ABSTRACT

Title of Document: "THE SAUCE IS BETTER THAN THE FISH": THE USE OF FOOD TO SIGNIFY CLASS IN THE COMEDIES OF CARLO GOLDONI 1737-1762.

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This dissertation explores the plays of Venetian Commedia del'Arte reformer-cum-playwright Carlo Goldoni, and documents how he manipulates consumption and material culture using fashionable food and dining styles to satirize class structures in eighteenth century Italy. Goldoni's works exist in what I call the "consuming public" of eighteenth century Venice, documenting the theatrical, literary, and artistic production of the city as well as the trend towards Frenchified social production and foods in the stylish eating of the period. The construction of Venetian society in the middle of the eighteenth century was a specific and legally ordered cultural body, expressed through various extra-theatrical activities available during the period, such as gambling, carnival, and public entertainments. The theatrical conventions of the Venetian eighteenth century also explored nuances of class decorum, especially as they related to audience behavior and performance reception. This decorum extended

to the eating styles for the wealthy developed in France during the late seventeenth century and spread to the remainder of Europe in the eighteenth century.

Goldoni ‘s early plays from 1737 through 1752 are riffs on the traditional Commedia dell’Arte performances prevalent in the period. He used food in these early pieces to illustrate the traditional class and regional affiliations of the Commedia characters. Plays such as *The Artful Widow*, *The Coffee House*, and *The Gentleman of Good Taste* experimented with the use of historical foods styles that illustrate social placement and hint at further character development. In his later plays from 1753-1762, Goldoni developed his satirical use of food in order to illuminate current social problems and bourgeois status issues. Plays such as *Mirandolina*, *The Superior Residence*, and the three plays of *The Country Trilogy* offer a social commentary about the role of consumption in the formation of class structure during the period. My work offers a new look at the theatre and literary output of the eighteenth century, and particularly how writers used material culture as a way of illustrating social changes.

“THE SAUCE IS BETTER THAN THE FISH”: THE USE OF FOOD TO SIGNIFY CLASS IN THE COMEDIES OF CARLO GOLDONI 1737-1762

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2006

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Dedication

To the memory of Carlo Goldoni, a man essential to every dinner party.
He would keep the wine flowing, the food varied and delicious, and make every woman present feel the most beautiful in the room.

And

To my Mother, Gwendolyn Shew Coyle,
who hates to cook but loves to eat.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to the many people who made this process move smoothly. The staff at Ca'Goldoni in Venice. The Pierpont Morgan Library Staff, particularly Kathleen Stuart and Sylvie Merian for their help in finding documents, and their kindness in helping me view them before the library closed for renovations. Also, thanks to the staff at the European Reading Room at the Library of Congress for their suggestions on Italian language sources, and their assistance. The University of Genoa staff and faculty were also accommodating during the 2004 Winterterm Study Abroad program

I am grateful for the friendship and advice of many who helped or inspired me in this project. Dr. Elizabeth Nathans, for giving me advice about the Harvard Library system, and putting me up during the 2005 blizzard that blanketed Cambridge. Professoresse Deigan and Amodeo at the University of Maryland Department of French and Italian, for their patience. Dr. Catherine Schuler, whose class first launched this inquiry into the wonderful connections between cuisine and comedy. Drs. Korey Rothman and Stacey Stewart for proving that a PhD can indeed be finished. Lindsey Snyder, for early morning coffee, advice, and gossip, and Heidi Castle-Smith, Carrie Cole, and Beth Osborne for dissertation advice.

Particularly, I would like to gratefully thank the University of Maryland Dissertation Support Group, under the watchful eye of Dr. Marcy Marinelli, for suggestions and encouragement during this enormous task. Sandy Jackson, Rita Phelps, and Keiko Suwa, for their exquisite patience with the process and their excitement as various stages were completed. My sister Dr. Donna Coyle, for her enthusiasm and encouragement for this project, my patient translator Jeannette Connors, and my editor and office mate, Kris Messer, for cheerleading, talk of food, and Sake.

Acknowledgements prefacing a dissertation about food would be incomplete without some mention of culinary support. In Memory of gastro-critic Piero Camporesi, whose works have influenced me immensely in my understanding of historical Italian cuisine. Many thanks to cook Marcella Hazan, whose cookbook *The Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking* has inspired me in this project as well as in the kitchen.

I was fortunate to have a committee excited about the project and hungry to hear about food of the eighteenth century. Dan Conway, whose interest in the architecture of the period was helpful in thinking about artistic output. Dottore Falvo, an Italian culture representative, lent his expertise in a few difficult translation moments. Dr. Mary Sies for being a terrific teacher and role model, and for her generous readings of the theory to make sure it actually made sense. Dr. Hildy, for his excitement regarding this project as well as his enjoyment of the recipes. Dr. Heather Nathans, whose patience with the actor who tried to be an academic was legendary, and who taught me far more than historiography and editing.

Finally, to Scott Rowe, who was patient, encouraging, problem-solving, carried books, suitcases, and computers, fed the cats when I had to travel, encouraged me to write daily, to be thorough in my research, and open to learning about the crazy rigors of academia, my thanks and love.

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Introduction

"Amidst riot and luxury did I enter the world"[1]: Goldoni and Classed Use of Food and Methodological Structure

In the 1791 preface of his memoir, eighteenth-century Venetian playwright and theatrical reformer Carlo Goldoni wrote, "My life is not interesting; but it may happen that some time hereafter… [my plays may] excite a curiosity to know something of this singular man who undertook the reformation of the theatre of his country, who gave to the stage and the press one hundred and fifty comedies of character and intrigue.… Posterity must be informed."[2] Reading the comedies of this much-beloved Italian playwright incites a curiosity for the details of his life and the society he wrote for, as chronicled by his plays. His interest in recording the daily life of his countrymen is reflected in the themes and characters of his plays. His prolific writing career offers copious material for a re-examination of his life, and provides works that categorize Goldoni's experience of eighteenth-century life in Venice. Yet, beyond their interest to scholars of theatre and Italian literature, Goldoni's plays offer particular insight into the nuances of class structure and the question of social mobility during the mid-eighteenth century. Nowhere is this phenomenon more evident than in his portrayal of cuisine and consumer culture. This dissertation explores how Goldoni built a coded language of class into the cuisine that appears throughout both his best-known and his most obscure works.

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[1] Goldoni, *Memoir (*New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), 4.

[2] Goldoni, *Memoir*, xxi.

Goldoni's emergence as a playwright came at a pivotal period in Italian and European theatre history. Theatre in his native Italy had featured mostly operatic and tragic works, as well as the traditional form of the Commedia dell'Arte, an improvised comic performance based on unscripted scenarios and performed by gifted actors who wore masks. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century playwrights such as Molière, Goldoni, Lillo, and Gay fictionalized the lives and circumstances of the bourgeoisie and working classes as they negotiated the shifting social structure of their cultures. While scholars have explored extensively the contributions of Molière and Gay, among others, there has been a tendency to overlook Goldoni's contributions to the bourgeoisie transformation in Venice at the end of the eighteenth century. Remembered primarily as the playwright who reformed the Commedia dell'Arte tradition and as a writer of domestic comedies in a precursor to Romanticism, 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.

The introduction outlines the goals for this project and discuss the methodological structure I have adapted from the theories of Jean-Christophe Agnew, Pierre Bourdieu, Erving Goffman, and Jürgen Habermas. I am interested specifically in consumption and personal taste as a model for social behavior and decorum, as represented onstage and in eighteenth-century Venetian life.[3] The introduction will conclude with a description of the dissertation chapter structure.

Theatre in Europe during the Enlightenment served as a road map of sorts, reflecting the shifting political currents in Europe and the resulting changes in class

[3] A discussion on consumption and how contemporary scholars view its role in the eighteenth century will be covered in Chapter Two of this project.

structure, as playwrights portrayed elements of life familiar to the middle class. By transforming the Italian drama into a 'cultural road map,' Goldoni gave new voice to the middle classes, allowing them to observe and enjoy reflections of their lives. Denis Diderot wrote a treatise on acting entitled *The Paradox of Acting (1773),* in which he discussed how an actor might use his audience for inspiration. "Actors… paint the madness [of spectators]… they discern… the absurdity of the motley crowd… [and] reproduce it… [to] make you laugh both at the unhappy models… and at yourself."[4] Playwrights of the period depicted this everyday 'absurdity' in an effort to educate their audiences on how to behave in the context of their own culture, using pivotal characters from the merchant and lower classes in their plots.

As Diderot states in his *Paradox on Acting*, the function of theater is to be a "copyist of nature," where actors "are the least sensitive of all creatures… It is we who feel; it is they who watch, study, and give us the result… they are all planned."[5] Goldoni himself could be referred to as a 'copyist' of Venetian life, as he represented onstage the concerns and interests endemic to Venetian society and the people who inhabited it. He was a self-appointed arbiter of taste, including food fashion, for he enjoyed good food and participated in the fashions of the day, including these topical referent points in his works. His observations of the world around him guided his choice of the trends to be represented in his works onstage. Goldoni was not only

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[4] Denis Diderot, *The Paradox of Acting* from Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy, *Actors on Acting* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1949), 164.

[5] Denis Diderot, *The Paradox of Acting* from Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy, *Actors on Acting*, 164.

teaching his audiences how to use contemporary styles to their advantage, he also helped create the fashion itself by the use of material culture on stage.

The theatrical world of which Diderot writes is very carefully structured so as to offer an ideal representation of the world. It is a place where stage truth is artistic and not realistic, and the actor conforms to the 'ideal' type of person found in the 'ideal' world as the playwright sees it in order to tell his story. Being true to real life is unimportant in the theatre of this period; instead, the theatrical world reflected society in an attempt to create optimal artistic effect.[6] Goldoni adopted Diderot's position in his plays, opting for an artistic presentation of an idealized society, rather than one which could be confused with daily life. Goldoni used specific objects drawn from his culture, such as food choices and table settings, to order and define his theatrical world, but took the table habits of his characters to a ridiculous extreme in order to make a satirical point regarding society. He did so to illustrate the story in the way he wished it told, and not to reflect the world accurately. Food also exists as a universal, for everyone needs to eat in order to survive. Goldoni explored food issues in his culture in a very nuanced way, which spoke to every level of his society. Because his audience would have a passing familiarity with the tools he used to dismantle fashionable trends, they understood the social ramifications of his plays. Other audiences could also understand the use of this human language of daily food requirements, even if they did not necessarily share the cultural rules of the Venetians. Among seventeenth- and eighteenth-century playwrights, Goldoni stands

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[6] Denis Diderot, *The Paradox of Acting* from Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy, *Actors on Acting*, 168.

alone in his use of food as a theatrical and satirical device that indicates class affiliation and social mobility.

Molière rarely wrote of what his characters were eating; he instead made reference to their desire for social ascension. Molière's characters sparkle with a sophistication and humor befitting the salons of Paris, but one has no inkling what they eat when at the dining room table, apart from a few references to going to dinner. Instead, Molière's characters are exceptional in their uncompromising ability to mirror and satirize their society's flaws. They exist less as real people living in a specific place than as characters with wickedly sharp wits, engaged in a familiar plot.[7] Eighteenth century English drama seldom focuses on food as a class signifier, either. For example, food and eating are never mentioned in Gay's 1728 work, *The Beggar's Opera*. Gay's characters discuss clothing and the accoutrements of the wealthy, but only as things to be stolen and then converted to cash by highwaymen. Lillo's 1731 *The London Merchant*, ignores food and dining as well. Lillo's play features the character of Millwood, who is interested in raising her status in society, not through food or the appearance of a fashionable lifestyle but rather through the acquisition and hoarding of riches. English plays of the period often appear concerned with financial status. Money, who has it and who does not, is of greater concern in England during this period than what those with money are doing with their financial freedom. In Goldoni's works, however, characters eat, drink coffee and chocolate, relax, and converse with one another in such settings as inns and coffee houses. They

[7] One might presume that Molière's characters eat in the tradition of the court and the king from the recipes of La Varenne, L.S.R., Vatel, and later Massiolot, as established by food historians such as Albala, Camporesi, and Tannahill. Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2003), 161.

make dinner plans, and discuss the manners of the stomach and table. To these characters, the act of eating is synonymous with enjoyment *and* social status, and is an important part of their daily lives in eighteenth-century Italy.

Goldoni used food to great effect in many of his plays, including *Mirandolina, A Servant to Two Masters, The New House*, and *The Country Trilogy*. Food is a potent cultural symbol that in Goldoni's work replaced the British need for money or the French love of witty repartee as a currency for the exchange of material goods for social meaning. 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. Goldoni also satirized the dining process, indicating how some characters, and by extension the audience, might be lead astray by gluttony and overindulgence. In his onstage depictions of Venetian cuisine, Goldoni established a pattern of class-related consumption. His works offer examples of the performance of middle class decorum, as well as an indictment of the bourgeoisie's emulation of the nobility, signified by the adoption of their material objects and behaviors. Goldoni's characters are based on the stock characters of the traditional Commedia dell'Arte, but they remain grounded in their specific environments, using types of local food and local Italian people to communicate culture to a local audience in an essentially theatrical way, with the characters subservient to the needs of the plot. More importantly, his characters express the playwright's ideas on how Venetian society might be improved. They serve as decoders of the sometimes baffling but specifically structured and classed social behavior that existed in eighteenth-century

Italy, demonstrating how the fine French dinner and the carefully laid table might help to smooth the transition from lower class anonymity to middle class acceptance.

For example, Goldoni's *Mirandolina* (1753) is a play about a female inn owner in Florence attempting to seduce her noble guests with delicious food in order to keep her business afloat. She is not necessarily a believable inn owner, but a 'type' who learns how to play the social game in order to advance her business; something that Goldoni argues a good capitalist merchant must do in order to attain success. Her social game includes portraying herself as an "Angel in the Kitchen,"[8] thus demonstrating her suitability as a wife for a nobleman as well as her status as a profitable member of the Florentine bourgeoisie. In his play *The Coffee House* (1750)**,** Goldoni details the goings-on in and around a Venetian coffee house, while one of the neighboring merchants, Eugenio, loses his business to gambling debts. The struggling Eugenio is not a specific business owner but one whose ruination was precipitated by his gambling addiction, a warning to the merchants in the audience who themselves had fallen prey to Venice's gambling halls. The play also exists as a snapshot of one of the Venetian neighborhood coffee shops, a scene familiar to all who would have been in the audience.[9]

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[8] Based on Maggie Gunsberg's study "The Angel in the House, or Virtue Punished", which explores how women in Goldoni's comedies contest public spaces and define their own femininity and values within the context of Venetian virtue and their fitness to become a wife. *Carlo Goldoni and Eighteenth Century Theatre*, edited by Joseph Farrell (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 119-134.

[9] In another example of *The Fan* (1763), a play not covered in this work, several small town love affairs are disturbed by the gift of an ornate hand fan, which causes elaborate but short-lived confusion among the couples involved. Nina is not a particular peasant woman, but one who has been given a fan that brings about a chaos of class identification—a confusion faced increasingly by Goldoni's audiences. Moreover, *The Fan* features people enjoying their midday meal outside an inn on the sidewalk of a small Italian village. Each of Goldoni's characters is recognizable and imbued with a social significance related to daily life in Italian culture.

Whether enjoying chocolate and coffee in a morning beverage, or knowing the proper setting for a dinner table, Goldoni's characters understand and intentionally seize upon the symbolic value and meaning of the cultural goods available in the Venice of the time. In this way, the objects portrayed in the theatre have an assigned cultural meaning known by all audience members in attendance.[10] This powerful public ownership of goods was further dramatized by Goldoni, who "facilitate[d] access… psychologically"[11] in his onstage presentations of these goods, imbuing them with a specific cultural meaning. As Goldoni scholar Manuela Cervato noted, Goldoni's "comedy [includes] serious and socially interesting elements… [which] include an educative function, and makes it a model of social criticism."[12] Goldoni used theatre as a potential marketing tool to encourage the utilization of material goods by his audience, whetting their appetite for the possibilities of ownership of social meaning. The social public sphere Habermas describes is encapsulated and preserved in the play texts of Goldoni, as his characters create a social meaning of fine food which serves to further define their place in the Venetian culture of the period.

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[10] Habermas defines the public sphere as an eighteenth century space such as a coffee house or a marketplace, where previously private people can mingle as a public in a public setting. This concept will be discussed later in this chapter.

[11] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989), 166.

[12] Manuela Cervato, *Goldoni and Venice: A Study of Six Comedies in Dialect* (North Humberside, Eng.: University of Hull, 1993), 11.

Section 1 Methodological Structure

My methodology for this project draws upon several sources. Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* examines how an understanding of aesthetic taste is achieved among different social classes through the observation and documentation of various groups and their preferences.[13] These ideas on taste and class help to frame an analysis of Goldoni's characters. I also will draw on Habermas' ideas regarding the creation of the public sphere, in which previously private people became engaged in the exchange of commodities, and in so doing gained a public share of cultural power.[14] I have adapted this idea to describe the various ways in which objects viewed publicly in theatres were adopted and then appropriated by the bourgeoisie, thereby giving new meaning to the object. For my purposes, Habermas's *public sphere* becomes a public sphere of *consumption*. I also will explore Jean-Christophe Agnew's concept of the "artificial person," a character compiled from social stereotypes of nobility and bourgeoisie prevalent in early modern culture.[15] This 'artificial person' was a way of encouraging commentary on the social interaction stimulated by the buying power of the marketplace. Goldoni

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[13] The spelling of Judgement is Bourdieu's. These samplings were taken in 1963 and 1967, using a total of 1,217 people. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 13.

[14] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989), 27.

[15] Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought 1550-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1986), xi.

created artificial people who modeled his ideas on the Venetian marketplace to his audiences. I also draw on Erving Goffman's notion of self-performance, in which a person constructs a believable image of who they want to be in order to impress others and manipulate public perceptions.[16] Goldoni's construct of the middle class character demonstrates this theory admirably, as his characters use cuisine and specific cultural signifiers to present a specific social face.

In the course of discussing the choices of food and aesthetic objects, it becomes necessary to define personal taste. Bourdieu defines taste as a "cultural need [for] the product of upbringing and education."[17] He argues that aesthetic taste is determined by two factors: the group of social origin and the educational level achieved by an individual. By Bourdieu's definition, a taste for cultural objects such as art and fashion is formed by the social echelon into which a person is born, or by the level of education they achieve during the course of their lifetime. As Bourdieu further observed, "Taste classifies and it classifies the classifier" as belonging to a particular segment of society.[18] The taster of the material objects and the observer both need to be a member of the designated social order under observation, however, before they can accurately decode the classifications.

In applying this idea of taste for cultural objects to the selection of foods (taste for food defined here as referring to a cultural and aesthetic object, rather than a human necessity or flavor taste), affinities for particular foods are expressed among

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[16] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959).

[17] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 1.

[18] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 6.

certain subgroups within the larger society. Culturally sophisticated audience members in attendance at Goldoni's plays were able to divine a character's cultural origins through their 'reading' of the food choices performed.[19] Therefore, my discussion of taste in this project will be steeped in Bourdieu's definition, but applied to the aesthetic principles and status-driven classifications of food. A careful analysis of food choices would enable the astute observer to classify the social status of a character within their society, while at the same time permitting an educated guess as to the character's social ambitions and background.

For example, in *Mirandolina* the title character makes a sauce herself (as opposed to a servant or a cook) in her attempt to seduce a rich Baron. She is further heard to say that if chicken is not to his taste, she can prepare pigeon. Upon tasting the dish, the Baron declares, "the sauce is really exquisite. I've never tasted better."[20] Chicken and pigeon were both considered to be extremely healthy meats during the eighteenth century; though pigeon was raised expressly for the purpose of eating, chicken was primarily viewed as a provider of eggs and was itself considered a food only in a secondary sense. In fact, pigeon was considered an aristocratic meat, since the birds could not be raised on a farm for fear they would eat freshly sown seeds and damage crops.[21] Sauces were considered the cornerstone of French cookery, and either were adopted or renounced by other cuisines as being indicative of Frenchified

[19] Certain of Goldoni's characters seem to enjoy the taste of food (the taste of the tongue and the mouth), especially Truffaldino, the hungry servant of *Servant to Two Masters*. Most prefer to use the food they eat as a signal of their class and their place in society.

[20] Carlo Goldoni, *Mirandolina* in *Four Comedies*, translated by Frederick Davies (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 214.

[21] Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, 70.

cuisine. Sauces supposedly expressed the delicacy and refinement of the meats they dressed, and became proof of the "cooks' alchemical skill, employed to extract the spirit of the flesh from the vulgar ruddy hunks of dead meat in which it dwelled."[22] Mirandolina, herself of the merchant class, proclaims her superior ability not only to serve and cook for the nobility, but also to read the signs of the wealthy and fashionable kitchen. In her attempted seduction of the Baron, she declares herself worthy of entry into the fashionable class through marriage. That she is able to perceive, decipher, and prepare the niceties of French aristocratic food makes her excellent 'wife' material. She is clearly of bourgeosie birth, as she boasts of making the sauce with her own hands, but she also is sufficiently knowledgeable of proper food styles to offer pigeon to a member of the noble class. Goldoni's audiences could have clearly divined these food signs.

Bourdieu classified cultural taste in three ways: *legitimate taste*, formed and upheld by the hegemonic dominant, including classical and traditional works of art; *popular taste*, determined by the working classes, including those traditional art forms currently "devalued by popularization," and *middle-brow taste*, determined by the middle class and less educated segments of the population.[23] All three classifications of cultural taste categorize the different levels of social distinction and aesthetic objects. I am interested in those food choices used to represent legitimate taste, which then are appropriated subsequently as popular taste, according to Bourdieu's definition. *Haute cuisine,* the fashionable food of the period as represented by Goldoni, equals "legitimate taste." Food is an example of aesthetic

[22] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew* (Malden, Mass.: Polity Press, 1990), 6.

[23] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 16.

pleasure as a product of hegemonic culture, as exemplified in the earlier example from *Mirandolina*. The foods of the lower classes—those eaten and consumed in order to live—are relevant to my discussion, primarily as indicators that a specific character has ignored the social meaning of fashionable foods in order to indulge in a "popular" taste.[24] In Goldoni's world, the middle-brow class appropriate a legitimate taste for good foods, resulting in the rise in popularity of the food and a change in the cultural symbolism of the food itself.

Bourdieu writes: "Art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil [sic] a social function of legitimating social differences."[25] People in culture read these social differences daily as various objects are consumed around them. Moreover, Giovanni Rebora argues in *The Culture of the Fork,* "We call culture whatever concerns communication… but cuisine is above all communication."[26] Choices of material culture signal identity, and communicate status in society. This framework for categorizing social taste supports my evaluation of Goldoni's comedies as an intentional effort to define social differences. The eighteenth-century bourgeoisie appropriated the taste of the nobility, and in doing so reflected that which they *wanted* to be, rather than their true station in life.[27] The bourgeoisie were 'transubstantiating' from a lower cultural class to one with greater

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[24] An example of this would be Uncle Cristofolo, a "greasy handed grocer" from *The Superior Residence*, who specifically clings to his merchant background through his food choice and eating style. He wants to eat at regular times, and eat simpler foods, like bacon, that signal his social class.

[25] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 6-7.

[26] Giovanni Rebora, *The Culture of the Fork (*New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 167.

[27] This is further reflected in Erving Goffman's concept of identity performance.

influence and prestige. According to Bourdieu, the social message of drama is dependent upon the clear communication of the value system shared collectively by the audience. He writes, "The theatre divides its public and divides itself."[28] The use of food as social message in Goldoni's work clearly referenced the tastes of the rising eighteenth century middle class, and demonstrated how class taste could be read by a society.

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* Habermas wrote of the way people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries might have employed the marketplace as a public space, within which free choice and personal preference signaled buying power and economic consumption, as well as allowing for the demarcation of the buyer as a public person. Habermas included the marketplace in his definition of the public sphere, as a place where "the sphere of private people come together as a public… to engage in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor."[29] Segments of society formerly excluded from public debate and policymaking, including the lower classes and bourgeoisie, were given entry in the eighteenth century to public discussions. This recognition provided the bourgeoisie with access to previously out-of-reach commodities and precipitated a restructuring of the symbols of social class and political power.[30] Once the bourgeoisie emerged as a collective public force, they appropriated and consumed

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[28] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 19.

[29] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 27.

[30] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 29.

many of the luxury items and goods available in the marketplace, and enjoyed the cultural meaning of these previously off-limit objects.

It is this consumption of culture that interests me—the commodities that the bourgeoisie appropriated in such a public manner.[31] To this end I have developed the term *consuming public* from Habermas' public sphere. The consuming public is a group of bourgeoisie emerging for the first time as a public entity, affirming their right to own property, and to consume objects that signal their right to a place in the "elegant world."[32] Habermas contends that the emerging market economy in the eighteenth century helped to break the power and importance of the old nobility by replacing it with a new social stratification based on economics and capitalism. This new public face, the consuming public, could play a role in the formation of social policy, while at the same time impacting the capitalist structure of society through their consumptive choices.[33]

An excellent theatrical example of this consuming public is Goldoni's *The Superior Residence* (1760). The plot revolves around two families occupying different floors of the same house. Sisters Checca and Rosina, with their nephew Lorenzino (a gentleman) live on the top floor, and demonstrate the old customs of virtue and thrift. Meanwhile, on the bottom floor, middle class Anzoletto and Cecilia spend all their money on fine home furnishings, clothing themselves fashionably, and eating in the latest style. The play paints us a picture of "two households [which

[31] I will discuss the eighteenth century consumption of goods and possible meanings in Chapter Two of this work.

[32] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 29.

[33] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 141–2

embody] two perceptions of life, two standards of propriety"[34] that demonstrate the problems of entry into the public sphere in mid-eighteenth century Venice, and convey the tensions within the consuming public. Checca and Rosina live gracefully and quietly, eating well, but frugally, while Anzoletto and Cecilia throw enormous parties and set a fine table. Cecilia brags of her entertaining, "We are never less than fourteen to sixteen at table. Oh, yes, we have people in to dine nearly every evening. Four or five chickens, salted tongue, or some truffles, or some good fish. Of course, I have a wine cellar, which you will find is something quite, quite out of the ordinary."[35] Anzoletto and Cecilia want to belong to the elegant world, and so publicly appropriate the food and dining styles of the nobility in order to take their place in a public sphere defined by habits of consumption.

Art and public taste play a large role in the formation of the public sphere. Habermas wrote, "Art became an object of free choice and of changing preference. The 'taste to which art was oriented' from then on became manifest in the assessments of lay people… since within a public everyone was entitled to judge."[36] These 'lay people,' which for Goldoni meant the bourgeoisie, negotiated the transformation of eating as a personal choice with social and cultural ramifications.[37] Goldoni's theatrical record signaled preferences for, and endorsement of, current food fashions, as in the aforementioned example from *The Superior Residence*. The taste

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[34] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1920), 445.

[35] Carlo Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, edited by Frederick Davies (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 300.

[36] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 40.

[37] Again, here I refer to food and dining as aesthetic and performative choices.

of the bourgeoisie (i.e., those shared choices in consumable objects) influenced the development of theatrical fare as playwrights sought to reflect contemporary life styles. "There formed a public consisting of private persons who… wanted to see itself represented as such in the sphere… and actualized… as humanity."[38] The consuming public enjoyed celebrating publicly (in portraiture, dress, and even theatre) their rights to the ownership of private property. Their need for positive representations drove the characters and themes presented in Goldoni's work.

His characters, drawn from the emerging middle class, are imagined as free and deserving of luxury, capable of owning property, as well as dictating fashion. Habermas writes, "The critical discussion of a reading [or theatre-attending] public tends to give way to 'exchanges about tastes and preferences' between consumers—even the talk about what is consumed, 'the examination of tastes', becomes a part of consumption itself."[39] Goldoni's consuming public feasted upon his plays that expressed their preferences, which in turn bolstered their own public image in the social marketplace. The audience's choice of theatrical consumption and the content of the plays themselves further influenced the evolution of cultural symbols, and inspired the selection of their personal goods.[40] The public performance of a dinner party in the French style, as in *The Superior Residence,* taught the audience which foods to consume in their efforts to construct a more sophisticated public persona. The new Venetian consuming public soaked up informational subtexts from plays as

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[38] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 55.

[39] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 171.

[40] In many ways, the portrayal of taste and specific foods onstage feed the consumption of them in private life, similar to the aim of television commercials and product placements in contemporary American life

they witnessed people much like themselves constructing cultural meaning through the objects they consumed.

The desire of the bourgeoisie to see themselves represented onstage culminates in the construction of a character type that Agnew calls the 'artificial person.' In *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought 1550–1750*, Jean-Christophe Agnew explores English and American theatre, but his theory on the effect that capitalism has on theatrical writing as a tool for representing changes in the marketplace is applicable to Venice and the theatre of Goldoni. Agnew wrote that theatre in England and America between 1550 and 1750 "modeled and in important respects materialized those relations [of an emerging market economy]… It brought forth 'another nature'—a new world of 'artificial persons'—the features of which audiences were just beginning to make out in the similarly new and enigmatic exchange relations then developing outside the theatre."[41] Theatre created a story that mirrored the consumption of available goods and the resulting market fluctuations present in the surrounding society.

Goldoni's 'artificial people' are representations of this consuming public observed daily in the larger Venetian society. As Agnew wrote, "The changing conventions of… popular drama revealed a movement toward a realism… that… took the social world to be… thoroughly staged as to make its truths accessible."[42] The market forces and exchanges of the consuming public could be literally staged in the

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[41] Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought 1550-1750*, xi.

[42] Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought 1550-1750*, 60.

comedies of Goldoni, representing specific choices of goods available in the marketplace. The cultural symbolism of the foods evolved as well, as they were claimed on stage by another class, mirroring the disruption of the society being satirized.

This 'artificial person' character resonates in Goldoni's works, for his characters demonstrate a detailed understanding of the uses of commodities as a means of expressing the self within the marketplace. "As a locus of representation… the body had become, in effect, a commodity—a double-stitched garment the social value of which fluctuated according to the mysterious movements of a placeless market."[43] The 'double stitched garment' of social meaning and taste is represented onstage in the performance of an artificial person, such as the merchant innkeeper Mirandolina and her French sauces. The manner in which the theatrical characters clothe themselves, the foods they choose to eat, or the style of their home furnishings becomes an indicator of class that has significant meaning and social ramifications for the audience.

The playwright engineers the public face of the 'artificial person,' which is later brought to life in the theater by actors and is then consumed by an audience. According to Agnew, "social mobility implies social disfigurement, a donning of masks and a sloughing off of the feudal framework of accountability."[44] A performance of status, onstage or off, is the donning of a mask of difference, a

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[43] Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought 1550–1750*, 85–6.

[44] Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought 1550-1750*, 62.

performed assumption of social meaning and birth status. Characters can change their status and social class easily by their adoption of a particular commodity, depending on how well they assume their desired identity.[45] In essence, Goldoni's work serves to define the possibilities of class mobility, using demonstrations of how the artificial person might eat in order to manipulate the consumption of social meaning.

This cultural performance of market goods, onstage and off, posits clues about who the 'artificial person' wants to be, and still more about the true nature of the individual.[46] The conscious choice to appropriate items with a powerful cultural meaning demonstrates the characters' desire to transform their social status. In this way, Goffman's theories about impression management are applicable to Goldoni's characters. According to Goffman, "The expressiveness of the individual (and therefore his capacity to give impressions) appears to involve two radically different kinds of sign activity, the expression that he *gives* and the expressions that he *gives off*."[47] In his plays, Goldoni expressed the tendency of his Venetian peers toward public performances of self, in which they utilized the same principles Goffman observed in self-identity performance. According to Goffman, "Society is organized on the principle that any individual who possesses certain social characteristics has a moral right to expect that others will value and treat him in an appropriate way."[48]

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[45] This particular use of identity references the themes of Goffman.

[46] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959).

[47] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 2. Italics are his.

[48] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*,13.

Goldoni's characters assert their own view of their value to others through the foods they choose to consume.

The social meaning of self lies not in individual worth, but in the behaviors and objects used to define importance. This performance behavior conveys either deliberately misleading information about class and social status (the appearance the performer wishes to impart), or it reinforces the audience's perceptions of true social class and status (the appearance the performer conveys to the informed audience). Many of Goldoni's characters try deliberately to hide their social status in their performances of the individuals they seek to become. Other characters (and the audience), however, recognize their true origins despite attempts at managing their self-image, as in the example of *The Superior Residence*. In *Mirandolina*, the main character performs the role of the subservient merchant, understanding her place in society as a servant, but at the same time alluding to her ability to transcend that servile position and gain entry into the upper class as a result of her understanding of foods and their meaning.

Section 2 Chapter Structure

My dissertation is organized around an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion. In Chapter One, "'Chocolate… was the most suitable medicine for my disease': Goldoni's Life as a Playwright and as a Consumer,"[49] I briefly outline Carlo Goldoni's biography, in order to give readers a context for his dramatic writings. A brief overview of the history of the Commedia dell'Arte, so that Goldoni's reforms will make sense when I address them in the same chapter. I also discuss the theatrical

[49] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 127.

controversy between Carlo Goldoni and rival playwright Carlo Gozzi that took place during the late 1750s and early 1760s. This project should in no way be mistaken for a biography—despite the fact that a scholarly and contemporary biography of this charismatic playwright would add greatly to the literature. Rather**,** I have organized my discussion of the playwright's life around his predilection for consumption and his enjoyment of luxuries, among them food, women, and high living. Goldoni was a notorious glutton and he wrote characters with similar characteristics into several of his plays. His works reference not only what he saw around him, but also contain allusions to his own life experiences.

My second chapter, "'I enjoyed all the pleasures of society, a good table': Consumption and the Eighteenth Century Venetian Consuming Public,"[50] traces the contemporary academic discussion on the consumption of goods in the eighteenth century and its effect on culture and class. The discussion will include the social and cultural construction of eighteenth-century Venice and will address the codification of culture and the various social classes within that society. This chapter will discuss and diagram the classed context of daily life in the Venice of the time, with particular attention paid to the potential make-up of the consuming public for Goldoni's plays.

Chapter Three, "'Some Agreeable Amusement…. No cheer like a good dinner': Extra-theatrical Rituals of Theatre and Food in Eighteenth Century Venice and the Evolution of Eighteenth Century Dining,"[51] discusses the structure and conventions of the Venetian theatre of the middle of the eighteenth century. I investigate the use of the theatre as a place of debate within the public sphere. This

[50] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 82

[51] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 15-17.

chapter will also offer an overview of the culinary history of Italy, and will explore the codification of foods by the French aristocracy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This chapter will specifically develop Bourdieu's ideas of taste in order to discuss the classed evolution of dining in eighteenth-century Italy.

In addition to tracking European cookbook publication and contents, Chapter Three will examine the evolution of recipes and food styles, as well as popular food preparation and cooking techniques. It also will include the description of fashionable and systemized table settings that emerged from France and led to standardized course settings and the sort of gracious *Haute Cuisine* dining for which Europe became known at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Formerly simple cooking evolved into *Haute Cuisine* during this period, and the tastes of the bourgeoisie were elevated to include more delicate and evolved preparations. With the emergence of *Haute Cuisine* and aesthetic dinner table arrangements, Venetian food styles changed in accordance with the influx of stylish French dining. According to food historian Ken Albala, "Good taste had replaced what to older generations merely tasted good."[52] A discussion of the changing styles of Italian food, historically as well as socially, will help set the stage for a classed reading of Goldoni's use of food in various plays.

The fourth chapter, "'No meeting takes place at Venice without expensive refreshments': Goldoni's Plays from 1738-1753"[53] explores the extant plays written between these dates dealing with food, and discusses the ways the plays construct an

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[52] Ken Albala, *Food In Early Modern Europe*, 156.

[53] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 113

artificial person for the stage, based on my reading of Agnew. This chapter will also explore the ways in which Goldoni had begun to challenge and re-define the traditional Commedia dell'Arte form within the play text, responding to the needs he saw in the culture for a new form of theatre.[54] The plays included in this discussion are: *The Man of the World* (1738), *The Artful Widow* (1748), *The Venetian Twins* (1748), *The Coffee House* (1750), *The Man of Good Taste* (1750), and *The Comic Theatre* (1750).[55] The food featured in these plays serves to demonstrate the class of the different characters.

Chapter Five, "'If we wish to exhibit ourselves to advantage, we must at least appear rich': Goldoni's Plays 1753–1762,"[56] utilizes Agnew's work on the 'artificial person' and references Goffman's performance of self in everyday life. It also features analyses of specific Goldoni plays in this period and their use of food and dining in establishing the class of the characters. The plays, listed chronologically, are: A *Servant to Two Masters* (1753), *Mirandolina* (1753), *The Boors* (1760), *The Superior Residence* (1760), and the three plays that make up *The Country Trilogy* (1763), including *Off to the Country*, *Adventures in the Country*, and *Back from the Country*. These plays feature merchant and bourgeosie characters, and the foods on which they dine clearly mark the characters either as members of a particular social class or as transitioning from one class to another.

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[54] This period features the evolution of the Goldonian comedy building upon the topics and themes of the Commedia.

[55] *The Comic Theatre* (1750) deals little with food issues, but does illustrate in the text the various ways Goldoni was attempting to reform the Commedia.

[56] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 120.

My conclusion, "'The [French] public are amused only with novelties… they pass in rapid succession': Goldoni is Lost in Translation and Conjectures about Venetian Consumption"[57] examines Goldoni's use of food in his plays after his move from Venice to Paris in 1763, as well as attempts to theorize the meaning of consumption practices in eighteenth century Venice. The aging writer continued his work as a playwright for a few years but for a far different audience with vastly different cultural values. The French plays offer some referents to material culture, and utilize these objects in a manner similar to that of the Italian works. However, because they were written specifically for the French theatre-going public, they have a far different cultural context than Goldoni's earlier plays, and his interpretation of material culture often fails to translate. Goldoni, who believed that life onstage should mirror closely the needs and interests of his consuming public, saw his theatrical successes fade after his move to Paris. Ultimately, his failure in the French theatre caused him such inner turmoil that he abandoned the theatre entirely. The plays *The Beneficent Bear* (1771) and *The Spendthrift Miser* (1776) are particularly good examples of Goldoni's inability to transfer his dramatic structure to a French context. Ultimately, Goldoni's failure as a "French" playwright only underscores the richness of the coded language and meanings in his Venetian comedies. Finally, I attempt to draw some conclusions about how Goldoni used Venetian modes of consumption to explore how this activity impacted social mobility and issues of status. Goldoni used a blend of moral criticism and entertainment in order to elaborate on the dangers of excessive consumption to the society, theorizing on the differences

[57] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 458.

between style and substance in eighteenth century Venice. His characterization of Venetian consumption practices also helps to demonstrate how scholars may re-think Goldoni's local "drama," reading his use of material culture as a key to class and cultural transformation in eighteenth century Italy. Goldoni truly claimed his place as a reporter of Italian culture and a satirist of Italian life and society in the mid-eighteenth century.

Chapter One

"Chocolate… was the most suitable medicine for my disease."[1]: Goldoni's Life as a Playwright and as a Consumer.

In his memoir published in 1787, Goldoni described the main character Momolo in the 1738 *The Man of the World* (*L'Uomo di Mondo*) as a true Venetian gentleman.[2] His description of Momolo could just as easily have been applied to the social character Goldoni hoped to construct for himself. As Goldoni noted:

> [He is] serviceable, officious, and possessed of probity. 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?[3]

Though a trained lawyer who spent several of his formative years working as the legal counsel for the city of Genoa, in his personal life Goldoni chose theatre, gambling, women, food, and high living over a more sedentary and safe lifestyle as a middle-class Venetian citizen. His parents and grandparents straddled the class line between the middle class and nobility, their social class and aspirations unclear in a period where a family's past social standing did not determine its future place in society. Goldoni could have lived a very respectable, prosperous, and happy life with his middle-class Genovese wife. However, he gave up his law career to become a

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[1] Goldoni, *Memoir (*New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), 127

[2] *L'Uomo di Mondo* was his 1738 play that was the first to tackle the issues of reforming the commedia.

[3] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 182.

playwright, dragged his wife over much of Italy, and finally into exile in France. He lost his money in gambling halls, and enjoyed a fine life of eating, drinking, and womanizing.

Yet, while he indulged to excess in his private life, Goldoni deplored the public excesses of the Italian national drama, the Commedia dell'Arte.[4] His reforms changed the course and content of Italian comedy. His writing for Commedia troupes helped pave the way for the production of newer forms of character comedies, which in turn laid the foundations for Italian romanticism in the next century. His plays present new kinds of characters fit for eighteenth-century modes of consumption. The heroes extricate themselves from habits of indulgence by applying their common sense, while the villains and the buffoons consume to excess and suffer unpleasant consequences. Tensions between reason and passion shaped Goldoni's work, just as these apparent contradictions between reform and enjoyment of luxury shaped his personal experiences.

Goldoni's biography will be briefly chronicled here, as will the evolution of the traditional form of the Commedia dell'Arte, in order to clarify the reforms that Goldoni proposed to abolish theatrical excesses. The feud between reformer Goldoni and traditionalist Count Carlo Gozzi that gripped the mid-eighteenth century Venetian public sphere illustrates and investigates the theatrical artistic debates, as well as the class debates that proliferated during the eighteenth century. Finally, specific

[4] The excesses will be discussed later in this chapter, but chiefly of concern to Goldoni were the actor's extemporizations on the plot provided by the author, and the unrealistic actions, characters, and moments of physical comedy that were emerging in the popular theatre form. Goldoni also felt that having actors perform without masks would make the actors performance more accessible to audiences, and more life-like.

instances of Goldoni's attitude towards his own personal indulgences help to illuminate his interest in the act of consumption and how it affects social life.

Section 1 Goldoni's Childhood and Family

Carlo Goldoni (1707-1793) frequented coffee houses and went to gambling parties, and had a weakness for the actresses who traditionally played the Columbina characters. He believed that culture and people should be represented on stage in as natural a manner as possible, and felt that the traditional form of the Commedia dell'Arte as performed in Italy did not effectively represent the needs and lives of the changing middle class. As he wrote in his memoir, "My heroes were men and not demi-gods; their passions had the degree of elevation suitable to their rank, but they appeared with the properties of human nature with which we are acquainted."[5] Goldoni's plays explored how the middle-class man of his time experienced the very human desires and diversions of day-to-day life. French writer Voltaire called Goldoni the Italian Molière, due to the similarity in both writers' portrayals of the rising bourgeois.[6]

Goldoni was born in Venice on 25 February 1707. [7]

> Amidst this riot and luxury did I enter the world. Could I possibly condemn theatrical amusements, or not be a lover of gaiety? My mother brought me into the world with little pain, and this increased her love for me; my first appearance was not announced… by cries; and this gentleness seemed… an indication of the pacific character… I have ever preserved.[8]

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[5] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 160.

[6] Reportedly said by Casanova to Voltaire in 1760. Giacomo Casanova, *The Story of My Life*. Trans. by Stephen Sartelli and Sophie Hawkes (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 2000), 302. Casanova further reports that Goldoni "writes good comedies, and that is all… He is not particularly brilliant in society; he is insipid and sweet as marshmallow." (302)

[7] See Chapter Two for a discussion of social structures on eighteenth-century Venice.

[8] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 4.

His family was reported variously as middle class bourgeois and impoverished upper class.[9] He was the son of a medical doctor and the grandson of a 'nobleman,' but the actual social roots of the family are unknown. The family occupied a palazzo in Campo Polo in Venice, Palazzo Cent'Anni.[10] Kennard states that the Goldoni family was originally from Modena, "enjoying there an official and comfortable position."[11] Kennard further states that Goldoni's grandfather, Carlo Alessio, moved the family to Venice in order to take a job with the city government. He worked as a public official in the *Dei Savi del Commercio*, a court in place to monitor and resolve conflict between merchants doing business in Venice. This position would necessarily entail knowledge of the sorts of material goods and merchandise for sale in Venice, as well as of those men who were occupied in the procurement of both necessities and luxuries for a large city.

Kennard intimates that Carlo Alessio enjoyed life fully, with his "extravagant nature and sunny tendencies."[12] Alessio lived lavishly but also managed to foster profitable connections to merchants and businessmen while in a position of power in the city government. He took pleasure in the perks city living offered to the wealthy, throwing dinner parties and "living according to the standard of the times, where the

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[9] It becomes difficult to pinpoint his exact social class with the evidence available. It is a task made even more difficult since the meanings of class variation were in the process of slippage during this time.

[10] It is now Ca' di Goldoni, a library and museum devoted to theatre owned by the city of Venice.

[11] Joseph Kennard Spencer, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1920), 54.

[12] Joseph Kennard Spencer, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 54.

pursuit of pleasure was the supreme ideal of Venetians."[13] With his income from the Venetian city government, he managed to fund a city palazzo as well as a country house, where he reportedly was able "to satisfy his passions for the theatre with a private playhouse."[14] However, Alessio ran through the family's finances by the time of his death in 1703, before Carlo Goldoni's birth in 1707.

Goldoni's father, Guilio, chose not to follow his father into government work, and instead studied to be a doctor. However, due to the need for cash to supplement his father's earnings in order to sustain the family's lavish lifestyle, he courted and married an heiress who brought funds into the Goldoni estate.[15] Guilio is a shadowy figure historically. By becoming a doctor, Guilio clearly wished to earn his own living rather than relying on his wife's money for his income. He spent little time with the family in Venice. He spent much of Carlo's youth traveling and working as a doctor throughout Italy and in parts of Germany.[16] Reports of Guilio's ability at medicine are varied, but the consensus seems to be that he was not overly gifted at healing, instead managing to attract patients and noble patrons due to his charm and affability.

Because Giulio traveled widely, Carlo's mother, Margherita Salvioni retained more influence in her son's upbringing than did his absentee father. "Margherita Salvioni possessed the virtues and merits which would please a father-in-law," for she was reportedly pious and well-brought-up, "appear[ing] fairly representative of her

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[13] Joseph Kennard Spencer, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 54.

[14] Timothy Holmes, *A Servant of Many Masters* (London: Jupiter Books, 1976), 18.

[15] Joseph Kennard Spencer, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 57.

[16] Young Goldoni spent time in 1721 and 1722 in his teens traveling with his father. It is during this period that Carlo was first introduced to the theatre.

class and her time."[17] Her unmarried sister Maria lived with the Goldoni family, and helped with the various chores of home life. Goldoni wrote respectfully and lovingly of his mother until her death in 1754, saying "I was very warmly attached to her who had given me birth; who had reared and cherished me."[18] According to Goldoni, Margherita sent her younger son Gianpaolo (born in 1712) to the countryside for rearing. Gianpaolo was educated by a religious order of monks, and the devoutly religious Margherita clearly wished for her youngest son to become a priest.[19] Carlo himself was educated by Margherita, as she seemed "determined to bring me up under her own eye…. [and] scolded and caressed me by turns."[20]

As a boy, Goldoni read the comedies of the Florentine writer Cicognini who wrote "several comedies of intrigue, full of whining pathos and commonplace drollery…. I was infinitely attached to him."[21] Goldoni wrote his first comedy, based on these readings, at the age of eight. While at school in Perugia in 1719, he played a female character in a school performance of *La Sorellina di Don Pilone,* and in school at Chiozza read Machiavelli, Plautus, Terence, Aristophanes, and fragments of

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[17] Joseph Kennard Spencer, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 60. Left alone much of the time, she embraced the responsibility not only for child rearing but also for maintaining the family home during her husband's absences.

[18] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 7.

[19] Joseph Kennard Spencer, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 61. This was not to be, for the reportedly charming Gianpaolo grew up to be the Goldoni family scapegoat. He joined the army, made and lost several fortunes, continually got involved with scam artists and spongers, and was given up for dead. He resurfaced around 1753 briefly before his mother's death, having married a lawyer's widow with whom he had several children. After the death of his wife in Rome, Gianpaolo returned to Venice with his children to live with his brother. After his death at some unspecified date, but likely after 1754, Goldoni and his wife Nicoletta were responsible for raising the children, having none of their own.

[20] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 5.

[21] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 5.

Menander, lent to him by his teacher Father Candini.[22] At the age of fourteen, he went to join his father in his travels. In 1721 in Rimini with his father, he went to the theatre regularly, seeing women performers onstage for the first time.[23] A troupe of actors, noticing his fascination with their craft, befriended him. He eventually ran off with them on tour, under the pretense of returning to Chiozza to see his mother who was living there at the time. The company was composed of "twelve actors, as well as actresses, a prompter, a machinist, a property man, eight domestics, four chambermaids, two nurses, children of every age, cats, dogs, monkeys, parrots, birds, pigeons, and a lamb; it was another Noah's ark!"[24] Upon his arrival at Chiozza, his mother compelled him to leave the theatre troupe behind, and return to his studies.[25] This was the beginning of his infatuation with both the theatre and with the lifestyle of actors.

After studying at Padua, Goldoni finally qualified to practice law by 1732, and was admitted to the Venetian bar. However, he continued to indulge his love of writing for the stage during his brief law career. His first job as a lawyer was as the counsel for the city of Genoa. On one of his visits to the city for business in 1736, he met and married Nicoletta Conio, the daughter of "M. Conio, a notary of the College of Genoa, and one of the four notaries deputed to the Bank of Saint George, a

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[22] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 14.

[23] Goldoni, *Memoir,* 15.

[24] Goldoni, *Memoir,* 16-7.

[25] Goldoni did not know where his mother lodged at this time, but inquired on the street and was directed there. "Madame Goldoni and her sister wore a headdress; they were in the rich class and were known by everyone." Goldoni, *Memoir,* 19. Apparently, despite uneven family fortunes, the Goldoni family was still considered well-to-do.

respectable man, possessed of property."[26] The marriage was to last for life, and Nicoletta traveled with him on tours. During the first few years of his marriage, he practiced law in both Venice and Pisa, and indulged his love of the theatre by writing scenarios for Venetian theatre troupes.

Section 2 Goldoni and the Commedia

In order to understand Goldoni's theatrical innovations in context, it may be helpful to offer a brief overview of the traditional form and history of the Commedia dell'Arte. The Commedia, also know as the comedy of professional players, was the prevalent form of entertainment in Italy for centuries. The first recorded reference to a Commedia performance was in 1568, but the form was believed to have been in existence in the fifteenth century.[27] Italian actors perfected this popular form of entertainment through the beginnings of the eighteenth century. Believed to be based on Roman Atellan farces, and expanded upon from the *Commedia Erudita* (or learned comedy) of the Renaissance, Commedias had no formalized script, but instead were improvised by the actors as they performed. The actors followed the bare bones a plot outline called a scenario, written by either an author or the head of the company.[28] Although each troupe had its own scenarios based on the types of actors

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[26] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 177.

[27] Oscar Brockett and Franklin Hildy, *History of the Theatre* ninth edition (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003), 178.

[28] *Commedia Erudita* was a written form of farce that abided by more formal rules and characterizations than its free form cousin, the Commedia dell'Arte. Commedia Erudita was thought to have evolved from the academies where Latin and Roman farces were used for teaching the classical precepts of drama, as well as for practice of spoken Latin. "There is no sharp dividing line between the late humanistic comedy and the early Commedia Erudita save the change from Latin to Italian." Marvin T. Herrick, *Italian Comedy in the Renaissance* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1960), 65. Written by poets and literary figures, and largely performed in private court theatres or at academies, the actors were amateurs, and usually drawn from couriers, or from the student body. Commedia Erudita enjoyed by a very select audience, usually wealthy and "educated people who

found in the company, the plot of the scenarios and character types inhabiting them were relatively two-dimensional and varied little from company to company. The characters were stock characters of lovers, masters, and servants based on types drawn from the regional areas in Italy.[29] Most characters in the Commedia dell'Arte wore masks and traditional costumes, which informed the audience immediately of the character type. Women were allowed to perform, so long as they remained unmasked and wore a black velvet *loup* (domino) to protect their femininity.[30]

It was mainly the art of the actor that shone in the Commedia, rather than that of the playwright or the visual elements. "The success of the Commedia dell'Arte depended almost entirely on the acting rather than on the scenarios."[31] A scenario could be produced by different troupes simultaneously, and was passed down throughout the generations of the same family troupe. "It was not uncommon for a man to inherit his grandfather's profession as well as his scenarios, his *rôles*, and even his stage 'business'."[32] The main components of the commedia performances were called *lazzi*. Mel Gordon defines *lazzi* as comic stage business, "independent routines that more often than not interrupted the commedia or unraveled the commedia plots or

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could relish a literary performance as well as slapstick." (Herrick, 210) The rise of the Commedia dell'Arte was a response to the strictness of form and exclusivity of audience of Commedia Erudita. The best-known writers of the Commedia Erudita in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were Ariosto, Machiavelli, and Aretino. There was also a tradition in Italy of written farce that evolved from medieval religious plays. *Farsa* was a "loose term that could be applied to almost any dramatic work that did not fit the conventional categories of tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy or pastoral." (Herrick, 27) The most well-known playwright of Italian written farce in the early sixteenth century was the actor Angelo Beolco, who wrote in dialect of the adventures of the peasant Ruzzante. Beolco's works, all produced for a Venetian audience, are early models for Commedia dell'Arte.

[29] Pierre Louis Duchartre, *The Italian Comedy* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966) 19.

[30] Pierre Louis Duchartre, *The Italian Comedy*, 20.

[31] Pierre Louis Duchartre, *The Italian Comedy*, 30.

[32] Pierre Louis Duchartre, *The Italian Comedy*, 52.

performance unity."[33] Actors rehearsed their *lazzi* meticulously, since the success of the stage business was determined by the actor's physical comic ability. *Lazzi* were incorporated into the performance as either an interruption of the plot for the sake of the audience's enjoyment of the physical *lazzi*, or gag as a bit of business associated with various sections of the plot.[34] There were many different types of *lazzi* incorporating different kinds of humor, including acrobatic, illogical, sexual, social-class rebellion, trickery, and even *lazzi* using food and hunger.[35]

However, scenarios were the glue that held together the performance, providing a loose through-line for the actors to follow. An example of a typical scenario is taken from the actor Flaminio Scala's 1611 *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative* (*A Theatrical Representation of Fables*).[36] The scenario called *The Jealous Old Man* concerns the story of a Venetian merchant named Pantalone de Bisognosi whose young wife Isabella loves a handsome young Venetian count named Oratio Cortesi. Jealous, Pantalone removes his wife to his country house. However,

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[33] Mel Gordon, *Lazzi: The Comic Routines of the Commedia del'Arte* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1983), 4.

[34] "When lazzi became overly extended or integrated into the plot development, it was called a *burla* or *jeu."* Mel Gordon, *Lazzi: The Comic Routines of the Commedia del'Arte*, 5.

[35] Food *lazzi* could incorporate real food into the performance, or it could mime the presence of food, or even feature the actors looking for food. An early Roman *lazzo* dating from 1622 demonstrates Arlecchino eating his shoes or other stage properties because of his great hunger following a shipwreck. Another food *lazzi* from 1673 is reminiscent of *A Servant to Two Masters* and features Arlecchino serving Il Capitane while trying to surreptitiously eat the food, and engaging in increasing illogical comic activity, such as using a fishing rod to try to capture the roasted chicken from his master's table. My favorite food *lazzi* dates from 1716, where a starving Arlecchino has been hit over the head so that his brains (macaroni) spurt out. "Afraid he will lose his intelligence, Arlecchino sits and feasts on his brains." Mel Gordon, *Lazzi: The Comic Routines of the Commedia del'Arte*, 23.

[36] Flaminio Scala was the head of the Confidenti troupe, and the publishing of his books of scenarios was the first, and largest, collection ever. Flaminio Scala*, Scenarios of the Commedia dell'Arte,* trans. Kenneth McKee (New York: New York University Press, 1967).

Oratio follows them, and manages to meet up with Isabella. A servant tells Pantalone of the interlude, and Pantalone "was made to see his own impotence and folly" and gives his young wife to Oratio in marriage.[37] The scenario features the traditional commedia characters of the young lovers, Pantalone, lower class country characters, and comic servants. The scenario is written in three acts and the plot is recorded in simple outline form, which allows the actors to interpret the actions of the characters and create the dialogue.

The loose structure of the scenario allows for the inclusion of physical comedy, sometimes seemingly disconnected from the main action of the plot. For instance, one of the 'bits' Scala included in his scenario involves Burattino, a country grocer, who argues with his daughter Olivetta about her inability to farm effectively. Using a physical *lazzo* simulating the sexual act, he begins to teach her how to 'hoe' in the garden, so that she might find herself a husband. *Lazzi* can also be used to further clarify the main action of a Commedia. The action of *The Jealous Old Man* revolves around the deception of Pantalone by Isabella with a trickery *lazzo.* Isabella has secreted her young lover in the bathroom. Pleading need of the facilities, she is escorted there by her husband. Pantalone stands outside the door of the toilet, awaiting her return and saying "when desire comes over you, it is best to give way to it and not hold back."[38] Isabella proceeds to meet her lover Oratio for a sexual encounter. The crude sexual and scatological humor of the *lazzo* allows for extreme physicalization and improvisation by the actors.

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[37] Flaminio Scala*, Scenarios of the Commedia dell'Arte*, 47.

[38] Flaminio Scala*, Scenarios of the Commedia dell'Arte,* trans. Kenneth McKee (New York: New York University Press, 1967), 51.

Another example of a typical scenario is found in a collection in the Museo Correr in Venice. This collection dates from the late seventeenth century, and likely represents the repertoire of the Duke of Modena's troupe between 1688 and 1704.[39] "The scenari have been copied into a manuscript book of 137 pages preceded only by an index of titles… The usual conventions in setting out a plot are observed: the text of letters for reading aloud is sometimes supplied at the end of the scenario. Nothing is wasted on headings or fresh sheets."[40] The title of the example scenario is *Zanni Incredibile con Quatro Simili*, or *The Unbeleieving Zanni and the Four Alike,* a four page plot outline written for three acts and eight characters.[41] The plot revolves around mistaken identities between several sets of twins and the resulting confusion of love relationships, actions that scholar Kathleen Lea describes as "persistent to the point of monotony."[42] Ultimately, the scenario ends happily with all misunderstandings resolved. *The Unbelieving Zanni* features the traditional characters of *pantalone, dottore*, a courtesan, two sets of twin brothers (one a citizen of the city and the other a traveler), and several lovers. The scenario utilizes both slapstick and

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[39] Anya Peterson Royce, "Who was Argentina?: Player and Role in Late Seventeenth Century Commedia dell'Arte" *Theatre Survey*., v. 30 (May-November 1989), 45. The celebrated Duke of Modena's troupe was "first in the service of Alexander Farnese, then of the Duke of Modena, and subsequently of the Duke of Brunswick at Warsaw." Pierre Louis Duchartre, *The Italian Comedy*, 100. The main actor of the company was the popular pantalone Antonio Riccoboni, who performed in London and throughout Europe.

[40] Kathleen M. Lea, *Italian Popular Comedy: A Study in the Commedia dell'Arte*, vol. 1 (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), 145. Sometimes, key lines were given word for word, in order to cap the scene. The exact wording of the actor's speech also served as a specific cue for other actors.

[41] The two sets of twins alternate appearances during the scenario, a simplified arrangement so that the same actor can perform both characters.

[42] Kathleen M. Lea, *Italian Popular Comedy: A Study in the Commedia dell'Arte*, vol. 1, 145.

physical violence extensively, and the action vaguely describes the inevitable love confusions between the characters. For instance, the end of the first act is as follows:

> Lavinio the stranger as from a journey searches for a lodging; at this; Silvia from the house bids him 'good-day'; he says that he does not know her; she calls Argentina who says that Lavinio knows her; she shouts to him. He insists he never set eyes on her. Silvia retires reproaching him. He thinks she must be some courtesan and goes away. Argentina is left saying that at least her Zanni would not behave like this; to them: Zanni the traveler announces that he has just arrived in the city and is looking for an inn. Argentina calls to him; he is surprised. She caresses him, and he says he does not know her. She tells him she is with child by him; he gives her the lie; she strikes him and goes in. He goes out weeping and ends the first act.[43]

The actors could bring their own interpretations of the action to the performance, since there is little specificity of either dialogue or action. There is also considerable room for the addition of *lazzi* and other comic business, according to the skills of the performers and the attention span of the audience. However, the action of the scenario is repetitive, meant for an audience which was not paying close attention to the storyline.

By the eighteenth century, the Commedia dell'Arte had evolved to become one of the most popular theatrical forms in Italy.[44] During the age of Goldoni, the Commedia still incorporated "the old traditions of the improvisators," with improvised dialogue, masks, and rehearsed *lazzi*.[45] However, success of troupes became increasingly dependent on the ability of the actors to amuse the audience, and as a result the *lazzi* often became quite sexually and scatologically explicit, "easy appeals

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[43] Kathleen M. Lea, *Italian Popular Comedy: A Study in the Commedia dell'Arte*, vol. 2 (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), 606.

[44] Marvin T. Herrick, *Italian Comedy in the Renaissance,* 212.

[45] Pierre Louis Duchartre, *The Italian Comedy*, 32.

to the easiest taste."[46] Commedia lost some of its previous improvisational vitality, and grew stale in performance. Vernon Lee wrote that the "golden age of the Commedia dell'Arte is precisely the period which has been assigned to its decline, the time when the restraints of culture and civilization had rotted away, and when comedy fell into the hands of the rabble."[47] The sentiments of actor and scenario writer Nicolo Barbieri in 1640 regarding the place of improvisation and comedy sums up the appeal of Commedia performances, and the dangers of overacting. "Comedy is a thing of pleasure, not clowning… and those who give the name of comedy to all sorts of wantonness, are using a definition of their own fancy. Jests season a work but not always… they [can] disrupt the whole tale."[48]

This disruption of the tale was what Goldoni worked to avoid. He came to the theatre at a time when the public taste for theatrical entertainment began to lean towards sentimental comedies, such as those found in England and France during the same period. His success as a scenario writer eventually caused him to abandon his law career in favor of writing for the theatre full time. He first wrote scenarios and plays for the Imer troupe at the San Samuele Theatre in Venice in 1734, and wrote exclusively for the troupe of the actor Giralomo Medebach of the Sant'Angelo

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[46] Maurice Rowdon, *The Fall of Venice* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970), 152. French commedia actor Evaristo Gherardi wrote in 1700 in "On the Art of the Italian Comedians" that some actors of the commedia are "people without grace and without art… who therefore look only at their calling from the point of view of the receipts." Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy, editors, *Actors on Acting* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1970), 59.

[47] Vernon Lee, *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1908), 367.

[48] Nicolo Barbieri, *La Supplica*, Venezia, 1634, printed in *Actors on Acting* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1970), 53. He went on to write in the same passage, "the charm of the study is the excellence of a well-expounded incident which, though it is not full of absurd sallies, has unity of action, and a logical progression of scenes… This yields a pleasure which remains a food for noble minds."

Theatre from 1745 through 1753. He then transferred to the Vendramin Brothers' troupe at the San Luca Theatre, among others, from 1753-1762. Between 1748 and 1762, Goldoni was reputed to have written nearly 200 plays, although some historical sources place his output much higher if both scenarios and musicale scripts are included in the final tally.[49]

Section 3 The Reforms and Public Reaction

Goldoni is most often remembered by historians for his services in behalf of the reform of the Italian comedy. The reforms Goldoni proposed were to eliminate the use of masks by the traditional characters in the commedia and the use of heightened language to express the increasingly complicated and implausible plots. In their place, Goldoni substituted topics and themes he believed were more suitable for a specifically Venetian middle-class audience. He applied these reforms by writing out dialogue for all characters, specifying plot action more in keeping with sentimental comedies, and by having some traditional characters, such as *Arlecchino* and *Pantalone,* appear without a mask. Goldoni's reforms to the Commedia dell'Arte began in 1738, when he wrote *Momolo Cortesan*, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.[50] "Instead of types and set characters, hastily drawn against a conventional background, [*Momolo Cortesan*] deals with real people inhabiting a real milieu and forming a real society."[51] The play tells the story of a young Venetian merchant

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[49] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, translated by Frederick Davies (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 15.

[50] The original work produced in 1738 for Carnivale no longer exists, but was restructured in a later work of the same name (1755-6). A fragment of the later play can be found in the Ortolani edition of Goldoni's works in 1757. The available fragment will be covered in Chapter Three.

[51] Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), x.

Momolo and his matrimonial quest. According to Goldoni, *Momolo Cortesan* was well received by the Venetian public, and he saw his "countrymen renouncing their old relish for farces."[52] The play featured the first dialogue in a commedia scenario, with some scenes specifically written out and scripted for the actors to memorize, while other scenes were to be improvised through the use of a scenario, as used in the earlier forms of the commedia. The play also significantly limited the use of masked characters, while substituting new types of middle and lower class characters. Most significantly, the plot of the play dealt with new subjects concerning the middle-classes, in Momolo's search for a wife and for entertainment in Venice, rather than the usual recycling of the worn-out scenarios.

The plays that followed built upon this base of reform. Goldoni wrote, "I must treat the subjects of character; this is the source of good comedy…. I merely aspired to reform the abuses of the theatre of my country."[53] Goldoni wanted to create life-like characters based on the French comedies of character, for he felt improvised characters/masks were too theatrical with no reference to everyday life. He also believed that performers ruined the art of the writer by embellishing the scenario's action during improvisation. The 'art of the performer' would need to be reformed as well. Goldoni knew that the introduction of a more realistic text would demand more realistic performances by the actors. Goldoni also felt that the scenario plots were becoming too disconnected from the reality of Italian life, and significant changes needed to be made in order to make the plays relevant to the growing middle

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[52] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 183.

[53] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 181.

and lower classes in the audience. He outlined these reforms in a play-cum-critical work entitled *The Comic Theatre* (1750), which describes the rehearsal of an acting troupe preparing one of the new comedies for performance.

During the 1750s, Goldoni authorized publication of his plays. Goldoni's conflicts with editors and publishers are legendary (and deserve exploration in a larger work). In 1751 Goldoni engaged Antonio Bettinelli in Venice to print a volume of his works every year.[54] In 1753, when Goldoni and the actor/manager Medebach parted company, Bettinelli informed Goldoni that his play contract for Goldoni's works was passing to Medebach. "[Bettinelli] was to continue the edition on the account of the comedian," receiving his text copy directly from the actor.[55] Of course, this duplicitous agreement meant Medebach would receive the proceeds from the sale of the plays, and, more disastrously, would control the editorial content of the texts. Goldoni warned Medebach, "'Take care, friend… you are not rich, and have children; do not ruin yourself; do not force me to ruin you."[56] Medebach persisted in publishing his editions.

In response, Goldoni engaged a rival printer in Florence named M. Paperini to publish his plays with corrections to the Bettinelli edition. Goldoni published his bitter *Manifesto* on 7 May 1753, declaring the Bettinelli editions of his works had been tampered with and needed modifications, promising "corrections exact and faithful. There will be… my prefaces, the necessary annotations to the vernacular…

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[54] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 264.

[55] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 281.

[56] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 281.

to the characters, the place and the time of… every commedia, and others thousand attentions, that enrich the work."[57] Goldoni labeled Medebach's dishonesty an "unprecedented monstrosity, [for] a living author, [that] the printed publications of your art becomes a spiteful trick."[58]

In May 1753 the first Paperini volume was printed. It consisted of ten volumes, printed 1700 copies, and sold out by the sixth edition.[59] All the while, Medebach and Bettinelli continued to issue volumes of Goldoni's plays that had been performed by the Medebach troupe. In the Paperini editions, Goldoni included plays that had been "composed by me for the theatres of Saint Samuel and Saint Angelo; and I began now to send to the press the productions of the first two years of my new engagement with that of Saint Luke." [60] He also sent plays for publishing that had never before been performed. For example, *A Servant to Two Masters,* a rewrite of the famous scenario performed by the great actor Sacchi, was originally published in the third volume of the Paperini series.[61]

Goldoni continued to write comedies throughout the 1750s. Audiences initially enjoyed the new style of comedy that Goldoni introduced to the Venetian

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[57] Carlo Goldoni, *Manifesto*, printed in *Lettere di Carlo Goldoni*, con prefazione e note di G.M. Urbani de Gheltof, trans. M Coyle (Venezia, F. Ongania, 1880), 73. "la corretzione estta e fedele. Vi saranno le mie lettere, le mie prefazionè, le necessarie annotatzioni a'vernacoli, agli sceneggianti, ai caratteri; il luogo e il tempo della mia prima recita d'ogni commedia, e alter mille attenzioni, che arricchiscono l'opera e la decorano."

[58] Carlo Goldoni, *Manifesto*, printed in *Lettere di Carlo Goldoni*, 66. "E sarà una monstruosità in audita, che di un autore vivente, qualunque siasi, stampate vengano le opera sue a suo dispetto."

[59] Goldoni, *Memoir,* 282

[60] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 296.

[61] This play, as well as the actor Sacchi, will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Five. Another later printer who is affiliated with Goldoni is Pitteri, a Venetian bookseller, who took over the publication of his works in 1754.

stage, but theatre critics and the defenders of traditional Italian theatre and literature denounced his comedies as too modern and subversive. A literary and theatrical feud which ignited a firestorm of controversy was instigated in the late 1740s with the performance of plays of Abbot Chiari, who was the first playwright to adopt the title of the defender (against Goldoni's reforms) of the Commedia dell'Arte. Goldoni's production of *La Vedova Scaltra* (*The Artful Widow)*[62] in 1748 initiated a dispute with Chiari, who wrote his *La Scuola delle Vedova (The School of Widows*) during the same season in response to Goldoni's work. Goldoni biographer Joseph Spencer Kennard contends that had it not been for the quarrel over the commedia, "[Chiari's] name would have been forgotten by posterity."[63]

Kennard describes Chiari as a plagiarizer and a man of shallow intellect, one only capable of second-rate work. However, in 1747-8, Chiari was "standing [alone] as the champion of conservatism and orthodoxy in letters against a nameless young lawyer in the pay of a theatrical troupe."[64] According to his contemporaries, Chiari did not have the literary following or the talent to stand long against the popularity of Goldoni's works. Writer Carlo Gozzi wrote in his *Useless Memoirs,* "In him I found a brain inflamed, disordered, bold to rashness, and pedantic, plots as dark as astrological predictions; leaps and jumps demanding seven league boots… foisted in for the display of philosophical sententious verbiage… As for the writer, I found him… turgid, the most inflated of this century."[65]

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[62] This play will be covered in Chapter Four.

[63] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 139.

[64] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 142.

Chiari's opposition to Goldoni's reforms was soon eclipsed by the more venomous pen of Count Carlo Gozzi, who satirized Goldoni in print and on stage from 1757 through 1762. Gozzi was the most prominent of Goldoni's detractors. He openly attacked Goldoni's reforms, most notably in the *fiabe* (fable) *The Love of the Three Oranges* in 1761, and also in the Venetian newspaper *La Gazzetta Veneta.*[66] In contrast to Goldoni's family, Gozzi was born to Venetian "burgher aristocracy" in 1720.[67] He spent time in the military in Dalmatia from 1741-44, and then returned home to care for the family estate, a move that eventually devolved into inheritance squabbles. Gozzi reportedly wrote six hours a day, although his passion until 1756 was the "half-serious, half-facetious, more sociable than literary… [Accademia dei] 'Granelleschi," founded in 1747. [68] The Accademia dei Granelleschi was a society dedicated to "elaborat[e] a doctrine of literary and linguistic purism."[69] Gozzi and his colleagues wished to preserve the traditions of Italian literature and the purity of the Tuscan language used by Renaissance Italian authors. The Granelleschi was nominally founded to aid in this goal.[70]

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[65] Carlo Gozzi, *Useless Memoirs*, trans. John Addington Symonds (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 171.

[66] *La Gazzetta Veneta* was published by Gozzi's brother Gaspare Gozzi and circulated in the early 1760s.

[67] Carlo Gozzi, *Useless Memoirs*, trans. John Addington Symonds, xii.

[68] Carlo Gozzi, *Useless Memoirs*, trans. John Addington Symonds, xiii.

[69] Carlo Gozzi, *Five Tales for the Theatre*, trans. Albert Bermel and Ted Emery (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1989), 2.

[70] Gozzi was quite passionate about the "[Accademia dei] Granelleschi, from a word meaning 'testicles': an owl clutching two balls was adopted as its crest." Gozzi, *Useless Memoirs*, xii. The mock-serious tone of the academy is further underscored by their election of the *Archigranellone*, the figurehead of the society who was a "simpleton called Guiseppe Secchellari, who had been bamboozled by… the coverage of merry knaves… into thinking himself a man of profound erudition." Gozzi, *Useless Memoirs*, 156, 157. *Archigranellone* apparently can be alternately translated as large

Gozzi wrote of the ruin of literature in the eighteenth century, "then given over to dogs and utterly corrupted by a band of blustering fanatics during the period we are doomed to live in."[71] He believed that contemporary writers ought to use the classic form of Italian rather than dialect or vernacular forms. By contrast, Goldoni believed that vernacular made literature more accessible to all classes. Because of this fundamental clash of beliefs, Gozzi focused his vitriole specifically on Goldoni during the later 1750s and early 1760s. Theatre historian Ronald Vince describes the skirmish "as a part of a general struggle during the eighteenth century between those who cherished the native theatrical traditions exemplified in the Commedia dell'Arte (conservatives) and those who looked to the French precepts and models in their efforts to revitalize the Italian theatre."[72] Gozzi became involved in the commedia debate in 1757, when it became clear that Venetians found Goldoni's plays and his proposed reforms to be enjoyable theatrical fare, and that Chiari could not adequately defend the literary and dramatic purity of the drama. Gozzi wrote a mock almanac "'in strict literary Tuscan', *La Tartana degl'infussi per l'anno bisestile 1757 (The Tartane, an Almanac of Influxes for the Leap Year 1756)*, [in which] Gozzi excoriated both Goldoni and Chiari as dealers in chaos, two charlatans who kept the public in an uproar to line their own pockets."[73]

'testicle' or 'simpleton'. In his memoirs, Gozzi dated the founding of the Granelleschi in 1740, but both Albert Bermel and Marvin Carlson place it's origins in 1747. Gozzi might have been mistaken about the date the society was founded, but certainly the Accademia dei Granelleschi predated the beginnings of the feud with Goldoni.

[71] Gozzi, *Useless Memoirs*, 156.

[72] Ronald Vince, *Neoclassical Theatre: A Historiographical Handbook* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 162.

Because Goldoni completely wrote out plays, and revolutionized the events that could be included in a Commedia plot, Gozzi argued that Goldoni was destroying the ancient social order of Italy itself by altering the form of Italian drama.[74] According to Gozzi, Goldoni also preached unsuitable democratic reforms to a Venetian public by including lower and middle class characters in his plays, thereby marketing the plays to a more undesirable audience. Gozzi claimed that Goldoni's works were written in "this monstrous style, now bombastically turgid, now stupidly commonplace, [that] has become the fashion for everything which is written."[75] The reading public took sides in the resulting controversy, "in a snowstorm of pamphlets, epistles, poems, and plays spreading across literary Europe so that in Paris Voltaire came to Goldoni's defense and in London Guiseppe Baretti, a member of Johnson's circle, championed Gozzi."[76] Gozzi wrote in his *Useless Memoirs*, "So I prepared myself for a guerilla warfare, something after Goldoni's own kind, but more witty and amusing."[77] In 1761, Gozzi responded to Goldoni's "repeated charges that he was simply a carping critic who would never dare to enter the lists as a playwright competing for popular support," by writing plays based on the traditional form of the

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[73] Marvin Carlson, *The Italian Stage from Goldoni to D'Annunzio* (Jefferson, North Car.: McFarland and Company, 1981), 11.

[74] If one is to believe Carlo Gozzi, the reforms of Carlo Goldoni make a mockery of Italian virtues, calling them "mere romantic prejudices. Accordingly, justice has been sold with brazen impudence, knaveries and tricks and treachery have triumphed… and a diarrhoea (sic) of dramatic works, romances… and apologies by both the Vandals (Goldoni and lesser playwright Chiari) poured from the press and deluged Venice." Gozzi, *The Useless Memoirs,* 168.

[75] Gozzi, *Useless Memoirs*, 156.

[76] Carlson, *The Italian Stage*, 12.

[77] Carlo Gozzi, *Useless Memoirs*, trans. John Addington Symonds, 179.

Commedia and utilizing masked characters for production.[78] Gozzi wrote his theatrical works partially as a joke, and partially due to an overwhelming need to attack Goldoni's reforms.

In Venice, public opinion began to tilt towards the works of Gozzi, even while the theatres associated with both playwrights enjoyed healthy audiences and long runs. Goldoni wrote of his worries to an anonymous friend in a letter from Rome dated 28 April 1759, "You will return to Italy in time to see my new productions, and this is my fervent desire, since in your absence I am without one of my greatest friends… We are in calamitous times in which truth cannot be maintained by itself, and once voice more, or one less, can tilt the balance."[79] There are several columns by Goldoni published in *La Gazzetta Veneta* in 1761 and 1762, which respond to the accusations, but these appear to be his only public replies to Gozzi's attacks. Instead, Goldoni continued to spend his energy in the creation of new plays for performance. Goldoni does not refer to Carlo Gozzi in his memoir, and indeed spends little time recounting the feud.[80] Only one remark in his memoir alludes to the controversy, "My custom has always been never to mention the names of my adversaries."[81] He

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[78] Marvin Carlson, *The Italian Stage from Goldoni to D'Annunzio* (Jefferson, North Car.: McFarland and Company, 1981), 12.

[79] Carlo Goldoni, Rome to Anonymous, France, 28 April 1759, Literary and Historical Manuscripts, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

[80] Gozzi, on the other hand, mentioned Goldoni at every opportunity in his memoirs.

[81] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 311.

does, however, thank his supporters Count Verri and Count Gaspare Gozzi, among others, who defend his reforms in the public.[82]

Goldoni biographer Joseph Spencer Kennard argues that the debate between classical standards and the reforms was inevitable due the rapidly changing social structure of Venice and of Italy during the eighteenth century. The class differences between the two men were a microcosm of the growing social tensions in Venice, further fueled by the publication of political literature by French philosophers Montesquieu and Rosseau.[83] "Goldoni is the representative of the middle class and the forerunner of a more democratic and national spirit, Gozzi is an embodiment of that which was passing. He is the representative of aristocratic prejudice, of Venetian separatism."[84] Goldoni supported the new concepts of a democracy which allowed for consumptive freedom for all regardless of class, while Gozzi defended the ideas of classical Venetian republic, which advocated a specific class structure and a ruling body drawn from the landed aristocracy.

As one specific example of the differences between the two men, Goldoni offered the gondoliers free admission to Teatro San Angelo during his production of *La Putta Onorata* in 1748. While this was transparently a marketing stunt, since the play reproduced the daily ritual known as the 'gondolier's quarrel', it also indicates

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[82] To clarify, Count Gaspare Gozzi was the editor of *La Gazzetta Veneta* and a supporter of Goldoni. Goldoni's main detractor, Count Carlo Gozzi, was Gaspare's brother.

[83] Both Montsequieu and Rosseau were frequent visitors to the city of Venice in the mid-eighteenth century. They also both studied the Venetian political system, and their works could be bought at popular booksellers such as Giovanni Pasquali's store. Andrea di Robilant, *A Venetian Affair (*New York: Alfred Knopf, 2003), 16.

[84] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time (*New York: Benjamin Blom, 1920). 186.

the type of audience Goldoni wished to draw to his works, a cross section of Venetian society from all social classes. "They are a loquacious and a gossiping race, but they love better to have a quiet chat at the top of their voices… or to scream repartees across the Grand Canal…. It is true that the gondolier loves best of everything a clamorous quarrel."[85] Goldoni wrote:

> I wished to be reconciled to this class of domestics, who were deserving of some attention…. The gondoliers at Venice… could not enter at my comedies, they were forced to wait for their masters in the streets, or in their gondolas. I had myself heard them with very droll and comical ephithets; and when I procured them a few places in the corners of the house, they were quite delighted to see themselves brought on the stage, and I became their friend.[86]

Gozzi called the gondoliers' admission "a trick for gaining their support, and [Goldoni's] comedies were dismissed by many members of elegant society as rough and crude productions for the masses."[87] Goldoni's observation that the Gondoliers were delighted to see themselves onstage offers perhaps the clearest example of his mission as a playwright. He hoped to re-create, using colloquial and accessible language, the 'real' Venice that he saw everyday. He democratized his drama, just as democratic reforms were permeating Italian culture, challenging old hierarchies and social boundaries.

Between 1761 and 1762, "Gozzi's romantic fantasies written for the commedia temporarily eclipsed the realistic comedies of Goldoni."[88] Thus, in 1762, Goldoni moved to Paris to fulfill a writing contract with the Comèdie Italienne. His

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[85] W.D. Howells, *Venetian Life* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1907), 310, 315.

[86] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 242.

[87] Carlson, *The Italian Stage*, 7.

[88] Helen Krich Chinoy and Toby Cole, *Actors on Acting* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1949), 440.

contract with the Italian theatre of the Commedia in Paris is the most compelling and documented reason for Goldoni's move to France in 1763, since his work was then receiving less-than-positive reviews in Venice. "Although the popular story that Gozzi's success literally drove Goldoni from Venice is surely somewhat exaggerated, the shift in public enthusiasm for his rival's work was doubtless an important consideration in Goldoni's decision to accept a new post."[89] Unfortunately, he was less successful in Parisian theatres than he was in Venice, and only a handful of his works were ever performed in Paris. Many of his French works were re-writes of the plays that enjoyed their greatest success during his Venetian career, or were variations on the standard Commedia dell'Arte themes most familiar to the performers and audiences at the Comèdie Italienne.[90]

After ending his contract with the Comèdie Italienne in 1764, Goldoni taught Italian to the French royal family while under the protection of Princess Adelaide, the oldest living daughter of Louis XV. Goldoni did not excel at the French court as Molière had in the seventeenth century, for he "was not shaped for politics and never became more than a humble Italian teacher."[91] He ended his career in poverty as a minor figure at the French court in the last days before the Revolution. He never returned to either Venice or Italy. He wrote in his memoir, "With such an honorable

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[89] Carlson, *The Italian Stage*, 12-3.

[90] An example of this might be *The Beneficent Bear*, written in 1771 for the Comèdie Française. The French play is largely a re-write of the earlier *The Superior Residence,* focusing on slightly different characters. It is essentially the same plot, but is more conventional in dialogue and character than the original, and lacks much of the original's material culture references.

[91] Timothy Holmes, *A Servant to Many Masters*, 167. See Chapters 7, 8, and 9 of Virginia Scott's biography of Molière (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) for further discussion of Molière's time at the Court of the Sun King, Louis XIV.

employment [at the French court], and such powerful protection, I ought to have made a brilliant fortune in France. If I have acquired only a very moderate fortune, it has been my own fault. I was at court, but I was not a courtier."[92] His last days in Paris were spent visiting friends, going to the theatre and parties, gambling, and writing his memoir, published in 1787 on the eve of the Revolution.

> I pass the rest of my time in my ordinary mode of living in town. I rise at nine o'clock in the morning, and breakfast on chocolate, I labour [sic] until midday, and then walk till two o'clock. I am fond of society, and go out in quest of it. I frequently dine in the city, or at home, in the society of my wife.… Sometimes I go to the theatre, but I am most generally at parties till nine o'clock in the evening…. I take two or three small cakes with a glass of wine and water, and this is the whole of my supper. I converse with my wife until midnight; we sleep together conjugally in the same bed in winter, and in two beds in the same room in summer; I very soon fall asleep, and pass the night tranquilly.[93]

Goldoni died penniless at the age of 86 in Paris on the evening of 6 February 1793, as the French government had revoked his pension for services to the royal court. Ironically, the day after his death, the La Convention Nationale reinstated his pension. Upon learning of Goldoni's death, the French government granted his widow Nicoletta payments until her death.

Section 4 Goldoni and Consumption

Goldoni's life was long and his career as a playwright was active. The issue to be further explored here is how the playwright consumed popular goods in his life and embedded that pattern of consumption in his works. Despite an impressive output of plays during his lifetime, there are very few instances in Goldoni's own account of his life where he practiced self-discipline in regard to luxury or consumption. "I was too agreeably occupied… to find leisure to write… I have always been fond of

[92] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 379.

[93] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 478, 480.

pleasure."[94] He saw himself as an Italian of "good taste… a man who, with a moderate fortune, contrives to possess a charming house, select servants, an excellent cook, and shines in society an affluent individual."[95] He was by his own account of his life a happy-go-lucky spendthrift who enjoyed the finer things in life and the finest foods, more concerned with enjoyment on a physical level than in either spiritual or financial well-being. For example, when visiting a group of clergy in Pusterlengo in 1734 in order to present a reading of his tragedy *Bellisaurius,* Goldoni reported sleeping in a good bed until ten in the morning, having his morning chocolate and then enjoying the sunny day with a walk in the country. After a fine dinner, he settled in to read his work to the assembled clergymen.[96] Prayer and inner reflection were not his primary goals in this visit to an abbey, he sought personal comfort in a country setting.

Goldoni seems to have enjoyed luxury wherever he went. In 1754 on a trip to join the Vendramin troupe then performing in Bologna, Goldoni was detained by government officials at a bridge outside of Ferrara "where certain duties are demanded."[97] He had apparently neglected to present one of his trunks for inspection when crossing the bridge of Lago-Scuro. Upon searching the luggage, the officials found chocolate, coffee, and candles, which were considered contraband. He received a fine for carrying these luxuries. Goldoni stated in his memoir that the

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[94] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 335.

[95] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 256.

[96] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 148.

[97] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 296.

officer subsequently recognized him after seeing several copies of his plays in the trunk, and managed to work a deal with his superiors so that Goldoni would pay a reduced fine for carrying luxury items. Goldoni offered the officer money and even a share of his personal stash of chocolate, but the officer refused the enticement. However, "I wrote his name down in my memorandum book; I promised him a copy of my new edition, an offer he accepted with gratitude."[98] As the anecdote suggests, Goldoni so enjoyed the high quality chocolate and coffee that he traveled with a ready supply, rather than accept less-suitable substitutes when on tour. These items had clearly become necessities for a middle-class and civilized man of taste by the 1740s, who would include these goods in his luggage when he traveled. These luxury items had permeated every corner of daily life, taken for granted among people of a certain class.

Another example of this enjoyment of luxury took place in Rome in 1758-9, while he was writing for the Tordinona Theatre. Goldoni and his wife stayed with a Roman citizen named Pietro Poloni, who was apparently quite taken with the famous guest's works, and knew of his reputation as a connoisseur of good food. Poloni insisted on personally making every dish served to Goldoni, tempting him with exotic and interesting foods and refusing to allow anyone else in the household to sample them.[99] Goldoni's attitude towards the enjoyment of foods and goods is as much a part of the basic themes of the traditional Commedia as the *Arlecchino* who consumed food, the lovers who consumed romance, and the *Pantalone* who consumed both gold and young women. In his works, he returned constantly to the

[98] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 297.

[99] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 324-5.

themes of desire and gratification as a democratic ideal, delighting in a good dinner and a soft bed, proper dress and good social standing. His characters display the same tendencies. Their patterns of consumption uncover who they are, and even more, who they want to be.

Goldoni focused on the "*Scienza di Buon Gusto*" (The Science of Good Taste) as it was practiced by newly wealthy merchants, calling attention to the dangers that go along with the acquisition of wealth.[100] In his plays, he satirized the problems he observed in the bourgeoisie class, in an attempt to reform people's behavior. His predilection for representing 'life' as he saw it daily is recorded in his memoir. "Comedy… an imitation of nature… [is] everywhere… and…furnished me with virtuous models and traits of good moral conduct."[101] This 'imitation of nature,' a precept likely drawn from Aristotle, is the foundation of the reforms that Goldoni brought to the Venetian theatre, seemingly at odds with his natural tendency to luxury. Goldoni's personal practice was to enjoy consumption, as is demonstrated in this anecdote from his early youth. Goldoni writes in his memoir of a time he spent in Germany in 1720 with his father, a traveling doctor. His father was in the employ of Count Lantieri, a lieutenant general in the army of Charles VI of Germany. Goldoni stayed at the Count's home in Gorizia, a busy and fashionable residence and military headquarters. He wrote lovingly and longingly of the table the Count set for his guests, and also recounts the table fashions of the German upper class of the time.

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[100] "The Science of Good Taste" is a way of describing the rules to be followed in order to live well, the intimate understandings of matters of decorum, and the prescribed path of consumption that corresponds with the choices of the nobility who influenced all matters of popular culture.

[101] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 244-5

He recalls the menu if not precisely, at least with a memory as to its abundance and rather ostentatious edible display of meat sculpture.

> His table was not delicately but abundantly served…a dish of roast, which was the etiquette; a foreleg of mutton or of venison, or a breast of veal, constituted the base of it above this were hares or pheasants; with red and grey partridges above them, and next woodcocks or snipes; or thrushes; and the pyramid ended with larks and fig-peckers. This strange assemblage was immediately shared out and distributed… the amateurs of meat saw the large pieces which were most to their taste uncovered… It was also the etiquette to serve three sorts of soup at each repast: bread soup with the ragouts, and herb soup with the first service, and peeled barley with the entremets: this barley was moistened with the gravy of the roast meat, and I was told it was good for digestion. The wines were excellent: there was a certain sort of red wine which was called the 'child begetter', and which gave rise to some good jokes.[102]

The care with which Goldoni described the menu and the joy he took in the memory of consumption and sociable table behavior demonstrated his interest in the meal and the social environ. The repartee and camaraderie of the soldiers at the table and the proliferation of strong roasted meats and abundant wine help reconstruct the military table manners and masculine hearty lower class foods meant to promote potency and power.

Goldoni also spoke of his first experience with a group of actors, dating from 1721. On their travels, he recorded their hunger and their joy at being fed, and recounted the menu they had aboard ship on their way to Chiozza. One actress, he recalls:

> Asked for soup. There was none. She was in quite a rage, and they

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[102] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 70. The rather rough and tumble world of professional soldiery did not preclude the need for a well-set table and complex menu, heavily meat-based and featuring all the fashionable course placement of the time. In this period in Germany, there would have been two or three courses, one featuring soups and lighter dishes such as eggs or milk, the other two courses would features several dishes of meats and roasts simply prepared. There would have been few fresh vegetables or salads. French Haute cuisine would have been inaccurately imitated in this part of Europe at this time. Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, 189-90

> had all the difficulty in the world to pacify her with a cup of chocolate…. Macaroni! Every one fell on it, and three dishes were devoured. We also had à la mode beef, cold fowl, a loin of beef, a dessert, and an excellent wine. What a charming dinner! No cheer like a good appetite.[103]

The menu is fashionable with its chocolate and cold fowl (although not with its omission of a soup to start the meal), and caters to people who clearly understood and practiced fashionable eating.

Although happily married, Goldoni had many romantic involvements, and these relationships offer another clue to his overall patterns of consumption. He remained with Nicoletta until his death in 1793 and by all accounts loved her deeply and she him. Yet he enjoyed the company of many women, especially the actresses who performed the role of the *Columbina*.[104] Goldoni wrote, "I was fond of my wife; I shared my pleasures with her, and she followed me everywhere… The only place she did not accompany me was to my female friend's… this actress was not to her taste, and there is no disputing respecting taste."[105] Kennard writes that Goldoni's relations with women were typical of gentlemen of his time, and amount to little more than occasional enjoyments. The morality of the time accepted extramarital affairs, and in some ways expected that married partners would have close social

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[103] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 17.

[104] "These buxom wenches were the fresh and frisky servant-confidentes, who were sometimes crafty and nearly always of doubtful morals. In Italy, this type was called the *servetta birichina,* or artful servant-maid… She was… noted for her coquetry… the constant friend and companion of Harlequin… and by her keen and active wit was able to hold her own in every situation and emerge with ease and dignity from the most involved intrigues." Pierre Louis Duchartre, *The Italian Comedy*, 278.

[105] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 212. The phrasing indicates that Goldoni found the actress very much to his taste.

acquaintances of the opposite sex.[106] "His flirtations with actresses are of little consequence. Goldoni was at first a toy in their pretty hands, and when he became… the man who could give them a role, he in turn toyed with their petty vanities and rivalries."[107] His crushes gave him fodder for his theatrical creations of women, as he wrote roles for specific actresses and attempted to give their stage characters the personas of the actors who portrayed them.[108] He is credited with constructing some of the first three-dimensional and intriguing female characters of the Commedia, such as Rosaura from *The Artful Widow*, Mirandolina from *The Mistress of the Inn* and Beatrice from *A Servant to Two Masters*.[109] The construction of such complex and interesting female characters seems to bespeak his appreciation and respect for the role of women in business, and in family life.

These three characters were inspired by Theodora Medebach and Maddalena Raffi Marliani, actresses of the Medebach company with whom Goldoni maintained long friendships. "To assume that his friendships were really quite so simple and superficial (that of the collaboration of an actress and playwright)… would be to ignore both Goldoni's great susceptibility to feminine charms and the Venetian

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[106] A Venetian custom of the eighteenth century is the *cicisbeo* system. The word comes from *cicisbeare,* or to whisper. Married Venetian women of the patrician class had a male chaperon who accompanied her in public, while gambling or going to the theatre. The *cicisbeo* was an accepted part of Venetian social structure, and considered a disgrace for women to only be accompanied in public by their husbands. The *cicisbeo* must be of the same rank as the woman, and be eligible to serve on the Venetian Senate. He attended his lady while she was dressing, at her salons, and "no fashionable husband can lift up his head while his wife lacks her 'servant'." By the eighteenth century, the married woman and the *cicisbeo* might have had a sexual component to their relationship. "If the relation was a smooth one it meant continual titillation—and petty bickering and snapping if it was not." Maurice Rowdon, *The Fall of Venice* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970), 97.

[107] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time,* 76-7.

[108] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time,* 134.

[109] Goldoni, *Three Comedies*, trans. and introduced by Frederick Davies (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 17.

morality of his time."[110] The rivalry between the two women for Goldoni's affections and attentions, as well as their stage rivalries for roles within the same company, partially precipitated his departure for the Vedramin company in 1753.[111] Before his departure, he wrote a play entitled *The Revengeful Woman* for Maddalena, "a slight revenge of the author against Coralina (Maddalena's stage name), who, piqued at my departure, and at the inutility of all her efforts to prevent it, vowed eternal hatred against me… She did not, however, play [the role]."[112] His theatrical authorship became a way for him to enjoy the company of actresses, as well as to spend evenings with acting companies enjoying the fine dining and sumptuous parties of the theatrical lifestyle.

In an earlier and more amusing example of Goldoni's interactions with actresses, Goldoni took up with an actress from the Imer company in 1736. His relationship with the actress Madame Elisabetta Passalacqua, who played first ladies and female servants at the San Samuele Theatre, began innocently enough but then soon took several dramatic turns. Goldoni became sexually involved with Passalacqua; however the actress was also seeing an actor of the same company, Vitalba, who specialized in lovers and heroic leads. When Goldoni discovered Passalacqua's infidelity, he tried to end the affair, but she swore her love for Goldoni and threatened suicide with a knife. He "pardoned her everything, promised

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[110] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time,* 136-7.

[111] The women's rivalry led to the mental agitation of Theodora Medebach, as she was replaced in Goldoni's heart and in his plays by the newcomer Maddalena. Finally, Goldoni could no longer hide the affairs (especially since he was dallying with the wife of Medebach, his theatre manager and employer). Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time,* 356. Also see Timothy Holmes, *A Servant to Many Masters* (London: Jupiter Books, 1976), 121.

[112] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 278-279.

everything, and remained with her. We dined together and… we were on our former footing… I was convinced she loved me also. I invented reasons to excuse her failings."[113]

However, later finding her continuing her dalliance with the handsome Vitalba, he took leave of Passalacqua again and concocted an ingenious revenge, documented in the memoir. While writing his Italian treatment of the Molière play *Don Juan*, he created the character of Eliza the Shepardess specifically for Passalacqua. Eliza cuckolds Carlino the Shepard (a love-lorn and well-meaning character standing in for Goldoni himself). Eliza is sadly used in return by Don Juan, played by none other than Vitalba. "I put the same discourse in the mouth of Eliza as that which Passalacqua had made use of to deceive me… and in this manner I took my revenge upon the actress."[114] He even includes in the play the melodramatic scene with the dagger as Don Juan deceives poor Eliza. Goldoni dictated to the director which actors in the company were to play which roles, so that the actress would be forced to play herself.[115] In this way, Goldoni cast himself as the wily 'cortesan' and consumer, as he mined real life for effective and amusing storylines.[116]

Goldoni primarily wrote comedies, but did attempt to write tragedies early in his career in order to maximize his earnings, for "the profits of comedy are very

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[113] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 172.

[114] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 174.

[115] When Passalacqua discovered the stage text mirrored real life so closely, she complained to the director, who forced her to carry through with the performance as written. Goldoni had exacted his revenge.

[116] I mean cortesan here rather than courtesan. Goldoni defined cortesan as not a corruption of the word courtier (courtesan), but is rather derived from courtesy and courageous, meaning a character who preserves the importance of the *bella figura* and the social niceties of daily life.

moderate in Italy for the author, and from opera alone I could [collect] a hundred sequins at once."[117] His tragedies failed, because he was temperamentally unsuited to them. His lyrical tragedy about the queen of the Osrogoths, *Amalasante*, was relegated to the fire after a severe criticism of the work by Count Prata, a theatre owner in Milan in 1732.[118] After he burned the play, he "began to reflect that on no occasion had I to sacrifice my supper to my chagrin. I called the waiter and ordered him to cover the table instantly… I ate heartily, and drank even more so; I then went to bed, and enjoyed a profound sleep."[119] He wrote another tragedy entitled *Bellisarius in* 1734, where his "unpreparedness and the confusion in his mind is shown in… a tragic and historical subject Bellisario, while he entirely lacks both the sense of history and the pathos of tragedy."[120] This tragedy was produced by Imer's company, as were three later tragedies, labeled by biographer Kennard as "mere potboilers, and as little worthy of notice as many other mistaken incursions of Goldoni's into a field of an art not his own."[121] Goldoni soon stopped writing tragedies in favor of the lighter comedies of character and consumption.[122]

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[117] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 107.

[118] This play was one of Goldoni's first attempts at theatrical writing, and was the work of an immature writer. It was criticized as being too long, with too many characters for tragedy, and as having an unsuitable plot. At this time, the rules of neoclassicism were prevalent in the construction of tragedy, and *Amalasante* definitely did not adhere to these rules. In fact, according to biographer Holmes, "In Vicenza he showed Amalasanta to an old Venetian acquaintance, who received it coldly and suggested, wisely… that Carlo should try his hand at comedy." Holmes, *A Servant to Many Masters*, 45.

[119] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 125.

[120] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time,* 256.

[121] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time,* 256.

[122] In Goldoni's memoir, much mention is made of food in the sections that address the writing of the tragedies. Food is constant throughout the memoir, and was seemingly an obsession of

Goldoni contextualized his observations about Venetian culture in the writing of his characters and their actions, utilizing a familiar cultural context and a recognizable framework for audiences. He and his audience shared a specific moral outlook on life, which precluded wholesale mixing of classes, but supported limited movement between social classes and the enjoyment of certain aspects of material wealth. For instance, in 1750 Goldoni wrote his play *Pamela*, based on Samuel Richardson's famous 1740 British novel of the same name. *Pamela* is about a maidservant of the lower class who is pursued by a nobleman for whom she works, and who attempts to keep herself chaste. Eventually, in the novel, Richardson's Pamela ends up being forced to marry the nobleman, but finds love in her relationship after trials and tribulations, transforming herself into a member of the upper class. Goldoni's concern in translating Richardson's 'dangerous' work to the Venetian stage was its morally suspect ending of the mixing of the classes, a concept anathema to an Italian who supported the "rigid division of caste that was the basis of the Venetian life."[123] He wrote in his memoirs, "I did not, however, begin the work till I had invented a denouement which, instead of being dangerous, might serve as a model to virtuous lovers, and render the catastrophe both more agreeable and more interesting."[124]

Goldoni's. He drank fine chocolate and read *Bellisario* to a group of priests in Pusterliengo on route to Brescia; he reads both *Amalasante* and *Bellisario* to the actors over dinner at the director's home, where "the dinner was splendid." (*Memoir* 152). Although concerned with tragic matters, he continually returned to matters of the stomach in his enjoyment of a fine dinner and good chocolate.

[123] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 321.

[124] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 256.

Goldoni's *Pamela* follows the plot of the original until immediately before the marriage, when it is discovered that Pamela is not of lowly birth, but instead is the long lost daughter of a Scottish laird, and is therefore of the same social class as Lord Bonfil. Although Goldoni believed in the concept of social leveling, he (and the Venetian moral code) considered the marriage of people from different classes dangerous and subversive. Since theatre ought to exist as a form of education and prescriptive behavior, his version of *Pamela* needed to be adapted. Goldoni called comedy "a school for propriety", which exposes "human weaknesses for the sake of correcting them."[125] Therefore, the union was only morally sanctioned after the couple was found to be of similar social class.

In another example from his memoir, Goldoni writes of a character from his 1750 *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto (The Man of Good Taste*).[126] This definition of the main character from Goldoni's memoirs might describe the way Goldoni saw himself as an ambassador of Italian culture. "The Italian of good taste, whom I paint in my piece, is a man who, with a moderate fortune, contrives to possess a charming house, select servants, an excellent cook, and shines in society as an affluent individual, without injuring any one or deranging his affairs."[127] The plot of the play concerns itself with false friends who want to ruin Count Ottavio, the noble 'man of good taste,' despite the fact that the Count entertains and feeds them according to the highest fashion. This 'Venetian' man (although the play was set in Naples)

[125] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 255.

[126] The play will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Four.

[127] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 256.

exemplifies *la Dolce Vita* (the sweet life) and *la scienza di buon gusto* (the science of good taste), so prized by Venetians. The Count's luxury and his belongings and menus are envied by others in society, as they flock to his home and his table to partake of the luxuries his wealth can purchase. However, it is perfectly justified that the Italian of good taste would have a nice home, servants, and good taste with regard to the table. These objects are acceptable to be consumed, and important to the quality of life. Goldoni advocated the moderate enjoyment of food and fashionable living. Goldoni's appreciation for the details of luxury is apparent in his descriptions of his life, and he used this theme of enjoyment of classed goods in his efforts to democratize the theatre forms of Venice. His satirization of the pit-falls of how class is determined in his own culture resulted in the codification of these objects for the theatre. His treatment of these themes brought about a new language for the Italian theatre which helped to define status issues for the consuming public.

Chapter Two

"I enjoyed all the pleasures of society, a good table"[1]: Consumption and the Eighteenth Century Venetian Consuming Public

This chapter will fuse several theories of consumption with a historiographical view of the social structure of eighteenth century Venice. My notion of the Venetian *consuming public*, as derived from Habermas' *public sphere*, is particularly important in analyzing the social levels of the eighteenth-century Venetian merchant. The act of consumption is variously defined in modern historiographic work, as well as by theorists Bourdieu, Habermas, Agnew, and Goffman. All of these different views, when discussed together, offer a view of the consumptive power of different classes in the formation of popular taste. Contemporary historians such as Joyce Appleby, Peter Burke, Roy Porter, and Woodruff Smith have recently explored the role of consumption in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Their discussions influence my observations on how consumption impacts Venetian class structure and forms a consuming public's taste. The second part of this chapter will center on the social construction of eighteenth-century Venice and will address the codification of culture and the various classes within Venetian society, contextualizing the development of the consuming public of Venice.

Section 1 Theories of Consumption

I have suggested throughout my brief overview of Goldoni's life and career that he was a consumer of luxury and that he devoted much of his time and energy to

[1] Carlo Goldoni, *Memoir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), 82

securing what were to him the 'necessities' of a 'civilized' life. The words "consumer" and "consumption" have complex implications. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a *consumer* as "he who or that which consumes, wastes, squanders, or destroys."[2] *Consumption* is defined by Oxford as "The action or fact of consuming or destroying; destruction."[3] These definitions have negative connotations, and imply an action that wastes or destroys goods rather than emphasizing possible strength from that which is consumed. These definitions are problematic when attempting to describe the ways in which Goldoni's characters utilized goods in the performance of wealth, for they do not mention the desired object, but merely the action itself and the 'actor'. *The American Heritage Dictionary* provides a more satisfactory, albeit contemporary meaning, defining a *consumer* as "one that acquires goods or services for direct use or ownership rather than for resale or use in production and manufacturing."[4] Here, the word *consume* is defined as meaning "to purchase (goods or services) for direct use or ownership, or to waste; squander." There is no useful product implicit in this definition, which is why it is a wasteful action. The *American Heritage* more interestingly gives an alternative

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[2] Oxford English Dictionary Online, (2005), "Definition of Consumer", http://dictionary.oed.com, (13 September 2005).

[3] Oxford English Dictionary Online, (2005), "Definition of Consumption", http://dictionary.oed.com, (13 September 2005).

[4] The American Heritage Dictionary Online, (2005), "Definition of Consumer", http://www.bartleby.com, (13 September 2005).

definition of the verb *consume* as "To absorb, engross", which implies that the object one consumes becomes a part of the consumer.[5]

Contemporary theorists define consumption in different ways. In *Distinctions*, Bourdieu theorized that taste (a cultural need) and the actual production of goods are linked by the laws of supply and demand. This ensures that what a group finds 'tasteful', or worthy of consumption, is available in the marketplace to be ingested by whoever has developed a taste for a specific product. However, the "antagonistic relations between the different classes or class fractions over material or cultural consumer goods" constantly mediate this process of displaying available goods for use by a consumer.[6] The object that one class finds desirable is repudiated by another class as drab or tasteless.[7] This ebb and flow of tastefulness helps determine market value, as well as the residual meanings of the objects formed by the cultural market. The subjective demand by different classes of people for objects to be obtained "enables taste to be realized" by the "the universe of cultural goods as a system of stylistic possibilities… constituting a lifestyle."[8] With his dramatic

[5] The American Heritage Dictionary Online, (2005), "Definition of Consume", http://www.bartleby.com, (13 September 2005).

[6] Bourdieu, *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 230.

[7] An example might be the enjoyment of peasant foods by eighteenth century upper class Italians, such as polenta. Eating rustic foods also became a trend among some classes, as an alternative to *Haute Cuisine*. Goldoni discussed spending time in the country, saying he grew accustomed to "breakfasting on milk, and sometimes sharing the fare of the peasants, which is a soup composed of turkey corn, called polenta, and of which we made the most delightful toasts." Goldoni *Memoir*, 88. People who routinely ate polenta when they could find little else did not find it as appealing as those who consumed it because of its idyllic status.

[8] Bourdieu, *Distinctions*, 230.

displays of fine dining, Goldoni's theatrical and private performances of consumption affirmed the hegemonic food culture of the period.

Bourdieu further stated that taste is determined by the choice of objects that align with one's position in society.[9] Taste and consumption are interdependent marks of distinction as the consumer signals his or her own place in society through culturally determined taste as well as performed consumption of objects.[10] Consumption redefines the field of the meanings of material goods and taste, for "consuming… creates the object of consumption."[11] The object is given meaning through its being chosen, through the consequential interpretation by society to in turn identify whether the consumer is of an appropriate class level, as well as the inherent meaning of the object as determined by cultural competence. Bourdieu suggests that consumption identifies the *habitus* to which an individual truly belongs. *Habitus* is defined by Bourdieu as "the internalized form of class condition and the conditionings it entails."[12] Therefore, class *habitus* is the cultural structure that supports and helps demonstrate variations in the classed characteristics of daily life. In this way, taste and personal choice are determined by the class habitus of the individual, an internal conditioning which prefers the champagne Moêt & Chandon to a mid-level sparkler Totts in the twenty-first century, or burgundy to rosolio in the eighteenth. For Bourdieu, the interaction of lifestyle choices of the individual and

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[9] Bourdieu, *Distinctions*, 232.

[10] Bourdieu's idea of *habitus* helps explain how a consumer expresses taste as a defining characteristic. *Habitus* is "a structured and stucturing system" (171) Taste of the individual and the prevailing system of classifications help determine the position the object occupies in the structuring system (*Habitus*). (172)

[11] Bourdieu, *Distinctions,* 282.

[12] Bourdieu, *Distinctions,* 101.

their corresponding *habitus* leads to a change in the distribution of the perceived power of the individual and solidifies the differences between groups.

Habermas was also interested in this public display of social influence and power, and his definition of the public sphere helps gives structure to the social rules governing consumption in the eighteenth century. According to Habermas, consumer culture replaced print, newspaper, and novels as the determinants of culture and power in the public sphere.[13] The "world of letters, which instituted the beginnings of the public sphere, soon gave way to a 'realm of consumption'… [encompassing apolitical] leisure behavior."[14] He posited consumption as an expression of individualized self-unconnected to the group. The public sphere itself was originally theorized by Habermas as a democratizing influence encouraging equality in society; however consumption is a hierarchical and dividing authority of haves and have-nots in the public sphere. As consumer culture became more ingrained within society, individual expression through buying power and belongings became a new but debased, unequal, and apolitical form of the public sphere.[15] The individuality of the consumer, expressed by their choices in the marketplace, took precedence over

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[13] Nancy Fraser suggests that Habermas idealizes the idea of the public sphere and the amount of influence previously private individuals can have in a structure does not allow them equal access to goods, services, and ideas. She states, "The full utopian potential of the bourgeoisie conception of the public sphere was never realized in practice." Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy" in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 109-142.

[14] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989), 160.

[15] Note footnote 13 above for the flaws within Habermas' ideas of the public sphere.

recognized power as part of a public group, for participation in that group was granted to many individuals.[16]

The public sphere was the key in enabling an individual to access the public debate, but participation in the marketplace of cultural consumption required financial means. "Put bluntly, you had to pay for books, theatre, concert, and museum, but not for the conversation about what you had read, heard, and seen."[17] Consumption is not predicated on aesthetic considerations or even personal choice, but by availability the whims of fashion and the corporate marketplace.[18] Culture (theatre, art) and its corresponding consumptive choices (fashion, food, décor) elevated and defined public acceptance of an individual, but did not radically change their place within the public sphere. "The people [meaning for Habermas the lower and middle classes] were brought up to the level of culture; culture was not lowered to that of the masses."[19] The marketplace itself and the role of consumption in culture are both problematic for Habermas, since the marketplace's very importance as a space of public debate devolves to one of 'mass taste' and the basic imbalance of the public sphere does not equalize social influence.[20]

Other historians explore the idea of artistic growth and cultural change as a result of the marketplace. In *Worlds Apart*, Jean-Christophe Agnew posits the idea

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[16] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 161.

[17] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 164.

[18] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 165.

[19] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 166. He seemed to suggest that meaning of the objects to be consumed is fixed and unchangeable, and not in flux as Bourdieu believed.

[20] Goldoni seemed to posit consumption as having little favorable effect on his character's status in the public sphere, as they consume goods; but they actually have their power eroded.

that patterns of consumption and market relations help to illustrate cultural and artistic growth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Agnew defines consumption as "the moment of economic 'trade-off' toward the outcome of a personal and interpersonal sequence of exchange." He goes on to say that "[it is] the image of its outcome, that is, as an infinitely divisible series of trade-offs consciously or unconsciously entertained by the individual."[21] Agnew explores consumption as a system of individual experiences of adapting culture to a new market economy.

The social meaning of the goods is more significant than the financial value, for the motives of the people who consume help determine cultural significance. Therefore, the history of the market can be observed and explained by the different disciplines of cultural exchange and market exchange. Agnew suggests that the term "free market" as it is normally referred to in traditional economic theory alters considerably in this reading of consumption as cultural exchange, becoming "a radical disruption and restructuration of needs and their mode of gratification via the market."[22] Agnew's view of consumption is personal and individual as it then helps qualify cultural norms and fantasies of luxury.

One of the places that consumption became an object of debate was the theatre, as the "laboratory of and for new social relations…. [improvising] a new social contract between itself and the audience."[23] Consumption is vital to the formation of a "commodity self: a mercurial exchange value or 'bubble' floating on

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[21] Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought 1550-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3.

[22] Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart*, 5.

[23] Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart*, xi, 11.

the tides of what attention others were disposed to invest."[24] Agnew argues that theatre helped to materialize the definition of the commodity self. Goldoni created this theatrical construction of the middle class, who freely made consumptive choices designed to symbolize their 'self as commodity'. His characters became the artistic representation of consumption in society, as the Venetian consuming public attempted to negotiate their relationship to the changing world of consumption. For Goldoni's characters, the job of planning dinner is not merely to eat the evening meal, but becomes instead a business proposition in which their understanding of current fashion is put on display to be judged by both the others at the table and the members of the audience.

For Erving Goffman, the role of consumption in society lies in 'Impression Management', as an individual seeks to strengthen his self-performance and employs specific tools in order to maintain his projection of self. The effect of consumption on the individual is not important, nor is the literal use of the objects one has accumulated; it is the effect the object has on the audience that matters. Objects that people use to define self reinforce the performative fiction they create. These objects are in essence stage properties, with no more necessary function than their performative use. "The circumspect performer will adjust his presentation according to the character of the props… out of which he must build his performance."[25] The 'front stage' of the performance is what an individual projects as self. The 'back stage' is the actuality of the individual's background, the root circumstances.

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[24] Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart*, 13.

[25] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 224.

Individuals plan environment, clothing, even the appearance of the food on their tables in order to impress others, performing above and beyond the sheltering affects of clothing and the nourishing influence of food. Therefore, consumption is geared not only toward maintaining life, but also is also geared toward this very specific task of signifying performance of personal choices. Goldoni created a very specific 'front stage' of consumption in his works, with the 'back stage' being the audience's understood cultural context of Venetian class divisions.

Consumption is a ritual act that occurs before, during and after the exchange of money for goods, entertainment, food, sex, objects, or ideas. Consumption implies ownership of that which is consumed. The social and cultural meaning of the consumptive event continues to evolve after the initial exchange of objects. In *Culture and Consumption,* Grant McCracken posits consumption as the "processes by which consumer goods and services are created, bought, and used…. Consumption is thoroughly cultural in character"[26] In other words, consumption includes the entire structural system of manufacture, sales, ownership, and usage, as well as the meanings that reverberate throughout culture due to the choice of preferred goods. The individual consumes not only the object itself but also the cultural meaning of the object. For instance, if a twenty-first century woman buys a pair of Manolo pumps, she is paying not only for the fashionable shoes, but also for the accumulated popular meaning of the shoes that exists in the cultural marketplace. However, objects have

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[26] Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington: Indiana University press, 1990), xi. He points out that the act of consumption is charged with cultural meaning, specifically with the intent to express self, enjoy a certain lifestyle, and with the ability to "create (and survive) social change." (xi)

different cultural meanings, depending on their evolved symbolism. A consumer can choose the object that he/she hopes will signify self, the one that best expresses his/her individuality.[27] The woman who buys sexy Manolo pumps most likely will not buy Birkenstock sandals, for the cultural significance of these brands of footwear are vastly different. The meanings of the goods evolve over time, and can be read by an audience educated in the specific symbols of the object.[28] In the luxurious and sensuous moment when the object becomes owned, the consumer *hopes* to be fundamentally changed by the object's significance to others and the value placed upon it by popular culture. The consumer views the moment as liminal; however, the event is seldom able to alter the individual's status irrevocably.

Objects develop different meanings as they are read by their receivers/audience. This interpretation of consumption is informed by Bourdieu's definition of taste as resultant from both an individual's background and his/her level of education. According to Bourdieu, an individual cannot transcend his/her initial class status, no matter the degree of achieved education. Goldoni's characters attempt to learn hegemonic taste through specific cultural observation and emulation, with varying degrees of success. Ultimately, the cultural implication of the object rests not only with the consumer, but also with the audience who reads the interaction between the consumer and the object as grounded in the greater world of cultural meaning. The making of meaning is governed by specific cultural codes far more than it is by

[27] This is not only a question of individual preference for certain objects, but also a decision mediated by a desire for status, or perhaps to elicit a certain perception from the receiver.

[28] For instance, Manolo pumps were popularized by the hit HBO television show *Sex in the City*. If an individual were not familiar with the show, he/she would not necessarily understand the significance of the shoes.

an individual's choice of object. The act of consuming is desirable for the individual, not only for the public social meaning which the individual hopes to consume along with the object, but also for the private pleasure that occurs in the act itself. Goldoni used dining rituals and *Haute Cuisine* as tools to satirize the value placed on cultural education and advancement in Venice during the eighteenth century. For Goldoni, the background of the character, rather than the character's consumption of an object intended to alter audience perception, would always determine how the character's class was interpreted by society at large.

As an example from our contemporary marketplace, different types of wines called 'champagne' have very different meanings. Champagne is a designation of aged sparkling wine specifically from the Champagne region of France. It evolved as a celebratory drink during the time of Louis XIV, who particularly enjoyed the wine and served it at meals. Fine French champagnes such as Dom Perignon, Veuve Cliquot Ponsardin, Perrier-Jouet, Moêt & Chandon, and Piper Heidsieck are specifically marketed as an elite form of alcohol, not only due to their price but also due to the limited availability of the items and champagne's traditional function as a specialty wine. In the United States, the word champagne is used to indicate *any* sparkling wine, rather than the specific French variety, and usually means a wine that has been produced using *Méthode Champenoise* (traditional production methods). American brands such as Domaine Chandon, Roederer Estate, Schramsberg, and Robert Mondavi have inherited some of the original celebratory French meaning, but are far less expensive. Inexpensive domestic sparkling wines such as Korbel, Tott's, Taylor, and Asti are also widely available.

Consumers understand the received meaning of the symbol of champagne very differently, and therefore choose their object accordingly. With the wide variety of choices available, the educated consumer can decide what brand of meaning they wish to imbibe along with their wine.[29] Choosing a Veuve Cliquot Grande Dame indicates a certain level of sophistication in the consumer, thereby transforming their image in the eyes of the educated observer. Unfortunately, naïve consumers often do not realize that the less expensive versions do not have the same social meaning, and therefore their indulgence carries little positive cultural weight. They do not possess the necessary cultural knowledge to determine that their consumptive choice marks them as foreign to the particular social field. The mid-level sparkler, such as a Mondavi, carries far more cultural meaning for those of a specific cultural competence than a Korbel, and further creates the image of the celebratory person of taste that one might wish to construct when indulging in a sparkling wine. Regardless, each wine chosen makes a statement about the consumer's class level and socio-economic bracket, as well as their mastery of the cultural code of champagne consumption.

Goldoni's characters often choose objects specifically for their cultural meaning as well as occasionally for their taste.[30] Time has been spent on the choice of object consumed by the characters, whether the object is a novel, a dress, a fan, a glass of wine or a piece of fruit. The object finally chosen is notable for its specific

[29] Sparkling wine no longer has to be French in order to maintain its celebratory meaning. However, different types of sparkling wines certainly illustrate the social differences among their target audience, if observed by a person educated in the language of wine.

[30] However, some of Goldoni's characters, namely Truffaldino in *Servant of Two Masters*, enjoy taste as much as the meaning he consumes.

cultural meaning for the savvy consumer, while worthy but lesser others are rejected due to their unappealing cultural connections. Consumption in Goldoni's works signals a character's attempt to elevate his/her own cultural taste, a predilection for goods of an evolved social meaning, and a very public display of a discriminating palate.[31] Goldoni exposes both the coded language of material culture and its inherent instability in the eighteenth century. If a servant expertly and knowingly consumed the same meal as his master, they might eventually achieve equal social status, given other factors such as income, clothing, and housing.

Section 2 Perspectives on Eighteenth Century Consumption

Currently, consumer practices are being explored by seventeenth and eighteenth century scholars and historians who wish to understand how the formation of a market economy effected cultural change, and ultimately helped define the personality of the middle classes. As Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford write in the introduction to *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850*, "The eighteenth century luxury debate, thus far but little investigated, has been set out as a problem in the history of political thought, or as a literary and moral issue…. The contemporary texts themselves, however, took the luxury debate into a discussion of consumer cultures of the middling classes."[32] John Brewer and Roy Porter echo this

[31] I would make the argument here of Goldoni's use of the traditional Commedia dell'Arte character of the *Arlecchino*. *Arlecchino* is traditionally a starving servant, one whose search for food and comfort takes a great deal of his time. This was fitting in the Renaissance, when food was hard to come by. However, by the mid-eighteenth century the *Arlecchino* in Goldoni's works had developed into a character with a far more discriminating palate. His superior knowledge of stylish food and dining habits signaled a change in how consumption was viewed by Goldoni's contemporaries. See Pierre Louis Duchartre, *The Italian Comedy* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), Chapter Twelve, 123-160 for further information.

[32] Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford, *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850 (*Manchester, Eng.: Manchester University Press, 1999), 3. The moral issue addressed here

sentiment in their introduction to the volume of essays *Consumption and the World of Goods*. [33] The task of exploring consumption as it affected the bourgeoisie becomes allied with the role of the social or cultural historian, rather than the economic historian. Cultural historian Peter Burke argues "evidence about material objects in poems, stories, and plays is a rich vein which has hardly begun to be exploited."[34] As a specific example, Burke suggests that the eighteenth century evidenced a growing obsession with material objects, especially by those in the upper classes. Conspicuous consumption alone may not have caused changes in literature; but, as Burke notes: "we have the evidence of the increasing splendor of the objects themselves… to combine with the references in the literary sources."[35] The use of fine dining in Goldoni's comedies makes a powerful statement about the importance of food to this specific culture when compared to the recipes found in the cookbooks of the period.

Roy Porter offers a more contemporary historiographical reading of how consumption affected the populace of the eighteenth century, "We must not think of the consumer society simply in terms of the license to acquire more. It was… the development of new values which helped people to transcend that very license to acquire more."[36] In other words, the disease of luxury or consumption leads directly

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originated with Mandeville and his theorization that luxury enjoyment was morally suspicious and a vice.

[33] *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 1.

[34] Peter Burke, "Res et verba: Conspicuous Consumption in the Early Modern World", *Consumption and the World of Goods*, 151.

[35] Peter Burke, "Res et verba", *Consumption and the World of Goods*, 157.

to a development of new rules by which to live. Agnew writes in the same volume, "Fashion and its democraticization were less the answer to the question of consumer culture's birth than a problem to be resolved."[37] Joyce Appleby, an historian of the early modern period, also echoes Porter and Agnew's ideas on how consumption redefined the rules for membership within a certain social class.[38] She argues that the idea of what it means to be a man, a citizen, and a member of society is altered irrevocably by the spectrum of goods available.[39]

Cultural historians study how changes in morality of society are expressed via consumerism, when, suddenly, new ideas of what it means to be upper class or wealthy or privileged are forced to evolve rapidly in order to cope with a changing world-view.[40] For instance, Appleby argues that social change in the eighteenth century is largely due to the reduction of famine and hunger in the major cities of Europe in the seventeenth century.[41] She uses London as a seventeenth-century

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[36] Roy Porter, "Consumption: Disease of the Consumer Society?", from *Consumption and the World of Goods*, 71.

[37] Jean Christophe Agnew, "Consumer Culture in its Historical Perspective", *Consumption and the World of Goods*, 25.

[38] She defines consumption as "the desiring, acquiring, and enjoying of goods and services which one has purchased" and also as the activity of finding enjoyment and fulfillment of self through the attainment of certain goods one desires. Joyce Appleby, "Consumption in Early Modern Social Thought", *Consumption and the World of Goods*, 162.

[39] This is an echo of Habermas' idea of the public sphere, where one of the necessities for its formation was the influence of the marketplace.

[40] Brewer and Porter write of Appleby's work: "The multiplication of goods upset entrenched Christian religio-moral teachings, with their denunciations of Mammon and the love of lucre, and threatened conservative theories of social order, which stipulated (partly through sumptuary laws) that each rank must have, and must remain within, its proper material trappings. One of the historical tasks of what we may loosely call the Enlightenment was to forge new sets of moral values, new models of man, to match and make sense of the opportunities and obligations, the delights and dangers, created by the brave new world of goods." *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter, 4-5.

example, where only the lower classes were threatened by malnutrition.[42] Italy had cases of daily hunger, as well as famines through the eighteenth century. Camporesi writes, "Casual workers, *fumatti,* and day labourers in general, along with the smallest landowners, formed the mass of the so-called *malnutriti* (undernourished)."[43] However, there was a large difference in supplies for those who lived in urban centers and the country poor. Food stores were readily available for the majority of citizens in cities during the eighteenth century, even in times of bad crops, and so hunger there was more a product of poverty rather than availability of ingredients.

This availability of food, coupled with a growth in population having expendable incomes, helped fuel the use of food as a social symbol by the eighteenth century. Hunger and satiation were once defining characteristics of class structure, but the reduction of hunger in the eighteenth century for all classes eliminated the need for maintaining the current hegemonic social order, "leaving behind a set of social prescriptions whose obsolescence has to be discovered one by one in the course of the next two centuries."[44] Lines between classes began to disintegrate. The confusion called into question what it actually meant to be upper class or middle

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[41] However, hunger was still a prevalent force in the countryside where economic inequities were more pronounced. Reserves of food were not available, despite the agrarian output being centered in the villages of rural Italy. Piero Camporesi, *The Magic Harvest* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 22-3.

[42] Joyce Appleby, "Consumption in Early Modern Social Thought", *Consumption and the World of Goods*, 162. "It is true that chronic malnutrition lingered on for the bottom twenty percent of the population, not completely disappearing for another century, but famine was gone." She attributes this elimination of national hunger to increased purchasing power by the previously impoverished classes, the growing ability to move food from farms to city centers, and increased agricultural output.

[43] Piero Camporesi, *The Magic Harvest*, 8, 11.

[44] Joyce Appleby, "Consumption in Early Modern Social Thought", *Consumption and the World of Goods*, 162-3.

class, as an individual could create his/her own meaning through cultural performance. Man is a "consuming animal with boundless appetites, capable of driving the economy to new peaks of prosperity."[45] This new conception of 'man', meaning all people and not just those privileged with wealth, consumed social thought as the literature of the period challenged the role of class in the development of identity.[46] This man's hunger was for status as well as food.

The discussion of the evolving class structure of the eighteenth century echoes the work of Piero Camporesi, a gastro-critic and historian specializing in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Italy. His book, *Exotic Brew*, analyzes how Italian food and diet changed in the eighteenth century because of the re-shaping of society and class lines. This development was made possible not only because of the influence of a growing middle class, but also because of an evolving conception of the delicacy of the body and sensitivity of the spirit. Camporesi places food as an expression of self within a specific socio-cultural context that privileged beauty of the body and the corresponding balance of the plate. He charges that France began to export "social interpreters of the newest trends to emerge from its burgeoning civilization…. Pietro Verri complained that the 'science of savoir vivre'… [is] quite unknown to us

[45] Roy Porter, "Consumption: Disease of the Consumer Society?", *Consumption and the World of Goods*, 65.

[46] Another cultural historian, Woodruff Smith, writes of the need for a historiography of consumption in contemporary analyses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He calls for a method of deciphering the ways consumption is used historically, through exploring new cultural models that display the ways that human thought is encoded in consumption patterns. He defines consumption as a "range of meaningful behaviors that… derived most of their meaning from their places in certain contexts." Woodruff Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 16. Consumption was a way that people could maintain and signal their entrance into the middle class and their overall respectability to society. He writes, "As certain commodities became available to fill new, vaguely defined cultural roles, their nature and availability helped to clarify, in a sense reify, these roles." This transactive event of choosing items literally created the role of the individual and the cultural norm, as well as redefining the cultural context of the commodity.

Italians."[47] This notion of scientific approaches to eating and good manners in order to "know how to live" is typical of Enlightenment thought, with its preoccupation with reason, order, and scientific application to the structures of daily life. "The most refined luxury went hand in hand with an inimitable and exquisite fashion…. The dinner table was becoming the condensation chamber for the new frontiers of the mind, the board on which a game was played entailing the reconversion of human nature to the rules of reason and science."[48]

Camporesi documents a changing and evolving food fashion, which eliminated older dining rules in favor of ones symbolizing a new era. However, the evolution of cuisine took a century to complete the cycle from noveau to accepted practice. He writes:

> Every gentleman who joined in the headlong rush to frivolous consumption, the search for pleasure in the plentiful supply of material goods… aspired to become 'an ingenious person and thereafter a delicious one'…. Mass hedonism was making its first appearance…. Whether in their standard of living or in their manner of dressing, everyone now wanted to exceed the boundaries set by birth and station…. The 'Science of savoir vivre' which in the past only an elite had known and practiced… was now within the grasp of all those who, in the universal reshuffling of estates and classes, had managed to get rich.[49]

I take the concept of the French '*Science of Savoir Vivre,'* and adapt it to '*Il scienza di buon gusto*,' for living well for Italians meant that one automatically would have good taste. "Depravity in taste always went hand in hand with license in manners" which

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[47] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew* (London, Polity Press, 1994), 1. Pietro Verri was a Milanese Count writing in the middle of the eighteenth century. He was known for his studies of political economy, and for founding the "Società del Caffè", an organization that studied problems of philosophy, economy, and literature.

[48] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 4, 7.

[49] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 23-4.

ultimately and disastrously unbalanced the art of the table.[50] The cultural symbol of food was available to anyone who had the ability to pay for it. Reshuffling the boundaries of the palate and the plate altered the way meals were conceived, prepared, and served, and, ultimately changed the public perception of those meals.

Section 3 Food as an Historical Object of Consumption

Food itself is an object to be consumed.[51] Food is "simultaneously necessity and luxury."[52] Humans enjoy the act of eating, and most people experience pleasure with the taste of food; however the moment of ingestion is both ephemeral and repeatable. Food has social connotations, for individuals usually eat with others, and therefore consume food at the same time as they devour the words and sights of friends and family. People consume food as a means of celebration and festival, and also as a way of making friends. Many people have strong emotions regarding what they eat and the food they indulge in. Some restrict themselves to certain limited foods or plan special foods in celebration of an event. An abundance of food may lead to weight gain and is associated with intemperate eating. Access to a wide range of foods in which an individual might excessively indulge or deny transforms food from a necessity to a luxury. Food choice is fraught with both personal and cultural meaning.[53]

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[50] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 11.

[51] However, the problem with attempting to use food as a cultural symbol is that it exists both as survival and pleasure, and thus cannot be simply explained.

[52] *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 5.

[53] See Sidney Mintz's essay "Changing Roles of Food" in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 261-273.

In the class-conscious and performative world of 1750s Venice, consumption of certain foods connoted both power and excess. The act of consuming food for Goldoni's characters illuminates their cultural standing, their notion of entertainment, and their financial status. Truffaldino in *A Servant for Two Masters* works in two positions primarily so that he can get two meals. The comic situation reveals his voracious appetite for *Haute Cuisine*, rather than mere "sustenance." Mirandolina in *The Mistress of the Inn* invests capital to create specialized foodstuffs to tempt her guests, as well as to prove her class worth. Consumption is the tool that uncovers the underlying needs and dreams that characters have for social advancement. Sometimes, the only power they have in their lives lies in their performative ownership of objects of indulgence.

In his book *Tarte a la Crème: Comedy and Gastronomy in Molière's Theatre,* Ronald W. Tobin talks about the difference in the use of food as a symbol in comedy and tragedy.[54] In his example, there is little food (aside from banquets offstage) in the theatre of Jean Racine, while in the comedies of Molière "we come upon rich soil."[55] According to Tobin, tragedies make use of sensory deprivation, both in smell and taste. Abstinence and starvation are the primary forces in the tragic genres. The tragic form is about denying the pleasures of life, and instead plunging into the excesses of negative emotion. Comedy celebrates pleasure, extravagance, and consumption. In Goldoni's comedies, the characters are unable to deny themselves,

[54] Consumption is often funny, because it shows people indulging their hunger and their bodily needs openly, whereas abstinence is tragic, illustrating how people limit their lives through the choices they make.

[55] Ronald Tobin, *Tarte a la Crème: Comedy and Gastronomy in Molière's Theatre* (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1990), 14.

and this becomes their downfall. In fact, Goldoni himself alluded to his inability to bypass indulgences when they presented themselves, as he wrote, "I was too agreeably occupied… to find leisure to write…. I have always been fond of pleasure, and I availed myself of my moments of liberty."[56] He later wrote, "I cannot explain to myself the motives which sometimes induce me to act… against my interest. [I have] the best intentions in the world [but tend] to give myself entirely up to whatever I am interested in."[57]

The comic form delights in feasts, banquets, and gluttony. As Mikhail Bakhtin wrote in his *Rabelais and his World*, "The mighty aspiration to abundance and to a universal spirit is evident… It determines their forms… their gay and triumphant note."[58] In the traditional form of the Commedia dell'Arte, the *Arlecchino* figure is always hungry, looking to fulfill his abundant appetite at the expense of his masters. Many of Goldoni's most memorable characters are based on the medieval characters of *Arlecchino* and *Pantalone,* and their trajectories conclude triumphantly when they satiate their appetites.[59] The idea of appetite and hunger was in the process of redefinition in the eighteenth century, as economic inequities were stabilizing and luxuries became available to those who could afford the price. There are two kinds of hunger at work here: physical hunger for food and psychological hunger for social

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[56] Goldoni, *Memoir,* 334.

[57] Goldoni, *Memoir,* 356.

[58] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 278.

[59] Denial of both luxury items and the sensual side of nature was a medieval concept, grounded in religion and necessity, since life was harsher and more restrictive with far less food for most segments of the population. Extravagance in the middle ages was an occasional luxury, not a daily occurrence as it was in Goldoni's Venice.

acceptance. The first can only be assuaged by food; the second can only be appeased by foods encoded with the proper meanings. Medieval and early modern characters focus on this physical hunger and its links to "spiritual" hunger, for it is a literal need in their society. Eighteenth century characters focus on the psychological hunger manifested in their need for social acceptance. This second hunger becomes the major source of Goldoni's comedy.

Physical hunger as portrayed in theatrical works illustrates the need for fantasy and fulfillment. As Roy Porter writes of the early modern period need for an artistic expression of their physical hunger, "Eating and drinking fueled vital fires… where hunger, dearth, and even famine stalked the land, people needed little persuading that hearty eating and drinking provided fortification… Haunted by hunger, the poor fantasized about full bellies."[60] Food was a potent symbol to be fantasized about and desired both as a luxury and a form of power.[61] Early modern characters were hungry for sustenance and needed to take in food in order to maintain bodily strength and power.[62] These themes reflected the social problems of hunger

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[60] Roy Porter, "Consumption: disease of the consumer society?", from *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 59.

[61] Earlier, I made the argument of the evolution of dining habits of the traditional character of the Arlecchino. If one translates this into food terminology, the Arlecchino becomes a gourmet rather than a gourmand or a glutton. His hunger, socially sanctioned in the Renaissance because of his social level of peasant and the frequent and numerous famines in Italy during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, signaled his place in life as a glutton and a devourer. Food was hard for him to come by, and therefore he had to devise more and more complicated plans in order to obtain it. However, Goldoni's Arlecchino characters are clearly gourmets, with specific and detailed knowledge of how the upper classes are supposed to eat, and able to provide their masters and themselves with fashionable and socially specific food. Specific examples will be covered in later chapters, but for current reference, Truffaldino in *A Servant To Two Masters* as well as Frontino in *A Spendthrift Miser* demonstrate this.

[62] The medieval French farce *The Chicken Pie and the Chocolate Cake* features the haves and the have-nots of the Renaissance world. *The Chicken Pie and the Chocolate Cake*, trans. Oscar Mandel (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1970), 151-158. This play features two thieves who attempt to steal the food of a baker's wife, and get beaten for their actions.

during the early modern period. The prevalence of beggars, vagrants, and overpopulation in cities were all symptoms of an economic crisis in the lower classes of medieval and renaissance Europe, one that found partial resolution during the eighteenth century. For all classes, starvation was an ever-present part of daily life, and the getting of food was a constant concern for the poor, or a matter of concern, shock, and/or disgust for the wealthier portions of society. There was famine present in Italy during much of the seventeenth century, and several times during the eighteenth, by as late as 1764**,** giving rise to riots, vagrancy, and thievery.[63] This interplay between the lack of food and abundance of food became material for writers of the early modern period, as they attempted to explore and resolve the problem of starvation and excess appetite.[64] "Hunger therefore… the preposterous abundance and perennial feasting of the privileged, or, indeed, as the lack of food, emptiness, sterility—is the common theme [in early modern writings]."[65]

By the eighteenth century, representations of physical hunger had abated culturally, though it was still apparent in certain areas and at certain times of crop failures or worker's strikes. In its place, images of psychological hunger begin to flourish, as well-fed audiences sought tools for cultural and social advancement. Goldoni addressed the democratization of psychological hunger in his theatrical portrayals, offering the audience drawn from all levels of Venetian society equal

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[63] Jeremy Black, *History of Eighteenth Century Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 11.

[64] There were still periodic shortages of food in Venice in the eighteenth century, due to various strikes by boatmen bringing in food from the terra firma. There were also still famines in the period, namely the famine during the year of 1764.

[65] Piero Camporesi, *The Land of Hunger* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 3.

access to the most recent styles and fashions in his onstage presentations, despite their background or their cultural education.[66] By the eighteenth century, engaging in the process of preparing food was easier, for more people had access to money to pay for food. There was also a marked increase in agricultural production, and governments were better prepared to distribute goods, and deal with the effects of widespread hunger.[67] Personal past relationships with hunger and the awareness of what it meant to go hungry fueled representations of food in art and theatre in the eighteenth century as audiences fantasized of eating well rather than seeking enough food to feed a family.[68]

Other contemporary historians, sociologists, and anthropologists have set themselves a similar task, investigating how objects define a period and a people culturally and socially, and specifically how food evolved historically to play a role in this self-performance. Historians have usually argued that the culture of luxury available in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was enabled by the growth

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[66] In this, Goldoni's use of food would incorporate Bourdieu's ideas on habitus and consumption, as well as Goffman's theories on self-performance. Goldoni's characters attempt to publicly perform their mastery of food consumption in order to demonstrate knowledge of upper-class eating, and therefore entry into the fashionable world. However, their daily practice of eating and social backgrounds likely limited their entry into the practices of fine dining.

[67] However, there was a breakdown of this system in Italy during the 1764 famine. Tobias Smollett, traveling through Italy during the famine observed, "The nourishment of those poor creatures consists of the refuse of the garden, very coarse bread, a kind of meal called polenta, made of Indian corn, which is very nourishing and agreeable, and a little oil; but even in these particulars, they seem to be stinted to very scanty meals. I have known a peasant feed his family with the skins of boiled beans. Their hogs are much better fed than their children." Tobias Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy*, Letter XX, Nice, October 22, 1764, (Adelaide, Australia: The University of Adelaide Library ebooks, 2004), http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/s/smollett/tobias/travels/chapter20.html, viewed 23 September 2005.

[68] An example of this hunger for change is Mirandolina from Goldoni's Mistress of the Inn, who understands fine dining, and uses her knowledge to feed her hungers for social mobility and financial. The dream of eating well creates the possibility for members of the middle class to become powerful and culturally engaged members of the consuming public; Goldoni's images of consumption of food engaged contemporary audiences.

of personal business interests and its effects both on the international and national markets.[69] The more expendable income one had, the more one would be able to consume. Because there was a standard of everyday luxury set by the nobility for the bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century, consumption was good for businessmen, but dangerous for public morality, as people consumed far more than their income would allow. Goldoni's work reflects this problem in Venetian society, where intemperate spending and gambling routinely impoverished people from all walks of life. As Goldoni noted in his memoir, "All sorts of games of hazard were… tolerated in Venice; and that the famous *Ridotto*, which enriched some and ruined others… was still then in existence. It was unadvised of me therefore to disclose the consequences of this dangerous amusement, and still more the tricks of certain gamblers, and the artifices of the brokers."[70]

As medical historian Roy Porter writes in *Consumption and the World of Goods,* a collection of essays on consumerism, "The traditional world… saw the disease of consumption as a disease of excess."[71] Patricia Fortini Brown notes in her essay "Behind the Walls: Material Culture of Venetian Elites" that the bourgeoisie "attempt[ed] to distinguish themselves through a display of material wealth threatened the mercantile virtues of prudence and frugality as well as the solidarity of

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[69] This issue is discussed in depth in Jean Christophe Agnew's "Consumer Culture in its Historical Perspective", *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter (New York: Routledge, 1993). The historians involved in this discussion of "relative roles of commerce and class, [rather than the Marxist arguments of] exchange and production" (23) in the emerging consumption of products in the marketplace are: Fernand Braudel, Immanuel Wallerstein, Chandra Mukerji, and Jan de Vries, among others.

[70] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 257. The *Ridotto* was the Venetian state run gambling house.

[71] Roy Porter, "Consumption: disease of the consumer society?", from *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter, 70.

a ruling class based first and foremost on hereditary right."[72] Goldoni satirized this display of material comfort, for he feared the effect it would have on the finances of the bourgeoisie. He advocated the sensible allocation of funds to luxuries by all classes, as in his plays *The Boors* and *The Superior Residence*. Goldoni encouraged democratic access to goods and services so long as the consumer did not ruin themselves in pursuit of luxury, as so many did in Venice during the eighteenth century. Therefore, the downfall of merchant characters due to bankruptcy would have been a legitimate concern.

Section 4 Consumption in Eighteenth Century Venice

Eighteenth century Venice glorified luxury goods and entertainments, even as it simultaneously slid into one of the more dissolute periods in the city's history.[73] Italian historian Pompeo Molmenti observed, "The city preserved its atmosphere of gaiety and its air of magnificence as if to hide its wounds and weaknesses under a golden mantle."[74] He suggested that Venetians were particularly remarkable for their ability to remake themselves according to the dictates of fashion. English writer and diarist Hester Piozzi visited Venice from 23 April through 21 May 1785, twenty-two

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[72] Patricia Fortini Brown , "Behind the Walls: Material Culture of Venetian Elites" in John Martin and Dennis Romano, *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State 1297-1797* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 295. Brown argues that this blurring of class lines was a pragmatic and deliberate decision by the government of Venice, due to the large amounts of nobility drawn from the mercantile trades, and the intermarrying of these families in order to preserve their wealth.

[73] Timothy Holmes, who wrote a speculative and non-academic biography of Goldoni, reports that a French visitor to Venice during this time was reputed to have said "Venice hasn't got a brothel, it is one." He also recounts a saying of the time "*À la matina una meseta, al dopo disnar una basseta, e ala sera una doneta*—a little mass in the morning, a card game of basseta after lunch, and a woman in the evening." According to many historians, Venice's gambling and sex industries were bustling during this time period, making consumption a norm. Timothy Holmes, *A Servant to Many Masters* (London: Jupiter Books, 1976), 19.

[74] Pompeo Molmenti, *Venice* (Boston: Hale, Cushman, and Flint, 1926), 120.

years after Goldoni's departure for Paris, and kept a record of her stay.[75] She noted that the partaking of luxurious foods and entertainment seemed a part of daily life in Venice. Piozzi wrote:

> Twenty four hours do not suffice for all the business and diversions of Venice, where dinner must be eaten as in other places, though I can scarcely find a minute to spare for it, while such fish waits ones fork and knife as I most certainly did not see before, and as I suppose are not to be seen in any sea but this in such perfection. Fresh sturgeon (ton they call it) and fresh anchovies large as herrings and dressed like sprats in London, incomparable, turbots, like those of Torbay exactly, and plentiful as there, with enormous pipers, are what one eats principally here. The fried liver, without which an Italian can hardly go on from day to day, is so charmingly dressed… that I grow to like it as much as they…. Well, the ladies, who never hardly dine at all, rise about seven of the evening when the gentlemen are just got ready to attend them, and sit sipping their chocolate on a chair at the coffee house door with great tranquility, chatting over the common topics of the times.[76]

She further noted, "The Venetians, to confess the truth… than others of their countrymen… are happier."[77] This theme of the Venetian delight in food and fashion is a refrain heard often in nostalgic eighteenth and nineteenth century texts. The celebratory spirit displayed by Venetians to visitors of the city is mentioned by many, including Montagu, Piozzi, Boswell, and Beckford.[78] The city became a playground

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[75] Hester Piozzi, *Glimpses of Italian Society in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1892), introduction. Piozzi, married first to an Englishman named Thrale and then to an Italian music master in her employ named Gabriele Piozzi, hosted salons in London during the later part of the eighteenth century. Samuel Johnson, Edmund Burke, David Garrick, Oliver Goldsmith, and Sir Joshua Reynolds frequented Piozzi's literary parties. Piozzi also reportedly visited Goldoni in Paris during his exile there, having heard of his work from her travels in literary society.

[76] Hester Piozzi, *Glimpses of Italian Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 128-9. The ladies "who hardly ever dine at all" present an interesting reference to the tendency among upper class women to abstain from heavier foods and rich dining.

[77] Hester Piozzi, *Glimpses of Italian Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 133.

[78] Nineteenth century historian Phillippe Monnier stated that "In Venice alone men set before themselves another ideal of life and thought—to be simply and sincerely happy… And it is the peculiar glory of the city at this period it had contrived… to expend its last energies in enjoying itself

for Europe's wealthy class during the eighteenth century, as tourism increased even with Venice's seventeenth century decline as a shipping center.[79] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, an English visitor in Italy, remarked on the cultural diversions available in the Venice of the mid-eighteenth century in a letter dated 1 June 1740. "The operas and the masks begin next Wednesday, and we persevere in gallantries and *raree-shows*, in the midst of wars and rumours of wars that surround us."[80] She wrote to her daughter, the Countess of Bute, of the fashionable amusements available in Venice, stating that she had better health and sleep "than many younger ladies, who pass their nights at the *ridotto*, and days in spleen for their losses there. Play is the general plague… I know no corner of it entirely free from the infection."[81]

Later historians posit these constant recreations as an attempt by eighteenth-century Venetians to ignore the changes to their fast-disappearing way of life, or at least to resist the pull towards more democratic reforms altering the new Europe. The prevalence of luxury goods as well as the location of Venice as a holiday destination for the wealthy of Europe made the city cosmopolitan in nature. This allowed citizens easy access to goods and services, such as foodstuffs, well-lit and

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remorselessly, unflinchingly." Phillippe Monnier, *Venice in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1910), 19.

[79] See Christopher Hibbert, *Venice: The Biography of a City* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1989), Chapter Eleven, and John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice* (New York, Alfred A Knopf, 1982), Chapter Forty-Five, among others.

[80] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol. II (New York: AMS Press, 1970), 64. A Raree-Show was a peep show where a view of a print could be seen through a hole cut in a box. A flap at the top of the box would admit light or candlelight from inside the box could also be used. These boxes were capable of displaying multiple images in often spectacular ways.

[81] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol. II, 360.

paved streets, and various artistic productions. Seduced by the available luxuries, perhaps Venetians purposely ignored outside influences, preferring instead their own social rules and their own company.

These cultural symbols of consumption were a part of the unspoken language of meaning available in eighteenth-century Venice. Historian Maurice Rowdon links the daily social structure of Venetian life in the eighteenth century with one of Goldoni's better known plays, the 1760 *The Boors*, (a play that will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five). In this play, the bourgeois female characters dress themselves in fine clothes and attempt to make their hard-working, boorish husbands take part in polite society. Drawing on *The Boors*, Rowdon suggests that Goldoni's period could be thought of as a "grand drawing room where the faces were familiar, and intrigue was in the air… a will to soften and civilise life outside… the noble class; their manners… percolated down to the other classes as an ideal of life…. [fading away social contrasts] in the light misty colors of her drawing rooms."[82] According to Rowdon, social success and power in the 'New Venice' of the eighteenth century relied heavily on understanding the rigid social performativity of objects and manners, and then imitating them successfully. "It was money which counted in this Venice," and money could be exchanged for goods and objects, which translated into social power.[83]

Definitions of wealth and social status were in flux in eighteenth century Venice. In order to develop a picture of the audience of Goldoni's plays, it becomes

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[82] Maurice Rowdon, *The Fall of Venice* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970), 32-3.

[83] Maurice Rowdon, *The Fall of Venice*, 33.

necessary to discuss the social construction of Venetian culture in the middle of the eighteenth century, focusing on how the society was ordered, and the how classes were both politically and culturally determined. This will enable me to address the consuming public of mid-eighteenth century Venice. An air of social performativity pervaded the eighteenth century in Venice, and Goldoni worked to document the ways in which society encountered the specific problems that the display of good taste and appearing fashionable produced. With the growth of Venetian luxury and consumerism in the eighteenth century and the growth of Carnival, the people of Venice displayed a disposition towards visual spectacle designed to engage the senses.[84] The adventurer Casanova described a casino in Venice in the 1760s as follows: "The casino had five rooms, furnished in exquisite taste. Everything in it had been made for the pleasures of love, good food, and the joys of the senses."[85] English traveler William Beckford wrote in 1780 of a barge floating at night on the Grand Canal, as musicians, joined by the passing gondoliers, serenaded the merrymakers along the canals. This resulted in an impromptu dance on the streets of Venice.[86] Hester Piozzi wrote of the theatricalized facade of the Venice of this period:

> When one sees St. Mark's Palace lighted up of an evening, adorned with every excellence of human art and pregnant with pleasure, expressed by intelligent countenances sparkling with every grace of nature, the sea washing its walls, the moonbeams dancing on its

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[84] Carnival is a celebration in Venice that traditionally begins after Christmas and lasts until the beginning of Lent.

[85] Giacomo Casanova, *The Story of my Life*, trans. by Stephen Saratelli and Sophie Hawkes (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 2000), 213.

[86] William Beckford, *The Grand Tour of William Beckford* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 57.

> subjugated waves, sport and laughter resounding from the coffee house, girls with guitars skipping around the square, masks and merrymakers singing as they pass you, unless a barge with a band of music is heard at some distance upon the water, and calls attention to sounds made sweeter by the element over which they are brought—whoever is led suddenly I say to this scene of seemingly perennial gaiety, will be apt to cry out of Venice as Eve says to Adam in Milton: "With thee conversing I forget all time/All seasons and their change—all please alike."[87]

Venetian private life was led in public, seen in the rituals of public consumption taking place in the coffee houses and in the campiellos, the ridotti, and in the theatres.[88] The very nature of public and private was challenged in the eighteenth-century Venetian theatre as Goldoni put life onstage to both mock and educate his audiences.

Newspapers help construct another view of society and the consuming public of the eighteenth-century Venetian public. I do not intend to make this chapter an analysis of these useful print sources, though a longer work analyzing the newspapers and pamphlets of the period would be most educational. The eighteenth century in Venice was a time when pamphlets and newspapers were cheap to print, easy to buy, and "ubiquitous…. They offered news and gossip, recipes… reviews of books and plays… a really liberal education in Venetian manners [and customs]."[89] Gaspare Gozzi, brother of Goldoni's 'arch-enemy' Carlo Gozzi, wrote and edited the Venetian newspapers *La Gazzetta Veneta* and the later *L'Osservatore Veneto.* In the 6 February 1760 edition of *La Gazzetta*, Gozzi declared the purpose of the publication to be to "notice spectacles, new works of other genres, how many private citizens we

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[87] Hester Piozzi, *Glimpses of Italian Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 108-9.

[88] These rituals will be discussed further in the following chapter.

[89] Christopher Hibbert, *Venice: The Biography of a City*, 172-3.

desire to sell or to buy, the price of mercy, of things for us to eat, or in brief all things that contribute greatly to our life. Paris and many other cities will have a poor time in the imitation of our example."[90] Despite the implicit satire in this quote, *La Gazetta Veneta* served not only to parody the Venetian social scene, but also recorded its events, becoming the most popular and widely-read newspaper of this period in Venice. Despite his familial relationship with Carlo Gozzi, Gaspare treated Goldoni sympathetically in his newspapers, and encouraged the playwright's new works.[91]

However*, La Gazzetta* primarily existed as a social commentary on the Venetian public, and is useful to historians in their attempts to understand the daily life of Venice in the mid-eighteenth century, a culture entering, according to Gozzi, "a time of second thoughts."[92] Gaspare himself was open to the thoughts of reform of literature and society, and the twentieth-century editor Bruno Romani has argued that *La Gazzetta* was in fact a tool to foster social change, "to free the costumes and the manners of the period from the seventeenth century," in order to create a new contemporary Venetian decorum more in keeping with the rational social demands of the enlightenment.[93] Gaspare Gozzi painted a satirical picture of his fellow citizens with his vignettes about Venetian daily life and characters.[94]

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[90] Gaspare Gozzi, *La Gazzetta Veneta* (Milan: Bompiano, 1943), 24. Translation by M. Coyle.

[91] As noted before, Goldoni found much sympathy from Gaspare, and counted him among his circle of friends. Goldoni tellingly even left to him the details of revising and correcting an earlier edition of his plays in 1762 when he left Venice for Paris. Joseph Kennard Spencer, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1920), 176.

[92] Gaspare Gozzi, *La Gazzetta Veneta*, Milan, Translation by M. Coyle, 11.

[93] Gaspare Gozzi, *La Gazzetta Veneta*, Milan, Translation by M. Coyle, 17.

[94] Rowdon negatively ascribes the position of dilettante to Gozzi, an amusing one, but a dilettante nevertheless. He wrote, "The rich had one remaining standard of honor, one source of

For example, an entry from Saturday 28 February 1760, demonstrates the predicament of an anonymous nobleman who did not have the money to purchase supplies to brew hot chocolate. "On the last day of Carnival, past the hour of midnight, a certain man in a mask, a large and well-made person, very well dressed and wearing a hat bordered with gold, went into a coffee house under the sign of Oriulo… Still in his mask, he held out a contract for six pounds of chocolate, at four lire per pound." Apparently, the gentleman in question tried to pay four zecchinni for the chocolate instead of four lire, and got into an altercation with the coffee shop owner. Gozzi ends the segment stating the proverb "*Non e tutt' oro quello che splende*" or "It is not all gold which shines."[95] To all who read the piece in *La Gazzetta,* the anonymous, generously proportioned, well-dressed nobleman with his 'hat bordered with gold' would have been instantly recognizable to members of the Venetian city scene. The gentleman's attempt to cheat the shop owner on the price of the chocolate pokes subtle fun at stinginess of some of the nobility.

Venice boasted a unique social class structure in the eighteenth century. Venice was officially a republic, and class and status in Venice were legally defined by the state, with each class assigned specific duties, rights, and legal protections from the government. Venetian politics were controlled by a senate/government exclusively drawn from the noble class. Merchants and non-nobles could hold some offices and governmental posts, but were barred from the governing body. Nobility was a legal and a political designation, and was not a simple manifestation of the

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rivalry—personal ostentation…. That was heroism in modern Venice. As to what these men did in their free time. They dabbled." Maurice Rowdon, *The Fall of Venice*, 116-117.

[95] Gaspare Gozzi, *La Gazzetta Veneta*, Translation by M. Coyle (Florence: G.C. Sansoni, 1921), 34-5.

divine right of birth. There were three distinct levels of class in Venice: nobility, citizens, and the general population, made up of artisans or 'lesser' people.

Due to its limited size, the physical structure of Venice itself helped to condense the bustle and variety of daily life into a small 'stage' area.[96] The restricted dimensions of the city also help to explain the limited overall population totals. Venice as a city was constrained to evolve within an enclosed area surrounded by water, and little room was available for growth without taxing the resources of the city. Despite Venice's reputation as a cosmopolitan city, the island's location far from other population centers helped to protect the population's differences. Scholars and historians have compared Venice to a world of its own, a small and insular population cut off by the sea from all connections with the larger world of Europe, choosing to freeze its self image in the mercantile past rather than look towards the possibilities made available by a changing social milieu. In 1766, the population of Venice was recorded to be around 141,000,[97] which is only slightly more than during the sixteenth-century, when Danielle Beltrami reports a population density of 134,000 in 1581.[98] This number reflects only the people who were nobles, residents, or citizens of the republic, and not the tourists or foreign merchants who did business in the city.

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[96] Venice is about two and a half miles from the mainland, and it measures two and a half miles from east to west and less than two miles from north to south. It has 400 bridges that link over 118 islets to each other.

[97] Mirto Etonti and Fiorenza Rossi, *La Popolazione del Dogado Veneto nei Secoli XVII e XVIII* (Padova: Dipartimento di Scienze Statictiche del'Universita degli Studi di Padova, 1994), 179. Beltrami reports 141,056 people in Venice in 1766.

[98] Daniele Beltrami, S*toria della Popolazione di Venezia dale Fine del Secolo XVI alla Caduta della Repubblica (*Padova: Casa Editrice Cott, 1954), 38. This is also relevant since the population of London doubled in the eighteenth century from 1,114,644 in 1701 to 2,235,344 in 1801, while Venice remained relatively constant. Beltrami (71).

In 1766, there were some 300 noble families with 3,526 members, which comprised less then 3% of the total population.[99] The status of nobility could be passed down through families, and was a lifetime designation. The Venetian nobility was also a legally described group, and "not a class whose position rested on any distinguishable economic base."[100] However, the Great Council of Venice began selling seats to officially sanctioned affluent men of the merchant class in the beginning of the eighteenth century, in order to attempt to "attract new blood."[101] By 1718, 127 Venetians had bought membership into the patrician class for themselves and their families, all for the price of 100,000 ducats. "It is significant that all of them abandoned their former life immediately on being ennobled."[102] Legally, members of the nobility could not maintain merchant ties or operate a business.[103] "Throughout the eighteenth century… the Republic was thus effectively run by only forty-two families, from whom all holders of key governmental positions were drawn."[104]

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[99] Maurice Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), 67. Daniele Beltrami, S*toria della Popolazione di Venezia dale Fine del Secolo XVI alla Caduta della Repubblica*, 72.

[100] Oliver Logan, *Culture and Society in Venice 1470-1790* (London: B.T. Basford, 1972), 273.

[101] John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice*, 596.

[102] John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice*, 584.

[103] Father Sarpi noted that the nobility were not allowed to seek employment as merchants, because "the merchant is of necessity a foreigner he having commerce and interest in other nations; whereas a nobleman ought to have his affections nowhere but in his own country." Father John Sarpi, *Maxims of the Government of Venice* (London, J. Morphew, 1707), 33

[104] John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice*, 596. Father John allegedly wrote in his maxims that it was publicly beneficial to keep the indigent nobles in poverty, "which is like to the viper that is not able in the cold to use its poison." Father John Sarpi, *Maxims of the Government of Venice*, 7. A noble owed allegiance to the city, rather than allegiance to a financial system that owed little or

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."[105] These "paupers" were the *Barnibotti,* a particular sub-section of impoverished nobles who lived in the parish of Saint Barnabus. Although required to wear silk (then a cloth reserved for the noble class), and keep seats on the council for their lifetime, they were "poor or uneducated… [and] debarred by their rank from working as craftsmen or shopkeepers, [so] increasing numbers drifted into corrupt practices such as the rigging of minor elections or the selling of votes. Others… lived on poor relief."[106] *Barnibotti* on public welfare were forbidden to marry so that the numbers of the indigent nobility would not increase. Some earned their livelihood working as dealers in the city owned and run *Ridotti*.[107] The *Barnibotti* emulated the lifestyle of the wealthy nobles, supporting houses and households they could no longer afford, "receiving friends in the smallest apartments of their vast, forlorn palaces, there to offer them nothing but a slice of watermelon… send[ing] the solitary manservant out

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nothing to the institution of government. In this way, nobility were automatically included in the social sphere and the merchant class were excluded from it, by their very lack of citizenship and perceived lack loyalty to a central base of government.

[105] Oliver Logan *Culture and Society in Venice 1470-1790* (London: B.T. Basford, 1972), 26. "Some men genealogically qualified for nobility simply [left the] nobility since they did not wish to claim a seat on the Great Council." James S. Grubb, "Elite Citizens", in John Martin and Dennis Romano, *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State 1297-1797* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 340.

[106] John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice*, 596.

[107] Barnhart, Russell T., *Gambling with Giacomo Casanova and Lorenzo Da Ponte in eighteenth century Venice: the Ridotto, 1638-1774* (New York, 1994), 6. This was a rather transparent attempt to keep the *Barnibotti* from gambling, which was one of the main reasons they were impoverished.

for a dish of polenta and ate it surrounded by the inherited picture gallery in the dining room."[108]

The citizen class compromised about a twentieth of the overall population in 1766, or 3.9% of the total population, or 5501 people.[109] This rank was officially called the *cittadini originari* and the *cittadini per privilegio*. *Cittadini originari* "had to be legitimate descendants of two generations of Venetian citizens, and must possess 'honorable status,' that is neither they nor their father might have exercised a 'mechanical' occupation."[110] *Cittadini per privilegio* needed certain qualifications of marriage to a citizen or residence within the borders of the city. This legal designation allowed them the protection to trade either within the city, or in other counties. *Cittadini Originari* had no voting rights on the council, but could hold governmental posts. Citizens could intermarry with the nobility, but the position of nobility could only be transmitted through the male line.[111] Citizens were generally wealthier members of the population, could own property, and had established practical and financially lucrative trades, often in commerce and industry. This class included the merchants and the rising bourgeois with the proper pedigrees, or those who could conceivably buy noble status for themselves and their families.

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[108] Maurice Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova*, 75.

[109] Daniele Beltrami, S*toria della Popolazione di Venezia dale Fine del Secolo XVI alla Caduta della Repubblica*, 72. This figure is misleading due to the large numbers of people who were fluidly moving between classes. Many merchants and bourgeois were buying their way into the noble classes, and others were sinking from the middle class to lower classes. Class structure and legal designations of class will be discussed shortly.

[110] Oliver Logan, *Culture and Society in Venice 1470-1790* (London: B.T. Basford, 1972), 26.

[111] Meaning that a male citizen who married a noble woman retained his citizen position, and their offspring would retain citizenship. But a female Venetian from the citizen class who married into the noble class effectively altered her legal status, and her children would become part of the nobility.

Much of the city's population was unaffiliated with either the nobility or the citizen class. Most of the city's inhabitants were drawn from the general population, determined to be 132,169 people, or 93.7%, in 1766.[112] This number embraced vastly diverse people from very different economic levels, including the unaffiliated middle class and the commoner class, which was comprised of the working people in Venice, such as artisans, servants, and those who performed manual labor. Members in the commoner class could not hold office or work for the government, intermarry with other classes, or own property. It was difficult to legally transcend this class, whose members found that "law by law, their political prerogatives were whittled away while they stood by."[113] There was limited room for advancement within their social and political designation, but they did have a high standard of living due to the city's amenities, as well as the governmental system of public charity available for the comfort of the poor.[114]

The Venetian middle class, drawn mostly from the general population, was an entity of its own, vastly unlike their peers in the rest of Europe and in stark contrast to the *Barnibotti* and the commoners' class. They became the predominant force in the

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[112] Daniele Beltrami, S*toria della Popolazione di Venezia dale Fine del Secolo XVI alla Caduta della Repubblica*, 72. Christopher Hibbert, *Venice: The Biography of a City*, 199. These numbers of specific class population were constantly in flux as many bourgeois were passing into the realms of the upper classes, and "the poorer members sank into the class below." Maurice Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova* , 81. By 1797, there was a recorded population of 137,240 within the city. However, in the later part of the eighteenth century and into the Austrian occupation of Venice in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the city's population began to shrink as families and young people left in search of employment.

[113] Andriuex, *Daily Life In Venice at the Time of Casanova*, 88.

[114] Andriuex, *Daily Life In Venice at the Time of Casanova*, 91. This system of public charity funded by the Venetian government covered 18,000 persons in 1760.

city in the nineteenth century, after the fall of the republic. During the eighteenth century they were in the process of learning to take charge of the commercial and professional fields within the city, taking heightened control as the power structure of the nobility was decentered. "The Venetian third estate was rather like Pantalone… It came too late into the world to snatch political power… Its members, all shrewdly watching their own advantage, and traditionalists to a man, never bothered with ideology or claiming their rights to this that or the other thing. They were far too busy managing their own affairs."[115]

The bourgeois in this period were not necessarily interested in bettering their republic or their society, but instead tried to preserve their own rights and privileges within the context of their society. This included entrenching their status within the social strata of the city.[116] The public sentiment regarding these classed boundary alterations "ranged from extreme hostility on the part of certain restricted noble elites who showed no inclination to absorb or recognize in any way the political rights of men from another class, to the opposite extreme of osmosis of gradual absorption of other classes through the granting of new noble titles."[117] Into this potent pot were stirred class rivalry and envy. Tensions existed despite the similarities in noble and bourgeois culture and marketplace consumption during this period. It is this life of

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[115] Maurice Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova*, 88.

[116] Father Sarpi wrote of the attitude of the Venetian government to the undifferentiated plight of citizens, saying that "in this case I might not improper to imitate Cato who fomented discord…. in continual divisions and jarrings among ourselves." Father John Sarpi, *Maxims of the Government of Venice*, 13.

[117] Dino Carpanetto and Guiseppe Ricurperati, *Italy in the Age of Reason 1685-1789*, trans. Caroline Higgett (London: Longman, 1987), 55.

the middle class that Goldoni best explored in his works, as performed by the audiences themselves.

The large population of merchants still fundamentally believed the route to success lay in hard work and conventional morality. According to Andrieux, however, some merchants began to use their new found-wealth to acquire luxuries previously reserved for the nobility. "They strove, not always convincingly, to imitate the noble attitude and way of life…. all were members of a separate world with a moral code, a conception of honor, and customs of its own."[118] Consumption in the middle class followed two different patterns. Some members of the middle class enjoyed the products available to them with their excess money, while others believed that an abstemious and simple lifestyle would further enhance their financial and mercantile growth**.** Some saw consumption as enjoyable, while others saw it as debilitating and inherently dangerous to their stability. Gozzi wrote of his discovery of his noble family's poverty in his *Useless Memoirs*, "No one could have expected that that this fine flight of steps would lead to squalor and the haunts of indigence…. I only saw some portraits of my ancestors by Titian and Tintoretto still staring from their ancient frames…. They wore a look of sadness and amazement, as though inquiring how the wealth which they had gathered for their offspring had been dissipated."[119] Material possessions provided a modicum of pleasure and enjoyment, where "riches consist in those things that food, clothing, and houses give us… we also make to be born a certain delight and splendor, though which this life is more

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[118] Andriuex, *Daily Life In Venice at the Time of Casanova*, 82-3.

[119] Carlo Gozzi, *Useless Memoirs*, trans. John Addington Symonds, 59.

pleasing…. They impart a certain force and a marvelous dignity."[120] Many of Goldoni's later plays, namely *The Country Trilogy*, *The Boors*, and *The Superior Residence*, to be discussed in Chapter Five, chart this phenomenon of the danger of consumption in middle-class society

Historically, the Venetian Republic had legally demarcated classes and its society was conscious of class differences. The legal demarcations of class had little relevance to one's earning potential. Middle- and upper-class citizens strongly supported the concept of the self-made man rising through the ranks to attain financial stability, as well as political power and noble status. Many merchants sought and attained material luxuries in an attempt to re-make themselves after claiming a place in Venetian nobility. "People of status in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries spent a great deal of time and effort attempting to conform to the standards of behavior expected of the genteel by the genteel."[121] These standards were molded by the performance of consumption of those goods and objects previously reserved for the genteel class and now indicating class mobility for the lower levels of society. This is the Venetian society that Goldoni framed in his works, and the culture he was attempting both to entertain and satir

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[120] Paolo Paruta, *Della perfezione della vita politiche* (Florence, 1852), 229, as quoted by James C Davis, *A Venetian Family and Its Fortune 1500-1900* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1975), 51-1.

[121] Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability*, 34.

Chapter Three

"Some Agreeable Amusement…. No cheer like a good dinner": Extra-theatrical Rituals of Theatre and Food in Eighteenth Century Venice and the Evolution of Eighteenth Century Dining[1]

Goldoni's biographer Pompeo Molmenti has observed that, "The works of Goldoni were not the fruit of [academic] study, and those rules which he confined himself to [in his writings] were the simple observations of good sense," rather than

[1] Carlo Goldoni, *Memoir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), 15-17.

the neo-classical strictures of eighteenth century drama.[2] Molmenti further comments that "the Frenchman is a philosopher, the Italian is a photographer…. The Frenchman is a philosopher and artist, the Italian is simply an artist. The one contemplates and meditates strictly, the other observes… smilingly."[3] Goldoni's observations of the manners of his culture and the people who inhabited it helped move the comic theatre of the time into a new phase of naturalism. However, as I have noted, Goldoni's arch-rival, Carlo Gozzi, denounced him for "being a democrat" in his portrayals of Venetian life and manners, because of his sensitive portrayals of the middle class and intimate family moments.[4] Gozzi wrote that Goldoni's work was natural to life and gloriously comic, and that Goldoni was an effective stylist of well crafted plays. However, Gozzi found Goldoni's works to be "nature copied from fact, not imitated," which he believed a violation of the classical purpose of drama defined as an imitation of action.[5]

Goldoni was the one of the first playwrights to celebrate the Venetian citizen with characters and plots that dealt with events of eighteenth-century daily life.

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[2] Pompeo Molmenti, *Carlo Goldoni* (Venezia, F. Ongania, 1880) 116. trans. by M. Coyle.

[3] Pompeo Molmenti, *Carlo Goldoni*, 116.

[4] Joseph Kennard Spencer, *The Italian Theatre from the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (New York: William Edwin Rudge, 1932), 88.

[5] Carlo Gozzi, *Useless Memoirs*, trans. John Addington Symonds (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 169. The classical premises of imitation are as follows. Aristotle wrote that drama is "an imitation of an action which is complete, and whole, and has a certain magnitude." Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. by Gerald Wise (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970), 30. However, Plato argued that imitation was dangerous since it was removed from reality and could be confused by some people for a real action, and that poetic imitation was dangerous because it appealed to the emotions, and disturbed the search for truth. Plato, *Republic* (http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.11, accessed 21 March 2006). Gozzi is clearly more Platonian in his ideals of drama, for realistic imitations are inherently dangerous to the social fabric. In contrast to Goldoni's imitations of nature, Gozzi's own plays are pure fantasies, fables with allegorical connections to eighteenth century life.

Goldoni constructed plays for specific performers, certain theatrical companies, and a specific public, as well. He also published his works, thus reaching an audience outside of the playhouse.[6] "Goldoni, the first professional *commediografo* (in the modern sense of the commercial playwright) was no longer a poet in an ivory tower or a court artist."[7] Gozzi noted that Goldoni expected payment for his work, "thirty sequins for every piece, good, bad, or indifferent."[8] Goldoni justified these payments by saying that the profit from ticket sales and box rentals went to the proprietor of the theatre, "so that the author's share is hardly worth the looking after. Men of talent in France have another resource: gratifications from the court, pensions, and royal presents, but there is nothing of this kind in Italy."[9] Compensation from the sales of his work to publishers and theatre managers allowed Goldoni to fund his predilection for the entertainments offered in the Venetian social marketplace, such as sumptuous dinners, gambling and parties. His own tastes helped him understand the public's habits of consumption, as he replicated these observations on stage. The images he routinely used as expressive of Venetian culture in his plays included the entertainments and rituals of consumption that proliferated in eighteenth-century life.

It is difficult to document the conventions of Venetian theatre, an evidentiary predicament that extends to the Venetian culture of this period, due to varied sources and the divergent and contradictory evidence of political and artistic, social and

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[6] See Chapter One.

[7] Adrian Giurgea, "Theatre of the Flesh: The Carnival of Venice and the Theatre of the World" (PhD Dissertation: University of California, Los Angeles, 1987), 538.

[8] Carlo Gozzi, *Useless Memoirs*, 201. Gozzi donated his services as a playwright.

[9] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 231.

economic spheres.[10] Adrian Giurgea writes: "The main difficulty in approaching the subject is not the lack of documentary literature, but perhaps the very opposite. Each segment… has been the object of abundant attention, erroneous testimonies, and continuously misleading interpretations. The historian… faces not only the dispersion and fragmentary condition of the archival material, but also, despite its apparent immutability, the reality of a world in a permanent state of change."[11] Frankly, I cannot even begin to compile a comprehensive history of Venetian theatre in the eighteenth century, or even of the rituals of dining and eating that were established in this period. That belongs to a longer and different work. Here, this chapter will be concerned with the discussion of consumption of luxuries and entertainments in Venice during the eighteenth century, specifically found in such performances as the theatre, Carnival, and gambling parlors, and in dining and stylish food preparation.

There are many extra-theatrical activities and rituals associated with mid-eighteenth century Venetian culture. I undertake an overview of several distinct, but interrelated subjects in this chapter, all of which demonstrate some level of consumptive or festival commonality. Activities such as the Carnival and the *Ridotto*

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[10] There is actually little available evidence regarding the Venetian theatre in the last days of the Republic. Giurgea states in his dissertation a single source which attempted (unsuccessfully) to clarify the history of Venetian theatre, namely Nicola Magnini, *Dramaturgia e Spettacolo tra Settecento e Ottocento: Studi e ricerche* (Padua: Liviana, 1979). He does point out the importance of theatricality to understanding the Venetian population, a view shared by most significant historiographers of Venetian life, including Sansovino, Filiasi, Arteaga, Napoli-Signorelli, among others. Giurgea's dissertation includes work on this subject, includes his Chapter Three "The Birth of Venetian Theatre from the Spirit of Carnival" (227-412) and Chapter Four 'The Venetian Theatre of the World" (413-499) add much to confused historiographical evidence surrounding the Venetian theatre. A wonderful model for this eventual discussion would be Jeffrey S. Ravel's book on French theatre *The Contested Parterre: Public Theatre and French Political Culture 1680-1791* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1999).

[11] Adrian Giurgea, "Theatre of the Flesh: The Carnival of Venice and the Theatre of the World", 228.

provide insight into the daily practices and diversions of the city's middle-class population, focusing on these activities that fall into the category of the ritual, or the indulgent, rather than those deemed 'necessary'. A discussion of various literary, artistic, and theatrical forms common to Venice in the mid-eighteenth century, concurrent with Goldoni's writing career, act to give an idea of Venetian artistic life in the eighteenth century. The theatre of eighteenth-century Venice was also expressive of festive, extra-theatrical behavior, with unique activities of Venetian audiences and the conventions of operation. Lastly, I will turn my attention to seventeenth and eighteenth century culinary history, and the consumptive codification of the rituals attached to the performance of food during this period. The evolution of food styles, in conjunction with the fashionable and systemized table and table settings that emerged from France at the end of the seventeenth century, help demonstrate these rituals of food consumption. A discussion of the changing styles of Italian food, historically as well as socially, will help set the stage for a classed reading of Goldoni's use of food in various plays in Chapters Four and Five**.**

Section 1 Venetian Spectacle: Visitors and Carnival

Monnier wrote, "The population of the city [of Venice] was a population of holiday-makers. It comprised poets and parasites, barbers and money-lenders, virtuosos, courtesans, ballet-dancers, actors, croupiers, panders—all those, in fact, who make their living out of pleasure and luxury."[12] Venice was the cultural center of Italy during the eighteenth century, with many artists, writers, musicians, and composers all producing artistic work aimed at the wealthy privileged few. "Throughout the century hundreds—perhaps thousands—of the most cultivated and

[12] Phillippe Monnier, *Venice in the Eighteenth Century*, 22.

civilized men and women of Europe poured into the city every year," where there were not only comfortable amenities but also pleasurable distractions.[13] English visitor Lady Wortley Montagu wrote in 1740 that she soon expected a "fresh cargo of English…. I have nothing to complain of here [in Venice] but too much diversion…. I can hardly believe it is me dressed up at balls… I am embroiled in a thousand affairs that I had resolved to avoid as long as I lived."[14] In his 1791 *A Picture of Italy,* Johann Archenholz wrote that Venice was invaded by large numbers of visitors each year, and "the amusements were multiplied" in the city, chief among the diversions during the commercial event of Carnival were plays and entertainments at St. Mark's Place.[15] He observed that at the theatre "a serious subject meets with an empty house, but when [Venetians] can relish their… favourite entertainments [Commedia]… profound silence reigns and all is attention."[16]

Due to its abundance of available entertainments, the city functioned as a playground for citizen and visitor alike. According to Maurice Andrieux, author of *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova*, "What had long been second nature to the city of Venice—addiction to the delectable side of life—had taken over entirely by the eighteenth century, and she was an enchanted place of serenading, masquerade, and pleasure. The world strained towards the future as happy-go-lucky,

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[13] John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice* (New York, Alfred A Knopf, 1982), 584.

[14] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol. II (New York: AMS Press, 1970), 61.

[15] Johann Archenholz*, A Picture of Italy*, Translated by Joseph Trapp (London : printed for G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1791), 29.

[16] Johann Archenholz, *A Picture of Italy*, 33.

fatalistic Venice closed her eyes to the whole thing, smiled, and had a good time."[17] The consuming public of Venice enjoyed many of the city's pleasures, for "everyone was allowed to do just as he pleased, provided only that he left politics and religion severely alone."[18] Hester Piozzi noted the citizen's appreciation of luxuries in Venice. "Here at Venice there are no unpermitted frolics; her rulers love to see her gay and cheerful; they are the father of their country and, if they indulge, take care not to spoil her."[19]

The seasonal visitors viewed their time in Venice as a holiday, indulging in luxuries made possible by the diverse Venetian marketplace.[20] Lady Montagu wrote that Venice provided "all the conveniences of life, they are to be had at very easy rates…. It is much the established fashion for everyone to live in their own way, that nothing is more ridiculous than censuring the actions of another."[21] Rather than engaging in the political debates that enveloped the rest of Europe, the Venetian government was concerned with the financial stability of the republic and the flow of goods into the marketplace. Attention was given to goods and services that increased

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[17] Andriuex, *Daily Life In Venice at the Time of Casanova* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969),105.

[18] Phillippe Monnier, *Venice in the Eighteenth Century*, 21. The quote expresses the reaction to the law passed in Venice in 1746 by the Senate that forbade the public discussion of politics. Jeremy Black, *Eighteenth Century Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 493.

[19] Hester Piozzi, *Glimpses of Italian Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 107-8.

[20] Hibbert states that during the eighteenth century tourism grew immensely in Venice, especially with the numbers of English who were visiting the city. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu stated that the young Englishmen on holiday in Venice spent their time acquiring fashionable clothing, spending time with one another in coffeehouses, and spending time with maidservants or "opera queens… I look upon them as the greatest blockheads in nature." Christopher Hibbert, *Venice: The Biography of a City* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1989), 153.

[21] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol. II, 50.

the coffers of the city, and the comfort of both citizen and tourist equally. "Generally castigated as… [full] of demoralization and decay on all fronts, Venice [in the eighteenth century] was enjoying a period of unusual commercial prosperity and economic growth."[22] Venetian citizens were well-off and the markets offered a great number of goods made available by merchants and importers, despite Venice's overall decline as a seaport in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[23]

The increase in financial prosperity and the constant influx of visitors each year, produced a city full of daily spectacle and constant merrymaking. The masks and specific costumes associated with Carnival only increased the performative quality of everyday life, as people purposely put themselves on display for others.[24] Lady Montagu described a regatta that took place in Venice during her visit. She wrote of the spectacle produced for the many spectators, "at the expense of the nobles and strangers that have a mind to display their magnificence…. I shall name only the principal [boat]: the Signora Pisani Moncenigo's represented the chariot of the night; drawn by four sea-horses, and showing the rising of the moon, accompanied with stars, the statues on each side representing the hours to the number of twenty-four,

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[22] John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice*, 584

[23] According to Norwich, the goods that came into Venice's ports during the eighteenth century were local Italian merchandise, rather than foreign origin. Venice no longer had a monopoly on the spice trade, and from 1702 no longer had exclusive shipping rights on the Adriatic Sea. In Goldoni's time, popular cargoes were domestic, and included "wine, olive oil, sulpher, salt, raisins and currants. The money flowed in." John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice*, 591.

[24] Adrian Guirgea's dissertation "Theatre of the Flesh: The Carnival of Venice and the Theatre of the World" discusses the performativity of the Venetian Carnival, the Venetian theatre, and the effects of both on daily life. Giurgea examines how masks, clothing, and color schemes used by Venetians during the time of Carnival, later became everyday social garb, arguing that Venetians purposely put themselves on display, with their "instinct for theatre" in everyday life. His argument encompasses the Venetian proclivity for theatricalized living and daily drama. Adrian Giurgea, "Theatre of the Flesh", 7.

rowed by gondoliers in rich liveries, which were changed three times, all of equal richness, and the decorations changed also to the dawn of Aurora, and the mid-day sun."[25] Åsa Boholm recounts the 'parade of noble masks' during the period, "where, from the first day of Carnival, during the late evening and early night, nobles, both men and women, in masquerade costume, promenaded up and down in front of gazing spectators."[26] Goldoni himself wrote that the Carnival time "more wonderful by night than by day…. The shops… at all seasons remain open until ten o'clock of the evening, and a great number are not shut until midnight, and several never shut at all."[27] Goldoni embedded examples of the theatrical nature of Venetians in his plays, with memorable Italian characters, including Rosaura in *The Artful Widow* who dresses in costumes complete with masks to trick her foreign lovers, and Cecilia in *The New House*, who imitates the ways that the wealthier classes present themselves. He also wrote several plays set on the streets and *calles* of Venice, such as *Il Campiello* and the *Coffee House,* where characters observe the comings and goings of their neighbors. Goldoni's characters perform not only on the stage for a paying audience but also for one another in their use of costumes and material goods.[28]

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[25] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol. II, 66. For further discussions of the events that occur during Carnival, and the performative gatherings of Venice, see Åsa Boholm's *Venetian Worlds: Nobility and the Cultural Construction of Society* (Goteburg, Sweden: Institute for Advanced Studies in Social Anthropology, 1993).

[26] Åsa Boholm, *Venetian Worlds: Nobility and the Cultural Construction of Society*, 92.

[27] Goldoni, *Memoir,* 156.

[28] On my first visit to Venice in January of 2004, I saw an eighteenth century carriage in the Ca' Rezzonico which struck my imagination. The carriage was meant for a human servant to draw, and had glass panels from top to bottom, so that the person seated inside could be seen fully by any and all passerby. The material of the carriage was gilded and ornately carved, while the inner seats were covered with velvet. It seemed not so much a contraption for travel as a display box meant to showcase the jewel of a human riding in it.

The popularity of evening entertainments meant that Venice was one of the few cities in Europe to have publicly funded street lamps. This practice began in 1732 so that citizens and visitors alike could enjoy the city after dark.[29] "Because the pastimes and the spectacles of the streets came to life with the night, the illumination of the city… was extraordinary: in 1755 their number [of streetlamps was]…1400, and in 1775 more than 2000."[30] Goldoni wrote, "The lamps of Venice formed a decoration both useful and agreeable," for the practice meant that the city could be traversed safely well into the nighttime hours.[31] Lady Montagu also noted the prevalence of paved streets in Venice, where "the greatest ladies" walk in masks and dominos, which were "the common fashion to carry you everywhere."[32] Public illumination of the night and wide walkways full of masked people helped to transform nighttime Venice into a theatricalized setting, where people could easily watch the actions of others in the large-scale public performances.

However, it is the festivity of Carnival that offers the best example of Venetian spectacle.[33] Venetian Carnival traditionally begins after Christmas and lasts

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[29] Christopher Hibbert, *Venice: The Biography of a City*, 166. Also Maurice Rowdon, *The Fall of Venice* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970), 82.

[30] Adrian Giurgea, "Theatre of the Flesh", 537.

[31] Carlo Goldoni, *Memoir*, 156.

[32] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol. II, 50, note 1. The streets in Venice were paved, due to the constant flooding threatened from the seas and needed reinforcement of the structure of the city itself. The streets of the city not attached to canals, called *calle,* were very narrow and high walled, surrounded by all sides by buildings. However free of mud the streets might be, many were still dirty, as trash was dumped on the street until it could be retrieved by a cleaning service. Andriuex, *Daily Life In Venice at the Time of Casanova*, 26-7.

[33] Åsa Boholm suggests that the eighteenth-century authorities did not fear the Carnival celebration as a mass transgression of social rules, but instead saw it as an opportunity to further engrain the established social structure within the city. He writes, "Paradoxically, therefore,

until the beginning of Lent. It evolved from the Roman celebrations of Saturnalia and Lupercalia, which allowed licentiousness and a deliberate overturning of the normal social order.[34] In the eighteenth century, Carnival was at its height, popular with the wealthy as a stop on the Grand Tour of Europe. Carnival offered "pleasures and entertainments of almost every kind…. One could dress up in fantasy costume and don a mask… participate in public masquerades out of doors… and attend public spectacles of a variety of kinds."[35] By the eighteenth century, Carnival in Venice lasted for six months, and certain of the transgressive practices, such as wearing masks and *bauta*, were common throughout the year during the eighteenth century. "Masks were worn during the day, in ordinary everyday circumstances, as well as during the night and on festive occasions."[36] Many of Goldoni's plays are set in the period of Carnival, and all were performed during the social season attached to it. A wonderful dramatic example of the excitement and events of Carnival can be seen in Goldoni's 1759 *The Boors*, in which the characters are planning a wedding and a

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Carnival—as a 'ritual of rebellion' that exhibits blatant disrespect of authority—far from threatening the established social order, functions rather to support it… 'an authorized transgression'." Boholm, *Venetian Worlds: Nobility and the Cultural Construction of Society*, 85. The threatened danger of upturning society that existed during Carnival helped create and influence Venetian everyday life, affecting the instincts and the daily rhythms of the citizens, who "assert themselves even in the intellectual life of the city and stamp it with their character." Phillippe Monnier, *Venice in the Eighteenth Century*, 218.

[34] Åsa Boholm, *Venetian Worlds: Nobility and the Cultural Construction of Society*, 73. Lent, the six weeks before Ash Wednesday of Holy Week, is observed by abstaining from luxury and meat products, including eggs and cheese. Carnival in Venice dates from the year 1162, when the Republic defeated Ulrico, Patriarch of Aquileia, and slaughtered a bull and 12 pigs in the Piazza San Marco around Shrove Tuesday to commemorate the victory. The annual festival grew to include the use of masks by the middle of the thirteenth century.

[35] Åsa Boholm, *Venetian Worlds: Nobility and the Cultural Construction of Society*, 87.

[36] Åsa Boholm, *Venetian Worlds: Nobility and the Cultural Construction of Society*, 89.

dinner, and the young male lover is brought in a mask and women's clothing to meet his fiancée.[37]

Section 2 Venetian Literature and Art

The city's performative culture flourished in other Venetian forms as well.[38] Venice's artistic scene was diverse, befitting a city dedicated to pleasing visitors as well as local patrons.[39] "Only republican Venice could make any claim to being a cultural and theatrical capital comparable to Paris or London."[40] The eighteenth century saw the artistic transformation from the excessive Rococo to a more restrained neo-classical style. In this period, theatre, along with literature and painting, depicted Venice's transformation from histrionic excess to reserved naturalism and a social concern in both manners and behavior.[41] Then, "towards the end of the century interest in the ideas of sensibility and the value of nature combined in early romanticism."[42] This is reflected in the dramatic changes instituted by

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[37] This play will be discussed in Chapter Five.

[38] Father Paul Sarpi allegedly called for the government support of the arts. "Let the arts that are peculiar to the city be carefully preserv'd and in order that they ought not to be overcharged with great burdens…. If gain is not found where it is expected, people will go in search of it and leave the city. Thereby, encourage arts and crafts that are beneficial." Father John Sarpi, *Maxins of the Government of Venice* (London, J. Morphew, 1707), 18-9.

[39] Italy, and especially Venice, was on the forefront of the artistic world in the eighteenth century, with performers such as the famed Arlechino Antonio Sacchi, writers of a burgeoning nationalistic drama such as Alfieri and Goldoni, operas by composers Monteverdi and his pupil Pier Francesco Cavalli, and scenic and stage design with the family of Bibbiena. Venice was also known for composers such as Vivaldi.

[40] Ronald Vince, *Neoclassical Theatre: A Historiographical Handbook* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 158.

[41] Guirgea states that theatre was the only manifestation of this revolution in manners. I disagree with his assessment, seeing it also in other artistic forms popular in the city. Adrian Giurgea, "Theatre of the Flesh," 347.

[42] Jeremy Black, *Eighteenth Century Europe*, 287.

Goldoni to the Commedia. The Goldonian reformation to the ornate styles of Venetian theatre can be understood as a moral imperative reasserting itself in the face of the immoderation in the culture, and found in both the plots and characters of the Commedia that reflected it.

While Goldoni's work was revolutionary in the playhouse, it did mirror larger trends in Venetian literary culture. Writers, artists, and musicians all struggled to create works that would reflect the scientific principles of the Enlightenment as well as the cosmopolitan sophistication of the new Venetian marketplace. For example, Giuseppe Parini (1729-99) was a priest and tutor to the upper classes who wrote of social injustice and class issues, attacking the aristocracy for their corrupting and apathetic lifestyle. His best-known poems are "Il Giorno" and "Odi." Parini, like Goldoni, wrote satirically of the place of fashion in everyday life, decrying the moral decline of the age. Count Vittorio Alfieri (1749-1803), primarily remembered for his tragedies and poetry, was also a satirist. He wrote in protest of the tyranny of public officials, and historians have credited him with aiding Italy's rise to independence and political unity. His tragedies feature classical and historical themes, and include *Mary Stuart*, *Antigone,* and *Saul*.[43] The Gozzi brothers were also keenly interested in Venice's changing cultural and social practices. Gaspare Gozzi believed in the cause of the social reformers. Carlo Gozzi fought to maintain past forms. Clearly the issues of social change and reform, or conversely, of maintaining the *status quo*, are

[43] Another author is remembered for his contributions to opera. Pietro Trapassi (1698-1782), better known as Metastasio, was a poet and librettist remembered for his work in both melodrama and opera. He wrote almost exclusively on historical and classical subjects, and his best known works include: *Galate*, *Didone*, and *Demetrio.*

demonstrated in the work of the writers of the period. Goldoni is perhaps the best-remembered literary figure from Venice during this period.

Just as the literary world was changing, the visual world of Goldoni's Venice was transforming as well. During the eighteenth century, there was an introduction of new styles of painting which helped free Venetian art from Renaissance interpretations and from the influence of Rococo.[44] Venetian painter Pietro Longhi (1702-1785) illustrates many of the social changes of the Enlightenment. Reacting against the lavish visual aesthetics of Rococo in the mid-eighteenth century that emphasized sensuality, playfulness, and fantasy, Longhi depicted the daily life of the new middle class and the wealthy bourgeois. This change in artistic fashion represented Venetian citizens, the nobility, bourgeois, and commoners alike, in a more natural form, reminiscent of the reforms Goldoni suggested for theatre. Goldoni wrote of Longhi's work, "O Longhi, you who call my comic muse/ The sister to your brush which seeks the truth/… You with live colour, I with poetry/ I paint the graces, you the golden locks."[45] Both Longhi and Goldoni became the recorders of an evolving social class and the resultant changes in the eighteenth century, presenting

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[44] Rococo was a design style popular in the Venice of Goldoni's time, emerging from France in the early eighteenth century. It influenced decorative art in Europe until around 1770, and can be seen in both the architecture and the visual art of the Venetian eighteenth century. Rococo emphasized light, delicate, whimsical forms and curved shapes, pastel colors, and a trend towards oriental furnishings, depicting pleasure and sensuality in playful design. The most popular Venetian artist that worked in Rococo was Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696 through 1770). Tiepolo specialized in the fresco medium and the use of shadow and light in his paintings, resulting in a delicate color scheme heavily relying on pastels. He painted large-scale masterpieces in several Venetian palazzos, most memorably the 1750 allegorical interpretations of the four continents.

[45] Carlo Goldoni, *Compopnimenti poetici per le felicissime nozze di sue eccellenze Giovanni Grimani e la Signora Catterina Contarini* (Venice 1750).

the figures of Venetian daily life at work and at play in the marketplaces and *calles* of the city.[46]

Part of the daily life that Goldoni, Longhi, and others recorded and satirized were new eating practices. The precisely laid and ornate table styles and sumptuous meals of this period can also be traced to the overwrought style of rococo, which itself operated as a reaction to the heavier foods and recipes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[47] "Picture the curved lines of gilt furniture, so light and ornate it seems to defy use…. Now imagine what these people wanted to eat. We have moved once again into a period of culinary excess, over refinement, the exotic and the artificial outweighing the homegrown and the traditional."[48]

Section 3 Il Ridotto and Gambling

One of the more curious institutions in eighteenth century Venice was the state-run gambling parlor called the *Ridotto,* which opened officially in 1628.[49] The Venetian government attempted to maintain control of the gambling that went on in the city, and originally saw the *Ridotto* as a way to raise income, to make up for the maritime trade that had begun to flag in the seventeenth century. The *Ridotto* soon became the entertainment of choice among upper- and middle-class Venetians, open

[46] I do not suggest that either the artist or the playwright was attempting to chronicle life as it was, but rather an idealized version of life.

[47] Food trends, too, were in the process of changing from the over-formal, but that change would not be complete until the nineteenth century. Chappelle and Marin's cookbooks document a simpler and more elegant style, in a possible attempt to "further distance elite cooking from the aspiring middle classes who could now afford to imitate their lavish style." Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2003), 163.

[48] Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, 162.

[49] The original *ridotto* still stands at number 1362 in the Calle del Ridotto.

nightly with free entry given to any masked individual.[50] The favorite games were *biribisso*, a type of roulette originally introduced in France, and *faro*, a card game.[51] "It is nothing to stake one's clothes at the card table, and to have to go home naked, as happened to the noble Abbe Niccolo Grioni in 1762; a man sometimes stake[d] his wife."[52] There were rooms open for chocolate and coffee, as well as wine, sausages, sweets, and fruit.[53] The *Ridotto* was a meeting point for courtesans, prostitutes, and their clients. On 27 November 1774, the Venetian Grand Council voted to close the *Ridotto* in order to "preserve the piety, sound discipline, and moderate behavior so necessary for the well being of our society."[54]

English traveler William Beckford wrote:

> [The casino] consists of five to six rooms, fitted up in a gay flimsy taste, neither rich nor elegant; where there were a great many lights and a great many ladies negligently dressed, their hair falling very freely around them, and innumerable pleasures written in their eyes. The gentlemen were lolling on sofas, or lounging about the apartments…. Coffee was carried round. The magic beverage diffused a temporary animation…. But the flash was soon dissipated, and nothing remained save cards and stupidity.[55]

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[50] The *Ridotto* was only open during Carnival, and there was a strict clothing code to be adhered to for entry, which necessarily left out the lower classes who couldn't afford the clothes. Barnhart, Russell T., *Gambling with Giacomo Casanova and Lorenzo Da Ponte in Eighteenth Century Venice: The Ridotto*, (New York, 1994), 5.

[51] Maurice Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova*, 131.

[52] Phillippe Monnier, *Venice in the Eighteenth Century*, 241.

[53] Christopher Hibbert, *Venice: The Biography of a City*, 171.

[54] Samulele Romanin, *Storia Documentata di Venezia* (Venezia: P. Naratovich, 1853-1861), 207 The city realized many citizens going bankrupt from excessive gambling, and so closed the *Ridotto* in an a desperate attempt to protect their citizens

[55] William Beckford, *The Grand Tour of William Beckford, 58.*

Piozzi wrote that Venetians, "like all sensualists…. do not taste their pleasures here, they swallow them whole."[56] Sarah Goudar**,** wife of a French gambler Ange Goudar (friend of Casanova), observed that "No state can keep going without the aid of vice."[57] Despite the closure of the *Ridotto* in 1774, back-room gambling parlors remained open to business.[58] In the taverns, barbershops, and wine shops of the city, citizens of every class could gamble while enjoying "coarse wine served with soup and fried fish… whipped cream in wafers…meat… or water with brandy."[59]

Section 4 Theatre in Venice

The theatre of the period also represented the whimsical and excessive ideals of Rococo that Goldoni was reacting against. The predominant style of performance in the eighteenth century was Commedia dell'Arte, with its light, comical touch and overblown plots. Large-scale operatic productions that feasted the ear as well as the eye were also popular.[60] Play going was one of the most popular entertainments in Venice in the eighteenth century during Carnival season.[61] Venice boasted public playhouses, as well as impromptu street theatre and private theatres in noble houses.[62]

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[56] Hester Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections Made in the Course of a Journey through France, Italy, and Germany* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1967), 93.

[57] Ned Rival, *Casanova La Vie a Plaisir* (Paris: Plon, 1977), 60.

[58] Maurice Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova*, 131.

[59] Christopher Hibbert, *Venice: The Biography of a City*, 172.

[60] The opulent form of Opera evolved during the seventeenth century, but was still vastly popular in the eighteenth century.

[61] See Ronald Vince, *Neoclassical Theatre: A Historigraphical Handbook*, and Maurice Andriuex, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova,* Joseph Kennard Spencer*, Italian Theatre from the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (particularly Chapter Three) for discussions of the theatre's popularity. Also, Ravel's *The Contested Parterre* would be of use for description of the types of behavior in eighteenth-century theatres, of which Venetian theatres were quite typical.

The city also featured numerous street festivals both to celebrate religious holidays, and to impress foreign dignitaries with the strength and power of the Venetian republic.[63] Hester Piozzi wrote of Venice's public theatres that "here there are many theatres, the worst infinitely superior to ours."[64] There were seven permanent public playhouses as compared to three in Paris and two in London in the same period.[65] Theatres specialized in a certain type of performance, such as opera or ballet, melodramas, or the Commedia dell'Arte, which was by far the most popular form of theatre in this period.

Theatre buildings in Venice bore the names of the parishes they were located in, and were privately owned by the nobility. The structures were leased to the acting companies, who gave back the majority of their profits to the owner. The building owners usually ran a gaming room in the playhouse that added to the lure of the event, and also helped to subsidize the theatre.[66] Theatres operated during the autumn through the wintertime Carnival, when there were performances every evening of the week, even on Fridays which were traditionally rest days all over Italy. During the remainder of the year, the acting companies toured throughout Italy, and other neighboring countries. Productions of comedies lasted between 4-5 hours, including musical interludes and breaks. "In eighteenth century Venice, about thirteen hundred melodramas were given premieres and a little less than eight hundred musical dramas

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[62] Maurice Andriuex, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova*, 182.

[63] Joseph Kennard Spencer*, Italian Theatre from the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (New York: William Edwin Rudge, 1932), 70.

[64] Hester Piozzi, *Glimpses of Italian Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 122-3.

[65] Phillippe Monnier, *Venice in the Eighteenth Century*, 129.

[66] Maurice Andriuex, *Daily Life in Venice at the Time of Casanova*, 184.

written by five hundred librettists and as many composers; all of these were published. Forty-five hundred conductors, singers, ballet dancers, and mimes were employed to realize them. To this number should be added the architects, scenographers, and technical workers."[67] Actors working in the city's theatres received part of the net profit of the evening as payment for services. The author of the play received his money from the manager/owner of the company, and was allowed to keep the profits from selling the copies of his work. [68]

The bourgeois were a major part of Venetian theatre audiences, and their support was crucial to the development of the new Republican consciousness that drove cultural formation of the public theatres into the nineteenth century.[69] The middle class saw representations of their lives and concerns onstage in Goldoni's productions. Gaspare Gozzi wrote of the middle class customs presented in *I Rusteghi* (*The Boors*), in the 20 February 1760 edition of *la Gazzetta Veneta*. "He painted in it some of the customs of the fathers of the family, who are the enemies of the honest pastimes of society, against which they always mutter, and they hold their wives and children apart from these diversions. From the enactments of such customs the comedy takes its title."[70] Gozzi declared that Goldoni illustrated these types of people and customs admirably, and labeled the piece a new type of comic artistry in its break with theatrical convention and its presentation of middle-class characters in

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[67] Adrian Giurgea, "Theatre of the Flesh", 552.

[68] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *The Italian Theatre from the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, 33.

[69] Jeremy Black, *Eighteenth Century Europe*, 279.

[70] Gasparo Gozzi, *La Gazzetta Veneta* (Firenze: G.C. Sansone, 1915), 24-5.

lifelike situations. Despite Goldoni's emphasis on representing the middle class, theatre attendance was a popular pastime for those of *all* classes who could afford the price of admission.[71] In his book *Venice in the Eighteenth Century,* Phillippe Monnier observed that "Drama [in Venice] is the literature of those who do not read,"[72] theatrical topics of both plays and performers were the gossip of the streets, and "a new play was a public event."[73] Daily notices would be placed at the Rialto Bridge and St. Mark's Piazza listing the performance schedule at the city's seven theatres. By the end of the eighteenth century, small boys cried out the programs of the theatres in front of coffee houses as well as in crowds, rather than post the daily performances.

Audience members paid entrance to the theatres to the theatre manager, but had to pay an usher again if they wanted an actual seat. Otherwise, they stood to watch the performance. Often times the usher charged the audience member more than the going rate, and pocketed the difference. The seats were chairs made of wood, although benches and tiers might be used in the gallery sections.[74] As in other theatres throughout Europe, prices for admission varied in relation to the placement of the seats within the theatre. Boxes were more expensive than the parterre area. Tickets to the *parterre* were originally free, but then owners began to charge four lire

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[71] Emanuela Cervato. Translated by Andrew Thompson. *Goldoni and Venice: A Study of Six Comedies in Dialect* (Market Harborough, Leics.: Dept. of Italian, University of Hull , 1993), 8.

[72] Phillippe Monnier, *Venice in the Eighteenth Century*, 130.

[73] Phillippe Monnier, *Venice in the Eighteenth Century*, 130.

[74] Christopher Hibbert, *Venice: The Biography of a City*, 168

for admission.[75] Boxes were paid for separately and were reserved for wealthier individuals who bought out the entire season. Lighting consisted of small oil lanterns placed near the front and edges of the stage, which left the majority of the house in darkness, allowing licentious behavior.[76] The space between the first row of seating and the stage was reserved for "women suffering from an incontinence of urine."[77] Candles were provided for the upper galleries where people gave parties, conversed, gambled, or ate during the production.[78] Food and drink were common in the theatres of the period. Just outside the theatre's entrance, vendors sold baked apples and pears, passing through the audience with tray of other foods, including oranges, fritters, chestnuts, and cakes. In their boxes, the spectators were served wine, coffee, and ices.[79]

Being seen in attendance at the theatre seemed more important to some spectators than watching the performers onstage. "Many of the theatre goers [in the *parterre]* would be… more interested in acting out their own Carnival characters than

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[75] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *The Italian Theatre from the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, 32. Lady Montagu reported that the prices for tickets in Venice were ridiculously low. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol. II, 50. This must supposedly be in comparison to tickets in London theatres.

[76] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *The Italian Theatre from the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, 32.

[77] Norbert Jonard, *La Vita a Venezia nel XVIII Secolo* (Milan: A. Martello, 1967) 174. Note that earlier twentieth century historian Kennard did not mention the use of the area for bodily functions. He reports that the area was cleared so that the spectators could "walk around." Joseph Spencer Kennard, *The Italian Theatre from the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, 32.

[78] Marvin Carlson, *The Italian Theatre from Goldoni to D'Annunzio* (Jefferson, North Caro.: McFarland and Co., 1981), 5. Note that, like other theatres of the period, the upper balconies were often used for sexual congress.

[79] Marvin Carlson, *The Italian Theatre from Goldoni to D'Annunzio*, 6.

in watching the play, and their efforts to stand out from the crowd" were impressive.[80] Boxes functioned more as meeting places and extensions of the sitting room, where women came to see what others were wearing,[81] and to be admired. The box served as a "perfect setting in which to show off dresses and jewels."[82] The audience members talked and visited with one another during the evening's performance. In the words of Giustina Renier Michiel, "We listened… and in the rest of the time we could hold conversations, because we were not obliged to listen to what we disliked or bored us."[83]

Audience behavior during the performance varied in the different theatres of Venice. In comedic theatres, such as the Teatro San Cassiano, the behavior of patrons was often quite exaggerated and noisy. Patrons were generally better behaved in the opera houses, but in the theatres specializing in comedy the spirit of Carnival reigned.[84] In a comedic house, the pit was generally filled with lower-class patrons, while conversely in opera houses the pit was occupied by the upper classes,

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[80] Maurice Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova*, 187.

[81] This behavior was typical of the period for French and English theatres as well. Adrian Giurgea discusses the language of color as a tool in marking class differentiations in eighteenth-century Venice in his dissertation, "The Theatre of the Flesh." Color was used as a mark of social class distinction, it was also evolving as a form of political nuance as well. Strong variations of color in clothing were common, between black and white, wine and turquoise. However, the most traditional and acceptable color was various shadings of greys. Women were to dress with less color than men, who favored more vivid colors such as canary yellow and the 'Goldonian' color (*la veuve rejouie*). Sadly, he does not provide an example of the Goldonian color, nor could I find reference to it in other sources. The clothing colors one chose while in public could signal not only class but also emotional and character traits. Black and red were reserved for government magistrates and council members, while black and white were colors adopted by all classes. However, by contrast, a willow green signaled a woman who was sad in love.

[82] Maurice Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova*, 187.

[83] Giustina Renier Michiel, *Origine delle feste venezian,* trans. by Adrian Giurgea (Milano: Presso gli Editori degli annuali universale delle scienze e dell'industria, 1829), 85-7.

[84] Christopher Hibbert, *Venice: The Biography of a City*, 169.

so that they could be nearer to the music. It was considered proper to judge the play by the reactions of those in the pit, since they were closest to the action.[85] Many of the members of the audience in both the pits and the box seating were masked, and/or in costume. Goldoni himself wrote of going masked to see his rival Chiari's comedy *The School for Widows* at the theatre of San Samuele in 1749.[86]

Venetian audiences were quite loud, producing "shameless, uncontrolled laughter, coarse strident shouts from the men, cackling from the women, cat calls, cries in imitation of cocks and hens, sneezings, coughings, yawns, every kind of racket."[87] When the spectators were enthusiastic about a certain performer, they would reward him/her with applause and cheers, crying "Blessed be thou! Blessed be he who fathered you! Darling, I throw myself at your feet!"[88] If the performance was bad, or if there were audience members present who preferred another comedic theatre, rotten fruit might be thrown, and quarrels would break out among spectators.[89] People in the boxes would drop objects from their boxes, or spit on the

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[85] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *The Italian Theatre from the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, 74.

[86] Carlo Goldoni, *Memoir*, 247. This is one of the first incidents to spark the Goldoni/Gozzi debates to proliferate in the 1750s.

[87] Phillippe Monnier, *Venice in the Eighteenth Century*, 33.

[88] Norbert Jonard, *La Vita a Venezia nel XVIII Secolo*, 175. Adrian Giurgea reports that some spectators were so moved they tried to throw themselves from the balcony, or would throw poetry, flowers, and, in one instance, live "pigeons with silver bells around their necks." "Theatre of the Flesh", 334.

[89] "One half of the house might come into conflict with the other as to the merits of certain performers, and the uproar grew louder than ever as cheering and clapping competed with catcalls and shout of abuse." Christopher Hibbert, *Venice: The Biography of a City*, 168. Venetians dedicated themselves to supporting particular theatres, playwrights, or performers. As in France and England, the theatres of Venice were given to intense rivalries between the audiences as to which theatres and troupes they preferred, which only added to the excitement and confusion of the performances. According to Andriuex, the theatre season of 1760 was exceptional in this regard, as the battle for

heads of those in the pit.[90] Verisimilitude and realistic performance styles did not exist under these conditions. Theatre had to continually introduce novelties to catch the attention of the unruly spectators, using new topics, new performers, new plots, and innovations of scenery and text.[91]

Section 5 Eating and Drinking in Venice

After an evening at the theatre, patrons would go to coffee houses to enjoy a late supper, or to the *Ridotto* to gamble. The public spaces of the city were in use much of the day and well into the night. Places such as hotels, inns, taverns, coffee houses, and gambling houses occupied every section of Venice of the eighteenth century, and visitors could buy food, rest, drink, see and be seen. Goldoni's play *The Coffee House* is a perfect example of the social and performative bent found in the city's outdoor spaces, as the characters gather in the *campiello* in front of a Venetian coffee house and enjoy the private life made public. Coffee houses were preferred places of relaxation and discussion, and by 1759, the city passed a law limiting the number of coffee houses to 206 within the city of Venice.[92] This rather large number

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control of the commedia was heating up between Chiari, Goldoni, and Gozzi. "Some of the battles would begin with inter-theatre rivalry, as in the open war between the Sant'Angelo, where Chiari's plays were given and the San Luca which employed Goldoni and stood for an entirely different kind of drama…. Those who really wanted to hear a word or a note were forced into the heroic course of sitting somewhere in the front rows nearest the stage, where they were exposed to more than their fair share of orange peel, tomatoes, and soft-stewed fruit." Maurice Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova*, 188.

[90] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *The Italian Theatre from the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, 32.

[91] Since many Commedia performances reused the same *lazzi,* dialogue, plotlines, and costumes, it was easy to haphazardly follow the performance. However, Goldoni's reforms created novel characters and stories. The works of Goldoni "made Venetian audiences look at the stage with attention all the time," so that they did not miss any part of the story." Maurice Rowdon, *The Fall of Venice*, 153.

[92] Yet coffee houses were frequented by all levels of society and were seen as potentially politically subversive places to exchange radical ideas. Father John in his *Maxims of the Government*

of coffee houses available in the small city of Venice demonstrates the importance of not only the ritual of drinking coffee to the Venetian eighteenth century consuming public, but also of the social camaraderie that was a part of daily life. Coffee was so popular a beverage in Europe that Johann Sebastian Bach wrote "The Coffee Cantata" between 1732 and 1734, in which a father forbids his young daughter to go to the coffee houses.[93]

The popularity of coffee and hot chocolate in the eighteenth century demonstrates *la scienza di buon gusto*. While first adopted for medical use as stimulants or restoratives, coffee and hot chocolate soon became a status symbol among the wealthier classes, eventually replacing alcoholic beverages such as wine or beer as a morning drink.[94] Coffee was first introduced into Venice as early as 1644, through Dutch mercantile communities**,** and its popularity quickly spread throughout the population as coffee houses began to appear throughout the city.[95] While many decried the dangers of coffee and the possible political intrigue that could foment in coffee houses, the popularity of these establishments in Venetian daily life was

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of Venice observed that "care must be taken to prevent, as much as we would do the plague, the people from flocking together in great numbers, because there needs no more for overturning the commonwealth than to leave it easy for the people to unite together in any conference." Father John Sarpi, *Maxims of the Government of Venice*, 15.

[93] Lieschen, the daughter, sings, "Father, don't be so severe! If I can't drink my bowl of coffee three times daily, then in my torment I will shrivel up like a piece of roast goat. Mm! how sweet the coffee tastes, more delicious than a thousand kisses, mellower than muscatel wine. Coffee, coffee I must have, and if someone wishes to give me a treat, ah, then pour me out some coffee!" English lyrics to Johann Bach, *The Coffee Cantata*, http://www.good-music-guide.com/reviews/044lyrics.htm#english, accessed 24 February 2006.

[94] Ken Albala, *Food In Early Modern Europe*, 84.

[95] Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past: The French Kitchen and Table from 1300 to 1789* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 91.

unparalleled by any other consumer site.[96] Andrieux notes that the working classes of Venice during the eighteenth century lived fairly frugally, with "their sole luxury being excellent coffee."[97] In the 1780s Hester Piozzi noted the intemperate use of coffee among the Venetian populace. "For what… can account for the people's rage here, young and old, rich and poor, to pour down such quantities of coffee? I have already had seven cups to-day, and feel frightened lest we should some of us be killed with so strange an abuse of" it.[98] As noted in Chapter One, Goldoni himself was seized near Bologna in 1754 with a stash of illegal coffee and chocolate from Venice. Coffee houses replaced taverns, and as Barbara Wheaton argues in *Savouring the Past* can be seen as precursors to the modern restaurant.[99] At first a luxury, coffee was eventually adopted by *all* classes, as coffee houses were open to all, embodying some of the eighteenth-century republican spirit of equality.

Chocolate, by contrast, was a beverage that figured prominently among the monied classes of the eighteenth century. Hot chocolate, introduced to Spain in the early fifteenth century, was in widespread use among the eighteenth century nobility and was "sipped through the morning by indolent noblemen and women."[100] It was less visible on the tables of the middle and lower classes due to its prohibitive

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[96] Goldoni's 1750 play *The Coffee House* (to be covered in Chapter Four) discusses the place of the coffee house in the campiellos of Venice. By the 1760s, there were 200 coffee houses in the city of Venice alone.

[97] Maurice Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova*, 93.

[98] Hester Piozzi, *Glimpses of Italian Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 127.

[99] Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past*, 91.

[100] Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, 85.

price.[101] Chocolate arrived at the French court with Louis XIV's Spanish wife, Marie Theresa, who "brought along a maid whose prime task was to brew the queen's chocolate."[102] By the eighteenth century the composition of chocolate changed from "the complicated taste of baroque chocolate, thick with pungent aromas, towards the simpler and less composite taste of enlightenment chocolate, which was prepared by simply blending sugar and cocoa with a light dusting of vanilla and cinnamon."[103] In 1778, Vincenzo Corrado wrote a text on the health benefits of chocolate and coffee entitled *La Manovra della cioccolata e del caffe* (*The Making of Chocolate and of Coffee)*. In it, he recounted the histories and household usages of the beverages, including remedies for fortifying the stomach and curing certain ailments. [104] This book helped to signal the arrival of both chocolate and coffee in the middle classes, since they could now make these beverages in their homes with some basic ingredients and utensils, following Corrado's instructions. By the late eighteenth century, "bowls, cups, and chocolate pots soon became part of the domestic panorama of mansions, villas, bishop's palaces, convents, and other well appointed homes."[105] Correct use of different services for beverages was also a social test or performance of sorts, which provided instant proof of one's class identity. "Those of high birth

[101] Giovanni Rebora, *The Culture of the Fork: A Brief History of Food in Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 119.

[102] Roy Strong, *Feast: A Grand History of Eating* (New York: Harcourt, 2002), 225.

[103] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 108. Baroque chocolate was heavily spiced and had many other additives such as chilis, lemon, jasmine, corn, flowers, musks, and other exotic spices. See also Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, 85.

[104] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 108.

[105] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 115. Cups for chocolate differed in design than cups for other hot beverages—the cups had wider brims and were wider across. Accordingly, coffee, tea, and chocolate each had their own service.

received training sufficient to allow them to orient themselves among this plethora of utensils and glassware; others did not and thereby gave proof of their inferior breeding."[106]

Venice was famous for the abundant luxury it provided in its extra-theatrical banquets, where the opulence of the table was presented in a performative and extravagant style. For example, in 1755, a Bavarian Duke feasting at the Palazzo Nani was served three courses with "one hundred and twenty five dishes each" on gold plate at a horseshoe shaped table, along with 180 guests.[107] The dessert consisted of thirty-five separate dishes with forty-eight side dishes of flavored syrups so that each person could have a different taste to suit his or her palate.[108] In 1807, Italian chef Francesco Leonardi wrote of the artistic importance of the seventeenth and eighteenth century dessert. "In Italy, we have had outstanding artists who were not only highly skilled… but who brought, moreover, many other special talents, immense genius and a fertile imagination to the creation of the most beautiful works of decoration…. Arranged with art and sense of symmetry to make the dessert a joy to behold."[109] This proliferation of different tastes and visual stimulation certainly describes the Venetian palate of the period.

The eighteenth century palate and choices of foods among different classes were quite distinct, and help to illustrate the social changes taking place in the period, changes which are further contextualized by Goldoni's plays. The availability of

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[106] Giovanni Rebora, *The Culture of the Fork*, 146.

[107] Christopher Hibbert, *Venice: The Biography of a City*, 160.

[108] Maurice Rowdon, *The Fall of Venice*, 43.

[109] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 159.

diverse foods, the dictates of fashionable eating, and with the new trends in social mobility helped to shape popular and aesthetic tastes in eighteenth-century Venice.[110] Class lines were clearly drawn between what the ordinary bourgeois ate (Bourdieu's definition of middle-brow taste), with food fads such as chocolate and French dishes trickling down from the upper classes (legitimate taste) and becoming prevalent on the Venetian menu as a part of popular taste.

The standards for food preparation in the eighteenth century were quite exacting, as was the overall attitude towards eating. In 1778, Roman chef Vincenzo Corrado wrote in *Il credenziere di buon gusto* (*The Credentials of Good Taste*) about the rules of eating necessary to create a civilized society. Part of Corrado's rationale for writing cookbooks and treatises on eating was to reclaim some of the glory of food preparation from the French, who threatened to eclipse the tasteful and stylish cooking available in Italy.[111] According to Corrado, the most necessary component to living a good life was the noble art of eating, *stessa nobilissima arte del mangiare*. According to Corrado, the knowledge of good eating ensured personal contentment in life.[112] Corrado further noted that the art of eating should be considered a science of the throat, '*La scienza della gola,*' which relied on the effective mechanics of the kitchen and the sideboard, '*meccanismo della cucina e della credenza,'* in order to be effective.

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[110] For the experienced connoisseur Venetians of Goldoni's time, the study of the fashions of the upper classes by the up and coming middle classes could be considered akin to Bourdieu's education. It is certainly an education of placement of classed objects.

[111] Ken Albala, *Food In Early Modern Europe*, 139.

[112] Vincenzo Corrado, *Il credenziere di buon gusto e La Manovra della cioccolata e del caffe* (Bologna Arnaldo Forni Editore, 1991), prefazione.

For Corrado, the tasteful man, '*L'uomo gusto'* could apply this science by tasting, varying, and carefully selecting seasonally available food of a high standard of quality.[113] "Eating was always moderate in Venice, but it got careful attention… Even noblemen ate their elaborate and often sickly French dishes only at the great banquets, and then mostly for the show of it."[114] Eighteenth-century Venetian menus were highly formalized and French in conception, especially for the wealthier classes.[115] Corrado's 'man of taste' would have appealed to Venetians, who took the freshness of their ingredient, as well as the overall taste of their foods quite seriously.[116]

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[113] Vincenzo Corrado, *Il credenziere di buon gusto*, prefazione. Holiday food in Venice was menu specific and dependent on what was available during the season. "On Christmas Eve salmon and eels were eaten with cabbage; the last day of the Carnival meant rissoles and turkey and whipped cream, the first day of lent lentils; lamb was for Easter, duck for the first of August." Maurice Rowdon, *The Fall of Venice*, 87.

[114] Maurice Rowdon, *The Fall of Venice*, 87. Elaborate banquets were meant to be visually moving and attractive, as well performed according to the most recent style. Daily eating tended to be more abstemious and localized in nature, whereas stylish eating, such as banquets and large scale extravaganzas were standardized in both visual spectacle and manner of presentation.

[115] The heavily spiced food associated with Renaissance cookery was typical of the foods of the rich during the formation of the Venetian republic, for "only the wealthiest consumers could afford spices and this made them powerful markers of status. To offer guests a heavily spiced dish was literally to consume one's wealth." Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, 16. Venetian cooks would have access to spices at lower prices than other European cooks, since Venetian merchants dominated the spice trade in the Mediterranean until the late seventeenth century and their wares were readily available in the market. The typical lunch of the middle ages in Venice was not ostentatious but was heavily spiced, as befits the expectations of the medieval palate. "At nine o'clock and at midday the sound of the bell again summoned laborers to a modest meal…. not a sound to be heard in the shops, men and women met round the board. The fare was frugal, composed of vegetables, fruit, fish, wild duck, beef, pork, and, above all, kid and wild boar, as is suggested by the vast quantity of bones found a few feet below the surface." Pompeo Molmenti, *Venice: Its Individual Growth from the Earliest Beginnings to the Fall of the Republic,* trans. Horatio Brown (London: John Murray, 1906), 26, volume 2.

[116] "Foreigners with more money to spare could eat extremely well. The sturgeon, turbot, tunny, mullet, and sole of the lagoon were renowned the world over… good beef came from Syria, mutton from Padua, veal from Rovigo and Chioggia… On the whole, a person… could live as well in Venice as anywhere in Europe." Christopher Hibbert, *Venice: The Biography of a City*, 256.

The food markets of Venice were extensive, and helped to underscore the ritual aspects of food preparation and enjoyment for the eighteenth-century Venetian. Hester Piozzi wrote of the food shops she saw in Venice, "Every shop, adorned with its own particular produce, was disposed to hail the passage of its favorite in a manner so lively, so luxuriant, and at the same time so tasteful…. The poulterers and fruiterers were by many thought the most beautiful shops in town, from the variety of fancies displayed in the disposal of their goods."[117] Venice did have certain challenges regarding the distribution of food as it was inaccessible to farmland, and did not have roads to bring in food items. Most of the food business took place near the Rialto Bridge, where boats would bring fruits and vegetables from the islands and unload them for the daily market.[118] William Beckford wrote of the visual spectacle of these markets:

> It was not five o'clock before I was roused, by a loud din of voices and splashing of water, under my balcony. Looking out, I beheld the grand canal so entirely covered with fruits and vegetables on rafts and in barges, that I could scare distinguish a wave. Loads of grapes, peaches, and melons arrived, and disappeared in an instant; for every vessel was in motion, and the crowds of purchasers hurrying from boat to boat, formed one of the liveliest pictures imaginable… I procured a gondola, laid in my provision of bread and grapes, and was rowed under the Rialto.[119]

The Venetian markets featured corn for polenta, Arborio rice, and wheat for bread and pasta from Venice's vast lands to the west.[120] Andrieux reports that meat

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[117] Hester Piozzi, *Glimpses of Italian Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 105.

[118] The Rialto was a commercial hub of the city in the thirteenth century, "when the two sides of the Grand Canal were linked by a wooden bridge, long the only span across the waterway. By 1588 construction of a stone bridge began… [and was] completed in 1591." Florence Fabricant and Adam Tihany, *Venetian Taste*, (New York: Abbeville Press, 1994), 17.

[119] William Beckford, *The Grand Tour of William Beckford, 57.*

was plentiful in the eighteenth century, "for 500 cattle, 50 calves, and any amount of fowls and goats were slaughtered each week" in order to feed the city.[121] Not surprisingly, fish comprised a large part of the daily menu of the Venetians. Seafood was sold near the Rialto in the *Pesceria*, though occasional strikes by fisherman limited the supplies.[122] Venice also boasted many ready-made and inexpensive foods to choose from, with cook shops and cafes littering the city.

> With so many stalls selling fried fish and fritters, the women took small trouble in the kitchen. The usual excuse was that the smell of cooking oil would annoy the neighbors…. Nor did they cook vegetables at home, but let their baskets down from the windows to an itinerant greengrocer and hauled up helpings ready boiled, with salt, pepper and seasonings all complete… Whatever one may think of Venetian indolence, this habit of buying cooked and therefore more expensive, food, argues a degree of prosperity.[123]

However 'French' the stylish cooking of the eighteenth century, historians argue that the history of Venetian food underlies the creation of *Haute Cuisine*. "Venice was an early laboratory (and warehouse) important in the development of fine European cooking. Venetian merchants introduced now basic ingredients such as sugar, rice, and coffee to the continent and long held a monopoly on the distribution of salt and pepper…. Forks and glassware were first introduced on the Venetian table. By the sixteenth century the cuisine was renowned throughout Europe for its delicacy."[124] Despite the Italian underpinnings of fine dining, the French created the customs of

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[120] Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, 119.

[121] Maurice Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova*, 93.

[122] Maurice Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova*, 93.

[123] Maurice Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice in the Time of Casanova*, 93.

[124] Florence Fabricant and Adam Tihany, *Venetian Taste*, 14. There was probably greater variety in the Venetian kitchen in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, due to the continual influx of foreigners.

'*Haute Cuisine'* in the seventeenth century, based on recipes from French chefs engaged in cooking for the upper classes. Fine dining purposely separated middle and lower class bourgeois cooking styles, and focused on the creation of an experience with many courses and dishes served at the same meal.[125] Roy Strong reports "the aristocracy sought a cooking style which set them apart from the lower orders, because… a growing body of bourgeois was pushing upwards."[126] In his book on eighteenth-century dining styles *Exotic Brew,* gastro-critic Piero Camposesi writes that French dominance of cuisine began during the reign of prodigious eater and gourmand Louis XIV from 1643-1715.[127] Ken Albala echoes this observation, adding that dining was a "complex ritual, and nearly every daily activity for the king was a carefully orchestrated performance."[128]

By 1700 wealthy fashionable Italians followed French taste by importing cookbooks, cooking techniques, and recipes. However, not every Italian enjoyed the new styles. A Venetian of the sixteenth century, Gerolamo Zanetti, compared the cooking of France unfavorably with that of his own city, saying "French cooks have ruined Venetian stomachs with sauces, broths, extracts, meats and fish transformed to

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[125] Implicit in this definition is the understanding that only people of quality and financial means would be indulging in this sort of meal.

[126] Roy Strong, *Feast: A Grand History of Eating*, 227.

[127] Here I merely wish to make clear that the influence of Louis XIV on gastronomy is unquestioned, but the changes that cuisine underwent took place over the period of half a century. It was his insistence on plentiful food prepared well that catapulted French chefs into creating a more sumptuous cuisine as a service to the Sun-King. A favorite cuisine myth found during the time of Louis XIV is the story of the chef Vatel, who allegedly committed suicide when not enough fish were delivered to grace the table of the king and his courtiers. (Camporesi, 28 and Albala, 160)

[128] Ken Albala, *Food In Early Modern Europe*, 155.

such a point that they are barely recognizable."[129] This statement underscores Venetian preference for simplicity and balanced delicacy in their foods.[130] The prevalent French tastes angered many Italian gourmands, who believed that these overblown cooks merely adopted Italian tastes and preparation styles. Count Francesco Algarotti, a European traveler and Italian nobleman, wrote in 1752: "In the delicacies of life, where there are so many absolute masters, the French have no choice but to acknowledge their teachers…. the fact is that after Europe's shared period of barbarism, the Italians opened their eyes before all other nations. When others were still sleeping, we were wide awake."[131] Camporesi writes, "Many a noble cuisine fell into the hands of Frenchifying cooks who proceeded with lofty pigheadedness to enforce the new laws of their transalpine code."[132] Some members of the middle classes clung to the older and less fashionable ways of eating, decrying the French styles as ostentations. "In these hard times, all these fits of vapours come from drinking so much coffee and chocolate, and other drugs which do nothing but put the stomach out of order; in these hard times, French chefs have poisoned Venetian cooking with all their gravies and essences and wine sauces."[133]

Between 1662 and 1778, Italian cuisine underwent a gradual but striking transformation from Renaissance spiced recipes, to a lighter, more continental

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[129] Florence Fabricant and Adam Tihany, *Venetian Taste*, 14.

[130] Reay Tannahill, *Food In History* (New York: Stein and Day, 1973), 280.

[131] Francesco Algarotti, "Lettere Varie" in *Opere del Conte Algarotti editione novissimma* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1792), 236-7.

[132] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 1.

[133] Phillippe Monnier, *Venice in the Eighteenth Century*, 213.

flavoring. As Albala writes, "by the mid-eighteenth century, the French influence began to be more widely felt, and major changes took place in the organization of cooking as well as the flavors appreciated."[134] Camporesi notes that "the Italian table (of aristocratic and high bourgeois circles, obviously) was embarking on a period of reflection, rethinking, and transformation" that would affect the cuisine served to those of wealth and status.[135] "Foods [were] increasingly cooked in a way that accentuated and intensified the flavor of the main ingredient rather than contrast with it the flavor of sugar, spices, and vinegar of older [renaissance cookery]…. Good taste had replaced what to older generations merely tasted good."[136]

'The science of cooking,' which began as a set of standards for French (and later Italian) aristocrats, eventually found its way into middle-class Italian cuisine through the Italian translation and publication of French cookbooks, as well as the influence of European visitors on the Grand Tour, who demanded fashionable foods in their travels.[137] There was a consuming public of financially solvent middle-class cooks eager to signal their status by their use of the newest food styles, and they eagerly bought the books that taught them how to properly prepare the most fashionable dishes.[138] As Giovanni Rebora reminds, "While it is true that the cuisine

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[134] Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, 139.

[135] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 34.

[136] Ken Albala, *Food In Early Modern Europe*, 156.

[137] Local cooks needed to incorporate fashionable foods into their menus, and became accustomed to serving those familiar with the foods of the elite. An example from Goldoni might be *Mirandolina*, who serves fine foods to her upper class patrons. This play will be discussed in Chapter Five.

[138] Strong points out that these middle-class cooks the books were geared toward needed to be literate in order to read and execute the recipes. Roy Strong, *Feast: A Grand History of Eating*, 226.

of these books was almost always more advanced than popular practice, they nonetheless established the fashion in cooking" for those wishing to attain a French ideal.[139]

Only France was printing and exporting cookbooks in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This afforded them a de-facto monopoly in the development of standardized culinary practice. Italian cookbook production, flourishing in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, had ended abruptly in the mid-seventeenth century, at the same time that French chefs began translating and exporting their own treatises. The last major Italian cookbook of the seventeenth century was Bartolomeo Stefani's 1662 *L'Arte di ben cucinare,* which featured recipes drawn from Renaissance and medieval cookery. Italian cookery was not featured in print again until Vicenze Corrado's *Il Cuoco gallante* in 1778 and Francesco Leonardi's 1797 *L'Apicio Moderno.*[140] The only exceptions to this were a few localized works documenting regional cuisine written by anonymous Italian authors. The abrupt cessation of Italian cookbook publication can be linked to the creation of the French monopoly on fashionable food preparation. By the end of the eighteenth century, Italian food was localized and regional, whereas French food was universally stylish and eaten everywhere.[141]

The formation of *Haute Cuisine* in the eighteenth century can be traced to the seventeenth-century French cooks whose books soon became the eighteenth-century

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[139] Giovanni Rebora, *The Culture of the Fork*, 105.

[140] Dates and cookbooks are taken from Emilio Faccioli, *L'Arte della cucina in Italia* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1987).

cook's canon. The first cookbooks interested in "addressing the prosperous classes, both urban and rural, noble and bourgeois"[142] were *The French Cook* (*Cuisinier François)* published by Francois La Varenne in 1651, followed by Pierre de Lune's *Le Cuisinier* in 1656, and L.S.R.'s 1674 *L'Arte de Bien Traiter*.[143] These books introduced the concept of lighter cooking that emphasized the freshness and taste of the food, long an ideal ascribed to Italian cookery. L.S.R. also emphasized "developments in haute cuisine yet to come: his interest in sensory perceptions, the way the food looks and feels in the mouth, the delicate perfumes evoked by perfect cooking."[144] L.S.R. wrote, "It is the exquisite choice of meats, the refinement of their seasoning, the politeness and propriety of their service, their quantity in proportion to the number of guests, and finally the general order of things that are essential to the goodness and ornament of a meal."[145]

These cookbooks were written by chefs in service with nobility or the church, who were accustomed to catering to the tastes of the upper class. Camporesi describes them as a "new *cuisinier* that strides forth, chest out… no mean cook slaving over a hot stove and bound to the corporalistic tradition of the anonymous masters of stoves however aristocratic, but rather a proud esquire for… the culinary wars."[146] At first,

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[142] Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past*, 114.

[143] The full name of L.S.R. has not yet been discovered by culinary historians, and all we know of L.S.R. is his initials, and the record of refinement in his recipes from *L'Arte de Bien Traiter*. "He is usually remembered today for his scathing remarks about the vulgarity of earlier cookbooks, especially that of *La Varenne*." Ken Albala, *Food In Early Modern Europe*, 159.

[144] Ken Albala, *Food In Early Modern Europe*, 159.

[145] L.S.R., *L'Art de bien traiter*, in *L'Art de la cuisine francaise as XVII esiecle* (Paris: Payot and Rivages, 1995), 21.

[146] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 28.

the cookbooks were published as a standard for the upper-class cooking professional to follow and standardize recipes and dishes. However, as the 'cult' of fine dining began to symbolize prestige of the diner, cookbooks began to be adapted for the middle class cook. In the mid-seventeenth century, "we see the specialist cook setting up his kitchen and practicing his skills… [he] will have an ample and varied array of ingredients from which to produce a considerable volume of interesting dishes… and he must be in touch with current fashion."[147] Later, in the eighteenth century, cookbook authors began to create recipes to appeal to specifically middle class audiences.[148]

The most influential cookbook of the seventeenth century was Francois Massiolot's 1691 popular receipt book *The Court and Country Cook (Le Cuisinier roïal et bourgeois)*, first translated into Italian in 1741.[149] Not much is known about Massiolot, except that he came from a long line of 'celebrity chefs' who cooked for royalty and wished to set down some of his techniques in writing.[150] According to Wheaton, Massiolot described himself in the earliest edition of *Le Cuisinier Roïal* as "a cook who dares to qualify himself royal… for the meals he describes have all been

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[147] Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past*, 120-1.

[148] The recipes which reflected a simpler palate could be made in almost any kitchen. The greatest division between the dishes prepared by chefs in wealthy kitchens and more humble home cooks was found in quantity and not quality. Multiple courses and larger number of dishes per course meant twice as much preparation and cooking, making "such a meal beyond the reach of any but the wealthiest host." Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past*, 15. It is also worth noting that while middle class food tastes were far more expensive and complex foods, among the nobility there was a demand for things bourgeoisie, or simpler food preparations and ingredients.

[149] Goldoni wrote Commedias in Venice between the years of 1743 and 1763. Before this date, he was contributing scenarios to the professional companies of the Commedia dell'Arte.

[150] The earliest editions of this cookbook are complete with menus for meals served by Massiolot to the Dauphin and others in the highest court circles of France at Versailles, Meadon, and other royal palaces. Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past*, 151.

served at court or the houses of princes, and of people of the first rank."[151] Massiolot's cookbook is arranged alphabetically with suggested menus and lists of seasonal food. It also accommodates the religious calendar by offering versions of the same recipe with meat and alternatives for fast days. Later editions of the text in 1703, 1712, and 1734 featured new original recipes and menus in keeping with the most current fashions of the table, "which call upon the cook for the greatest skill and imagination."[152]

Massiolot also helped create the course rules, altering it from the previous medieval system of three courses with many different dishes per course based on heavily spiced meats and sweets. The new course system was lighter in design, featuring less meat and more vegetables and fruits, and at least three courses, "the first and second prepared in the *cuisine* (kitchen) and the third in the *office* (pantry)."[153] Ideally, a simple meal offered at least three dishes per course. Elaborate meals consisted of more courses as well as more dishes per course, where "everything that was brought out [to the table] also came in balanced sets of twos, fours, and eights."[154] There were also specific rules for number of dishes allotted to each course. This was calculated "on a fixed ratio of dishes to diners. A four course

[151] Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past*, 151.

[152] Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past*, 155.

[153] Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past*, 138.

[154] Ken Albala, *Food on Early Modern Europe*, 140. Contrast this simplicity with the renaissance feast of 1529 thrown by the son of the Duke of Ferrara. There was a guest list of 104, 9 hot courses with multiple dishes in each course, not including the antipasto of cold dishes. "Because Messibungo specified the number of plates needed for each food in each course, they can be counted. This meal used 2,835 plates." Albala, 125-6.

meal for twenty-five, for example, meant 100 dishes."[155] The cook would not double a dish in order feed more people, but instead offered different dishes to balance the table and the palate.

Another of the innovations that Massiolot introduced with *Le Cuisinier roïal* were fold out plates with diagrams describing menus as well as the proper way for home cooks to set up tables for meals. Earlier authors such as Varenne touched upon this necessity in their works, and later authors adopted this fashionable and increasingly essential course and table setting system. However, Massiolot systematized and documented how to lay the table into precise geometric patterns to stimulate the eye as well as the palate. "The manner in which it was done was known all over Europe as *service à la française*, and it remained the standard form until it was replaced with *service à la russe*, beginning in the 1860s."[156] This is the dining style satirized by Goldoni in many of his plays, including *The Servant to Two Masters*.

The rules for laying the table were quite exact. The food being served at the meal was ranked by size of plate needed. The largest dish, such as a soup tureen, must occupy the center of a square table, and four larger platters be laid precisely on the table around the centerpiece, with smaller bowls or plates holding delicacies anchoring the corners of the table. Eight smaller dishes were set around the perimeter of the pattern, with the diners' plates around the edge of the table. Great importance was given to building the pattern from the largest pieces in the middle furthest from

[155] Roy Strong, *Feast: A Grand History of Eating*, 231.

[156] Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past*, 138.

the diner, to the smaller pieces closer to the diner, so that the eye was stimulated by the composition and the table appeared balanced. Every effort was made to preserve the pattern throughout the three courses of a formal meal. Camporesi notes that as the cuisine of the seventeenth century transitioned from an abundance of meats and overly rich spiced foods to a more balanced and simple palate, cooks attempted to mirror the sweet/savory composition of the recipes with a matching equilibrium in the table setting. "It had to be apparent at a single glance that the meal on offer was top quality."[157] The balance of the eye would lead necessarily to the balance of the palate.

In order to impress others, a host had to adhere to these strict course rules with multiple dishes, as well as an ostentatious table setting. As Chappelle's *The Modern Cook* asserts, "There are rules in all arts, and such as desire to become masters of them, must conform to the rules."[158] Strict conformation to the French rules in laying the table, recipes, course selections, and food choices soon became common at middle- and upper- class tables throughout Europe. Following these dining rules correctly facilitated simpler movement between the fluctuating boundaries of social class in both France and Italy. However, the bourgeois home cook would be forced (out of space considerations) to limit the number of dishes per course, since the average home kitchen was not set up to accommodate numerous dishes multiplied by several courses.

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[157] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 68.

[158] Mr. Vincent La Chappelle, *The Modern Cook* 3rd edition (London: Thomas Osborne, 1744).

Massiolot's text had broad audience appeal, it was "at once royal but would also appeal to up and coming city dwellers, merchants, and other wealthy members of the middle class."[159] In the early eighteenth century, cookbook writers la Chappelle (*Cuisinier Moderne,* 1735), Menon (*Nouveau Traitè de la Cuisine*, 1739) and Marin (*Le Dons de Comus,* 1739) further cemented the French domination of culinary discernment. These texts were subsequently translated and exported to Germany, England, Spain, and Italy. This new culinary awareness of "the taste of the century… sought to restore a balance to the laws of the table and… prohibit foods deemed not just obsolete but positively harmful and above all socially improper and vulgar, such as garlic, onion, cabbage, and… cheese."[160] By the middle of the eighteenth century, the transformation to stylish cooking was complete and standardized according to the French form.

Goldoni's plays illustrated the importance of correctly performing the rituals of food and dining for his audience. The rules that dictated proper dining and stylish eating were very exact during the eighteenth century, and even the smallest gaffe in the decorum of the table, or the science of good taste, would label the offender as unable to participate in refined society. It is striking to note that Goldoni's theatre reforms simplified the accepted dramatic forms considerably and molded the rules of the Commedia. However, dining and recipe trends were complex and highly structured, despite their simple ingredients and delicate preparations. In many ways,

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[159] Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, 160.

[160] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 37.

Goldoni manipulated his reforms of the Commedia dell'Arte into a commentary on the excess of 'civilized' society, and the need for moderation in eighteenth-century

Chapter Four

"No meeting takes place at Venice without expensive refreshments"[1]: Goldoni's Plays from 1748-1752

In the archives of the Morgan Library in New York City sits an undated ink sketch on rough paper by the Roman artist Pier Leone Ghezzi, who lived from 1674-1755.[2] The Morgan staff titled the drawing "Goldoni and the Figures of the Commedia dell'Arte." Across the top of the sketch is written in the artist's hand "*Viva le Marpheari Italiani il Carlo Goldoni*."[3] It features a group of actors taking their final curtain call on an indoor raised stage, and includes the familiar masked characters of the commedia, from the checkered costumed *Arlecchino*, to the heavyset *Brighella* in a large conical cap and loose clothing. Both are ready for physical comedy, tumbling, or perhaps dancing. On the other side of the drawing, the *Capitan* stands proudly in a plumed hat and ruffled long coat, wearing a mask with a hooked nose and handlebar mustache. The Venetian merchant *Pantalone* is also figured

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[1] Carlo Goldoni, *Memoir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), 113.

[2] Pier Leone Ghezzi, Goldoni and Actors, on paper, undated, Morgan Library, New York. Ghezzi was a caricaturist known for sketches that emphasized comic features of individuals, as well as their expressions and details of their clothing. The picture itself is undated at this time. The Morgan plans to research the drawing and publish the results in the next few years in a book on seventeenth and eighteenth century Italian art. Unfortunately, a copy of the picture could not be obtained. The holdings are currently inaccessible, due to a long planned renovation. The museum will reopen at the end of April 2006. I was lucky enough to see the picture a few days before the archives became off-limits for researchers.

[3] This passage is difficult to translate exactly due to the sloppiness of the artist's writing; the phrase appears to read "Long Live the Masked Italians of Carlo Goldoni."

prominently, in a ruffled shirt and fashionable clothing. A dancer with curved toe Asian-style shoes, and a large flowing jacket points his toes as he makes an elaborate bow.

Near the center of the drawing is a heavy-set gentleman further downstage than the rest of the figures. I interpret this figure to be Carlo Goldoni himself, traveling with his acting company on tour in Rome.[4] 'Goldoni' is holding a staff and is wearing a large feathered cap and a wig. There is a marked similarity to other portraits of Goldoni, except this figure looks heavier and older.[5] The face of the figure is pudgy and rounded with a large beaked nose and distinct laugh lines near the eyes. The figure looks delighted with the response of the audience to his work, as he acknowledges them with a wave of his walking stick and a huge smile.

Even though the picture remains undated, it does have several clues that help to place it pre-1750, a period during which Goldoni was in the process of establishing his notable reforms.[6] It was during this period in his work when he was struggling to

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[4] The drawing has not been analyzed by historians at this point, but is due to be evaluated by the Morgan Library for an exhibition in the next few years. This interpretation is mine, and mine alone.

[5] A wood-cut by Marco Alvise Pitteri in the frontispiece of Pitteri's 1757 edition of his plays shows a solemn faced man in a wig who is looking out at the viewer. Here, Goldoni is round faced with few lines and a rather pronounced double chin. Carlo Goldoni, *Nuovo Teatro Comico dell'Avvocato Carlo Goldoni* (Venezia: Francesco Pitteri, 1757). A more famous depiction of Goldoni shows a well dressed, heavy-set man with a very distinct stomach, and very full lips. Alessandro Longhi, "Portrait of Carlo Goldoni", 1762, Casa Goldoni, Venice. Ghezzi's picture could indeed be that of Goldoni.

[6] This deduction is mine alone. These clues can be evaluated based on a chronological knowledge of the stages of Goldoni's theatrical career and the progression of Italian theatre history in the eighteenth century. The drawing must have been created within a range of dates during both the artist's lifetime and the times Goldoni's actors toured to Rome. The sketch predates Goldoni's tenure at the Tordolina Theatre in Rome, which occurred after the death of the artist Ghezzi in 1755. It might date from the period when Goldoni was freelancing scenarios for many different theatres throughout Italy, or while he was working with the Vendramin brothers' troupe at the San Luca Theatre from 1753-1762. He also freelanced briefly for various troupes before his Medebach contract between 1734-45. The performance is most likely in Rome, since there are no actresses among the figures, as

implement new ideas about the future of Italian comedy. This chapter explores the earlier years of Goldoni's career between 1738, when he wrote the partial scenario/partial text of *L'Uomo di Mondo,* and 1752, the year after his widely publicized boast to write sixteen plays for the 1750-51 season.[7] Goldoni succeeded in writing sixteen full-length plays during that season, producing some of his best works such as *The Coffee House* and *The Comic Theatre*, both of which will be covered in this chapter.[8] The period from 1738 to 1752 also marked the beginnings of his career as a playwright, rather than as a scenarist. Medebach, a player-manager who supported Goldoni's interest in theatrical reform, produced many of Goldoni's early works in which Goldoni experimented with contemporary themes and the use of material culture. The Ghezzi picture captures a critical time period of theatrical experimentation, demonstrating how Goldoni was playing with reforms of the

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women were banned from Roman stage during this period. Also, Pier Leone Ghezzi was a noted Roman artist, and did very little work outside of that city, although he might have traveled to see Goldoni's players at another theatre. Venetian actors toured with their shows during the off-season, and Rome was a prominent and lucrative stop on their travels. The figures of the actors portrayed in the drawing represent the traditional Commedia style rather than the reforms Goldoni brought to the theatre, and which were fully realized in his work by the 1750s. The drawing features an actor/dancer in Asian costume. This further supports dating the picture before 1750, when non-Italian characters had largely been eliminated from the casts of Italian Commedias.

[7] "Presuming something on my own worth, in the closing address delivered by the principal actress [Theodora Medebach of the Medebach company on the last night of the 1749-1750 season], I promised, in very indifferent verses, but very distinctly and positively, that, next year, I would bring out sixteen new pieces…. It was a terrible year for me, and the remembrance of it still makes my flesh creep." Goldoni, *Memoir*, 250-251.

[8] In this year, Goldoni also produced several less well-written works, such as *L'Adulatore, Il Giuocatore*, and *Il Vero Amico,* "The sixteen plays finally became seventeen, and there were also several lighter compositions, operas, and the usual demand for occasional poetry. All this Goldoni achieved without utterly breaking from those social habits that were considered an obligation and from other habits of his own liking… Goldoni could not miss the daily gathering around a coffee table." Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1920), 148-9.

Commedia. It catches the Commedia dell'Arte in a moment of transition between traditional comedy and the creation of character comedy based on Goldonian reforms.

Although Goldoni did not begin using dining and food images to the same extent as he post-1752, his earlier plays such as *The Artful Widow, The Man of Good Taste* and *The Coffee House*, show him experimenting with the ways that class could be expressed on stage through eating, dining, and object ownership. The majority of plays from this period in Goldoni's career are from the later 1740s, from his work with the Medebach players after implementation of his reforms.[9] This chapter will explore how the food presented in Goldoni's plays between 1748-1752 helps to determine a character's class, nationality, social status, and economic level. Analysis of the 1755 re-writing of Goldoni's earliest scenario/play text from 1738, *Momolo Cortesan, or The Man of the World,* lays the groundwork for a discussion of how Goldoni portrayed class issues early in his career. I argue that the seeds of his later ideas are visible in this text. Investigation of several plays written between 1748-1752 that deal with food and with class issues helps to construct the ways Goldoni created a particularly Venetian classed artificial person as a member of the consuming public. I use the following texts in this discussion: *The Venetian Twins* (1748), *The Artful Widow* (1748), *The Coffee House* (1750), and *The Man of Good Taste* (1750**).**

Before moving to a discussion of the plays from this period, I would like to address the difficulty in translating Goldoni's earlier works. There are significantly

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[9] Goldoni was the first to write dialogue for the commedia, and this part of his reform was developed gradually in his work dating from the period 1738-1748. Once hired by the Medebach company, he was fully scripting his works. However, I have not located copies of any of his scenarios or partially written out theatre pieces, and no other historian, to my knowledge, has located copies of his early works. Goldoni play scholarship necessarily dates from the period after 1748, and specifically from the 1750s onward when he was negotiating publications of the texts of his plays.

fewer translations of Goldoni's texts from 1738-1752, due to his use of both Italian and various regional dialects/languages. The upper-class and noble characters tend to use proper Italian, while the lower class and bourgeois characters use dialects such as Venetian, among others.[10] These differences in speech underscore the diversity in social class and education to Goldoni's eighteenth-century audience. These specific character clues are often untranslatable for a modern researcher, and inexplicable to a modern audience, due to the considerable language barrier.[11] Although Goldoni wrote in his memoir, "the Venetian language is undoubtedly the mildest and most agreeable of all the dialects of Italy; its pronunciation is clear, delicate, and easy, its words abundant and expressive, and its phrases harmonious and ingenious; and… the language is… distinguished for lightness and pleasantry,"[12] he nevertheless endeavored to give explanations of the words in the more obscure Venetian dialect in his print editions, "for the sake of strangers."[13]

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[10] The rhythm of speech in Goldoni's works helps create character and context, but it more importantly supplies much of the comedy as characters work in tandem to construct a comic flow to the dialogue. The eminent translator of many of Goldoni's works, Frederick Davies wrote of the translation difficulties due to rhythm, saying, "it is now being realized that Goldoni, in order to achieve comic effects, began by using the characters speaking cultivated Italian almost contrapuntally against the characters speaking Venetian dialect." Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, translated by Frederick Davies (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 107. His 1740s audience would have understood these subtleties of place, character, and word choice, but they are often difficult to translate for the modern audience.

[11] Many of the so-called 'dialects' of Italian spoken around the country are far different from standard Italian, and are considered separate languages by most linguists and some speakers themselves. The language we know as Italian today is based on a dialect of Tuscany, which became adopted as a written language by Renaissance writers. Actual dialects of modern Italian are: Tuscan, Abruzzese, Pugliese (Apulian), Umbrian, and Laziale, among others. However, Piemontese, Lombard, Ligurian, Emiliano-Romagnolo, and Venetian, among several others, are considered regional minority languages, structurally separate from Italian. Therefore, Goldoni's use of several dialect languages in his plays constitutes a very difficult translation problem, and demands a very specific base of knowledge for a translator.

[12] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 245.

Section 1 *L'Uomo di Mondo*, or *The Man of the World*

The first play I will discuss is *L'Uomo di Mondo*, or *The Man of the World,* exploring the nuances of class Goldoni brought to the stage early in his playwriting career. This play was originally written in 1738 as *Momolo Cortesan*, and was the first Commedia to include any written dialogue. Only fragments of the 1755 re-write remain. Goldoni scripted the part of Momolo and the 'serious' (or upper-class) characters, leaving the servant characters to improvise their parts. Unfortunately, the original scenario was lost, though Goldoni reported that the initial performance was well received by the Venetian public.[14] Eventually, Goldoni scripted the play completely in the theatre season of 1755, when he was working for the Vendramin Brothers' Company at the San Luca Theatre. The 1755 full-length play was retitled *L'Uomo di Mondo*, and featured the same plot as the original, and the same central character of Momolo, a "simple-minded, free spirited… cortesan [sic] who drew his sword or his purse to serve the stranger and to protect him against sharpers."[15] It is uncertain how much of the original has been preserved in the later rendition. Kennard writes, "Unfortunately, the first version was not preserved, and thus the printed text, composed years later… does not allow a critical study of Goldoni's first conception of his art."[16] Sections of the 1755 play are published in the Ortolani edition of Goldoni's works in 1757, and edited by Filippo Zampieri in his *Carlo Goldoni's Opere, con Appendice del Teatro Comico nel Settecento* in 1954.

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[13] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 245.

[14] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 183.

[15] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 414-5

[16] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 260.

The play tells the story of the young merchant Momolo's matrimonial quest in Venice. Momolo is described by Goldoni as a *Cortesan*. "It is impossible to translate the adjective cortesan into any other language. The term cortesan is not a corruption of the word courtier (courtesan), but is rather derived from courtesy and courageous."[17] Young Momolo wishes to find a good wife, and the plot follows his wooing of several women, among them a comic romantic entanglement with the servant Truffaldino's sister, Smeraldina. The sub-plot revolves around Momolo's kind-hearted aid to Silvio and Beatrice, a married couple from Rome who fall into the unscrupulous hands of the Venetian panderer and dilettante Ludro.

Monnier writes "*Momolo Cortesan* was already a faint outline of a comedy of character" as it explored the vast differences among a range of social classes.[18] Momolo represents an ultimately sympathetic picture of the path to social success for the up-and-coming merchant, as he rises through the ranks of the bourgeois because of his courtly and kind nature. Momolo is indeed courteous and helpful, and his character reinforces the ever-present need felt by the middle class to model politeness and gentlemanly behavior in order to succeed in the Venetian social marketplace. Goldoni gave the work an alternate title of *The Accomplished Man*, which suggests that he imagined Momolo as the ultimate representative of the city of Venice and the merchant class through his kindness to women and visitors, as reflected in his good nature.[19] Filippo Zampieri writes that Momolo "belongs to the bourgeois Venetian

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[17] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 183.

[18] Phillippe Monnier, *Venice in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1910), 152.

[19] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 182.

merchants and who, but for the unscrupulous audacity of [Ludro], displays the good sense, the taste of balanced ethics and economics of his own social class (Momolo is a young pantalone)."[20] In his 1787 memoir, Goldoni described the main character of the low born Momolo as a true Venetian gentleman in spirit, if not in name or birth. Goldoni's words regarding this play in his memoir leave clearly worded instructions for behavior expected of the merchants in the city.

> 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?[21]

This kind pleasantry appears as a set of commands to the noble class on how to amend their public behavior, but they may also apply to those citizens of Momolo's own class. Goldoni goes on to say, "I shall be asked whether there are many of these cortesans in Venice. Yes: a tolerable number."[22] Momolo serves as a reminder of proper behavior illustrating that Goldoni's characters serve as representatives of real people. They are not merely types thrown on a stage.

Momolo Bisognosi[23] was written specifically to be performed by the *pantalone* of the Imer Company, Francesco Gollinetti, a particularly expressive actor

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[20] Carlo Goldoni, *Opere,* edit. Filippo Zampieri, trans. M. Coyle (Milano: Riccardo Ricciardi Editore, 1956), 223.

[21] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 182. Quoted in the Introduction of this dissertation.

[22] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 182

[23] Bisognosi is literally translated as "needy," a traditional family name for the *pantalone* characters.

who was considered one of more celebrated interpreters of the *pantalone* characters.[24] "I fixed on Golinetti… not for the purpose of employing him in a mask which conceals his physiognomy and prevents a sensible actor from displaying the passion which he feels in his countenance; but I admired his behavior… I believed him possessed of the qualifications of an excellent actor."[25] Golinetti was the first traditional Commedia actor to perform without a mask, in an attempt to represent the Venetian life of the merchant accurately. Momolo clearly understands his uncertain social status as a merchant, as his servant Nane says, "Bravo, signor Momolo, to live uncertain is the end you shall have." Momolo replies, "Ah dear, because I am a cortesan."[26] The introduction of the bourgeois into an unfamiliar and unsettling social world that demanded politeness and courageous behavior in social exchanges was a new scenario for both Momolo and the class he represents.

Describing the difference between the implicit gentility of a nobleman and the acquired gentility of the bourgeois, Momolo says, "The true cortesan is worth a ducato to be worth a zecchin… [He is] 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."[27] Momolo explains how carefully the bourgeois class had to maneuver through their encounters in society in order to avoid the unscrupulous. The middle class, in Momolo's

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[24] Pierre Louis Ducharte, *The Italian Commedia* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 191.

[25] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 182.

[26] Carlo Goldoni, *L'Uomo di Mondo*, 230.

[27] Carlo Goldoni, *L'Uomo di Mondo*, 229. I would note that the character of Momolo is written entirely in Venetian dialect.

assessment, are worth far more than their apparent face value, a *ducat* rather than a *zecchin*.[28] The *ducat*, a unit of money, was also called a *zecchinno i*n Venetian dialect, based on the Italian word *la zecca*, or mint. Momolo espouses a democratic ideal of class equality, saying that a man who speaks dialect is as good as man who speaks classical Italian, a bourgeois is as good as a nobleman, a *zecchinni* has the same worth as a *ducat,* and that gentility is not formed by clothing but by manners.

The other characters in *L'Uomo di Mondo* also reveal much about Venetian social structure. The upper-class Romans, Beatrice and Silvio have arrived in Venice in order to take part in the social life there, but they do not know the social scene, the customary clothing, or the social rules. They engage Ludro, a self-proclaimed "gallant who has seen the world" to shepherd them through their Venetian social debut.[29] Ludro demonstrates the disparity between the kindness of the character of Momolo and his own behavior, for they have similar backgrounds but each has made vastly different choices. Goldoni wrote, "it is necessary to contrast… with characters of an opposite description. In this piece I introduced a rascally Venetian, who deceives strangers; and my cortesan, without being acquainted with the persons imposed upon, secures them from the deceit and unmasks the knave."[30] The two men display the good and the bad of Venetian bourgeois society, and illustrate the

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[28] The Venetian ducat was a golden coin circulated from the thirteenth century onward. The coin was minted by the Doge Giovanni Dandolo in 1284, and bore an image of the doge kneeling before St. Mark and Christ with the words: *Sit tibi Christe datus quem tu regis iste ducatus*. This legend gave the coin its name, *ducato* (ducat).

[29] Carlo Goldoni, *L'Uomo di Mondo*, 228.

[30] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 182, 183. Ludro is the kind of character Momolo warns his servant Nane to be cautious of.

different paths a man of the merchant class can take: the "honorable merchant"[31] or a man of "unscrupulous audacity."[32]

The servant characters include: Brighella, Truffaldino (Arlecchino), and Smeraldina (Columbina). Brighella is master of the inn under the sign of the mushroom.[33] Brighella is the figure of the professional cook and innkeeper, an important guild in the society of the time.[34] Truffaldino and Smeraldina are brother and sister, and Truffaldino is a lazy servant trying to marry off his sister to well-to-do merchant Momolo. As Goldoni wrote in his memoir, "Harlequin is not a stupid servant in this play; he is an idle fellow who insists on his sister supporting his vices; the cortesan procures an establishment for the girl, and subjects the lazy fellow to the necessity of working for his bread."[35] Truffaldino avoids real work in order to make easy money. In brokering of the prospective marriage of Smeraldina, Truffaldino receives a fee, and says to the audience, "If I had ten sisters, I would deliver them

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[31] Carlo Goldoni, *L'Uomo di Mondo*, 231.

[32] Carlo Goldoni, *L'Uomo di Mondo*, 223.

[33] Mushrooms were traditional peasant food, easy to find and gather in fields and in forests, and plentiful and tasty. They add great flavor to stews and soups, and produce a meaty consistency as well as a broth when boiled, a great asset in a society where meat was expensive and rotted easily. However, mushrooms had to be examined carefully before eating, since many were dangerous and potentially deadly if ingested. Perhaps Goldoni implied here that Brighella, the trickster character, is not to be trusted completely. He might look safe on the surface, but be dangerous underneath. "Mushrooms are also eaten, but have led to crime in many cases…. when it pleases the gluttonous…. even though they satisfy the palate, they are considered the very worst, for they are difficult to digest and generate destructive humours." Platina, *On Right Pleasure and Good Health*, trans. Mary Ella Milham (Tempe, Ariz.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), 409.

[34] Cooks that set up "prepared food shops had to belong to the very restricted guild of cooks…. Aristocrats had cooks in their palazzos, but if, say, the council of notables… decided to dine together in their headquarters… they hired the registered cook, who, with his helpers, furnished all the necessities for the kitchen, the crockery and glasses for the table, the tablecloths, and the decorations. He did the shopping and the cooking. He then presented the bill." Giovanni Rebora, *Culture of the Fork*, trans. Albert Sonnenfeld (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 164.

[35] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 183.

again."[36] Smeraldina is considered by Zampieri to be another original character type, despite her origins in the character of the Columbina.[37] Goldoni excelled in the portraits of young female servants, and the later Mirandolina can be seen in this early version of Smeraldina, a lower-class woman in love with the penniless Lucindo, but forced to court Momolo in an attempt to better the family's fortunes.[38]

There are a few mentions of food in this play that illustrate class designations but most merely help to illustrate character development. Brighella's sign at the Inn of the Mushroom offers one tangential use of a food item. In another example, Smeraldina tells Momolo she will make polenta when they are married to keep them from hunger. Polenta is a coarsely ground cornmeal cooked into mush.[39] It was considered a subsistence food for peasants, since corn is relatively easy to grow and can be dried and stored for long periods.[40] Ground corn can also be used as fodder for farm animals, and therefore can serve a dual purpose as food for animals and humans in rural peasant life.[41] However, eating polenta for any length of time

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[36] Carlo Goldoni, *L'Uomo di Mondo,* 233.

[37] Carlo Goldoni, *L'Uomo di Mondo*, 224.

[38] Kennard finds both Truffaldino and Smeraldina the weakest characters in *L'Uomo di Mondo*, which he also considers the most unfinished and unpleasant of Goldoni's works. He feels they exist primarily as types to test the goodness of Momolo, and are more two-dimensional than the rascally Ludro, owing more in their writing to the older versions of the commedia. I disagree, for the two characters represent other forms of the Venetian scoundrel engaged in their own attempts to better their lives. The dialogue of Brighella, Truffaldino, and Smeraldina would have been largely improvised in the early 1738 version of the play. Therefore, Goldoni had to largely reconstruct the dialogue in the rewrite based on his memory of the original unrecorded version. Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 325.

[39] Giovanni Rebora, *Culture of the Fork*, 6.

[40] Ken Albala, *Food In Early Modern Europe* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2003), 26. Polenta was at first a mash of spelt, beans, and chickpeas. Corn became an ingredient after it was introduced into Europe by Columbus. It spread to Northern Italy in the sixteenth century.

without other forms of protein in the diet can lead to malnutrition, a problem which plagued many peasants during Goldoni's time. Smeraldina's mention of polenta references not only their regional location in northern Italy, but also her own and Momolo's class background. Interestingly, by the eighteenth century, polenta was also routinely used by traditional Italian diners to counteract the richness of French cuisine, thus the peasant food became a medical treatment.[42]

In another class specific food reference, Momolo accuses Brighella of serving beans for breakfast, an inexpensive traditional Tuscan lower class meal capable of providing protein without meat and sustaining a long day's work.[43] Beans were introduced into Europe by Columbus, and they spread through lower class populations by the sixteenth century. However, beans were uniformly condemned "as gross, difficult to digest and flatulence promoting. Only laborers were thought to have stomachs strong enough to digest them."[44] Yet, recipes for them appeared in cookbooks in the seventeenth century, as they were easy to prepare and store, could feed many hungry mouths, and were a delightful complement to roasts.[45] *L'Uomo di Mondo* is remarkable for its forays into class issues such as social behaviors, characters types, and the use of food as a symbol. These issues are more fully

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[41] Giovanni Rebora, *Culture of the Fork*, 125

[42] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew: The Art of Living in the Age of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 145.

[43] "There is the… bean, phaseolus or phasellus, which Virgil called lowly… Their use lubricates the bowels, and is fattening, moves the urine… fills the head with gross and bad humors and brings on dreams and indeed bad ones… After [eating beans], it is very necessary to drink pure wine." Platina, *On Right Pleasure and Good Health*, 313.

[44] Ken Albala, *Food In Early Modern Europe*, 27.

[45] Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 86-87.

explored in later works, but the kernels of this theme can be seen here in Momolo, Smeraldina, and even in the rascally Ludro.

Section 2 *I Due Gemelli Veneziani*, or *The Venetian Twins*

By 1748, Goldoni had settled in Venice as the resident playwright at the Saint Angelo, and could begin to develop his playwriting reforms in tandem with his use of food to illustrate class. Once Goldoni settled with a stable theatre company, he was able to begin implementing his reforms by writing character comedies expressly for a set acting company, the Medebach players, who performed in a very specific theatrical home, "the theatre of Saint Angelo, which, though not very large, was less fatiguing to the actors than other playhouses, and contained a sufficient number of people to produce adequate receipts."[46] The intimacy of the house aided in the presentation of more realistic plots and characters, easing the transition between masked Commedia and character comedies performed without masks. One of the first plays he wrote for Medebach was *The Venetian Twins* (1748), "performed in Venice… and was the first play in which Commedia dell'Arte actors went on without their masks and triumphed."[47] This play marks the early stage of the Goldonian reforms, which is the reason for its inclusion here. Goldoni utilized *The Venetian Twins* to illustrate class issues *among* the middle classes.

Goldoni wrote *The Venetian Twins* for the pantalone actor in the Medebach Company, a man named Darbes who specialized in performing Venetian characters,

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[46] Goldoni, *Memoir,* 238.

[47] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 21.

but who never performed without a mask.[48] Goldoni felt that "to establish [Darbes] reputation still more, it was necessary to exhibit him in a situation where he could shine with his countenance unmasked."[49] Goldoni describes Darbes as "a man nearly six feet high and broad in proportion… with a cane in his hand and a round hat, in the English style." He noted two very distinct and opposing movement patterns and characterizations in the behavior of the actor.[50] One was very energetic, witty, and lively, and the other "assumed the airs, the manners, and conversation of a simpleton and a blockhead."[51] This was the germ that led to the writing of *The Venetian Twins*.

The Venetian Twins is based on a scenario recycled from some of Goldoni's previous work, and from Greek and Roman theatre. The plot revolves around a set of twins. "The dramatic possibilities of using twin brothers, here so alike in appearance but so different in spirit and temperament, had caught the imagination of Plautus and Shakespeare before Goldoni."[52] The necessity of the twins being physically identical, but with distinct facial expressions and physicalities helped Goldoni conceive of this play as a vehicle specifically for an actor as versatile as Darbes. The play tells the

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[48] Darbes was the actor who first convinced Goldoni to sign with the Medebach company. Darbes visited Goldoni in Pisa in 1747, bringing with him an offer from Medebach and Venice. Goldoni describes their meeting most comically in his memoir, and it seems that the force of Darbes' personality convinced Goldoni to take a chance to leave his comfortable life in Tuscany and return to Venice to work for the theatre fulltime. Darbes challenged Goldoni to create his best roles for him, and is a character to be studied at a later date. Goldoni reports Darbes to have said, "I have bet a hundred ducats with our manager that I shall obtain a piece from Goldoni… I am young, and not sufficiently known; but I will challenge Rubini, pantaloon of Saint Luke, and Corrini, pantaloon of Saint Samuel in Venice; I will attack Ferramonti at Bologna… and even Golinetti in his retreat." Goldoni, *Memoir*, 225-228.

[49] Goldoni, *Memoir,* 239.

[50] Goldoni, *Memoir,* 225.

[51] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 239.

[52] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 21.

story of twins, Tonino from Venice (the witty twin in love with Beatrice), and Zanetto from Bergamo, (the foolish twin engaged to be married to Rosaura who is in love with Lelio).[53] The twins converge in Verona during their respective marital quests, and (of course) are mistaken for one another. The action of the play is complex and fast moving, as befits a play revolving around mistaken identities. By the end of the play, Zanetto has been poisoned by the jealous Pancrazio (another suitor for Rosaura's hand). It is discovered that Rosaura is actually Tonino and Zanetto's long lost sister Flaminia, abandoned when their mother was attacked by bandits while traveling from Venice to Bergamo. Pancrazio poisons himself in distress over the murder of Zanetto, Tonino marries Beatrice, and Rosaura is betrothed to Lelio. The comedy ends with two deaths and two marriages.[54] Goldoni observed that "The play was extolled to the skies."[55]

The Venetian Twins makes significant use of class symbols, and demonstrates Goldoni's use of economic differences as a method of character development. All of the major characters, with the exception of Marquis Lelio and Florindo, are of bourgeois class origins. The bourgeois characters are unethical in their dealings with other characters, as they attempt to better their status through marriage and

[53] Bergamo is the traditional birthplace of the Arlecchino character, a country town associated in the Commedia with dull and slow characters who are very poorly socialized.

[54] Death of major characters is very rare in Goldoni's works. Aside from the two onstage deaths of Pancrazio and Zanetto in *The Venetian Twins*, the only other deaths in Goldoni's canon are before the commencement of the action in *A Servant to Two Masters* (Beatrice's brother Federigo whom she is impersonating) and *The Mistress of the Inn* Mirandolina's father, who has left her his business to run. This singular incident is likely a holdover from the more traditional Commedia scenario and not an invention of Goldoni himself. Also, comedy by definition in this period is marked by a happy ending, and can still include tragic events, such as the deaths of major characters.

[55] Goldoni, *Memoir,* 239.

acquisition of goods.[56] For example, the *dottore* character Balanzoni steals Lelio's rightful inheritance.[57] His daughter Rosaura is engaged to Zanetto, but secretly loves the nobleman Lelio, who has "illustrious blood… in [his veins and]…. Among [his] possessions are gold mines."[58] At the end of the play, Lelio and Rosaura are betrothed, and so Lelio receives his rightful inheritance in Rosaura's dowry, an ending Goldoni used to preserve the moral balance of the play. In another example, the older *pantalone* Pancrazio attempts to deceive Zanetto about the nature of marriage and women so that he can marry Rosaura himself. "Take care. She could melt a heart of stone… Marriage is a weight, a weight that makes your days wearisome and your nights sleepless. It weighs down your spirit, weighs down your body, weighs down your purse, and weighs down your mind."[59] Pancrazio steals jewelry from Zanetto and eventually poisons Zanetto in order to try to keep Rosaura for himself. *The Venetian Twins* is one of the few Goldoni plays which confirms traditional class structure of Venetian society and the expected depictions of class. His other plays portray a more egalitarian social structure, which is understandable due to his democratic tendencies. In this play, Goldoni portrays the bourgeois

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[56] Interestingly, this may be a plot line held over from older versions of the Commedia dell'Arte, at a time when audiences saw bourgeois characters as grasping for social acceptance.

[57] Balanzoni had a baby daughter who died. However, Balanzoni had received an inheritance from his brother, Lelio's father, to be used for the upbringing of his daughter. "Not wishing to lose such a rich inheritance, I decided to substitute another child for the dead [baby]." He adopted the orphaned Rosaura in order to keep the money. Lelio and Rosaura are not related by blood, since Rosaura turns out to be the sister of twins of the title. In order to preserve the moral standing of the play, Lelio receives his rightful inheritance as a dowry for Rosaura.

[58] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 71.

[59] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 65.

characters as wily manipulators and tricksters, while the two nobles appear as far more sympathetic characters.

The twins Tonino and Zanetto are young bourgeois *pantalones,* sons of a wealthy Venetian merchant named Bisognosi.[60] Tonino is a smooth talker and a quick wit. He is first to discover his brother's presence of in Verona. Zanetto, the foolish twin, bears a closer resemblance to a *zanni* character, who stumbles unluckily through life, and ends up being tricked into drinking poisoned wine which he believes will free him "from the powerful urges of lust… One pinch of the powder will free you from the torments [or love]."[61] These two characters are the source of most of the food references in *The Venetian Twins*, all of which are drawn from more traditional peasant foods rather than *haute cuisine*. These references are also unconnected to Goldoni's bourgeois characterizations, but instead are used merely as comic dialogue customary to the Commedia.[62] All mentions of food in this play are relegated to the commonplace descriptions of actions, metaphors, and comic phrasing, rather than truly significant insights into character or society. However, *The Venetian Twins* does represent a turning point in Goldoni's depictions of class, and for the implementation of changes to the Commedia's form.

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[60] See footnote 23 for a discussion on the name Bisognosi.

[61] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 92.

[62] Examples include Tonino saying that fighting Lelio, "this puffed up windbag, is as easy as eating a fresh egg." Carlo Goldoni*, Four Comedies*, 36. Tonino tells Columbina her complaints about her mistress Rosaura are normal, for "You'd rather live on bread and water that do without your little grumble now and then." Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 89. Zanetto, in an ironic moment of prophecy after discovering of the theft of the jewels says that "it's all the same to the sheep whether the wolf eats her or the butcher cuts her throat." Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 77. Later, he says that "the very moment I first saw the signora Rosaura, I felt myself burning all over like a roasted chicken." Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 81.

Section 3 *Le Vedova Scaltra*, or *The Artful Widow*

The Venetian Twins provides a clear contrast to Goldoni's next play. *The Artful Widow*, or *La Vedova Scaltra* (1748) is filled with social commentary using images of food, dining, style, foreign fashion, and class. This play invokes national stereotypes to point out character differences in patterns of consumption. It features a lively and intelligent heroine who enjoys both her fun and her dining. The play opened during Carnival in 1748, and was a huge success, enjoying thirty successive performances in that season.[63] *The Artful Widow* also marked the first occasion of Goldoni's detractors taking aim at his reforms, eventually leading to the Goldoni/Gozzi campaign that gripped Venice during the early 1760s. As I noted in Chapter One, Abbot Chiari wrote a parody of *The Artful Widow* called the *School for Widows*, which was performed at the Saint Samuel in 1749. Goldoni himself went to see a performance.

> Nothing was changed but the dialogue, which was filled with insulting invectives against myself and my comedians. One actor uttered a few phrases of my original, another added 'silly stuff… stupid! stupid!'…. the sarcasms and satirical traits were received with laughter, cries of bravo, and reiterated clapping of hands. I was in my box, covered with my mask. I kept silent… three fourths of the spectators had an interest in my ruin… [and] Medebach's.[64]

After seeing the play, Goldoni wrote a short dialogue he titled "Apologetical Prologue to *The Artful Widow*", in which he "did not dwell on the stupidity of the work of my enemies… [but used the text] to point out the dangerous abuse of theatrical liberty, and the necessity of a police to preserve decency in theatres."[65]

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[63] Goldoni, *Memoir,* 241. *The Artful Widow* was such a success that it was revived in the following season.

[64] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 247-248.

Goldoni had this pamphlet printed and circulated in Venice at coffee houses, theatres, and markets. When the run of Chiari's play was ended, Medebach's company brought back the earlier production of *The Artful Widow* in the season of 1749 in order to capitalize on the publicity.

The Artful Widow tells the story of Rosaura, a widow possessed of a *joie de vivre,* described as "young, beautiful… with a good dowry."[66] She is back on the Venetian marriage market after the death of her merchant husband, Stefanello dei Bisognosi.[67] During the annual Carnival, she is courted by four gentlemen from different countries: the staid Milord Runebif from England, stylish Monsieur LeBleu from France, formal Don Alvaro di Castiglia from Spain, and the jealous Italian Conte di Bosco Nero.[68] The play revolves around Rosaura's decision about which man she should marry. Goldoni used his impression of the cultural differences between each country to characterize each foreign suitor, and Rosaura craftily exploits their national characteristics against them in the battle of romance. The play seems a rehearsal for Goldoni's later play *The Mistress of the Inn*, and his memorable heroine Mirandolina, as Rosaura purposely manipulates the marriage market in order to get what she wants. She says, "Foreigners have a very poor opinion of Italian

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[65] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 248.

[66] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 114.

[67] Again, note the use of the traditional name of the Pantalone character in the Commedia. Goldoni is attempting to signal to his audience that Rosaura is of bourgeois class and birth.

[68] One of the dishes considered most English in origin is Roast Beef, done in the English style. "If you will roast a chine of beef… all ready and none burnt... You shall first take your chine of beef and parboil it more than half through… then spit the chine of beef… and then bathe your chine with boyling lard, then when you see the beef is almost enough, which you shall hasten by scotching and opening of it." Gervase Markham, *The English Housewife* (London: Sign of the Bible on Ludgate Hill, 1675), 61. Goldoni is attempting to make a pun on the 'national dish' of England in his choice of name for the upright and staid English lover, Runebif, or Ruined Beef.

women. They think they've only to shower us with their gold and jewels and we're their slaves for life… I'll see that whoever offers [a present] has first to beg me to accept it, and second to realize that my accepting his present will be all the reward he can hope for."[69]

Rosaura tests each man by wearing a mask, and clothing marking her as a woman from their own country, trying to tempt them into betraying her with the unknown lady she impersonates. Each suitor is tempted by their 'countrywoman', and wishes to spend more time with the masked lady at that evening's party. The only exception is the Conte, who "treats unknown masked ladies with such incivility, who denies the slightest favor to one who sighs for him, and who parts unwillingly with even a silly silk handkerchief. To him I say… that the unknown masked lady… now gives him her hand and promises to be his wife."[70] The Conte's refusal to engage in conversation with the masked Italian proves his love for Rosaura. Not surprisingly, Rosaura marries him at the end of the play.

As Rosaura says at the end of Act I that "Italy today teaches the world how to live. She retains all the good from foreign countries and rejects the bad. This is what makes Italy admired and loved by all the peoples of the world."[71] This statement echoes the 1739 preface to the cookbook *Dons de Comus,* in which two Frenchmen, Guillaume-Hyacinthe Bougeant and Pierre Brumoy, identify Italy's fifteenth-century innovations in cooking as the beginnings of modern food. They wrote, "The Italians

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[69] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 116.

[70] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 185.

[71] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 131.

civilized all of Europe, and without a doubt it was they who taught us how to eat."[72] Italian patriotism and the pride of nationalism are evident in the ending of *The Artful Widow*. While other countries may have good things in their culture, only in Italy can be found the perfect blend of culture and enjoyment. Rosaura naturally chooses the Italian for her husband, after careful consideration of the other men, for only Italy displays the necessary understanding of both civilized culture and cuisine.

The play deals with taste, on many levels—taste in manners, marriage partners, and meals. Goldoni draws an intriguing parallel among the three, using cuisine as a metaphor for romance and the glory of Italian civilization. It is assumed that the suitors are wealthy tourists in Venice, enjoying the yearly Carnival and the vibrant social scene, while trying to find a wealthy and stylish Italian wife.[73] The opening scene of the play finds the gentlemen enjoying a fine dinner and wine in an inn, singing a popular French song, and talking about the beautiful Italian widow Rosaura.[74] The gentlemen talk about the food they have just eaten, although only the Italian finds the menu pleasing and acceptable.

> *Conte*: Our landlord deserves to be congratulated. That was an excellent supper.
> *Monsieur*: It was tolerably good. You Italians do not know how to eat like the French.
> *Conte*: We have French cooks.
> *Monsieur:* Yes, but when they come to Italy, they forget how to cook. Ah! You should see how we eat in Paris! There, eating is an art!

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[72] Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari, trans. by Clarissa Bottsford, *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 430.

[73] The men wooing Rosaura are described as gentlemen, a title that could be applied to both nobleman and bourgeois equally, depending on the situation. They each have titles such as Lord, Count, and Don with the exception of Monsieur, the Frenchman. However, Monsieur has the best knowledge of current clothing, hair styles and food fashions, despite his lack of a title.

[74] See footnote 34 for discussion of special meals prepared in inns.

> *Milord:* You Frenchmen have a bee in your bonnet about Paris. You think it's the only place in the world.[75]

This exchange reveals how the French perceived "foreign" cuisine in the eighteenth century and their disdain for those who sought to imitate their cooking styles. Cultural differences in food preference limit and localize consumption patterns through national exclusiveness. Interestingly, the English gentleman and the Spanish lord, who both come from countries not renowned for their cuisine, seem unconcerned with matters of the table. [76]

National taste for specific foods is also displayed by the servants of the play. The server at the Inn, the masked Arlecchino, is the traditionally hungry Italian servant in the Commedia. Goldoni's rendition of the character remains true to its roots. Arlecchino is perpetually hungry and cheeky, always on the lookout for both food and mischief in equal proportions. Arlecchino serves up not only dinner but much of the food humor in *The Artful Widow,* as he illustrates the nationalistic tendencies in dining and consumption.[77] In the opening scene, Arlecchino listens

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[75] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 111-112.

[76] It is clear from the dinner table exchange that the gentlemen are enjoying a very late supper, in the Venetian style, eating after spending the night out at the *ridotto* or among friends. A menu from 1723 served at the Abbey of Saint Bartholomew from Gino Brunetti's *Cucino Mantovana di Principi e di Popolo* (*Mantuan Cook of Princes and of the People*) lists rice with a green vegetable minestrone, fresh eel with an ornament of grape leaves, olives, lamb 'knobs', shrimp, fried sardines, and pasta. Gino Brunetti, *Cucina Mantovana di Principi e do Popolo* (Mantova: Istituto Carlo D'Arco), 191. This menu is far more traditional Italian fare than would appear on the table at a fashionable inn in Venice during the same period. The reliance on several different types of fresh seafood, including the prized fresh sardines from Lake Garda near Mantua, which "when fried… are covered with verjuice or orange juice," a green vegetable soup, a stewed lamb, as well as pasta is far more Italian bourgeois cooking than French haute cuisine in construction. Platina, *On Right Pleasure and Good Health*, 459. However, the variety of main dishes appearing on the table at the same meal is typical of almost all eating styles of the period. A more French meal, as would have been eaten by the gentlemen in Goldoni's play, would include: a soup, several meats and vegetable dishes, sauces, and salads.

[77] Servers of food in the eighteenth century took on an increasingly significant role in the household, or wherever the service of food occurred, since a formal meal with many dishes and

with delight to the gentlemen's conversation and their song, and then promptly joins in the celebration. The Italian Conte cheers him on, saying, 'Bravo! He's a real Italian, that waiter." The Spanish Don replies "In Spain, a waiter would get a good beating for such impertinence." The Frenchman adds, "And in France he would make his fortune. There we appreciate such high spirits."[78] The Italian and the French national characteristics are defined here as similar to one another. Both men accept the necessity of having servants: They acknowledge class differences between servants and masters yet still enjoy their enthusiasm and exuberance. The Spanish proclivity for aloofness and proper manners, as well as the strict separation of classes, is illustrated by Goldoni's characterization of the Spanish Don as he rebuffs Arlecchino for his jovial behavior.

Arlecchino cannot help but further tease the Don in his attempts to woo the Lady Rosaura, as he simultaneously and stealthily makes off with the Spaniard's snack. Arlecchino says:

> She was at table… trying to eat. But she wasn't getting much down her because she kept weeping and sighing…. The illustrious name of Don Alvaro…. She'd almost reached the end of her meal. So she takes a biscuit—just like this one here. (eats biscuits) Then, she has a sip of some dark wine—something the colour of this coffee here. (drinks the coffee while still eating the biscuits) Then she says, 'Go and find Don Alvaro and tell him—I don't care a fig for him'.[79]

This report to the Don is also Arlecchino's chance to fulfill his hunger for sweets, as

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courses required a food knowledgeable staff in order to handle the service properly. An average staff of a French country house was fifteen to twenty servants, all supervised by the *cuisinier*. The resultant spectacle of table service required many bodies to perform, "as dishes did not stay on the table much longer than about fifteen minutes…. New ones arrived, and used plates were replaced by clean ones." Roy Strong, *Feast: A Grand History of Eating* (New York: Harcourt, 2002), 235-7.

[78] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 110.

[79] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 173.

he steals the Spaniard's cookies from under his nose. The late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries celebrated the appearance of the biscuit, a relative of the modern cookie. Recipes first appeared in the 1650s, and were quite popular with both Massiolot and Menon, who featured a chocolate biscuit recipe in his *La Science du maître d'hôtel* in 1750. Arlecchino understands his place in life, and seems content to stay where he is, for he says to Monsieur that "the only thing I am really good at is eating. And there's no better place for that than at an Inn, is there?"[80] Although Arlecchino reports that Rosaura cannot eat because of her feelings for the Don, she still manages to finish her meal, down to the dessert and the *digestif*. These *digestifs*, or the table liqueurs, "the pride of Italian spicery," were traditionally served with the sweets and the sorbets at the end of the meal.[81]

Another metaphor used throughout the play is the consumption of coffee and chocolate as a social beverage that indicates both class and sexual identity. Goldoni comments on the sexualized meaning of the beverages (as defined within eighteenth century culture), and the ways members of Italian society would have interpreted beverage choice as a statement about identity. Several scenes take place in a coffeehouse, and character preferences for one or other of the beverages is noted throughout the play, specifically chocolate, as preferred by the Englishman, or coffee, as advocated by the Italian. As discussed in Chapter Three, chocolate was primarily a drink for ladies and idle noblemen. Coffee was felt to raise the spirits and energy levels, and therefore was favored by men. The Count says, after discovering Rosaura

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[80] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 136.

[81] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 70.

drinking chocolate with Milord, "To hell with whoever invented morning cups of chocolate."[82] Later in the play, as Milord and the Conte are waiting in a coffee shop, the Conte orders coffee, and then scolds the waiter for bringing a cup of the beverage to Milord. Conte says, "No! You mustn't give coffee to Milord! He's used to drinking chocolate with the ladies. This sort of drink wouldn't suit him. But we really must drink a little less chocolate, Milord, old chap."[83] The Conte intimates that Milord is effeminate, and will not be likely to win the affections of Rosaura, due to his womanly love of the sweet beverage chocolate. In another example when the masked Rosaura impersonates an English woman, Milord first offers her coffee, then chocolate, and finally English punch, which she accepts. Rosaura refuses drinks that mark her as 'foreign' or 'Italian', and instead agrees to imbibe a drink acceptable for English ladies. Personal choice illustrates differences in the palates of characters from different countries, and beverage choice helps to indicate social, sexual, and national identity.[84]

The use of beverages to indicate class differences is explored further in a scene between Pantalone, Rosaura's brother-in-law, and Monsieur, as they extol the excellencies of Italian and French wine. Here, wine choice "reinforces the class structure, the choice reflecting the social standing, constitution and occupation of the

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[82] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 122.

[83] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 168-9.

[84] Punch is an English tea drink that is fortified with alcohol and usually served cold. Five distinct elements are necessary to create punch: sweet, sour, bitter, weak, and alcoholic. A basic recipe would include tea, arrack (alcoholic spirit made from sugar cane, grains, and fruit juice), sugar, lemons, water.

drinker."[85] Camporesi writes, "The internationalism of food and the cosmopolitanism of taste were particularly pronounced in the merry battle of wines… [where] the Italian wines took the worst beating."[86] Monsieur, trying to get closer to Rosaura, offers Pantalone some fine French Burgundy that will "bring a corpse to life."[87] In the eighteenth century, the red wine Burgundy was considered a wine specifically for the upper classes, so Monsieur is not only offering a special treat, but is also raising Pantalone's social status to nobility.[88] Monsieur remembers "a very good bottle of Cyprus wine" that he once drank in Pantalone's house.[89] Despite the conviviality of shared wine, Monsieur angers Pantalone when he mentions his sister-in-law Rosaura. Monsieur offers to send Pantalone a dozen bottles of Burgundy in amends. Pantalone replies, "I don't need your wine. I could drown you and fifty like you in the wine I have in my cellar…. And don't think you'll drink any of my Cyprus wine in my house. Such wine is too good for the likes of you."[90] Pantalone clearly associates Monsieur with low class status. The Frenchman ought not to be drinking fine wine,

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[85] Roy Strong, *Feast*, 82.

[86] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 87-8.

[87] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 123.

[88] Roy Strong, *Feast,* 225. French wines were considered to be superior to any others, due to the dominance of French foods and cuisine.

[89] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 123. The best wines from Cyprus were invariably white, sweet, and expensive, signaling to those in the know that the drinker was from the upper classes, although Cyprian wines carried far less aristocracy than Burgundies. Pantalone has a barrel of Cyprian wine ready to be decanted and bottled. Pantalone is seemingly a merchant in wines who specializes in exotic and fine vintages. The Venetian wine merchant made sure "the distribution of wine took place… to regulate wine supplies for the people, all the while keeping a sharp eye out for the products intended for the rich." Venice was an ideal area for trade in foreign wines, with its seaport ready to accept large casks, and then limit the cost of transportation of large quantities. Giovanni Rebora, *Culture of the Fork*, 157.

[90] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 125.

let alone having access to multiple bottles of Burgundy and a fine Italian lady such as Rosaura. Monsieur, momentarily let down, declares Pantalone "too Italian," or too emotionally capricious.[91]

The Artful Widow is an excellent example of Goldoni's early use as a cultural and class marker signifier. The misunderstandings that litter *The Artful Widow* help to illustrate differences in consumption among assorted nationalities, and how choice of beverage or food creates national identity.

Section 4 *La Bottega del Caffe*, or *The Coffee House*

A later play of Goldoni's takes a more focused look at the formation of Venetian national identity rather than the broad spectrum of European character types, and helps explain how local identity is constructed in daily life on the Venetians streets. *The Coffee House (La Bottega del Caffe),* written in 1750 and based on an earlier intermezzo dating from 1736, details the goings-on in and around a Venetian coffee house in a *campiello* (small square), which also contains a gambling parlor.[92] The play chronicles the lives of customers of all classes who meet daily "around the tables of the honest coffeehouse keeper Ridolfo."[93] Eugenio is a struggling cloth merchant ruined by his love of gambling. His wife threatens to leave him and take her dowry back since he is destroying their love through his addiction. Eugenio's deterioration is mirrored by that of the card-shark Count Leandro, in reality a humble clerk from Turin fallen prey to the darker side of Venetian life, who has

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[91] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, 125.

[92] *The Coffee House* is one of the plays written during 1750-1751, the year of the 16 play challenge.

[93] Carlo Goldoni, trans. By Jeremy Parzen, *The Coffee House* (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1998), xi.

abandoned his wife for a Venetian dancer and the lure of the gambling dens. Both these characters present a strict warning to the merchants in the audience who themselves might be tempted by Venice's infamous gambling halls, or who waste their time in Venice's equally infamous coffee houses. *The Coffee House* also features the characters of Ridolfo, the hard-working owner of the coffee shop, his wait staff Trappola and Giovanni, Pandolfo, the owner of the gambling parlor next door, the notorious dancer Lisaura who seduces the false Count, and finally the impoverished noble busybody of the piece, Don Marzio. The play offers as a snapshot of life in Venetian neighborhood coffee shops and gambling halls, two places of leisure and diversion that would have been familiar to Goldoni's audience.

The Coffee House is considered one of Goldoni's best plays for its rendition of Venetian cultural life in the eighteenth century. This play demonstrates the danger to those who get involved with the seamier sides of Venetian life rather than taking their rightful place as members of the steady merchant class and up-and-coming bourgeois. The story ultimately reconciles both gamblers with their estranged wives and features the arrest of the gambling house owner who is "to be flogged in public."[94] The single character representing the upper class is Don Marzio, an impoverished nobleman who sits in front of the coffeehouse spying on others and attempting to impress the other characters with his higher social status. He is eventually rejected by inhabitants of the *campiello* as an informer for orchestrating the arrest of Pandolfo, the gambling den owner. This play features Venetian character types living together as a distinct community, while simultaneously satirizing the problems facing all classes in society.

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[94] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 90.

Goldoni in this play also wished to reveal the social dangers of the *Ridotto* in his portrayals of men addicted to gambling.[95] *The Coffee House* denounces gambling as a moral ill and a social problem for Venetian citizens in the eighteenth century.

Another potential social problem for Venetians was the advent of the coffee house as a fixture in daily life.[96] Coffee shops originated in Mecca with Arabs, who could not drink alcohol, and used coffee to interact socially.[97] Once coffee arrived in Italy in the early seventeenth century, coffee houses spread throughout Europe in less than fifty years, and by the 1640s had become a popular diversion. Goldoni's *The Coffee House* presents a dangerous combination of coffee house and gambling den. It illustrates a peculiarly Venetian problem among the middle class, who were

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[95] Goldoni stated in his memoir that "it was unadvised of me therefore to disclose the consequences of this dangerous amusement, and still more the tricks of certain gamblers, and the artifices of the brokers." Goldoni, *Memoir*, 257.

[96] "The coffee houses, which developed into luxuriously decorated places where music, dancing, chess and gossip could be enjoyed and business conducted, were subsequently suppressed when they became centres of political activity, although they were soon re-established." The Coffee Science Information Centre Website, <http://www.cosic.org/background/index.html>, accessed 23 November, 2001. European traders, such as Venetian Pietro della Valle (reportedly credited with importing green coffee beans to Italy in 1615), first enjoyed coffee in Constantinople coffee houses and likely made business transactions for goods in them. There are many tales of the introduction of coffee into Europe, but all agree it had definitively arrived by the early part of the seventeenth century. Coffee was potentially introduced into Venice as early as the seventeenth century, through the German speaking and Dutch mercantile communities, and its popularity quickly spread throughout the population due to the social aspects of its consumption. John Ellis, *The Historical Account of Coffee* (1824), < http://www.cafepress.pair.com/history_of_coffee/hist_coffee_p9.html<, accessed 23 November 2001.

[97] The legend of the discovery of coffee states that Yemeni goatherd Kaldi or Kladi, noticed around 600-800 AD that his goats were more active than usual after eating the bright red berries off a particular bush. He smelled the berries and, enticed by their luscious aroma, tried them himself. He felt rejuvenated and more alive after eating them, and deduced they were bewitched, either taken over by some devil or touched by God. He took the berries to the local monastery so that their effect could be confirmed as divine or malevolent. The Abbot, fearing the hand of Satan, threw the berries on the fire to burn out evil. Instantly the room was filled with a sweet pungent odor. The beauty of the scent convinced the Abbot of the berry's godliness and so he pulled them from the fire and put them in a pail of cold water to cool. The water changed color and the Abbot tasted the liquid to ascertain the properties of God's gifts. He felt more awake and energized, and ordered that the entire monastery take part in the drinking of Kaldi's discovery.

welcomed in both establishments, and indulged in gambling and leisure activities to the detriment of their businesses. "Few doors were closed to the plebian.… As good coffee was sipped in popular *botteghe*," and money lost and won by members of the middle classes in the back-room gambling dens.[98]

The coffeehouse and the *campiello* combine to create a specifically Venetian culture, as the characters consume coffee, hot chocolate, dinner, as well as each other's reputations. The interwoven plots revolve around the public dining areas of the shop, usually a social gathering place for all classes of Venetian society, but here especially serving the 'common man' of Venice. Goldoni wrote *The Coffee House* in Venetian dialect, in order to keep it "local" and focused within the environs of the city. Goldoni said in his forward, "The Author to the Reader," that "The characters of this comedy are so familiar… My characters are human, lifelike, and maybe even real."[99] Goldoni wrote in his memoirs that he had taken "this piece from the middle class… and it had a very brilliant success… The assemblage and contrast of the characters could not fail to please."[100] *The Coffee House* features "sympathy with Venetian manners, insight into that predisposition to investigate each other's affairs…fitly represents the character of neighborly intercourse…. carried on under the observant eyes of many."[101]

The opening scene features Ridolfo, Trappola, and Giovanni in front of the coffee shop, preparing for the day's business and watching the neighborhood wake up

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[98] Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Times*, 51.

[99] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, xi.

[100] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 252.

[101] Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Times*, 326, 329.

and come to life. As Trappola complains about the earliness of the hour and his missed sleep, Ridolfo observes the working habits of his neighbors in order to prove the merits of hard work to his employees. "The barber's open—see he's dressing wigs—even the gambling house is already open."[102] They then discuss the brewing technique of coffee.

> *Ridolfo:* Go roast some coffee, and make a fresh pot.
> *Trappola:* Do I put in the grounds from last night?
> *Ridolfo:* No! Make it properly….
> *Trappola:* Boss, it's time for a change.
> *Ridolfo:* What do you mean?
> *Trappola:* When a new shop opens, great coffee. After six months at the most—hot water and dregs.[103]

The implication here is that after Ridolfo has established his clientele and has taught his regulars to come to his shop for their gossip and coffee, he can start cutting corners with his service. However, Ridolfo, proud of his accomplishments in building the business from the ground up, displays his ingrained work ethic by refusing to make shoddy drink, even to save money.

Ridolfo sees hard work as a necessary trait to exist honorably as a member of the middle classes. He has moved up in society not through consumption of a socially elite beverage, but by his ability to effectively market it to others. As Ridolfo says, "Up to now, I've been a servant and fulfilled my task with honor. I saved a few pennies, and with some help from my former master… I opened this shop and I want to make an honorable living with it, without discrediting my profession."[104] By using

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[102] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 1.

[103] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 2.

[104] Carlo Goldoni, trans. By Jeremy Parzen, *The Coffee House* (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1998), 15.

the currency of high market value, Ridolfo betters his lot in life, negotiating himself into a higher social bracket. Ridolfo also uses his dedication to his profession to keep him aloof from his customers. Whenever Don Marzio brings up an unpleasant subject, Ridolfo excuses himself, saying "the coffee is on the boil."[105] Ridolfo often reminds his servers, "Look lively boys. Remember—snappy service with a smile."[106] Ridolfo understands that the success of a shop often rests on the good manners of its servants.

The locals have appropriated the tables of the coffee shop for both business and pleasure. Eugenio owns a cloth shop on the Rialto Bridge, and he sells bolts of fine Paduan wool and his wife's earrings in the coffee shop in order to cover his gambling debts.[107] Don Marzio watches the world go by as he sips coffee in the shop, commenting on the busy activity going on through dancer Lisaura's back door.[108] As Eugenio laments his huge losses from the night before, Leandro attempts to interest Eugenio in a short game to win back his money. He entices him with sweet hot chocolate, a luxury imbibed to smooth over the bitterness of wagering money he does not have.

> *Leandro*: Match you for a cup of chocolate anyhow.
> *Eugenio*: No, I'm not in the mood.
> *Leandro*: Come on—a cup of chocolate. Be a sport.
> *Eugenio*: I tell you…

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[105] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 8.

[106] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 19, 1.

[107] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 19, 14. He believes she is a prostitute and Count Leandro her pimp, and that customers use the back door of her home to enter. Other characters make jokes of the sexualized meaning of Don Marzio's statements about flux entering through back doors.

[108] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 19, 10.

Leandro: One chocolate, that's all and the first to suggest a serious game forfeits a ducat.
Eugenio: All right, just for a cup of chocolate.
Leandro: (to himself) Got him! He's in the bag!"[109]

The women of the play are presented as opposites to one another. The dancer Lisaura, described as "having something to suit any taste" and a "little tart," offers a lazy sexuality and feminine attractiveness.[110] The men of the *campiello* think her a prostitute, selling her body for food and financial favors. However, she refuses to interact with many of the men, despite her reputation as a sexually available woman. When Eugenio tries to get close to the dancer by offering her a drink, she refuses.

Eugenio: (to the waiters) Boys, take this lady some coffee.
Lisaura: I drink chocolate.
Eugenio: Chocolate then, or whatever she likes. I'll pay.
Lisaura: Thank you again, but I make my own.
Eugenio: Good stuff, I'll bet. Would you like me to help you stir up a pot… Just say the word and I'll pop up and share a little with you.[111]

Lisaura clearly is uninterested in Eugenio's advances, for she has promised to marry the already-married Leandro. Despite her reputation, she prefers her own company and her own cooking.[112] By contrast, Eugenio's wife Vittoria is portrayed as the

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[109] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 38-39.

[110] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 17. An Italian torte would be likely made from ricotta cheese and either nut or citrus flavoring. A fruit based crostata would be more similar to the fruit based tarts more in keeping with French cooking. Italian tortes would also be more likely to be savory than sweet, and in keeping with the preferences of the Italian palate.

[111] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 21.

[112] A Medici recipe for chocolate included black cocoa and fresh jasmine aged for two weeks. Then sugar was added, vanilla, cinnamon, and ambergris. Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 109-110. Ambergris was an aromatic culinary substance extracted from sperm whales, and was "one of the more expensive things that could be incorporated into food with the exception of pearls and gold." Ken Albala, *Food In Early Modern Europe*, 48. However, a recipe from French cook Menon is far simpler and can be made at home, with one chocolate tablet needed per four ounce cup, melted with hot water added, adding a yolk of an egg and stirring well. Menon, *La Science du Maître d'hôtel* (Paris, 1750), 407

long-suffering spouse offering sustenance to a husband who ignores her needs. She enters the coffee shop in a mask, and her husband, not recognizing her, offers her some coffee. She says "I don't need coffee. I need bread," and reveals herself to him.[113] Eugenio has gambled away all their money, and Vittoria is unable to feed the family or pay the bills. She angrily asks him to return her dowry.

The Coffee House also underscores how often Venetians ate outside of their homes, or bought pre-made food. Special meals were prepared by special guild cooks who had risen through the ranks of the noble kitchen to open their own cooking stalls and furnish "catering services for very exacting banquets."[114] Goldoni satirizes this ostentation among his poorer, middle-class characters, as they order a meal to be eaten in Pandolfo's gambling parlor. At one point, Don Marzio tries to make Eugenio responsible for the cost of a meal they order, therefore passing the financial burden onto the poorer and lower status man. The meal ordered is likely inexpensive, since Eugenio has little money left due to his gambling debts. However, he foolishly states to the others that he wishes to celebrate because he has won back some of his money.[115]

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[113] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 31.

[114] Giovanni Rebora, *Culture of the Fork*, 164.

[115] Leandro and Don Marzio pass the time before dinner by taking some snuff. Leandro prefers Spanish tobacco, but Don Marzio tells him it is "terrible stuff… the only real stuff is rapè." Snuff was a sign of social distinction, and was kept in small decorative boxes. Snuff was considered a safer form of taking tobacco, since the burning and inhaling of smoke is what causes the majority of damage. Snuff is dried, fermented and ground tobacco leaf further mixed with essences. This entire production process resulted in different sizes of granules, flavors and scents. A ritual of taking snuff was developed, which included inhaling the powder and sneezing, which helped to clear the head. Camporesi writes "Throughout the seventeenth century there raged a momentous dispute over the social and therapeutic use of tobacco." Smoke from tobacco was considered beneficial for colic pain and many other illnesses. Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 118.

The increasing popularity of the coffee shop restaurant allowed Goldoni to develop comic waiter characters outside of their traditional servant roles. "In a land [Venice] where the great aim was to do as little as possible… the patron's part was to dole out money and… feed [servants] in return for the flattering table talk. Such were… the characters found time and again in the plays of Goldoni."[116] These servants used their positions to acquire cosmopolitan tastes and manners. Trappola is invited to help serve the meal, "if [Leandro] will give me a bite to eat."[117] The other hungry waiters, whose payments will be the leftovers from the meal, are angry at Trappola's entry into their territory. One says, "We're here for that…. (to the other waiters) Keep an eye on the platters. Don't let any outsiders snatch our leftovers."[118] Servants usually ate the same food as their masters, and exercised control over the quality, preparation, and table service of fine meals. They also learned fashionable table manners, and how to prepare finer meals for themselves, using less expensive cuts of meat and flavorful herbs such as basil and marjoram that they could gather in the fields, rather than the spices that graced the recipes of *Haute Cuisine*.[119] "No good service can possibly be expected from a starving servant any more than a drunken one."[120] Servants had the tools for excellent preparation of inferior ingredients, and prepared at-home versions of the same Frenchified recipes favored

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[116] Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice at the Time of Casanova* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), 91-92.

[117] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 63.

[118] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 63.

[119] Giovanni Rebora, *Culture of the Fork*, 148.

[120] Andre Simon, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Gastronomy* (London: Allen Lane, 1952), x.

by the upper classes. For instance, servants used beef rather than veal, believed to be an aristocratic meat. "Servants enjoyed beef five days a week… [which] was not a luxury product, but one of the most accessible foods."[121] Since beef was cheap, it provided a good amount of protein for little money, and so was often bought by most members of the serving class.

The final food image used in *The Coffee House* is Don Marzio's pocket full of dried chestnuts, a cheap present he tries to offer to the ladies he wants to impress. Don Marzio grows the chestnuts on his estate outside of Naples, and "roasts them himself."[122] Chestnuts were a particularly important food in mountainous regions, and were associated with the poorer classes, where 'peasants' diet consists almost exclusively of chestnuts, either fresh, roasted, or dried and ground into flour.[123] They were also considered difficult to digest, though the roast chestnut was a popular treat for all in winter months.[124] Dried and ground chestnuts were often used for polenta and cakes.[125] Refusing the roasted chestnuts, Lisaura states that Don Marzio "is quite a toaster, I see. Well, you burn me to a crisp,"[126] meaning that Don Marzio does

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[121] Giovanni Rebora, *Culture of the Fork*, 46-8. Furthermore, this is where the tradition of a sliding scale for cuts of met originates. Butchers charged more for the leaner cuts and the fillets, while pricing the haunches and the tripe for the less wealthy patrons. But "In Genoa, a pound of beef cost two soldi in the sixteenth century and little more in succeeding centuries." Giovanni Rebora, *Culture of the Fork*, 46.

[122] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 50

[123] Piero Camporesi, *The Magic Harvest* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 4.

[124] Ken Albala, *Food In Early Modern Europe*, 54. Platina wrote, "Of all things given us to eat, this nut generates strength and force in the limbs, but they are very difficult to digest…. But are quite enjoyable with cheese in the third course." Platina, *On Right Pleasure and Good Health*, 179.

[125] Piero Camporesi, *The Magic Harvest*, 95.

[126] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 50.

not appeal to her. When he makes the same offer later to Placida, Leandro's wife, she has a similar response. He mistakes her for a prostitute, saying, "Actually, for someone as attractive as you, a few chestnuts aren't much. If you insist, I'll add a couple of lire." Placida responds "Boorish beast."[127] Clearly, *The Coffee House* illustrates the importance of food and drink to the ordinary Venetian, as well as helping to explicate the cultural meaning of foods and drinks to different classes. *The Coffee House* explores the dietary traditions and manners of all classes in Venice, and the ways that food and drink provide a social glue for the people who frequent the coffeehouses of the city.

Section 5 *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto*, or *The Gentleman of Good Taste*

In the same year he wrote *The Coffee House*, Goldoni made his initial foray into fine dining and French foods in Italy, exploring the food of upper-class Italians served at the table of a Count. *The Gentleman of Good Taste (Il Cavaliere di buon gusto)* displays Goldoni's most developed use of food as a symbol of class and social level in his early works, and points to the sophisticated development of food images that would inform the next decade of his work. *Il Cavaliere* presents food signifiers clearly intelligible by all social classes. Goldoni offered his own explicit definition of *The Italian of Good Taste*:

> In France, [The Man of Good Taste would] designate a person acquainted with the sciences and fine arts; whereas the Italian of good taste… with a moderate fortune, [would] contrive to possess a charming house, select servants, an excellent cook, and shines in society as an affluent individual, without injuring anyone or deranging his affairs. There are curious individuals in the piece anxious to conjecture his secret, and slanderers who attack his fame; and the latter are of the number of those who frequent his table and profit by his generosity.[128]

[127] Carlo Goldoni, *The Coffee House*, 52.

[128] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 256.

Goldoni considered the play a middling success at its premiere and felt it was overshadowed by his earlier dramatic rendition of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. *The Gentleman of Good Taste* has never been translated in English and is little studied by Goldoni scholars.[129]

The Gentleman of Good Taste features Ottavio, a Venetian count who luxuriates in the latest styles, and tries to please his guests with the fashions of the day. Goldoni's Ottavio symbolizes a class of nobleman who choose to enjoy social life rather than work in politics. "In a few instances Goldoni's portrait flatters Ottavio, as in *Il Cavaliere di buon gusto*… [with] the qualities that a gentleman of birth, learning, and education should possess."[130] Ottavio is a man who respects others and enjoys pleasing them, while at the same time pleasing himself. Ottavio is in partnership with Pantalone di Bisognosi, a Venetian merchant occupied in selling imported luxury items such as furs and jewels. Ottavio entertains often, and enjoys good food and a large circle of wealthy friends. Yet, he eschews the insolence that wealth can breed in the upper classes. The action of the play concerns the marital confusions in Ottavio's house as he prepares to greet guests and offer them a luncheon. His nephew Florindo is engaged to Rosaura, and Ottavio teases the noble ladies of his acquaintance by telling them that he is planning to get married as well. The women then spend much of the play attempting to figure out who his bride is to

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[129] This play has never been published in English. The translation I use was provided by Jeannette Connors, and done in September 2005. The Italian text of *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto* can be found in Carlo Goldoni, *Collezione Completa delle Commedie di Carlo Goldoni,* tomo xi (Prato: F. Giachetti, 1819).

[130] Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Times*, 394.

be, while Eleonora and Clarice vie with each other for Ottavio's affections. After a large meal, and over coffee and liqueurs, Ottavio announces that "the person that I've chosen, the one that I love, the one I want to marry, do you know who it is? It is a partnership with Mr. Pantalone de'Bisognosi."[131] Ottavio then reads aloud from his business contract with Pantalone.

> With this contract a partnership is established for ten years between the noble count Ottavio Astolfi, having invested 40,000 ducati in capital, and Mr. Pantalone de'Bisognosi, having invested 20,000 ducati, are partners in business and all profits will be divided proportionally between the above-mentioned parties. Since Mr. Pantalone will lend his name and give his assistance to the business, he will receive an additional ten percent of the entire profits. Did you hear? This is my wife, this is my contract. This is how I maintain my lifestyle and enjoy my honest pleasures.[132]

In this way, Ottavio maintains he is truly a 'gentlemen of good taste' because he delights in his life without causing harm or unhappiness to anyone else. Also, as a good merchant, he chooses to devote himself to business interests rather than give control of his life to a wife.

Good taste for Ottavio is clearly something linked to luxurious living, a good table, and the freedom to enjoy life on his own terms.[133] Ottavio adopts the new food fashions from France, and applies them wholeheartedly to his eating. Camporesi's 'Science of Savoir Vivre' fits in well with Ottavio's aspirations of the good life, as it is referred to in the title of the play. As Ottavio says at the end of the play, "let us now enjoy ourselves and all that fortune has given us. We will enjoy our earnings

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[131] Carlo Goldoni, *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto, Collezione Completa delle Commedie di Carlo Goldoni,* tomo xi, trans. by Jeanette Connors (Prato: F. Giachetti, 1819), 78.

[132] Carlo Goldoni, *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto, Collezione Completa delle Commedie di Carlo Goldoni,* tomo xi, trans. by Jeanette Connors, 78.

[133] Ottavio does not wish to see his enjoyable lifestyle cramped by the inclusion of a wife and the attendant responsibilities of marriage.

joyfully, honestly and without offending anyone. It is all of these things that constitute the life of a gentleman of good taste."[134]

The play contains many explicit references to food, recipes, menu choices, and fashionable table settings. It also clearly delineates Ottavio's relationship with his kitchen staff, exploring how masters feed their servants. He wants them to buy their own foodstuffs, rather than eat the same foods they prepare for his guests. For Ottavio, this is a cost saving maneuver, but he does not realize that the servants will be eating the stylish food as they prepare it.[135] Ottavio, concerned about waste, charitably tells Brighella, his new master of the house, to give the leftover food to the indigent poor rather than to his own servants.[136] In another example, balance of the table and of food is important to Ottavio, and the satisfaction of the appetite is just as important as is the proper service and wine. He wants not only magnificent style, but excellent value. Ottavio tells Brighella that "If you spend, for example, six, make it look like you spent ten."[137] Ottavio also requests that the cook vary the menu often, so that the guests do not get tired of eating the same dishes. He demands the food be both flavorful and interesting.

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[134] Carlo Goldoni*, Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto*, *Collezione Completa delle Commedie di Carlo Goldoni,* tomo xi, trans. by Jeanette Connors, 76.

[135] A former servant used to sneak food to his own mistress, including the nicest pieces of fruit, the choicest cuts of meat, full bottles of wine, and cakes for his mistress. This is largely why Ottavio has concerns about his food bills, since the food bill for the household during his tenure was exorbitant.

[136] Carlo Goldoni, *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto, Collezione Completa delle Commedie di Carlo Goldoni,* tomo xi, trans. by Jeanette Connors, 10.

[137] Carlo Goldoni, *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto*, *Collezione Completa delle Commedie di Carlo Goldoni,* tomo xi, trans. by Jeanette Connors, 11.

In reward for this excellent service Ottavio assures Brighella that he will be well compensated. The key to self-improvement for a servant, according to Ottavio is to "make sure you carry yourself well and not poorly."[138] Ottavio clearly believes that some advancement is possible within the servant class, given proper decorum in society and an impressive personal presentation. In this way, Goldoni presented an important piece of advice to his audiences about the path to advancement within the hegemonic social structure.[139] Ottavio schools Brighella in the subtleties of fine service, dining as an art form, and the highest evolution of the Italian civilization for a gourmand. "All those who served domestically or in shops, drinking houses, inns, and taverns learned both to prepare food and to serve, and it was up to them to preserve the knowledge and the know-how of what we now call traditional cooking."[140]

Ottavio orders foods and supervises daily menus, a traditionally female duty. This may be the most pertinent reason for his refusal to marry, so that he does not have to give up control of the table to a wife. He is a gastronome of the highest sort, one who does not prepare his own meals, but who likes to supervise and control the order and fill both his eyes and his belly with sensuous pleasure. Ottavio gives his new butler specific instructions on how to set the table for lunch, as Goldoni orchestrates a parody of French course fashions, with two courses of six different types of covered dishes in each course. If more people arrive for the meal than

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[138] Carlo Goldoni, *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto, Collezione Completa delle Commedie di Carlo Goldoni,* tomo xi, trans. by Jeanette Connors, 11.

[139] However, Ottavio is of the hegemonic class, and his ideas about the proper place and needs of servants might not be acceptable or palatable to the servant.

[140] Giovanni Rebora, *Culture of the Fork*, 166.

expected, then the main second course may have an additional four dishes added, bringing the total to sixteen. This strict conformation to the French 'rules' is satirized here by Goldoni's insistence on Otttavio's devotion to balance and harmony of the table.[141] Ottavio requests that wine from his private cellar be served at his daily lunches in another cost saving maneuver that at the same time demonstrates fine taste: two larger flasks of a local vintage and two bottles of a better wine are to be put on the table, and afterwards *rosolio* and coffee are served.[142] The French rules of the table, as originated from La Varenne and Massiolot at the end of the seventeenth century are very much in evidence at Ottavio's table.

After luncheon, there is a disagreement among Ottavio's guests as to whether coffee is healthful or harmful. This argument was prevalent in the eighteenth century, as many people believed that coffee as a stimulant was harmful to the health of delicate individuals. Others felt that it helped to clear the head and sharpened the reflexes during digestion. Ottavio himself stays out of this argument, and instead flirts with Clarice and Eleonora, offering them coffee (but not chocolate) and watching them vie for his attention. The women both turn down the coffee (for a lady ought to avoid an excess of hot liquids and strong tastes). They prefer instead to try to engage Ottavio's attention, enjoying the game of courtship and gossip. "Unlike

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[141] As discussed in Chapter Three, the course system dictated that menus be constructed in balanced sets of even numbers of dishes, and the number of dishes for each course was calculated on a fixed ratio of dishes to diners.

[142] *Rosolio* is an after dinner liqueur made with alcohol, sugar, water and rose petals. "The acknowledgement of French superiority and hegemony in matters of good taste and in the delicacy of their culinary science was accompanied by the awareness" that making liqueurs was indubitably an Italian art form. "*Rosolios*… may be defined as sweet and aromatized liqueurs, made to satisfy taste and smell." Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 70. One would soak rose petals in a sugar water base, and then once distilled, added to alcohol and aged.

women of the previous century who had loved to feed greedily on strong-tasting foods, these languid, dyspeptic, salon-frequenting women, lacking in appetite and conversing so coldly… were fearful of the heated, animal tastes of instinctual luxury and flesh."[143] This attitude will not be likely to win Ottavio's attention, who feels that a good meal and the company of good friends are all he needs to succeed in life.[144]

Ottavio's friend Count Lelio stands in stark contrast to Ottavio himself. Lelio is the classic character of the parasite, or sponge, a professional hanger-on who takes advantage of his benefactors, and consumes whatever he finds at their homes. An impoverished nobleman, Lelio would have been a familiar type in Venetian society. Although he has an understanding of the ways a stylish life should be lived, he cannot afford to fund his own. Lelio says that he does not eat in the evening so he has a good appetite for the luncheons prepared by his friends who have a finely developed food sense. However, this is an attempt on his part to save money by dining at the expense of others. Lelio also clearly has little regard for the bourgeois classes, for he insults Pantalone by insinuating that his presence at these luncheons is only secured through Ottavio's sense of charity. It is implied that Pantalone is not cultured or civilized enough to properly enjoy meals such as Ottavio serves. The class warfare escalates, as the hard working Pantalone clearly feels superior to the indigent Lelio, saying, "If Count Ottavio invites me to his table, it is because I am a gentleman, an

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[143] Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 101-102.

[144] Carlo Goldoni, *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto, Collezione Completa delle Commedie di Carlo Goldoni,* tomo xi, trans. by Jeanette Connors, 63.

honorable merchant, and men of my kind don't dine at tables to sponge. If I go to someone's house, I do it because it will be a nice visit, not because I want to eat two days at one house, two days at another, and three days at another in order to save the month's wages and fill my stomach behind the backs of fools."[145]

Above all, *The Gentlemen of Good Taste* demonstrates the highest evolution of the bourgeois of good taste in Ottavio, a man concerned not only with his table, his comforts, and his social standing, but also with his income and the partnerships. He forges a bridge between the traditional class structures of Venetian society. These early plays of Goldoni construct the foundation for his later brilliant use of food and dining images as expressive of class structure within eighteenth century Venice. The depiction of *la scienza di buon gusto* in plays such as *The Coffee House* and *The Artful Widow*, and especially in *The Gentleman of Good Taste,* lays the groundwork for his eventual satire of Venetian bourgeois society, which makes a trenchant commentary not only on class structure but the common language of consumption in eighteenth century society.

[145] Carlo Goldoni, *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto, Collezione Completa delle Commedie di Carlo Goldoni,* tomo xi, trans. by Jeanette Connors, 53-4.

Chapter Five

"If we wish to exhibit ourselves to advantage, we must at least appear rich"[1]: Goldoni's Plays 1753–1762.

In the period between 1753 and 1762, Goldoni's plays had attained their full development of character comedy, based on Molière's model of social satires meant to illustrate the excesses of the middle and upper classes. Chapter Five will analyze specific Goldoni plays in this period and Goldoni's use of food and dining in establishing the class of the characters. I will also use Agnew's work on the 'artificial

[1] Goldoni, *Memoir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), 120.

person' and will reference Goffman's performance in everyday life to discuss readings of class by bourgeois characters in Goldoni's plays. I have included seven plays for discussion. The plays, listed chronologically, are: *The Servant of Two Masters* (1753), *The Mistress of the Inn* (1753), *The Boors* (1760), *The Superior Residence* (1760), and *The Country Trilogy* (1761), which includes the three plays *Off to the Country*, *Adventures in the Country*, and *Back from the Country*. These plays feature merchant and bourgeois characters. The foods these characters choose clearly mark them as either as social climbers or as individuals content with their current status.

In order to illustrate status changes theatrically, Goldoni began to incorporate the use of what Agnew calls the 'artificial person' into his comedies. This artificial person represents the rising bourgeois, and clearly illustrated for Goldoni's audiences the social aspirations and problems that merchants and the newly wealthy middle classes contended with in the marketplace economy of the period. Their love of luxury items and their appreciation of fine food lead them to transgress the boundaries of class and income.

As I noted in the previous chapter, Goldoni often used food to demonstrate class status and a character's place within Venetian culture, as his characters observed class boundaries in their consumption/consumer practices. In his plays written between 1753-1762, Goldoni's characters used food in a new way. They demonstrate a new awareness that these signs and symbols are the key to social mobility, so that the deliberate use of food by the characters functions as a signifier of class. His characters purposely choose specific foods to demonstrate either their transcendence

of their former place in society, or their acceptance of their current status. Sometimes this strategy is successful, as with Mirandolina in *The Mistress of the Inn* and Truffaldino in *The Servant of Two Masters*. Sometimes the appropriation of classed items backfires, as in the case of Anzoletto from *The Superior Residence* and Leonardo from *The Country Trilogy*. These characters learn to their dismay that they must renounce their social aspirations and instead return to their origins.

Section 1 *Il Servitore di Due Padroni*, or *The Servant of Two Masters*

The first play I will discuss has complicated origins, and is the most well known Goldoni play in English speaking countries. Based on an original scenario written for the great comedic Arlecchino actor Antonio Sacchi in 1745,[2] *The Servant of Two Masters* was published in the Paperini edition in 1753. The piece is a farce about two pairs of mixed-up lovers, their anxious fathers, and the servant Truffaldino who takes on two masters, because "it [is a fine thing to wait upon both of them, and get two men's wages, and eat and drink for two."[3] In the end, the lovers are united, and Truffaldino is not only sated by food, but also gains a wife (Smeraldina) and

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[2] There is speculation as to when *Servant* was first commissioned and performed by Sacchi, who was the star performer with the Imer company. Some sources state the original production of the scenario was in 1743, and other historians such as Kennard confirm the 1745 performance at the San Samuele in Venice. Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1920). Goldoni was living in Pisa from 1744-47, when Sacchi approached him about the scenario, and so this narrows the date of the original work to either 1744 or 1745. Holmes states that the play was written in 1749, but this date is suspect since Holme's chronologies are often quite muddled. (Holmes, *Servant to Many Masters* (London: Jupiter Books, 1976), 190). These confusions in the date of the first performance are understandable, given the popularity of Sacchi, the success of the original scenario, and the possibility of multiple re-stagings of the piece by Sacchi and other, less know, companies during the ten year period before the piece was scripted in 1753. Goldoni stated he wrote the play out completely in order to avoid the "unsuitable extemporizations" that other actors brought to the performance of Sacchi's Truffaldino. Heinz Riedt, *Carlo Goldoni* (New York: Frederick Unger Publishing, 1974), 19

[3] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classic, The Servant of Two Masters,* trans. Edward Dent (New York: Applause Theatre Books, 1986), 98.

respectability.[4] The play features many examples of food, Venetian eating and dining habits, and the servants often know better than the masters what food is appropriate for consumption.

The piece is inextricably linked with Sacchi, a player considered by his contemporaries to be one of the most gifted physical performers of his art.[5] Timothy Holmes argues, "When Goldoni came to write out the play in full for publication, he deviated little, if at all, from the original unscripted version. So it is true to say that the text we have today is imbued with Sacchi's performance."[6] Although this is sheer speculation on Holmes's part, Goldoni scholar Edward Dent agrees, saying, "There

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[4] The late eighteenth-century French gourmet writer Brillat-Savarin wrote upon truffles, "Who says *truffle* pronounces a great word, charged with toothsome and amorous memories…for the bearded sex…This… distinction belongs to the noblest of tubercules, because it is not only delicious to the taste, but is also believed to foster powers the exercise whereof is eminently pleasurable. The delight of taste and sex unite within the truffle." Brillat-Savarin, *The Physiology of Taste: Or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy* (New York: Dover Publishers, Inc, 1960), 68. Platina wrote that truffles are "nourishing… and arouse passion…. If it is done for fertility, it is praiseworthy, but if it is really done for libidinous behavior, as many idle and immoderate people are accustomed to do, it is entirely detestable." Platina, *On Right Pleasure and Good Health*, trans. Mary Ella Milham (Tempe, Ariz.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), 411. Considering the meaning associated with the truffle, Truffaldino is an apt name for this comic servant who craves pleasurable food.

[5] Goldoni himself wrote of the performance abilities and comic magnificence of the actor known by Italian audiences as Truffaldino. "Antonio Sacchi possessed a lively and brilliant imagination… always adhered to the essence of a play… It was Sacchi alone to whom the people crowded to see…. In his impromptus, we could recognize the thoughts of Seneca, Cicero, or Montaigne: but he possessed the art of appropriating the maxims of these great men to himself and allying them to the simplicity of the blockhead." Goldoni, *Memoir*, 187. Goldoni wrote of his initial conversation with Sacchi regarding the play, "He asked me for a comedy; he even sent me the subject of one, which he left me at freedom to work on as I pleased. What a temptation for me!" Goldoni, *Memoir*, 220. The completed scenario was an immediate success for Sacchi, but this collaboration eventually brought Goldoni to the attention of D'Arbes, who extended an offer to take the spot of the resident playwright for the Medebach company. Holmes writes that "Not only is the play a pure joy from beginning to end, but it is also a perfectly constructed halfway house between the Commedia dell'Arte and the new comedy of character containing, it could be argued, the best of both worlds." Holmes, *The Servant of Many Masters,* 91.

[6] Timothy Holmes, *The Servant to Many Masters*, 78.

can be no doubt that he incorporated a great deal of Sacchi's traditional business."[7] The play remains associated with the original Truffaldino even today.[8]

The Servant of Two Masters features both masked and unmasked characters from the Commedia dell'Arte.[9] The cross section of classes and character types help to anchor this social satire of middle-class life in Venice, where the traditional types of Pantalone (a Venetian merchant) and the cheeky servant of Truffaldino (from Bergamo) would be familiar to Commedia audiences. The most evolved characters in the play, and arguably most interesting, are the servants. According to twentieth-century Goldoni critic Heinz Reidt, "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]."[10] Two of the traditional servants,

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[7] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 252.

[8] Since Goldoni wrote the play to be published rather than for performance by the Vendramins in 1753, the role of Truffaldino remained identified with Sacchi himself, rather than other actors who later played the role. Part of the scripting of *Servant* for the Paperini edition might have been an attempt on Goldoni's part to take command of his own work and dramatically illustrate his ties to Sacchi, the greatest actor of the Arlecchino characters in the eighteenth century. That kind of affiliation would have stood him in good stead, especially since he was transitioning as resident playwright from the Medebach company to the Vendramin brothers during this period, and attempting to further imbed his reforms into the Italian drama. It is interesting that neither company appears to have produced the work.

[9] Beatrice and Florindo, Truffaldino's two masters, are the upper class serious lovers. Clarice and Silvio are the young comic lovers of the piece, with Pantalone and Dottore as their parents. The traditional servant characters of the commedia can be found in Truffaldino, Brighella, and Smeraldina. Of these nine characters, four represent the masked stock types of the Commedia: Dottore, Pantalone, Brighella, and Arlecchino. In the original performance in the San Samuele, the lovers would not have worn masks, and since Smeraldina is a composite character descended from Columbine, she would not have worn a mask either.

[10] Heinz Riedt, *Carlo Goldoni*, 33-4.

Truffaldino and Brighella, perform much of the food *lazzi* in the piece, and also display most of the knowledge of food.

Truffaldino occupies the center of the play and the rest of the characters revolve around him, much as plate placement in the eighteenth century revolves around the leading dish. He is the *Arlecchino* (or comic servant) of the Commedia, the glutton of Italian literature, a man who "who eats to excess, or who takes pleasure in immoderate eating… one who is inordinately fond of some specified object or pursuit."[11] The character of the *Arlecchino* in Goldoni's works evolved into a distinctly Venetian figure, "a truly European distillation of naiveté and shrewdness…a composite of miserable poverty… and the genuine essence of all things Italian."[12] Truffaldino has no native understanding of proper French style. However, he is quick to learn, possessing a natural wit and a fascination with proper presentation of courses, coupled with the ability to display taste in dishes. These show his learned ability as a judge of good eating. Truffaldino resorts to complicated tricks or *lazzi* in order to appease his hunger, a motif commonly found in the traditions of the Commedia dell'Arte and considered 'common' to the eighteenth century. Servants starve regularly in Goldoni's world. As he attempts to transcend his lower-class status, the satisfaction of appetite is vital to Truffaldino's well being.

The chef Brighella uses food to access upper-class lifestyles, but not to transcend his own class.[13] His food knowledge reinforces his subordinate social

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[11] OED online, accessed 9 November 2001.

[12] Heinz Riedt, *Carlo Goldoni*, 48.

[13] Brighella originates from the stock type character of the comic servant who is untrustworthy and can be bought. He is a restaurateur, "one whose trade consists in offering to the

status because he submits to culturally defined boundaries between the cook and the consumer. Brighella is a 'master-chef' in a very clearly defined domain. Understanding the French system of foods and the current style is important to his success, since it is literally his vocation, his 'bread and butter.' In the beginning of the play, Pantalone orders food from Brighella.

> *Pantalone*: Do you know what I have in mind, good master Brighella? I know you love to show your skill in the kitchen. Now, I would have you make us a few dishes of your best.
> *Brighella:* 'Tis a pleasure to serve you, sir. Though I say it that shouldn't, customers are always well contented at my house. They say there's no place where they eat as they do there. You shall taste something fine sir.
> *Pantalone*: Good, good. Let's have something with plenty of gravy that we can sop the bread in.[14]

Brighella, a self-made man, is proud of his abilities in the kitchen and uses his talent to 'sell' style and fashion to those with power and money, deriving pride in seeing others enjoy his sumptuously prepared meals. Content to view their enjoyment, he does not sit at the table with his guests, nor does he ever aspire to.

However, not all the characters share in Truffaldino and Brighella's passion for fine dining. For instance (in the above quote), Pantalone requests that Brighella provide gravy to sop bread at the celebratory dinner for the announcement of his daughter Clarice's marriage. Pantalone is indifferent to the fine foods being offered, opting instead for something bland and simple. Pantalone, a traditional Venetian merchant, has his roots in country life, which is confirmed by his request for bread.[15]

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public an ever-ready feast…on the demand of each consumer…Few…give a thought to the genius and penetration which must have belonged to him who conceived and made the first restaurant." Brillat-Savarin, *Physiology of Taste*, 226.

[14] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant to Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 83.

[15] Pantalone also might have few teeth left, since he has a predilection for softer foods such as moistened bread and rice. In traditional Tuscan peasant eating, a complete meal might consist of

However, although his stable finances mean that he can afford better food, he evidently prefers to continue to eat familiar foods from his past. In a later example, Pantalone tells Brighella and Beatrice that he does not need a fancy meal. "What's this about courses of five dishes? We'll take pot luck—a *risotto*…. My tastes are simple."[16] His request for a *risotto* discloses his lower-class local origins, since *risotto* was a specialty rice dish made around Venice from locally grown Arborio rice, and was far more common than pasta in the north of Italy during the fifteenth century and later.[17]

At one point in the play, Brighella and Truffaldino work together to plan a meal to be served to the 'masters'. Truffaldino is obsessed with quality and presentation. Proud of his culinary prowess, Brighella assures the anxious Truffaldino that "I always have plenty of everything. In half an hour, I can put on any sort of dinner you like." [18] This is music to Truffaldino's ears, as he promptly takes advantage of the offer. Brighella suggests four dishes per course, but

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stock soup with a piece of hard stale bread, as "Italians still talk about 'bathing a soup' and 'souping up the bread'." Giovanni Rebora, *The Culture of the Fork* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 11. Bread was usually baked once a week, and so a little liquid was needed in order to soften it enough for chewing. Bread was also used as a thickener for soups and sauces, since it was cheap and readily available. In Italian kitchens, gravy refers to any sauce that is used to flavor pasta or rice, dating from a time before the ubiquitous tomato base sauce now associated worldwide with the essentials of Italian cookery. "Tomatoes had not yet arrived from America, and sauces… were used to accompany meats… and flavor pasta…. To overcome dryness, one added broth or meat gravy." Giovanni Rebora, *The Culture of the Fork*, 24.

[16] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 127.

[17] "The peasants of Lombardy, following their traditions, made of [rice] a kind of flavoured puls, or porridge, called *risotto*… [which came to be one of the traditional foods, rich in calories but unfortunately poor in glutinates (protein obtained from grains)" Ken Albala, *Foods in Early Modern Europe* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2003), 26. "Spread rice which has been well-cooked, either in milk and rich broth…. Mix into it a little well-ground cheese, ten well-beaten egg whites and sugar with rose water and half a cup of milk" Platina, *On Right Pleasure and Good Health*, 369.

[18] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 124.

Truffaldino thinks four will not be enough. He argues that his 'master' requested more. "He said five or six dishes—better say six or eight. That will do."[19] Truffaldino observes the current trend in course settings that advocates an even number of dishes on the table, and illustrates his own hunger and need for satiation in requests for a larger meal.[20]

Once the number of dishes has been decided, they must discuss the menu. "For the first course, I shall give you some soup, fried, boiled, and a fricandeau… 'tis a French dish—a ragout—very tasty indeed… and for the second course the roast, the salad, a meat pie, and a trifle… That's an English dish, a pudding, my very own specialty; there's not another man in Venice knows how to make it." [21] The small-town Truffaldino does not recognize *fricandeau*, but eagerly wishes to devour the French foods reserved for people with money.[22] The *fricandeau*, or ragout, a "well-spiced stew or sauté… receives its own entry" in Massiolot's 1712 rewrite of *Le Nouveau Cuisinier roïal et bourgeois*.[23] Vincent La Chappelle's recipe for ragout from *Cuisinier Moderne* in 1742 includes "slivered sweetbreads, mushrooms, truffles, foies gras (in season), cockcombs, and crawfish tails placed between…. Squabs…. It

[19] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 124.

[20] As discussed in Chapter Three, the course system dictated that menus be constructed in balanced sets of even numbers of dishes, and the number of dishes for each course was calculated on a fixed ratio of dishes to diners. Truffaldino is attempting to ensure that there will be plenty of leftovers for his own meal.

[21] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 124-5.

[22] One could argue that Truffaldino cares little for the meaning or status of the dish, but just for the taste and the quality of the foods involved.

[23] Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past: The French Kitchen and Table from 1300-1789* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 155. According to Barbara Wheaton, the list of ragout recipes occupies the largest section in the cookery book

is prepared half white and creamy, with a *coulis* of chicken breasts, egg yolks, and cream, and half dark and meaty, with *jus* and a good ham *coulis*."[24]

Truffaldino takes offense at the offer of a trifle for the second course, saying, "What's that? A trifle? My master and his guest are gentlemen of substance; they won't be satisfied with a mere trifle."[25] Truffaldino, still in the process of obtaining cuisine sophistication, mistakes the meaning of 'trifle', understanding only the literal meaning of the word. However, the adoption of English puddings as desserts was very popular in Italy and France in the later half of the eighteenth century, being one of the only additions to *haute cuisine* to evolve from English cooking. La Chappelle is credited with incorporating dishes from other countries under the aegis of French cooking. He is widely considered the first chef and cookbook writer to include a recipe for English puddings in a cookery book,[26] with a recipe for 'potin' or pudding, "made with red currants wrapped in pastry and boiled in a cloth."[27]

After they plan the menu, Brighella and Truffaldino then turn to the arrangement of the table, as Truffaldino says, "But with a really good dinner 'tis not the having such and such dishes, but the way it is served. A properly laid table is worth more than a mountain of dishes."[28] Brighella dismisses the importance of table setting, saying it is a matter for the waiters to decide. Yet, this issue is vitally important to Truffaldino, who understands the effects that balance and spectacle have

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[24] Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past,* 171.

[25] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 124.

[26] Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past,* 200.

[27] Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past,* 293.

[28] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 124.

on the palate and the overall enjoyment of the repast.[29] "No, my friend, laying the table is a very important matter; that's the first thing about a dinner, to have the table properly laid."[30] According to Massiolot, table design and taste should be balanced and symmetrical.[31] Truffaldino's insistence is in the height of fashion. Truffaldino and Brighella kneel on the floor and proceed to 'lay' the table in a serious demonstration of current dining trends.[32] Brighella and Truffaldino soon hit a snag, however, as they try to decide how to place the dishes on the table.

> *Brighella:* Well, you might put the soup here, the fried there, there the boiled and here the fricandeau.
> *Truffaldino*: I don't like that. Don't you put something in the middle?
> *Brighella*: Then we should want five dishes.
> *Truffaldino*: Good, then let us have five.
> *Brighella*: We can put the gravy in the middle.
> *Truffaldino*: No, no, friend, you know nothing about laying a table; you can't put gravy in the middle; soup always goes in the middle.
> *Brighella*: Then the meat on one side, and the gravy on the other.
> *Truffaldino*: Lord, lord, that won't do at all. You innkeepers may know how to cook, but you have no idea of butlering.[33]

Truffaldino then rips up a banknote given to him by one of his masters, using the shreds to illustrate to Brighella how a table is properly set. "In the matter of pantry work, I won't give way to the first butler in the land."[34]

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[29] It is unclear where Truffaldino gained this superior knowledge of table setting.

[30] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 125.

[31] His system published in *The Court and Country Cook* in 1691 prompted other cookbooks to include table settings as well, establishing a codified system for fashionable dining.

[32] Massiolot's rules for laying the table were quite exact. The food being served at the meal was ranked by size of plate needed, and a pattern was constructed by building the pattern from largest pieces in the middle furthest from the diner, and the smaller pieces closer to the diner.

[33] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 125.

[34] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 126.

Truffaldino's complaints about the ineptitude of waiters and the dinner Brighella has provided demonstrate his passion for proper 'etiquette'. He demands, "Call that a dinner! One dish at a time!"[35] Truffaldino is appalled because, despite Brighella's fine talk, he appears unable to deliver the entire course at once. Brighella, of course, is sending out the dishes as they are ready and hot, signaling that he indeed as clueless about courses as Truffaldino implied. The meal begins with the antipasti: a soup in the French style,[36] and a boiled meat platter, which was lamb rather than mutton or veal.[37] In the middle of the antipasti, Truffaldino's other master Florindo returns to the Inn hungry for dinner. Since he is holding the platter of boiled meats, Truffaldino tries to serve it to Florindo, who balks at this flagrant ignorance of table service. "And you begin with boiled meat instead of soup?" Truffaldino quickly responds, "You must know, sir, at Venice soup is always taken last." Florindo replies, "I have other habits. I want my soup."[38] Florindo clearly understands the

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[35] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 128.

[36] An everyday bouillon recipe from Marin's *Les Dons de Comus* (1739) includes beef round, boiling fowl, veal, onions, leeks, parsley, celery, cloves, and salt. He observed "this bouillon or simmering stock is used to cook everything which is put into soups, such as poultry, game, red meat, and so forth, and all sorts of vegetables… Part of the goodness of all these bouillons depends on the attention given and care taken in making them." Barbara Wheaton, *Savouring the Past*, 269.

[37] Mutton is meat from an older sheep and has a far more assertive flavor, whereas lamb is meat that is from younger animal. "Lamb was one of the more important foods in Europe, probably because sheep were one of the most valuable animals for both cheese making and the wool industry." Ken Albala, *Foods in Early Modern Europe*, 63-4. "In European cities, lamb cost the same as other meats and sometimes a bit less", especially if there were larger tracts of land nearby. However, in larger cities in Northern Italy and France, urban areas featured higher lamb prices, due to the lack of land available to raise flocks. Giovanni Rebora, *The Culture of the Fork*, 48-9. Veal was quite expensive, due to the cost associated with raising cattle to maturity. It was considered to be a very healthy meat, but more appropriate to the upper-class palate than either lamb or beef due to its delicacy. Calves would be raised in a private stock in order to obtain the most desirable meat possible. "In the Piedmont, one said that this home-raised veal was *à la façon du particulier* (today we would say customized)." Giovanni Rebora, *The Culture of the Fork*, 45.

[38] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 129.

rules of fashionable table etiquette. The stage action escalates as Truffaldino and his bevy of waiters are forced to take the two-course/twelve dish meal and divide between three eaters and two different tables in two different rooms. "If I can manage to wait at table on two masters at once, 'twill be a great accomplishment indeed."[39]

Rissoles emerge next from the kitchen, defined by Massiolot as a "minced pie made of capon's breasts, calves udder, marrow, bacon, fine herbs… and fried in lard to give it a fine color."[40] Truffaldino must divide them between two tables. "I know what I'll do; I'll divide them on two plates, take half to each… That's four and that's four. There's one over. Who's to have that? We mustn't cause ill feeling; I'll eat that one myself."[41] Then, the kitchen produces the trifle. Truffaldino says, "What the devil is this pudding? It smells delicious, and looks like polenta. Oh! If it is polenta, that would be good indeed. I'll taste it," and declares it "wonderful stuff."[42]

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[39] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 130.

[40] Francois Massiolot, *The Court and Country Cook: Giving New and Plain Directions How to Order All Manner of Entertainments, and the Best Sort of the Most Exquisite a-la-mode Ragoo's* (London: W. Onley, 1702).

[41] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 131. It is, of course, important that even the arrangement of food on the plates be properly balanced and symmetrical, in keeping with the fashion of the period.

[42] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 133. See discussion of Polenta from Chapter Four in *L'Uomo di Mondo*. The Royal Shakespeare Company's 2000 production of *Servant* featured an English pudding in the stage business, namely a 'spotted dick.' This, of course, allowed the actor portraying Truffaldino the opportunity to sneak in sexual humor and banter with the audience, in a good example of how eighteenth-century Commedia dell'Arte actors might have handled physical lazzi. For instance Truffaldino, played by actor Jason Watkins in the 2000 production, worries as to whether the 'Spotted Dick' is really genitals. He tastes the dish and discovers he likes it. When one of his masters calls him, Watkins handed the plate to a woman in the front row, cautioning her to hold his dick for him, but not to eat it. A recipe for "Marrow Pudding a Second Way", also known as Spotted Dick, from Raffald, *The Experienced English Housekeeper* is as follows: "Half boil four ounces of rice, shred half a pound of marrow very fine, stone a quarter of a pound of raisins, chop them very small, with two ounces of currents well cleansed, beat four eggs a

Once all of the diners are content in their separate rooms, Truffaldino can return his attention to the pudding he delights in. As Truffaldino says, "Now for my pudding!... They've had a very good dinner. I have waited on two masters at once, and neither of 'em knew anything about the other. But if I have waited for two, now I am going to eat for four."[43] His physical hunger abated, he meets Smeraldina in the courtyard of the Inn, and experiences a different sort of hunger, sexual longing and the urge to marry. Hunger for Truffaldino is not "synonymous with the vulgar voraciousness of the Commedia dell'Arte. It is a genuine hunger," not merely for food, but also for success and advancement.[44] Truffaldino is no longer merely the stupid peasant *Arlecchino*. He demonstrates a finely tuned culinary knowledge and the innate understanding of how to get the food he craves. As his palate becomes more sophisticated, so do his desires.

Section 2 *La Locandiera*, or *The Mistress of the Inn*

If *Servant* demonstrates the importance of food to indicate the subtleties of class consumption, then *The Mistress of the Inn* suggests that proper etiquette can also be used to facilitate advancement. The 1753 *La Locandiera*, or *The Mistress of the Inn* (also called *Mirandolina* in translation) tells the story of Mirandolina, a female

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quarter of an hour, mix it all together with a pint of good cream, a spoonful of brandy, sugar, and nutmeg to your taste; you may either bake it or put it into hogskins." Elizabeth Raffald, *The Experienced English Housekeeper for the Use and Ease of Ladies, Housekeepers, Cooks, &C, Written Purely from Practice and Dedicated to the Hon. Lady Elizabeth Wharburton, Whom the Author lately served as Housekeeper: Consisting of near Nine hundred Original receipts, most of which never appeared in Print* (London: E & W Books, 1970). For a contemporary recipe, see *Gourmet*, March 2000, 122.

[43] Eric Bentley, editor, *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*, 134.

[44] Heinz Riedt, *Carlo Goldon*i, 51.

merchant who owns an inn in Florence.[45] She is a woman of the middle class, who was left her business by her father. Her hotel is popular with upper class patrons, including the older Marquis of Forlipopoli, and the younger Count of Albafioretta, who recently purchased his title. Mirandolina maintains her inn's reputation by flattering and feeding her customers. The plot follows her attempted seduction of the avowed woman-hater, Cavaliere di Ripafratta, a wealthy merchant.[46] Her performance of deference and humility ensures her success as a female merchant. She also demonstrates her supreme knowledge of 'the art of seduction' in her successful wooing of Ripafratta. As he vows eternal love for Mirandolina at the end of the play, she turns down his proposals and instead informs her guests that she plans to marry her servant, Fabrizio.[47] *Mirandolina* was first performed in Venice during the 1752 carnival, and the production continued into 1753.[48] The play was written to

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[45] According to Camporesi in *The Land of Hunger*, the place name Mirandola is a metaphor for 'snatch', grasping in both sexual terms and in life/personality. "We'll clean out the bread oven and break into the cellar. And when we are laden quite… always keeping on the move." Camporesi, *The Land of Hunger,* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 93. Her name implies that she might be perceived as grasping, duplicitous, and sly in nature, as well as being sexually bold for her gulling of the nobility who enjoy her 'wares'.

[46] Ripafratta maintains at first that he is in "no danger, for to be upset by a woman is to be upset by nothing…. I've always maintained that woman is an insufferable nuisance to man." Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies, Mine Hostess,* trans. Clifford Bax (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 7.

[47] Heinz Riedt, *Carlo Goldoni*, 82.

[48] Goldoni, *Memoir,* 277. "We opened the theatre, then, on the 26th of December [1752] with *La Locandiera*, a word derived from *locanda* (inn), which has the same signification in Italian as *hôtel garni* (furnished hotel) in French. "Bouquet garni is a cookery term for a selection of herbs added to stocks and soups to deepen the flavor. Garni can also be used culinarily to indicate the use of a garnish by the side of the dish. One assumes that the furnished hotel is meant for people who need accommodations long term, and are willing to pay for the privilege to live comfortably and be looked after, much like the noblemen to be found in *La Locandiera.*

feature Maddalena Marliani, popular by her stage name Corallina, an actress who often played the *Columbina* characters.[49]

The play is a remarkable portrait of the social climate of 1750s Venice. As Heinz Reidt points out, the basic social inequality of the characters is underscored in the opening dialogue between the Marquis and the Count, as the Marquis says "Between you and me there is a social difference." The Count goes one step further, "But here at the inn, my money is worth as much as yours."[50] Money, not social rank or class, is the driving force of luxury and consumption, marking money as a tool in the construction of Venetian consumer society. The possession of financial means ensures a better meal, more social deference, and advancement. In Mirandolina's Inn, a wealthy merchant (Ripafratta) trumps an indigent Marquis.

Goldoni reported that the play "was the most natural and best conducted of all my pieces,"[51] largely due to the character of Mirandolina, who bridges the gap between the new aristocracy and the fast-rising merchant classes. She is a woman in a man's world, interested in using the power of food and French luxuries to achieve social success on her own terms. "She attempts to portray herself as 'virtuous' not simply on abstract moral grounds of 'goodness', but as the embodiment of patriarchy's ideal woman."[52] However, she is not innocent for she actively sells herself and her skills on the open market as a commodity. The tools she uses to flaunt

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[49] At the time *La Locandiera* was written, Medebach's wife Theodora, the star actress of the company, was ill and unable to perform. Goldoni himself was about to leave the Medebach troupe for the Vendramins at the San Luca, and this play was one of the last performed at the San Angelo theatre.

[50] Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies, Mine Hostess*, 3.

[51] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 277.

[52] Joseph Farrell, *Carlo Goldoni and Eighteenth-Century Theatre*, 97.

her perfection are culinary and sexual ones. "The Inn is a setting where *business* flourishes."[53] In *Mirandolina,* her business is a place of commerce where the commodity is food and comfort. By using her disciplined understanding of fashionable food and dining, Mirandolina increases her power in the marketplace, ensuring her success. "Mirandolina's honesty… is not grounded on high principles, not declared in high sounding sentences, but interwoven with a solid tissue of common sense…. She only wants to promote the interest of her business."[54]

Mirandolina serves as an excellent example of the growth potential of the merchant classes. She fearlessly marries a servant in her household, demonstrating that status differences are no longer prohibitive for marital alliances. At the same time, she builds her inn into an exemplary establishment. Ripafratta says of Mirandolina "If this is how Mirandolina looks after her guests she'll never have an empty room. Good food, good linen. And one has to admit she's quite charming."[55] Her performance of middle-class morality and deference to the monied classes is quite effective. However, at the same time, she breaks the class rules that structure her society, as she manipulates her clientele shamelessly. Versed in the French styles, she has trained waiters and servers in her establishment, and spares no luxury for her

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[53] Joseph Farrell, *Carlo Goldoni and Eighteenth-Century Theatre*, 126. The italics are mine.

[54] Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 491. The reasons why Mirandolina chooses to seduce her patrons are unclear, and are a point for discussion. She could be using her sexuality to maintain her business and perhaps carries it a little too far, or she could enjoy toying with the men. Perhaps she merely uses the tools she has as a woman to maintain her clientele. However, she does choose to follow her heart at the end of the play, as she marries the man she has loved all along.

[55] Carlo Goldoni*, Four Comedies, Mirandolina*, trans. By Frederick Davies (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 214.

guests, serving chocolate in the afternoon and taking dinner orders directly.[56] She plays at being the perfect hostess, combining food and a sweet and biddable female demeanor to provide the necessary keys to all men's hearts. Underneath, she is looking out for her own interests.

The dinner served to Ripafratta is revealing. Mirandolina has chosen Ripafratta for her target, for he is the wealthiest of all her clients. However, her attempts to seduce Ripafratta with fine food are doomed, as he shows little interest in his plate. But, she soon succeeds with her deferential treatment of him. The servant informs him "this room's been served before the others… the mistress of the inn said you were to be served first, signore."[57] The servant brings in soup and chicken with sauce.[58] The servant displays the sauce to Ripafratta, and archly informs him that, "she particularly asked me to let her know if you liked this sauce. Because she made it with her own hands."[59] Ripafratta's interest is aroused.

Mirandolina soon has the woman-hating Ripafratta 'eating' out of her hand. He attempts to please her by declaring the sauce exquisite, for he has "never tasted

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[56] Mirandolina babies Ripafratta as she orders his meal, "No, I must know your likes and dislikes. If there's something you'd like more than anything else, you really must tell me…. Men don't give the attention and patience to such things as we women do. What about a nice little ragout with a special sauce?" Carlo Goldoni*, Four Comedies, Mirandolina*, 209.

[57] Carlo Goldoni*, Four Comedies, Mirandolina*, 213.

[58] *Four Comedies*, 212-229. As discussed in the Introduction, Mirandolina offers pigeon if chicken is not to Ripafratta's taste. Chicken and pigeon were both considered to be extremely healthy meats during the eighteenth century, though pigeon was raised expressly for the purpose of eating, while the chicken was primarily a provider of eggs and was itself considered a food only in a secondary sense. In fact, pigeon was considered purely an aristocratic meat, since they could not be raised on a farm for fear they would eat freshly sown seeds and damage crops. Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, 70.

[59] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies, Mirandolina*, 214.

better."[60] When he praises her cooking and her establishment, she politely shrugs off her abilities because she is merely doing her job as "the servant of any who are kind enough to stay in my inn."[61] But, when he presses her for the ingredients of the ragout, she cagily dodges the request, saying, "Ah, I have my secrets, signore. These hands of mine know a thing or two," intimating that she not only has culinary abilities but perhaps sexual ones as well.[62] She serves Ripafratta a fine Burgundy, and then flirtatiously drinks out of his used glass. She appropriates a piece of bread from his plate, making herself part of his dining experience. Flustered yet intrigued by her nearness, Ripafratta asks Mirandolina to sit at the table with him. He sends the servant off on a made-up errand, to "go and boil a couple of eggs. Bring them in when they are ready", so that he can be alone with Mirandolina.[63] When the servant

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[60] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, *Mirandolina,* 214. An excellent example of a nouvelle cuisine sauce "which can be used for a good many things" is from Marin's 1740 *Le Dons de Comus.* "Put a spoonful of oil in a saucepan, one-half a septier quintessence [a reduction of meat broth], half a glass of champagne, an ordinary bouquet [of herbs such as thyme, tarragon, and bay], three mushrooms, two shallots, and some parsley, all minced fine, a slice of ham, salt, and pepper. Boil everything together, letting it bubble five or six times; when you have tasted it, squeeze in a sour orange." Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past*, 205.

[61] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies, Mirandolina*, 216.

[62] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, *Mirandolina*, 216. A way to a man's heart is through his belly.

[63] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, *Mirandolina,* 218. Eggs are considered by culinary historians to be one of the most easily found and prepared foods for all social levels in Europe of the eighteenth century. Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, 79. They also have complex fertility symbolism. "[Eggs] were part of a dietary ritual connected with the sanctity of nature, the ancient pre-Christian cults of fertility and fecundity, of apparent death and eternal return. Eggs were and still are a mysterious symbol of life and birth." Piero Camporesi, *The Magic Harvest*, trans. by Joan Krakover Hall (Cambridge; Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 108. Ripafratta is quickly becoming interested in a sexual relationship with Mirandolina, so the implied symbolism of his request of an egg is humorous. Ripafratta requests plain, old fashioned hard boiled eggs, which take time to prepare due to the need to first boil the water, and then submerge the eggs in the pan for anywhere from ten to twenty minutes. "Celsus affirms that hard-boiled eggs are of a very strong material and therefore are digested slowly." Platina, *On Right Pleasure and Good Health*, 163. Ripafratta wants time alone with Mirandolina, in order to appease his sexual appetite. Incidentally, egg whites took on a special significance in fashionable cookery during this period due to the 1740 La Chappelle's *The Modern Cook.* He

returns with the eggs, Ripafratta waves them away, saying he cannot stand them.[64] As they get more intimate at the table, Mirandolina asks for another glass of wine, and as her glass is being eagerly filled by Ripafratta, she tells the audience in an aside, "He's ripe for the picking," meaning she has succeeded in her conquest, if she chooses to marry him.[65]

The Marquis of Forlipopoli interrupts this promising moment.[66] However, the intrusion provides another persuasive example of class differences in the play. Mirandolina offers the Marquis some of the Burgundy to tempt his supposedly refined palate, and he counteroffers some Cyprian wine from his own personal stock.[67] Yet the Marquis is poor, and does not wish to waste his wine reserves on others, so he asks for liqueur glasses rather than wine glasses for the service.[68] Unfortunately, the Marquis' prized wine is sour. Mirandolina realizes the Marquis' poverty, and instantly dismisses him, stating that the "person who can deceive in one

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combined whipped egg whites with a pastry cream and inserted it into a puff pastry shell, "the first soufflé." Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past,* 170.

[64] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, *Mirandolina,* 220

[65] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, *Mirandolina*, 219.

[66] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, *Mirandolina*, 221. Mirandolina is then forced to focus her charms and culinary attention on the Marquis to extinguish his jealousy. She must keep Ripafratta interested in her as well. She offers Forlipopoli the personally prepared ragout, while at the same time whispering to Ripafratta that the Marquis is meaningless to her. The Marquis declares the ragout "excellent! What a superb dish! Most savoury ragout I've ever tasted." She wants to keep all of her clients interested in frequenting her establishment.

[67] This comparison between Burgundy and Cyprian wine is reminiscent of Goldoni's earlier play *The Artful Widow* from 1747. Red Burgundy from France was considered a pleasing wine with meals for the upper classes, a complement to meats and rich foods. Cyprian wine was white and sweeter than the Burgundy, and was also generally considered to be a drink for those with the money to afford it.

[68] After dinner aperitifs became popular in the eighteenth century, and smaller glasses were developed which held about half of the amount of a wine glass. However, while Cyprian wine was sweeter, it was not really considered a dessert wine. It was improper for the Marquis to offer the drink at this time in the meal, and in a small aperitif glass.

thing can deceive in another."[69] Mirandolina turns her attention back to the wealthiest man in her sights, who can afford fine wine and continue to fund her establishment. Mirandolina happily giggles, "He's roasted, basted, and done to a turn."[70]

However, Mirandolina is only interested in Ripafratta's business, she has no intention of becoming romantically involved with him. Mirandolina loves her server Fabrizio, who is learning the arts of inn keeping and serving.[71] This affection is hidden from the nobles. Fabrizio is the perfect lover, as he learns from Mirandolina how to please and pamper. Fabrizio realizes that Mirandolina is in control of their relationship, and is jealous of the attention paid her by the patrons of the Inn. "I eat your bread, so I must obey you."[72] Both characters are servers first and foremost, understanding this inn as a foundation for their future together. As Fabrizio reprimands Mirandolina for flirting, she says:

> What d'you think I am? An empty headed little flirt? I thought you knew me better than that! How do you expect me to behave with guests that are here today and gone tomorrow? If I treat them well, that's in my own interest, for the good name of my inn…. And if I want to make love, one's enough for me and I have him already. I know when I'm well off, and when I want to marry…. I shall remember my father's wishes.[73]

The future for the two of them is bright, with their superior knowledge of service and dining, and fine linens. Mirandolina clearly understands not only what drives the

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[69] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, *Mirandolina*, 223.

[70] Carlo Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, *Mirandolina*, 232.

[71] Fabrizio was Mirandolina's father's choice for a husband, and it is implied that the two have been romantically involved for some time.

[72] Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, *Mirandolina*, 230.

[73] Goldoni, *Four Comedies*, *Mirandolina*, 204.

market, but also how to use the public's habits of consumption to her own advantage. They have all of the necessary tools to make both their guests (and each other) happy.

Section 3 *I Rusteghi*, or *The Boors*

The next play I will explore was written during what Holmes reckons to be "the richest creative period of [Goldoni's] life,"[74] and clearly shows the class based tensions lurking beneath the veneer of this highly polished period of fine fashion and civility in Venetian society. *The Boors*, (1760) features characters drawn exclusively from the middle class who clash over proper social behavior. The "New" Venice of the later half of the eighteenth century displayed both social niceties and a preoccupation with material goods and the enjoyment of ownership. This play specifically focuses on the problems of the bourgeois in adapting to new consumer practices.

I Rusteghi, or *The Boors* is a comedy in three acts, produced at the Teatro San Luca on February 16, 1760.[75] The play is written completely in Venetian dialect, and is difficult, if not impossible, to translate accurately for contemporary readers. The play provides a glimpse into Venetian middle-class family life, "stormy households, swayed by the ill steering of their chiefs, tyrannizing over their women folk."[76] Many critics (among them Holmes, Kennard, and Andrieux) find *The Boors* to be among Goldoni's best works, as much a social document as a theatrical play-text. [77] The

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[74] Holmes, *The Servant to Many Masters,* 150.

[75] Goldoni does not mention this comedy in his *memoir*. *The Boors* was first published in 1761 in the Pasquali edition.

[76] Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 437.

boors of the piece are conservative merchants who subscribe to the old-fashioned middle class values of thrift and hard work. However, their wives enjoy wearing fashionable clothing, going out to the *Ridotto* and the theatre, and being a part of the flourishing social scene of Carnival. As Lunardo, the head 'boor' of the piece, says, "Those who think like you only make themselves ridiculous; while those who want to stay quietly at home, to live a sober life, and be of good repute, are thought to be churlish, boors, barbarians."[78]

The play begins on the day that Lunardo plans to announce the engagement of his daughter, Lucietta, to Filipetto, the son of a rival merchant named Maurizio. Lunardo plans to host a meal that evening in honor of the couple. However, the merchants refuse to introduce their children before the marriage, because they believe they have raised them to be "old-fashioned." They assume that their children will necessarily abide by the choices of their parents. Lunardo and Maurizio cherish their traditional and well-ordered homes.

> *Lunardo*: Live in one's own house; without noise, without gossip.
> *Maurizio*: With none to trouble us.
> *Lunardo*: Keeping our affairs to ourselves.
> *Maurizio*: To be our masters.
> *Lunardo*: So that our wives do not have their own way.
> *Maurizio*: And our children behave like children.
> *Lunardo:* My daughter has been brought up like that.

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[77] It explores the clash between the old conservative tradition of the middle-class merchants of Venice and the new pandering to upper-class luxuries and frivolous enjoyment of merchandise. Ultimately, the purpose of the play is to illustrate a social point about the make-up of the power structure in families, and the results of the inevitable battle of the sexes. Goldoni explored the possible downfall of the next generation of merchants through their profligate spending of their parent's hard earned money on luxuries, an enjoyment denounced by their frugal parents as unnecessary. Goldoni used this play to help document the changing structure of his society, in the renegotiation of the family structure, and the potential promise, or the foolhardiness, of the next generation.

[78] Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies, The Boors,* trans. from the Venetian dialect by I.M. Rowson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 112.

> *Maurizio*: My son, too, is a pearl of a boy. There's no danger of his throwing money away.
> *Lunardo*: My daughter knows her work well. I've had her taught all she should know about housekeeping.[79]

Predictably, the children wish to meet one another before the marriage, so the wives of the merchants, Margarita, Marina, and Felice concoct a plot to bring the two young people together before the engagement dinner. Since the play is set during carnival in Venice, the women dress Filippetto as a masked woman in order to avoid attracting attention, and bring him to visit Lucietta. The two children fall in love, but the boors are angry that their wives have engineered the meeting without their agreement.

> *Lunardo*: It is a question of honor, it is a question of—let us come to the root of the matter—of the reputation of my house….
> *Simon*: Calm yourself, dear friend. It's no fault of yours. It's all because of the women. [80]

After much confusion (and the delaying of the dinner), the men are won over by the pleadings of Felice, the wife of a fellow merchant.[81] She argues that the merchants "are too rough, too uncouth. The way you treat your women… is so beyond the bounds of all reason… that never in the world can they love you; they obey you perforce."[82] At the end of the play, the whole company goes to the bridal feast, as Felice says, "And if Sior [Signore] Lunardo's cook has not provided us with wild fowl [see footnote] to eat, we shall see nothing untamed and unmannerly at table. We are all civilized people, good mannered, and good hearted. Let us enjoy

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[79] Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies, The Boors*, 117.

[80] Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies, The Boors*, 172.

[81] Canciano practices more equality in his marriage and does not attempt to control his wife's choices and her life. Felice is a "clever, sharp tongued wife who has partly tamed, partly bullied [Canciano] into a somewhat better form." Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 451-2.

[82] Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies, The Boors*, 181-2.

ourselves, eat and drink, and give a toast to all those who so courteously have listened, suffered, and sympathized with us."[83] Although Goldoni understands the plight of the children in a traditional farce, he also suggests the merchants need to re-evaluate how the world works, and make way for sentiment in their practical lives.

These merchants enjoy fine foods, as one of their few concessions to social life. There are several mentions of dining in *The Boors*, illustrating the split in public opinion among the bourgeois regarding public or private dining. For example, two of the merchants, Lunardo and Maurizio, discuss how to enjoy the fine life frugally at home and not expend too much cash in either the procurement of supplies, or in going out to eat. Lunardo wants "to eat well—fine capons, plump pullets, and good fillets of veal." His description of his ideal table features lighter, more delicately flavored meats, all of the best quality.[84] Lunardo's taste in meat reinforces the fashions of the day, for each animal is young and fed well until they are butchered.[85] Maurizio concurs with Lunardo, and notes that the merchants have the money to buy the food for their culinary pleasures outright, rather than use credit, as did many of the

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[83] Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies, The Boors*, 190. There is a translator's note from Bax that reads, "There is a play of words here between the meaning of *salvadeghi* (game, wild-fowl) and *salvadeghi* (barbarians, savages, the same as *rusteghi*)." Obviously, Goldoni was making a pun regarding cannibalism, the eating human flesh as an uncivilized act.

[84] Pullets are young hens less than a year old, usually well fed and bred for the table. Lunardo prefers his veal dressed and deboned by the butcher, rather than leaving the bones for his wife to use for stock. One could also make the argument that leaving the bones in the cut of veal would be heavier and, therefore, cost more money. Also, it implies that all parts of the meat purchased must be used for consumption, rather than wasting the bone, even in stock. A capon is a "rooster that is castrated when quite young (usually before eight weeks), fed a fattening diet, and brought to market before it is ten months old." Sharon Tyler Herbst, editor*, The New Food Lover's Companion* (Hauppage, New York: Barron's' Educational Series, 2001), 125.

[85] These meat choices are in keeping with both upper-class Haute Cuisine and the eighteenth century enjoyment of more refined tastes with less spice. The reformed cuisine of the eighteenth century favored "elegant simplicity" as opposed to the opulent excess of the seventeenth century. These meats, juicy and tender on their own, required little enhancement in preparation in order to make them tasty. Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 37.

impoverished noblemen of the period. Maurizio says "all of the best quality and at a low price, because we don't run up bills."[86] The men's description suggests that this style of eating is reserved for a special event, such as the engagement dinner, and is not an everyday occurrence.

The plot of the play revolves around the fantastic engagement dinner, the guest list, the menu, and proper dress for the occasion. The gentlemen display their evolved tastes as they discuss the meal. Lunardo says to Maurizio, "You dine with me today…. To come to the root of the matter, I have four sweetbreads, as big as these [gesture]."[87] Sweetbreads "are prized by gourmets throughout the world…. the thymus glands… and pancreas… of young animals, usually calf or lamb…. The heart sweetbread is considered the more delectable (and therefore more expensive) of the two because of its delicate flavor and firmer, creamy-smooth texture."[88] Lunardo has pulled some strings to obtain these meats for the special dinner, and he wants to brag to Maurizio.

> *Maurizio*: We'll eat them.
> *Lunardo:* We'll enjoy ourselves.
> *Maurizio*: We'll make merry.
> *Lunardo*: And then they say that we're uncivilized!
> *Maurizio*: Bah!
> *Lunardo*: Fools![89]

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[86] Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies, The Boors,* 118. Maurizio's statement implies two prices in operation in the Venetian food markets. One explanation is that there is a single price for those who pay cash, and another, higher price for those who ask for credit to be extended to them. Another possibility is that these merchants are using inside connections to ensure they get the meats wholesale, rather than waiting until they appear on the market.

[87] Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies, The Boors,* 119.

[88] Sharon Tyler Herbst, editor*, The New Food Lover's Companion,* 609.

[89] Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies, The Boors,* 119.

Lunardo does not wish to eat out in public, for although he may enjoy the foods of the upper classes, he wants to perform the preparation in his own home in order to cut costs. He discusses the planned dinner with his daughter.

> *Lunardo*: Today we will dine in company.
> *Lucietta*: Where, sir, where?
> *Lunardo*: At Home…where would you have us go? An Inn?…. I don't dine at the expense of others.[90]

Going out to an inn for a meal would mean paying more for services that he can easily perform himself. The idea of public display does not please him either. He wants to be perceived as honest and simple, and eating out would signify that his family is a part of the stylish social world, with all the demands and the financial commitments that go along with an increased status.

The merchants' wives, however, are not pleased with staying quietly and docilely at home. The women understand the capital of social influence and the proper presentation of one's self in the marketplace. Simon tries to control his wife Marina by refusing to tell her where the dinner is to be held, so that she will not be able to dress appropriately for the occasion.[91] He tells her "You will come with me…. where I take you… [if not] then you can stay at home dinnerless."[92] Lunardo and Margarita's marriage is bumpy as well, but Margarita appears to have more power within the relationship to effect small changes.

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[90] Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies, The Boors*, 110-1.

[91] This marriage seems particularly doomed. "Marina: Have you sent to the market? Simon: No, Mistress. Marina: Aren't we to eat today? Simon: No, Mistress. Marina: That's the last straw that you should lose your temper with the dinner…. Why are we to have no dinner today? Simon: [with an ill grace] Because we have to dine out. Marina: Why do you sound so ill-humoured? Simon: You annoy me." He then refuses to tell her where they are going, not even when she reminds him she needs to dress properly to go out in public. Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies, The Boors,* 124.

[92] Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies, The Boors,* 125.

> *Lunardo*: Poor Creature! What have you to complain of? Haven't you enough to eat?
> *Margarita*: To be sure, if a woman has enough to eat, she has all that she needs.[93]

How these characters defined 'civilized' in the context of dining helps to illustrate the class issues of the period. The women see dining out as a vehicle for social transformation, while the men see it as a needless expense. The men's definition of the market is narrowly confined to the literal world of commerce, rather than the broader social construction that the women implicitly understand.

Section 4 *La Casa Nova*, or *The New House*, or *The Superior Residence*[94]

In 1760, Goldoni explored the 'flip side' of the bourgeois enjoyment of fine living, but with vastly darker consequences. *The Boors* tells the story of fiscally secure merchants, whereas *The Superior Residence* demonstrates what can happen when financial restraint is ignored in favor of decadent living. *La Casa Nova*, or *The New House*, or *The Superior Residence* was produced at Venice's Teatro San Luca on 11 December 1760.[95] It features a realistic plot representing the materialistic concerns of Venetian society.[96] Goldoni himself wrote that the play "has continued to remain in the class of pieces which constantly please, and always appear new on the

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[93] Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies, The Boors,* 142.

[94] The play *La Casa Nova* is normally translated into English as *The New House*. However, the translation used in this work is by Frederick Davies, who translated the title as *The Superior Residence*.

[95] Carlo Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, edited by Frederick Davies (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 272.

[96] Kennard writes that *The New House* reveals clearly the behavior of Venetians to non-Italians, due to the culturally specific behavior of two families. Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 454-5. Ernesto Masi agrees, stating the play exists is a picture of "that condition which comes from accumulated wealth due to industry and thrift." Ernesto Masi, *Scelta di Commedie*, vol. 2 (Firenze: Successori Le Monnier, 1897), 232.

theatre."[97] He noted that the idea for the play came from a personal experience when he "changed his lodgings, and… always on the lookout for subjects of comedy, found one in the embarrassment of my removal…. The circumstances suggested the title, and my imagination filled up the rest."[98] Goldoni boasted in the introduction to the play's first edition in 1768 that if he had only written this comedy, he would still have acquired all the success he received through his long career.[99] The editor Gaspare Gozzi wrote of the premiere, "The characters are so true to life that we do not feel as if we were listening to a play, but rather as if we were witnessing scenes that were true."[100]

The play revolves around two families occupying different floors of the same Venetian home. Sisters Checca and Rosina live with their nephew Lorenzino (a gentleman)[101] on the top floor, and demonstrate the longstanding customs of bourgeois virtue and thrift. On the ground floor, new neighbors Anzoletto and Cecilia are in the process of setting up housekeeping. Impoverished Anzoletto has spent all of his money trying to please his status-conscious wife with a magnificently

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[97] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 357.

[98] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 357.

[99] Carlo Goldoni, Introduction to *La Casa Nova*, in *Commedie*, edited by Elio Vittorini (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1952), 391. "So ch'ella ha veduto questa mia commedie rappresentare; so che n'è remasta contenta, ed io per cìo l'ho preferita ad ogn'altra."

[100] Gaspare Gozzi , *La Gazzetta Veneta*, 13 December 1760 (Firenze: G.C. Sansone, 1921), 394. "I caratteri sono così pieni di verità, che non par essere as una rappresenzione, ma presenti as un fatte vero."

[101] Checca's husband is referred to as being away in Bologna on business, but there is no mention of his line of work. I am hesitant to assume his status as a merchant, when so many other textual clues point to the family as being of noble birth, or at least as well established within their social class. It is a point that is inconclusive given the clues Goldoni has given us, however they are definitely portrayed as well off, but not as wealthy. In the social milieu of the time, this could either signal their place as a member of the bourgeois middle class or the noble class.

furnished Venetian palazzo, lavish meals for their equally ambitious companions, and the latest fashions. Anzoletto's sister, Domenica, is in love with Lorenzino, and must somehow reconcile the two families to marry the man she loves. However, due to the differences between the families with regard to daily expenses, eating, entertaining, and dressing, the gulf between her family and her intended widens with each meeting. The family of fashion meets the family of quiet living, and "the representation of manners in this play is the amusing and interesting element—the exchange of civilities between neighbors, the petty quarrels over precedence of visits, the superabundance of compliments which often hide impertinences."[102] The final result is the marriage of the two young lovers, while the overspending couple gets their comeuppance as they are forced to remove themselves from their fine new residence to go live more sedately and soberly with their uncle.

The play depicts "two households [that embody] two perceptions of life, two standards of propriety,"[103] signifying fluctuations in the configuration of Venetian social status in 1760. Many of the financially insolvent nobility either lived quietly on their reduced wealth or amassed bills with little care. Members of the rising middle class lived either thriftily to assume the trappings of the upper class luxurious displays of wealth. This lifestyle could ultimately prove ruinous, as demonstrated by Anzoletto's resultant bankruptcy. *The Superior Residence* is the natural corollary of the argument against high living in *The Boors*, for in *The Superior Residence* the merchant's children squander the money amassed by their boorish and sober parents.

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[102] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 449.

[103] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, 445.

The characters portray all levels of Venetian society, but especially those of the upwardly mobile merchant class, whose social backgrounds include owning shops and selling food to the lower classes. Domenica's maid Lucietta befriends Checca and Rosina and gossips with them about her mistress' dearth of family connections. "Her father was a grocer. Her uncle used to sell butter. Her brother's been able to live in such fine style on the money his father left him. But that'll soon be all gone."[104] Anzoletto's uncle Cristofolo concedes that Cecilia does not like to be near him "because [she does] not like the smell of bacon from my shop."[105] Anzoletto clearly comes from a bourgeois background of food merchants, but has rejected simple eating and unadorned living. Checca, on the other hand, states that her nephew comes from "a family whose reputation is quite irreproachable. Nor have any of his relatives worn a tradesman's apron."[106] Lorenzino is established as a gentleman

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[104] Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, 287. The family of Anzoletto clearly makes their living by selling country foodstuffs. Bacon and butter are brought into Venice daily from farmlands outside the city. This reference to the family as being sellers of bacon and milk products leads the audience to believe that the family is from the country and are not city citizens.

[105] Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, 328. Cristofolo is clearly a butcher who raises or once raised pigs for a living, actually quite a lucrative profession in the eighteenth century. Most peasant farmers ate their pork raw, while the cured and processed pork was destined for the marketplace, where city dwellers would pay top dollar for the meat. "The transformation of pork into bacon… was a godsend for farmers…. Where there existed a marketing system that could satisfy urban demand, the breeder would derive profits… by processing his meats. I am not referring here to salted meats fattened for winter but rather to products rich in added value, destined for the marketplace." Giovanni Rebora, *The Culture of the Fork*, 82. Pigs that were field raised produced the best prosciutto and hams, whereas stabled pigs, although more expensive to raise due to feeding costs, produced better sausages and salamis. The greater return on the profit margin by preparing and selling smoked and processed pork products far outweighed the extra time, effort, and expense in rearing, butchering, and then preparing the products. Therefore, successful bacon merchant Cristofolo is a savvy salesman and one who has weathered the marketplace for some time in order to turn a profit. Whether he actually does the butchering himself is open to question, but he definitely has country connections as a seller of pork.

[106] Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, 300**.** This speaks to Cristofolo running an established shop in a fixed location, rather than moving from town to town in the round of local weekly markets common in the eighteenth century. Giovanni Rebora states that the idea of cuisine is an urban phenomenon, so the running of a smoked meats store in Venice makes sense, since there would have been wealthy households willing to buy the expensive products in order to make specific dishes.

without a trade—not even one in the food industry. Anzoletto's family later is described as "greasy handed grocers"[107] by Lorenzino. The text suggests that Cecilia was brought up in surroundings of wealth and luxury. Yet, despite their seeming gentility, Cecilia's parents had one of the servants "pawn their gold bracelets to buy food for them."[108]

At the beginning of the play, Anzoletto is found planning a fashionable dinner for acquaintances he would like to impress. Dinner at the home of Anzoletto and Cecilia has become a glittering social event that occurs almost nightly, but it soon becomes apparent that the couple is running out of money. Anzoletto's friend, Fabrizio, says of the dinner he knows Anzoletto cannot afford, "If the dinner is worth the eating, that is! There goes a man who has been trying his best to ruin himself for some time."[109] Anzoletto and Cecilia are most interested in how they are perceived by others, knowing that the detail of their menus, manners, and fashions will be reported by their guests all over Venice.

After ordering an opulent meal laid for ten, Anzoletto warns his sister to make herself presentable.[110] However, his sister's formal dresses, as well as the correct

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Giovanni Rebora, *The Culture of the Fork*, 90. The creation of such an establishment by Cristofolo means that he was a successful merchant near the Rialto, one who had taken a gamble that paid off handsomely.

[107] Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, 302.

[108] Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, 311. Despite the loss of wealth, Cecelia's parents attempt to keep up the pretense of a higher social status in their lifestyle.

[109] Carlo Goldoni, *The Superior Residence* , 272.

[110] A decree limited the number of guests allowed at dinner parties to no more than 10 at a time, and "Inspectors could sniff round your kitchen and dining room at any time." Maurice Rowdon, *The Fall of Venice* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970), 24.

table linen are still at the old house, and need to be retrieved immediately.[111] The servants know how to prepare both the table and the meal far better than Anzoletto himself, as he orders the servant Lucietta to help the cooks prepare the meal, and go and get the proper linen. Lucietta clearly has the ability to run the house and "see that it's done" properly according to fashion.[112] The workmen and the servants complain, however, that while there is money for the renovations and fashionable dinners and the right weave of French linen, there is none for their wages. "There's no money for me, but plenty for that dinner of his" mutters Oswaldo, the building contractor responsible for the renovation.[113]

Of primary importance here is the fiction of wealth that the meal establishes, with all the props and the settings in place, the actors properly costumed in lavish clothing, and "company vastly entertaining… beautiful… unrestrained."[114] The actual components of the meal are never mentioned and seem unimportant, so long as they conform to the latest style. The performance of wealth is more important than the actual eating. In the second act, when Anzoletto realizes he cannot locate his old table linens, he advocates using old, ragged and cut-up hand towels as napkins in order to adhere to the rule that napkins must be present at fashionable meals.

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[111] Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, 265. Tablecloths and napkins were standard for formal affairs from the Renaissance through the eighteenth century. Roy Strong, *Feast* (New York: Harcourt, 2002), 172-4. Napkins were "starched and stiffened and deployed as an art form akin to paper sculpture…. By 1639, Mattia Giegher could publish an illustrated *Tratatto* on the subject [of napkin folding]." (173) Eighteenth-century diners especially prized napkins and tablecloths from Flanders and Italy. Giovanni Rebora, *The Culture of the Fork*, 146.

[112] Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, 265.

[113] Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, 265.

[114] Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, 268.

Later in the text, Cecilia visits the new neighbors and prospective in-laws, Checca and Rosina, in order to impress them. She boasts of her daily dinners, "We are never less than fourteen to sixteen at table. Oh, yes, we have people in to dine nearly every evening. Four or five chickens, salted tongue, or some truffles, or some good fish. Of course, I have a wine cellar, which you will find is something quite, quite out of the ordinary." Rosina whispers to Domenica, "Divide all that by three," to which Domenica whispers back "By five at the least."[115] However, it is important to note that Cecilia mentions chicken, fish, and salted tongue, which are traditionally lower-class foods. Her use of these suggests that she attempts to save money by using less fashionable ingredients.[116] Truffles are the only nod to fine dining, a fact which is not lost on Checca and Rosina.[117] Although she brags of an opulent table, it is evident that Cecilia exaggerates in order to make a favorable impression. Cecilia possesses knowledge and understanding of the rules for proper and stylish meals, speaking of the requisite abundance of dishes as well as of several different courses. In fact, Cecilia's own meals rarely adhere to these rules. Cecilia seems to deny herself the enjoyment of food, for she is more concerned with the appearance of

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[115] Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, 300. Platina wrote a recipe for salted tongue, which called for them to be "cooked in water, and when they are cooked, cut them up in pieces, put them in a dish, and add some parsley, mint, sage, and spices, as much as is enough. Let vinegar be poured in last." Platina, *On Right Pleasure*, 229.

[116] Chicken was considered to be a healthy meat during the eighteenth century, though it was primarily a provider of eggs and was itself considered a food only in a secondary sense. Fish is inexpensive and available year round to Venetians, due to the nearness of the Adriatic. Tongues must be skinned and cooked for several hours in order to make them edible, and can be prepared in a variety of ways including pickling, smoking, and salting. Sharon Tyler Herbst, editor*, The New Food Lover's Companion,* 635.

[117] Truffles are specifically higher-class cuisine, and are meant as a flavorant or a garnish, either forming the base of a sauce, or shaved raw over a dish. The fact that Cecilia mentions them as part of her meal means she understands their importance to French cuisine, but it does not mean that she truly understands how they are used.

social niceties rather than the substance of them. When Cecilia learns of Anzoletto's bankruptcy, she is so upset that she cannot even eat her dinner, saying, "The thought of food's enough to poison me." When offered a little chocolate, the proper restorative for women of the eighteenth century upper class,[118] she replies irritably, "I don't want anything! How could my husband treat me like this!"[119] Cecilia, learning of her husband's impending financial ruin and the defection of their alleged friends, exclaims, "When you can no longer offer them a meal, few people will put themselves to the trouble of visiting you."[120] The imminent danger of social ruin is far more important to her than nourishment or physical comfort.

Section 5 ***The Holiday Trilogy***

The final three plays I will discuss in this chapter are *The Holiday Trilogy,* beginning with: *Le Smanie per la Villeggiatura* (*Off to the Country)*, *Le Avventure della Villeggiatura* (*Adventures in the Country*), and *Il Ritorno dalla Villeggiatura* (*Back from the Country).* The three plays will be discussed together, as the trilogy concerns the same characters and follows their adventures through to their return from the country, poorer and presumably wiser. They were first produced at the San Luca Theatre in the fall of 1761, the year before Goldoni left Venice and made his way to Paris to write for the Comèdie Italienne.[121] The subject of the plays is the

[118] "A sweet scented antidote to languishing heads/ Providing life-giving juice, a tasty infusion, /A rivulet rouging the breast of every illness./ I drink Indian Ambrosia in a handsome cup/ …there flows into my soul/ A curative power and a calming joy." Semenzi from *Il Mondo Creato* quoted by Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 113.

[119] Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, 321.

[120] Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, 320.

[121] They were later printed in the Pasquali edition of Goldoni's work in 1773. Goldoni wrote the introductions in Paris to accompany the print edition of the plays.

middle class's annual excursion from the city to their country estates, "the innocent pastime of the country holiday has lately become a passion, a mania, a disorder…. Ambition has invaded the forests: people going to the country take with them the pomp and tumult of the city."[122] In his introduction to *Off to the Country,* Goldoni wrote, "In the first, we see the frantic preparations, in the second, the absurd conduct, and in the third the painful consequences arising therefrom." [123] Performance of the first two plays were timed to coincide with the annual passage of wealthy Venetians from the city to their country estates in October, and the final play was performed during the period that marked the return to the city before the beginnings of Carnival. "This planned coincidence between the world of the play and the world of real life… is fraught with significance."[124]

The 'innocent pastimes' of the yearly trip to the country house represented in these plays are socially and personally damaging to the bourgeois characters, as they are unable to reconcile polite social performance skills and the expectations of their culture with their daily needs and income. Fido goes on to say that Goldoni's early works were:

> Wholly sympathetic to his merchants, and confident in their ability to adapt to the new 'European' culture…. But now… he sees the middle-class characters… as victims of a crisis of values: the older generation too narrow minded and insular, despots within the family and suspicious of everyone outside it, and the young men and women over-frivolous, imprudent, and headstrong.[125]

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[122] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy,* trans. by Anthony Alcorn, introduction by Franco Fido (New York: Marsilio, 1992), 4. In the notes to the text, Alcorn observes that the rich of Venice went to the country twice a year in the last two weeks in July and again from the beginning of October to the middle of November. Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy,* 282.

[123] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy,* 4.

[124] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy*, ix.

The Holiday Trilogy features characters that consciously consume the accessories of polite society. They take their citified manners with them to their country escape, and further complicate their lives with objects and behaviors that are unnecessary. "From this point of view" Fido writes, "the trilogy could be read as a dramatized tongue-in-cheek Emily Post," a how-to manual on social graces and the importance of public performance. Goldoni wrote, "the ambition of the lowly goads them to figure alongside the great, and this is the ridiculous aspect I have tried to bring out, in order to correct it, should that prove possible."[126] Kennard goes on to point out the ways in which Goldoni introduced the custom of the trip to the country in these plays,

> As practiced by middle-class people or by aristocratic paupers; because of the petty contrivances they resorted to, in order to save appearances and conceal their poverty under ostentation, or the embarrassments due to extravagance…. That a family should spend, in a month, the income of a whole year, and plunge into an abyss of debt for the sake of cutting a figure in some distant village… was not funny; but it appeared so when presented behind the footlights.[127]

Goldoni's satire of the social rules of the middle class is more starkly portrayed in this trio of plays than in his earlier works.[128]

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[125] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy*, intro. F. Fido, xiii.

[126] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Off to the Country*, 4.

[127] Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Times*, 461.

[128] Perhaps Goldoni's scheduled trip to Paris made his criticisms of Venetian social life more pointed and biting, or maybe it was that his frustration with his publicized battles with the Granelleschi made him less cautious in his observations. As an example of the satirization of social rules, the trip the characters take to the local coffee house in *Adventures in the Country* operates symbolically on many levels. The individual palates of the characters are exposed as Goldoni codes the types of beverages ordered to correspond to the relative taste of the bourgeois at the table. Their preferences also uncover much about their characters. The trip to the coffeehouse in the country illustrates the giddy and lightweight nature of the town visitors when contrasted with relaxed nature of country life and service. Both Giacinta and Vittoria order coffee, a strong beverage deemed unsuitable for a woman's palate as it encouraged violent tendencies and ruined the taste buds for more delicate fare. Giacinta tersely orders her beverage first, and her social rival Vittoria betters her order by requesting coffee without sugar. Both women consume the socially popular caffeinated beverage to remain alert,

The plays feature many of the stock character types, including the Goldonian spendthrift brother and sister, Leonardo and Vittoria, the Pantalone character of Filippo with his lovely and practical daughter Giacinta, the handsome Venetian cortesan Guglielmo, and the gossip Ferdinando. The plays take place in the city,[129] and in the nearby resort town of Montenero.[130] Leonardo, a young wealthy bourgeois, is in love with Giacinta, who in turn loves Guglielmo. The trilogy follows the lovers on their travels from city to country villa and back to the city. Leonardo and Giacinta end unhappily married, uniting to bolster their social position, rather than out of any real affection.

In the beginning of the first play *Off to the Country*, impoverished Leonardo does not have the money to spend freely in the country, although he attempts to stock his rented country house with the best foodstuffs he can afford. Leonardo is a version of Anzoletto from *The Superior Residence*, a man trying to transcend his humble

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due to the possible social combustion of this gathering. Furthermore, since both are on the marriage market, they need to restrict indulgence in more fattening beverages such as alcohol or chocolate. Leonardo, the spendthrift, asks for a glass of cold water, needing no more stimuli in his system, with this indifferent love Giacinta sitting nearby, and the threatened ruination of his fortune. Likewise, Filippo orders water, but with a splash of limejuice to tease the palate and elevate the simple beverage into a refreshing drink. Tognino, a simple-minded countryman who seems perennially hungry, requests hot chocolate, a beverage he likely would have infrequently. Lastly, the sponger Ferdinando orders a glass of Rosolio cordial in keeping with his usual overindulgence. He enjoys trips to the country, since as the guest of Filippo, he need never pay the bill. Other people at the table order lemonade, sherbet, and an iced lime drink. The order is long in coming, as the country coffee house is unused to so many customers who all "ordered something different." When the order finally arrives in dribs and drabs, it is wrong, and the customers complain bitterly. Apparently, the pace of the country coffee house cannot keep up with the demands of high "Leghornian" society. Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Adventures in the Country*, 169-174.

[129] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy*, 280. Leghorn, known also by its Italian name of Livorno, is a city on the Tuscan coast with an "entrepreneurial middle class actively engaged in trade and commerce. Goldoni purposely set the events of this trilogy far away from Venice in an attempt to soften his criticism of Venetian high society. The introduction to the 1761 fall season's offering… ironically assured the members of the Venetian audience that the country follies described in these plays reflected the mores of other more reprehensible communities and did not for one minute concern them."

[130] "Montenero, a small hill town a few kilometers to the south of Leghorn, was a fashionable country resort." Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy*, 280

background. Leonardo tries to pack the goods from his city house to take to the country in order to entertain lavishly. "First of all, let's take a quick inventory of what we have and what we still need." [131] He and his manservant Paolo pack four dozen settings of silverware, borrowing two from a neighbor because "place settings need to be changed constantly, and two boxes of cutlery just won't be enough."[132] He also borrows silver trays and candlesticks, and sends Paolo to the grocers to get "ten pounds of coffee, fifty pounds of chocolate, twenty pounds of sugar, and an assortment of spices for the kitchen."[133] These supplies form the basis for country leisure, especially the quantity of coffee and spiced chocolate that are necessary when entertaining in society.

Later in *Off to the Country*, Leonardo decides to forego the country trip.[134] He angrily orders Paolo to return the goods to the shops, since they will be unused.[135] Paolo then must retrieve them when Leonardo changes his mind yet again about the upcoming trip. Paolo is concerned that the shopkeepers will not extend him credit a second time.[136] However, the financial situation is far worse than this small

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[131] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Off to the Country*, 8.

[132] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Off to the Country,* 9. Clearly, Leonardo plans to adhere to strict Haute Cuisine dining while in the country, with lavish amounts of dishes being needed in order to change tableware during several courses, and able to accommodate a large number of guests at each meal.

[133] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Off to the Country*, 9.

[134] He cancels his trip because the woman he loves, Giacinta, has been discovered flirting with another young man, Guglielmo. Leonardo angrily decides that he does not want to go on holiday only to watch Giacinta interacting with other suitors.

[135] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Off to the Country*, 40-41

[136] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Off to the Country*, 72

confusion, as the shopkeepers have a large bill covering past goods for Leonardo to pay.[137] Amassing bills he cannot possibly pay marks Leonardo as the up and coming young man of the period, who will bankrupt himself in the name of high fashion. His sister Vittoria does not understand the financial straits her brother is in. When confronted with the news that her planned country trip is increasing the financial burden, she suggests that her brother economize more in town. "Let him cut down on the household expenses, give less lavish dinners in town, fire some of the servants, pay them less wages. Let him dress with less flair…. But we simply must have our trips to the country!"[138] Goldoni's satire of Leonardo's predicament illustrated for his middle-class audiences the dangers of high living and excessive spending.

Vittoria believes that lavish entertainments during country trips are linked irrevocably to her success on the marriage market. The face presented to social equals and betters, and the lavishness of the surroundings and table while in the country determines social worth in the city. The table and appearance "must do us credit, in the style we're accustomed to, with our usual noblesse oblige."[139] Vittoria and Giacinta are rivals for the latest fashion, and try to outdo one another in their clothing and proper ladylike behavior. Although women were prized for being heavy in the Renaissance, by the eighteenth century the emphasis is on a more streamlined, slender figure, and a more delicate appetite. Though, neither of these women knows

[137] The first forms of consumer credit began in the eighteenth century, when merchants would keep a tally of goods purchased, and expect partial payment each week. Obviously, Leonardo is far behind in his payments.

[138] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Off to the Country*, 38

[139] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Off to the Country*, 38. *Noblesse Oblige* is from the French for Nobility Obligations. It originally meant that the nobility was obligated to help those that were less well off, but here clearly means that Vittoria expects that she will have access to expensive goods which will mark her to the observer as wealthy, fashionable, careless of money, and beneficent.

true hunger, they debate the merits of abstinence and indulgence. Vittoria tells Giacinta she has not eaten in days, and that "I don't know how I survive. I ought to be thin as a rake!" Giacinta understands that this dialogue is a game, and returns the parry with a small jab. "Yes, indeed. Thin as a rake! Those plump little arms are not rake handles." Vittoria is offended, and for a moment her animosity dominates the exchange. "You're not exactly skin and bones yourself!" Giacinta refuses to rise to the bait, and agrees placidly that she, indeed, gets what she needs.[140]

Leonardo's bills come due in *Back from the Country*, and he cannot pay them.[141] He whimpers "Oh, dear, my affairs keep on going from bad to worse. And this year our stay in the country set me back even more than usual."[142] Leonardo does not know the amount of money he actually owes. He discovers later that his country estate has been seized for non-payment of bills, including the linen, place settings, and silverware he borrowed from neighbors expressly for the purpose of entertaining lavishly in the country.[143] Leonardo is forced to turn to work and marriage in order to save himself. He marries Giacinta, and goes to look after her father Fillipo's interests in Genoa. Filippo, Giacinta's father, requests that Leonardo's work/marriage contract contain a clause stating that Leonardo has to "send a case of macaroni now and then… and candied fruit from Genoa, and

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[140] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Off to the Country*, 60

[141] He tells his servant to inform the grocer that he is out of the house. The servant, tired of being the go-between with the shopkeepers regarding Leonardo's excessive spending, says, "That's what I told him yesterday and the day before yesterday, just like you told me, but, seeing he comes round three or four times a day, perhaps you better talk to him yourself and get rid of him somehow." Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Back from the Country*, 192.

[142] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Back from the Country*, 192.

[143] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Back from the Country*, 214.

pomegranates from Portugal."[144] Filippo is less concerned about his daughter's happiness than he is about the availability of cheap but good food.[145] Filippo cares deeply about the quality of his food. In the last play of the trilogy *Back from the Country*, Filippo is at dinner when he arranges the marriage between Leonardo and Giacinta. He is eating fruit for dessert, a possible panacea for the rich or badly prepared foods he ate in the country. He says proudly that his table in the country was incomparable, that it was laid with "the finest veal, superb capons, grouse, woodcock, quail, pheasant, and partridge. You name it."[146] He mixes fashionable and expensive cuts of meats such as veal and capons with game birds available readily in the countryside. Unlike his financially ruined son-in-law, Filippo eschews the new *Haute Cuisine* course system in favor of heartier and richer foods that gratify the palate rather than fulfill social dictates.

Another character featured in the Trilogy is the parasite Ferdinando, an old character from Roman comedies remade for eighteenth-century sensibilities and described by Goldoni as a "freeloader."[147] He is a professional hanger-on, a man who takes advantage of his host's generosity and lives well while spending little of his own money. He has an interest in well-prepared and tasty food, and many jokes are made about his prodigious appetite during the course of the trilogy. Brigida

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[144] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Back from the Country*, 253.

[145] He apparently stocks a good table, for his maid Brigida assures him he will have plenty of visitors in the country as "the birds go where the grain is, and freeloaders flock to a well-stocked table." Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Off to the Country*, 4. Filippo cares deeply about the quality of his food. He is described as hating to be interrupted at table, and as enjoying his food. Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Off to the Country*, 247.

[146] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Back from the Country*, 250.

[147] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Off to the Country,* 6.

describes Ferdinando as "The Knight of the Errant Tooth," meaning that he is well born but poor, and eats indiscriminately and without ceasing, searching out the most plentiful food.[148] Ferdinando decides to stay with Filippo in the country because "one is better off here than anyplace else… better food, better company…. this is the best there is."[149] Filippo, unused to the Ferdinando's appetite, makes fun of his greediness. Ferdinando tries to excuse the gluttony by stating "last night was an exception." No stranger to large eating and fine food, Filippo replies "If I'd eaten all you ate, I'd fast for three days."[150] Pleading a weak stomach and a need to appease his hunger, Ferdinando orders some chocolate, but all the chocolate is gone, having been consumed by the country servants.[151] Filippo tells them to replace the household stash at once, and to "see to it that it's made without sparing expense."[152] Despite Filippo's fears of overspending in the country, he still manages to set a good table.

Ferdinando often complains of indigestion, and the country bumpkin Tognino prescribes a remedy for indigestion, containing "cassia, manna, senna pods, cream of

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[148] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Off to the Country,* 48. Goldoni's own footnote from the original text is that this is the Italian phrase routinely given to "scroungers to chide them." Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Off to the Country*, 282

[149] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Adventures in the Country*, 105.

[150] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Adventures in the Country*, 107.

[151] Brigida offers coffee, hot whipped chocolate, or something stronger to the country servants in the first scene of *Adventures in the Country*. They opt for the chocolate, and want "something sweet to go with it." (100) Clearly, the food and drink are far better when the master comes to the country than it is during his absence, and the servants wish to take advantage of the plenty. Brigida assures them that the sweets will be forthcoming since "there's no shortage of food; if they [Filippo and his guests] don't know how to make the most of it, we might as well take advantage ourselves." (101)

[152] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Adventures in the Country*, 108.

tartar, and Epsom salts."[153] All of these ingredients are natural laxatives, which would certainly purge Ferdinando of his discomfort (to say the least). In a humorous subplot, Sabina, the old aunt of Giacinta, falls for Ferdinando and lectures him to be more careful of his diet and to practice moderation at the table, an eighteenth-century dietary concern. She offers to order his foods at every meal, in order to prevent his discomfort.[154] The remainder of the play focuses on Ferdinando's attempts to avoid the old lady's ministrations while still managing to fulfill his hunger. On his return to Livorno, Ferdinando immediately goes to the coffeehouse to spread the gossip of the holiday. "Everyone's waiting, anxious to hear the adventures of Montenero. I have enough material for two weeks' worth of conversation…. I'll have half the world laughing."[155] He has accumulated stories of the events during the holiday to fund further meals and to entertain other, wealthier patrons.

Despite the various incidents I have described above, the culinary center of the trilogy is the description of the meal during *Adventures in the Country*. Filippo prepares a formal luncheon at his villa, with "eleven or twelve of us at the table."[156] The meal is expected to be sumptuous, and indeed is reported as excellent by the servants afterward. However, Ferdinando is displeased with both the food and the service.[157] Ferdinando reports that Filippo favors excessive amounts of heavy food

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[153] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Adventures in the Country*, 114.

[154] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Adventures in the Country*, 128.

[155] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Back from the Country*, 204

[156] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Adventures in the Country*, 106.

[157] His unfavorable description may be tainted by jealousy or dissatisfaction.

common to Renaissance food rather than more refined and delicate choices of *Haute Cuisine*.

> He spends a fortune, all he can afford and more, and he gets the worst kind of service… what unpalatable stuff—if there are twelve guests, there's enough for twenty-four, but without any taste, without any refinement; the worst quality meat, plates piled high with food, mountains of badly cooked, badly seasoned stuff, swimming in fat, loaded with spices, stuff that takes away your appetite just to look at it, let alone eat it.[158]

By contrast, both Ferdinando and Costanza report the dinner at Leonardo's as "exceptional." There, he served delicious spitted quail, with eight birds provided for each diner.[159] A later course featured tuna.[160] However, Ferdinando declares the "oil in the dressing was inferior. If it isn't the top quality oil from Lucca, I can't stand it."[161]

As dinner is announced, Filippo and his guests observe the ritual of going into the salon, pairing off by rank and gender, illustrating the subtext of the love affairs

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[158] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Adventures in the Country*, 112.

[159] Quail were very small and dainty birds that were supposed to be unhealthy, since they ate a poisonous herb in the wild called hellebore. Ken Albala, *Foods in Early Modern Europe,* 70. According to Platina, quail are land birds rather than flight birds, preferring to travel on the ground. "The food that is most pleasing to quail is the seed of poisonous plants. For this reason, in certain periods, foreign tables banished it…. It is considered tasteless and of bad nourishment." Platina, *On Right Pleasure and Good Health*, 255.

[160] Tuna was a fish found throughout the Mediterranean, and was prized for its eggs preserved as Bottarga. Ken Albala, *Foods in Early Modern Europe*, 73. Tuna was largely traded in the province of Liguria, and near the Tuscan coast. Giovanni Rebora, *The Culture of the Fork*, 76. *Bottarga* is the dried roe of tuna, and is salted in its sac, then weighted underneath wood to compress and dehydrate it. Then, the substances is hung and dried. *Bottarga* is served sliced thin with oil and lemon, or shaved and grated over pasta or rice. John Mariani, *The Dictionary of Italian Food and Drink* (New York: Broadway Books, 1998), 41-2.

[161] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Adventures in the Country*, 112. "Olive oil was a luxury product because of the expense of manufacturing and transporting it… In Italy… the rich merchants of big cities fostered the brand image of their products, with export trade in mind." Each region had producers it considered best. Lucca is in Tuscany, near the Ligurian Sea, and the oil produced there is supposed to be of exceptional quality Ferdinando is attempting to prove not only his superior palate, but trying to infer that Filippo's oil is second-rate. Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, *History of Food*, translated by Althea Bell (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 210.

and the jockeying for social status that permeates the scene. The first to enter are the freeloader Ferdinando and Sabina, the old aunt who loves him, followed by Guglielmo, who offers his arm (unwillingly) to Vittoria, the woman he later agrees to marry. The hungry Tognino follows, and Filippo goes next, leaving the love-lorn Leonardo and indifferent Giacinta to enter last.[162] The two pairs of young lovers are less interested in the forthcoming meal than in their heightened emotional state. However, even in the country the proper status and form must be observed.

After dinner, the servants report on the events of the meal.[163] Beltrame and Tita gossip about the food that was served, dismayed they did not get as many leftovers as they had expected.

> *Beltrame:* We thought we'd get a good spread; and there wasn't enough to take the edge off of your hunger.
> *Tita*: The plates came back sparkling clean. They didn't even leave the bones….
> *Beltrame*: Don't forget, they did us the favour of making a soup just for us.
> *Tita*: What a soup! It tasted like dishwater.
> *Beltrame*: The wine was atrocious.
> *Tita*: The watered down wine they give to the wounded!
> *Beltrame*: If there'd only been bread.
> *Tita*: If you wanted bread, you had to go down on your hands and knees.
> *Beltrame*: I did get my hands on a nice piece of beef, and to tell the truth, it was like cutting butter.
> *Tita*: And I spotted a bony piece of chicken which luckily had a whole wing left on it, I wolfed it down in two bites.
> *Beltrame*: The macaroni wasn't bad.
> *Tita*: I liked those meatballs as well.
> *Beltrame*: If the roast has been hot, it wouldn't have been half bad.
> *Tita*: Yes, it was milk fed veal, I wrapped up a piece for tonight.
> *Beltrame*: I got four pies and a hunk of Parmesan cheese.

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[162] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Adventures in the Country*, 149-50.

[163] Leonardo did not eat much, and seemed agitated. Giacinta seemed equally distracted, especially when Leonardo stained her dress while handing a used plate to a servant. Sabina tried to seduce Ferdinando and choose his food, but he wolfed down everything, "as if he hadn't had a bite for four days." Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Adventures in the Country*, 154.

> *Tita*: But if it had been a proper lunch, we could have carried out a whole tablecloth full of food.[164]

Despite their complaints, the two still managed to receive food far above their social standing and their daily menu, including beef, some fine veal and cheese, as well as pies to enjoy later. The report of the meal supports not only its appropriateness, but also the excellence of its preparation. The reflected magnificence of the off-stage meal would have been familiar to all who sat in the audience, and they would have implicitly understood the symbols embedded in the food choices, the manners displayed, and the social picture drawn by the actors based on Goldoni's text.

These seven plays were produced in the last season Goldoni worked in Venice. Soon after, he moved to Paris to work with the Comèdie Italienne. In the spring of 1759, Carlo Goldoni wrote to a friend who was traveling in France.[165] Goldoni was in Rome writing for the Tordinono Theatre during this period, but also was contracted with the Vendramin Brothers in Venice. The relationship between himself and Francesco Vendramin was turning sour as the Goldoni/Gozzi controversy was gathering strength in the Venetian press. The 1759 letter related many of Goldoni's aspirations for the development of Italian theatre, as well as his worries surrounding his own future in the Venetian artistic scene. He justifiably felt that Italians were rejecting his work and reforms in favor of novelty, which seemed to be

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[164] Carlo Goldoni, *The Holiday Trilogy, Adventures in the Country*, 167-8. I would call attention to earlier discussions of beef, veal, and chicken.

[165] This unidentified friend seems to have been a supporter of the theatrical reforms. He or she may also have been a minor figure such as a critic or patron of the theatre of the time, someone familiar with the main players and producers. The identity of the friend is a mystery, and could well be Voltaire, a member of the Parisian theatre circles, Gaspare Gozzi, a Goldoni supporter from Venice, or even a literary figure from another Italian city.

dampening the inspiration he once found in Venetian city life. These challenges tested Goldoni's conception of himself as a professional playwright. Goldoni wrote:

> In the search…of new characters. I might easily seek these in Rome, but they are dressed in foreign costumes which do not lend themselves to the stage, and to strip them of these disguises, would be the same as putting a denuded woman on view. Comedy drinks from a vast fountain, but we do well not to touch certain of its streams, enduring, on occasion, restraint in abundance. And so it happens that when common themes are exhausted, we turn to the East or to the West, and those who are bored by truth oft told come to desire either the marvelous or the wretchedly ridiculous.[166]

This letter was uncharacteristically solemn for the gay Goldoni.[167] He argued for restraint in his dramatic works rather than excess, for tasteful specificity in the representation of society rather than overindulgence for the sake of levity, a theme he touched on in his presentations of food. He went on to say, "Bored by good theatre and lacking authors to produce it, the public turns to novelty…. The work which I have produced (if not of the quality, at least in the same spirit [as those of Molière]) will always have the pleasant distinction of having bettered the Italian taste."[168]

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[166] Carlo Goldoni, Rome, to unidentified friend, 28 April 1759, transcript in the hand of Goldoni, transcription by Morgan library staff, Literary and Historical Manuscripts, Morgan Library, New York.

[167] Goldoni was in Rome writing for the Tordinono Theatre, specifically a troupe of Neapolitan comedians who engaged Goldoni to write for the Roman season, which opened the day after Christmas. This short term contract did not conflict with his longer association with the Vendramins. They did not request any new plays from Goldoni, and allowed him to revisit older works. However, actors were expecting a more traditional form of the commedia, rather than the explicit scripts of reform Goldoni provided for their performances. The actors tried their best, but were unused to performing without masks or lazzi, and Goldoni's plays had little success in Rome. He opened the season with *La Vedova Spiritosa*, which did not succeed. The theatre of Tordinono was "the resort of coal heavers and sailors, and that, without Punch, none of the lovers of farce would attend…. The public became impatient and asked for Punch, and the piece became worse and worse. I could bear it no longer, I began to feel myself growing unwell, and I asked… permission to withdraw." Goldoni, *Memoir,* 320-326. He seemed dissatisfied with the theatre of Rome in comparison to the reception he had always found in Venice. Goldoni wished for Roman audiences to embrace the bourgeois character comedy he was in the process of developing, but instead their interests in fantastic themes or unrealistic characterizations based on more traditional forms frustrated him in his representations of social life.

Clearly, he felt his carefully constructed 'recipes' were being rejected by audiences in favor of lightweight treats. Even in Venice, his works were subject to intense scrutiny by his colleagues and public. It is clear that this period, while an important time artistically for him, also helped nudge him towards leaving Italy behind in favor of new challenges in another country.

[168] Carlo Goldoni, Rome, to unidentified friend, 28 April 1759.

Conclusion

"The [French] public are amused only with novelties… they pass in rapid succession" [1]: Goldoni is Lost in Translation and Conjectures about Venetian Consumption

Voltaire, French Enlightenment novelist of *Candide* and *Zaire*, as well as author of many plays and letters, wrote to Carlo Goldoni from Geneva on 28 August 1762, as Goldoni was on the move from Venice to write for a different theatre in another country.[2] Goldoni's decision to move to Paris was not undertaken lightly, and he likely was bitter about the reasons for his speedy departure from Venice, and concerned about the reception his works would receive in Paris. Voltaire was a fan of Goldoni's work, and supported the reforms Goldoni instigated in the Italian theatre.[3] In this letter, Voltaire attempted to reassure Goldoni with his transition to a new

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[1] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 458.

[2] The different theatre was the Comèdie Italienne in Paris.

[3] Voltaire published this poem in the 9 July 1760 edition of *La Gazzetta Veneta*, where he supported Goldoni's work. Gaspare Gozzi, *La Gazzetta Veneta,* trans. by M. Coyle, 9 July 1760 (Firenze: G.C. Sansone, 1921), 200.

In every country a cutting remark
molests the talented,
Of Goldoni's critic
fight his partisans
One did not know by which title
One must judge his works
In this trial, one
took nature for referee
To Critics, to the rivals
nature said without pretence
Any author has his defects
But this Goldoni painted me

Also, on 4 April 1772, Voltaire wrote to thank Goldoni for sending him a copy of a "very gay, very purely written, very moral French comedy composed by an Italian. This Italian was made to provide models of good taste for every country…. [I wish] Mr. Goldoni all the prosperity he deserves." This likely refers to the play written at Voltaire's urging, *The Beneficent Bear*. Voltaire, *Selected Letters of Voltaire*, trans. by Richard Brooks (New York: New York University Press, 1973), 293-4.

culture and a new audience would be relatively smooth. Certainly Voltaire would understand the concerns and fears plaguing a writer displaced from his home.[4]

> You want therefore, my beloved gentleman, to heal the plague that I know pains the honor of your dedication…. I will continue to read your charming comedies, until the day that I will be able to receive the author [in my arms]. I do not know where you are now. I do not know how to direct my letter. But your name is enough (so that this will find you); and I am confident that you are already known to Paris, like to Venice…. Already you are, or you will be very soon, in the city of Paris… But… you ought not to be disappointed or give up your most hopeful illusions.[5]

Despite the kind reassurances Voltaire gave Goldoni regarding his move, "Things began to go wrong even before he reached Paris."[6]

This conclusion will address two separate issues. First, Goldoni was frustrated by the French reception of his works by different audiences with different values and consumption practices. At least one of his French plays references material culture, and the characters use these objects in a manner similar to that of the Italian works. Yet it is clear that Goldoni was not as adept in the language of French consumer culture as he had been in his native Venice. His work did not survive the transition to another country, where different rules and cultural symbols held sway.

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[4] Voltaire fled Paris in 1734, after publication of his *Philosophical Letters (Lettres Philosophiques*) in which he compared the French system of government unfavorably with that of England, where he saw fewer social barriers. The book was banned and burned in France. He returned to Paris shortly before his death in 1778. Voltaire understood Goldoni's fears and sense of displacement perhaps better than many other literary figures of his age.

[5] Voltaire, Geneva, to Carlo Goldoni, Venice, 28 August 1762, transcript in Italian in the hand of Voltaire, translated by M. Coyle, Literary and Historical Manuscripts, Morgan Library, New York. "Volete dunque mio caro signore sanar la piaga che mi fate, col l'onore della vostra dedicazione… Leggero le vostre vezzzose comedie fino al girono che potero riverire l'autore. Non so dove siete adesso. Non so come indirizare la mia lettera. Ma il vostra nome absta, e mi confide che siete gia connosciuto à Parigi, come a Venezia…. Gia che siete, o sarete ben presto cittadino di Parigi… ma di grazia non mi deludete piu colle le illusioni della speranza."

[6] Kennard, *Goldoni and the Venice of his Times*, 203.

Although he lived out the remainder of his life in France, he is primarily remembered for his Italian plays from the period of the 1740s and 1750s. These plays perform a specific view of consumption in Venice as practiced during his tenure there, where market goods function as social markers, delineating status changes and social aspirations. Unfamiliar with French material culture, Goldoni could not transpose a language of consumer goods onto the French stage in the same insightful way. A theory of the social marker function of Venetian eighteenth-century consumption begins to emerge after careful observation of his plays.

I am reminded of Robert Darnton's statement in *The Great Cat Massacre* that the key to discovering how people from another place of history (or a different culture) think about the world is to unravel the details that spring from the point, moment, or incident that appears incomprehensible to the modern. This certainly was true for Goldoni in his first steps into the alien landscape of French culture. He simply did not grasp the differences of French culture and thinking, and his strengths as a dramatic satirist were perhaps doomed from the start. Darnton writes, "They do not think the way we do. And if we want to understand their way of thinking, we need to set about with the idea of capturing otherness. We constantly need to be shaken out of a false sense of familiarity with the past, to be administered a dose of culture shock…. What was proverbial wisdom… is opaque to us."[7] Goldoni was unable to internalize an understanding of 'Frenchness' in the same way he captured Venetian sensibilities and tastes. The culture shock he experienced was too great for him to process the social materials of satire with the facility that he did in Venice.

[7] Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 4.

Although he tried to imbed food and dining images in his few French plays, and recycled scenarios and plotlines which worked well for him in Venetian theatres, the otherness of his audiences, and their methods and manners of consumption, became too great for him to interpret for the stage effectively.

Section 1 Lost in Translation

French audiences were vastly different from those in Venice. Italian comedy in Paris was fighting for survival in the 1760s. During the eighteenth century, the French public taste in performance was leaning towards more spectacular musical theatrical works, such as the *opèra comique*.[8] In desperation, the Comèdie Italienne, in desperation, brought Goldoni to Paris to write new scenarios, which they hoped would reinvigorate their box office. But as it turned out, the Comèdie Italienne actors and the audiences alike preferred the older, improvisational forms of Commedia dell'Arte, and did not support Goldoni's reforms.[9] Most damningly, the French actors in the Comèdie Italienne were hesitant to act in scripted comedies, and so Goldoni returned to writing scenarios for the performers. Goldoni wrote, "Most of the Italian actors asked only for outlines; the public were accustomed to them, the court suffered them, and why should I have refused to comply with the established practice?"[10] During his time in France, Goldoni only wrote three comedies.[11] All his

[8] The term opéra comique designated a musical work consisting of pre-existing tunes as well as spoken dialogue. Opéra comique drew on many influences, most prominently vaudeville and the comédie-ballets of Molière (a combination of a comic play with ballets between the acts). The thrust of the performance was to satirize cultural foibles with music, dance, and witty dialogue.

[9] The Comèdie Italienne closed permanently in 1780, after struggling for several years. The Italian actors were sent back to Italy.

[10] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 367.

plays after 1762 were written specifically for the French theatre-going public and therefore have a far different cultural context. The plays I will explore in the conclusion are: *The Beneficent Bear* (1771) and *The Spendthrift Miser* (1776). The bulk of his Parisian work consists of scenarios featuring Arlecchino, a great favorite with French audiences. However, he preferred to skip these performances.[12] His contract with the Comèdie Italienne lapsed in 1764, and he left the theatre entirely, becoming an Italian teacher at the French court, rather than a professional *commediografo*. "I was no longer the master at Paris, as I had been in my own country…. I bade adieu to the Italian theatre [in France], which was not, perhaps, sorry at getting rid of me."[13]

After his arrival in Paris, Goldoni spent time exploring the city and the new culture he was now a part of, but his excursions in public were fraught with the confusions and misunderstandings of a tourist in a strange city. He "demanded four months time to ascertain the public taste [before beginning work on writing], and during that time I did nothing but run about, pry into everything, and enjoy myself."[14] The social differences he encountered were difficult to interpret, and he felt he could not find the same satire and humor he so easily found in Venetian culture. "Everyday I felt more perplexed as I tried to distinguish the ranks, the classes, the manner of

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[11] *L'Amore paterno (A Father's Love*), performed in 1763 at the Comèdie Italienne, on 4 February 1763. It was a failure, and was taken off the stage after only four performances. *Le Bourru Bienfaisant (The Beneficent Bear)* was produced at the Comédie Française on 4 November 1771, due to the urging of Voltaire. *L'avare fastueux (The Spendthrift Miser*) was produced for the French court at Fontainebleau on 14 November 1776.

[12] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 367. "I seldom went to see [my scenarios]. I preferred good comedy, and frequented [the Comèdie Française] for the sake of amusement and instruction."

[13] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 364, 379.

[14] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 363.

living, and the different modes of thinking. I no longer knew what I was, what I wished for, or what I was becoming."[15] This cultural confusion, as well as the self doubts it spawned, hindered him from replicating the success he had found in the Venetian theatre by satirizing class and status issues encountered in everyday life. Instead, he had to limit himself to what audiences demanded, and what his actors insisted on portraying. His works proved to be ineffective at capturing the French spirit, the Parisian middle class, or even of holding his audience's interest.

In his *Memoir*, Goldoni recounted a conversation with Rousseau, who did not hold much hope of Goldoni's success with French audiences, "I know the taste of both the Italians and the French; they are too dissimilar" for the same plays to be agreeable to both audiences.[16] Goldoni felt that each country embraced a particular etiquette and style, predetermined by national interests and cultural symbols, and he attempted to include these nationalistic signposts in his plays. However, his understanding of taste and class status was anchored in another culture. Goldoni was aware of the problems he faced, but still hoped for success.

> The work is calculated to please in every language, for it paints nature, but… differently modified in different climates, and must be represented everywhere with the manners and customs of the country where the representation takes place. My pieces… favorably received in Italy, would meet with a different reception in France, and considerable changes must be made before any of them would pass.[17]

Goldoni was unable to change his style, and remained unable to decode French manners, or French culture, and his Italian plotlines met will little favor.

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[15] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 363.

[16] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 420.

[17] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 344.

During his later years in Paris, the national spirit and social order he tried to depict was closely associated with the French court system and the nobility, rather than the middle class (as he had in Venice). Both Venice and Paris during the eighteenth century were cities trying to balance between indulgence and business, the rising middle class and the dissolute ruling class. When writing in Venice, native son Goldoni possessed an intimate knowledge of the culture and the people. In Paris, however, his status as a foreigner (and later a courtier) led him to focus his theatrical themes towards the cultural group he was most familiar with—the French nobility. Goldoni was interested in promoting the moral character of the middle class and the Italian theatre-going public in his Italian plays,[18] yet in his later French plays he appeared more interested in merely pleasing and entertaining his French nobility, at the time the predominant social class patronizing the theatres.[19] Pre-revolutionary France was subject to social upheavals, but the official French theatre upheld the social norms and rules of the nobility and Parisian society to a greater degree than did their Italian counterparts. According to Jeffrey Ravel, in *The Contested Parterre*, "In

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[18] Goldoni was committed to the use of theatre as an idealistic mirror that reflects what should be, rather than what is. He writes in his *Memoir*, "Comedy, which is, or ought to be, a school for propriety, should only expose human weaknesses for the purposes of correcting them." Goldoni, *Memoir*, 255.

[19] "Nearly all the theatre posters displayed in Paris were found in the aristocratic districts. Their role as patrons and leaders of fashion, and their influence… insured that the wealthy nobility played a crucial role in the artistic world." Jeremy Black, *Eighteenth-Century Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 271. The plays popular in Paris tended to be the ones that appealed to the upper-class perspective, although the audience for the three public playhouses was drawn from most social classes. For more information on the French theatres of the eighteenth century, see Jeffrey Ravel, *The Contested Parterre: Public Theatre and French Political Culture 1680-1791* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999). The theatre audience in the six playhouses devoted to commedia in Venice tended to be drawn from all segments of society as well, and the plays were intended to teach the moral good and reinforce patriotic Venetian sentiment, while still retaining the theatres's commercial appeal as a form of entertainment for the masses. Therefore, the theatre audiences for both cities were mixed, but the plays themselves had very different social goals.

practice, this desire [to glorify the French state] led to productions that implicitly… emphasized the power and the magnificence of the Bourbon monarchy."[20] The lines of social class were blurred in Venice and Paris in very different ways. Although the rules of fashion, food, and social class determined by the nobility were considered important in both contexts, on stage they failed to hold the Parisians' interest.

Two of his French plays help illustrate Goldoni's inability to use food and dining images to illustrate social and status differences in this new context. One of the plays ignores the symbology of food and dining completely, recycling a plot Goldoni considered the most successful from his Venetian works. Interestingly, this was the most successful of his plays in Paris. The other play uses food and dining images to illustrate class differences, but these observations are mere shadows of Goldoni's previous Venetian usages, and create an overly simplistic statement damning the middle class to ignorance rather than illuminating class mobility.

Le Bourru Bienfaisant, or *The Beneficent Bear*, was written in French, and performed at the Comèdie Française on 4 November 1771, and the next day for the royal court at Fountainebleau. Goldoni wrote,

> I then conceived of a project of composing a French comedy; and I had the temerity to offer it to a French theatre. The word temerity is not too strong on this occasion… that I, a stranger, who had never set foot in France till the age of fifty-three, with merely a confused and superficial knowledge of that language, would venture, after a lapse of nine years [since my last play], to compose a piece for the principal theatre of the nation?[21]

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[20] Jeffrey Ravel, *The Contested Parterre: Public Theatre and French Political Culture 1680-1791* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 9.

[21] Goldoni, *Memoir,* 413.

The play was a success, and was presented twelve times in Paris. *The Beneficent Bear* is a retelling of Goldoni's Venetian Comedy *La Casa Nova (The Superior Residence).* The French rendition is mostly concerned with the character of the gruff Uncle Cristofolo (here renamed Monsieur Gèronte), the love affair between Domenica and Lorenzino (here Valère and Angèlique), and the bankruptcy of Anzoletto and Cecilia (here Monsieur and Madame Dalancour). Everyone is frightened of crusty old Uncle Gèronte. Monsieur Dalancour is afraid to approach his uncle for help in paying his debts. Valère is afraid to ask for Angèlique's hand in marriage, and Angèlique worries that she will not be able to get a dowry from her uncle for her marriage. However, this simple comedy of character ends happily, as the characters realize that the brusque old uncle is actually quite kindly. Gèronte gives his nephew money to pay the debts, and blesses the lovers' marriage. The play ends with Gèronte ordering dinner for everyone, while fending off their thanks for his kindness.

This dinner that occurs after the end of the action is the only mention of dining in the entire play. The grounding of his characterizations in images of food and fashionable dining, so illustrative of class in the Venetian comedy of *La Casa Nova*, are mysteriously absent in *The Beneficent Bear*. The characters do not eat, they talk. They do not sit down to dinner, they worry about the gruffness of Gèronte. The critique of French social excesses seems blunted and weak in this play, as the Dalancours are forgiven their excesses, given the money to pay their bills, and expected to be reformed by of their love for kindly Uncle Gèronte. The female characters, in particular, seemed pale shadows of those inhabiting the Italian version

of the play. In the original Italian version, Domenica stands up to her uncle about the need for help in organizing her marriage and saving her brother from ruination, saying "I'll throw myself on the ground at his feet."[22] Meanwhile, in the French adaptation, Angèlique cannot tell Gèronte of her brother's troubles, saying "How timid I am!" Gèronte answers "You are a sweet dove."[23] The Italian Cecilia gleefully enjoys her excesses. Although she does apologize and ask for help from Cristofolo, it is clear she only agrees to this course of action because of her own shame in appearing in public as poor and shamed. Her French counterpart Madame Dalancour apologizes for her spending, saying that "The example of society is bad for me," and offers to leave her husband if that will please Gèronte.[24]

The themes of *The Beneficent Bear* are far more concerned with familial relationships, and the comedy of the gruff and surly benefactor, rather than the Italian enjoyment of luxury and the *Bella Figura*. There is a disconnect from French culture and images of French consumption that were so gloriously present in the earlier Italian play. Goldoni himself wrote that "I not only composed my piece in French, but I thought in the French manner when engaged in it. It has the stamp of its origin in the thoughts, in the imagery, in the manner, and in the style." [25] However, the play is a pale imitation of Molière's family comedies such as *The School for Wives*. The

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[22] Carlo Goldoni, *The Superior Residence*, edited by Frederick Davies (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 319.

[23] Carlo Goldoni, *The Beneficent Bear,* translated by Barrett Clark (New York: Samuel French, 1915), 13.

[24] Carlo Goldoni, *The Beneficent Bear,* 48.

[25] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 417.

satire in *The Beneficent Bear* is given up in favor of sympathetic portrayals of stock character types, and a happy ending.

The last play I wish to discuss does incorporate food and dining images, but Goldoni does not ground them within the particulars of French culture. *L'avare fastueux,* or *The Spendthrift Miser,* written in 1776, was the last play of Goldoni's life and was performed for the French court at Fountainebleau by the Comèdie Française. Goldoni took the play off the stage after a single performance. He recorded that the Royal Court received the play quite coldly, and the actors "were apparently as much disgusted with it as myself."[26] In this play, Goldoni targeted "a character so frequently to be met with in nature… I took my protagonist from the class of upstarts, to avoid the danger of coming in conflict with the higher classes."[27] This 'class of upstarts' refers to the middle classes, who are portrayed negatively, in order to appeal to the tastes of the royal court. The play features many of the themes that succeeded in his Italian works, but apparently did not appeal to a specifically upper class French audience. The play concerns the adventures of a Parisian merchant-cum-nobleman, Count Casteldoro, who has recently purchased himself a title, and is now looking to convince the parents of several well-born women that he is a fitting candidate for marriage. He takes care to ensure his home and table reflect the latest style, but cuts corners as he attempts to avoid expense. For example, the Count orders a magnificent dinner that has "an air of grandeur", and will have "thirty to table." However, the count wants to "combine economy and magnificence," so that he will spend as little

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[26] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 433.

[27] Goldoni, *Memoir,* 431.

money as possible in a performance of wealth.[28] The resulting meal is made up of forty dishes, which is not quite enough to fulfill the dictates of the course system. Those who understand *Haute Cuisine* realize that the Count is a fraud. Even his table settings do not measure up to the exacting standards. When the servant suggests getting the blackened silver polished for the occasion, the Count replies "Oh, silver is always silver."[29] Just possessing the proper table setting is enough for the Count, regardless of its appearance.

His performance of status is flawed in other ways. The bourgeois Count is interested in saving money on what he perceives to be non-essential luxuries, while at the same time impressing his "performed" income upon his prospective noble parents-in-law, Araminta and the Marquis del Bosco. This presentation of wealth makes them fear that he is overspending and being frivolous. As Araminta says, "Vanity, ostentation, folly. My good friend, you do not know the value of money."[30] The middle-class upstart Count knows the value of money, but is unskilled in public performance of status, while Goldoni's upper-class French characters are assured of their status and so do not need the trappings of *Haute Cuisine*. His concern about saving money marks him as unreasonably cheap to the audience. When the Marquis and Araminta at last discover that the Count is a fraud, they refuse his request to marry their respective daughters. These portrayals seem geared to appeal to the

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[28] Carlo Goldoni, *The Spendthrift Miser*, edited by Helen Zimmern (Westport, Conn.: Hyperion Press, Inc., 1892), 232-3.

[29] Carlo Goldoni, *The Spendthrift Miser*, 237.

[30] Carlo Goldoni, *The Spendthrift Miser,* 248.

upper-class courtiers present in Goldoni's audience at Fountainebleau, but "it finished without any sign of approbation or reprobation."[31]

The Spendthrift Miser boasts another similarity to Goldoni's Italian themes in the character if the Count's butler, Frontino. The Count relies on Frontino to know the proper and fashionable styles for noblemen. Frontino points out that two provisions have been overlooked in the planning of the feast—coffee and liqueurs. The Count raves, "Liqueurs inflame the blood… Coffee at night! It prevents sleep." To which Frontino replies, "Not give coffee? Forfeit your character as a liberal host, for such a trifling expense?"[32] The Count, however, is blind to the significance of these small details in his successful performance of a wealthy man. As he is a new arrival to the upper class, the Count has not had time to learn the rules of status, although he comprehends perfectly well the need to do something in order to convince others he belongs in his new life. Goldoni tried to play on the fears his noble audience would have of the bourgeoisie occupying their own social space, but the result is stilted. These small differences in the portrayal of status were designed by Goldoni to favor the noblemen in attendance at his play, rather than help the middle class discover the tools they need to succeed in social life.

As a counterpoint to Frontino, Fiorello works for a genuine specimen of the nobility, the proposed father-in-law, the Marquis, who has little money to spend on trifles but was born into his class status and therefore is possessed of the necessary

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[31] Goldoni, *Memoir*, 432.

[32] Carlo Goldoni, *The Spendthrift Miser*, 267. Frontino, while a servant and a member of the lower class, has a better sense of the proper etiquette of dining than does his master, although he did order insufficient courses for the meal.

understanding of luxury. In another parallel to the Italian plays, the Marquis is more comfortable with a simple meal, perhaps because he is accustomed to eating well, while the Count insists on the largest possible display of grandeur. Fiorello looks forward to consuming the proposed meal, saying, "Your kitchen smells wonderful… Much to eat and little to do."[33] Frontino informs Fiorello, however, of the reality they shall face during the meal, "The dishes are large; the contents small."[34] When Fiorello hopes that they may at least share a bottle of wine, Frontino informs him of his master's scheme to count the bottles by placing colored pellets in his pocket that he "draws out one by one as the bottles are emptied."[35] The Count has given consideration to (nearly) everything in his playacting charade, except for the reaction of the people he desperately desires to impress. This parade of errors in *The Spendthrift Miser* becomes stereotypical, and further weakens Goldoni's attempts to render the French bourgeoisie on stage.

Although Goldoni satirized fine dining and *Haute Cuisine* in *The Spendthrift Miser,* he also clearly used these images to illustrate the Count's ineffective performance of his desired status. The Count does not learn from his mistakes, but continues to bumble through social encounters. The comic use of the middle-class character's deficiencies and their inability to master the correct status performance helped to bolster the royal court's opinion of their own worth. Since the play was meant to be performed for the nobility, any sympathy for the bourgeoisie would have

[33] Carlo Goldoni, *The Spendthrift Miser*, 256.

[34] Carlo Goldoni, *The Spendthrift Miser*, 276.

[35] Carlo Goldoni, *The Spendthrift Miser*, 276.

been short lived once skilled actors from the Comèdie Française interpreted the roles. Instead of feeling pity for the Count and his misguided ideas of status, they instead would likely have applauded this portrayal of his stupidity.

Voltaire's assurances regarding Goldoni's ability to translate his works for French audiences were misplaced. Goldoni's successes as a playwright lay in his ability to translate daily Italian life onto the stage, resulting in reforms of Italian comedy that had far reaching influences into the nineteenth century. 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. His plays do not easily "translate" their social and cultural standing. Goldoni's legacy lies specifically in his Italian plays, which can help decode the lost language of eighteenth century Venetian consumption.

Section 2 Arrivare alla Mie Conclusione

One of the tasks of this work has been to develop a preliminary theory as to how Goldoni used his plays to document and reflect social changes in public consumption of goods in Venetian society during the eighteenth century. Goldoni presented character types, situations, and specific material goods that mirrored the ways that Venetian eighteenth century class systems operated. His topical references to the particulars of Venetian life in his use of material goods illustrate the status fluctuations and financial development characteristic of this period. Goldoni's Venetian plays did not necessarily influence changes in consumer society so much as reflect these trends in consumption at work in the larger social sphere of the eighteenth century.

The social reforms suggested by eighteenth century politicians and philosophers, as well as the new artistic forms instigated by artists and writers, were at odds with the Venetian republican government's adherence to a strict legal structure of class, and a society based on hereditary status and cultural orientation. This opposition is further illustrated in the debates about the future of the traditional theatre form of Commedia that involved Goldoni and Carlo Gozzi during the 1750s and 1760s. [36] This tension between cultural stasis and change is part of the world that Goldoni portrayed in his works. Goldoni's exploration of the social consumption of his time led him to develop, over the period of his Venetian career, specific suggestions about how to successfully manage the social and fiscal aspects of luxury.

In his early works from 1737-1753, Goldoni reflected the cultural use of fashionable status objects by characters in order to indicate their relative levels of society. However, in this period, he does not necessarily evaluate or advocate "status management," but merely depicts the use of social markers to indicate regional affiliations as well as class demarcations. Later in his Venetian career between 1753 and 1762, his plays increasingly use status objects to satirize the social changes occurring during this period. His portrayals of those benefiting socially from thoughtful management of cultural objects and status (Truffaldino in *The Servant To Two Masters* and Mirandolina from *The Mistress of the Inn*) contrast distinctly with

[36] Goldoni's reforms and Gozzi's subsequent championing of the traditional reforms came at a period of social unease and fear of the future. The answer to the seeming 'rejection' of Goldoni's works of reform and the embrace of Gozzi's plays may lie in the audience's enjoyment of the novel rather than the good. Venetian audiences may have endorsed what was new and innovative about the presentations, rather than what they truly enjoyed viewing. If a Venetian eighteenth century life was based on the enjoyment of originality and spectacle, then something out of the ordinary would have caught their attention. However, once the new and novel became commonplace, the public turned their attention to the next spectacular enjoyment. This would explain why Gozzi's plays, in their turn, became unpopular with Venetian audiences.

other characters whose regulation of their social image exceeds their fiscal grasp (such as Anzoletto from *The Superior Residence* and Leonardo from the plays of *The Country Trilogy*). The complete argument between the two sides is presented in his 1760 *The Boors*. Here, the characters debate the issue of status management during the course of the play, as the merchants advocate limited enjoyment and fiscal management, and their wives and children desire a greater involvement in the fashionable trends of the period. Although Goldoni began his writing career merely making use of these cultural objects in order to illustrate fluctuations in the meaning of class, he evolved his observations into a critique of Venetian social practices in his use of food.

Goldoni used these depictions of social practices for the purposes of both audience entertainment as well as moral criticism of social issues, suggesting that public performance of status was far more important to social acceptance than was hereditary status or literal financial level.[37] Although the theatrical and consumptive practices of the period supported traditional definitions and performance of status levels on the surface, Goldoni's characters break with these rules of decorum in their altered presentation of their own status, by their consumption of stylish goods. Goldoni's plays such as *The Man of Good Taste*, *Mirandolina*, and *The Boors* comically demonstrate the many ways that the Venetian middle classes were appropriating and reflecting taste and social fashions. The characters in these plays learn to use the dictates of fashion appropriately so as to reinforce their performed status (and for their own enjoyment), without compromising their economic stability.

[37] He subscribed to the neoclassic idea that comedy was important not only for the purpose of audience enjoyment but also instruction of how to create change within social structures.

However, other of his plays, such as *The Coffee House*, *The Superior Residence*, and the three plays that make up *The Country Trilogy,* demonstrate the dangers of inappropriate spending on material possessions.

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.[38] This display of wealth in the social depiction of Venetians was the tool Goldoni used to create a language of Venetian consumption based on financial stability.

For instance, the bourgeois Anzoletto from *The Superior Residence* has excellent taste in clothing, meals, and houses. None of the other characters ever question his right to own and use these items, although they do reference his merchant class antecedents. The heart of the issue is his "crime" of living beyond his income, being unable to maintain the luxurious lifestyle he aspires to because of his lack of funds. In Venice during the eighteenth century, class was a legal definition and not a hereditary one.[39] The nobility in the period did not necessarily possess wealth, and middle-class merchants with significant income could conceivably buy

[38] This is a more liberal interpretation of the neoclassic ideal of decorum, which requires that characters to behave according to expectations based on their status, sex, age, in order to create a social façade of polite behavior. Goldoni's characters negotiate the currents of fashion and proper behavior in order to demonstrate their status in their society, but they do not necessarily follow established rules of decorum. Instead, suitable ownership of items is determined by the financial ability to maintain the style of living.

[39] See Chapter Two for a discussion of class definitions.

their families a title. This bespeaks a development of porous lines of class based on current fiscal stability as well as family status.[40] If an individual possessed wealth in eighteenth-century Venice, there were no legal bars on ownership of material goods. However, there were very real social and political concerns about the prevalence of indigent individuals claiming charity from the Venetian government. So, Goldoni's concerns with Anzoletto's bankruptcy was not his class, but his inappropriate use of money. The social public sphere captured in Goldoni's works represented these very democratic definitions of class as advocated by the Republic of Venice.

However, Goldoni's interpretation of the operations of consumption goes further than merely democratizing them for all social levels. He suggested that consumption is truly market based, without restrictions other than asking price. In Goldoni's works, consumption was largely a matter of choice and financial ability, which argues for free market consumption. Truffaldino from *The Servant to Two Masters* can eat fashionable food without repercussions, although he is clearly from the lower class. Anzoletto and Cecilia in *The Superior Residence* can enjoy all the luxuries of clothing, food, and residence that the market can offer to them, despite their middle class precursors and their quickly dwindling income. Even *The Coffee House* features equal access to the luxury of hot drinks and conversation. Personal wealth was all that was necessary to determine suitable consumption. The dangers no longer lay in consuming items deemed outside of status levels, but the desire to over-spend personal income.

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[40] Once attained, nobility was granted for life in the Venetian republic.

The rules of consumption of eighteenth century Venice as portrayed by Goldoni are quite simple. Popular taste in the period is derived from aristocratic culture. One of the most important aspects to crafting a public persona lies in aping current style and showing possession of fashionable objects. This careful crafting of *la Bella Figura* was a determinant for entrance into the vibrant social scene of Venice during the eighteenth century. In *The Man of the World*, Ludro attempts to dupe the Roman couple Beatrice and Silvio by allegedly showing them the proper performance of style that will attain entrance into Venetian society. Without this guidance of the insider who has been properly tutored in the ways of Venetian culture, they will not be able to participate properly in the festivities of Carnival. The deciding factor of who can enjoy stylish material goods and participate in social 'diversions' is not based on status level, but on income. In *The Artful Widow*, the poor Frenchman Monsieur has equal access to the widow Rosaura due to his implicit understanding of style, despite his lack of a noble title and a suspect income. Mirandolina in *The Mistress of the Inn* studies stylish goods to lure in customers to her inn. This knowledge of current consumer practices enables her to not only make her business a success, but also to ensure her future enjoyment and sale of luxury items. The wives in *The Boors* want to dress properly and go out to dinner, so that they can mingle in high society, whereas their husbands do not want to create a social persona, preferring to enjoy the same luxuries without spending the cash needed to participate in social functions.

Ultimately, in Goldoni's world, the performance of a refined style in public determines the face value of social worth. The value of an item is worth far more

culturally than its market price. However, this performance of style must be effective in the consumer's choices and complete to the last detail, otherwise the overall presentation is deemed suspect in the eyes of the audience. This performance demands hard, cold cash for success. Goldoni's characters use these status markers for their own ends. Consumption cannot give an individual more money or more power, but it can craft the appearance of power that is the ultimate goal of the performance. This theme is touched on in the later part of Goldoni's Venetian career between 1753 through 1762 in plays such as *Mirandolina*, *The Superior Residence,* and the three plays from *The Country Trilogy*.

In his Venetian plays Goldoni drew a distinction between style and substance. He ultimately argued that consumption in Venetian culture developed into a social problem during this period, that the gain of material objects ought not to be equated with the loss of status in the social sphere, and certainly was not worth jeopardizing fiscal stability. Goldoni saw consumption as having the potential to function in society as a great equalizer but ultimately not as an effective use of resources, especially if reserves are severely depleted in the attempt to compete in the marketplace. This is the argument put forward in *The Boors* as well as in *The Country Trilogy,* as the characters attempt to fulfill fashion markers of status in the least expensive way possible.

The idea of balance in characters and life choices also plays a key role in Goldoni's depiction of the Venetian consumer landscape. The equilibrium represented between classes competing for marketplace presence also included even access to goods and services despite previous social inequities marked by class. The

character of Momolo from *l'Uomo di Mondo* is an excellent example of Goldoni's attempt to present a balance between ethics and worldly enjoyment, or courtesy and advancement. Other characters such as Mirandolina with her balance of private motivations and public performance, the merchants from *The Boors* who have their food and keep their money, too, and *The Man of Good Taste,* where Ottavio effortlessly assesses the needs of his household with those of his business, indulging his personal taste as well as entertaining his friends. Mostly, however, Goldoni's characters indulge too much, creating a basic imbalance between their trappings of style and their finances. Or, they deny the basic severe truths of their situation, much as Eugenio does in *The Coffee House* or Anzoletto in *The Superior Residence*, to their ultimate downfall. This change to the landscape of consumption in the eighteenth century from traditional prescription of decorum to a financial free-for-all has dire consequences for many of the characters without the ability to realistically assess prices and the need for public performance.

Goldoni's ultimately created a *lingua franca* of consumption, a basic language understood by all members of the society. He embedded signposts in his plays clearly demonstrating to the audience whether the consumption the character engaged in was appropriate or destructive.[41] This way of reading consumptive practices onstage facilitated communication between the audience as they performed in the social landscape, allowing them to clearly understand the altering nature of the symbols of fashion markers. Goldoni's use of consumption in his plays did not

[41] Lingua franca is defined as a mixed language or jargon, consisting largely of Italian words deprived of their inflexions. It also means any mixed jargon formed as a medium of intercourse between people speaking different languages. It can be read as any group of images developed to serve as a medium of communication. Definition of Lingua Franca, Oxford English Dictionary Online, www.dictionary.oed.com, accessed 17 April 2006.

influence the styles of eighteenth century Venice, but certainly developed consumption as a common social language.[42] Ultimately, his interest in reforming society was to advocate balance of the good life and the financially secure life in performance of the *La Scienza di buon gusto*, and knowledge of how to sanely achieve fiscal as well as social self-presentation.

[42] Interestingly, many of Goldoni's critics were displeased with his work because he refused to use the standard literary language of the period, Tuscan, when composing his works. Instead, he wanted to use different dialects from different areas of Italy in order to represent lifelike behavior to his audiences. However, in doing so, he developed a new dialect of social consumption, that was understandable to all steeped within the culture.

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