pur vero che egli ci suggerisce che il "ridivenire immagine perfetta di Dio è imprescindibile dal raggiungimento della pienezza di umanità" (128).

L'ultimo studio della Rigo, *Prenderò il cappello* (Par. 25.1-12) è quanto mai suggestivo poiché rintraccia il campo semantico di appartenenza del termine 'cappello' non già nella *birretatio* accademica ma nella incoronazione poetica, per di più arricchita dal senso del *sumere pilleum*, il gesto cioè dell'affrancatura degli schiavi nell'antica Roma. La studiosa passa in rassegna tutte le fonti latine classiche sul tema e si sofferma anche a valutare l'idea della *manumissio in ecclesiis*. Dante *bannitus* dalla sua stessa città può ricomporre il dissidio, o meglio superare l'ostacolo dell'esilio, per mezzo di questa sorta di cerimonia redentiva: "nello stesso luogo, il battistero, in cui fu costituito persona *in ecclesia* ora Dante augura di riconfermarsi persona nella città secolare. Firenze, la Firenze agognata della riconciliazione, è allo stesso tempo figura di Roma e della Gerusalemme celeste e si collega a tutte le immagini ed i motivi sia biblici che liturgici o politici" (153). La scelta poetica dell'autore, pertanto, "nasce dalla fede nella tradizione giuridica romana, l'unica capace, per Dante, di ripristinare l'accordo perduto tra *civitas* terrena e *civitas* celeste, tra la giustizia umana dunque e la giustizia divina" (153).

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Lorenzo de' Medici. *The Autobiography of Lorenzo de' Medici the Magnificent: A Commentary on My Sonnets*. Translated with an introduction by James Wyatt Cook, together with the text of *Comento de' Miei Sonetti*, reprinted from the critical edition of Tiziano Zanato [Florence: Olschki, 1991]. Binghamton, N.Y.: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1995 (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 129). Pp. 289.

Translation is a humble trade; still, each translator works according to some principle. This reviewer believes that the only way to be faithful to the original is to remake it in natural English (or whatever the target language may be). Mr. Cook claims to follow exactly the same principle, but belies the claim in practice. He would have done better to shield himself behind the principle that the best rendering is an ungainly, literal one, permitting the reader with some knowledge of the original language to follow the syntax of the original text, for his translation of Lorenzo de' Medici's commentary is composed in contorted and unnatural English as he attempts to follow the Italian syntax. (Lorenzo's sonnets, however, are adroitly rendered into English blank verse.) Whenever Mr. Cook feels the need to supply some bit of bridging syntax in English, in order to make explicit a connecting link implicit in the Italian, he pointlessly puts it inside square brackets instead of simply writing a sentence that would convey to English readers the same notion conveyed by the original to Italian readers. Italian uses many more passive and reflexive constructions than English does, and every translator has to

solve the problem of creating English equivalents. Mr. Cook's solution is to resort frequently to the impersonal construction based on the pronominal "one," and the result sounds very ill: "si dice" becomes "one says," and so on.

So the translation is a failure as a piece of English. Would the book be of use to anyone who wished to improve their command of Renaissance Italian by reading Lorenzo's prose with a literal translation *en regard*? Well, in purely quantitative terms, the bulk of it shows adequate comprehension of the Italian. But in equally quantitative terms, how many mistakes ought we to be prepared to tolerate in *any* translation? A bare "physiological" minimum, in my view – and I submit that this minimum has been exceeded many times over in the work of Mr. Cook. The publishers and their referees have failed in their duty to assess the work carefully and exercise proper judgment as to the suitability of this translation for publication.

On almost every page there are patches of English that cloud the meaning of the Italian. I will illustrate this failure with some examples. Lorenzo writes: ". . . non pare molto necessario purgare quella parte che in me parebbe forse più repressibile, per le diverse occupazioni pubbliche e private: perché, s'egli è bene, il bene non ha bisogno d'alcuna excusazione . . ." (40). *Quella parte* refers to a possible objection against his literary activity which the author has already foreseen, and which he now mentions again and dismisses (*non pare molto necessario purgare*), to wit that it is an unseemly activity for a person burdened with private and public occupations such as his. Mr. Cook fails to see that the words *quella parte* are an idiomatic way of referring back to a consideration previously adduced, and he wrongly takes the masculine pronoun *egli* as a reference to the antecedent feminine noun *parte*. Here is the result: "it does not seem very necessary to eliminate that part of me that would perhaps seem more reprehensible because of my various private and public occupations. For, if that part is good, the good has no need of any apology . . ." (41). And here is a correct translation: ". . . it does not seem very necessary to counter the charge that this literary activity might seem more reprehensible in my case because of my various private and public occupations. For, if the good is in fact the good, it has no need of any apology . . ."

Lorenzo writes: "Pare molto conveniente alla presente materia fare intendere la cagione . . . e però diremo apresso da che cagione mossi abbiamo fatto questo" (94-96). In his translation of the first clause Mr. Cook makes *materia* into an agent, and in his translation of the second clause he quite fails to see the true relationship of subject, verb, and object, perhaps because the word order is Italianate rather than English, and therefore unfamiliar to him. Here is the result: "It seems very fitting that this material make clear the reason . . . And therefore we say in connection with this argument that we were moved by this" (95-97). The correct translation: "It seems highly appropriate to the matter at hand to explain . . . And thus in what follows we shall indicate the reason that moved us to do so."

Lorenzo writes: "e gli occhi dello innamorato tanto sono più felici, quanto il cuore ha maggiore tormento" (98). Mr. Cook, failing to see that the construction *tanto / quanto* means *as much / so much*, writes: "and the eyes of the lover are much happier than the heart that suffers greater torment" (99). But Lorenzo's meaning is of course: "and the eyes of the lover are all the happier, the greater the torment the heart suffers."

Lorenzo writes: "E perché non paia questo contradica a quello che abbiamo detto, . . . ; e così si absolve questa parte" (114). Mr. Cook does not recognize the

subjunctive construction with *perché*, and fails once again to see that Lorenzo is using the word *parte* in the idiomatic sense of “consideration previously adduced.” Here is his translation: “And therefore this does not seem to contradict what we have said, . . . And so this part is done” (115). But in truth the meaning is: “And in order to make it clear that this does not contradict what we said above, . . . And that is how we resolve this question.”

Lorenzo writes: “E, se così è, pare più tosto impossibile che con tanta bellezza non fussi congiunta una maravigliosa virtù e potenza, che difficile a credere di lei quello che ne scrivo” (144). It is impossible to describe the confusion which Mr. Cook creates out of this sentence: “And, if that is so, it seems impossible rather than [merely] difficult to believe of her that which I write about her – that with such great beauty there would not be conjoined such a marvelous virtue and power” (145). An accurate rendition: “And, if that is so, rather than what I have written of her appearing difficult to believe, it will appear impossible that such beauty should not have been united with a marvellous virtue and power.”

Lorenzo writes: “se ‘l Sonno non serra quelli occhi, non resteranno mai di lacrimare” (164), and although the plural form ought to have alerted him, Mr. Cook seizes on the most familiar meaning of the verb *restare*: “if sleep does not seal up those eyes, nothing will be left except to weep” (165). But even the *Cambridge Italian Dictionary* gives the meaning “to cease, to leave off” for the verb *restare*. Correct translation: “if sleep does not seal up those eyes, they will never cease to weep.”

Lorenzo writes: “se bene tra loro or l’una or l’altra abbia maggior potenza” (172). Mr. Cook, unfamiliar with the meaning of the phrase *se bene* (“although”) writes the following: “if indeed either the one or the other of them can have the greater power” (173). But Lorenzo’s meaning was: “although sometimes one member of this pair has greater power, and sometimes the other.”

Lorenzo writes: “perché la morte si brama o per uscire di doglia, o perché non sopravenga amaritudine che contami una somma dolcezza e felicità” (182). Mr. Cook completely loses his bearings here, failing to see that the subject of the verb *sopravenga* is the noun *amaritudine* (the inverted word order, very common in Italian, must have thrown him off), assigning a spurious meaning (“to overcome”) to the verb *sopravvenire*, and of course missing the point of the subjunctive. He writes: “because one yearns for death either as a release from suffering, or because one is not overcome by the bitterness that contaminates a surpassing sweetness and felicity” (183). Here is the true meaning in idiomatic English: “because one yearns for death either as a release from suffering, or to preserve a surpassing sweetness and felicity from being adulterated by the onset of chagrin.”

Lorenzo writes: “parendo molto conveniente che una cosa bella e lucente elevi la visione dell’altre cose, come è natura della eccessiva luce, e tragga gli occhi a sè, come sempre suole fare la bellezza” (186). The confusion created by Mr. Cook is beyond analysis: “For it seemed very fitting that [I look on] one lovely and shining thing and that I avoid the spectacle of the other things, as it is the nature of excessive light to do, and it seemed fitting that the image draw the eyes to itself, as beauty usually is accustomed to do” (187; the words in square brackets are his). Accurate translation: “For it seemed very fitting that a lovely and shining thing should both hide other things from sight, as it is the nature of excessive light to do, and also draw the eyes to itself, as

beauty is always accustomed to do."

Lorenzo writes: "né senza qualche invidia di quella erba e fiori mi s'apresentò quell'atto, che fussi ricevuta da loro la donna mia così dolcemente affaticata" (204). I will admit that for readers who do not have a certain amount of experience with Italian texts from the Renaissance, it might be difficult to grasp the structure and meaning of the passive syntax of the last clause. Such readers ought to think twice before undertaking to translate the prose of Lorenzo de' Medici, or they will produce absurdities like the following: "but not without some envy of those plants and flowers did their deeds, which my lady, so sweetly wearied, received from them, present themselves to me" (205). Lorenzo's meaning, rendered into natural English, is: "but not without some envy of those plants and flowers did I behold in imagination the moment at which my lady, so sweetly wearied, reclined upon them."

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Virginia Cox. *The Renaissance Dialogue: Literary Dialogue in its Social and Political Contexts, Castiglione to Galileo*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. Pp. xi, 236.

Although there is wide recognition of the diffusion and importance of the dialogue in the Renaissance, until now there has not been a systematic study that convincingly addresses its social and cultural importance. In an attempt "to restore this most sociable of literary genres to the social matrix within which it was produced" (xi), Virginia Cox has written a very clear and extensively researched study of the genre in the context of its time from literary, historical, and even political perspectives.

The nine chapters which comprise the study flow coherently from broad questions relating to the nature of the genre to the particular problems of its various transformations. Thus Ciceronian, Lucianic, and Platonic models, as well as open and closed forms of dialogue are examined over the course of the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century.

The author states from the outset that the basic problem that genre criticism has had with the dialogue is its "bewildering heterogeneity". It is here discussed in relation to the wide variety of topics addressed and the difference between true dialectical dialogues and monologues in disguise. The point stressed is its unique position among genres of argumentation due to the fact that it simultaneously presents a body of information or opinion while representing the process by which it is transmitted to a particular audience. By being, in Cox's terms, "a drama of communication" (8), the dialogue's appeal lies in the parallel between fictional conversation and actual literary exchange.

This is followed by an exploration of history and invention in the dialogue, intended to shed light on the different kinds of reception given to dialogues containing both historically clear and unclear settings and characters. The author begins by showing