

V. How comedy changed opera

Having witnessed the evolution of Goldoni's texts for music within the opera theatre tradition, the final, most important element that confirms the novelty and innovation of his *drammi giocosi* resides in the direct connections between the libretti and his groundbreaking works of prose comedy. Common ground in comedies and libretti can be found in both content and style. Thematically, affinity between libretti and comedies is widely apparent in the character types, situations, and social mores exposed in both. As early as 1748, the same year as *La scuola moderna*, Goldoni's prose theatre is already occupied with contemporary custom in the extraordinarily famous *La putta onorata* (followed by the sequel, *La buona moglie*), which also displays precocious elements of *larmoyant*. Only a short while later, we find hallmark original characters in works such as *L'avventuriero onorato* (The Honored Adventurer, 1751), a partially autobiographical comedy that presents a false lawyer and a failed merchant, and *La moglie saggia* (The Wise Wife, 1752), an *unicum* even for Goldoni, in which the heroine Rosaura, a virtuous wife betrayed by her husband Ottavio (naturally, Medebach) pays an unprecedented visit to her rival (the Marchesa Beatrice) to ask advice on how to win him back.¹³⁸ Other works of similarly complex characterization include *La figlia obbediente*, (The Obedient Daughter, 1752), and *Gli innamorati* (The Beloveds, 1759).

I mercatanti (The Merchants, 1753, originally *I due Pantaloni*, though masks and dialect were eliminated when Goldoni sent the work to print) launches a positive image of the merchant class and targets familiar themes of prodigality and dissipation, as Pantalone, on the edge of ruin thanks to his son's unchecked spending, is saved by a merchant from Holland. *Il festino* (1754) attacks another relevant phenomenon, *cicisbeismo*, and so too does *La sposa sagace* (The Sagacious Bride, 1758), set in Palermo. Curiously, this work presents a female

138 Carlo Goldoni, *La Moglie Saggia*, see in particular Act II, vii.

character, Petronilla, homonymous to the protagonist of the libretto *La ritornata da Londra*. The two women not only share their name, but moreover their circumstances and character traits: both are surrounded by *cicisbei*, and both seek and enjoy their attentions. There is no textual evidence to suggest a direct adaptation from one work to the other in this case, but similarities are such that a common inspiration for both characters was clearly present.

Naturally, we cannot forget the elevated realism of Goldoni's comedies in Venetian dialect, including *Le donne de casa soa* (The Women of Their Own Home, 1755, given at the *Teatro S. Luca*), *Il campiello* (The Venetian Piazza, 1756), and the later *Le baruffe chiozzote* (1762). The first two in particular, which present the popular life of Goldoni's city in a genuine, quotidian style, met with overwhelming success, and not only in Venice despite their strong dialectal ties. The higher echelons of Venetian society are instead central to *Le morbinose* (The Spirited Girls, 1758).

Speaking of Goldoni's most famous accomplishments in the direction of realistic theatre, however, we should not overlook the fact that the author's process in prose theatre, much like for his libretti, does not always follow a comfortable linear trajectory. In particular, just as Goldoni often but not always illustrates modernity or contemporary life in his libretti, some of his comedies, or the styles employed in them, also take steps away from the current reality. His mature production includes works such as *Terenzio* (1754) and *Torquato Tasso* (1755), for example, attempts in the field of historical comedy. In these works, Goldoni abandoned his own preferences in the effort to emulate a different style very much in vogue, and thereby equal or overturn the great success of Pietro Chiari, who specialized in this type of theatre.

Other comedies parody or draw from the generic imagery of older comic currents (e.g. *La pupilla* (The Pupil, 1757), *Il padre per amore* (The Father for Love, 1757)), and most importantly, become grounds for linguistic experimentation. In fact, a surprising number of Goldoni's comedies are not written in the realistic prose he is best remembered for, but in *versi martelliani* (Alexandrian verse) and endecasyllable. *La scuola di ballo* (The Dance School, 1759) is even a rare excursion in difficult *terzine* (tercets), an effort to gain back audiences after Goldoni's period of absence in Rome (which however

did not meet with much success). We also find a singular return of the *Commedia dell'Arte* masks in a very late comedy, *Il buon compatriotto* (The Good Compatriot, 1762), written just before the author's departure for Paris. Goldoni's theatre once in Paris will also more consistently slip back towards the *Commedia dell'Arte*, still sought by Parisian audiences, but for specific reasons concerning his appointment at the *Comédie Italienne*.

Ultimately, the variation of content and language in his prose comedies testifies that, much like his libretti, Goldoni's 'principal' theatre too does not always follow a clean line of progress in the direction of the reform agenda. Rather, it is subject to experimentation and, in some cases, external stylistic demands. Goldoni's deviations or 'experiments' do not however undermine the success or integrity of his larger project, but are instead an important aid to understanding the multifaceted nature of a *corpus* often considered homogeneous.

i. The musical elements of comedy

Beyond linguistic experimentation, a more significant point of contact between comedies and *drammi giocosi* resides in Goldoni's improvements of structure in both theatrical genres. In opera, this is particularly manifest in the expanded use and complexity of ensembles, as we have seen. While the layering of independent voices is by nature a musical technique, notably, elements of textual polyphony also become noticeably present in Goldoni's mature prose comedy, and moreover acquire increasing prominence.

His Venetian masterpiece *I rusteghi* (1760) is an exemplary end result in this respect. This comedy in dialect boasts the particularity of featuring four protagonists, all of similar character and belief, yet each clearly individual; not an easy task, as Goldoni reminds us:

Si scorge dal titolo della Commedia non essere un solo il Protagonista, ma varii insieme, e in fatti sono eglino quattro, tutti dello stesso carattere, ma con varie

tinte delineati, cosa per dire il vero difficilissima, sembrando che più caratteri eguali in una stessa Commedia possano più annoiare che dilettere.¹³⁹

The four *rusteghi* most often appear together, creating symmetry of discourse in a polyphonic style. To the quartet of protagonists Goldoni also adds the coalition of their respective spouses, who counterweigh their husbands' strictness and conservatism ("El xè un orso, fia mia; nol se diverte élo, e nol vol che se divertimo gnanca nu"¹⁴⁰) with liveliness and adire to experience the world ("Via donca, che el ne mena un pocheto in maschera"¹⁴¹). The interactions of the two quartets create multiple levels of symmetry, not only within each group but moreover between them, as the conservative men and progressive women challenge each other in a battle of the sexes.

Midway through the first act, Goldoni creates a duet that reveals more than a few affinities with the choral quality of his *drammi giocosi*, a musical progression carried through the entire scene (therefore a larger excerpt is required):

LUNARDO. Gh'aveu dito, che el volè maridar?

MAURIZIO. Ghe l'ho dito.

LUNARDO. Cossa diselo?

MAURIZIO. El dise, che el xè contento, ma el gh'averave gusto de véderla.

LUNARDO. Sior no, questi no xè i nostri pati. (*con isdegno*)

MAURIZIO. Via, via, no andè in colera, che el puto farà tuto quello che voggio mi.

LUNARDO. Co volè, vegnimo a dir el merito, la dota xè parecchiada. (...)

MAURIZIO. No stè a spender in abiti, che no voggio.

LUNARDO. Mi ve la dago, come che la xè.

MAURIZIO. Gh'àla roba de séa?

LUNARDO. La gh'ha qualche strazzeto.

139 Carlo Goldoni, *I Rusteghi*, "The Author to his Readers." From the title you will see that the Comedy does not have one single protagonist, but different ones together, and in fact they are four, all of the same character, but delineated in a variety of tones, something to tell the truth very difficult to do, because it seems that multiple similar characters in a Comedy would appear to be boresome, rather than entertaining.

140 *ibid.*, Act I, i. He's a bear, my child. He never enjoys himself, and he's determined that we shouldn't either.

141 *ibid.*, Act I, i. Come, take us out in costume for a bit.

MAURIZIO. In casa mia no voggio séa. Fin che son vivo mi, l'ha da andar co la vesta de lana, e no vòì né tabarini, né scuffie, né cerchi, né toppè, né cartoline sul fronte.

LUNARDO. Bravo, sieu benedeto. Cusi me piase anca mi. (...)

LUNARDO. Ghe xè pochi, che pensa come che pensemo nu.

MAURIZIO. E ghe xè pochi, che gh'abbia dei bezzi, come che gh'avemo nu.

LUNARDO. I dise mo, che nu no savemo gòder.

MAURIZIO. Poverazzi! ghe vèdeli drento del nostro cuor? Crèdeli, che no ghe sia altro mondo, che quello, che i gode lori? Oh compare, el xè un bel gusto el poder dir: gh'ho el mio bisogno, no me manca gnente, e in t'una ocorenza posso meter le man su cento zecchini!

LUNARDO. Sior sì, e magnar ben, dei boni caponi, delle bone polastre, e dei boni straculi de vedèlo.

MAURIZIO. E tutto bon, e a bon marcà, perché se paga de volta in volta.

LUNARDO. E a casa soa; senza strepiti, senza sussuri.

MAURIZIO. E senza nissun, che v'intriga i bisi.

LUNARDO. E nissun sa i fati nostri.

MAURIZIO. E semo paroni nu.

LUNARDO. E la muggier no comanda.

MAURIZIO. E i fioi sta da fioi.

LUNARDO. E mia fia xè arlevada cusi.

MAURIZIO. Anca mio fio xè una perla. No gh'è pericolo che el buta via un bagatin.

LUNARDO. La mia puta sa far de tuto. In casa ho volesto, che la faza de tuto. Fin a lavar i piati.

MAURIZIO. E a mio fio, perché no voggio, che co le serve el se ne impazza, gh'ho insegnà a tirar suso i busi delle calze, e metter i fondèli alle braghesse.

LUNARDO. Bravo. (*ridendo*)

MAURIZIO. Sì dasseno. (*ridendo*)

LUNARDO. Via fémolò sto spozalizio; destrighemose. (*fregandosi le mani, e ridendo*)

MAURIZIO. Co volè, compare.

LUNARDO. Ancuo v'aspetto a disnar con mi. Za savè, che ve l'ho dito. Gh'ho quatro latesini, vegnimo a dir el merito, ma tanto fati.

MAURIZIO. I magneremo.

LUNARDO. Se goderemo.

MAURIZIO. Staremo aliegri.

LUNARDO. E po i dirà, che semo salvadeghi!

MAURIZIO. Puffe!

LUNARDO. Martuffi! (*partono*)¹⁴²

142 *ibid.*, Act I, v. Lunardo: Have you told him that you want to marry him off? Maurizio: I've told him. L: And what does he say? M: He says he's happy, but he'd like to see her. L: No sir, this was not our agreement (*angrily*) M: Oh come come, don't

Apart from the comic yet realistic characterization of the two men, who embody the “onesto ridicolo” that Goldoni so often shows on the stage to expose certain universal flaws, this scene displays a keen attention to pacing. From initially unmeasured prose discourse, Goldoni gradually transitions into shorter and symmetrical exchanges (“E nissun sa i fati nostri/ E semo paroni nu/ E la muggier.../ E i fioi... “etc.), and ultimately ends the scene in a triumphant chorale style (“I magneremo/ se goderemo”) that utilizes both rhyme and meter, two highly musical elements.

We must also note the musical *stringendo* created by his progressive shortening and *rapprochement* of entrances, almost as a fugal diminution. Such is the affinity to operatic style by the end of this scene, that

get angry, the boy will do everything I want him to do. L: Well then, whenever you like, we can get down to business. The dowry has been prepared. (...) M: Don't spend in fancy dresses, I don't want that. L: No, I'll send her to you just as she is. M: Does she have silk gowns? L: She's just got a couple strips of it. M: I don't want silk in my house. As long as I'm alive, she's going to have to wear a plain wool dress, and I don't want cloaks, or bonnets, or hoops, nor decorations, nor bows nor frills in the front. L: Good for you, God bless. I like it so myself. (...) L: There are few, who share our opinions. M: And there are few who have the money that we have. L: And they say we don't know how to enjoy life. M: Poor fools! Can they see inside our hearts? Do they really think that there is no other world but theirs, which they enjoy? Oh friend, what pleasure it is to be able to say: I have all I require, I lack nothing, and if I ever had the need, I could draw up a hundred *zecchini*. L: Yes indeed, and to eat well, good *capons* and hens, and veal hanks. M: And all delicious, and a good deal, because we pay as we acquire. L: And in our houses, without scenes or mutterings. M: And without anyone to poke around in my money. L: And nobody knows our business. M: And we are the boss. L: And the wife can't tell me what to do. M: And the children behave as children should. L: And I've brought my daughter up this way. M: And my son is a pearl. There's no chance of him wasting a penny. L: And my daughter knows how to do everything. At home, I decided she should do all sorts of jobs. She even washes the dishes. M: And my son, since I don't want him to be interested in servant girls, I've taught him how to mend his own socks, and hem his own trousers. L: Bravo (*laughing*) M: Yes indeed (*laughing*) L: Quick then, let's make this marriage happen (*rubbing his hands together and laughing*) M: Whenever you like. L: Then I'll expect you to dine with me tonight. You already know, I've told you. I've got four sweetbreads at home, and they'll be cooked as they should be. M: And we'll eat them. L: And we'll have a good time. M: And we'll be merry. L: Let people say that we are savage! M: Puff! (*expressing marvel and disdain*) L: Dimwits! (*both exit*)

its final verses could function perfectly in a musical ensemble finale, accompanied by a progressive *crescendo* and culminating in the hasty exit of the characters with enthusiastic impetus.

The musical qualities of Goldoni's comedies appear to be one of the more distinctive traits of his authorship, and one of no coincidence given the intensity of his activity as a librettist. Many if not most of his mature comedies make expansive use of polyphonic techniques like those seen above, among these *La bottega del caffè* (1750), *Il Campiello* (1756, written "secondo l'uso dei drammi che si chiamano musicali"¹⁴³), *Il ventaglio* (1763). In these works and many others we witness a reprise of the original meaning of the term *concertato*, from the Latin *concertare*, meaning to fight or compete: a competition, that is, of sounds and voices.¹⁴⁴

To cite just one further example, we find the same complexity, but on a much larger scale, in the nostalgic masterpiece *Una delle ultime sere di Carnevale* (One of the Last Evenings of Carnival, 1762). This work is especially well-known for its allegorical design, through which Goldoni, representing himself through one of the characters, metaphorically took his leave from his Venetian public on the eve of his journey to France. Another realistic, Venetian comedy in dialect, *Una delle ultime sere* is situated within the domestic world of a textile merchant, and pays homage to the industry and honest profit of that trade. It is, in Goldoni's own words, "la pittura del sistema e del costume di quel ceto di persone."¹⁴⁵

The entire plot unfolds within one evening during *Carnevale*, the central event being a convivial dinner followed by festivities and games. This comedy like few others thrives on the interaction of groups and exploits the close interconnection of parallel sub-plots. Perhaps the largest, and most prolonged ensemble of Goldoni's entire output can be found in the second Act. Marked *Tutti*, it is a theatrical feat of gigantic

143 Carlo Goldoni, *Il Campiello*, Preface.

144 For further reading on the uses of this term, and its connections to Goldoni's output, see Pier Mario Vescovo, "Tarasca. Tra Napoli, Venezia, e L'europa" in *Drammaturgia*, XI / n.s. I – (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2014); 193–215.

145 Carlo Goldoni, *Una delle ultime sere di carnevale*. "The Author to his Readers." (...) the portrait of the system and customs of that class of people.

proportions, employing virtually all characters uninterruptedly for all of seven scenes. The central frame is a game of cards that brings all together around the same table, and characters are strategically distributed by couple so that each pair may continue their own sub-plot while the broader action progresses with the game.

In the comedy, Goldoni represents himself through Anzoletto, a young fabric designer of great skill, the source of ideas from which others weave together the final product. Goldoni draws the parallel to playwriting explicitly: “I Comici eseguiscono le opere degli Autori, ed i Tessitori lavorano sul modello de’ loro Disegnatori.”¹⁴⁶ Such is the skill of Anzoletto (though covered by modesty), that he has been called to “Moscovia” (Moscow) to take up his trade in that place, where, as in Parisian theatres, demand for Italian artistry is high. Many things still tie Anzoletto to Venice, however, including the love of Domenica, an authentic *putta de campielo*.

A central component of the work, seasoned by secondary plot threads between other characters, remains the predicament of separation that threatens the young lovers. The card tournament, an open game that nonetheless affords privacy as each team strategizes in secret, becomes a pretext ripe with possibilities for the advancement of their relationship. The brief excerpt below illustrates the manner in which Goldoni embeds important progress of action (a resolution between two lovers) within an exteriorly fixed scene:

MARTA. Tocca a far le carte a sior’Elenetta. (*dà le carte ad Elena*) Via, chi manca a metter su?

ANZOLETTO. Mancheremo nualtri. (*prende i quattro soldi*)

MARTA. (Mo i compatisso, poverazzi!)

ANZOLETTO. (Se la sapesse, quanto che me despiase). (*a Domenica*)

DOMENICA. (De cossa?)

ANZOLETTO. (De doverla lassar). (*mettendo i soldi nel piatto*)

DOMENICA. (Busiario!) (*ad Anzoletto*)

ELENETTA. Che la leva. (*a Polonia, dandole le carte perché alzi*)

MARTA. (Siora Domenica, come v’ala?) (*a Domenica*)

DOMENICA. (Qua no se sente altro, che de le busie). (*a Marta*)

146 *ibid.* Actors perform the works of Authors, and Weavers work on the models of their Designers.

MARTA. (Se sè un putto civil, tratè almanco con sincerità). (*ad Anzoletto*) ANZO-
 LETTO. (Per farghe véder, che no son busiario, ghe farà una proposizion). (*a*
Domenica, che senta anche Marta)
 DOMENICA. (Che xè?)
 ANZOLETTO. (Vorla vegnir in Moscovia con mi?) (*come sopra*)
 MARTA. (Si ben, che l'accepta. Nol dise mal). (*a Domenica*)
 DOMENICA. (Come?) (*ad Anzoletto*)
 ANZOLETTO. (Col consenso de so sior padre). (*come sopra*)
 MARTA. (Se gh'intende). (*a Domenica*) DOMENICA. (Sposai?) (*ad Anzoletto*)
 ANZOLETTO. (No vorla?) (*come sopra*)
 MARTA. (Bravo, bravo dasseno). (*ad Anzoletto, rimettendosi al giuoco*)
 AGUSTIN. Spade, che la vegna. (*giuocando*)
 DOMENICA. Spade? Chi zoga spade? (*con allegria*)
 AGUSTIN. Mi; el cinque de spade.
 DOMENICA. E mi el cavallo. (*allegra butta giù la carta*)
 MARTA. L'aspetta, che no tocca a ela. (*a Domenica*) (Adesso la se confonde per
 l'allegrezza). Via a lori. (*a Bastian e ad Alba*) etc.¹⁴⁷

The sheer quantity of parenthesis in this excerpt denotes the author's constant use of asides, a dramatic strategy often found in opera, which enlivens and quickens the pace of the discussion. Goldoni walks a line of equilibrium within the three-part conversation and the juxtaposition of the trio to the ongoing game. The occasional intrusion of other characters thereby creates the illusion of simultaneity. Here we witness an

147 *ibid.*, Act II, iii. Marta: It's my turn to give the cards, Ms. Elena. Now, who's missing them? Anzoletto: We are (*takes four coins*). M: (I feel for them, poor things!) A: (If only you knew how sorry I am) (*to Domenica*). Domenica: (What for?) A: (For having to leave you) (*putting the coins in the dish*) D: Liar! (*to Anzoletto*) E: Pick it up (*to Polonia, giving her a card to pick up*) M: Ms. Domenica, how is it going? (*to Domenica*) D: (I'm hearing nothing but lies) (*to Marta*) A: (So you see that I'm not a liar, let me make you a proposal) (*to Domenica, but so that Marta hears too*) D: What is it? A: Would you like to come to Moscow with me? (*as above*) M: (Oh yes, you should accept. It's not a bad idea) (*to Domenica*) D: What? (*to Anzoletto*) A: With the consent of your father, of course (*as above*) M: Now you get it (*to Domenica*) D: Married? (*to Anzoletto*) A: Don't you want to? (*as above*) M: Good, good for you, in earnest (*to Anzoletto, going back to the game*) A: Spades, bring it on (*playing*) D: Spades? Who's playing spades? (*happily*) Agustin: I am, the five of spades. D: Then I'll play the horse (*happily throws down her card*) M: Wait, it's not your turn (*to Domenica*) (Now she's so happy, she's confused). Over to you (*to Bastian and Alba*) etc.

ensemble technique altogether different from the verbal *crescendo* of *I rusteghi*, but no less effective. While vocal overlap can be easily created in musical ensembles, the illusion of simultaneous discourse is still effectively rendered in prose, a tangible link between opera theatre and comedy. So rich are the possibilities afforded by this polyphonic design, that Goldoni adheres to this strategy for the entire act.

Connections between comedy and opera theatre are not only present in Goldoni's use of ensembles; *Una delle ultime sere di carnovale* also reflects his modernized *serio* style in the detectable presence of melancholic tones- and this work is not the only comedy in which *serio* is prominent, as we shall see. *Serio* elements are no longer of Metastasian stamp, by this point long abandoned, but rather are characterized by heightened intimacy, introspection, often self-doubt and confusion ("no so cossa dir"¹⁴⁸), and they evoke *pathos* in response to candid emotion. The monologue is a typical device in these cases, as for example:

MARTA e DOMENICA

MARTA. Siora Domenica, cossa gh'ala intenzion de far?

DOMENICA. No so gnanca mi.

MARTA. Ma pur?

DOMENICA. Vorla, che andémo dessus anca nu?

MARTA. Quel che la comanda.

DOMENICA. La resta servida, che adessadesso vegno anca mi.

MARTA. Vorla restar qua?

DOMENICA. Un pochetto. Se la me permette?

MARTA. La se comoda. (Ho capio; la se vol consegniar da so posta. Che la varda de no far pezo. Ho sempre sentio a dir, che amor xè orbo; e chi se lassa menar da un orbo, va a pericolo de cascar in t'un fosso). (*parte*)¹⁴⁹

148 *ibid.*, Act I, xv. "I don't know what to say," spoken by Anzoletto, unsure whether to remain for love or leave for honor.

149 *ibid.*, Act I, xviii. Marta: Ms. Domenica, what do you resolve to do? Domenica: I don't know M: and yet? D: Would you like to go upstairs to join the others? M: Whatever you prefer. D: Alright then, I'll be up shortly. M: Do you prefer to stay here? D: Just a little bit. Do you mind? M: As you wish. (I understand, she wants to counsel herself. Let's hope she doesn't make matters worse. I've always heard it said, that love is blind; and who is led blindly risks falling into a ditch) (*exits*). D (*alone*): I don't know what to do. I don't want him to go; but I wouldn't want to be the cause, if he were to lose his fortune. Of course, there is this embroiderer who

DOMENICA. No so quala far. No voria, che l'andasse; ma no vorave gnanca esser causa mi, che 'l perdesse la so fortuna. Certo, za che se vede, che sta recamadora gh'ha corrispondenza in Moscovia, se poderia farghe parlar per qualchedun, e obligarla a scriver de là, che nol sa, che no l'è bon, che ghe n'è de meggio... E mi, che a Anzoletto ghe voggio ben; mi saria capace de farghe perder el so conceto? No, no sarà mai vero. Che 'l vaga, se l'ha d'andar; patirò, me despiaserà; ma pazzenzia. No faria sto torto né a lu, né a nissun, se credesse de deventar principessa. No, no certo; patir, crepar; ma rassegnarse al Cielo, e perder tutto, più tosto che far una mala azion. (*parte*)

In these brief scenes, the opening dialogue functions almost as an introductory recitative duet, and Domenica's monologue as a solo aria. Our grieving heroine of noble resolve is no longer an aristocratic *prima donna*, but a humble seamstress within a guild of artisans in a dialectal world. Yet, her piece reflects the same interior conflict, sadness, longing, and ultimately the same resolution of self-sacrifice that are emblematic of the true *parte seria*; nor should the use of Venetian be seen as a detraction from the weight of her words. While elsewhere Goldoni mixes dialects with standard Italian for comic contrast or caricature, this comedy, as his other Venetian works, shares no affinity to that purpose. Rather, it is simply the realistic representation of the world of the author and his audience (not to mention the fact that Venetian was once an international language in Europe, and that, as also testified by Neapolitan comedy, dialect did not pertain only to popular sphere at the time). Thus, Domenica's resolve, "patir, crepar; ma rassegnarse al Cielo, e perder tutto" (to suffer, to die, but to resign myself to the Heavens, and lose everything) carries the full weight of a dramatic *serio* and creates an aura of pathos typical of the new *larmoyant* fashion.

The shadow of impending departure that looms over *Una delle ultime sere di carnovale* provides ample opportunity for similar empathic episodes throughout the work, such that an overarching hue

has contacts in Moscow, and we could make her speak to somebody, and write over there that he doesn't know anything, that he's not capable, that they could find someone better... But I, who love Anzoletto, would I be capable of ruining his prospects? No, this will never be. Let him go, if he must; I'll suffer, I'll be sorry; but so be it. I cannot betray him nor anyone, even if I thought it would make me a princess. No, no indeed, to suffer, to die, but to resign myself to the Heavens, and lose everything, rather than commit a crime. (*exits*)

of nostalgia can be said to characterize the autobiographical comedy as a whole. Notably, elements of *serio* or *larmoyant* as we find in *Una delle ultime sere* do not appear exclusively in later comedies. As in opera theatre, precocious symptoms of Goldoni's mature style can be traced to relatively early works. The prose comedies that, like *drammi giocosi*, reap benefit from the inclusion of *serio* are many.

Among these, an example of particular strength is *Le avventure della villeggiatura* (The Adventures of Vacationing, 1761, part two of the famous trilogy that includes *Le smanie per la villeggiatura* (The Yearning for Vacation) and *Il ritorno dalla villeggiatura* (The Return from Vacation)), in particular for the *serio* character Giacinta. Portrayed as a comic flirt in the first comedy, in *Le avventure* Giacinta undergoes radical transformation. Her role becomes tragic as, torn between her love for Guglielmo and her promise of marriage to Leonardo, she is forced to renounce her feelings in order uphold her engagement. To her predicament Goldoni adds the additional pain of witnessing her lover ultimately promised to another woman. The author portrays her as “incantata, oppressa, avvilita” (in the words of her servant, “ella è così melanconica”¹⁵⁰). In an extended dialogue, Goldoni colors Giacinta's role with a strong language of suffering:

GIACINTA. (...) Uso ogni arte perché egli non se ne accorga, ma ti giuro ch'io patisco pene di morte. Quel dover usar al signor Leonardo le distinzioni che sono da una sposa ad uno sposo dovute, e vedere dall'altra parte a languire, a patire colui che mi ha saputo vincere il cuore, è un tale inferno, che non lo saprei spiegare volendo.

BRIGIDA. Ma come ha da finire, signora mia?

GIACINTA. Questo è quello ch'io non so dire, e che mi fa continuamente tremare.

BRIGIDA. Finalmente ella non è ancora sposata.

GIACINTA. E che vorresti tu ch'io facessi? Che mancassi alla mia parola? Che si lacerasse un contratto? L'ho io sottoscritto. L'ha sottoscritto mio padre. È noto ai parenti, è pubblico per la città. Che direbbe il mondo di me?¹⁵¹

150 Carlo Goldoni, *Le avventure della villeggiatura*, Act II, i. Transfixed, oppressed, mortified.

151 *ibid.* Act II, i. Giacinta: I use every art so that he [her betrothed Leonardo] doesn't notice, but I swear to you, I am suffering the pains of death. To have to give Leonardo the distinctions owed to a husband by his wife, and to see the other languish, to see suffer the man who has conquered my heart, is such great torment, that I

In addition to familiar manifestations of trembling and anguish, the pathetic element of doubt and indecision is carried throughout the work (“sono così confusa”), aggravated in this dialogue by a feeling of powerlessness beneath the oppression of the passions and the confines of social contracts that cannot be breached. Giacinta’s internal illness even becomes manifest in physical symptoms as she refuses food and experiences headaches in the manner of a tragic lover.

To use Goldoni’s own words, the role of Giacinta in *Le avventure della villeggiatura* is “una lunga disperazione, un combattimento di affetti, un misto d’eroismo e di tenerezza,”¹⁵² precisely the elements of a modern, realistic *serio*. The psychological realism of her lines contributes to the dramatic impact of her role and unequivocally seals the comedy as an exquisite mixture of *buffo* and *serio*, as we have often encountered in the *drammi giocosi*. The comedy also makes ample use of ensembles, with typical theatrical feats such as asides and parallel conversations, as well as the convergence of all characters at the conclusion of acts in operatic chorale style.

Coincidentally, the idea of *villeggiatura*, vacation in the countryside much in vogue among well-to-do Venetian families, is persistently made the object of comic critique in Goldoni, who in particular denounces the excesses of this fashion. The tradition is targeted not only in the other comedies of the *villeggiatura* trilogy (*Le smanie* and *Il ritorno*) but in numerous other comedies as well, including *La castalda* (The Gastald, 1751), *I malcontenti* (The Dissatisfied, 1755), and *La villeggiatura* (a distinct work, 1756). Goldoni also tackles the issue in music, beginning with the *dramma comico L’Arcadia in Brenta* (Arcadia on the River Brenta, 1749).

Looking back further, prototypical antecedents of *serio* and *larmoyant* can be found as early as *La putta onorata* (The Honorable Venetian

could describe it even if I wanted to. Brigida: But how will it end, my lady? G: This is what I don’t know, and what makes me tremble constantly. B: In the end, you are not yet married. G: And what would you have me do? Should I betray my word? Should I break a contract? I’ve signed it. My father has signed it. It’s known by to our family, it’s public in town. What would the world say of me? etc.

152 *ibid.*, Act III, xvi. (...) a long desperation, a contrast of affections, a mixture of heroism and tenderness.

Girl), written in the same year as Goldoni's first *dramma giocoso*, *La scuola moderna*. A largely successful

Venetian comedy that mixes Italian with dialect and masks with original characters, *La putta onorata* was premiered at the *Teatro S. Angelo* in 1749 and given for 22 consecutive nights. Giuseppe Ortolani has seen in the work "la rivendicazione della virtù del popolo nostro [veneziano] offesa, con triste tradizione, dalla leggerezza e dalla maldicenza dei viaggiatori stranieri,"¹⁵³ and the protagonist embodies Goldoni's attempt to create a positive image of Venetian women.

In a letter to his publisher Bettinelli, Goldoni clearly delineates the high level of realism of the work, "avendo io in più luoghi imitato le azioni e i ragionamenti della minuta gente." As in the early *intermezzo* *La Birba*, Goldoni again explicitly derives his characters from the direct, 'natural' imitation of real-life models: "i Gondolieri di Venezia... furono da me nella presente Commedia imitati con tanta attenzione che più volte mi posi ad ascoltarli, quando quistionavano, sollazzavansi o altre funzioni facevano, per poterli ricopiare nella mia Commedia naturalmente."¹⁵⁴ Bettina, Goldoni's heroine (originally Teodora Medebach), earns the title of *putta onorata* as she defends her honor when, like Lucia of Manzoni's *Promessi Sposi*, she is abducted by a man who desires her, in this case the Marchese Ottavio di Ripaverde (already married, at that). Much of the *serio* or *larmoyant* of the work arises from Bettina's pitiable circumstances during this episode, particularly from her confusion, as from her innocence:

153 Giuseppe Ortolani, "Introduzione" to *La Putta onorata in Tutte le opere di Carlo Goldoni*, a cura di Giuseppe Ortolani, vol. II. (Milano: Mondadori, 1936). (...) the vindication of the virtue of our people, offended, in a sad tradition, by the carelessness and malicious gossip of foreign travelers.

154 Carlo Goldoni, *La Putta onorata*, "Lettera dell'Autore al Bettinelli." I have in several places imitated the manners and discourse of the common people. (...) the Gondoliers, in the present work imitated with such great attention that many times I set myself to observing them, listening to their conversations when they argued, when they played, and when they did other things, to be able to recopy them in my Comedy naturally.

Oh povereta mi! Cossa mai sarà de mi? Dove songio? In che casa songio? Chi mai xe stà che m'ha menà via? (...) Povero Pasqualin, dove xestu, anema mia? Perché no viestu a agiutar la to povera Betina, che te vol tanto ben?¹⁵⁵

In her Venetian spirit, Bettina has little of the fearfulness or timidity of Manzoni's Lucia. As a true heroine, she is quick to act in adverse circumstances, and her stricken monologue (cited above) soon transforms grief into rage, even resolving to inflict physical punishment on her oppressor ("ghe darò...tante sgrafignare, che ghe farò piovèr el sangue"¹⁵⁶). The changeability of her role not only adds complexity to an original character but moreover contributes to an overarching sense of continual propulsion. In this comedy, in which action is dense and events are often hurried, characters change disposition within the span of a few lines. *La putta onorata* is in essence a sequence of *rovesciamenti*, as also testified by Goldoni's resolution of the work with a fantastic *peripezia*. The third Act uncovers two mistaken paternities: Pasqualino, Bettina's lover, while believed to be the son of a gondolier, in reality is the heir of the rich merchant Pantalone; conversely, the alleged son of Pantalone (Lelio) is in fact the real son of the gondolier.

More than Goldoni's inventiveness alone, the dramatic nature of these events and of *La putta onorata* as a whole reflects a growing appreciation for *romanzesco* elements. The combative heroine, the continual flow of action, and events such as infants swapped in the cradle or the abduction of a maiden, all point towards the adventurous, almost incredible, brand of action characteristic of new 18th century novels. Of course *La putta onorata* is still an early work and in more mature comedies and *drammi giocosi* Goldoni will often prefer more realistic solutions. However, elements of *romanzesco* will continue to inform some of the author's dramatic choices, particularly in new strains of sentimentalism.

155 *ibid.*, Act II, iii. Oh wretched me! What will become of me? Where am I? In whose house am I? Who's taken me here? (...) Poor Pasqualino, where are you, my soul? Why don't you come to the aid of poor Bettina, who loves you so? etc.

156 *ibid.*, Act II, iii. I'll scratch and swipe at him so much, that his blood will pour.

ii. Comedies that became *drammi giocosi*

The close relationship between Goldoni's comedies and libretti is not only detectable in the shared realism, *buffo* and *serio*, and dramatic techniques that we have seen, but confirmed by several cases of direct translation from one genre to the other. Most often, Goldoni drew *drammi giocosi* from his comedies, though some themes first explored in his libretti also served as the foundation for later works of prose theatre. Seen within the larger context of the author's entire output, occurrences of direct translation are not numerous, yet they can be traced from his early years through his mature production.

Naturally, not all instances of adaptation reflect the same degree of adherence to their original. The early *intermezzo Il quartiere fortunato* (The Lucky Neighborhood, 1744), for example, cannot be considered a direct source but rather the precedent for *L'amante militare* (The Military Lover, a reform comedy dated 1751). In the same way, other comedies do not explicitly testify the use of a libretto as a model, yet reveal a high degree of thematic affinity. The previously examined *La ritornata di Londra* (1756), for example, exploits the comic yet critical *topos* of a woman pursued by an entourage of suitors taken up in several later prose works. The larger outline of the plot is faithfully recovered in *L'apatista* (The Indifferent, 1758), in which the countess Lavinia, like her musical *controfigura* Petronilla, is encircled by gentlemen of diverse yet complementary nature. By no coincidence, the typified character traits of the men, one an impetuous captain, another the antithetical, apathetic philosopher, allow comedy and character study (particularly of the calibrated indifference of the latter) at the same time. Also akin to the peculiarity of *La ritornata di Londra*, all characters are of noble extraction; their tone is thus consistently elevated, though the high level of linguistic propriety is not always maintained in their actions. A final element of affinity between the two works resides in their reduced cast: Goldoni's libretto is scored for seven characters, and the comedy contains six. While a restrained number of characters is necessary in opera, where every plot element is dilated by music, a small cast is rather atypical in Goldoni's prose theatre, especially at this mature stage. The relative simplicity of *L'apatista* is clearly intended

to facilitate performance, particularly as the comedy, commissioned by the Marquis Francesco Albergati, was written for the semi-professional troupe of actors that performed in the private theatre of his villa at Zola.

A looser resemblance with *La ritornata di Londra* can also be found in *La donna stravagante* (The Bizarre Woman), a comedy in verse given during the same carnival season as the *dramma giocoso* (1756). Notwithstanding metrical constraints, this comedy appears particularly well developed in its characterizations and gained a positive reception at the *Teatro San Luca*. Its protagonist Livia is complex and original, but as an orphaned girl under the guardianship of her uncle, however strong willed, she has little in common with the emancipated diva Petronilla. More noteworthy is the fact that from *La donna stravagante*, Goldoni derived a second comedy, *La donna bizzarra*, given in the same season as *L'apatista* (1758). *La donna bizzarra*, also written for the Marchese Albergati, again presents a noblewoman (this time widowed) amid an entourage of suitors. The number of gentlemen has now grown to four, none of whom are ultimately desirable. As Goldoni himself admits, the comedy was written in undue haste, therefore recycles choice scenes from the earlier *La donna stravagante*. Poetically put, “qualche volta gli autori sono costretti a valersi del loro *baule*, come fanno i Maestri di musica.”¹⁵⁷ For this reason, the comedy preserves the *versi martelliani* of its source, though the characters have been modified and the plot somewhat reworked, so that Goldoni may assure, “senza scrupolo ho potuto dargliela per cosa nuova, e per tale posso ora darla alle stampe.”¹⁵⁸

The most prominent point of distinction between the two works is the declared critical intent of the second, which sheds a cautionary light on the protagonist, as on her suitors:

La bizzarria di questa mia Donna non dipende né da iracondia, né da vivezza di spirito, ma da capriccio, che vale a dire da una testa mal regolata. Vi sono delle Donne e degli Uomini di tal carattere; meritano di esser corretti, ed io ho avuto animo di far del bene a chi n'ha bisogno, e di far ridere chi è esente da tal difetto. Ma chi sa che non rida degli altri chi è più attaccato da una simile malattia? Raro

157 Carlo Goldoni, *La donna bizzarra*, “The Author to his Readers.” Sometimes, authors have to dip into their *trunk* just like musicians do.

158 *ibid.* Without scruple, I can deliver it as a new work, and as such send it to print.

è lo specchio che disinganni, l'amor proprio vi mette un velo, e l'abitudine fa che si sente l'odore degli altri, e non si fa caso del nostro.¹⁵⁹

We find in this introduction a clear reprise of Goldoni's Horatian belief in the moral potential of comic theatre. Of particular note is the absence of differentiation between flawed women and men. In a spirit close to *La ritornata di Londra*, the panorama of flaw is of universal scope.

Moving beyond these primary elements of contact between Goldoni's two theatres, we may now consider works that more explicitly testify direct translation from one genre to the other. Goldoni first unequivocal derivation of a *dramma giocoso* from a reform comedy is *Lo speciale* (The Apothecary, 1755), built from elements of *La finta ammalata* (The False Patient, 1751). As its opening date betrays, the comedy was one of sixteen such works famously turned out in a single season for Girolamo Medebach, while the *dramma giocoso*, first premiered at the *Teatro S. Samuele* with music by Vincenzo Pallavicini and Domenico Fischietti (it was not uncommon for different composers to set *serio* and *buffo* roles), is readily available even today thanks to the musical rendition by Franz Joseph Haydn.

With the expansion of every verse in song, Goldoni's reworkings from a prose original for musical theatre always logically appear as reductions. In this particular case, however, the author does not condense the entire plot while maintaining its most prominent features as he will do elsewhere, but instead spins an entirely new libretto from a single element of the comedy, the character of the apothecary. *La finta ammalata* revolves around a hypochondriac whose only real malady is love, and the attempts of an *équipe* of doctors (an honest one and two corrupt foils), to procure her remedy. With three doctors, an anxious father, and a surgeon in the picture, the apothecary, whose character is nevertheless well developed, necessarily remains secondary in

159 *ibid.* The oddity of this leading lady does not stem from temper or vivacity of spirit, but from whim, in other words from a mind that is not well governed. There are women and men of this type; they deserve to be redressed, and I have a mind to give help to who is in need, and to entertain those who are exempt from these flaws. But who can say if he who laughs the most is not afflicted by the same illness? Rare is the mirror that disenchant, for pride often veils it, and habit leads us to detect the smell of others, but does notice our own.

an already male-dominated plot. He is an accomplice of the false doctors, but the more artisanal nature of his profession does not grant him their status. In synthesis, the comedy is an attack on false medicine, and those false doctors who, simulating abstruse expertise, make their fortune treating patients with invented remedies. While the apothecary seldom has the opportunity to treat patients directly, he too participates in the fraud by lobbying for a greater number of prescriptions and for remedies of greater cost.

Lo speciale takes a cue precisely from this aspect of the *La finta ammalata*, yet the comedy's polemical bent is notably softened in favor of the introduction of amorous sub-plots. While *La finta ammalata* sees all characters revolve around a single protagonist and her desires, *Lo speciale* is built upon the parallel intrigues between the apothecary's daughter, another young girl he looks after, and their respective romantic partners. Continuity between comedy and libretto is thus manifest uniquely in the transposed apothecary Sempronio, who shares with his predecessor crucial aspects of character, namely a scarcely professional predilection for the latest gossip, and reliance upon the *gazzetta* (a sort of almanac) for his medical authority. Despite the amorous intrigues new to *Lo speciale*, however, the original theme of false medicine is preserved at least in part through a new character, the assistant pharmacist Mengone. While Mengone harbors none of the contrivance of the profit-seeking doctors of *La finta ammalata*, being illiterate and unable to decipher prescriptions, he too invents cures in like manner.

A much higher level of correspondence between comedy and opera can be detected in the *dramma giocoso* *La donna di governo* (The Governess, 1761), reworked from a comedy of the same title written for the *Teatro S. Luca* in 1758. Of the text we have spoken earlier (the score unfortunately has not survived), noting in particular its desolate panorama of moral corruption, headed by the unscrupulous protagonist Corallina. The introduction to the comedy befits the negative heroine of the *libretto* as much as its own protagonist:

Eppure anche i tristi caratteri s'hanno da far conoscere sulla Scena, per rimproverarli, per opprimerli, per isvergognarli. L'arte insegna in tal caso a moderarne l'aspetto, a estendersi fin dovella modestia il permette, e lasciar campo all'uditore di concepire il di più, che non apparisce sul palco e che l'Autore ritiene nella penna per onestà e per dovere. Si trovano delle Donne pur troppo, che costrette

dallo stato loro a vivere del pane altrui, se ne abusano malamente, e guadagnando l'animo del Padrone, lo conducono dove l'ambizione o il mal costume le porta. Ho veduto cogli occhi miei delle Famiglie in disordine, in disunione, in rumori grandissimi per causa di quelle lusinghiere serventi, che aspirano a dominare. Entrano in casa per Governanti delle Famiglie, e il loro governo tende per ordinario a fabbricare la propria fortuna sulle rovine dei Figliuoli medesimi. Succede poi bene spesso, che altri divori alla Governante ciò ch'ella con mala arte procaccia, ma non sì spesso accade ch'ella finisca con quel rossore e con quel castigo che merita, poichè gli acciecati Padroni lasciano talora anche dopo morte la memoria della loro fatuità e debolezza, beneficandole per le loro insidie, e per le loro studiate simulazioni. Io ho avuto in vista in questa Commedia di smascherare alcune di queste false zelanti per li loro Padroni, e d'illuminare altresì que' tali che più credono ad una mercenaria adulatrice servente, anziché ai Parenti, agli Amici, ed al loro sangue medesimo.¹⁶⁰

Again, we are made aware of familiar notions: Goldoni's desire to denounce and redress moral corruption through the benefits of comic *mimesis*, and at the same time his extraction of character types from the witnessed experience of daily life ("ho veduto cogli occhi miei"). Corallina, like her prose predecessor Valentina, is one of those women who, employed by others, take advantage ("ne abusano malamente"),

160 Carlo Goldoni, *La donna di governo*, "The Author to his Readers." And yet, all those deplorable characters must be made known, to reproach them, to suppress them, and to give them shame. Art can in this case teach moderation, going only as far as modesty permits, and letting the listener go further in his imagination to see what does not appear on the stage, which the Author keeps closed in his pen for reasons of honor and duty. There are certain Women, unfortunately, who, forced by their condition to live off the wealth of others, take advantage savagely, and, earning their Master's soul, lead him where their ambition and dishonorable ways desire. I have seen with my own eyes Families in disorder and disunion, in great scandal for fault of those flattering servants who aspire to govern the house. They enter as Governesses for Families, and their mode of government usually tends to produce their own profit to the ruin of the children. It then occurs frequently, that another takes from the Governess what she with dubious arts has gained, though not so often does it happen that she ends up with the redness of shame and the punishment that she deserves, given that the blinded Masters leave even after death the memory of their weakness and their fatuousness, rewarding them for their schemes and their studied pretensions. In this comedy I set my sights on unmasking these actors of false zeal for their Masters, and on enlightening moreover those who give credence to such flattering mercenaries, instead of to their Families, to their Friends, and to their own blood.

spurred by ambition, or worse, *mal costume*. Differently from *Lo speciale*, Corallina is far from the only point of contact between the prose and operatic *La donna di governo*. From comedy to libretto, Goldoni maintains all of the essential characters, even allowing a direct correspondence of names in the case of Fabrizio, the *benestante* head of the house, and Fulgenzio, the *serio* lover of his niece Giuseppina (in opera Rosalba). Other important characters maintained from comedy into opera include the governess's sister, the servant who is Corallina's accomplice, and most importantly the governess's lover, who reaps benefit from her deception of Fabrizio.

While the lovers of Valentina and Corallina do not share a name, their characterization is in fact identical. Goldoni not only leaves their dishonesty uncovered, but more conveniently transposes excerpts from his comedy into *recitativo*, carried word for word. The procedure becomes apparent from the opening of both comedy and opera, in which the lover protests:

Non so far niente...Servire? ho i miei riguardi. Son solito dal letto levarmi un poco tardi. Sentirmi comandare avvezzo non son io. Mi piace, e mi è piaciuto, far sempre a modo mio.¹⁶¹

The parallels continue almost identically. In comedy,

BALDISSERA. Servir non fa per me.

VALENTINA. Qualche cosa nel mondo devi pur far.

BALDISSERA. Perché? Ho vissuto finora senza far nulla, e adesso Dovrei morir di fame con una moglie appresso?

becomes

CORALLINA. Qualche cosa dei far.

RIDOLFO. Per qual ragione? Campai senza mestiere infino adesso e ho da temer con una moglie appresso?¹⁶²

161 Carlo Goldoni, Comedy, I, i; Opera, I, v. I don't know how to do anything. To serve? I have my scruples. I am used to getting out of bed late. I'm not used to taking orders. I like, and I've always liked, to do as I please.

162 *ibid.* In comedy: B: Serving is not for me. V: Well, you'll have to do something in this world. B: Why? I've lived until now without doing anything, and now I should

Just as Goldoni must reduce the plot in a larger structural sense to fit five acts of comedy into three of opera, he also operates at the minute level to render his text concise enough for music. Masterfully, even while Goldoni reworks his comedy in such a high degree of fidelity, he does not preclude the use of typically operatic devices, such as the aria (Baldissera's exit in comedy becomes a solo piece in opera). In this respect, the fact that Goldoni's comedy had been written in verse (*versi martelliani*, a double septenary structure) appears particularly advantageous, a further motive whereby only slight changes were required for the libretto.

Textual parallels continue to the end of the scene and beyond, traceable in the interactions of the central characters, while secondary figures that occupy stage time in the comedy, namely a second sister for Giuseppina and a maternal aunt who takes up their defense, are cut by Goldoni to streamline his libretto. Certain episodes from the comedy are therefore entirely absent from the libretto, but stretches of textual parallelism resurface with regularity, preserving all the distinct character flaws of the principal figures. Considering the length of these scenes, we may consider one example representative of others, and analyze the parallels that arise as the governess interacts directly with Fabrizio.

Originally, we find:

FABRIZIO. Valentina. (*come sopra*)

VALENTINA. Si sfiati, se vuol, quest'animale. Egli ha da far un giorno la fin delle cicale.

FABRIZIO. Che tu sia maladetta; possa cascarti il cuore. (*escendo fuori, senza veder Valentina*) Dove sei, Valenti...? (*scoprendo Valentina, rimane sorpreso*)

VALENTINA. Eccomi qui, signore. (*facendo una riverenza caricata*)

FABRIZIO. Grido, grido, e non sente. (*con sdegno*)

VALENTINA. Grida, grida, e si sfiata. (*con arroganza*)

FABRIZIO. Perché non rispondete? (*come sopra*)

VALENTINA. Perch'era addormentata. (*come sopra*)

FABRIZIO. A quest'ora?

VALENTINA. A quest'ora.

Saran quattr'ore e più

starve with a wife by my side? In opera: C: You must do something. R: For what reason? I've gotten by without a trade until now, and I should fear with a wife by my side?

Che ho fatto in questa casa levar la servitù.
 Ho fatto ripulire le stanze, il suolo, il tetto,
 Ho fatto spiumacciare le coltrici del letto,
 Lustrar nella cucina il rame insudiciato
 E han fatto queste mani il pane ed il bucato.
 Ma qui non si fa nulla. Qui si fatica invano.
 Il padron sempre grida. Che vivere inumano!
 Casa peggior di questa non vidi in vita mia;
 L'ho detto cento volte, voglio di qui andar via.
 FABRIZIO. Subito vi scaldate. (*mansueto*)
 VALENTINA. Mi scaldo con ragione.
 FABRIZIO. Non sapea che dormiste.
 VALENTINA. No, non vi è discrezione.
 Ritrovatene un'altra che faccia quel ch'io faccio.
 Se non foss'io... ma basta, fo il mio dovere, e taccio.
 Del faticar sinora non mi ho mai lamentato;
 Spiacemi aver che fare con un padrone ingrato.
 FABRIZIO. No, cara Valentina, ingrato io non vi sono.
 Se ho detto quel che ho detto, vi domando perdono.
 Ho questo naturale perfido e doloroso,
 Facilmente mi accendo, ma poi sono amoroso;
 Amoroso con tutti, e più con voi, carina.
 Non so che non farei per la mia Valentina.
 VALENTINA. Questa è la gratitudine che dal padron si aspetta:
Possa cascarti il cuore; che tu sia maladetta.
 Mi alzo per faticare, che ancor non ci si vede,
 Ed ei cogli strapazzi mi rende la mercede.
 FABRIZIO. Puh, mi darei nel capo un colpo micidiale. (*dandosi da sé stesso un pugno nella testa*)
 VALENTINA. (Batti, accoppiati pure). (*da sé*)
 FABRIZIO. Lo so ch'io son bestiale.
 E voi pure il sapete, e compatir conviene
 Qualche volta il difetto di un uom che vi vuol bene.¹⁶³

163 Carlo Goldoni, *La donna di governo* (comedy); Act I, ii. Fabrizio: Valentina. Valentina: Let him run out of breath, this animal. F: Curse you, may your heart fall out (*exiting without seeing Valentina*). Where are you, Valenti...? (*seeing her, he is surprised*). V: Here I am, sir (*with an exaggerated curtsy*) F: I yell, I scream, and you don't hear me. (*with irritation*) V: You yell, you scream, and you waste your breath (*with arrogance*). F: Why don't you answer? (*as above*) V: Because I was asleep. (*as above*) F: At this hour? V: At this hour? V: It's now been more than four hours since I woke up all the servants. I had them clean the rooms, the floors, the roof, I had them shake out the beds, scrub the copper in the kitchens, and with

In opera, all the above content is preserved, only visibly condensed:

FABRIZIO. Corallina. (*Di dentro*)
CORALLINA. Animalaccio. (*Da sé*)
FABRIZIO. Corallina. Che tu sia malede... (*Esce e s'incontra in Corallina*)
CORALLINA. Grazie, signore.
FABRIZIO. Grido, grido e non sente. (*Con sdegno*)
CORALLINA. Grida, grida e si sfiata. (*Con arroganza*)
FABRIZIO. Perché non rispondete? (*Come sopra*)
CORALLINA. Perché era addormentata. (*Come sopra*)
FABRIZIO. A quest'ora?
CORALLINA. A quest'ora. Saran quattr'ore e più
che ho fatto risvegliar la servitù.
Ho fatto ripulire
le stanze infino al tetto,
spiumacciar più d'un letto,
lustrar nella cucina
il rame insudiciato
e han fatto queste man pane e bucato.
Ma qui non si fa niente;
servo un padrone ingrato.
Casa peggior non vidi in vita mia.
L'ho detto e lo farò; voglio andar via.
FABRIZIO. Uh! Mi darei nel capo
un colpo micidiale. (*Si dà nella testa*)
CORALLINA. (Datti, accopati pur). (*Da sé*)

my own hands, I made the bread and did the wash. But here no work gets done, all efforts are in vain. The master always yells. What an inhuman way to live! I never saw a worse house in my life; and I've said it a hundred times, I want to leave. F: You anger so quickly (*meekly*) V: I anger with good reason. F: I didn't know you were asleep. V: No, there is no reserve. Find yourself another who does what I do. If it weren't for me... but enough, I do my duty, and hold my tongue. I never before complained of my toils; but I don't like having anything to do with an ungrateful master. F: No, dear Valentina, I'm not ungrateful. If I said what I did, I ask forgiveness. I am of an illIspirited, distressed nature, I am quick to anger, but I can be loving too; Loving with all, but more so with you, sweet. I don't know what I'd do for my Valentina. V: This is the recognition I expect from my master: *May your heart fall out; may you be damned*. I get up to work, we've yet to cross paths in the day, that you immediately thank me with scoldings. F: Puh, I'd give myself such a blow to the head (*hitting himself on the head*) V: (Beat, go ahead and kill yourself) (*aside*) F: I know I am an animal. And you know it too, yet you must have compassion for a man who loves you.

FABRIZIO. Sì, son bestiale.
Ma voi mi conoscete
e compatir conviene
qualche volta un padron che vi vuol bene.¹⁶⁴

This textual evidence proves tangible contact between Goldoni's opera and prose theatre. In the transposition of scenes at a high level of fidelity, Goldoni also preserves the moral and critical intent of the comedy in his libretto. Differences between the two works, aside from the natural reduction of the acts and the elimination of auxiliary characters, are few. The most notable adjustment in content is the replacement of rage episodes in comedy with a *larmoyant* type of *serio* in the opera, advantageous in many respects. The choice for new tragic hues does not subtract from the realism of the *parti serie* involved, but rather enhances it as we have seen, and this ampler diversification in turn translates into greater musical variety. Furthermore, we must understand the expansion of *serio* as a logical dramatic consequence of Goldoni's other changes. In particular, in comedy the governess prevails over two sisters, who however can count on their mutual support and that of an aunt to ultimately resolve the plot in their favor. The necessary reductions for the *dramma giocoso* leave only one sister, and Goldoni removes all of her supporting characters. The tendency of Rosalba towards despair and self-pity is thus a natural consequence of her isolation, and appears a realistic reaction to her impotence.

The analogous conclusions of the two works prove that, aside from these few crucial differences, the relationship between them is one of common purpose. In particular, in opera as in comedy Goldoni preserves his commentary and condemnation of blind infatuation. Both protagonists are ultimately forgiven by a hurt but still love-struck Fabrizio, who furthermore bestows a hefty dowry upon them, as foretold: "non si spesso accade ch'ella [the governess who takes advantage] finisca con quel rossore e con quel castigo che merita, poiché gli acciecati Padroni lasciano talora anche dopo morte la memoria della loro fatuità e debolezza, beneficandole per le loro insidie, e per le loro studiate

164 Carlo Goldoni, *La donna di governo (dramma giocoso)*; Act I, viii. Translation above.

simulazioni.”¹⁶⁵ In sum, together with his augmentation of *serio* in the *dramma giocoso*, Goldoni does not hesitate to expose the real world in opera theatre in equal measure as in his comedy.

The two renditions of *La donna di governo* testify that Goldoni could not have seen comic theatre and opera theatre as incompatible arts, nor did he believe musical theatre to be less capable of harboring the same reformist traits and social critique at the core of his best comedies.

Il povero superbo (1755), a case of particular complexity, confirms this unequivocally. This *dramma giocoso*, premiered at the Teatro S. Samuele like so many others, was not only derived from a previous comedy by Goldoni, *La Gastalda* (1751, published by Bettinelli amid bitter controversies in ‘53), but served, in turn, as the basis or ‘twin work’ for another prose comedy, *La Castalda* (1754–55). This latter comedy, deliberately entrusted by the author to the florentine editor Paperini, bears clear correspondance of title, albeit ‘tuscanized,’ with *La Gastalda*, but the common ground between them does not go much beyond- likely a direct consequence of the conflicts of interest in copyright claims arisen when Bettinelli published the ‘original’ of his own accord.

Correspondances and divergences between the two comedies, and between the comedies and the libretto, have already been weighed exhaustively by Lucio Tufano, who has even sublimated Goldoni’s process of rewriting in a series of very clear diagrams.¹⁶⁶ It is not necessary therefore to repeat that information here, but the case of *il povero superbo* must nonetheless be brought to the forefront as an additional, indisputable, witness to the near noexistent line of distinction between comedy and libretto in Goldoni’s creative process. The chronology of the works in question imply that Goldoni inevitably drafted comedy and libretto side by side, a circumstance apparently confirmed by the fact that, singularly enough, Goldoni did not append his name (Arcadian or otherwise) to this particular libretto. Good lawyer that he was, this only logical motivation for this choice must have been an effort to avoid

165 Carlo Goldoni, *La donna di governo* (comedy), previously cited.

166 For further reading see Lucio Tufano, Introduzione a Carlo Goldoni, *Drammi comici per musica*, vol. 3 (Venezia: Marsilio, 2016).

formally connecting himself to a text so similar to a new comedy yet written for another theatre (Grimani's newly restored *S. Samuele*), in other words a text that could risk violation of the terms of exclusivity of his contract with Vendramin.

We come finally to Goldoni's *dramma giocoso La buona figliuola* (The Good Girl), adapted from his comedy *La Pamela*. The prose version has been extensively noted in scholarship particularly for its tragic or pathetic accents, and the opera derived from it, which preserves and augments these traits, represents a significant innovation in the direction of Goldoni's reform, and more broadly in the direction of a new, contemporary, and realistic opera theatre. *La buona figliuola* and even more so its original, *La Pamela*, are important indicators of the new influence of English novels on the European imagination, and most importantly of the new *larmoyant* style previously defined. As the author announces in his *Prefazione*, "questa è una Commedia in cui le passioni sono con tanta forza e tanta delicatezza trattate, quanto in una Tragedia richiederebbersi,"¹⁶⁷ reason for which AnnaMaria Finetto asserts, "ascrivere la *Pamela* di Goldoni al genere "commedia" è ...per certi aspetti riduttivo."¹⁶⁸ Derived by Goldoni from Samuel Richardson's epistolary novel, *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* (1741), *La Pamela* overturns all of the comic irreality of the traditional *serva padrona*. Another legacy of Goldoni's prodigious year of the sixteen comedies, it was first given in 1750 with Medebach. A sequel of even greater success, *La Pamela maritata* (Pamela Married), followed ten years later (immediately translated into German, Spanish, and French), prompting editors Bettinelli and Paperini to subsequently list the original as *Pamela fanciulla* (Pamela Nubile) for reasons of distinction.

Before considering Goldoni's operatic adaptation (with particular regard to its treatment of *serio*), a word must be said regarding the author's intervention on Richardson's original. The story of Pamela is

167 Carlo Goldoni, *La Pamela*, Forward. This is a Comedy in which the passions are treated with such force and such delicacy as would be required in a Tragedy.

168 AnnaMaria Finetto, "La Pamela e La Buona Figliuola: Il Linguaggio Patetico di Goldoni", in *Studi Goldoniani quaderno 8* (Venezia: Casa di Goldoni e Istituto di Studi Teatrali dei Musei Civici Veneziani, 1988); 107. Ascribing Goldoni's *Pamela* to the genre of comedy is in some ways reductive.

one of contrast between internal affection and social obligation, and it confronts the potential incompatibility between 18th century class structure and Enlightenment philosophy. The heroine, whose letters to home make up the novel, is a modern English *putta onorata*, of humble origin but noble spirit. With the protection of a noblewoman who comes to love her as a daughter, Pamela receives an excellent education and all that she needs to function in high society. Her fortune changes dramatically at the death of the Lady, as Pamela becomes victim of the violent temperament of her son, torn between his love and admiration for Pamela's character and contempt for her origins. Pamela's virtue never falters, and, after many tempestuous ordeals including attempted physical assaults and abduction (the hallmark of a *romanzesco* work), rewards her with a felicitous union to the son of her late mistress, transcending every social barrier and norm.

An extremely popular tale, Richardson's novel was partially reworked in Italy by Pietro Chiari and the Neapolitan Francesco Cerlone (1730–1812) among others. Cerlone, who worked as a librettist in Rome from 1750, like Goldoni authored two comedies, *Pamela nubile* and *Pamela maritata*. It is unknown whether the authors ever interacted, but it is certain that they shared a composer, Giovanni Paisiello, who first set Goldoni's *Il mondo della luna*.

Goldoni's own rendition of *Pamela* boasts a long legacy. His comic reduction was published in England as early as 1756 (editor John Nourse) together with another Medebach comedy, *Il padre di famiglia* (The Family Father, 1750), within a bilingual edition interestingly advertised as *A New Method of Learning the Italian Tongue*. More importantly, scholars have identified Goldoni as a source for subsequent *Pamela* adaptations throughout Europe, including Voltaire's *L'Ecossaise* (The Scottish Girl, 1760) and *Pamela, ou la vertu récompensée* (Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded) by François de Neufchâteau (1793) in France.¹⁶⁹

Goldoni's changes for opera theatre are necessarily oriented towards a reduction of content. His comedy therefore begins long after the death of Pamela's kind mistress, almost at the eve of the union between the

169 T. Keymar, P. Sabor, *Pamela in the Marketplace: literary controversy and print culture in eighteenth century Britain and Ireland*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); 138.

maiden and the heir Bonfil. Consequently, Bonfil retains some of Richardson's characterization in his rash temper, but displays none of the violent behavior of his early days. Goldoni prefers to highlight instead a mature state of respectful admiration for Pamela, intensified by an all-consuming love and dependence on her presence, and a resulting tendency towards melancholic humor. The action is entirely carried out within the walls of Bonfil's home; dramatic episodes of physical nature, such as Pamela's abduction, are wholly excluded in favor of emphasis on interior conflict, which constitutes the core of the action. These changes are by no means, however, the most noteworthy.

More than a mere reduction, Goldoni also directly alters Richardson's plot. Most notably, he removes the political undertones of the original in effacing its radical message of equality. Goldoni's Pamela, unlike her predecessor, is discovered through a *coup de scene* to be of noble blood. She does not, therefore, attain marriage directly because of her personal merits, but only thanks to a deliverance from her social status in which she plays no active role. Not only does Bonfil not transcend the constraints of his social order in acknowledgment of her moral worth, but moreover Pamela's virtuous conduct is retrospectively framed almost as a physiological consequence of her blood, therefore her free will undermined, and its merit reduced. Goldoni explains:

Il premio della virtù è l'oggetto dell'Autore Inglese; a me piacque assaissimo una tal mira, ma non vorrei che al merito della virtù si sacrificasse il decoro delle Famiglie. Pamela, benché vile ed abietta, merita di essere da un Cavaliere sposata; ma un Cavaliere dona troppo al merito di Pamela, se non ostante la viltà de' natali, la prende in isposa. Vero è che in Londra poco scrupolo si fanno alcuni di cotai nozze, e legge non vi è colà che le vieti; ma vero è non meno, che niuno amerà per questo che il figliuolo, il fratello, il congiunto sposi una bassa femmina, anziché una sua pari, quantunque sia, più di questa, virtuosa quella e gentile.¹⁷⁰

170 Carlo Goldoni, *La Pamela*, "The Author to his Readers." The reward of virtue is the subject of the English author; I liked it very much, but I wouldn't want to sacrifice the dignity of Families to the merit of virtue. Pamela, while vile and abject, merits that a Gentleman should marry her; but a Gentleman would give her too much merit, if her were to marry her in spite of the lowliness of her birth. It is true that in London such a union does not raise concern, and there is no law there to forbid it; but it is no less certain that no one because of this would like for his

This decision may appear uncharacteristic, especially in light of the Enlightenment ideals we often associate with Goldoni's comedies. It becomes more comprehensible, however, when we remember that *La Pamela* is a relatively early work, written during Goldoni's first contract as a dramatist. Preservation of all aspects of Richardson's original would easily have ascribed a radical stance to a young author just beginning to gain the goodwill of Venetian spectators. The delicacy of this societal matter, and likely a certain discomfort with the issue, is betrayed by the ambiguity of the remarks that follow:

Non so, se su tal punto saranno i perspicacissimi ingegni dell'Inghilterra di me contenti. Io non intendo disapprovare ciò che da essi non si condanna; accordar voglio ancora, che coi principi della natura sia preferibile la virtù alla nobiltà e alla ricchezza, ma siccome devesi sul Teatro far valere quella morale che viene dalla pratica più comune approvata, perdoneranno a me la necessità, in cui ritrovato mi sono, di non offendere il più lodato costume.¹⁷¹

Goldoni's language suggests a high regard for the 'great minds' of England, and his request for pardon, however rhetorical, leaves open the possibility of a divarication between his personal beliefs and the constraints of his first professional debut. What is more, while Goldoni resolves the action in a less socially charged manner, he does not wholly eliminate egalitarian notions from his comedy, offered by various characters throughout the work. An unequivocal example is the following tirade spoken by Pamela's governess, which appears almost as a prose exit aria:

Che si abbia a morire per salvar l'onore, l'intendo; ma che sia disonore sposare una povera ragazza onesta, non la capisco. Io ho sentito dir tante volte che il mondo sarebbe più bello, se non l'avessero guastato gli uomini, i quali per cagione

son, brother, or other relation to marry, instead of a lady his equal, a lowly woman, even if she were more virtuous and ladylike than the other.

- 171 *ibid.* I don't know if on this matter the perceptive minds of England will approve of what I've done. I do not intend to disapprove of what they do not condemn; and I further convene that following the principles of nature, virtue is always preferable to nobility and to wealth, but since in the Theatre I must reflect those customs upheld by common practice, they will forgive me for the necessity in which I found myself, to not offend the more largely approved tradition.

della superbia hanno sconcertato il bellissimo ordine della natura. Questa madre comune ci considera tutti eguali, e l'alterigia dei grandi non si degna dei piccoli. Ma verrà un giorno, che dei piccoli e dei grandi si farà nuovamente tutta una pasta. (*parte*)¹⁷²

There are also strong lines given to Bonfil (e.g. “Quanto cambierei volentieri questo gran palazzo con una delle vostre capanne!”¹⁷³), in which the incompatibility of logic and rationality with imposed constraints of class division comes to the forefront:

Tutti amano Pamela, ed io non la dovrò amare? Ma il mio grado... Che grado? Sarò nato nobile, perché la nobiltà mi abbia a rendere sventurato? Pamela val più d'un regno, e se fossi un re, amerei Pamela più della mia corona. Ma l'amo tanto, ed ho cuor di lasciarla? Mi priverò della cosa più preziosa di questa terra? La cederò a mia sorella? Partirò per non più vederla?¹⁷⁴

Also of note in this excerpt is the *larmoyant* quality of *serio* that colors these lines. In particular, the sequence of questions creates a feeling of restlessness, yearning, and again, the most powerful element of *pathos*: self-doubt. Gallarati has observed that, in opera, Goldoni further removes the more weighted monologues of his comedy (such as those above), though his conclusion, “Goldoni li considerava evidentemente incompatibili con la ‘frivolezza’ del teatro cantato”¹⁷⁵ is not

172 *ibid.*; Act III, iii. That one should die to save his honor, I understand; but that it be dishonorable to marry an honest girl because she is poor, I do not comprehend. I've heard it said many times that the world would be more beautiful if only men had not ruined it, men who, by reason of their arrogance, have upset the superb order of nature. This common mother considers us all equals, while the haughtiness of the greats disdains the common people. But there will come a day in which the great and the humble will once more become one mold. (*exits*)

173 *ibid.*; Act III, vi. How gladly I would exchange this great palazzo for one of your huts!

174 *ibid.*, Act I, xii. Everyone loves Pamela, and I should not love her? But my rank... what rank? Was I born a nobleman so that my nobility could make me wretched? Pamela is worth more than a kingdom, and were I a King, I would love her more than my crown. I love her so, yet I have heart to leave her? Will I deprive myself of the most precious thing on this earth? Will I give her up to my sister? Depart to never see her again?

175 Paolo Gallarati, *Musica e Maschera*; 135. Goldoni evidently considered them incompatible with the ‘frivolity’ of opera theatre.

entirely supported by Goldoni's operatic text. In particular, while in his *dramma giocoso* Goldoni does distance himself further from the original *Pamela*, Goldoni's libretto clearly maintains elements of moderated *serio* as above, largely responsible for the work's success. What is more, the many *drammi giocosi* examined through the course of this chapter (not to mention the close interconnection of opera theatre to comedy in *La donna di governo*) all testify that Goldoni hardly avoided taking a stance on social issues through his musical theatre. As we have seen in numerous libretti (*Il filosofo di campagna*, etc.) the life of commoners, in its closeness to nature, is often cited as a positive foil for corruption in the city, where, in the words of M.me Jevre, "gli uomini (...) per cagione della superbia hanno sconcertato il bellissimo ordine della natura" (men, by reason of their arrogance, have upset the beautiful order of nature).

First premiered in Parma in 1757 with music by Egidio Romualdo Duni, *La buona figliuola* became widely renowned in 1760 when it was given with a new musical setting by Niccolò Piccinni at the *Teatro delle Dame* in Rome, boasting thereafter a long itinerary throughout Europe, subsequently performed in Vienna, London, Madrid, Berlin, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Paris, and even young Philadelphia. Goldoni's derivation from *La Pamela* preserves an intermediate degree of fidelity to his source. While the author never includes close textual citation (nor any correspondence of name between characters) as we find in *La donna di governo*, he also does not create an altogether new plot as with *Lo speziale*. Instead, Goldoni maintains the same dynamics of relation between the central characters, preserving Pamela (now Cecchina, perhaps named after a character from an earlier *dramma giocoso*, *La cascina*), her Bonfil (the Marchese della Conchiglia), and his aristocratic and disapproving sister Lady Daure (the Marchesa Lucinda), yet also transposing the saga to an Italian setting, and most importantly diversifies the dramatic spectrum of the opera with new secondary characters. Entirely original additions include a lover of the Marchesa (*serio*) and an array of *parti buffe*: a maid, two farmers, and a foreign soldier. The most noteworthy aspect of this *dramma giocoso* remains its treatment of Cecchina and the Marchese as realistic *mezzi caratteri*, as seen previously. While the *dramma giocoso* presents significant departures from Goldoni's comedy, it remains an important milestone in psychological

realism and moreover, in the creation of a new brand of *serio* that, attenuated, realistic, and freed from all Metastasian influence, is decidedly modern and will have a lasting influence beyond 18th century Venice. Furthermore, the examples of direct translation cited above prove varying degrees of contact between Goldoni's comic theatre and his opera texts. Most of all, they testify to the author's efforts to improve comedy through realism by the progressive attenuation of stereotypical role divisions. Thanks to the foundations laid by our author, opera after Goldoni will be able to accomplish what Gallarati has called "la trasformazione del melodramma comico in una grande commedia musicale."¹⁷⁶

iii. Goldoni as musical reformer

Goldoni's realist reform, undertaken at great cost in his prose theatre and reflected in his *drammi giocosi*, can be understood from many angles. The author's autobiographical remarks are filled with testimony of a changing horizon. From an initial desire to move beyond the masks of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, Goldoni's new style and a new comic practice set in motion a transformation of greater scope, which comes gradually into focus:

Nel primo e secondo anno di tale mio esercizio [as a comic author] non ho azzardata Commedia alcuna senza le Maschere, ma queste bensì a poco per volta sono andato rendendo men necessarie, facendo vedere al popolo che si poteva ridere senza di loro, e che anzi quella specie di riso, che viene dal frizzo nobile e spiritoso, è quella propria degl'omini di giudizio.¹⁷⁷

176 Paolo Gallarati, *Musica e Maschera*; 136. The transformation of comic opera into great musical comedy.

177 Carlo Goldoni, *Nona Lettera dell'Autore allo Stampatore* dell'edizione Bettinelli di Venezia, 17501 52, riportato in *Opere di Carlo Goldoni*, a cura di Gianfranco Folena e Nicola Mangini, (Tomo VII a cura di Giovanni Getto) (Milano: Mursia, 1975); 1334. During my first two years as a playwright, I did not venture any comedy without Masks, but instead little by little I made these less necessary, showing audiences that they could laugh even without them, and moreover, that

A comic theatre for a new, enlightened audience (“uomini di giudizio”) is one capable of responding to the issues of its own time without the abstraction of masks or stereotyped characters. Beyond a question of style, Goldoni’s realist reform necessarily acquires a higher implication, as it reflects the transformations of the social makeup, and captures the virtues and shortcomings of the modern lifestyle in all social contexts. Goldoni’s reform comedies and *drammi giocosi* must also acknowledge current trends of thought, including rationalized Enlightenment messages of equality. Goldoni’s reform of the spoken theatre is a thus double-sided coin, aiming at the renewal of theatrical custom and of social mores. While developing comedy without the *Commedia dell’Arte* mask and beyond the limits of superficial improvisation, Goldoni also makes his theatre the mirror of everyday life to exalt or deprecate its characters, a choice radically detached from the fantastical theatre of Carlo Gozzi, much in fashion in his day. Goldoni’s contributions to the *dramma giocoso* must be evaluated according to this double achievement of ideological and formal renewal.

The ideological continuity between the majority of the *drammi giocosi* and the reform plays becomes apparent as Goldoni, following natural inclination, confronts the most widespread societal flaws in his libretti. *Drammi giocosi* and comedies alike are filled with positive and negative examples of every social condition, derived from firsthand observation (as the author deliberately reminds us). As the rigid barriers of tradition are dismantled, commoners, *borghesi*, and aristocratic characters display honesty, dishonesty, intelligence and foolishness.

We have also traced a number of recurring themes in Goldoni’s opera theatre, including the contrast between Nature and civil corruption, between nobility of name and of deed, and the critique of rampant vices including excessive vanity, materialism, and fraud. Franco Fido’s affirmation that the libretti are used more as ground for theatrical experimentation and farce (“scherzi e giochi di parole, paradossi e calembours, onomatopée e iperboli, equivoci e cacofonie plurilingui”¹⁷⁸)

laughter which is the product of noble and clever quip, is more befitting of a man of judgment.

178 Franco Fido, “Riforma e controriforma del teatro: I libretti per musica di Goldoni fra il 1748 e il 1753,” in *Studi Goldoniani* vol. 7; 63. [Previously translated]

than for real social commentary does not seem to fully correspond to the subjects and characters of the mature *drammi giocosi*. While certainly not excluding verbal or theatrical play, these works make sport of real moral problems and are able to integrate more serious tones with the prevailing comedy.

Ultimately, in prose comedy and opera theatre alike, even through the author's experimentation in many styles and settings, we may always reconnect his theatre to one unified intention:

Vorrei di buon cuore aver fatto e poter tuttavia fare con le Opere mie qualche frutto, indirizzando io tutti i miei pensieri non solamente a dilettere, che sarebbe piccolo pro, ma a far ancora qualche giovamento.¹⁷⁹

In countless ways, in commentary as through direct practice, from his theatrical debut to his mature works, Goldoni underlines his conviction of the higher potential of comic theatre. It follows that the restitution of comedy's capacity of moral regulation hinges upon the level of realism attained within it. The psychological characterizations achieved in his mature libretti, therefore, unequivocally connect his *drammi giocosi* to these higher aims.

From the Metastasian *serio* of *La scuola moderna* to the emotional moderation and *pathos* of *La buona figliuola*, and the complete social disintegration of *La donna di governo*, we can clearly trace the trajectory of Goldoni's reform in music. The psychological characterizations that have contributed to the success of Goldoni's *drammi giocosi* are the end result of a gradual process that, beginning with the integration of *serio* within prevalently comic structures, continues towards the progressive attenuation of the divisions between *buffo* and *serio*, as testified by the realistic *mezzo carattere*. Moreover, the coexistence of *buffo* and

179 Carlo Goldoni, *Ottava Lettera dell'Autore allo Stampatore* dell'edizione Bettinelli di Venezia, 17501 52, riportato in *Opere di Carlo Goldoni*, a cura di Gianfranco Folena e Nicola Mangini, Tomo VII a cura di Giovanni Getto (Milano: Mursia, 1975); 1333. I hope that I have borne, and that I may continue to bear with my Works some fruit, as I have directed all my thoughts not only to the aim of giving pleasure, a small benefit, but indeed to being of some use.

serio roles as a realistic device is further confirmed by the inclusion of moderated *serio* elements in his prose theatre as well.

From a formal point of view, Goldoni must be considered author of a number of structural innovations that most markedly characterized Classical opera throughout Europe in the later 18th century. First, the author modified the rigid succession of arias and recitative of Metastasian opera with the introduction of *ariette*. Unlike grand arias, these shorter pieces did not require the character to exit the scene, therefore creating more possibilities for plot development and musical variety. Goldoni further limited the use of static arias by making frequent use of ensembles. Along these lines, another major innovation of Goldoni is the canonization of the ensemble finale, a practice that can be detected already in the *intermezzi*. The conclusion of *L'amante cabala* (1736) provides an excellent blueprint for the style of collective address that characterizes so many Classical works all the way to Mozart and Da Ponte: "Imparino tutti/ da sì bell'esempio/ che l'arte d'un empio/ trionfare non può."¹⁸⁰ Importantly, in the mature *drammi giocosi*, ensemble pieces surpass the chorale function exemplified above to acquire an increasingly polyphonic dimension. No longer static, they serve as vehicles for the advancement of the action, rendering opera theatre more lifelike and dynamic.

Many of these innovations, especially the integration of *serio* with *buffo* and the use of ensembles within scenes, are absolute and unique to Goldoni. The chapter that follows is dedicated to his musical legacy, to make clear the extent to which these features shaped comic opera throughout the century in the best European schools. In Mozart's operas and the prestigious Austrian tradition, for example, the entire catalog of Goldoni's dramatic effects can be found in full form. It is important not to overlook these relevant innovations in order to understand the stature of this playwright in his own time, and in our musical tradition.

180 Carlo Goldoni, *L'Amante Cabala*; Act II, scena ultima. Let all learn/ from this example/ that the art of a villain/ can never prevail.