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A TALE OF TWO CARLOS: AN EXAMINATION OF THE  
ONGOING BATTLE BETWEEN THE MARGINALIZED  
AND THE PRIVILEGED AS EXEMPLIFIED BY  
CARLO GOLDONI AND CARLO GOZZI  
DURING THE 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

by

David Josh Patterson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Theatre Arts

Approved:

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Logan, Utah

**2011**

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## ABSTRACT

A Tale of Two Carlos: An Examination of the  
Ongoing Battle Between the Marginalized  
and the Privileged as Exemplified by  
Carlo Goldoni and Carlo Gozzi  
During the 18<sup>th</sup> Century

by

David Josh Patterson, Master of Arts

Utah State University, 2011

Major Professor: Dr. Colin Johnson  
Department: Theatre Arts

This thesis explores the lives and works of Carlo Gozzi and Carlo Goldoni. Specific emphasis is placed on their feud, positions in society, the motivations behind their theatrical styles, and the ways they used theatre to either attempt to maintain the status quo (Gozzi) or strive for social change (Goldoni). Contrary to previous studies, this study suggests that Goldoni tried to influence the world around him, rather than merely reflect it. This study examines the above through the lens of several twentieth century theories including semiotics, structuralism, and the avante-garde. The contents of this work are essential to anyone seeking biographical information, doing dramaturgical research or producing one of their plays, and those investigating the ways theatre has

been used to incite change and create an atmosphere of social equity. This work demonstrates that theatre can, has been, and should be actively used to influence that change.

(117 pages)

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION: ENTERING THE WORLD OF  
CARLO GOLDONI AND CARLO GOZZI

When I first started researching the lives of Carlo Goldoni and Carlo Gozzi, I thought the same as most people who are aware of their literary feud did. I believed that the primary concern of their quarrel was the reformation of the art form *Commedia dell'Arte*. However, I soon discovered that they were quarreling about something much more applicable to modern society. Count Carlo Gozzi, a minor noble, sought the goal that most nobles seek, to maintain his status in society. Meanwhile, Carlo Goldoni, a champion of the poor and the emerging middle class, was influenced by the social change coming out of France and the ideas espoused by Rousseau and Voltaire; that a person is not born with an essential nature that cannot be changed, there should be mobility between the classes, and that rational critical thought outweighs blind acceptance of the current order. The content of their plays will be examined at length in this work to provide evidence of these goals.

Goldoni can be viewed not only a reformer of *Commedia*, but as a social reformer as well. When Goldoni began representing real people onstage instead of character types, he started showing his audiences a different way to live rather than merely entertaining them. In addition, by choosing which actions were rewarded and which were punished in his plays, he began suggesting that if his peers act in certain ways in the real world, they too will be rewarded or punished. Goldoni recognized that a portion of his audiences was made up of nobles, and he included information for them in his plays as well, but he

focused his messages toward the common people of Venice: the merchants, the waiters, the gondoliers, etc. He was showing them the path to better representation in society.

For Gozzi, the actions of Goldoni were a direct assault on what he viewed as the rightful position of his class. He believed that representing the lower classes onstage in such a manner was giving them too much power, and would lead to disaster and the ruination of society. As a result, he himself attacked Goldoni and began writing plays of his own with counter-narratives to Goldoni's.

What does this mean to readers today? Yes, there is the importance of production teams fully recognizing that, beyond the farcical and fantastical nature of their plays there are underlying issues that clearly detail the impact each author wanted to have on their audience. Beyond that however, is the fact that in many places the plays can have a similar impact on the way audiences today view separations of class. A production that ignores the way that each of these authors wanted to impact their audiences is not only doing a disservice to the playwright, but also missing an opportunity to impact its own audience.

The basic struggle of a group of people being marginalized by another is as prevalent today as it was back then, perhaps even more so. Furthermore, it isn't necessary to look any further than the list of recent Pulitzer prize winners to see that theatre is still playing a very active role in trying to influence social change.

This thesis attempts to not only raise the awareness of the themes for those performing and researching these works today, but also to explore the ways that theatre can be used for social change and possibly discover if any methods being used are better



than any other.

The root of the conflict between Goldoni and Gozzi was a battle over the rights and status of the marginalized and the privileged in their society and despite the fact that many people believe Carlo Goldoni lost their feud by being forced out of Venice, it was instead Gozzi who lost by being unable to stifle the upcoming social revolution. Furthermore, the way that each of these playwrights viewed the current class structure had specific impacts on the style and methods of theatre they chose to employ. Goldoni used theatre to veil his social critique in a manner that wouldn't be objected to by the censors. He broke form with the traditional methods of *Commedia dell'Arte* and began to employ a style of realism not seen before on the Italian stage in an attempt to reveal the oppressive social condition of the working classes and was rebuffed by the fantastical unrealistic styles put forth by Gozzi as he tried to present the position of the ruling class as inevitable, natural and right. Beyond their feud, the battle over social status has continued throughout time with members of both sides using theatre as a tool to convince people of the social system they should support.

This thesis unfolds in three phases. The first explores the concept of the marginalized versus the privileged and what that means today. The second phase reveals specific moments from the lives of Goldoni and Gozzi in order to gain a sense of how each man came to represent a specific side in the battle between the marginalized and the privileged. It is necessary to understand where they came from and who they are to see why they made the choices they did. Furthermore, as documentation about the lives of these two individuals is scarce, particularly in any language other than Italian, having a

single source that details their lives will aid future scholarship and study of their works.

The third closely examines the plays and the methods that each used to spread their message about social change.

## CHAPTER II

### THEATRE AS A TOOL IN THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE MARGINALIZED AND THE PRIVILEGED

This chapter discusses exactly what it means to be marginalized or privileged, the ways that theatre can be used to influence social change, and the methods the privileged use to fight that change. I believe that conflict between the marginalized and the privileged is one that occurs in every place and time period. While it is difficult to categorize people as homogenous groups, and in many cases such attempts are exactly what leads to conflict in the first place, at any given moment, in any given place, it is likely that you will find some people being marginalized by those considered privileged. This is not to imply that all marginalized people are the same or are having the same experiences, nor am I trying to suggest that of the privileged. However, terms such as lower-class, middle-class and upper-class exist for a reason. It is clear that there is not equality between all people, and it is in the perception of equality that the terms marginalized and privileged are used here. Also, while there have been marginalized and privileged people throughout time, what it meant to be a member of the marginalized or privileged was different in each circumstance. Examination of these specific differences lie beyond the scope of this paper and although I refer to them for their similarities, I recognize that they are not the same.

Through theatre, as well as other means, members of society are constantly being bombarded with messages that include a call for them to side with either the current

system that supports a privileged group or to create a change in that structure, the message may or may not be overt. It is for this reason that society needs to be conscious of the struggle in order for each individual to have the ability to construct their own arguments instead of relying on others to make their decisions for them. The privileged try to keep the marginalized unaware of the fact that they are fighting against themselves, because if they focus their resources fighting amongst themselves, they won't be able to focus them on fighting the privileged.

The simple definition provided by a dictionary does not do justice to the power these words contain. Merriam-Webster defines marginalize as, "to relegate an unimportant or powerless position within the society or group" while privileged is defined as, "a right or immunity granted as a peculiar benefit, advantage, or favor. Especially such a right or immunity attached specifically to a position or office." This does not necessarily refer to rich and poor. Carlo Gozzi is a perfect example of this. He was plagued by money problems throughout his life, his family was poor and they squabbled over money to the point of taking one another to court. Yet, because of the family title granted many generations previous, he was awarded privileged status as a member of the ruling class. In fact, nobles were expected to "Hold office and live a luxurious lifestyle, but in stark contrast to a few wealthy powerful families many nobles were in fact paupers" (Coyle 101). Meanwhile, Carlo Goldoni, whose family was very wealthy when he was born, became a successful playwright, but was never a member of the ruling class.

These definitions can be expanded upon using the ideas of de Saussure. De

Saussure believed that the linguistic sign, such as the word marginalize, “unites, not a thing and the name, but a concept and a sound-image” (4). He would further define the linguistic sign as the signifier and the concept as the signified. The words within the definition of the linguistic signs marginalized and privileged are also signifiers themselves that help us create an idea of the signified in our minds, meaning the concept of being marginalized or privileged.

For example, when one hears or reads the words “marginalized” or “privileged”, one often thinks not of the definition, but what that concept might mean to the individual. This could be as simple as remembering a childhood friend who had all the toys that the kids in neighborhood wanted to play with, or as complex as recognizing that most of Disney's “bad” characters are old and ugly, there implying that old and ugly should be marginalized, and only the young and beautiful should be treated as “good” or even more importantly that there needs to be a “bad” in order for there to be a “good.” Inequality is bred when such thoughts are extrapolated to the belief that there needs to be a marginalized in order for there to be a privileged and that not all people should have equal access.

There is a fluidity to these terms, not only within the concept of what it means to be marginalized, but also in who is viewed as such. An example of this is the Catholic Church. Consider the position of Catholics in ancient Rome, their position after the Donation of Constantine and their position today. In one time period they were heavily persecuted, and in the next the Pope claimed sole authority over the western part of the Roman Empire. Although several hundred years separate Catholics of the two time

periods, the biggest difference between them is that they were at one time marginalized and another privileged. Two opposing signifiers that can indicate the same signified. The fluctuation has continued to the point where Pope Benedict XVI was quoted in a recent article denouncing the “Increasing Marginalization of Religion” (Rocca).

This cyclical nature of one such group between being marginalized and privileged is indicative of many other groups throughout time. Consider the different ways people have perceived beauty. At one point in time people with more fat on their body were considered attractive because, among other things, it signified they were healthy. There was a point in time that people who were tan were considered to be low in society because it signified they had to work in the fields all day; now tan may also signify that someone doesn't have to work and can spend their time lounging in the sun. Additionally, consider the way that different occupations have fluctuated in esteem. For example, at one time scientists were considered fools for questioning what they saw with their own eyes. This is not to say that each of these groups experienced the same level of persecution, but to show that there is evidence of different groups of marginalized people elevating their status to one of privilege.

Theatre is one of the many different tools that can be used to influence change within society. For evidence, consider the Theatre for Development (TFD) movement in Africa. Tim Prentki discusses TFD as a way to develop social action and consciousness in theater. He claims that TFD tries to use indigenous theatrical forms to transform the poor and marginalized from the objects to the subjects of history, and that “TFD can be an important tool in the struggle to improve the quality of life for all communities that

have suffered from the oppressive hegemonies of those who have claimed to speak for them” (“Social Action” 115). TFD is an effort to evolve the theatre of Africa from repression into one of self representation. The style of European theatre has often overwhelmed different cultures throughout the world and TFD gives people the opportunity to regain indigenous forms of theatre, allowing them to “take control of their social realities and act rather than be acted upon” (Prentki “Social Action” 116). For specific examples of artists with similar goals see the works of Zakes Mda and Ngugi wa' Thiong'o.

Tim Prentki is essentially advocating a theatre for the marginalized, a theatre that can improve the position of those who have been acted upon by outside forces in their own world, in this case the Europeans. Prentki describes one of the fiercest challenges being faced by the Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA) as, “To turn strategies for development into strategies for self-development” (“Social Action” 124). While rural villagers are viewing and joining in the performances, afterward they are still waiting to be told what to do. The previous power relationship still remains. They have experienced years with development practices that have told them that they are ignorant and need outside help for their own good. Prentki says that TFD is trying to change that relationship by teaching the people that they can “affect the direction the skit takes in ways which will leave them in charge of the material and responsible for the consequences of their choices. This momentous step of moving from object to subject occurs within the safe space of fiction” (“Social Action” 125).

The NPTA is not only made up of visiting theatre artists but locals as well. The

leadership structure of the NPTA is spread across six zones, with an emphasis on gender equality, to ensure that each local community is well represented. They have collaborated with local organizations that focus on gender equality, AIDS, general healthcare and civic education to improve the lives of the populace. Prentki warns however, that only at the point where the theatrical practices of these groups translate from fiction into the real world does TFD live up to its name, and only if it has risen out of a full democratic participation of the community. Once that occurs, sustainable self-development may occur.

There is also a TFD movement that started in Laos in 2004. According to their website, [www.theatrefordevelopment.com](http://www.theatrefordevelopment.com), “the [TFD] teams have performed in 37 villages for over 16 thousand people on the subjects of drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, microfinance and agriculture” as well as human trafficking. This movement also has an increased emphasis on gender equality in their performances. There are currently five teams each made up of six members, three men and three women, who are all villagers. There is a female team leader and a male team leader for each team. They are supported by the government, as well as other outside sources, but their goal is to become self sufficient. The other goal is for the team members to act onstage so that the villagers who witness the performance will know how to act in real life. They want to minimize the negative impact of development on the people living in these communities. These rural communities often become marginalized and taken advantage of by the privileged who are more familiar with the outside world. Farmers who don't know how to negotiate deals are taken advantage of by new business partners, the young are often tempted to



enter neighboring countries at the promise of riches but end up being exploited, and girls and women may be drawn into prostitution. Through their presentations to the villages the teams provide strategies to cope with the new world they are being introduced to.

The teams use the following methods to construct performances: they interview locals and organize training workshops, they create plays based on the stories and experiences they collect in the interviews and they create a public forum between local government officials and villagers by performing in areas that allow for the whole village to attend and participate. The goal of these performances is for the villagers to be in a better position to make informed choices to the benefit of their health and standard of living. They also say that for them theatre plays a key role in community education and development. By presenting performances onstage that discuss sensitive subjects, such as prostitution, the villagers can discuss the actions of the characters in the play instead of criticizing individual members of their community. In this way “they can test potential ways of problem solving on stage in front of the whole village and then discuss them” and that after “daring to take action within the playful situation of a theatre play, villagers realise that they have just performed an action they could also undertake in real life.”

Their plays are based on stories from local life in the local language. They represent local Laos traditions, cultures and values in order to keep them alive; while at the same time presenting ways to improve the standards of living in these communities and prevent them from becoming marginalized.

Prentki discusses the use of Boal's Forum Theatre in which, “The creation of an actual performance space, a theatre, allows the participants the chance to try out roles to

which they would normally be denied access” (“Must the Show Go On” 420). The marginalized act in roles that were normally denied them and they experience what it means to be privileged. Hopefully this experience gives them the confidence and knowledge necessary to change the way they behave in real world situations and obtain privilege themselves.

Bertolt Brecht also wanted to use theatre to create social change. He wanted the spectator to watch the action of his theater onstage and say, “I'd never have thought it – That's not the way – That's extraordinary, hardly believable – It's got to stop – The sufferings of this man appall me, because they are unnecessary” (“Theatre For Pleasure” 174), then leave the theatre and do something about it. Augusto Boal, however, wanted to take the power away from the actor onstage and give it to the spectator. Boal discusses the differences and similarities between his theatre and that of Brecht by saying that in the theatre of the oppressed the main objective is to change the spectators from passive beings into subjects, actors themselves, that can transform the dramatic action. He goes on to discuss the evolution of the relationship between spectator and character by saying that while Aristotle proposed a poetics in which the character thinks and acts for the spectator, and that Brecht proposes a poetics in which the character acts for the spectator who reserves the right to think, in the theatre of the oppressed “the spectator delegates no power to the character (or actor) either to act or to think in his place.” In this way the spectator can be trained “for real action” (396).

In addition to discussing Brecht and Boal, Prentki also quotes Oga Abah who expresses the need for theatre to take an active role in fostering change:

In situations of deprivation, of poverty, of disease and of hunger, should theatre be complacent or should it be active in confronting issues, in shaping and indeed altering ways of thinking and seeing? I should think that theatre needs to declare itself an active practice in favour of enlightenment and change. (qtd. in “Must the Show Go On” 425)

Who experiences deprivation, poverty, disease and hunger? It is clear that this type of theatre is meant for those who feel marginalized.

While going about it in different ways, each of these artists were using theater for the purpose of social change, of increasing the representation of the marginalized.

Prentki mentions that both Brecht and Boal were “guilty of making the theatrical process participatory and of encouraging participation from those with an interest in social change. Art that speaks of the lives of ordinary people is dangerous, but theatre which invites collective performance, rehearsal for revolution, is doubly so” (“Must the Show Go On” 423-4). Both Brecht and Boal were censored and forced to spend part of their lives in exile in part due to their political beliefs differing from that of the privileged and because their theories attempted to convince the marginalized to actively question their status.

Such persecution of individuals reveals the ways that the privileged have used their power to fight against the marginalized. They have banned this type of theatre, sent its proponents into exile or worse, and used power and force to keep the marginalized in “their place.” An example may be seen in the use of governmental control over theatre such as in the case of Indonesia's National Art theatre in the 1990's when Minister of Information, Harmoko, responded to critical media coverage of a banned play by insisting that the ban was not “in any way confining artists’ creativity” (qtd. in Bodden

63). The Jakarta Post paraphrased Harmoko as stating that “The government does not take action to curb Indonesian artists’ creativity provided they base their creations on national cultural values” (qtd. in Bodden 63). This is a case of the privileged saying that the marginalized can do whatever type of theatre they want, as long as it doesn't interfere with the national cultural values which *they* have set in place. However, if the marginalized attempt to question the privileged and gain a real position in society, they will be punished. The privileged will assert the power that they have gained by being the privileged to make sure that they remain the privileged. In addition to being censored or exiled those who speak out against the privileged may find themselves imprisoned, as was the case for Nelson Mandela and Vaclav Havel, or experience the fate of Frederico Garcia Lorca and Ken Saro-Wiwa, execution.

However, direct governmental action provides an obvious opponent for the marginalized to rally against. It is much more effective for the privileged to push their agenda by claiming that what they are doing is in the best interests of the marginalized. For example, members of the privileged class have learned how to use buzzwords, such as “pornography” and “hate”, to label potentially subversive acts as “bad” for all people.

Amy Adler discusses censorship in the United States saying, “Some portion of the political left in the United States has called for the restriction of pornography and hate speech. Those who advocate such censorship do so on the ground that pornography and hate speech cause harm to disadvantaged 'outsider' groups in society” (1500). It is interesting to note that this document written for an audience of people who speak and understand legal terms uses the word “outsider” to describe the marginalized. Clearly

identifying them as separate from others, an indication of how the language may change but the concept remains the same.

Adler makes specific mention that this call for censorship deliberately disregards the value of public debate and artistic expression contained within this language. Those arguing for censorship claim that “the harm caused by hate speech to the 'outsider' groups outweigh the issues contained within the foundation of the First Amendment protecting free speech” (1501). Many forums that have advocated equality have been censored under the guise of doing it for the protection of the marginalized people. Whether or not the censorship is malicious in nature, purposely done to keep the marginalized from becoming privileged, if it is impossible for artists to use certain words to discuss gender, sexuality or race, then how can they create a forum that discusses whether or not the use of such words is harmful? Context is an important determining factor in “hate speech” and by keeping something unnamed and undisclosed, it is impossible to take the power out of those words and this allows them to be continually used as weapons.

In a stand up comedy performance, well known transvestite Eddie Izzard said: “I noticed, if you do have the guts to say it, yes, I am a transvestite, I don't care,” then the people who wanted him to deny it, people who wanted to bully him, would think, “He's a bit comfortable ... He doesn't have the victim mentality we usually request at this point of the debate” (“More Shouting”). The bullies in his scenario lose their power. The signifiers transvestite, homo, queer, etc. can be used as weapons but if people can say, “Yes, I am and I don't care”, then those words lose the power to hurt. Just as important is that, if people like Eddie Izzard have the freedom to go onstage and tell that story using

those words, people in the same situation may gain the courage to give that response to anyone who attempts to bully them. Plays that show characters reacting in a similar manner to Eddie Izzard can also provide audience members with the power to stand up for themselves and resist that victim mentality of which he speaks. While marginalization through insulting words is not in and of itself equivalent to marginalization through systematic economic inequality, it is a step toward the identification of “outsider groups” as separate and unequal that may eventually lead towards systematic discrimination. For further discussion see JanMohamed's *The Manichean Allegory* in Chapter V.

Others have also attempted to use this type of language to strike back at those who would use the language to keep others down. “The Million Fag March” is a recent example of a group trying to limit the power of a word that has been used for hate. According to Chris Love, the march is a protest against the Phelps family's Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas, which he claims is a “hate group masquerading as a Christian church.” According to Love the church uses the word “fag” to inflame passion and generate publicity, and to the Westboro church if you aren't a member you are “lumped into one of two categories — fag or fag-enabler.” Love states that the march was created with the idea that, “By having everyone but the Phelps fall under the definition of 'fag' for at least one day, we're hoping to render the word completely meaningless.”

However, people like Love are not only fighting against those who use such words to oppress, but also those they are trying to fight for. According to Adler, “Many

of the latest assaults on artistic expression have come not just from right wing sources, but from outsider groups themselves” (1503). Some marginalized people have been convinced that it is in their own best interest to attack and denounce certain forms of art as being racist or sexist, even when the artists are working against racism and sexism. It is a common tactic of the privileged to keep the marginalized fighting against themselves. While these calls for governmental censorship ultimately failed, many people still protest anytime these words are used, in popular culture or otherwise. One such example of an “outsider” group protesting the usage of these words is The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD).

A quick Google news search can turn up many instances of GLAAD, in many cases justly, protesting and fighting against uses of “hate” words. However, Michael Jensen, discussing a gay writer for Vanity Fair using the word fag, claims that GLAAD is often overzealous in their attempts to eliminate the word. GLAAD may be hindering much of the good work they do by ignoring the context in which a word is used. He writes, “GLAAD's position on the topic is pretty black and white,” and that GLADD will only accept the word being used in “a direct quote that reveals the bias of the person quoted.”

Accepting only this type of context for the word prevents it from ever becoming anything other than hate. For example, part of GLAAD's chastisement of Vanity Fair included gay supportive articles like “The Heartwarming Story of Fagbug.” The story details how a woman named Erin Davies turned someone spray painting the word “fag” on her VW Beetle into a cross country tour promoting gay tolerance and a documentary

to promote acceptance of GLBT people. Jensen interviewed Erin for his article to get her reaction, and she said “The word fag is one the strongest words in our society. It hits hard, strikes a deep nerve, and offends many” and that “it's not a word that's going anywhere.” According to Erin, whether people find the word offensive, or are proud to refer to themselves using it, each time it is used can have a very different sentiment. She says, “Context and intent have to be considered in the process of interpreting the meaning of language and the ways its communicated.” She believes that to silence the conversation so people aren't allowed to use the word only magnifies the problem, and that “we have to be able to talk about oppression, in order to ever reclaim it.”

Instead of silencing the conversation, many are claiming those supposedly hateful words as their own and stripping the power from them in an attempt to stem the flow of marginalization. They have the ability to change the connotation of mere signifiers.

Carlo Gozzi was one of those privileged who attempted to resist change and keep the marginalized from claiming any power. Instead of censorship, or overt protestations like those of the Westboro Church, his method was to present a series of carefully crafted scenarios to the marginalized with a message that led them to decide for themselves that it was in their own best interest to sustain the current social system. Instead of forcing an ideology on the people, he used theatre to get them to feel as if it was their own idea.

Unfortunately for the privileged, like Gozzi, many of those who used theatre to promote the marginalized including Brecht, Boal and Goldoni, have also realized that this is the most effective method they have to overcome their oppressors. They have realized that the marginalized have neither the money nor the power to compete with the



privileged on their terms, but that through art and forums such as theatre they can have a voice loud enough that it demands to be heard and influences others. As a result, people are being buffeted from both sides to take a stance on their position in society. Ultimately the choice they make will depend on the quality of the argument being presented combined with their awareness of, or resistance to, that argument. The next few chapters will show exactly how Gozzi and Goldoni came to represent the privileged or the marginalized respectively, and how they used their theatrical voices to battle with one another over the proper position of the marginalized in eighteenth century Venetian society.

CHAPTER III  
THE LIFE OF CARLO GOLDONI

*“Il Mondo e` un Bel Libro, Ma Poco Serve a Chi Non Lo Sa Leggere.”*

The World is a Beautiful Book, But Little Service to  
He Who Does Not Know How to Read It.

–Carlo Goldoni, *Pamela*

The memoirs of Goldoni provide us with an excellent glimpse at his life. However, when trying to perceive the nature of the man Carlo Goldoni, it is important to look at other sources than his memoirs. Although Goldoni claimed to tell “only the truth” (Memoirs 428), he was often incomplete and inaccurate when talking about his past (Kennard 42). There are most likely many reasons for this. He mis-remembers dates for example, but a major reason is the fact that Goldoni was truly a man of Venice and society at that time was very concerned with how they were viewed in the eyes of others. Venitian society was polite to a fault and not entirely sincere. For Goldoni to reveal his whole mind and display all of his feelings would have been undignified (Kennard 43). Therefore, he presented himself in the best light, not because he had things to hide, but because that was the way things were done at the time. In fact, according to Kennard, he goes even further than most with polite decorum and is “delightfully free of petty ambition, unlike other authors of memoirs of his time, he does not attack anyone, nor does he try and defend himself” (44).

Timothy Holme has yet another theory for why Goldoni, a man who shared many revealing stories when writing the prefaces to his plays, wasn't as revealing in his memoirs. For example, Goldoni often began a tale involving a pretty woman that followed the same track as the same story told elsewhere, only to all of a sudden swerve off course. Holme explains this by saying that the *Memoirs*, unlike the prefaces to his other editions, were actually read by his wife, Nicoletta, as he wrote them, and they may have even been dictated to her (28). If this was the case, it is understandable that he would not tell the same sordid story as before.

The first mistake Goldoni made when writing his memoirs was the timing of his birth. Carlo Goldoni was born in Venice on February 25, 1707, to Giulio and Margherita Goldoni. He was born after the death of his grandfather who supervised international trade and settled disputes under the title of “*Dei Savi del Commercio*” (Kennard 54). When he died in 1703 the Goldoni family had land, but was also deep in debt. These modest beginnings may have lead to Goldoni's support of the lower classes later in life. Giulio had inherited the playful nature of his father, who often employed the greatest actors of the time to come and perform at their house, and this love of theatre was also passed along to Carlo as he was exposed to similar entertainments.

Goldoni was very intelligent as a child and at the age of four was already able to read and write (Kennard 61). Around that time a second son, Giampaolo, was born. From birth he was not treated the same way as Carlo. While Carlo remained at home and studied with a tutor, Giampaolo was sent to the country to nurse and then on to a friars school to prepare for a monastic life (Kennard 61).

Goldoni was educated in the traditional manner, study at home followed by grammar school and then on to a university, but he was a very indifferent student. Instead of math he was intrigued by theatre, and in his memoirs Goldoni claims to have written his first comedy at the age of eight (*Goldoni Memoirs* 39). However, this probably happened at the age of eleven (Kennard 63). Either way, it was good enough that Giulio sent for Carlo to come to Perugia and attend the Jesuit College in seventeen-nineteen. When Carlo arrived at the place where his father lodged, he found it to be dismal and entreated his father to move. When Goldoni heard the dissatisfying news that there was not even a theater in his new town he said, "I would not remain here for all the gold in the world" (*Memoirs* 42). Already he was more interested in theater than his education, a trend that would continue as long as his schooling. Goldoni even left a college in Rimini to travel with a troupe of actors (*Goldoni Memoirs* 50).

The next attempt at an education for Goldoni was to study law at the highly exclusive Papal College of Ghisleri. To prepare he apprenticed with his uncle M. Paul Indric in Venice. Once again he was seduced by the theatre. Goldoni calls Venice a city that resembles none, where all the other cities were alike. He was fifteen and it was the first time he saw a city of such amazing wonders, two theaters dedicated to Grand Operas, two to Comic Operas, and three to plays (*Memoirs* 60-63).

In order to enroll in the Papal college Goldoni received his tonsure Christmas day 1722 (Holme 28). Some point to this as proof that Goldoni was a pious man, but according to Holme, "it goes without saying that it had no influence whatsoever on his life and was, indeed, never again referred to, except by his mother" (28). While he was

waiting for some documents to arrive so he could enroll, Goldoni studied from the personal library of one of his professors. In addition to, and more importantly than, skimming the institutes of Roman law, he read and reread the Greek and Latin poets and said to himself, “I wish it were in my power to imitate their plans, their style, and their precision ; but I should not be well pleased if I did not throw more interest into my works, more marked characters, more of the *vis comica*, and bring about a more successful termination of the plot” (Goldoni *Memoirs* 67). Goldoni wanted to emulate the classics, but add more movement, happier endings, and better characters – essentially to make them more realistic so they would better connect with the Venetian people. He wrote, “We owe respect to the great writers who have smoothed the way for us in science and art, but every age has its dominant genius and every climate its national taste. The Greek and Roman writers knew human nature and copied it closely, but without illusion and without skill” (Goldoni *Comedies* 12-13).

Furthermore, as he rummaged through this library he found English, Spanish, and French plays, but no Italian. He challenged himself to fix the discrepancy and write plays in Italian. Up until this time the comedic tradition in Italy was one of scenarios that were improvised by the actors, and there were no full scripts. The seed for his reform of Italian theatre was planted in that library.

In his second year Goldoni was asked to write a sermon for the panegyric of Pius V, this was given every year and was always written by a student. When the sermon was given by the Abbé the audience wept and applauded (Goldoni *Memoirs* 80). This was the first time in his life that he received real applause and adoration for something he wrote

and the success encouraged him to continue writing. Eventually he wrote a satire that led to him being expelled from the school (Goldoni *Memoirs* 87). According to Holme the college was besieged by a lynch mob and Goldoni was smuggled out of town (30) in 1725 (Goldoni *Holiday Trilogy* 300).

After getting expelled and returning home, Goldoni traveled with his father to Udine where he resumed studies at the house of M. Movelli, a celebrated jurisconsult. He later professed to having learned more there in six months than in the the years he spent at Pavia (*Memoirs* 94). While in Udine he also wrote 36 sonnets and published them in a pamphlet that he dedicated to the deputies of that town (*Memoirs* 95).

In 1726 Goldoni was sent to Modena to study law in order to avoid a requirement that absent citizens pay a tax (*Holiday Trilogy* 300). While in Modena Goldoni witnessed a man in the pillory cross examined and tortured by a priest and his acolytes (Kennard 80). The man was then sentenced to six years in prison (Goldoni *Memoirs* 105). After witnessing the pain, degradation and humiliation of this man, whose only crime was that of indiscreet speech, Carlo became so shocked that he fled Modena in terror. He wanted to join a convent to cleanse his sins and avoid any temptation to return to writing, which could lead to the same punishment he witnessed. His father wisely did not attempt to talk him out of it, but instead told him to come to Venice to inform the church authorities there of his plans. While in Venice, Goldoni once again became intoxicated with the city and forgot all about joining a convent (Kennard 81).

Goldoni turned twenty-one and was no nearer a career than he was before he started school in the first place. He said later that, "So many unusual disasters had

befallen me, so many unpleasant adventures that I saw no other possibility for me than the theatre which I had always loved and which I would have entered long before if I had been master of my own destiny” (Holme 32).

However, Goldoni was not yet the master of his own destiny and Giulio was still trying to find a proper place for him. Giulio obtained a job as a clerk for his son in the criminal court of Chioggia. After less than two years Chioggia, Goldoni became a principal coadjutor in Feltre. He would later say, “Hitherto I had looked only on employments at a distance; but now I held one which pleased and suited me. I resolved with myself never to quit it; but man proposes, and God disposes” (Goldoni *Memoirs* 109-110).

It is in Feltre that Goldoni wrote his first *Intermezzo* (Goldoni *Holiday Trilogy* 300). He also directed two tragedies by Metastasio and two farces of his own. Shortly thereafter Giulio fell ill. He called Carlo to his bedside and made him promise to take care of his mother, gave him his blessing, and died a few days later on March ninth, seventeen-thirty-one (Goldoni *Memoirs* 121). Goldoni and his mother traveled to Venice where she begged him to find a job that didn't require him to travel all the time, and ultimately convinced him to finish his degree and become a lawyer (Goldoni *Memoirs* 121).

Goldoni experienced a difficult time finding clients in Venice. He was supposed to be supporting his mother, but he ended up being supported by her (Kennard 84). Without any clients and some extra free time he wrote a tragedy called *Amalasantia* (Goldoni *Memoirs* 135). Shortly after Goldoni was called to defend someone in court,

something other lawyers had to wait up to four years before doing. He won the case and made a name for himself. Afterward his uncle Indric, the lawyer, supposed that he “will soon not want for clients” (Goldoni *Memoirs* 136). However, instead of successful law career, Goldoni decided to leave Venice for Milan to sell his tragedy.

On his way to Milan Goldoni meets an old friend in Vicenza who reads the opera and tells him that he should stick to comedy because he is better at it (Goldoni *Memoirs* 147). Unswayed, Goldoni presses on thinking he can make at least 100 *zecchini* in Milan (Holme 45). Goldoni knew the principal actor and dancer of the opera company currently performing in Milan. The actor presented him to the directors who granted him a reading (Goldoni *Memoirs* 151). However, during the reading Goldoni was interrupted multiple times by complaining actors and afterward Goldoni was so disgusted that he went to his hotel and threw the only manuscript of his opera into the fire (Goldoni *Memoirs* 152-153).

Goldoni took a undemanding job as a secretary in Milan to support himself while continuing to write (Holme 47). It was during this time that Carlo met Bonafede Vitali. Vitali was a scholar who had obtained degrees and diplomas from Canterbury, Palermo, and Catania universities. Vitali, a former professor of medicine (Holme 47) was an able physician, and had even staunched a violent epidemic in Parma. He was also a charlatan under the stage name of Anonimo or the Anonymous (Kennard 95).

Goldoni became good friends with Vitali after he pretended to need one of his famous remedies in order to meet him. Vitali, seeing through the long list of symptoms, told him a cup of hot chocolate was the best cure for all his ills. Goldoni said of this visit,



“He was as pleasing in private as he was in public” (Goldoni *Memoirs* 159). Vitali was unique from other charlatans of the time as he came from a good family and had received a very good education. He had a degree not only in medicine but in chemistry as well, but mostly used common sense to help people get better. In contrast to most charlatans he actually wanted to make the whole use of his knowledge in order to improve the lives of others. He couldn't do this without any money, however, hence the showmanship. He often claimed that those who practiced “orthodox medicine” were just as likely to be ignorant frauds as the so called quacks (Gambaccini 164-166).

More importantly for Goldoni, Vitali was also the stage and company manager of a group of Commedia dell'Arte actors who would perform *lazzi*, expertly rehearsed comedic bits, to attract more people to hear the doctor ply his trade. Later, at night they performed full plays on that same space. Goldoni assisted Vitali in securing a theatre for a season, and was rewarded with a front box and the favor of free admittance behind the scenes. Better still, Vitali had him write a short *intermezzo*, which was performed with some success in the year seventeen-thirty-three. The first professional presentation of his work was another milestone for Goldoni (Kennard 97).

In that season another event occurred that would have a lasting impact on the direction of Goldoni's career. He attended the lauded performance of *Belisarius*, a play that was represented as being “The last word in theatrical perfection” (Holme 48). Goldoni was horrified by the spectacle of it. The show contained a *lazzi* where the blind hero Belisarius is led on-stage by his servant Arrelequino, who shows him the way by beating him with a cudgel. Outraged, he asked one of the actors, Casali, about why the

show was so low and crude and had not been advertised as such. His reply, “Alas, sir, you know but little of actors. There is not a company which does not occasionally fall upon similar tricks to gain money; and this in the theatrical jargon is called *una arrostita* [a roasting]” (Goldoni *Memoirs* 161). Goldoni believed that a much better play could be written about the main character Belisarius with no buffoonery, and Casali challenged him with doing so. In fact, he hired him to write a play that he could take to Venice. (Goldoni *Memoirs* 162).

Some time later, after having written the play *Belisarius*, Goldoni traveled to Verona where, as fate or luck would have it, he witnessed a play starring none other than Casali (Goldoni *Memoirs* 178). After an introduction, the director of the company, M. Imer, invited Goldoni to dinner and a reading of his play (Goldoni *Memoirs* 179-180). The impression of the new play, combined with the fact that the company was already performing a small piece known to Casali that Goldoni had previously written, placed him in a position of high esteem with Imer, who then hired Goldoni to write a few small things for him, and eventually offered him a position with the company (Goldoni *Memoirs* 181). Finally in seventeen-thirty-four, the career that seemed to be Goldoni's destiny was officially underway. Or as Holme puts it, “Carlo had been received into his kingdom at last” (55).

During his first period as a playwright in Venice, Goldoni was reduced to accepting almost any work that came his way. In the beginning Goldoni followed the traditional Commedia format of writing out scenarios for the actors to improvise around. During this learning period he gained necessary experience and slowly started to

implement his reformation for the theatre.

Eventually, in November of seventeen-thirty-four, *Belisarius* appeared on the stage for the first time. It was Goldoni's Venice debut, and it set the tone for his career with immediate success. He remarks, "My piece was listened to with a silence altogether extraordinary and unusual in the Italian theaters (*Memoirs* 185). Holme agrees that this is something almost entirely unheard of at the time (68). The play was so well received that when the principal actor presented himself to announce/take requests from the audience for the play for the succeeding evening, all the spectators at once called out for the same play to be repeated (*Goldoni Memoirs* 185).

It is here working with the Imer company that Goldoni first saw the benefit of representing real life on-stage, and he also got his own little form of revenge. He had been seduced by an actress who wanted him to write better parts for her, and only later discovered that she was playing him for a fool. She was having a real affair with an actor in the company. Incensed by this betrayal Goldoni wrote a play clearly about this relationship for the public's eyes, leaving not a thing out (Kennard 104). The public loved seeing their stars in a scandal and the play was a huge success. When the company traveled during Venice's off season, Goldoni would go with them and work on new pieces with them in each city. That was how he came to be in Genoa in the spring of seventeen-thirty-six (*Goldoni Holiday Trilogy* 300) where he met and married Nicoletta Conio.

The best portrait we can see of the relationship between Nicoletta and Carlo comes from the introduction of a comedy he dedicates to his father in law years later "You could not have given me a greater treasure than your exemplary daughter and my

most loving wife. She has always been a good companion that in all the many years we have been together I have never for an instant either from domestic quarrels or inflamed temper, regretted having married her” (Holme 75).

Nicoletta got along very well with Carlo's mother and aunt, making him “the happiest man in the world” (Goldoni *Memoirs* 198). This was fortuitous because Nicoletta lived with them while Goldoni stayed with, and studied, the actors (Kennard 107). He took notes on their manners and decided that some of them would benefit from not being covered with a mask. While there were a number of specific characters in Commedia dell'Arte that did not wear a mask, Goldoni broke from this tradition by removing masks from the characters that had previously worn them. Goldoni kept the names of these characters, but began to write them based on the talents and characteristics he observed in his actors instead of using the traditional stock attributes (Kennard 108). During this time period he was still writing scenarios and scenes instead of full scripts, but slowly, he began to change the course of Italian theatre.

In 1741 Goldoni was appointed Consul of Genoa in Venice (Goldoni *Holiday Trilogy* 300). The previous consul died and Nicoletta's father arranged for him to get the post. This forced Goldoni to spend much of his time engaged in lower level political work instead of working in the theatre. However, Goldoni found time to take the next step in his reform by writing his first entirely scripted comedy *La Donna Di Garbo*, or *The Well Mannered Lady* (Holme 83). Once again breaking with tradition, Goldoni removed the element of improvisation from his comedy.

Things were going fairly well for Goldoni when his brother, Giampaolo, entered

the picture and involved him in an illegal recruiting scandal (Holme 84). The brothers were promised important titles in exchange for six-thousand ducats, supplied by Carlo. The recruiter took the money and disappeared. Goldoni gave up his post and fled with his wife and brother to Bologna. He felt that they needed to avoid the punishment that surely would sweep through the government “leaving out the big fish but catching the small fry” (Kennard 115-116). They left Venice on September eighteenth, seventeen-forty-one (Goldoni *Memoirs* 220).

Eventually Goldoni and his wife arrived at Pisa in 1744 where Goldoni practised law for three years (Goldoni *Holiday Trilogy* 301). It was the longest consecutive period of time that he practiced law and he was so overrun with clients that he had to turn some away (Holme 90). However, his successful strategy was to convince his clients to settle out of court.

Things were rather prosperous for Goldoni in Pisa. He was “in such a flourishing state as to inspire my brethren with jealousy” but “the devil, I believe, sent a company of comedians to Pisa,” and once again he was persuaded to try his hand at theatre. However, this time his play *The Hundred and Four Accidents in one Night* was a failure and he “resolved nevermore to go near the comedians, or to think of comedy” (Goldoni *Memoirs* 237). This oath was about as good as the one he took never to quit his situation in Feltre. It wasn't very long before he received a letter from the great actor Sacchi, who asked Goldoni for a comedy, and so Goldoni once again turned his thoughts towards theatre and wrote a play for him. The play was *The Servant of Two Masters*, and its success renewed his passion for comedy (Goldoni *Memoirs* 238). The success of this

play led to another commission from Sacchi and a strange visitor two years later.

Cesare D'arbes believed that the best way to gain fame as an actor was to have Carlo Goldoni write a play with a part specifically written for him. He presented himself to Carlo, saying, that he must have a comedy written by the great Carlo Goldoni and he would not accept no for an answer. He then left several golden ducats and exited without giving Goldoni a chance to decline (*Goldoni Memoirs* 245-246).

Goldoni wrote him a comedy, and delivered it to Venice himself. Upon arriving at the theater he was introduced to the company manager Medebac. He stayed for a few days watching the company perform some of his earlier plays and was asked to become the company's permanent playwright (Holme 94). In September of seventeen-forty-six Goldoni signed a contract which bound him exclusively for the first time in his life to the world of theatre. He was to join the troupe on tour at Mantua in April of the following year and then return with them to Venice (*Goldoni Memoirs* 251).

The Medebac company was housed at the Sant'Angelo theatre in Venice. Goldoni rented an apartment in nearby Calle San Giovanni for himself, his wife, and mother. Goldoni's new contract required him to provide eight new plays a year, adapt several old ones, write occasional pieces of poetry, provide sonnets for the end of performances, and attend all rehearsals to supervise the acting (Kennard 132).

The Medebac troupe was very intelligent and had the highest quality of actors at that time. They were largely related and subsequently a very tight-knit group. Once Goldoni was assimilated into this group they were very willing to let him lead and to take his direction. For the first time in his experience the actors weren't jealous of one another

and didn't clamor for better parts. Without such a willing group of actors Goldoni may have never succeeded with his new brand of theatre. He failed a lot, but this learning period was to be invaluable to him later in his career (Kennard 134), and the company had faith that he would work his way through it.

The first plays Goldoni wrote in Venice received little attention, but they were good enough to keep him going. It was only after he had gained recognition from audiences that the critics deigned to acknowledge him with a pamphlet that applauded some aspects of his plays but viciously attacked some of his more realistic representations of life in those times as “too true and pungent for exhibition” in the gentle and civilized world of Venice (Kennard 137-138). How dare he accurately describe the lives of those people who live in the country?

Instead of responding to this, Goldoni continued to work and tried to prove himself through merit, not mudslinging. Goldoni would have us believe that he was being the honorable Venetian, but instead of being a pamphleteer he chose less obvious forms of mudslinging, such as writing a play that was similar to, but better than, a rival's play. This began his feud with his first major opponent, Pietro Chiari, now known mostly for being a rival to Goldoni (Kennard 139). In comparison to the less learned Goldoni, Chiari was a man of extensive reading, and was believed to be a wonderful critic. This caused many to accept the judgments he passed on Goldoni's plays, but Chiari was also a great plagiarist.

Two camps were formed, the Goldoni and anti-Goldoni camps. The anti-Goldoni people, who were led by Chiari, were not necessarily pro Chiari. They were the literati

who did not like the new form Goldoni was taking, members of other theaters, the classicists or those who wished to have the success that Goldoni was achieving (Kennard 140). Many at this time were starting to rally for change but none of them knew exactly where they were trying to go (Kennard 141). These men of letters praised one another but discouraged outsiders. A few years later when the real scholars looked into the work of Chiari, they discovered his plagiarism, and his reputation crumbled. But for two years he stood as the champion of conservatism against the upstart lawyer Goldoni (Kennard 142).

When Goldoni responded to them at all it was only to defend his actors. No, instead of the erudite, it was the groundlings whom Goldoni tried to please (Kennard 143). At the end of the seventeen-fifty fall season (Goldoni *Holiday Trilogy* 301) Goldoni's theater was suffering hardship. Wanting to see his actors prosper, he announced that he would write sixteen plays for the upcoming season, twice as many as usual. At the cost of his health, Goldoni succeeded this extraordinary feat and his supporters grew (Kennard 146-147). Significantly, only one of the sixteen plays was considered a failure – *The Coffee House* (Goldoni *Memoirs* 274). This proliferation is exemplary of Goldoni's career as various sources number his works around three hundred.

Unfortunately for Goldoni, Medebac paid him no extra money for writing the extra plays, but enjoyed large profits. This and other maltreatment led to Goldoni creating a very specific contract with his next employers, the brothers Antonio and Francesco Vendramin, the owners and managers of the theater San Luca. The contract



stated the exact amount of money promised as well as the amount of work to be done with conditions and rewards (Kennard 153). While the change may have seemed economically beneficial to Goldoni, it turned out to be disastrous to his style of theatre. The new theater was much bigger than his previous one, and therefore the setting was not as intimate as was required for his style. Furthermore, the new actors were not bound together with strong family ties and bickering and jealousy once again became part of his business life. They also were not as quick to accept his new ideas. Goldoni wasn't allowed a say in any important decision, including which actors to bring into the company (Kennard 155). It was apparent to Goldoni that he did not have the right actors. They were as unprepared for Goldoni's methods as the space was for his plays. To make up for it he was forced to write plays in the old style in order to keep the audiences happy (Kennard 157). His first two plays with the company were flops.

Money became really tight for Goldoni and his family when he assumed care for his brother's children, but thanks to his strict contract he was at a static salary and restricted from working for anyone else without permission. Things became worse for Goldoni before they got better, notably his great failure *Il Vecchio Bizarro*. He wondered that the play even made it to the stage, and when the curtain was lowered there were nothing but boos and hisses to be heard. Afterward Goldoni attended the Ridotto in mask and listened to everyone rip his play apart "Goldoni is done," said some, "Goldoni has emptied his bag" said others (Goldoni *Memoirs* 308). He returned home and set to work on a play that would prove his critics wrong. In the new play his characters go to the Ridotto and repeat all the nasty things he had heard and lampoon them. The audience

laughed and he was redeemed.

Why did *Il Vecchio Bizarro* fail? What was so great a crime committed by Carlo that the audience would react in such a manner? The problem was that in Italian tradition it was always a young man who played the role of the lover, a young and handsome man, and the older men were never regarded with sympathy and were always looked upon as lecherous or dumb when they attempted to seduce younger women. They were never treated as a protagonistic lover. *Il Vecchio Bizarro* violated this tradition (Kennard 179). How dare he put on stage a gentleman of wit and pleasant manners who was turning grey while at heart remained youthful?

Through all his success his critics never ceased harassing him and it only got worse with his new failures. His biggest critic was Count Carlo Gozzi. The two were opposites in almost every single way, Goldoni represented the future and Gozzi the past. Some conflict between them was inevitable. Gozzi was tall skinny and sour looking. Goldoni was short tubby and friendly. Goldoni was raised with constant attention and care and Gozzi was “raised by servants in a run down castle” (Kennard 187). Goldoni's family worked hard to earn money that would provide him with the best education and entertainments. Gozzi had a family that struggled to find enough money to serve their own interests. Goldoni was pleasant at social intercourse with a sweet nature while Gozzi was ill tempered. Gozzi had a large amount of book learning and championed correctness, purity and Italianism against the novelty of Goldoni's reform. It is almost as if Gozzi lived a century too late. The Count lived long enough to sign his name as *Citoyen* and was a protester even on his death bed against the new order of philosophy

that was destroying the old order of things (Kennard 189).

Kennard has a very small opinion of Carlo Gozzi, but Gozzi is important in his own right. Gozzi wrote many pamphlets and reviews decrying the works of Goldoni. He used his position as Count and independent income from rents to attack the fact that Goldoni was forced to accept money for his art. His attacks even shifted from art to attacks on the character of Goldoni. Eventually Gozzi began to write and produce his *fiabe*, fairy-tales, that were the antithesis to Goldoni's reform. Some say that it was Gozzi who ran Goldoni out of town with his attacks, but Goldoni retained many supporters when he left, supporters who were in much higher circles than Gozzi. Kennard believes that Goldoni would not run at the first sign of adversity (193). I think that Gozzi certainly helped him make his decision when the time came, but Carlo Goldoni was already unhappy in his situation regardless of the actions of Gozzi. Goldoni was always more concerned with pleasing the audience than with pleasing his detractors, and the audience began to tire of his style after so many years.

In 1756 Goldoni received an invitation from the Tordinona theater of Rome to write plays for them and oversee their production for two years (Goldoni *Memoirs* 321). During that time he wrote his famous Holiday Trilogy about some well-to-do Venetians who followed a tradition of taking holiday into the country each year. In Rome the novelty of his theatrical reform became evident to Goldoni. The players were not suited, nor well disposed, to his new style of comedy. Furthering his despair was the fact that the female parts in this area were legally restricted to being played by males (Holme 131). Goldoni says of them in his memoirs, "Good Heavens! What extravagant

declamation! What awkward gestures! No truth, no intelligence.” After talking to the actors about it he was rebuffed by the speaker for the group who said, “every one has his manner, sir, and this happens to be ours” (328). In the end he shortened his play so he didn't have to bear the pain of watching it all.

Thereafter he gave the audience what they wanted, farce, masks, and crudeness. He ended up working mostly on sketches and musical interludes (*Goldoni Memoirs* 330). His growth as a playwright was stunted in Rome and his whole experience would have been a loss if it wasn't for the other theater in Rome, Capranica. The company at the Capranica had been performing his works for years, and he often went to that theater to keep his spirit up (*Goldoni Memoirs* 331).

When Goldoni returned to Venice in 1758 Vendramin was upset because the plays he had left behind had done badly (Holme 133). Goldoni redeemed himself by producing almost nothing but masterpieces for the next four years. Even with this new success he was unhappy with his situation and spent his last two years in Venice negotiating with the Comedie Italienne in Paris. Some of his manuscripts had been well received, and when they offered a engagement of two years with a great salary Goldoni accepted it (*Goldoni Memoirs* 340). He did not make a hasty decision; it was a well thought out choice. Although, perhaps not well thought out enough. Goldoni didn't have a great grasp on the language and didn't understand the culture he was entering. The methods he relied on for writing scripts in Venice would not work in Paris.

In his memoirs Goldoni wrote that he only planned to go to Paris for two years, but in his personal letters and actions however, it appears that he knew he would never

return. He arranged for his brother to be well taken care of and transferred some estates to him, secured a position for his niece in a convent, took his nephew to Paris with the intention of securing him employment and he arranged for his friends to supervise his affairs and publish his plays in his absence (Kennard 197-198).

Kennard also proposes another reason why he never planned to return to Venice. Without knowing how Goldoni managed to convince Vendramin to allow him to travel to Paris, especially with the presence of many letters to Goldoni and others stating his opposition to the plan, Kennard perceives that hard times were awaiting Goldoni if he were ever to return to Venice (198).

Goldoni planned to depart in April seventeen-sixty-one (Goldoni *Memoirs* 342) and spent his last weeks preparing to say goodbye. The hardest thing for him to do was leave his audience and his friends. His final goodbye reads as if he knew he would never return, like a man pleading for his audience to understand his motives:

That I could forget this country! This my beloved native land! Forget my patrons, my good friends! This is not the first time that I have gone away, and wherever I have been, I have always carried the name of Venice engraved on my heart. I have always remembered the favor and kindness I received; I have always longed to return, and whenever I did come back it was with the greatest joy. Every comparison I have been able to make has shown me my country more beautiful, more magnificent, more worthy of respect; whenever I came back I discovered new beauty; so will it be this time too, if god grants that I come back. I confess and swear on my honor that I leave with a broken heart, and that no attraction, no pleasure, no fortune I may meet, will compensate the grief of being away from those I love. Do not deprive me of your affection, my dear friends; may heaven bless you; I say so with all my heart. (Kennard 199)

Awaiting Goldoni in Paris was a company of second rate comedians and a theater of less than second rank (Kennard 200-201). The rundown Comedie Italienne was on its

last legs and had been forced to merge with the Opera Comique by the time he arrived in August (Holme 162). The actors had all the bad habits that he had tried to eradicate from the Italian stage. Plus, by the time he arrived, Italian plays were no longer in favor. After only a few performances he realized that there was not much promise for him in Paris. His company was performing to an empty house and the Opera's houses were always full (Kennard 207).

Goldoni believed that after he reformed the actors the way he had in Italy, the audience would come back to them (Goldoni *Memoirs* 352). First however, he requested four months to study his actors so he could create characters specifically for them, and to gauge the public taste (Holme 164). His study revealed that his actors were lazy and could not memorize his lines. He was forced to make extensive cuts to his plays and rely on the actors methods of improvisation that he had put behind him in Italy (Kennard 209).

When they finally tried to perform one of his scripted plays it was a failure and closed in four nights (Holme 164). In order to be successful he was forced to betray all of his previous theories and he had lost the pride and joy he had for his work. He confessed, "I never went to see my own plays, I was fond of good comedies, and went to the theatre Francaise" (Goldoni *Memoirs* 356).

In Venice Goldoni knew the language and mannerisms of the people. He was able to imitate them and ridicule them with understanding, but in Paris he was at a loss. He depended on the actors to accurately translate his words and ideas, and they were not faithful to his script (Kennard 219). Goldoni was not their master, instead he worked for them, and they flattered the public by giving them exactly what they wanted. He

lamented in a letter to a friend “so few people understand me” (Kennard 220).

His second year in Paris was better. His play *Les Amours D'arlequin et de Camille* was so well received that he turned it into a trilogy, with each one receiving more praise. Yet even in those good days, he wrote to a friend “If I could, I would leave at once for Italy. Not because I dislike Paris but because I do not feel at home here. And I realize how difficult it is to satisfy when one is not understood” (Kennard 223).

Goldoni finished his contract at the Comedie Italienne in 1764 (Holme 166) and he was able to obtain a place teaching Italian to Princess Adelaide (Goldoni *Memoirs* 366-367), which eventually led to a pension (Kennard 232). One day, for no apparent reason he was nearly blinded. Suddenly he felt as if a dark veil surrounded him and at the time he wrote “My poor eyes are in a sad condition...i swear on my honor very sad...on account of having spent over my inkstand whole days and whole nights...and my eyesight is all my capital...if I lose it, I lose all my earnings” (Kennard 225). It was a few days before he recovered the complete use of his right eye. The left was blinded forever (Goldoni *Memoirs* 368-369).

Teaching at court paid two-thirds of what he made as a full time playwright and, even though he still sent plays to Vendramin, funds were low (Kennard 228). Goldoni considered ceasing to write for the theatre at all. He detested still being bound by Vendramin “by a hateful, unendurable bond” and claimed he would do anything else rather than go back to work for Vendramin again (Kennard 229). Yet in a letter to Vendramin he wrote, “If I stay in Paris I will send plays to none but you, and if I return to Venice I will serve no one but you... it is my duty” (Kennard 232). Even though he

continued to write, six of his plays from 1780 were never performed. The Theatre Italienne closed and the actors returned to Italy (Kennard 233). Goldoni did not. He and Nicoletta remained in France, finally able to spend time together without the theatre, a wayward brother, or any number of fans and guests getting in the way. Perhaps people passed all around them, or stood behind him in a line at the market, and never knew that they were standing next to “the greatest comic playwright Italy had ever seen” (Holme 9). Goldoni didn't mind, by now his reformation was done, he had nothing else he needed to accomplish. He was getting old, and his memory was fading.

Of course true to Goldonian form the theatre lured him one last time. While never fully grasping the French language, he had spent enough time in Paris to undertake his first and only play written, not translated, in French. *Bourru Bienfaisant* was a success (Kennard 234). When the play was shown for the first time he watched, as he usually did, from the wings. He was approached by M. Dauberval who told him that it was time to exhibit himself for the audience and, although he protested, he was dragged onto the stage. This was not what a Venetian man was accustomed to. He didn't know what to do, and so he crossed the stage to reach his coach waiting on the other side while the audience cheered (Goldoni *Memoirs* 391).

This event was followed by one last what could have been. The Italian Opera traveled to France and Goldoni waited for them to approach him. They didn't. Without his guidance they failed to understand how to perform in Paris. Goldoni claims that he could have saved them if he hadn't been so foolish in the beginning, “I should have labored for the honor of the thing, had they known how to go to work with me; I should



have been high priced had they haggled with me; but my labors would have indemnified them” (Goldoni *Memoirs* 412). The letters and poems of longing he wrote during this time reveal that his love for Venice and her people has not diminished. He helped and gave advice to any Italian who crossed his path, as if they were a brother (Kennard 239).

In his memoirs Carlo gives us a peek at what his final days were like. No longer required to attend rehearsals, or write vigorously in order to fulfill a quota, he only wrote when he pleased. He would rise at nine o'clock, breakfast on a cup of chocolate, write until midday, go for a walk, and after dinner he might go out to the theater or a small party until nine o'clock in the evening. Always returning before ten o'clock. He never escaped his sweet tooth and ate two or three small cakes with a glass of wine and water for supper. He would then converse with his wife until midnight when he would fall asleep (426). He was the type of man who always accepted invitations to lunch, avoided those to dinner, and never refused a game of cards (Holme 178).

In 1787 he finished his memoirs. After which few events were recorded about his last years. He did some small work, translated a few books, while dedicating the entire proceeds to those less fortunate around him. Even in the days when every coin made a difference to his well being he was looking out for the marginalized. He died a quiet death a few years later, at six o'clock in the evening, February 6, 1793 at the age of 86, poor and broken (Kennard 241). Nicoletta, left alone in a land where she didn't know the language, old, and frail, lived without her Carlo for two years before dying herself (Holme 188).

Goldoni's thoughts on the eve of, and subsequent, revolution were left unrecorded.

Somehow he, a man who was closely associated with court, escaped the persecution suffered by even the lowliest members. Many others who had a pension from the royal government, less attached than Goldoni, were dragged into prison and even put to death. He died penniless after all pensions were suspended, but other than that he was left alone. The French national convention even restored his lost pension, too late unfortunately; they acted the day after he died, but they did make sure it went to his wife and she was well taken care of. They even decreed a presentation of one of his plays be given as a memorial service, “quite an honor for a foreign author” (Kennard 242). Perhaps they honored him for his good nature, always giving time and good words even to those people most considered low. Maybe those who revolted and then ruled may have protected him and honored him for his intellect and kindness, or perhaps they saw in his writings the ideals that they had hoped to achieve and recognized him for that.

CHAPTER IV  
THE LIFE OF CARLO GOZZI

According to DiGaetani, Carlo Gozzi was the most successful playwright of the 18th century. Yet in his book, he also asserts that prior to his work there existed no biography for Carlo Gozzi, not even in Italian (1). In fact, other than his work the primary source for information on the life of Carlo Gozzi comes from the memoirs he left behind. According to Symonds in the preface to his translation those memoirs, copies were very difficult to find (I: vi-vii). It is therefore interesting to consider the name Carlo Gozzi chose for his memoirs, *Memorie Inutili*, or *Useless Memoirs*. Why would someone DiGaetani describes as the most successful playwright of the 18th century call his own memoirs as useless? Perhaps it was because he considered himself unlucky and was known to his friends as being very pessimistic (DiGaetani 90-91). It may be a clue revealing his strange sense of humor or could it be that by the time he wrote his memoirs Gozzi had realized his attempts to stem the growing social changes evident in his country were ineffectual. Symonds believes that it was partly a slap in the face of Gozzi's readers as, "he tells them candidly in one of his prefaces that he considers the moral reflections with which the book is filled to be both sound and valuable, but the default science of the age is certain to render them to no effect" (*Useless* I: 20). Either way, it is evident that Gozzi did not always believe his writings to be useless.

Before the birth of Carlo the name Gozzi was already listed in the *Libro D'argento, The Book of Silver*. This was one of two books that listed the aristocracy of

the region. The other was the *Libro d'Oro*, or *The Book of Gold*. According to DiGaetani these two books were more important than the Bible, or even Dante's Divine Comedy in eighteenth century Venice (10).

The Gozzi family owned the Palazzo in Venice as well as an estate in Friuli, one of the most fertile parts of the Venetian empire. The family estate contained some 600 acres which formed their claim to aristocracy (DiGaetani 12). It was this seemingly wealthy and exotic situation into which Carlo Gozzi entered the world. He was born in December of seventeen-twenty, the sixth of eleven children, and the third son. As a result he was down in the line of succession and did not receive the same dotage from his mother as Goldoni did from his. To add to his dissatisfaction, while the Gozzi family had a title, they did not have the money to adequately represent their position in society (DiGaetani 13). Furthermore being raised in Friuli, 5 miles from the town of Pordenone, the Gozzi family was living on mostly farmland and isolated more than 150 miles from Venice (DiGaetani 15). In addition, whenever a member of the family made a trip into Venice, they were forced to stay in an inn because they rented their Palazzo in order to provide income for the family. The farms provided for their basic needs, but not much more. The Gozzi estate housed eleven children, parents, servants and tutors. Subsequently the quarters were often cramped (DiGaetani 15). Gozzi started life with a ready reason for resentment toward the lower classes, and a desire to claim social status.

Carlo Gozzi's father had much in common with the father of Carlo Goldoni. From his father Gozzi inherited a finely tuned sense of humor, he described his father as the type of man who laughed at childish jokes. Unfortunately, Jacopo was also very poor at

managing the business side of his estates and the living conditions of the family became more and more desperate as time went on.

Little is known about the exact nature of Carlo's relationship with his mother, Angela Tiepolo Gozzi, during these times but it is evident that during his teenage years whatever relationship they had turned sour. Her family was listed in the *Book of Gold* and was a very famous family in the history of Venice. She married beneath herself, and she constantly tried to live above the means of the family (DiGaetani 16).

The only child she appeared to have a good relationship with was the oldest brother, and first born, Gasparo. Carlo resented his mother's preferential treatment of Gasparo, but he loved his father dearly. It is unsurprising that much of his work shows father figures to be very loving while at odds with neurotic and monstrous mothers (DiGaetani 17).

Like Goldoni, Carlo and his siblings often took part in amateur theatricals. The family maintained a small theater on their estates and while they could not afford to pay for traveling professional troops (which interestingly enough the Goldoni family was able to do, even though they were considered lower-class) the children taught themselves to write, rehearse and act in plays, as well as build the sets, choose the costumes and even administer makeup. All the children participated in these theatricals but Carlo was pointed out as a very talented mimic (DiGaetani 18). He and his sister would often parody married couples in their village, and even their own parents, down to their exact mannerisms in such a way that garnered lots of laughter and applause from their audience (Gozzi *Useless I*: 201).

As further evidence of their poverty, the family was unable to afford to give the third son the fine education provided the first two. Therefore, while his older brothers were sent off to school, Carlo was educated locally. Many of his tutors were Catholic priests whom he came to despise. In his memoirs he states that many of them earned of their dismissal through “impertinent behavior and intrigues with the serving-maids” (I: 191) when they should have been teaching him the classics.

He was eventually sent to an academy to study with about twenty four other students, some of whom who were of noble birth, and some of whom were not (Gozzi *Useless* I: 193). As a result, he struggled with more difficult texts and came to bitterly resent the better education provided Gasparo (DiGaetani 19). Gozzi's education was saved thanks to the presence of a neighbor who acted as a librarian for another nearby family. It was in that library that Gozzi discovered the classical Italian authors and it was their Tuscan style that he later praised and tried to imitate.

Even as Gozzi struggled to teach himself and impress his parents, he grew more distant from them. Perhaps as a result of his resentment, he pushed himself even harder and quickly established himself as the most literary of the children, both in reading and writing (DiGaetani 20). At the age of nine Gozzi wrote his first sonnet. By his teens he was reading the classics and critically discussing them with his father and tutors (Gozzi *Useless* I: 205). Unlike the first literary work attributed to Goldoni, Gozzi's first work survives. Gozzi remained proud of that sonnet throughout his life, and even printed it among his mature works (DiGaetani 20).

Gozzi quickly worked his way through the library studying Latin, Spanish, and

French. In addition to writing his own poems and plays he even attempted to translate the works of others into Italian, already beginning to believe in its superiority. One of his translations was a French play by Marivaux, entitled *Pharsamond*. Marivaux became an inspiration for Gozzi. Marivaux was born into a impoverished minor nobility in the provinces of France, and he eventually moved to Paris where he achieved fame as a playwright. In Marivaux Gozzi saw a path to success that he himself could follow (DiGaetani 22).

When Carlo was eighteen, and Gasparo twenty-five, Gasparo married Luigia Bergalli. A woman ten years his senior. They went on to produce a sizable family which put additional strain on the Gozzi estate. Shortly thereafter their father, Jacobo, suffered a stroke which left him almost totally paralyzed for the remaining seven years of his life. Gasparo did not want the responsibility of caring for the financial affairs of the family and as a result Gozzi's mother and his sister-in-law began to manage the affairs. This lack of duty combined with the increasing size of the family furthered his resentment towards Gasparo (DiGaetani 25).

Gozzi had little money and no career but yearned to escape his overcrowded family. Thanks to his noble status Gozzi had the right to buy an officers commission in the Venetian army or navy. He joined the navy, spending three years in that service, and quickly discovered that most of his comrades were mercenaries and not even Italian, let alone Venetian. As a result Gozzi had difficulty finding a friend that shared his love for Italian literature and poetry (DiGaetani 27-28). In his memoirs Gozzi states that he used his time in the military to study the manners of his comrades (*Useless* I: 216). This

enabled him later in life to have a better understanding of the different types of human frailty, which he was able to play upon in his writings.

Some of the first evidence of Carlo Gozzi's enormous pride can be seen during his time in the Navy. His position as an officer required that he keep at least one servant and, even though he could not afford one, he did so and left the Navy in debt (DiGaetani 34).

During that time Gozzi befriended another officer, Innocenzo Massimo from Padua. The two remained friends for life. Gozzi writes in his memoirs that, "Neither time, nor distance, nor even occasional rudeness, interrupted the rare friendships which I contracted for life, and which are still as firm as ever" (*Useless* II: 8).

Also during his service Gozzi overcame his previous opinion of priests and became highly influenced by religion and morality, while simultaneously gaining a disdain of science and mathematics. Later in life he would connect science and math to the horrors of war and the new enlightenment, which were a heresy against the Church. An event evident of Gozzi's religiosity occurred when he contracted a very bad fever, one that was called terminal, and called a confessor to make his peace with god. His fellow officers, who did not believe such things, found his request comical (DiGaetani 35).

Gozzi was taught mathematics because it was of concern for fortifications and defenses. In his memoirs he talks about the importance of mathematics in creating defenses, but also remembers all of the well-built fortifications that were destroyed by mathematics and other sciences. He weighs the blessings with the curses of science and concludes that the harm it has done far exceeds the good, and even though he enjoys having a watch to look at so that he may keep his appointments, he feels that moral



philosophy is of more importance to the human race than mechanical inventions (*Useless* I: 226-7). In his memoirs Gozzi spoke out against those he referred to as the freethinkers:

Although we may not be able to define with certainty what we are, we know at any rate beyond all contradiction what we are not. Let the freethinking pigs and hens rout in their mud and scratch in their midden; let us laugh and quiz them, or weep and pity them; but let us hold fast to the beliefs transmitted to us by an august line of philosophers, far wiser, far more worthy of attention, than these sages of the muck and dungheap. The modern caprice of turning all things topsy-turvy, which makes Epicure an honest man, Seneca an impostor; which holds up Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius, Mirabeau, etc., to our veneration, while it pours contempt upon the fathers of the Church; this and all the other impious doctrines scattered broadcast in our century by sensual fanatics, more fit for the madhouse than the university, have no fascination for my mind. I contemplate the disastrous influence exercised by atheism over whole nations. This confirms me still more in the faith of my forefathers. When I think of those fanatics, the sages of the muck and midden, when I think of mankind deceived by them, I repeat in their behoof the sacred words of Christ upon the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (*Useless* II: 8-9)

In 1742 Gozzi joined some fellow soldiers in an amateur theatrical group. He would write plays on local themes, but was best known for his comedic acting and ability to improvise his lines to fit each particular dramatic situation (DiGaetani 38-9). Back home acting was not considered a profession appropriate for a young nobleman, but in the navy Gozzi learned the pleasure associated with success in theater. He was good enough that during the carnival season the commander relieved him of all of his military duties so he could focus his time and energy to the theater (Gozzi, *Useless* I: 251). Gozzi knew that there was no social distinction to be gained by acting but, as a man of letters, he could gain status by writing about theatre and eventually become a playwright. This was a worthy profession for a Count.

Gozzi also participated in many pranks along with his comrades. Pranks that could have gotten him in a lot of trouble, and did put him in many dangerous situations. He did the usual gambling, entertaining, and fighting, but on occasion he and a number of the other soldiers would dress up in disguises in order to frighten townspeople. They would haunt the town while knocking on doors and howling like banshees, set horses free to stampede through town and cause the townspeople to think they were being invaded (Gozzi *Useless* I: 254). He claims that he always managed to avoid discovery and therefore punishment, but events like this do show that he and other soldiers felt themselves to be above the common townsfolk.

Gozzi and Innocenzo left the military together in October of seventeen-forty-four. They had heard of the wonders awaiting them in Venice and so the two struck out for the Gozzi family home. Gozzi was despaired to discover that the home was not as he remembered it. It was run down and it leaked. Not to be dissuaded from their revelry, Gozzi borrowed some money from Innocenzo and the two celebrated their new found freedom on the town (DiGaetani 44-6).

Although he would eventually pay his debts occurred to this point, Gozzi would remain in debt for more than twenty years. Throughout his life the Gozzi Palazzo was sold off little by little and rented out in order for him to survive. So much so that, at one point in time, Gozzi had only a tiny suite on a high floor to himself (DiGaetani 47).

Gozzi fell in love with the city, more so than Innocenzo who longed for his native Padua. Therefore, while Innocenzo returned home, Gozzi stayed to enjoy the many theaters, casinos, antique stores, bookstores, fine restaurants and other various avenues of

spending money and obtaining debt. Their friendship was never damaged by Carlo's debts, and more than 60 letters of personal correspondence between the two can be found in the archives of the Correr library in Venice (DiGaetani 54).

Gasparo arrived in Venice shortly thereafter to reveal that while their father still lived, he was also speechless. He also informed Carlo that two of their sisters were married and 10,000 ducats had been given for their dowry. As a result, much of the estate had been sold and the family had accumulated an additional 2,000 ducats of debt. They were also being sued for portions of the dowry remaining unreceived (*Useless* I: 282-83).

Gozzi felt powerless to rectify the situation, and thought that he would have little left but debt to inherit when his time finally came, and so he returned to Friuli to better understand the situation (DiGaetani 55). In his memoirs Gozzi relates a very touching story about the first time he'd seen his father since before he entered the Navy. It is clear that the two were very close. He also provides the story of seeing his mother. The two stories side-by-side clearly reveal their relationship (*Useless* I: 285-86). This, compared with some of his later plays that detail dominating women who lead single households into chaos and financial bankruptcy, make it clear that he resented the two women running the family household. Gozzi also learned that his younger brother had been sent off to school. He was the only one tutored at home and denied a good education (DiGaetani 57).

Unable to continue to watch the two women mismanage the affairs of his family, Gozzi returned to Venice determined to survive on his talents as a writer and remain there indefinitely. The best course of action for his family was to remain in the country where

his father was afforded better care, but his mother wanted to return and live the lavish lifestyle offered in Venice and would sell off the family house in order to pay for it. When a potential buyer was found, Gozzi refused to agree to the sale (DiGaetani 58-9). This and the chaos that followed his father's death resulted in a family feud full of litigation that would last 18 years and cause much embarrassment to the family. Carlo had to take out another loan in order to keep his father from being buried in an unmarked grave (DiGaetani 64). A very detailed account of the ensuing family feud can be found in the last hundred pages of the first volume of Carlo Gozzi's memoirs.

Gasparo also began his own literary career, which furthered Carlo's resentment towards him (DiGaetani 60). They each desired to earn money to make their keep through a literary career, but in order to be respectable noblemen it could not seem like they were making a living off their writing, this would be beneath them. They were forced to make it appear that they wrote for pleasure and did not need the money.

As an aristocrat, Gozzi viewed himself as above the idea of finding a patron as other writers of the time did. He approached other nobleman as equals rather than as a beggar looking for money. He also did not want to pander to the wealthy, which he believed Goldoni did by penning birthday poems and wedding verses. Therefore he rejected all of those requests. He viewed authors, such as Goldoni, who were able to pump out script after and script and poem after poem as people who disregarded the art and only wrote drivel (DiGaetani 78-9).

Instead of patrons, Gozzi sought out literary friends. He and a few other authors founded the Testicular Academy, also translated as The Big Balled Academy, in

seventeen-forty-seven. In his introduction to Gozzi's memoirs Symonds states that not only did they protest the “perversion of taste, low domestic arguments and clumsy realism”, and that they were “particularly sensitive, more ever, on the point of language, diction, style” (I: 88). Their primary objective, according to Symonds, was to maintain standards of style, with the secondary objective of opposing theatrical innovations (I: 89).

Carlo and Gasparo were able to set aside family matters and be members of this group together, and even though they often joked, the club was very serious about their own literary works. One of their primary concerns was to defend the use of the Tuscan form of Italian. They felt that the language was being attacked by writers, such as Carlo Goldoni, who wrote in dialect, and others who wrote in French. They were very conservative, very anti-change and very anti-enlightenment (DiGaetani 84).

Gozzi's faith and beliefs often set him in opposition with most of the intellectuals of his time. While the club was a place where he could gather with people who thought the same as he did in literary matters, he was often unable to see eye to eye with his peers as far as religion was concerned. However, they still supported one another and the club quickly became famous for denouncing contemporary writers. Goldoni defended himself against the group in writing with a play called *The Financial Poet* that satirized the Testicular Academy while also referencing a family that was suing one another.

Over the following years the literary feud between Gozzi and Goldoni became more heated, and according to legend they met each other for the first time at the Colombani bookstore. It was there that Goldoni issued his challenge to Gozzi, telling him that he took personal offense at the attacks by Gozzi and, if he didn't like his plays,

let him try and write a better one so the audiences could decide who was right (DiGaetani 93). In his memoirs Gozzi states that not only did Goldoni challenge him to produce a comedy, but that he also called him a verbose word monger and kept asserting that the enormous crowds which flocked to enjoy his plays constituted a proof of their essential merit. It was one thing, Goldoni said, “to write subtle verbal criticism and quite another to compose dramas that would fill a public theater with enthusiastic audiences.” Gozzi responded that that proved nothing and he could fill a theater with even the most puerile of works (*Useless II*: 128-29). In 1760 Gozzi published the first of his ten fairy tales (DiGaetani 93).

The first play represented a large shift in strategy for Gozzi, who had previously only written parodies of Goldoni's work, and had primarily been a critic rather than a playwright. Gozzi detested Goldoni's work, believing that playwrights such as he and Chiari were ruining Italian theater, and he reveled in the struggle of being a noble defender of what he believed was right (DiGaetani 96).

For his first *fiaba*, or fairytale, Gozzi chose a well-known work known called *The Love of Three Oranges*. He wrote this play using all of the old traditions of *Commedia dell'Arte*, a direct affront at the works of Goldoni. Gozzi donated this play and the rest of his fairy tales to the troupe of Antonio Sacchi (DiGaetani 98). By doing this not only did Gozzi help save a well-known and established *Commedia* company, *Commedia* being a tradition that he felt deserved to be preserved as a part of the culture and heritage of Italy and Venice, but he was also able to take another jab at Goldoni by making it clear that he was above being paid for his art. In his memoirs Gozzi gives further explanation of why

his works were not sold:

My writings were always marked by freedom, boldness, pungency, and satire upon public manners ; at the same time, moral and playful in expression. Being unpaid, they gained the advantage of a certain decent independence, which secured for them toleration, appreciation, and applause on their own merits. Had I been paid for them, they would have lost their prestige; my antagonists might have stigmatized them as a parcel of insufferable mercenary calumnies, and I should have been exposed to universal odium. In addition to this : there is no degradation for men of letters in Italy worse than that of writing for hire in the employ of publishers or of our wretched comedians. (*Useless II: 4*)

Gozzi provides many examples of trying to earn money through other means other than writing in his memoirs. In addition to revealing that Gozzi would go through extreme pains to survive without being paid for his plays, the stories also reveal that he showed no sympathy for the poor and poverty stricken. Like many other moralists of the time he believed that prostitution and other vice was done because people were immoral, not because they had no other recourse (DiGaetani 136).

In his memoirs Gozzi claimed that from early childhood he had always been a silent observer of men and things (I: 191). By working with the Sacchi troupe for most of his career, Gozzi was able to observe and understand the skills each actor possessed and write roles specifically for them (DiGaetani 111).

One of the primary differences between Commedia dell'Arte and the comedies of Goldoni was in the way the plays treated the upper class. In Commedia, upper-class characters such as il Dottore, il Capitano, and Pantalone were treated as buffoons, but in a very comedic, unrealistic, way. The characters were stock characters and expected to act according to that manner. Goldoni, on the other hand, presented realistic upper-class characters whom he presented as buffoons. It was this type of treatment that drove Gozzi

to write his *Fiabe*.

By the time Gozzi wrote *The Love of Three Oranges*, audiences had become bored by the overused routines and situations of Commedia dell'Arte, one reason they loved the novelty of Goldoni. Gozzi felt that his play, which kept the masks but altered some of the regular forms of Commedia, was successful because:

It was novel and unexpected, the surprise created by a fairy-tale adapted to the drama, seasoned with the trenchant parodies of both Chiari's and Goldoni's plays, and not without devoid of moral allegory created such a sudden and noisy revolution of taste that these poets saw in it the sentence of their doom (*Useless II*: 129-30)

With the success of *The Love of Three Oranges* Gozzi discovered that use might be made of fairy tales, “not only for maintaining the impromptu style Italian comedy, and amusing the public with piquant novelties. But also for conveying moral lessons in the form of allegory” (*Useless I*: 147).

The first of Gozzi's plays, mostly written in the old-style scenario tradition of Commedia dell'Arte, was also the most incomplete (DiGaetani 111). *Oranges* left plenty of room for the famed improvisation of the Sacchi troupe. What separated it from other Commedia works was the fantasy style that Gozzi used, and the inclusion of myth. The action was less important than the conflict between the good wizard and the evil witch, a battle of the light and good versus the dark and evil. Fairy tales explain the unexplainable. The pathology of fairy tales have shown to be a very important part of the arts and theatre throughout time, and Carlo Gozzi whether he fully realized it or not was able to capitalize on this (DiGaetani 114). Gozzi had previously called for more moral messages in theater and it is no surprise that his fairy tales often take that tone (DiGaetani



112). With *Oranges* Gozzi presented a non-realistic play, with a moral, that complemented the higher classes of society. The play's success generated an interest in seeing more plays that fit that model, and set the stage for the rest of his *Fiabe*.

As Gozzi gained more experience his plays left less room for improvisation, and instead contained carefully crafted comic situations and plot. He would eventually cut opportunities for improvisation from all but the Commedia characters (DiGaetani 113). His second fairytale, *The Raven*, introduced a common fairytale device to his audiences, transformations. Gozzi transformed people into animals and back again in order to put an emphasis on the true nature of man (DiGaetani 118). Gozzi's fairy tales can be seen as a precursor to both the surrealism and Expressionism movements.

In 1762 Gozzi was at the height of his success, not only with big hits, but with Goldoni's departure from Venice he was the only prominent playwright remaining and he oversaw a revival of the Commedia dell'Arte style. Gozzi's plays used two types of characters, just as in Commedia; the nobles and the masks. The noble characters were often involved in near tragic events, while the masks created comedic situations that paralleled the events experienced by the nobles. Gozzi further differentiated between the characters by having the noble characters speak in poetry, while the commoners, the masks, speak in venetian dialect. This was a technique often used by Shakespeare to define class differences (DiGaetani 123).

Gozzi continued to write fairy tales, some achieving more success than others, until his tenth and final, *Zeim King of Genies*, premiered November 25, 1765 (DiGaetani 143). Gozzi had often criticized Goldoni for being too prolific in his writings, saying in

his memoirs that he produced a “diarrhea of dramatic works” (*Useless* II: 111). To Gozzi, each play took some of his genius away, meaning following plays were of lower quality. Having satisfied his literary honor by achieving success, he did not want to continue writing after the audiences had tired of his style. In this way he avoided repeating themes and ideas, which he believed led to the downfall of Goldoni (*Gozzi Useless* II: 155). After the premiere of his final fairytale, Gozzi took a year off and wrote nothing for the theater (DiGaetani 144).

The year off provided Gozzi with time to return to writing solely for literary purposes. He was free of the quarrels between actors as they clamored for the good parts, a relief to battle going on within the company that caused him to leave them for a while (*Useless* II: 166). He contented himself with sitting in a coffee shop and writing the day away. When he was writing Gozzi was able to completely forget about himself and his litigation problems, both with his family and his tenants, and escape from the real world.

When Gozzi returned to the theater world he set his eyes on a new challenge. Gozzi believed in the purism of the Italian language, unlike other writers of the time who found French to be the elite language, and so he set about translating foreign works into Italian. He didn't want to translate the works of France, as he detested the ideas and revolutionary thoughts in those writings, so he began to translate the theater coming out of Spain. He respected Spain for its strong king, the religious inquisition, and the general keeping to the Catholic faith (DiGaetani 154). Gozzi had also heard Sacchi previously describe the wonders he'd seen on stage while touring Spain and found them to be a good inspiration.

After some research Gozzi believed that the Spanish plays would never succeed in Italy unless they were cleverly translated into the language and adapted, not just to the style of theater, but also to fit the actors and actresses of Sacchi's troupe (DiGaetani 155). Because of this, Gozzi's "translations" may just as well be viewed as original works, as they often had little in common with the original (DiGaetani 156).

While many view Gozzi as the savior of Commedia dell'Arte, many purists of Commedia at the time believed he was ruining it by writing out scripts. Despite the success they were experiencing, the actors did not enjoy having their lines written out for them. As a result, many of the actors left Sacchi's troupe to form their own, and even though they did not meet with success, they refused to return (DiGaetani 161). Gozzi again grew weary of the politics and he decided that he would also leave the company. He returned, but only after very publicly refusing their offer to buy his plays and negotiating certain conditions. These conditions included top billing, ensuring that his name would always be closely recognized as a primary reason for the success of the company, but also let the public know that he was an aristocrat, in control, and that he had more power than the company (DiGaetani 161).

Gozzi's complete works were printed in eight volumes. The first printing was for one-thousand copies, quite a large amount in those times. This was an important mark of prestige, marking him as an important author, not only in Venice, but in Italy and throughout Europe as well (DiGaetani 164). The printing cemented Gozzi in history and protected, not only his pride and posterity, but his reputation as well. The eight volumes serve as the historical authority for his works (DiGaetani 165).

I have mentioned little until now of Gozzi's romantic life. In his memoirs he often described being fearful of committing to a serious relationship, perhaps because of the failures of his own familial life. Gozzi stated that, "It seemed to me, in this condition of affairs, best to remain a bachelor and to devote myself to the duties I had undertaken, without ambitious projects and without assuming heavier obligations" (*Useless I*: 371). In the second volume of his memoirs Gozzi discusses three love affairs that he took part in as a youth, how they went awry, and how he repeatedly had to suffer, due to the faithlessness of women. These events may have combined to make him decide that "love was nothing but a politer way of two people obtaining what they secretly wish for" (*Useless II*: 100).

However, he did have one very strong personal relationship that occurred during the period of unrest in Sacchi's company. Gozzi became very close friends with a married actress named Teodora Ricci, even to the point of becoming named godfather to her youngest child (DiGaetani 172). Many times in his memoirs Gozzi denies that there was ever anything more than a platonic relationship between the two, although rumors swirled around Venice suggesting that there was more. DiGaetani believes that Gozzi was very much in love with her, but that he was doubtful of her willingness to be true to him and live without other lovers, as she had been known to have had many of them (172).

During the time that Gozzi was infatuated with Ricci, an Italian politician, named Pietro Antonio Gratarol, developed an infatuation for her as well. Rumors of their relationship quickly spread, he was the secretary to the Venetian senate, and caused a big

scandal (DiGaetani 173-74). Gozzi was caught up in the scandal and volume one of his memoirs was written as a response to an attack from Gratarol after he had been exiled from Venice.

In January of 1777 Gozzi adapted a play that became a satire of the relationship between Ricci and Gratarol, *Droghe d'Amore*. Gozzi claimed it was not his purpose to humiliate Gratarol, but what seems more likely is that Gozzi didn't realize how big his play would become. In his memoirs he even claims that Ricci herself was purposely trying to associate the play with Gratarol, in order to make him mad at Gozzi, as revenge him for staying away from her (*Useless II*: 261-62). The play was so successful that tickets were scalped outside the theater and many patrons were turned away (DiGaetani 176). According to Gozzi it generated so much excitement that people were in line three hours before the performance (*Useless II*: 270). After that season Ricci left Venice as only to return a few years later after failing in Paris. Enough time had passed that she renewed her friendship with Gozzi and all was forgotten (DiGaetani 180).

In seventeen-eighty-three Gozzi officially ended his connection with the Sacchi company, which by then was failing to replace lost talent. It had been more than twenty years since he'd written a non translation play. He was also experiencing great sadness in his personal life as most of his family members had died. He was very nearly alone. Three years later Gasparo died. It was a big blow to Carlo. Of all his siblings he was closest to Gasparo. Their relationship survived all of the family squabbles, all of the resentment, and even the public litigation between family members.

In his letters to his longtime friend, Innocenzo Massimo, Carlo complained of

rheumatism, coughs, colds, and heart murmurs. He also began to experience greater difficulties in his economic life as well. The rents from his real estate holdings, getting older and older, were not keeping pace with the inflation rates of the Venetian economy. He was forced to work. He became an agent and seller of commodities such as lace, cloth, coffee, cocoa, spices, and carriages. The money he made from these endeavors barely supported him (DiGaetani 183).

With money short and health declining, Gozzi never lost any of his passion for the theater. He began to write even more translations which he offered to smaller companies throughout Venice. As his friends were dying around him, Gozzi dedicated himself more fully to his writing. One of the saddest times in his life was the death of Innocenzo in seventeen-eighty-seven (DiGaetani 186).

The next year Gozzi changed printers, as his current printer had only agreed to eight volumes. He changed once again after the ninth volume. Perhaps the volumes were not selling as well because Gozzi was in the decline of his career. Ricci retired shortly thereafter. She declined in favor just as Carlo Gozzi's career was in decline. The taste of modern Venetians had passed them by.

Napoleon's conquering of Venice caused upheaval not only in Gozzi's culture, but in his personal life as well. Still, old and infirm, Gozzi did not cease to write. In 1794 he wrote a critical discussion on modern writers that included an attack on Cesarotti for violating the grammatical rules of the Italian language (DiGaetani 187).

Surrounded by Napoleonic rule, which soon turned into Austrian rule, Gozzi saw the ideas of the enlightenment take hold of his beloved Venice. He also saw the people

become disillusioned by the ideals they had previously embraced. The Austrian rule was oppressive. While he would have been justified in saying “I told you so, I told you so, the French should hold no sway over Venice,” he merely continued to work. His writing began to express an increasingly stronger religious point of view, not surprising coming from a conservative Catholic who was reaching the end of his life.

The agnostic Napoleon oversaw churches being torn down, emptied, or turned into museums. The beautiful paintings were taken from their frames and shipped to Paris. The *bucentoro*, a famous golden boat that symbolized the marriage of Venice to the sea, was burned. All the glorious monuments and great pieces of art were being taken apart and carted away to France. The same France that he had been warning his fellow noblemen about for years. Gozzi foresaw the influences that led to the Revolution in France and eventually led to the desecration of Venice:

Gozzi never believed that Napoleon was a liberator. Instead Gozzi viewed him as an enemy of the good, an opponent to all that was sacred in this world and after. The horrors of the French revolution, especially the guillotining of King Louis XVI and his queen Marie Antoinette, not to mention the thousand of lesser victims of the Reign of Terror, represented what Gozzi believed to be the inevitable results of the radical thinking and writing coming from France during the 18th century. Using his plays as a vehicle, Gozzi had tried to show how these writings of Voltaire (and others), attacking as they did both State and Church, would lead only to chaos. (DiGaetani 190-191)

At the end of his memoirs Gozzi was so saddened by the events that had occurred, felt so futile and useless that he said:

The sweet delusive dream of democracy organized and based on your available foundations - the expectation of a moral impossibility - madmen howl and laugh and dance and weep together. The ululations of the dreamers, yelling out *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, deafened our ears; and those of us who still remained awake were forced to feign themselves

dreamers, in order to protect their honor, their property, their lives... I was keenly alive to the disastrous results which had to be expected from revolutionary science broadcast during the past age. I always dreaded and predicted the cataclysm is the natural consequence of those pernicious doctrines. Yet my warnings were doomed to remain as useless as these memoirs will certainly be - as ineffectual as the doctors prescriptions for a man whose lungs are rotten. The sweet delusive dream of our physically impossible democracy will and in the evolution of... Let us leave to serious and candid historians the task of relating what we are sure, if we live, to see. Today is 18 March in the year 1798 and here I lay my pen down, lest I injure my good publisher. Farewell, patient and benign readers of my useless memoirs! (*Memoirs* II 328-330)

Ironically, Carlo Gozzi was benefited in many ways by the new regime. His memoirs were no longer suppressed by the government and he was able to publish them for the first time. He was no longer forced to receive permission from the censor to publish any of his work. Although, he still felt that the state and church should censor writings and theatrical works in order to protect the morality of the common citizen (DiGaetani 192).

The freedom was not worth the injustice that Carlo Gozzi experienced. Thanks to the change he was now a citizen of the French run Venetian state. He was no longer allowed to call himself or claim to be Count Gozzi, instead he was referred to as citizen Gozzi. His whole life he prided himself on his noble birth and stature, a stature that was now denied him (DiGaetani 193).

Even though he claimed he would lay down his pen forever, Gozzi could not stay away from his love, the theater, for very long. He released another translation, *Annibale Duca di Atene*, the play commented on the ability, and the ideal, of noble conduct in contrast with the behavior of the lower orders. It was a moderate success, running for fourteen nights and encouraged him to continue writing (DiGaetani 193).



Gozzi continue to write essays on theater. In 1801 Schiller famously translated his play *Turandot*. This translation is credited with starting the Gozzi craze that would spread throughout Germany and lead to many of his works being turned into operas. It was a primary influence of the German Romanticism movement (DiGaetani 195) and maybe even the single reason that we are as aware of Gozzi as we are today.

Gozzi continued to write plays, but in his later years, Italian readers were far more interested in his works than theatergoers and his plays were being revived less and less. He also lived long enough to see Goldoni's works reenter vogue in Venice (DiGaetani 196). DiGaetani compares the relationship of Gozzi to Goldoni with that of Salieri to Mozart (197).

Gozzi maintained his humor to the last, passing away from illness on April 4, 1806. Four days previously he wrote to a friend "I've been hit with a sudden illness, an illness of the heart, and I feel the end coming. I'm ready for everything" (DiGaetani 197). As of DiGaetani's writing in 2007 there was no monument to Gozzi present anywhere in Venice; all traces of his tomb in the church of San Cassiano had disappeared. There is, however, a monument to Goldoni, showing who the Venetian people believed won their feud. There is not even a plaque on the palazzo Gozzi, or in any of the houses in which he lived marking his presence there (DiGaetani 197). It's almost as if they don't want to claim him.

Gozzi wrote a will and left most everything to his nephew saying, "I ask that my beloved nephew use this money to educate his children, and to try always to defend them from the false beliefs and sophistic and pernicious science of our age, which has reduced

all of humanity to a fog of confusion and a labyrinth of unhappiness and misery”  
(DiGaetani 197). Gozzi remained a moralist to the end.

CHAPTER V  
CARLO GOZZI'S METHODS OF ASSERTING THE DOMINANCE  
OF THE PRIVILEGED OVER THE MARGINALIZED

Gozzi was an optimist, respecting the institutions of religion and social manners of the past, and he was a bitter pessimist about all that concerned the changes going on around him. He hated the new literature, the new philosophy, the new luxury, and the new libertinism which seemed to be flooding Italy from France (Gozzi *Useless* I: 160). His fables were spawned by his militant conservatism (Bentley *Genius* 315). By nature he was touchy, provincial and solitary. However, Gozzi also believed that the original and most noble purpose of comedy was to correct vice (Gozzi *Five Tales* 4).

This chapter covers the way Carlo Gozzi attempted to correct the vice that he perceived in his city by influencing the public to resist social change through his *fiabe*, or fairy-tales. Gozzi presented his first *fiaba* as a puerile story that would prove to Goldoni that the audience would love any frivolous play and that just because Goldoni's works were well attended didn't mean that they were any good. However, behind this battle over the reformation of Commedia dell'Arte Gozzi had a bigger reason for choosing fairy-tales for the basis of his plays. By choosing well known tales as the basis of his stories Gozzi was able to ensure that the audience wouldn't have to think about the plot and would therefore be more receptive to the messages he had written into his plays. The importance of these messages lies not just in what Gozzi viewed as correcting vices, but in what I view as Gozzi attempting to maintain the position of his class as privileged in

the battle versus the marginalized. By writing his *fiabe* Gozzi was attempting to convince his audience that it was in their own best interest to maintain the current social structure in Venice and not, as he suggests, merely trying to prove that the old style of Commedia dell'Arte was the best method to produce theatre in Italy.

This work will investigate how two modern theories are represented in Gozzi's work, followed by an exploration of the way that Gozzi used religion to assert his place in society. The first theory discussed will be Brecht's concept of Alienation, followed by an examination of the way Gozzi used binary oppositions to present the good upper class as the rightful rulers over the evil lower class. Gozzi did this in a manner that suggested the lower class could avoid being evil if they never attempted to usurp the power of the upper class.

Choosing well known stories for the plot of his plays, such as the well known *The Love of Three Oranges*, was not the only device that Gozzi used to make sure his audience was able to focus on the messages contained within his plays. Gozzi also used many ideas that could be described as precursors to Bertolt Brecht's concept of Alienation.

Brecht was a playwright and director who was also heavily involved in the politics surrounding Germany during the era prior to World War II and beyond. As a highly active participant in political theatre Brecht also wanted to make sure that his audiences were able to focus on the messages contained within his plays, instead of focusing on the plot. He wanted them to be estranged or “defamiliarized” from the characters in the play instead of empathizing with them. He called this the

Verfremdungseffekt, or Alienation Effect. Brecht took social incidents and labeled them as things that were not natural and called for explanation. He said the object of the effect was to “allow the spectator to criticize constructively from a social point of view (“The Street Scene” 47).

One of the main differences between the work of Brecht and the work of Gozzi focuses around the decisions they wanted the audience to make once the play was over. Brecht wanted the audience to witness the way things were and say, “It doesn't have to be that way, this is not inevitable” (“Theatre for Pleasure” 174). Meanwhile, Gozzi wanted audiences to witness the way things were and say, that is just the way that it should be and the way that it had to be. Gozzi wanted people to see the king in *The King Stag* returned to the throne and leave the theater thinking about how that is the rightful place for a noble.

Among the similarities between Gozzi and Brecht are Gozzi's “moments of theatricalism, when the performance grows conscious of itself as theatre and the actors step outside their parts and allude to the audiences responses” (Gozzi *Five Tales* 310). This was precisely one of the concepts Brecht called for, and shows one way Gozzi directly tried to influence the audience. Another method of Alienation Gozzi used includes a summary of the action spoken by one of the characters at the start of his plays. Each of the *fiabe* contains a scene that details the events about to occur. Not only does this keep the audience from having to guess what will happen next, but it also makes the events seem like fate. The characters can't fight against what is going to happen, so why should the audience, he implies, attempt to do so in their own lives?

Another common stage device at the time was for the actors to call for applause from the audience, when combined with the fantastical transformations included in almost all of the *fiabe* it is easy to see that the audience was at no time expected to think that what was going on before them was real life. They were always conscious of the fact that what they were watching was a presentation. Gozzi presented them not only with a fantasy world of people being transformed into talking statues and animals, but also exotic characters and locales which he mixed with the recognizable. He used recognizable elements, such as a town crier in *King Stag* who copied the mannerisms of an actual Venetian town crier, in order for the audience to connect the events of the play to their own lives without being fully absorbed into the action. This is in opposition to what Goldoni did, which, according to Gozzi, was to “portray all the truths he saw before him, exactly transcribed in the most trivial way, and not imitated from nature with the elegance necessary to a writer” and that the truths are so low, so vulgar and so common that raising them to the dignity of theatre is unthinkable (Gozzi *Five Tales* 5).

In addition to the theatricality and Alienation provided by the transformations in his plays, Gozzi also used the transformations to represent the changes he witnessed around him as the ideas of the enlightenment, such as democratic representation, class mobility and anti-religious thought, took hold in Venice. Gozzi's specific thoughts about the new philosophies are especially prevalent in his later *fiabe*, particularly in *The Green Bird*, when Truffaldino is described as “a sex fiend, a cuckold, and a bankrupt— a genuine modern philosopher” (*Five Tales* 259). Gozzi saw the people around him turn into something lesser than human because of these influences on their thoughts (*Five Tales*

12). He expressed the corruption around him metaphorically in the same manner that Ionesco would do later in *Rhinoceros* when he represented the way that people blindly accepted the events leading to war. Gozzi said, “The transformations I used in my tales for the theatre were for the most part painful afflictions” that were the final outcome of the dramatic circumstances that led to them (*Five Tales* 8). Invariably when the transformation was due to the choices of the character being transformed, such as people turning into statues in *The Green Bird*, the dramatic circumstances that led them there were what Gozzi believed to be wrong action or wrong thinking. The characters were then punished with “painful afflictions” for their wrongdoing.

When looking at the *fiabe* using Claude Levi-Strauss' Structural Study of Myth it is easy to see that Gozzi creates binary oppositions throughout his plays to represent what he believes is right set in a dichotomy against what he believes is wrong. Levi-Strauss believed that individual parts gain meaning that is determined by their systematic relations with other parts. He also believed that those meanings can be organized in the form of dichotomies (17). Gozzi often employed melodrama to make it easy for his audience to recognize the polar opposition of the right way they should live under the current social structure and the wrong way, the social structure of the enlightenment often present in the works of Goldoni. A good example of this can be seen in the characterizations of King Deramo and his potential usurper Tartaglia in *The King Stag*. Deramo, a noble ruler, is a kind and caring man, while Tartaglia is selfish and unruly.

DiGaetani says that the combination of tragic seriousness and hilarious slapstick comedy represented one of Gozzi's most brilliant and original contributions to eighteenth

century Italian theatre (6). Close examination of the individual plays shows that Gozzi differentiated between the sections of his plays that are serious and those that are comedic by the types of characters each role was assigned to. The serious characters were high born, while the comedic roles are almost always those of lower class. The low born masked characters from traditional Commedia dell'Arte are not only differentiated from the nobles by their comedic contributions to the plays, but also by the language that they use. The nobles speak in a poetic form while the masked characters speak in a Venetian dialect (DiGaetani 123). Gozzi was often in contention with Goldoni over the use of dialect, which he believed to be impure, and the language of his characters represented this. Another very important fact is that at no time in any of the *fiabe* does any low character ever envy the nobles. Instead, they accept their role in society (DiGaetani 135).

As an important aspect of the relationship between high and low class being a dichotomy, it is necessary to note the absence of the middle class in all of the *fiabe*. Gozzi presented a stable hierarchy in which the ruling class presides over the ruled. While Goldoni presented the middle class as a productive economic force capable of upward mobility, Gozzi banished their existence from his fairy-tale world.

The representation of the middle class was a serious point of contention between the two. Gozzi presented the order of class structure as being providentially ordained. In his plays the upper class is naturally superior to the lower class but they are often threatened by someone who is attempting to upset the natural order, such as Tartaglia in *King Stag*, the separation of the twins from their parents in *The Green Bird* or Turandot who refuses to marry. The binary opposition of the ordered class structure and disorderly



thought, such as the one represented by religion being endangered by philosophical free thinking, is inevitably solved in a manner that shows the right way to live is to accept the current social structure. The king regains his throne, the twins are restored to their proper place in society and Turandot gets married. These way these events naturally unfolded influenced the people to accept Gozzi's premise of noble superiority as natural and inevitable.

The way that Gozzi continually represented the right way to live as following the current social system is very reminiscent of what JanMohamed termed *The Manichean Allegory*. JanMohamed describes the way that colonizing cultures control the colonized through the way they are perceived and represented. Even though Gozzi was trying to maintain control of a class and not a colony, the theory still applies. JanMohamed states that once a colonizer ceases direct coercion of a colonized people they enter a phase of neocolonialism in which the natives “accept a version of the colonizers' entire system of values, attitudes, morality, [and] institutions...” (98). It is in this phase that Gozzi was trying to keep the people of Venice entrenched. He wanted them to continue to believe in the system of values and institutions that supported his class. JanMohamed goes on to say that colonialist literature contains a “vociferous insistence, indeed a fixation, upon the savagery and the evilness of the native... in order to justify imperial occupation and exploitation” (98). In the same manner the *fiabe* all contain a dominant ideological function that reminds the audience that the upper class, and their cultural system, is superior to the evil influences of social change coming from France, influences that will cause disorder and chaos.

Further examples of the way that Gozzi equates nobility with good can be seen in the concept DiGaetani calls testing. In Gozzi's plays the noble hero is forced to endure difficulties throughout the play so that at the end he deserves victory (3). In *The Lucky Beggars* the king takes a four year vacation during which he leaves his kingdom in the hands of an adviser, who is not a noble. Instead of leaving, the king disguises himself as a merchant peddler and even a beggar. While disguised, the king discovers that there is corruption, misery and cruelty everywhere in his kingdom, corruption due entirely to the poor administration of his evil adviser. This play not only shows that the noble King was better as a ruler for his kingdom than anyone else, but also reinforces the idea that a king is a good and virtuous man who goes out of his way to ensure that his subjects are treated well, while a non noble doesn't care about the people and is only looking out for himself. The noble, being of noble birth and therefore superior, was better suited for the wealth, power and prestige of being a ruler.

The representation of noble characters was another point of contention between Gozzi and Goldoni. Gozzi accused Goldoni of frequently portraying nobles as frauds, cardsharps and fools, while “giving the serious actions of heroism and generosity to his plebian characters” in order to pander to the lower classes who viewed his plays; and said that his comedies were “a bad public example against the indispensable order of subordination” (Gozzi *Five Tales* 6).

Gozzi gave his greatest expression of support for the ruling class in *Zeim King of Genies*, his final *fiaba*. In the play Gozzi presents a wise ruler who is the only salvation for mankind, the single hope to save mankind from his baser instincts. These instincts

are shown by the Commedia characters in the play who present immoral behavior to the audience. Zeim tests each of the characters in the play by assigning them difficult tasks that seem to go against their well being. Those tasks are given to force the characters to act for the greater good instead of their own self interests. According to DiGaetani such tests are common in fairy-tales and serve to strengthen the morality of the person being tested (143).

Gozzi continued to show support of the current class structure even after he ceased to write *fiaba* and began writing his translations. Gozzi believed that the Spanish plays he was translating needed to be Italianized in order to play well in Venice and as a result his translations were so dissimilar to the originals that the term translation is a bit disingenuous. In his second translation, *The Candied Donna Elvira, Queen of Navarre*, the king dies while his wife is with child, and the mother and child are forced to flee from the evil brother of the king. Eighteen years later the son, who has been separated from his mother and raised thinking he is the child of someone else, achieves glory and learns of his noble nature. Gozzi makes it clear that the boy was already distinguished by noble birth and therefore able to succeed (DiGaetani 157).

In addition to writing *fiabe* that examined characters relationships to society, Gozzi also wrote *fiabe* that detailed the relationships that occur between individual members of a family, such as *The Serpent Lady*. In this play the central character transforms from a woman, into a snake, and then back again. The central theme revolves around the complex nature of people who live out their lives as a duality both bestial and human (DiGaetani 130). The play is completed only when the characters realize that it is

necessary to live rightly, once again following Gozzi's principles, in order to overcome their inner bestial selves.

In addition to the methods previously described to keep the marginalized in their social place, Carlo Gozzi, a very religious man, also used theological ideals to reinforce his place in society. In *The Green Bird* he calls the new philosophers sophists and “heathens who seek to excuse their faults by mocking the exquisite workmanship of our eternal creator” (*Five Tales* 255).

By discussing the idea of an eternal creator Gozzi uses another tactic similar to the colonizers described by JanMohamed. JanMohamed describes the way that the colonizer interacted with the colonized, who is referred to as the Other:

If he [colonizer] assumes that he and the Other are essentially identical, then he would tend to ignore the significant divergences and to judge the Other according to his own cultural values. If, on the other hand, he assumes that the Other is irremediably different, then he would have little incentive to adopt the viewpoint of that alterity. (101)

In his play *Zeim King of Genies* Gozzi espouses the view that men are placed in their order by God who oversees the rank of people, and that the malicious are the ones saying that there is liberty outside the order. To step outside of the order created by God is to sow confusion, disturb the peace and will lead to murder, theft and heathens. Here is the direct quote from the play:

Dugme: He always told me that sacred, inscrutable Providence had planned everything, and that the position of great men was a wonder of God. He said it was a heavenly sight to see all the people, rank by rank down to the most humble peasants, subordinated to their betters. “Oh”, he said, “don't be led astray by those malicious sophists who claim that there is liberty outside this beautiful order that Heaven has given us. They only sow confusion and disturb the peace, and often they are murderers, thieves, and heathens who end up on the gallows. Daughter, respect the

great ones, love them, and however heavy your state may be to you, do not be envious of them. In the eyes of Heaven, the good works of the great are no better than those of their lowest servants, and the way to immortality is open to a commoner as much as the king.”  
(Act 2, Scene 4, qtd in *Five Tales* 6-7)

In this combination between populism and statism Gozzi is saying the he and his class are irremediably different from the lower class as God has placed them in that order. The noble class knows what is best for all people in this life and that is why they have been placed there. However, there is no need for the lower class to be envious of those ranked higher because God views the good works of all men equally, they have equal representation in the eyes of God, their future salvation is ensured through their good works, and consequently they should not struggle against the current social order. He is also saying that the enlightenment way of thinking rejects submission to God and if they follow this line of thinking they will not be doing good works and will be led to ruin instead of salvation.

Theology such as this is present in many of Gozzi's works. According to Bermel:

Gozzi punches out one perilous episode after another to be endured by his principals and some of the secondary characters. Evil sometimes contends blatantly with good, the forces for good invoking Christian motives, an orthodox God-centered morality. (Gozzi *Five Tales* 309)

Gozzi uses the binary opposition of good and evil, combined with a strong orthodox Christian message to tell the marginalized that it is their lot in life to remain in the position of the marginalized or they risk their position of privilege in the afterlife.

Kerry Hauger discusses two elements of romanticism Gozzi uses in his plays: “the growing distrust of reason as the principle tool for achieving man's highest goals” (10) and the belief that “truth is infinite and beyond total comprehension or adequate

expression” (12). Hauger goes on to say that “truth in art is neither natural nor logical. Theatre may be a mirror of nature, but it is not nature ... Gozzi defied nature and logic, insinuating that truth is infinite and cannot be confined to nature” (12). Instead of trusting in natural man to reason out his place in the world, Gozzi shows us that God has provided a plan for each person's place in the world.

This was another point of contention between Gozzi and Goldoni. Gozzi believed that not only were Goldoni's plays indecent and immoral, but heretical as well. According to DiGaetani, Goldoni seldom treated clerical characters and religious ideas seriously, and his plays were often atheistic or at least agnostic in world view (98).

I have shown here the ways that Carlo Gozzi used the tools at his disposal in order to best present his side in the battle of the marginalized versus the privileged. Not only did he present the upper class as the natural rulers over the lower class, but he presented it in a manner that would lead the lower class to that conclusion on their own. Perhaps with less subtlety than today's audiences would require, but just forceful enough that the audience would see it and say, “Yes, it's obvious that this is in our own best interest.” Not only was it in their best interest in this life to accept what Gozzi was saying, but it was also in the best interest of their afterlife as well. Perhaps if his plays were the only exposure to these ideas that his audience encountered, Gozzi would have been the clear winner in Venice. Unfortunately for him, however, his audience had access to a counter narrative that would allow them to question the ideologies he espoused being delivered just across town in the theaters presenting the work of Carlo Goldoni. In the next chapter I will examine the methods Goldoni used in order to counter Gozzi's message.

## CHAPTER VI

## CARLO GODLONI: CHAMPION OF THE MARGINALIZED

Carlo Goldoni is a beloved son of Venice. A statue in his honor has been placed in *Campo S. Bartolomeo* so that locals and tourists alike may be reminded of his great contributions to Venice, of which there were many. Goldoni wrote around three hundred theatrical works during his lifetime. According to Joseph Kennard, one of his biographers, Goldoni “is a household God, an old acquaintance, a friend for every Italian speaking man” (515). His works are continually being performed throughout Italy. Yet, in Margaret Coyle's work, which primarily focuses on the way that Goldoni uses food to identify the class of his characters, she points out that “scholars have not questioned the manner in which Goldoni examined the eighteenth-century issues of class and social change at work in his native culture” (2). My research supports this conclusion. Most scholars have accepted the portrait painted of Goldoni in his memoirs without questioning how he was trying to influence the social world around him.

Goldoni is known as a reformer of the *Commedia dell'Arte* tradition, a writer of domestic comedies, and a man who used the stage as a mirror to reflect, not influence, the world he saw around him. He said, “I must confess that the two books upon which I have meditated most and which I shall never repent having used are the World and the Stage. It is a fact that no one becomes a master in playwrighting who neglects the study of these books” (Van Steenderen 49). From the world he gathered characters, passions, customs, knowledge and life. The stage taught him how to best present those things to the world.

He would conclude that, “Comedy is what it should be when we seem to be in the company of neighbors or taking part in some familiar conversation, while in reality we find ourselves in the theater. Nothing must be shown that has no counterpart in everyday life” (Van Steenderen 52). It is because of these ideas that Goldoni is known as man of realism who accurately paints a picture of eighteenth century Venice.

However, Goldoni also believed in the conventional neoclassical view of the nature of comedy and said that the original purpose of comedy was “to correct vice and ridicule bad customs” (Carlson 8). I believe that Goldoni pursued this aim for his comedies with more dedication than most scholars have stated, if, as Coyle suggests, they even questioned the presence of that goal at all. Goldoni believed that nature had created all as equal, that man had spoiled the natural order and that one day all will be made equal again (*Four Comedies* 16). This is why, more than merely reflecting society as it existed, Goldoni was trying to raise the status of the marginalized in his city and correct the vices he saw being committed by the privileged noble class, and specifically, change the way the noble class treated those they considered beneath them, while at the same time espousing the virtues of the middle and lower classes. Many Goldonian scholars have claimed otherwise. Not only did they not fully explore the way that Goldoni examined issues of class and social change, but they claimed that he had no interest in creating social change, only documenting reality. For example, Kennard says:

Unlike his contemporaries, [Goldoni] is delightfully free from the mania of generalizing and drawing conclusions. He has no preconceived theory to set up between actual facts and their significance. He does not, like Voltaire, rant against religion, nor does he, like Rousseau, pursue a dream of sentimental moralism; he simply notes that which is happening around him. (400)



However, I propose that the feud with Gozzi is a clear exhibition of conflicting views on status, with each playwright trying to convince people to act in a certain way when they left the theater. Goldoni was a moralist. Coyle believes that “Goldoni was committed to the use of theatre as an idealistic mirror that reflects what should be, rather than what is” (249), although she does point out that there is only evidence of this in his plays written for Venice, the time period that her work focuses on. Once he leaves for Paris and a people he does not wholly understand, he begins to write plays that seek the favor of the nobility. While in Venice, Goldoni wrote about things that he saw going on around him, yes, but he paired them with examples that showed these things as either in need of change, or something that should be striven for.

Kennard also wrote of Goldoni that “no man has ever more accurately reflected in his own self or more accurately revealed in his writings the thought, the atmosphere, the soul of his own environment. To know Goldoni the man and to of read his writings is to know Goldoni's Venice” (247). Therefore, the best way to examine the way Goldoni attempts to incite change in his Venice is to examine his plays.

In his first play to succeed without the traditional masks (Goldoni *Four Comedies* 21), *The Venetian Twins*, Goldoni presents a servant in a position of power over her mistress, proposes that Venetians should value friendship toward each other “dearer than life” (36), has a noble character proclaim that it is the duty of people with rank to care for the poor (67), reveals the injustice of a servant being thrown in prison for theft while a noble who is suspected of the same crime is just given a warning and provides an example of what happens to those who merely “affect an excessive perfection, for there is

not a more wicked man than he who pretends to be good, and is not” (103). In the first success of his new style of theatre he begins to woo his audience toward a new point of view.

Kennard makes a valid point concerning the way that Goldoni viewed the upper class: “Through all his works, even occasional miscellaneous poetry, Goldoni upholds the principle of the base of every Venetian law, custom, and idea, respect for aristocracy and for its rights” (324). While it is true that Goldoni does not disrespect the aristocracy as a class outright, he does advocate better treatment and more respect for the lower classes. Sometimes he does this by depicting individual aristocratic characters in contrast with a member of a lower class who has a higher personal character. For example, Kennard describes two main characters in the play *The Guardian*, Ottavio and Pantalone. In the play Ottavio is the slothful head of the family while Pantalone not only plays the hero by rescuing the family's daughter, but also provides proper moral advice to her throughout the play. Meanwhile, when Ottavio attempts to save his daughter, the servants are so surprised that he is actually leaving the house that they cannot find his shoes and they discover his hat being used as a basket to hold apples (401). While Goldoni is not calling the entire ruling class lazy, he uses this play to show his audience an example of the middle class succeeding where the upper class failed, as well as the possible pitfalls that members of the aristocracy should avoid. While I feel that he is telling people how to behave, in Kennard's view this is simply an example of Goldoni chastising the vices of the patrician caste, while praising the modest virtues of the humble class. Kennard goes on to say that Goldoni does not perceive the contradiction and that:

His mind is not speculative; he is without introspection; hence he admits the two antagonistic notions. Thus, with no thought of changing the form of government or the social divisions of cast he accumulates material for the revolutionary forces that are growing around him. L'assemble' Constituante declared, February, 1793, that by his works Goldoni 'contributed to promote the progress of light and bring to maturity within the minds of men, the great idea of politics and morals that, through the revolution of empires, the evolution of centuries are now setting things right.' He worked toward the elevation [*sic*] of the middle class by his faithful representation of their virtues and the attenuating of their sins; but he labored with greater power toward the destruction of privilege by his attacks against those institutions which are the bulwark of the aristocratic and oligarchic order. Though he never directly attacked royalty, he broke spears against feudalism, militarism, and the duel, three of the props that then supported absolute government. (505-506)

In a seeming contradiction, Kennard, who earlier claimed that Goldoni only represented the world he saw onstage, is now claiming that he labored toward the destruction of privilege. Kennard goes on to claim that Goldoni preferred imitating nature to writing social and philosophical theses. He quotes Goldoni, "Nature made us all equals, and nature teaches us that we are all made of the same material" and "Take off your silver clothes and you'll see that our state is the same" (510). Yet, by claiming that we are all equal, and there is no essence of nobility or poverty that determines the type of person we all are, Goldoni *was* writing a social and philosophical thesis. This is an argument that appears multiple times throughout the history of the battle between the marginalized and the privileged. For example, JanMohamed argues that the colonizer sees the colonized as an "other" who is essentially different from himself (101), and Judith Butler argues that there really is no essential difference between people, in her argument, specifically the genders (72).

Kennard claims that evidence showing Goldoni endeavoring to reconcile the

contradictory principles between respect for nobility, and the lower classes, can be found in his play *Pamela* saying:

Endowed with every virtue, with every attraction, she is the idealised symbol of a whole class set up in opposition to a gallery of aristocratic characters painted rather blacker than truth ... yet at the last turning point, he shifts his course; and, in his preface he gives reason for so doing. 'Pamela, though low born and humble is worthy to be made a nobleman's wife; but the nobleman loses too much by his match.' (511)

If a nobleman were to marry her, his children would lose all privileges attached to a high birth. He continues to quote Goldoni, “Let us even agree that, according to national principles, virtue is to be preferred to birth and to wealth, there still remains the impellent duty to proclaim on the stage that morality which is more generally approved and practised” (511-512).

I believe it is clear that Goldoni was not having contradictory feelings about class structure, but rather that he was learning how to write a message that wouldn't be seen as too controversial and immediately shut down by the censors, leaving no message at all. Kennard approaches this conclusion by saying, “Could he do more than suggest those changes which he thought might raise the common level? Could he have done more without jeopardising his position in Venice, his literary fame” (512). Later Goldoni would try to test his limits with a play called *The Jealous Spouse* but he was forced by the censor to rename it *The Prudent Lady* and instead of “depicting a nobleman absurdly jealous of his wife,” focus on the “virtues of his wife” (Steele 110). After the alterations, it became a failure.

Kennard goes on to say that, “In the analysis of his plays we have seen that Goldoni directs his hardest blows against abuse of power, against meanness and every

form of selfishness. Another general tendency of his is to encourage the civic virtues that make life's burden easier to bear" (514). Goldoni stood up for those that needed representation, the marginalized of his society. The things that he stood against, meanness, abuse of power, and selfishness were characterized by the aristocratic characters in his plays. Meanwhile, the civic virtues he espoused were primarily represented by the lower class characters in his plays.

As we shall see through exploration of his plays, it seems obvious that Goldoni is actively striving for his fellow Venetians to improve the way the marginalized were treated in their society. However, Kennard was not the only one to gloss over this seemingly obvious fact. According to Cope the scholar Giuseppe Ortolani, who devoted almost sixty years of his life to the study of Goldoni's works, was "a man who knew his chosen matter better than anyone who comes after him ever will know it, better, undoubtedly, than the author himself knew it" (123). Yet, when describing the comedy of Goldoni, Ortolani says:

But only in Venice, and only in the eighteenth century, owing to Goldoni, was the creation of a true comedy possible, of a pure comedy, without satire, without farce, without caricature, without double entendres, of wholly [made up] of open-hearted laughter which gladdens and renders the soul more indulgent than good. (qtd. in Cope 127, The brackets are his.)

He goes on to say:

If one searches 18th century Venetian literature in vain for incisive examination of individuals, for vigorous satirization of a society, one must accuse the nature of its authors... and not place guilt upon the laws of the Republic ... The Venetian comic playwright was above all a contemplator and worshiper of life, without true intellectual problems: an humble adorer, simple and ingenuous, as were certain painters of the Renaissance, but because of that, superior to many more powerful thinkers. In his way, he is a primitive, a pure artist. (qtd. in Cope 161-162)

Ortolani is saying that Goldoni did not include any intellectual problems in his plays, that he did not include satire, farce, or caricature, and, like others, that he adored the world and represented it as he saw it. Yet if you examine not only his plays, but his classical comedic influences, it is easy to find clear examples of satire, farce and caricature.

According to Cope, “Ortolani's view is, quite simply, that Goldoni is the master of that realism which his contemporaries believed they saw reflected in his works” (125). Cope investigates the way that Ortolani treats Goldoni's works and claims that, “The paradox permeating Ortolani's Goldonian *criticism*, then, is that his historical mission leads him to accept the eighteenth-century portrait of Goldoni but to invert all the value tones in restoring it” (127). Ortolani, who became the most prominent scholar of Goldoni's work in his time, made the same mistake that many other Goldoni scholars have made. He accepted the eighteenth century portrait of Goldoni as an innovator of realism without questioning to what further purpose his realism led. Heinz Riedt is another scholar who believes that “Goldoni's commitment to life had no philosophical or doctrinaire overtones” (23), but that his characters “always have a social significance since they all deal with human relationships” (24). While I agree that Goldoni's achievement in presenting a realistic picture of Venetian class structure was fundamental to his objective, I feel his objective went beyond mere representation. Those like Riedt who claim that Goldoni presented strong women onstage who “emphatically insist on their equal rights” (33) only because he presents his characters as true to their heart, fail to investigate any reason as to why he was presenting these types of characters onstage at

a time when others weren't, other than the tired argument of he was writing “real” people. It seems absurd to follow claims that he was not a philosopher or an intellectual, and had no goals of creating change, with statements like he “undermined the foundations of the existing social order in the name of human equality” (Riedt 34). Consistently undermining the foundations of the existing social order over a thirty year period is not something that one does by accident.

In 1956 Sean O'Casey discussed the way contemporary critics would respond to a play they had seen by saying that it was, “a real play about real people” to which he responds, “A real play about real people: here's a sentence that apparently punches home; but look well into it, and you'll find it empty of any real meaning.” He would go on to say, “Take people off the street or carry them out of a drawing-room, plonk them on the stage and make them speak as they speak in real, real life, and you will have the dullest thing imaginable” (295). Goldoni's plays are anything but dull. The “real” people that he presents onstage may be based on the world around him, but they are not real people. One character in particular that provides an example of the world outside of Goldoni's own is Don Marzio in *The Coffee House*. According to Franco Fido, Don Marzio goes beyond historical and geographical Venice with his complex character and moralistic clear-sightedness in contrast with his blindness concerning other areas of life (xix, xxi).

Real people, what does that even mean? Real people? The average person that exhibits the appropriate class and circumstances of the characters in plays? Such a person would usually be empty of any higher significance to the world in which they exist. Yet, Goldoni continually presents characters that exhibit a strong sentimentality

and convey a higher significance to the world at large. Gozzi wasn't upset with Goldoni for representing a realistic aristocrat onstage. He was upset with Goldoni for representing a realistic aristocrat onstage who was outwitted, outperformed morally, and outclassed by the other characters that Goldoni presented — servants, gondoliers, merchants, and so forth. By showing recognizable characters in specific circumstances acting in a specific manner Goldoni was able to show the audience a path to reforming, not only theatre, but the world around them. As such, *The Coffee House* is a play that is replete with examples of the best aspects that a coffee house of the era could contain, while at the same time brushing aside the unfavorable aspects or even punishing indiscretions such as Padolfo's cheating at cards (*The Coffee House* 159).

The way that Goldoni represented the people in his plays led to a very special relationship between he and his audience. He loved them and most of the time they loved him too. He often chose to speak to them directly when important issues were being discussed, such as Trufaldino directly addressing the audience in *The Servant of Two Masters*. The practice of characters acknowledging and even speaking with the audience was very common at the time. However, Goldoni took this a step further when he began to have characters discuss things onstage solely for the purpose of teaching the audience. For example, in *The Comic Theatre*, a play that Goldoni terms a “forward to all my comedies” (*The Comic Theatre* 3), the characters onstage are rehearsing for a play by the new playwright Goldoni and they discuss the difficulties of performing without a mask and the possibility of new written comedies replacing the improvisational tradition of Commedia dell'Arte. The play also includes a foolish character who tries to convince the



actors to perform his poorly constructed scenario instead. Goldoni used this realistic situation not only to inform his audience that his new style was much better than the old style, but also that they should accept the non-masked characters. With this type of reality he was preparing them for the dramatic transactions ahead, by being prepared to see the “star” actors in smaller roles, “If you want to make the most of an actor, make him a bit scarce; and to show him at his best, you should give him not a long part, but a good one” (*The Comic Theatre* 7), they were able to focus more on the message in later plays instead of his new conventions. This was important because, had the audience not accepted the first steps to Goldoni's reform, it is possible that they would never accept his larger message. The play also presented the idea that a change was needed in the way that theatre was being performed because the audiences were growing bored of always seeing the same thing. Goldoni recognized that if he really wanted to affect the way his audience behaved, he would need to present theatre different from the way that people were used to seeing it.

Goldoni wanted to fulfill the true purpose of comedy and correct vice, or as Vsevolod Meyerhold believed the point of theatre to be, “not to replicate life, but to improve it” (75). Goldoni believed that, “The stage must be imbued with national life, [and] brought within the sphere of everybody” (Van Steenderen 32). One of the strategies that Goldoni used to do this was to present his audience with characters that they were familiar with and that they could understand. Then, in order to convince them to adopt his views, he showed them either being rewarded for performing the appropriate behaviors, or by disclaiming or punishing inappropriate behaviors. By consistently

presenting and rewarding worthy lower and middle class characters Goldoni was demonstrating that change was possible. According to Coyle, “His gift as a satirist and an observer of life lay in culturally coding the objects that were a part of the language of consumption for eighteenth century Venice” (266). Therefore, if one does more than accept the portrait previously presented of Goldoni and investigates his works as more than a representation of his times, then it is possible to discover that he used realism with the specific purpose of teaching his audience how to behave.

Goldoni's masterpiece “The Superior Residence” is renowned for its deftly woven plot and natural picture of Venetian life. Goldoni himself said that if he had written only this single play it would have been sufficient to secure for him the reputation he acquired by writing all of his other plays (Goldoni *Four Comedies* 257). The entire play is a treatise on the proper way for the middle class to conduct themselves. It is a warning against wasting money on appearances and depending on the false friends that accompany such extravagance.

Coyle believes that Goldoni used specific food choices and table settings to a “ridiculous extreme in order to make a satirical point regarding society” and that “he did so to illustrate the story in the way he wished it told, and not to reflect the world accurately” (4). Everyone eats, and the Venetian people of the time were more aware than we are today what different types of foods and meals signified during Goldoni's time. This was one more way that he was able to accurately represent the “real” and combine it with his message. The act of eating was a signifier of the social status of the characters and Coyle felt that “Goldoni presented a “live” etiquette manual for his

audiences, and offered demonstrations of how they *should* eat if they wished to improve their social standing” (6).

Goldoni's works are littered with the concept of the middle class being able to improve their social status. This was another major point of contention between him and Gozzi. For example, at the opening of the play *Mirandolina* the following conversation occurs between the Count of Albafiorita who is rich, and the Marquis of Forlipopoli who is poor:

MARQUIS: There is some difference, Count, between you and myself!  
 COUNT: How do you make that out?  
 MARQUIS: Are you setting yourself up to be my equal?  
 COUNT: My money is worth as much as yours... at an inn.  
 MARQUIS: I am the Marquis of Forlipopoli!  
 COUNT: And I am the Count of Albafiorita!  
 MARQUIS: You only got your title through buying an estate.  
 COUNT: If I bought my estate, you sold yours.  
 MARQUIS: I should be treated with respect.  
 COUNT: Who is showing you disrespect?  
 MARQUIS: What is keeping you at this inn?  
 COUNT: The same thing that keeps yourself.  
 MARQUIS: I don't know what you're talking about.  
 COUNT: I am talking of *Mirandolina*.  
 MARQUIS: *Mirandolina*! The innkeeper! What have you to do with her?  
 COUNT: That's a good joke! You think no one but yourself may look at *Mirandolina*!  
 MARQUIS: She will never look at you while she has a chance of a Marquis.  
 COUNT: What is a Marquis against money? In these times a handle to the name counts less than a penance in the pocket. (239)

Both the title of Count and Marquis were considered part of the aristocracy. Yet, the Marquis is very disapproving of this upstart Count who has only received a title because he had the money to buy it. Merchants and other successful members of society were able to buy their way into the aristocracy, land led to titles. However, the Marquis is

claiming that there is a fundamental difference, an essence about himself, that makes him better than the Count. Meanwhile the Count is saying that there is no essence, his money is just as good as anyone's, and the title doesn't really matter at all. It is the money that makes him prestigious. Goldoni was showing the lower classes a model that they could follow in order to become privileged, and more importantly, that they deserved to be treated as equals. This type of mobility between the classes was a point that Gozzi argued against. Goldoni also treated those with contempt who used their money to buy their way into the aristocracy and then adopted the lifestyle of those who inherited a title only to then pass their days in idleness and behave arrogantly. To Goldoni, it wasn't the title that made the person, but their actions.

Traditionally titles were passed down through the generations, and those with titles didn't necessarily do anything to deserve them. They are contrasted with those who have newly made their fortune and bought their way into the ruling class. The old aristocracy viewed the new aristocracy as being completely different from themselves, even though it was often the case that their ancestors received the title in the same manner. Members of the Gozzi family, for example, gained the title of Count through a monetary donation. In the play, the Marquis has squandered his fortune yet still expects to be treated not only as though he were contributing to society, but as though he was above society, when all he does in reality is leach off others. The pattern of behavior attributed to the Marquis in this play, especially when contrasting the way he is treated with the way the Count is treated by other characters, shows that Goldoni clearly agrees with the Count's point of view.

In the second scene of the play the Marquis interrupts the Captain, who is taking a break to drink some chocolate and attempts to borrow ten gold pieces from him. The Captain smoothly convinces him that he only has one gold piece himself at the moment, yet the Marquis still requests that the captain give him all he has. The Captain gives him the gold piece and the Marquis makes an unceremonious exit, after which the Captain exclaims, “Well, if he doesn't pay, it will keep him from bothering me. I think the worse for him having drunk my chocolate” (*Mirandolina* 250). Not only did the Marquis drink his chocolate, but he did it very quickly, without savoring the expensive treat at all. Then in a later scene the Marquis is trying to impress the Captain and Mirandolina by sharing some wine that he is brought. He pulls such a tiny little bottle from his pocket that they have to drink it from small liqueur glasses, “shot” glasses, instead of wine glasses. Then he sends the Captains servant with a small glass for the Count saying, “here, my man, with your masters leave, go to the count of Albafiorita and tell him *loud*, so that anyone may hear, that I beg him to try a little of this” (265). He tries to show off at every available moment throughout the play, but always ends up looking like the fool. In this particular instance the wine was disgusting. In the Marquis, Goldoni satirized those members of the ruling class that he felt did nothing to deserve the adoration and respect they demanded.

Caricatures such as the Marquis were generalized representations of the upper class as a whole. Goldoni said, “I always directed my criticism at social foibles in general, never at any sinner in particular,” but that when exposing foibles and ridiculous habits onstage the whole world “saw the original in his neighbor or himself” (qtd. in Van

Steenderen 53-54). Even though he avoided particulars, the result was the same.

Audience members would see either themselves or someone they knew being criticized onstage, and when the rest of the audience laughed and joined in the criticism it was a sharp message that they needed to change in order to being laughed at.

The chocolates and other traditionally privileged foods that Goldoni uses in his plays take on a significant value when he allows lower class characters to enjoy them.

According to Coyle:

Goldoni also altered the traditional cultural reliance on decorum by instigating new rules for public performance, suggesting that every social class could and should enjoy luxury items. In his plays, indulgences were available to those with the financial means to fund them, regardless of status. Therefore, the characters in his plays (and the audience) learned to evaluate the consumer's pocketbook for definitions of appropriate consumption rather than their hereditary status levels as dictated by decorum. (260)

In this manner Goldoni was telling his audiences that the importance of social standing should no longer be placed on intangible things such as titles, but is now revealed through the appearance of things. Anyone can enjoy the luxurious items and make it appear as though they are of a higher social standing than they really are. Then, by doing so, they will become part of that higher standing because others will see them partaking of the luxuries and accept them. Coyle says, "The social meaning of self lies not in individual worth, but in the behaviors and objects used to define importance" (21).

An example of a well respected character who is also a member of the aristocracy can be found in Cristofolo in *The Superior Residence*. Cristofolo is a man of wisdom who is well respected by all others in the play. He rejects the title used as a form of etiquette that was once reserved for the aristocracy, but was being demanded by the new

aristocracy that Goldoni believed was doing nothing to deserve their status. After being greeted as “Most illustrious signor Cristofolo,” he responds:

No, no... no need to give me the illustrious bit... I have no need to be anyone's illustrious anything; I have never had any fondness for that kind of affection. I am a gentleman. Thank heavens I have no need of any other title. (Tosi 146)

In this way Goldoni was not only highlighting that one should strive to be a gentleman, but also showing how language and compliments were becoming meaningless due to overuse and the middle class shouldn't be concerned about a title.

Goldoni showed his support for the middle merchant class in other plays as well.

For example in the play *The Cavalier And The Lady* the following conversation occurs between a merchant, Anselmo, and a nobleman, Don Flamminio:

Anselmo: You seem to be surprised that a vile merchant should dare to teach a man of noble birth, such as you are, how to behave.

Flamminio: Of course I am surprised, and also I think that you are foolhardy.

Anselmo: Let me tell you: nobleman who know how to keep their own rank, behave themselves accordingly; they are in no need of being taught lessons by anyone, but those who wear a noble name and take advantage of their birth to behave very badly are unworthy to stand face-to-face with an honorable merchant such as I.

Flamminio: Hush, you impertinent fool! I'll make you repent of your impertinence. I am a cavalier, and you are a vile merchant, a plebeian.

Anselmo: A vile merchant, a plebeian? If only you knew what is meant by the word merchant, you would not speak so. Trading is an industrious profession followed even today by noble men of higher birth than your own. Trade is useful to the world, necessary to the relations of peoples; and whoever attends to it with honor, as I do, must not be called a plebeian; the real plebeian is the man who, having inherited a title and some acres of land, wastes his days in Sloth, and thinks that he can trample under his foot everyone and overrule everyone. The vile man is he who

does not know his duties, and would have his pride respected unjustly, thus betraying that he is only noble by accident, but ought to have been born a plebeian.  
(Kennard 282-283)

In this scene Goldoni is not only showing that a merchant may be more noble than a nobleman, and that to be a merchant is a worthy profession, but he also chastises all those members of the aristocracy who don't work for what they have, the lazy and unkind. Not only does he want the merchants to be more accepted, but he also wants certain members of the upper class to change their behavior and actually uphold the noble part of the term nobleman.

Goldoni also discusses respect for nobility in *The Honored Girl*, and its sequel, *The Good Wife*. Pantalone tells his daughter that he has married to a nobleman, “You're the wife of a Count, you are a Countess, but this title is not sufficient to ensure for you the respect of other people, unless you can gain their love by your obedience and humility” (Kennard 314). Pantalone, who is often the voice for Goldoni himself, is teaching his daughter, along with the audience, the proper way for a noble to gain respect.

In *The Accomplished Man* Goldoni represents another sympathetic middle class character who rises into the ranks of nobility. The character Momolo displays the standard of Venetian social decorum and becomes the ultimate representation of a man who can be born low but through his actions raise his status in society. In his memoir Goldoni described Momolo as a true Venetian gentleman in spirit and by detailing the personality of Momolo he gives instructions on the type of good behavior he expected in Venice:

He is generous without profusion; gay without rashness; fond of women



without involving himself; fond of pleasure without ruining himself; he is prepared to bear a part in everything for the good of society; he prefers tranquility, but will not allow himself to be duped; he is affable to all, a warm friend and a zealous protector. Is not this an accomplished man? (qtd in Coyle 27)

Such a passage not only reveals the classical Aristotelian thought on moderation that influenced Goldoni, but those of Rousseau as well.

Coyle felt that more than instructions this passage was a “set of commands to the noble class on how to amend their public behavior” (156). Later, Coyle examines a scene in which Momolo describes the difference between the implicit gentility of a nobleman and the acquired gentility of the bourgeois, Momolo says:

The true cortesán is worth a ducato to be worth a zecchin . . . generous in time, economic in house, friend with friends, and clever with the clever ones. The world, dear Nane, is bursting with the clever ones, and it is easy to be deceived by the style, but not knowing the gentility [of those you meet], you ought not to let yourself be tricked. (157)

By acquiring the knowledge of the world, the middle class is able to gain the gentility expected and taught to the nobility. This democratic idea is one more example of how Goldoni shows that the nature of the noble is not a trait that they are born with, but something that can be acquired by anyone, even members of lower society. It is not an essential difference and it is possible to discern the true worth of someone through their actions, not their title or looks.

In addition to plays that promoted the status of the middle class, Goldoni had many plays that advocated better treatment for the serving class. The character of Trufaldino in *The Servant of Two Masters* is a prime example of a character that pleads for the better treatment of servants. In the beginning of the play he enters a situation

where Pantalone and Dr. Lombardi are discussing the betrothal of their children. Pantalone's daughter was previously promised to Frederigo Rasponi whose recent death allowed this union to occur. However, Trufaldino is serving Beatrice, the sister of Frederigo. Beatrice is currently posing as her brother, which causes a lot of confusion when Trufaldino announces her arrival. After being repeatedly told that his master was dead, Trufaldino goes to check on her and believes that Pantalone is playing a trick on him. He chastises him saying, "Tis time you learned how to behave properly to strangers, to gentlemen of my position, to a honorable citizens of Bergamo" (*The Servant of Two Masters* 153). Trufaldino, even though he is a servant, presents himself as honorable man. His position is supported when Beatrice responds to Pantalone calling him a fool by saying, "he isn't really a fool, and I can rely on his loyalty" (159). Loyalty is an admirable trait, one that Goldoni seems to reserve for the lower classes in his plays.

In a classic Commedia dell'Arte manner, Trufaldino becomes very hungry while serving his master. Beatrice has been so focused on important matters that she never took the time for dinner, apparently without considering that meant that her servant would have no dinner either. While waiting outside for her to come out Trufaldino complains to the audience about his hunger and says, "When they say we ought to serve our Masters with love, they ought to tell the Masters to have a little charity toward their servants" (159). The importance of this particular line might be lost if he were speaking to another character but, since he is alone onstage at the time, it is clear that the message is intended for the audience. Goldoni is telling them that it is time they start treating their servants better.

Trufaldino decides to hire himself out to another master in hopes of a meal because it doesn't appear that Beatrice will be ready for dinner anytime soon. Unfortunately, his new master is just as busy as his old one and he sets Trufaldino to work. Throughout the play he attempts to serve both masters at the same time. This leads to the occasional mistake that causes both of his masters to beat him, one for opening a letter, and the other for letting himself be beaten. At the time it was customary to insult a person by beating their servant. After his beating Trufaldino says, "If a servant is no good, you can send him away, but you don't beat him" (*The Servant of Two Masters* 207). Once again this comment comes at a time when there is no other person onstage, providing another clear message to the audience about the treatment of servants.

Goldoni addresses the issue of beating servants for retribution against the master in the play *A Meticulous Woman*. When Florindo is insulted by Count Lelio he orders his servants to go pay four men to thrash all of Lelio's servants. He says, "This sort of thing is practiced everywhere. Thrashing a servant is the best way to insult a master." However, later in the play Pantalone chastises him by saying, "Oh, the fine vengeance. Really heroic and manly! ... Because the Masters have insulted you, you beat the servants? It is the servants' fault that their Masters do wrong? You call that compensation for an insult? ... My dear signor Florindo, this is foolishness, a trick of the imagination, to make men believe that to punish the culprit it is sufficient to oppress the innocent" (Kennard 317). Kennard says that Pantalone is Goldoni's favorite character and that he often uses him as a mouthpiece. Pantalone often shows that honesty, thrift, and industry are surer means to success than inherited titles (311-312, 318).

In moments such as these Goldoni showed more dignity towards the servant class than they had previously been given onstage. They are often the most evolved and fully realized characters in his plays. Coyle quotes Heinz Reidt's work *Carlo Goldoni* (the brackets are hers):

Goldoni bestowed human dignity upon the lowly... [He] endowed the most despised social class, the notoriously starving servants, with flesh and blood. When he made them into thinking human beings whose value judgments undermined the foundations of the existing social order in the name of human equality, [it was revolutionary]. (198)

Goldoni took the caricatures from Commedia dell'Arte and turned them into “real” people who now had a say in the way their world was ran, and they didn't like the way they had previously been treated.

In addition to the servants and the middle class, Goldoni's plays also reveal a desire to change the way that women were viewed and treated. Perhaps it is because he has such a strong affinity for actresses, but Goldoni often wrote plays that had very strong female characters. A major example of this is *Mirandolina*. In addition to showing the changes taking place in his society concerning wealthy people gaining access to the ranks of nobility, Goldoni also wrote this play to show that women, who had previously only been viewed as commodities, were now being accepted into business roles. Usually these women were working alongside a father, brother or husband, but in the case of *Mirandolina*, a single woman is in charge of an inn. All the men who come to stay at her inn fall in love with her, but in the play the Captain, who is a woman-hater, claims that she has no effect on him. She decides to punish him and uses her charms to make him fall in love with her. She is a very strong and intelligent character. However, much like

Katharina in *The Taming Of The Shrew*, she allows herself to be subjugated by a man at the end of the play. Regardless, this is a major step forward in the way that women were being represented on the Italian stage. No longer relegated only to the role of lover or servant, women gained power in the works of Goldoni.

*The Servant of Two Masters* also has a scene that discusses the ill treatment of women. Smeraldina, a serving girl to Pantalone's daughter responds to Silvio, who had just claimed that women invent things, by saying:

We should indeed, if we were like you. It's as the old saw says; we get the kicks and you get the halfpence. They say women are unfaithful, but men are committing infidelities all day long. People talk about the women, and they never say a word about the men. We get all the blame, and you are allowed to do as you please. You know why? Because 'tis the man who has made the laws. If the women had made them, things would be just the other way. If I were Queen, I'd make every man who was unfaithful carry a branch of a tree in his hand and I know all the towns would look like forests. (186- 187)

Just as in many other societies, there existed a double standard between the way infidelities were viewed between the sexes, but Goldoni makes it clear that this is caused by the people who are in charge making it that way, which is also saying that the same people who made the inequitable laws could fix them, if they so chose.

Goldoni had to overcome the prevailing attitudes towards women in his society. As such his characters often communicate in a manner that would seem demeaning towards women today, but merely reflect his times. The character Rosaura from *The Woman of Grace* is an example of a woman trying to overcome the prejudices of the world around her. Deirdre O'Grady highlights one of her lines, "... intelligence cannot be measured either by birth or by blood, and that even a despised, lowly woman, if she has

the opportunity to study and the willingness to learn, could become a doctor” (122) from Goldoni's first fully written out play to show that from the beginning of his career Goldoni believed women were as capable as men. O'Grady also claims, “It would appear at this point (1743) Goldoni wished to highlight female intelligence, and the indicated presence of female scientists in other countries and cultures as a reproach to the poverty of opportunities for the women in his own environment” (122-122).

The different goals that Goldoni had for the reform of the world around him led to him doing many things that can be considered avant-garde for his time. In addition to the content of his plays and writing out scripts instead of using scenarios he was an advocate of other new theatrical methods. According to Carlson, when Goldoni arrived in Venice the audience still sat on stage occasionally and he completely abolished that practice (5). The more modern form of the term avant-garde was primarily seen as an opposition to the realism of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, some of their writing is very applicable to the type of theatre that Goldoni was trying to do. Jean Francois Lyotard says that artists:

must question the rules of the art of painting or of narrative as they have learned and received from their predecessors ... those who refuse to re-examine the rules of art pursue successful careers in mass conformism by communicating, by means of the 'correct rules', the endemic desire for reality with objects and situations capable of gratifying it (50).

By questioning the “correct rules” of theatre Goldoni was able to determine that the best course of action to change the society in which he existed was to change the way that the art was being presented to them. Instead of supporting the current social system in place, he used a new kind of theatre to show his audiences a new kind of world in which they could exist. Like modern avant-garde artists, Goldoni received a backlash of criticism

because of this, most famously from Carlo Gozzi. Lyotard mentions that artists who do question the rules are

destined to have little credibility in the eyes of those concerned with 'reality' and 'identity' [reality and identity in this case are the things that Lyotard's avant-garde was fighting, for purposes of this discussion those words may be replaced with 'keeping to the tradition of the art of the time']; they have no guarantee of an audience. (50)

He would go on to say that those who support the system currently in place, that is the privileged— will triumph over the avant-garde by slandering it, banning it, and providing the “correct” images that support the current system (51). The fact that Goldoni's reforms eventually became popular meant that he was no longer a part of the avant-garde, but that did not stop his detractors, such as Gozzi, from slandering him and later attempting to provide the correct images of a theatre that supported the current ruling class. Eugene Ionesco said that, “The avant-garde man is the opponent of an existing system. He is a critic of, and not an apologist for, what exists now” (310). It is this critical, non-traditional, sense of one's art that “avant-garde” is used here.

Ionesco believed that when an author writes something, “he is fighting a battle, [and] that if he has something to say, it is because others have not said that thing properly, or that they no longer know how to say it. He wishes to say something new. Otherwise why would he write” (313). I believe the same thing of Carlo Goldoni. The Greeks believed that the purpose of theatre was to entertain in order to educate, and Carlo Goldoni wrote his plays in a manner that would entertain the audience, but also teach them the ways to improve their society in the manner that he believed was right. He used a new style of theatre, but within it he used elements that occur in the daily lives of his

audience—relationships, foods and events to keep them from becoming disconnected from what they were witnessing. The ways that he wanted to improve society are all consistent with raising the level of treatment that the marginalized of his society, the middle class as well as the servants, were receiving at the hands of those above them. He disliked arrogance, intolerance, and the abuse of power that he saw in the aristocracy of his time, and while he did believe in their right to be the ruling class, he did not feel that their right was exclusionary based on birth.

As the plots, characters, and objectives of his play show, Goldoni understood that individual people could make choices that would directly affect their position in society, and if they realized how to maneuver through the social system they could improve their way of life. However, he also realized that the ruling class needed to be motivated to accept these newcomers into their world. As a result, he showed characters that often made bad choices, neglected those around them, and caused those that depended on them to falter, such as Ottavio in *The Guardian*. By connecting these bad choices to the current social order he showed the ruling class a new method of behavior that he believed they should follow, as well as the correct path for the middle, and lower, classes to follow in order to improve their status.



## CHAPTER VII

## THE MARGINALIZED AND THE PRIVILEGED TODAY

When looking back at the feud between Carlo Gozzi and Carlo Goldoni, it is easy to understand how people at the time believed that Carlo Gozzi won the feud by forcing Goldoni out of Venice: “although the popular story that Gozzi's success literally drove Goldoni from Venice is surely somewhat exaggerated, the shift in public enthusiasm to his rival's work was doubtless an important consideration in Goldoni's decision to accept the new post” (Carlson 12-13). This minor victory for Gozzi was a hollow one. Over the next few years he saw the popularity of his *fiabe* decline and the themes from Goldoni's plays, that he attempted to suppress, take hold. Meanwhile the works of Goldoni were spreading across Europe replacing the Commedia tradition that Gozzi sought to preserve. Perhaps audiences no longer wanted to witness plays that represented a world they desired to break from, it could have been due to the Austrian rule that censored the works of Gozzi while allow Goldoni's to be presented intact or even the fading importance placed on training actors for the style of improvisation needed for the *Fiabe*, but for some reason Gozzi quickly declined in favor among audiences. It was “only in Germany where he was seen as an experimental precursor of romanticism, did Gozzi's plays attract much attention [outside of Venice] by the end of the [eighteenth] century (Carlson 14). Although Gozzi had heavy influence on the German romanticism movement, as well as Russian revolutionary theatre, up until recently he has primarily been known by today's audiences through operas such as Puccini's *Turandot* and Prokofiev's *The Love of Three*

*Oranges.*

Conversely, Goldoni continued to rise in prominence throughout the centuries following his lifetime and his theatrical influence spread far wider than Gozzi's. After he covers their lives and works, the name Goldoni appears seventeen times in Carlson's book, compared to only two for Gozzi (220). Like Gozzi, Goldoni's presence has also been heard through composers of operas, Mozart, Salieri, Wolf-Ferrari, and most recently the Czechoslovakian composer Bohuslav Martinu. However, Goldoni's canon of plays did not suffer the same neglect as those of Gozzi. In fact, Goldoni dominates the Venetian stage in the same manner that Shakespeare dominates the English (Simonis 53). Playscripts inc. has recently announced the publication of a new translation of *The Servant of Two Masters*. In addition, recent or current productions of Goldoni can be found by The Royal Shakespeare Company, The Shakespeare Company in Washington D.C., The National Theatre of Greece, as well as many other prominent theatre companies throughout the world. Because so few of his plays have been translated into English, there exists the potential for many "undiscovered" gems to be unearthed as masterpieces and presented to the English-speaking world. Perhaps *La Guerra*, which was translated into German at least five times, and which Giorgio Strehler called Goldoni's most important play, is one of these plays. As of the year 2000 this play had never been translated entirely into English (Gross).

Albert Bremel and Ted Emery's translations of the *Five Tales* have recently reintroduced Gozzi to modern audiences. Recent major Gozzi revivals have included Julie Taymor's productions of *The Green Bird* and *King Stag*, as well as Nona Ciobanu's

avant-garde re-envisioning of *The Love of Three Oranges*. Gozzi and Goldoni are once again battling one another for prominence on the stage. Many who have produced their plays have discussed a desire to stay true to the spirit and the style of Commedia dell'Arte and that of the playwrights themselves. However, no production of their work is complete without considering the ways that each playwright desired to affect their audience. Beyond frivolous, fun, fantastical effects and cheap laughs, these authors hoped to influence the social interactions going on in their world. They each recognized that it was necessary to alter the forms of theatre being produced, resulting in two unique styles, in order to best present their message to the people.

While the times and circumstances have changed since these plays were first written, they can still achieve that purpose today. As this work has discussed, there are still people being marginalized by those considered privileged. The messages on gender equality, respect for one another, frivolous spending, and yes even respect for authority and belief in a higher power, will still play well to audiences. It is up to the artistic team of each production to choose which themes to accentuate and which messages to attempt to share with audiences. Without cognizant consideration of what the purpose of each play once was, new productions may lead to unintended messages.

I believe that the marginalized are in as dangerous a position as ever of being overshadowed by the privileged. There have always been numerous groups of marginalized people seeking representation amongst the privileged. However, each of these groups have continued to splinter into increasingly smaller and smaller fragmented groups. Where Goldoni was once able to say that we should treat all members of the

lower class better, many of today's proponents of social change each shout for better treatment of very specific marginalized groups. Instead of blending together to create a single strong voice for the betterment of all the marginalized, their voices clash against one another and create such a cacophony that none of them can be heard loudly enough to make any progress.

For example, Elly Elshout et al. discuss the difficulties she faces being both disabled and feminist, saying “women with disabilities go unnoticed due to the 'blind spots' of both the feminist movement and feminist theology” (“Roundtable” 102). Later in the same article Dorothee Wilhelm says that the language of feminists is constructed in an analogous manner that presents women as a homogeneous “normal” group and, just as “man” has signaled only white men, renders any woman who is not white, able-bodied and elite as invisible. This creates the “blind spot” in both feminist movement and feminist theology (“Roundtable” 105).

It is now no longer enough for marginalized women, disabled people, or non-whites to group together in an attempt to find a voice among the privileged. A marginalized person may potentially have to group with only other non-white, disabled, feminist, women, of a certain sexual orientation, in their economic group, and who have specific theological interests in order to avoid falling into a “blind spot” that keeps their voice from being heard.

Marginalized people must find a way to create a solidarity even among all of these differences in order to turn what Mary Hunt calls an “unlikely coalition” into a “likely coalition.” Elshout et al. believe that this needs to be done through compromise. They

say, “I believe compromise is essential to coalition-building. Compromise requires that both parties give up some thing” and that “compromise prevents us from erasing differences and assuming complete harmonization. The process of compromise acknowledges that both sides have a position and that both have strengths as well as something particular to offer the coalition” (102). The time has come for someone today to do as Goldoni and Gozzi did, to either find a new way to present theatre, or discover a new way of using old ideas in order to create this coalition.

It is my desire that readers will take the ideas presented here about the way theatre can be used as a tool by the marginalized against the privileged and research how old and new works are being used today to specifically influence people towards social change. Furthermore, research needs to be done that examines how theatre can best be used to create a coalition across different social, racial, class, and sexual orientations that avoids the “blind spots” mentioned by Elshout and unifies first the marginalized, and eventually all people, under a single banner. How can theatre help create a system of harmonization instead of one of privilege? This, however, is a field of inquiry that lies outside the purview of this work and one that I propose to pursue in a further study.

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