PRODUCTIVITY AND WASTE:
A SOCIO-ECONOMIC VIEW OF
GOLDONI’S THEATER

by

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and approved by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Productivity and Waste: A Socio-Economic View of Goldoni’s Theater

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Professor Alessandro Vettori

The purpose of this work is to analyze characters and relationships in Goldoni’s comedies in terms of their social actions and interactions. I assert that Goldoni intended for these comedies to be a vehicle of instruction in order to model and reform behaviors he deemed either productive or wasteful to the progress of society. The success of society as a whole depends on the individual behaviors and conduct of its members. Goldoni recognized the denigration of morals and good sense among the various social classes. His plays, taken deeper than face value, demonstrate his desire to aid in the renovation of Venetian society and reinstate the honorable, virtuous and productive society that he perceived.

Through social dynamics and familial relationships, various behaviors of the characters and their interactions demonstrate aspects of Venetian society that Goldoni lauded or criticized. Many Goldoni scholars such as Mario Baratto and Franco Fido have noted the social implications of Goldoni’s theater. I believe that my research takes a different direction and, through the socio-economic lens, it is possible to note the theory substantiating Goldoni’s intentions. The ideologies of Adam Smith, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber will aid in this analysis. These
sociological and economic perspectives will shed new light on the characters and their relationships, both familial and societal, found throughout the comedies of Carlo Goldoni and to explain various trends in terms of sociological and economic theory. This examination highlights and analyzes the themes of productivity and waste in Goldoni’s works and his desire to provide a formula for change for the betterment of society.
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I dedicate this thesis to my children, Giacomo and Giorgiana and hope that they understand the value of perseverance and hard work, even when things seem impossible. A big thanks goes to my husband Chris for his patience, love and support.
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Introduction

The Enlightenment introduced new ideas and ideals to the European continent and opened unprecedented channels for information to be disseminated and discussed. Additionally, the fields of natural sciences, political science, philosophy and social sciences such as sociology and economics were experiencing enormous developments. Along with many new scientific postulates, theorists explored a new perspective regarding society and economic theory as it relates to progress and expansion. These new theories provided innovative and creative approaches to society as a whole, which eventually brought to light new concepts for societal reform. *Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith was published in the latter part of the eighteenth century and introduced terminology such as: optimizing output, division of labor and specialization of labor. The circulation of these concepts in the realm of production also found their way into societal applications. Ideas such as productivity, as it relates to the individual, a company or a nation were discussed and developed to understand and maximize production and optimal utilization of resources; which can include all factors of production such as land, labor and capital. The labor aspect relates directly to what a person does with his or her personal “resources” such as intellect, time and talents. The choice an individual makes regarding his or her own behavior influences society as a whole and creates a social dynamic. Studying a society through a literary work is an interesting endeavor and viewing 18th-century Venetian society through Goldoni’s eyes will provide access to the social sphere of the time. As Gustave Lanson states in his article regarding literary history,
But the precise and principal task of literary history is not to judge works in relation to ourselves, according to our ideals and our tastes, but to discover in those works what their authors wished to put there, what their first public found in them, and the actual manner in which they lived and acted in the minds and souls of successive generations.¹

The ideas Goldoni set forth throughout his works are evidence of the time period, and are useful to the modern scholar to dissect and observe the social phenomenon of the time. Goldoni’s comedies have an even deeper reach given that they could be viewed by audiences as well as interpreted by readers.

In a time period historically known for reform and revolution, Goldoni was perfectly placed to introduce his ‘new’ comedy, which served not only as entertainment but also as a vehicle for change and reform. His plays afforded him the unique role of social commentator who brought to light virtues and vices of Venetian society of the time. His characters span the social hierarchy but most are members of the bourgeois class, for Goldoni had a special position on the inside, he himself being a member of the borghesia or middle class on the ascent (both financially and proportionally in number) in Venice. Joseph Spencer Kennard states so eloquently, “a simple bourgeois he is by birth, and a bourgeois he remains through all the vicissitudes of his life, in close communion with the middle class of which he writes with loving comprehension…. Notwithstanding many travels and a long exile, he remains at heart and spirit, a Venetian.”²

Goldoni’s characters were identifiable to the audience as contemporary members of society. Characters and themes appealed and hit a chord with the

audience, and spoke to them regarding their very existence; it is this amazing circumstance that assured the success and popularity of Goldoni. Giorgio Cavallini states,

È universalmente noto che i personaggi goldoniani non sono mai isolati o appartati in scena (se non nei rari monologhi in cui, rivelando la propria psicologia, in realtà si rivolgono, più che a se stessi; al pubblico), bensì, inseriti in una vivacissima vita di relazione, agiscono e parlano nella dimensione sociale del quotidiano.³

Theater can be a vehicle for which truth is be portrayed under the guise of fiction to evoke personal reactions from those watching and reading. Therefore, it is important to note the relationship between Goldoni’s work and his public. I believe that through his comedies, Goldoni portrayed themes and characters, which were intended to aid in the betterment of society by providing concrete examples of both productive and wasteful behaviors.

The ideology of the time directly correlates with Goldoni’s themes and characters. Individuals should value and seek out reason, logic and productivity in one’s life; resources such as money, time and one’s reputation should not be wasted on frivolity and excess. Goldoni highlights specific behaviors that are wasteful and detrimental to society: jealousy, dishonesty, gambling, gossip, extra-marital affairs and keeping up appearances. He also names productive behaviors such as working hard, earning an honest living, being a respectable family member and using reason rather than passion to make decisions. This passion vs. reason opposition, where passion represents feelings that operate in the absence of reason, is present in a

large number of Goldoni’s works. Therefore anger, jealousy, avarice and gluttony are passions, which if left unchecked by reason, can consume a man or woman and detract from his or her life and society. Only when exercising “good sense” and reason can one fully embrace the life that will be the most fulfilling and productive to society.

Throughout Goldoni’s comedies, I began to notice a pattern of how certain behaviors were portrayed by the author. Those who worked hard and were productive regarding their resources were celebrated and depicted in a positive and laudatory manner. Conversely, behaviors that are deemed wasteful and are a detriment to societal progress were highly criticized in order to promote their reform. In this examination, I hope to highlight and analyze the themes of productivity and waste in Goldoni’s works and how his works helped to illuminate the virtues and vices present in society and aimed to provide a formula for change.

Goldoni prized being a productive member of society, no matter to what class one belonged. In addition, women have a very significant role within Goldoni’s comedies. Many of his female characters display a heightened sense of self-knowledge and reason and serve as pivotal characters to the very plot of the comedy. Many of the examples of worthwhile and exemplary behaviors come from female characters that not only act righteously themselves but often times are the vehicles for the rehabilitation of other characters. Maggie Günsburg’s theories and writing are instrumental in analyzing the place of women in Goldoni’s comedies. They serve as wives who must correct behaviors in their husbands, mothers who wish to temper the austere rustego and aid their children, widows who are wise in
the selection of a husband and dispel the evil words of gossips, and young girls who stand up for themselves in the face of a patrimonial society.

From the private, familial relationships often presented in the secure space of the home to public relationships between employer and employee or friends, Goldoni noted the interactions in everyday life along the social classes. Each member should in his/her way behave and perform in a manner befitting a productive member of society. As Kennard notes, Venice, at the time, required the presence of all types and classes of people, but everyone had his roles and knew his place. There was the aristocrat who embodied the role of patron, providing his protection to others, as one can plainly see in *La Locandiera* or *Il Ventaglio*. Other aristocratic figures such as the parasitic *barnabotti* as well as the frivolous gossips and *cicisbei* are also represented in his works. The old tyrannical *rustego*, the newly rich obsessed with his image and the hard-working merchant *Pantalone* figure are some of the many representations from the middle class. The *popolo*, or working class, furnishes colorful characters such as the gondoliers, fishermen, laborers and servants. Observing the characters who represent the various members of society is instrumental in investigating the virtues and vices within society. A main recurring leitmotif in Goldoni’s comedies is productivity, that is to say, a person being a productive member to society within the parameters of his or her social class. His plays serve as a guideline for appropriate behaviors and cast a pejorative light onto societal vices of the time.

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4 p 50.
I endeavor to examine Goldoni’s comedies both through close reading through the lens of socio-economic theory, in order to interpret behaviors in terms of productivity and waste as they pertain to society as a whole. In this interesting perspective, his characters and plays can highlight the Venice in which he lived and worked and are a vehicle for portraying both the virtues and vices within this society. The comedies depict 18th-century Venice and its place during the Enlightenment; a time in which there was a sense of optimism regarding the possibility of change and reform. For a society, the path toward progress and the modernization is found in the optimization of productivity and in minimizing waste.

In chapter 1, Goldoni’s writing style will be briefly discussed. Essays by Illaria Crotti, Manlio Dazzi and Pamela D. Stewart will aid in the analysis of his poetic and explain the way in which the World, the Theater and the Book are interrelated. A concise overview of the historical context of the time will also be provided to give insight to the social, political and economic climate that Goldoni was a part of. I will provide background on the roots of the Enlightenment and how thinkers and philosophers such as René Descartes, Ludovico Muratori and Celestino Galiani, to name a few, were instrumental in creating an environment out of which Goldoni’s works were born.

This chapter also describes the background of comic theater in Europe, primarily the Commedia dell’Arte and how this improvisational theater influences Goldoni in his early works, but is also the starting point of his reform, as
documented thoroughly in *Il Teatro Comico* (1750)\(^5\). I will also examine a number of Goldoni’s diverse direct appeals to his audience, the *Autore a Chi Legge* sections at the beginning of each play. Most of these were added in later editions of the plays and are explicatory of the author’s point of view and of his relationship with the reader.

Chapter 2 will provide detailed examples on the theme of productivity and waste as it applies to the aristocratic and popular classes. I will analyze trends of general behaviors by these classes. For the aristocracy, some plays that will be examined are, *Il Cavaliere e La Dama* (1749), *L’Adulatore* (1750), *La Famiglia dell’Antiquario* (1750) and *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto* (1750). The Popolo or working class, which includes the servants, is also analyzed. Servants’ views of their masters’ behaviors will be discussed as well as their role, more often than not, as rational advisor and confidant. Besides many of the above-mentioned plays, *Gli Innamorati* (1761), *Le Baruffe Chiozzotte* (1760), and *I Pettegolezzi delle Donne* (1751) will be the focus of the discussion. Chapter 3 will concentrate upon the middle class and will highlight the positive and negative behaviors found within it. For the examination of the bourgeois class, I employ *Le Smanie della Villeggiatura* (1761), *Le Avventure della Villeggiatura* (1762), *Il Ritorno della Villeggiatura* (1763), *La Vedova Scaltra* (1748), *I Rusteghi* (1760), *Il Vero Amico* (1751) and *La Bottega del Caffè* (1750). In addition to many other bourgeois virtues, the theme of work, working hard and dedication to one’s craft is fleshed out more in detail.

\(^5\) The year in parenthesis signifies the first time the comedy was represented on stage. This will be noted for each comedy in order to provide a chronological frame of reference for the discussion.
Goldoni’s representation of the role of families and familial relationships is explored in chapter 4. Here the positive and negative aspects within the family construct are analyzed in relation to which behaviors and elements are productive while others are not. The main plays that will serve in this chapter are, *I Rusteghi, La Buona Madre* (1761), *La Moglie Saggia* (1752) *La Bottega del Caffè, The Villeggiatura Trilogy, La Figlia Obbediente* (1752), and *La Famiglia dell’Antiquario*. This chapter also delves into the world of amorous relationships where the main culprit primarily is passion and a loss of one’s ability to reason. Here will be a discussion of an aristocratic figure, the *cavaliere servente*, also referred to as the *cicisbeo*. This practice was heavily criticized by Goldoni and is represented in many of his comedies. The comedies central to the discussion of this chapter are: *La Pamela* (1750), *Il Cavaliere e La Dama, Gli Innamorati*, and *La Famiglia dell’Antiquario*.

The scope of this work is to provide a close reading and a socio-economic view of Goldoni’s comedies highlighting behaviors he deemed productive or wasteful to the progress of society. In a final chapter, I will also attempt to apply sociological theory to analyze the different societal phenomena portrayed in Goldoni’s comedies. Essays and ideology by Emile Durkheim and Max Weber will aid in this analysis. These sociological perspectives will shed new light on the characters and relationships, both familial and societal, found throughout the comedies of Carlo Goldoni and to explain various trends in terms of sociological and economic theory.
Chapter One - The Historical and Social Context of the Eighteenth Century, the Age of Reform and Goldoni’s Writing Philosophy.

The eighteenth century was an era of great changes both socially and politically but perhaps more importantly, culturally, that were a result of events put into motion during the previous century. These changes and developments were crucial to the creation of the perfect environment out of which Goldoni’s comedies emerge. Goldoni’s works are direct illustrations of the enlightened mindset of the time, however they are also in some ways, a refutation of the precursory ideologies previously supported by the intellectual set. It is necessary to uncover the individual academic and cultural movements which, when combined, generated the ideal situation for Goldoni’s art to be born. The scientific and intellectual advances not only challenged the ideology of the time, but also paved the way for freedom of thought and the possibility of reform. The written works and new philosophies circulating and being discussed during Goldoni’s time, spawned the ability for new literary ideas to flourish as well. Important concepts concerning ‘universal law’ and the ‘right and wrong’ of human behavior are instrumental in the discussion of Goldoni’s comedies. A literary work is a culmination and commentary of all the societal influences of the time: religious, scientific and intellectual and in order to properly consider Goldoni’s comedies, it is necessary to examine the elements that influenced his genius.
**Historical and Social Venice of the 18th Century**

Venice of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was still the epicenter of commerce, although not quite as much as in preceding centuries. The import and export business was extremely important to the economy of Venice and at this time the demand was still sufficient to maintain, “in vita una marina mercantile abbastanza rilevante,” which proved to “attrarre un numero considerevole di mercanti stranieri per via di mare come di terra.”

Venice was always one of the most influential and important publishing centers on the Italian peninsula. Prominent thinkers and men of letters were able to collaborate and circulate their works thanks to the established printers in Venice. This fact maintained Venice’s hold as an intellectual center as well, bringing to its midst the most progressive and modern philosophies and ideas of the time. Ferrone states, “the presence of a flourishing publishing sector and its contribution of a largely free and open debate on modern thought nourished Venetian culture, which was opposed to Counter-Reformation political culture.”

Venice still served a destination for both travelers and entrepreneurs in search of its historical splendors and possibilities. In Goldoni’s time though, there were some aspects of Venetian culture that remained linked to the past even though Venice itself encouraged and participated in self-modernization. Paget notes, “The mode of life and way of thinking of the Renaissance were maintained in Venice, as were the institutions and dresses of the

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sixteenth century.” A sense of the past along with elements of modernity did provide Venice with a unique and individual quality, which was key in creating the society in which Goldoni lived and wished to help reform. Venetians were rooted in tradition but also were open to innovation and intellectual advances, which was fundamental to the social climate that Goldoni enjoyed. Siro Ferrone states, “Venezia vive così nella prima metà del secolo un periodo di <<ottimismo culturale>> che la conduce ad acquisire gran parte del pensiero innovatore italiano e europeo, con una forte modificazione della coscienza individuale di ampi strati intellettuali ed artistici.” Goldoni embraces this cultural optimism and employs it in both his reform of the comedy and also in his proposed reforms of behavior and comportment throughout society.

Venetian society of the time was very divided in terms of one’s social class and each member was fully aware of their place and what was expected of their behavior and existence. The noble class was situated at the top of the social hierarchy but in reality represented the smallest percentage of Venetian citizens. In addition, this small percentage was constantly diminishing over time. Vaussard notes that in 1586, in Venice, the aristocracy numbered 4.3% of the population; falling to 3.7% in 1642; to 2.5% in 1766 when it numbered 3,577 people and finally to 2.3% in 1790. The name one carried, at times, was more prestigious than a noble title and belonging to one of Venice’s most prominent families most assuredly provided one with unmistakable respect and place in society. There were twelve

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11 Vaussard, p 59.
families that could prove their descent from the twelve citizens who elected the first doge in 697 and even after more families were granted nobility in the 13th century, these ducal families always preserved a higher rank than the others. This class was on the decline both in number and at times in terms of wealth. While many nobles maintained their financial security in terms of land or investments in business ventures, others were aristocratic in name only, had no wealth and were living off the kindness of others. These members of society, the nobiltà decaduta, were termed, Barnabotti, and “all’economia sociale offrono solo lati negativi, la loro inquietudine e la scroconeria.” Goldoni represents these members of the aristocracy considerably in his comedies and condemns the wasteful parasitic existence that they maintain in society.

The still booming economy provided an opportunity for the middle class to earn quite an impressive living and begin their ascent politically as well as socially. The growing wealth of the middle class demanded more from the populace in terms of roles of servants and laborers than previously and they too began to amass their own small assets. The bourgeois class consisted of a great breadth of people and professions including: doctors, lawyers, innkeepers, artists, intellectuals and merchants. These people based their livelihood on commerce and trade as well as entrepreneurs representing the artisans and craftsmen. Although numerous members of the borghesia had strong ties to tradition, many embraced progress and the spread of new ideas coming from other intellectual centers throughout Europe. Dazzi states, “la borghesia dedita all’industria e al commercio sana e conservatrice,

12 Vaussard, p 59.
13 Dazzi, p 19.
This emerging middle class cognizant of their worth began expressing their newfound power and influence and sought to be represented politically as well as socially. Due to the fall of the aristocracy, the Venetian Senate began granting titles, honors and privileges to the industrious middle class in exchange for money. The traditional 'society' and culture that was once restricted to the aristocracy was slowly opening to include the bourgeois. Due to the changing social landscape for the previously nonexistent middle class, many did not know how to manage their new position in society. It is for this reason that Goldoni focuses so heavily on this class in particular, to guide and advise them through this difficult period of transition to arrive at a place in which reason and logic factor into their daily interactions.

Lastly, in the social hierarchy is the popular or working class, which made up the bulk of the population of Venice in the eighteenth century. The working class people of Venice knew their place to be at the bottom of society, but esteemed those around them who were hard-working and lived respectably. As Ferrone highlights, “Il basso popolo costituisce la maggioranza degli abitanti di Venezia, dedito all’artigianato, disprezza i Barnabotti ma rispetta l’ordine senatorio e, soprattutto, la borghesia, dall’attività della quale ricava lavoro e una condizione di vita non miserevole.” The borghesia, emerging in wealth and needing labor provided new

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14 Dazzi, p 19.
15 Kennard, pp 47-49.
16 Ferrone, Siro, p 6.
opportunities for working class people and created the possibility to transform their own status in society.

Their traditional roles include that of the servant, gondolier, fisherman, farmer and other quotidian job functions. Although many experienced low economic status, their efforts were instrumental in the daily functions of the city. Cavallini states that the condition of the popular class was, “meno prospera ma altrettanto attiva,” and that they lived “in buoni rapporti, anche per ragioni di lavoro, sia con i patrizi sia con i borghesi.” The domestic worker or servant made up about ten percent of the popular class and often times the servants were entrusted with the entire running of the household and shared in the pride and prestige of the families for whom they worked. Goldoni fondly depicts members of the popolani throughout his comedies and demonstrates his vast respect and affection for these industrious people.

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17 Cavallini, p 46.
18 Vaussard, p 86.
Goldoni’s Intellectual Roots

The end of the 1600s and the first half of the 1700s saw a literary and cultural movement known as Arcadia. The Arcadian Academy produced many discussions and literary endeavors that proposed a return to ‘truth’ and the possibility of an ideal or utopian society. Many critics believe that this movement shied away from science and its advances in order to return to this glimmering age of perfection. DeSanctis states that the men of science and other intellectuals were, “shutting their eyes to the world of their day” while revisiting their ancient worlds and not making any progress or advances.\textsuperscript{19} This movement was felt and experienced throughout Europe and allowed for an exchange of ideas and perspectives throughout the continent. The Italians became enamored with all that was French or English and vice-versa and ideas as well as current fashions travelled back and forth over country divides.

The political changes during this time allowed for the thoughts of philosophers such as Hobbes and Locke be diffused throughout Europe and caused shockwaves in the various countries. In response to the ideal world proposed by the Arcadia movement, a more rational approach to life and an affinity for realism began to grow in the 1700s thanks to a dissemination of more scientific research and ideas throughout the European continent. These beliefs, centered in the scientific model, proposed that reason be the foundation upon which a society should be built. Only through logic and reason could humans ameliorate their condition and arrive at the best possible result. There was optimism in the

utilization of logic and reason that grew out of this tradition that led to the movement known as the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment grew from a movement already present in the 1600s, which found followers throughout Italy discussing Newtonian theories from the *Principia Mathematica* and scientific experiments as well as modern theory and philosophy. In 1708, Ludovico Muratori published *Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto intorno le scienze e le arti* in which the Cartesian philosophical method is clearly demonstrated throughout. Descartes’s themes and philosophy highlighted the use of rational evidence and employing methodical doubt when entering into any scientific undertaking. In 1710, the *Giornale de’ Letterati* appeared in Venice which “presented a great many of these themes, emphasizing that they were the common patrimony of the intellectual throughout the entire Veneto.”

The Enlightenment allowed for a refocus on the thoughts and rationality of man and spurred the creation of salons in France and in Italy where intellectuals could meet and discuss. The human experience was once again at the forefront, presented in autobiographical texts and realistic approaches to literature, art and music. As Paget states, “the eighteenth century in Italy was...a mere gradual waking up from lethargy and a shaking off of its bad effects.”

Even those intellectuals from religious backgrounds grappled with confronting the new movement toward reason and a universal law of right and wrong. Celestino Galiani was a premier example of both the Enlightenment spirit of reform and a powerful member of the Catholic Church. He published the *Scienza* 

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20 Ferrone, V., p 91.
21 Ibid. p 92.
22 Paget, p 54.
*Morale* in the early 1720s which set out to “affirm the clear cut separation between morals and theology, between law and religion” and recalls theories of Locke, Spinoza, Pufendorf and Descartes.\(^{23}\) He along with others set out to prove the existence of “jusnaturalism,” a universal law defining human behavior and the concepts of virtue and vice.\(^{24}\) Galiani had a powerful position at the pinnacle of his career in which he served not only as Bishop of Taranto in 1731 but also as the Cappellano Maggiore for the Kingdom of Naples which aided in coordinating all threads of Neopolitan culture including the University and all private schools.\(^{25}\) His position allowed him to determine the course of education for Naples and accept responsibility for the dissemination of knowledge to the next generation of thinkers in Italy. It is not remiss to mention, that Naples was, at the time, one of the most advanced cultural and intellectual hubs. Ideas exchanged and discussed in Naples reverberated throughout the Italian peninsula in *salons* and discussion groups.

Galiani and his cohorts pursued reason as the driving force of human behavior and supported natural law, which holds virtue as its primary requisite. Muratori, in 1735 wrote *La Filosofia morale esposta ai giovani*, which was published in Verona by Antonio Targa.\(^{26}\) In this work, he insists on the presence of reason (though granted by God), which is able to illuminate the difference between good and evil. He stresses that only by betraying reason could man commit any evil actions or vices. In Muratori’s *Filosofia Morale*, Ferrone states, there are those who well-employ reason, “that is, the good fathers of families, the hard working and

\(^{23}\) Ferrone, Vincenzo, p 168.
\(^{24}\) Ibid. p 173.
\(^{25}\) Ibid. p 124.
\(^{26}\) Ibid. p 178.
obedient farmers, the honest merchants, the nobles who abandoned a life of waste and luxury to work concretely for the benefit of society, and the intellectuals who taught healthy virtues.”

These thoughts that connect positive contributions in society with the employment of reason and highlight vice as the disregard of reason, seem to be a precursor to Goldoni’s treatment of virtue and vice in his comedies. The ethics and good-sense fostered by the writings of Galiani and Muratori align with the wishes that Goldoni had for his society. The truth that these intellectuals sought out, and that Goldoni interpreted had no attachment per se with God or religious teaching, but rather with a universal moral code that stressed the use of reason and ‘good taste’ or ‘good sense’ to guide human actions and societal interaction.

No longer were people satisfied with whimsical topics and meaningless laughs but were truly concerned with the environment in which they lived and a global advancement of one’s situation. Political and societal reforms were explored as themes that truly affected the daily lives of the people. Authors began finding a purpose for which they wrote; authors like Goldoni who sensed the necessity for his words and pen to aid in the reformation of society. Goldoni’s sense of realism shed light on a social awareness for good sense and honor and promoted positive and productive conduct in society. His realistic approach to his comedies was a product of the time and showed not only his obligation to complete his life’s work, but also displayed the product of his Enlightened perception of society and, through reason, he painted a picture of what was and what could be.

27 Ferrone, Vincenzo, p 178.
**Goldoni’s Reform of Comic Theater**

According to DeSanctis, Goldoni’s central belief regarding the genre of comedy was that it “could interest the public by itself alone, and could afford to drop the spectacular, the gigantic, and the marvelous, whether with masks or without them. His reform at bottom was the revival of the word, the restoration of literature to the place that belonged to it and with the honours that were due to it.”

Goldoni desired to reform this genre and establish the national Italian comedy. In addition, Goldoni knew the power and opportunity he would have to utilize these comedies to achieve a greater good. Goldoni’s work began in the style of, and was influenced by, the *Commedia dell’Arte*, a traditional form of theater employed and embraced in Venice but also all over Italy for centuries. This performance-style theater relied on actor based comedic situations pulling from character-based personalities engaging in impromptu scenes without written lines or a predetermined dialogue to follow.

The Comedy of Masks, as it was also called, has roots in the earliest years of Italian civilization but was driven out of favor by early Latin playwrights such as Plautus, Aristophanes and Terence. As Paget highlights, the society of the Romans wanted to align itself with the Greek model, and abandon that which was considered a lower artistic form. “In the days of Roman civilization and eclecticism, the old Italic farce, the Comedy of Masks of antiquity, was rejected as coarse and rustic.”

Its popularity remained stagnant throughout the Middle Ages and continued to reside on the periphery of standard written comedy throughout the Renaissance.

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28 p 870.
29 Paget, p 355.
notable return to favor for the Commedia dell'Arte occurred in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During this time, the focus of society was shifted from studying the splendor that was Greece and Rome to the grave problems plaguing their daily lives. The comedies were a way for them to escape their daily condition and achieve “laughter in misery.”

The comedies were a natural development stemming from the existence of various ‘masks,’ which showcased a stereotypical representative of the various cities throughout the Italian peninsula. Since Italy as a nation did not actually exist, each region or city maintained its own style of dress and speech and at times professional focus. Therefore, the wealthy merchant was a representative of Venice while the Doctor, il Dottore, is a central figure to Bologna evocative of the university atmosphere of the city. Brighella and Arlecchino are typical servant figures from Bergamo displaying their own personalities but at the same time characteristic of their native city. The southern regions of Italy are also included and boast famous masks such as Pulcinella, Scaramuccia, Tartaglia and Coviello. In addition to these famously named masks, the Commedia dell’Arte also saw a variety of other characters representing different types of people speaking Tuscan dialect. As the genre grew, so did the numerous additions of characters and actors who improved with the existing cast of masks. Paget contends that the birth of the Commedia dell’Arte resulted when several of these popular representatives, who were unchanging in dress, manner, and speech, were brought on to the stage and were introduced in interactions with other masks in unwritten and impromptu

31 Ibid, p 358.
32 Ibid, p 359.
exchanges. For example, Pantalone from Venice, a Bolognese Dottore, a Brighella from Bergamo and a Brescian Truffaldino, all meeting on the same stage and engaging in a typical comedic banter.\textsuperscript{33}

The art of improvisation was central to this style of Performance Theater and took place in accessible theaters or in town squares in Italy for a paying public. The companies of actors roamed from place to place performing in public and the performers were actors/comics by trade and became famous for the role they portrayed. It is interesting to note that some actors never strayed from portraying the specific mask representing their hometown and always wore the same mask and costume. These characters or masks were immediately recognizable by their costume, the predictable phrases used, accents in which they spoke and of course by the masks that they wore. The performances were only for the sake of enjoyment and dealt primarily with repeated storylines, old adapted plays, lighthearted exchanges and at times immoral situations between the standard cast of characters. The actor was central to the art form and much of the plot relied on unoriginal tag lines and physical comedy and gestures. This performance art was known by many names such as, “Commedia dell’Arte, o commedia degli zanni, commedia improvvisa, commedia a braccia: si tratta pur sempre di definizioni che pongono l’accento, chiaramente, sulla centralità dell’attore: attore come professionista.”\textsuperscript{34} There were no playwrights or authors behind the performances and no limits placed on what could be presented on the stage. The improvisation took control away from what

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, p 68.  
was to be presented and the dramatic space that was created often lacked the walls of reality.

The golden era of the *Commedia dell'Arte* was the middle of the seventeenth century, but its popularity continued throughout the middle of the eighteenth century. Ernest Hatch Wilkins attests that “in the 1740s, the Commedia dell’Arte still dominated the comic stage, and Venice clung to it, vapid and degenerate though it was.” The degeneration and emptiness were two of the key reasons that caused it to fall from favor in the late 1700s. Goldoni and many other critics cited the main motivation for the desire and necessity to reform this art form was mainly a result of the Enlightenment-inspired movement toward rationality and good sense. The *Commedia dell'Arte* sketches tended toward risky themes and often toed the line of propriety. Goldoni notes that the performances being produced at the time were,

Favole mal inventate, e peggio condotte, senza costume, senza ordine, le quali, anziché correggere il vizio, come pur è il primario, antico e più nobile oggetto della Commedia, lo fomentavano, e riscuotendo le risa dalla ignorante plebe, dalla gioventù scapestrata, e dalle genti più scostumate, noia poi facevano ed ira alle persone dotte e dabbene, le quali se frequentavan talvolta un così cattivo Teatro, e vi erano strascinate dall’ozio, molto ben si guardavano dal condurvi la famigliuola innocente…

There was a very loose sense of morality in these sketches, and because they were mostly improvised, there was no formal indication as to what could be expected from any performance. Many of Goldoni’s contemporaries felt the same as he did and also longed for the return of ‘good taste’ back to theater to ensure its

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36 Preface from Opere, cited from: http://www.classicitaliani.it/goldoni/goldoni_Mondo_Teatro.htm
appropriate content for all audiences. He writes, "Molti però negli ultimi tempi si sono ingegnati di regolare il Teatro e di ricondurvi il buon gusto."\textsuperscript{37} The return of good taste and morality was integrated with the didactic calling of theater to be a vehicle for highlighting social downfalls and providing remedies for improvement. In addition, the reform of the \textit{Commedia dell'Arte} signaled a movement towards a unified Italy under one national identity. The masks, inherently skewed to one city or province, represented a regional division of Italy, which did not promote a sense of understanding or unification to the various cities. Paget states that “Goldoni’s comedy was to be for all of Italy, and no longer for a single province; it was to show the life of the whole country.”\textsuperscript{38} It is the movement away from the \textit{Commedia dell’Arte} that allows for a new Italian comedy geared towards the entire population including a more national approach to characterization and thematic content.

Initially, Goldoni utilized the \textit{Commedia dell'Arte} as a bridge from the older accepted art form to his conception of what was to become the reformed comic theater and the movement from the ‘mask’ to that of a more evolved character. Goldoni uses the familiar names of the traditional masks such as Arlecchino or Dottore, to aid in the presentation of his new ideals for the formation of characters. Ferrone states that this “permetteva di garantire un iniziale riconoscimento dei tipi tradizionali e un loro rinnovamento, dall’interno, secondo la pressione di fisionomie individuali e sociali ricavate dalla società veneziana. Attraverso la maschera Goldoni costruisce il “carattere.”\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Paget, p 69.
\textsuperscript{39} Ferrone, Siro, p 23.
The audiences as well were ready for a new theater that would reflect the civic strides it had made. When the Comedy of Masks found itself in revamped urban theaters “and found itself before a cultivated and respectable audience, it had been obliged to trim and clean itself, to conform to the decencies of civilized life; to exchange its rags for smart fancy dresses or for gala suits.”

The entire genre of comic theater was preparing to be reborn. No longer would exist career actors relying on their comic lazzis or catch-phrases, but a new studied actor was required; one who was dedicated to interpreting prewritten lines and trained in the art of acting. “To interest the public,” Paget stresses, “something new was required, and that something new could be found only in the written element; the improvisations were all stale, the only hope of novelty was in the plots of the written dialogue.”

Goldoni’s reform of this traditional performance-based theater was outlined in his Il Teatro Comico. The preface written by the author states that, “Questa, ch’io intitolo Il Teatro comico, piuttosto che una Commedia, prefazione può darsi alle mie Commedie.” This one comedy, in his mind, is a manifesto of sorts for that which he wishes to accomplish. His comedies written subsequently would all follow the rules and reforms outlined in this pivotal mission statement. The buone Commedie he writes are not to be confused with those from past tradition, which had “scene insieme accozzate senz’ordine e senza regola,” referring to the unstructured

Commedia dell’Arte scenes. He also does not wish to partake any longer in

40 Paget, p 386.
41 Ibid.
42 Il Teatro Comico, p 80. Throughout the dissertation, I will cite each play by its title, Act and Scene.
43 Ibid.
showcasing the trivial subjects and themes in these scenes but rather teach lessons through his theater. His art will have a purpose. The public, in his opinion, is ready for this new form of the theater, in fact in the first act, of *Il Teatro Comico*, Placida, the prima donna of the comedic troupe states, “Il mondo è annoiato di veder sempre le cose istesse, di sentir sempre le parole medesime, e gli uditori sanno cosa deve dir l’Arlecchino, prima ch’egli apra la bocca.”44 And as Orazio explains later, the Italian citizens are begging for the new theater and want more original characters of substance.45 The Italian public desires, according to Goldoni, along with innovation and modernization in their theatrical productions, a level of morality as well that reveals a dedication to living a progressive and industrious lifestyle. In developing these more modern unmasked characters in response to the public’s demand, Goldoni’s written parts “naturally restricted the masked and improvised parts; as the lovers, the housekeepers, the mothers and tutors became all important, so gradually the buffoons were reduced to little or nothing.”46 The characters of substance with which the audience connected began to take center stage to promote their moral message.

In *Il Teatro Comico*, Goldoni utilizes as his spokesman the character of Orazio, who is the head of a comedic troupe rehearsing scenes in order to perform a play (one of Goldoni’s). In the play-within-a-play format, Goldoni presents his ideas for reform and reasons for doing so. He even engages in a bit of self-promotion along the way in exchanges between Orazio, Placida and Lelio, an aspiring poet and

44 Ibid, I, 2.
46 Paget, p 388.
playwright. Some of the reforms outlined in Il Teatro Comico hit upon methods of structuring performances, ways in which lines should be delivered, keeping a reality to the presentation and of course highlighting productive and positive behavior of society. The first rule that Goldoni lays out is in the first act of the play. Orazio states that “le buone commedie devono avere l’unità di azione; uno deve essere l’argomento, e semplice deve essere il loro titolo.” Each play must have one central argument and the title should reflect that theme. Thus, although there are many characters and possible scene changes, all of the drama revolves around one central plot line and thematic concept. This provides the author a way of presenting his concept clearly without confusing the audience. Later in the same scene, the concept of modernity is brought to life. This reform tactic really is to create distance between the ways of the Commedia dell’Arte with its predictable lazzì and phraseology and display exchanges that truly reflect and mirror modern society. In truth, the old ridiculous ways and physical comedy of Arlecchino or Truffaldino had no place in a play modeled more on reality and the verisimilar.

The main reform that Goldoni intends is to produce commedie di carattere or comedies that have an underlying moral or demonstration of a positive character trait. This is in fact Goldoni’s mission and the explanation of which comes from Anselmo, a member of the troupe. He says,

La commedia l’è stada inventada per corregger i vizi, e metter in ridicolo i cattivi costumi; e quando le commedie dai antichi se faceva così, tuto el popolo decideva, perché vedendo la copia d’un carattere in scena, ognun trovava, o in se stesso, o in qualchedun’altro l’original. Quando le commedie son deventade meramente ridicule, nissun ghe abbadava più, perché, col

As Anselmo says, from ancient times, this was the whole purpose of a comedy, to correct behaviors that do not promote positive or constructive ways and to ridicule negative behaviors. Thus, when people went to the theater, they could see themselves on the stage and inwardly know which behaviors belonged to them and hopefully remedy their wasteful and damaging actions. In addition, it is also necessary to produce natural and realistic themes so that this process can occur and promote a transformation in society. In the second scene, Placida echoes this sentiment when explaining to Lelio how and why modern enlightened comics tend to keep their statements natural and true to life. She says,

I miei libri, che contenevano tali concetti gli ho tutti abbruciati, e così hanno fatto tutte quelle recitanti, che sono dal moderno gusto illuminata. Noi facciamo per lo più commedie di carattere, premeditate, ma quando ci accade di parlare all’improvviso, ci serviamo dello stil familiar, natural, e facile, per non distaccarsi dal verisimile. (Ibid)

The reform comes in the presentation of arguments that are true to life to facilitate the observer’s identification with a character that shares either a common defect or positive attribute. The true mission of Goldoni and his works is to promote a positive model of behavior to society so that reform on a greater scale can occur.

In Il Teatro Comico, Goldoni also proposes his endeavor to reform the necessity of maintaining the setting of a play stable. Orazio points out that this was
observed by Aristotle in reference to tragedies but makes no mention of comedies. He explains that keeping the scene stable leads to many absurdities, improprieties and indecencies and was only done in ancient times because they lacked the ability to change scenes and for that reason kept it unified. He continues, “è meglio cambiare la scena, e osservare le regole del verisimile.” The word verisimile, used here again to reinforce the importance of keeping the comedies to a more accurate/life-like manner and to truly reflect the world, as it exists. It is improbable that an entire three-act play depicting a plausible series of events would occur in one room or with one unified place of action. Thus, keeping true to a unified theme is necessary, but the scenes must change in order to uphold the likeliness of the drama unfolding. Changing the scene is also necessary when showing evil characters or behaviors on the stage. It is not prudent to have evil behaviors in the same scene where positive behaviors are celebrated. Orazio explains, “quando si vuole introdurre un cattivo carattere in una commedia, si mette di fianco, e non in prospetto, che vale a dire, per episodio, in confronto del carattere virtuoso, perché maggiormente si esalti la virtù, e si deprima il vizio.” Different scenes are necessary not only for keeping the action more true to life but also to highlight certain places where negative actions and behaviors take place such as in gambling halls or on vacation.

In keeping with the idea of being more modern in the presentation of themes and methods of writing, Goldoni enforces the need to stray from past use of allegory

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48 Ibid, II, 3.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
and comparisons that take the emphasis off the true behavior or action in question. Orazio explains in scene 9 of the second act, that the use of comparisons and parallels should not be employed so that the public can truly understand the message of the comedy. Regarding the use of masks, Eugenio, another member of the comedic troupe, asks Orazio whether or not Commedia dell’Arte masks should be abolished entirely. Initially, character masks within the comedies are preserved to maintain continuity for the sake of the public and to pay homage to the “gloria dell’arte nostra.”

51 Orazio states that sometimes within the commedie di carattere, the masks do no harm provided that the lessons are systematically present in the discourse. It is true that Goldoni appreciated and admired the Commedia dell’Arte, which had an incredible influence on him and on his talent. Also, in efforts to bring the comedy to the forefront and not detract from it, Goldoni proposes the elimination of musical interludes or intermezzi between acts.52 Placida explains that although music and musicians are very respected for their merit and their virtue within their art, this merit and virtue become debased and wasted when inserted in the comedies. Here again, Goldoni extols the virtuous and detests the misuse and wastefulness of talent.

The author in Il Teatro Comico also discusses the approach taken by actors in presenting and delivering their lines. Orazio/Goldoni sets out may rules to establish an ordered and methodical way to present comedies, which mostly revolve around creating a likely storyline and delivering it in a concise and tangible manner. In the third act, Goldoni denounces the use of soliloquy for purposes other than revealing

51 Ibid, II, 10.
52 Ibid, II, 15.
the true sentiments of the character that otherwise the audience would not be able
to be aware of. Lelio, poet turned actor asks Orazio, “Ma come si fanno i soliloqui
senza parlare al popolo?” Orazio begins to cite examples on how a character might
engage in a solo-speaking role without being pedantic and engaging the audience.
He then shares that employing the correct form of soliloquy keeps with the theme
previously noted: maintaining a true-to-life resemblance. He states,

Vi serva di regola, che mai non si fanno gli argomenti della commedia da una
sola persona in scena, non essendo verisimile, che un uomo, che parla solo,
faccia a se stesso l’istoria de’ suoi amori, o dei suoi accidenti. I nostri comici
solevano per lo più nella prima scena far dichiarare l’argomento, o dal
Pantalone col Dottore; o dal padrone con il servo, o dalla donna colla
cameriera. Ma la vera maniera di far l’argomento delle commedie senza
annoiare il popolo, si è dividere l’argomento stesso in più scene, a poco, a
poco andarlo dilucidando, con piacere, e con sorpresa degli ascoltanti. (III, 2)

Thus, Goldoni understands that in order to retain the attention and support of the
public, he must present his arguments in a logical, understandable and above all
enjoyable manner. The use of obscenity and dishonest dialogues is also forbidden
on stage. No longer “se vedono lazzi pericolosi, gesti scoretti, scene lubriche, di mal
esempio.” This preserves the sanctity of the theater and ensures that even young
ladies can come to see the plays without fear for indecency. Orazio also dictates the
methods that actors should employ for actually reciting their lines.

La voce non è ferma, ma questa si fa coll’uso del recitare. Badate bene di
battere le ultime sillabe, che s’intendano. Recitate piuttosto adagio, ma non
troppo, e nelle parti di forza, caricate la voce, e accelerate più solito le
parole….recitate naturalmente, some se parlaste, mentre essendo la

53 Ibid, III, 2.
54 Ibid, III, 3.
commedia una imitazione della natura, si deve fare tutto quello, che è verisimile. (Ibid)

All of these elements return to the wish to replicate in the most exact way that which occurs in natural and authentic speech patterns.

Beyond the scope of reforming how plays are performed and creating a more modern approach to theater, the reform returned the focus to the written word of the author and gave a new power to Goldoni and other playwrights of the time to utilize their words as instruments of social satire and means to educate and inform the populace. As Franco Fido notes, "gli uomini di cultura si sentono di nuovo membri qualificati e responsabili di una comunità civile; e d’altra parte si va costituendo un pubblico in grado di favorire la rinascita di un teatro scritto, realistico, a fondo decisamente morale."55 Fido also notes that the playwrights and writers of the time are answering the call of the borghesia, the rising middle class that before this time was nonexistent in Venetian society. These people, with their newfound power in society as a whole, no longer want to be simply entertained with empty and mindless scenes or evade the truths of their daily life, but want an art form to reflect both their merits and defects. “I borghesi chiedono alla letteratura e al teatro non più un’evasione dalla vita quotidiana di cui non hanno bisogno, ma piuttosto un ragionevole specchio dei loro problemi, dei loro meriti e perfino dei loro difetti.”56 This is far removed from purpose and performances related to the Commedia dell’Arte which by nature insisted upon a low intellectual level by

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observers and an effective indifference to morality in general. With Goldoni’s efforts in restructuring the comedy itself, the author’s words gained an immense power to stimulate the viewers into recognizing their own faults and aid them in self-correcting.
The Goldonian Trinity: Il Libro, Il Mondo e Il Teatro

Carlo Goldoni was a man of theater and a student of life, of the reality surrounding him and of society as a whole. He believed that the world was a great theater and studied and observed the world around him from a young age and made connections and realizations. He analyzed relationships and people and how they fit into the world around him. As a keen observer, he noted interactions and conversations occurring from the most banal familial situations to explosive and dramatic social scandals. The author himself stresses the preparation and observation necessary to undertake writing comedies, yet none of it came from any possible academic preparation. Goldoni did not study psychology, sociology or human behavior; these fields were not as evolved or even in existence as they are today. His expertise came practical training, from interacting with the world around him and observing social exchanges between people. He famously penned that “i due libri su’ quali ho più meditato, e di cui non mi pentirò mai di essermi servito, furono il Mondo e il Teatro.” 57 This binary relationship between the World and the Theater is pivotal to his production but also is the base of his poetic expression. He found inspiration in the world, where comedy flowed from the everyday exchanges occurring around him. He did not represent the abstract, but aimed at representing natural representatives that intend to provoke understanding and realizations in the audience. As Manlio Dazzi states, “quello che è certo è che il Goldoni non prende l’uomo in astratto, ma ogni sua figura esce da un ambiente sociale determinato e

contemporaneo.” The scope of his work was to represent the world as it actually was, evidenced by the fact that many of his plays had roots in events and people that actually existed in his time. He saw the absurd in reality and it is this reality that inspired his theater. Conversely, what he learned from theater also motivated him in refining his art and poetics. He learned from his actors about human nature and evolving his craft to realize his full potential as playwright and social critic. As Kennard highlights, “All these players brought some contribution to the technical preparation of their poet, learning every day more of that special technique which prepared the way to his better work. He took from the players and from the plays they performed a more extensive knowledge of the past than he could ever have taken from books.”

The realization of his craft was not one that happens overnight, but is a result of studying and analyzing the world around him throughout his life. As a young man, he had the opportunity to travel and work in various fields which all provided him with material for his future plays. As Goldoni states himself, “Quando si studia sul libro della Natura e del Mondo, non si può per verità divenire maestro tutto d’un colpo.” Orazio, the head of the company of comics, expresses this same sentiment in Il Teatro Comico. He explains to Lelio, a young poet, what it takes to be a playwright like Goldoni (although never mentioning the author’s name, he only alludes to “l’autore delle vostre commedie.”) Orazio says,

58 Dazzi, p 107.
59 Kennard, p 258.
61 Il Teatro comico, III, 2.
Eh figliuolo, bisogna prima consumar sul teatro tanti anni, quanti ne ha egli consumati, e poi potrete sperare di far qualche cosa. Credete ch’egli sia diventato compositore di commedie ad un tratto? L’ha fatto a poco a poco, ed è arrivato ad essere compatito dopo un lungo studio, una lunga pratica, ed una continova instancabile osservazione del teatro; dei costumi, e del genio delle nazioni. (III, 2)

Not only is it necessary to watch and partake in theatrical presentations for many years, but also continuously study, practice and maintain acute observations of the world and real-life people and customs to accomplish the goal of becoming a playwright. The world to Goldoni is a great theater and it was his vocation to create theater that reflects the world; it is only in this relationship that the truth be represented justly. This duality existing between the world and theater reoccurs throughout his works and thematic storylines. His plays, in strong contrast to the theater style of the time, have a message and function, which reflect his style and purpose. His experiences with both the Mondo and Teatro allowed him to look with a different perspective and depth of knowledge into his themes and project them onto his audience.

Ilaria Crotti introduces another level to the analysis of Goldoni’s work in conjunction with the Mondo-Teatro--that of the Libro or book. The Libro facet of the triad, or circle as Crotti describes it, rests on the written representation of the comedies in which the voice of the author is forever encapsulated for future readers. She states that, “Certo è che tra questi distinti fattori (Mondo, Libro, Teatro) si innesca una sorta di circolarità, di reciproca proiezione che deve indurre a considerarli all’interno di un continuo processo di verifica e di osmosi, senza
irrigidirli in nette e drastiche divisioni.” The three distinct entities of the World, the Theater and the Book create an interdependent relationship that must be considered when analyzing the works. The texts allow Goldoni’s original message intended for his peers to be transmitted to readers of his epoch and also to those of future generations. This adds another dimension to the scope of his work, to not only correct the behaviors of his generation but also provide a blueprint for societies to come. The written word creates a more active and influential bond with the reader of the comedy relative to that of a spectator of a represented comedy.

Crotti highlights the inherent depth and reciprocity of the rapport created between author and reader, “Nell’eleggere il lettore quale istanza dinamica, capace di un intervento restitutivo e riparatore, si cerca, in ultima analisi, di innescare all’interno del circolo della ricezione un processo di apprezzamento che attivi ricadute positive anche sull’altro versante, quello relativo allo spettatore della scena.” The reader is a dynamic participant in the circle of world and theater and benefits from the knowledge and wisdom imparted by the author by actively bringing his experiences into the fold. Goldoni’s message has a far broader reach than could be made by solely staged representations.

The Libro allows a further connection between the Mondo and the Teatro, which represents the true voice of the author without any refraction or manipulation by the visual representation. The author may directly communicate

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63 ibid, p 32.
with the reader to clarify or explain any of his original intentions. The preface of each comedy is entitled *L’Autore a Chi Legge* and is a message from the author to the reader. These were not present in the original representations of the comedies but were added by Goldoni when the works were published. These introductions are an insightful view into the mind of the author and give the reader precious information regarding the purpose and intent for the play. The content would even change from one edition to another to include commentary on various criticisms. Pamela D. Stewart highlights the importance of these prefaces and their publication dates. “Esse occupano, fra le varie prefazioni goldoniane, un posto particolare, per la loro stretta connessione con le singole commedie: in esse si riflette, infatti, direttamente il passaggio di queste dalla scena alla stampa.” \(^{64}\) In addition to these direct communications to the reader, there are passages within the comedies themselves that are aimed at the reader. These dedications offer insight into Goldoni’s perceptions and guidance to fulfilling his social reform and reinforce this active and dynamic relationship with the reader. Both the reader and viewer are aware of the intent of the author regarding his message, but it is the reader that finds a deeper connection and interdependence.

The various prefaces take on different approaches depending on the author’s desired effect. Some defend his artistic choices, some explain his intentions regarding the comedy, some attack criticisms that he received and some are for purely didactic purposes. In the preface to the play *Il Cavaliere e La Dama*, Goldoni

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explains his thoughts regarding reform tactics not only in theater, but also in correcting manners which inspired his writing.

Quando pensai a scrivere le Commedie in servigio del Teatro, ed a togliere, per quanto avessi potuto, le infinite improprietà che in esso si tolleravano, mi venne in mente di smascherare i ridicoli, bandire gli Zanni e correggere le caricature dei Vecchi. Ma ci pensai assai sì, e pensandoci appresi che, se ciò avessi fatto, mille ostacoli mi si sarebbono opposti, e che non dovevasi sulle prime andar di fronte al costume, ma questo a poco a poco procurar di correggere e riformare.65

He believes he is doing a public service through his plays for the entire genre of Theater, to bring to light the ridiculous elements and caricatures found in the theater of the time, but also to expand his vision little by little to correct and reform the habits of the audience members as well.

Every preface explains his message and ensures that it is not misunderstood. Goldoni also uses this vehicle to express his feelings regarding his presentation of characters or themes in the play. In the preface to La Bottega del Caffè, Goldoni, the attorney, reveals his disclaimer. He wishes to squash possible complaints in being represented as a character in one of his plays and reiterates his use of the verosimile, while casting blame where it is deserved.

I miei caratteri sono umani, sono verisimili e forse veri, ma io gli traggo dalla turba universale degli uomini e vuole il caso che alcuno in essi si riconosca. Quando ciò accade, non è mia colpa che il carattere tristo a quel vizioso somigli; ma colpa è del vizioso, che dal carattere ch’io dipingo, trovasi per sua sventura attaccato.66

65 Il Cavaliere e La Dama, p 449.
66 La Bottega del Caffè, p 715
Goldoni knows the weight of his words and the scope of his comedies. He is fully aware of the downfalls of his true-to-life depictions, but also realizes the importance and social obligation he holds in order to help change the status quo.

The preface to *Le Baruffe Chiozzotte* defends his artistic choice to use the dialect of Chioggia in the comedy. Goldoni gives some examples of the Chioggian dialect as compared to both the Venetian and Tuscan dialects but does not want to get caught in a grammar lesson. He writes, “Ma io non intendo qui voler dare una grammatica chiozzotta: accenno qualche cosa della differenza, che passa fra questa pronunzia e la Veneziana, perché ciò ha formato nella rappresentazione una parte di quel giocoso, che ha fatto piacer moltissimo la Commedia.”

He is aware of the fact that many of the words may be indistinguishable to Venetians as well as other readers/spectators. Goldoni writes regarding the speech of Fortunato, a character in the play, “gli stessi suoi compatrioti lo capiscono con difficoltà.”

His choice to use this dialect circles back to the foundations of his writing, “l’esatta imitazione della natura.” To maintain adherence to truth and nature, Goldoni chooses to use the exact patterns of speech that a Chioggian of the time would employ. It is important to note as well that a character that cannot speak properly demonstrates a defect, which Goldoni wishes to highlight and utilize for comic effect.

In addition to the choice of language, Goldoni also writes words of self-defense for his choice of subject matter to his critics. Other comedies such as *I Pettegolezzi delle Donne* that have themes relating to the popular class enjoyed

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67 *Le Baruffe Chiozzotte*, p 320.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
immense success at the theater. In speaking to those who criticize his use of working class people as subjects of yet another play, he says, “dirò lor francamente che la natura e l’esempio mi hanno consigliato a tentarlo; e la riuscita delle prime Commedie mi ha autorizzato a produrre le altre.” Success and truth guided his choice to write another comedy about the popolani who are also, more importantly, part of his paying public. Goldoni understood economics and the business behind the theater. He writes, “I teatri d'Italia sono frequentati da tutti gli ordini di persone; e la spesa è sì mediocre, che il bottegaio, il servitore e il povero pescatore possono partecipare di questo pubblico divertimento.” In order to reach every audience member, Goldoni made it his mission to depict scenes for all walks of society. No one was left out of his comic representations, not for purely altruistic purposes, but for financial reasons as well. Success, for Goldoni, depended on the written word, but also on sold-out theaters. The last word that Goldoni has for his critics is a comment about comedy springing from truth. He believes that no matter to which social class one belonged, everyone can appreciate the comedy that results from truth, the Teatro that comes from the representation of the Mondo. “Tutto quello che è vero, ha il diritto di piacere, e tutto quello ch’è piacevole, ha il diritto di far ridere.”

Prefacing La Famiglia dell’Antiquario Goldoni also defends his artistic choices, but more importantly, his decision for the play’s ending. He feared, perhaps, that the ending he chose would not be widely appreciated, so he utilized
this introduction to explain his choices in light of his quest for an elevated sense of morality and adhesion to realism. The play, to some critics, does not end well; the ending does not find the family in a harmonious situation or at peace. The author asserts that it would have been easy to “renderle sulla scena pacificate,” it would not be an ending, in his experience, that would actually happen in real life. Thus, “desiderando io di preferire la verità disaggradevole ad una deliziosa immaginazione, ho voluto dare un esempio della costanza femminile nell’odio.” He prefers to give a more authentic view of women when they are overcome by hate and pride. He also cautions to the heads of household in the audience to see themselves in the flawed character of the Antiquario, not to be distracted by outside interests and to be wary to what is going on in their homes.

He also defends himself from critics in the preface to La Vedova Scaltra. The main critics questioned Goldoni’s adherence to realism in the artistic choices he made in writing the comedy. In this play, there are four noble gentlemen from four different countries, France, Italy, England and Spain all vying for the affection of the eponymous Vedova Scaltra, Rosaura. He responds to his critics who question the veracity of three foreign nobles possessing the ability to speak Italian with wittiness and irony, “Come se il nostro linguaggio non fosse coltivato in tutte le più polite Corti di Europa da tutte quasi le persone di conto, e non fosse costume di parlare il linguaggio della nazione, tra la quale un si trova, quando adeguatamente favellar quello sappia.” A modern reader can almost envision the glint in his eye and ready

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73 La Famiglia dell’Antiquario, pp 536-7.
74 Ibid, p 537.
75 La Vedova Scaltra, p 247.
wit in the face of critics who question his choices. Goldoni’s principal motivation in writing comedies is to present a realistic scenario that conveys a profound moral message to the audience. As Torresani states, “la funzione del teatro, per Goldoni, è quella di dire con verità le cose vere e con semplicità le semplici: dirle e trasmetterle con chiarezza a un pubblico che ne accolga il messaggio morale.”76 He knows his audience and also cites public approval as the mainstay of his defense and that “la Commedia è piaciuta al Pubblico, il Pubblico la difende, e su tal difesa m’acquie to.”77 He will always have critics but also is aware of the public’s reception and support of his work and it is for them that he writes, not for those who find fault in his efforts.

For the play l’Adulatore, Goldoni gives an acknowledging nod to his public and explains that his ending will be acceptable to their wishes. This play depicts the conniving nature of Don Sigismondo, the secretary and primary advisor to the Governor of Gaeta, who employs flattery and dishonest statements to achieve his desired result. Goldoni recognizes that the play could have ended much more harshly, but he did not wish to sadden his audience. He admits to changing the ending and instead of other punishments, the Flatterer, don Sigismondo, is sent to the “ferri in potere della Giustizia”78 and will receive reproach for his actions. This condemnation of Sigismondo to be tried by the hands of justice allows for a happier and lighter ending, which he knows his public enjoys. He also entreats his public to notice the despicable behaviors committed by the protagonist and to hate him for

76 Torresani, p 97.
77 La Vedova Scaltra, p 248.
78 L’Adulatore, p 169.
his actions. “Odiatelo amici, ch‘ei ben lo merita, e Dio vi guardi dalle pesime arti di cotal gente, che sono l‘ira del cielo e l‘obbrobrio degli uomini.”79 This is not the case of recommending to his audience to examine themselves in order to change a vice, but a blatant statement to hate anyone who employs the use of flattery, a vice strongly abhorred by Goldoni.

Every work of art has imbedded in it both cultural and historical significance. Pieces of literature contain not only that which the author intended to write, but also the social and cultural influences that the author experienced. “It is impossible, in fact, not to recognize that every literary work is a social phenomenon. It is an individual act but a social act of the individual.”80 It is important to recognize Goldoni’s historical and intellectual roots that inspired his ideas for the reform of comic theater and also for the improvement of society. The intellectual reflections of Muratori and Galiani regarding man’s employment of reason and logic in life are echoed in Goldoni’s comedies as the means to a more productive society. The Scienza Morale of Galiani delineates the nature of virtue and vice and defines virtue as the primary natural law, which for many of Goldoni’s characters is a celebrated trait. Muratori highlights the necessity for each member of society to employ reason, in order to differentiate between good and evil. Goldoni also proposes the use of reason, which illuminates the individual and ensures that they make correct and honorable decisions, which will benefit society as a whole.

Goldoni’s reform of theater is a direct result of his desire to provide examples of appropriate themes and behaviors to his audience. In moving from the Commedia

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80 Lanson, p 226.
*dell’Arte*, Goldoni developed more realistic characters who portrayed actual members of society and true-to-life situations. His comedies provide didactic lessons concerning the use of reason, virtue and vice and being a productive member of society. He understood the direct link he had with both the audience to the performance and his literary audience. This link is another way for the author to communicate his message and purpose to his audience. Undoubtedly, Goldoni’s comedies offer to the modern reader, an amazing reflection of the historical and social aspects of Venice of the time. As theater and as literature, “È il lavoro di Goldoni, in una Venezia aperta, alla cultura moderna, europea e <<illuminata>>.”81

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81 Torresani, p 36.
Chapter Two – An Examination of the Aristocracy and Popular Class.

Within the constructs of societal relationships and roles, Goldoni presents a copious number of examples illustrating the positive or virtuous traits apparent as well as the negative corruptions of society. The positive traits associated with goodness add to the productivity and progress of society. In contrast, adverse behaviors, which waste resources such as time and talent, detract from the advancement of society. Goldoni’s works embody this theme and promote social correctness through the theatrical presentation. As Maggie Günsberg states,

For Goldoni theatre had an important contribution to make to civil society...In his plays, subversion, ‘vice’ and excess provide an object for dramatic correction and reasoned moderation on the part of dominant ideological and social forces. A system of stark binary opposites, encapsulated in the ‘vice vs. ‘virtue’ dichotomy, provides the moralizing framework for the behavior of both male and female characters.82

All of the characters are subject to examination in the manner to which their behaviors contribute to or detract from society as a whole. Those who exhibit virtue in their actions have a positive social utility and those with offensive views and behaviors are given the ability to reform. The characters that are cast in a negative light initially have the purpose of illuminating negative and detrimental behaviors so that by the end of the play’s journey, a complete transformation or abolition of their transgression comes to fruition. The characters experience, as Günsberg notes, a “discovery in terms of a change from a state or ‘moral ignorance’ to one of

recognition of ‘moral truth’. They become renewed in their rational and progressive transformation and become for society an industrious and integral member. If the character fails in this undertaking, if he or she can no longer act in a manner befitting society, Goldoni manages a way to have him or her separated or removed from the environment, such Don Marzio’s exile at the end of *La Bottega del Caffè*.

Although, in Venetian society, the social classes were rigidly separated, in Goldoni’s comedies the classes interact, conscious of belonging to different classes, with a naturalness and simplicity in their contact. As Cavallini underscored in his examination of Goldoni’s characters and their interaction,

Il loro incontro-scontro, infatti, si intreccia con quello che avviene, indipendentemente dall’estrazione sociale dei vari personaggi all’interno di un medesimo ceto tra gli esponenti di generazioni e sessi diversi, gli uni e gli altri impegnati ad affermare oppure a difendere le rispettive esigenze e concezioni di vita.

The situations in which Goldoni places the characters provide the occasion for different generations, sexes and social classes to intermingle in very natural and believable exchanges that give the modern reader insight into the societal workings of the time. His comedies are a mirror in which members of all classes and walks of life can see themselves reflected, whether for the positive or negative behaviors that they exhibit.

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83 Ibid, p 100.
84 Cavallini, p 12.
The Aristocracy

The aristocracy is ever in Goldoni’s works and its members are represented in a duality that presents, on one side, the respectable and virtuous nature instilled from birth that maintains a positive effect on society, and the reverse, a wasteful, lazy and parasitic existence that relies solely on the value of the noble title held. This disparate representation allows the reader to understand the different personalities with whom Goldoni was in contact and to offer to the audience a view of the various virtues and vices in society. It is evident that Goldoni respected and admired members of the aristocracy, many of whom were his protectors and patrons. Goldoni’s dedications at the beginning of each play pay homage to these esteemed members of society and laud their noble and honest ways.

Il Marchese Carlo Ginori is the recipient of the dedication preceding La Pamela. Goldoni praises il Marchese Ginori for several reasons; he states that he is “grande per nascita, per antichità, per dovizie; grande ancora più per lo possedimento di tante scienze, per l’uso delle morali virtù; e grande in fine, e maggiore di se medesimo, per quella singolare clemenza, onde sa così bene frenare i vizi dei rei e premiar le virtù dei buoni.”85 In Goldoni’s estimation, the Marchese demonstrates greatness for what he has inherited, but more profoundly for his actions in correcting the misdeeds of his contemporaries and encouraging virtue in society. In Goldoni’s celebration of the Marchese’s accomplishments, one can see the connection between the man and his deeds. Personal merit and virtue is that which Goldoni looks for throughout his plays in all of his aristocratic characters.

85 La Pamela, p 9.
These characters do not rest on their titles or noble blood, but act and speak in a manner displaying personal merit. Eleonora and Don Rodrigo, of *Il Cavaliere e La Dama* and Ottavio of *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto* are a few of the noble characters that, through their words and actions, contribute positively to society.

Those who do not exhibit this virtuous merit are viewed in an unfavorable manner, which can be noted throughout Goldoni’s plays. Many of the characters representing the nobility fail to exhibit behaviors that positively impact society, but rather draw from society’s progress, as a parasite would. Cavallini states that many of Goldoni’s noble characters display “il parassitismo sociale della nobiltà veneta minore, ormai avviata al declino economico ed esclusa dal potere politico, costituita dai cosiddetti Barnabotti.” The members of the fallen aristocracy called *Barnabotti* were financially bankrupt and lacked the integrity or ability to produce anything worthwhile for society’s benefit. Most of the critics, such as Goldoni, denounced the manner in which these people lived off of the generosity and hard work of others without performing any positive service in return. In addition to the penniless *Barnabotti*, Goldoni also represents the behavior of other nobles who demonstrate a dishonorable side of the aristocracy and criticizes “il modo di vivere insulso e frivolo che si manifesta nella prepotenza e albagia, nella vanità e maldicenza nella galanteria salottiera, nel rispetto delle apparenze e nella mancanza di valori autentici.” Goldoni’s comedies cast a disapproving light on the frivolity and idleness that gripped many of the nobles of the time. Activities such as putting on appearances and extravagance, engaging in duels, gossip, use of flattery and idleness

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86 Cavallini, p 46.
87 Ibid, p 47.
show no positive or productive repercussion to society and in fact, they undermine societal progress as a whole. As in most cases with Goldoni, the audience is also introduced to the archetype of behavior for each class, and, while he criticizes, he also provides solutions to achieve a positive reform.
Wasteful Behaviors of the Aristocracy

The fundamental vice of the aristocracy that Goldoni highlights is perhaps the font from which all the others spring, an innate superiority due to birthright. Feeling that one is supreme to all others and that they are predisposed to receiving certain things and being treated a certain way can lead to a false sense of pride and refusal to ‘lower oneself’ to interact with others of different classes. This negative side of pride is instrumental in creating the idleness and frivolity demonstrated by members of the nobility in the works of Goldoni and has no beneficial repercussions on society. Many aristocratic characters embody the empty ‘grand’ lifestyle and generally are depicted as maintaining a parasitic existence, depleting resources from society’s coffers. In addition to a feeling of supremacy, behaviors highlighted by Goldoni that plague the aristocracy are laziness, gossip, flattery and engaging in duels.

The feeling of superiority is the theme evident in the play La Famiglia dell’Antiquario o Sia La Suocera e La Nuora. The play’s action revolves around the situation faced when a girl of the bourgeois class marries into a noble family. As stated before, some noble families found themselves financially ruined and their only lifeline was to accept a hefty dowry from a bourgeois merchant to sustain their household. A similar situation occurs in La Moglie Saggia (1750), in which Rosaura, the daughter of a wealthy merchant marries a Count. In La Famiglia dell’Antiquario, the matriarch of the family, Isabella, is vehemently against the marriage of her son to a woman beneath him in social status and believes her to be inferior of character. The terms of Doralice’s dowry are dispersed throughout the play and the amount of
'twenty thousand scudi' is often a point of contention upon which the action surrounds. She knows what she brings to the family, as Torresani states, "conosce il valore della propria dote e sa che il denaro conta più degli alberi genealogici." Isabella considers Doralice an acquisition of sorts, a means to an end, and does not believe her dowry was worth the smudge on their noble family. She says to her husband, Anselmo, "per il vilissimo prezzo di ventimila scudi, avete sacrificato il tesoro della Nobiltà." Isabella is horrified that her son must marry beneath him, "una mercantessa mia nuora? Non lo soffrirò mai." Isabella’s uses the word, mercantessa as if it is offensive and disgusting to her sensibility and pride-laced idea of nobility. Isabella’s feelings stem from her egotistical view of her social status and create a terrible situation for her entire household.

Manlio Dazzi notes that the noblewoman, Isabella, "non si limiterà a creare alla nuora una vita d’inferno con le sue gelosie di primato." This hellish existence fueled from pride and jealousy further deteriorates any semblance of propriety or productivity for her family, and only causes more distress and waste. She does manage to accept, however, the money that came from Doralice’s dowry to buy a new dress, but not before her husband points out her hypocrisy. He comments, "se temete che vi sporchino le mani nobili, lasciateli stare." She certainly relishes the money, and takes it, but cannot isolate her feelings concerning Doralice’s social inferiority. Isabella’s son, Giacinto is more accepting of Doralice’s social status but

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88 Torresani, p 96.
89 La Famiglia dell’Antiquario o Sia La Suocera e La Nuora, I, 3.
90 Ibid.
91 p 131.
92 Ibid.
their unmatched social classes can never be forgotten. In an argument between the newly married couple, he does not fail to mention his noble blood and nor she, her dowry.

Doralice: Sempre mette in campo la sua nobiltà
Giacinto: E voi la vostra dote.
Doralice: La mia dote è vera. (I, 7)

This exchange demonstrates the motivations that each individual possesses in the relationship but it can also be applied to society as a whole. Doralice, representing the middle class, is aware of her worth, financially, and what she brings to society, while Giacinto and the aristocracy have only their empty titles. The money, as Doralice points out, is the only thing that is real and tangible. The self-importance garnered from a noble title is problematic, as it does not in effect accomplish anything worthwhile for society, neither does it encourage one to do so. Although many elements factor into the comedy’s conclusion, it is Isabella’s pride that is primarily to blame for the dysfunctional situation that results.

In Il Cavaliere e La Dama, Goldoni represents many characters that appropriate the description of the idle noble lifestyle. The polemic between the hard work and honest living earned by the merchant versus the laziness and idleness of the aristocracy is manifested in the exchanges between Anselmo and Don Flamminio. The lack of industriousness of the titled gentry is extremely loathsome to Anselmo, here the spokesperson for Goldoni. Anselmo has the utmost respect for the aristocracy, but sees their idleness as an unfortunate flaw. He is a man of experience and his words are not for the honest cavalleri who already conduct themselves properly but for those who engage in idle behavior. To Flamminio,
Anselmo states, “i Cavalieri onesti e propri, che conoscono il loro grado e san
trattare da quei che son nati, non hanno bisogno di apprendere a trattare civilmente
da che che sia; ma i Cavalieri di nome, e che si abusano unicamente del titolo, non
son degni di stare a fronte d’un mercante onorato, come son io.” Flamminio is
insulted; he is unable to defend himself with merits or deeds (of which he has none),
but only with his title. The contrasting natures of Anselmo, the diligent merchant
and Flamminio, the idle aristocrat, can be noted in the following passage:

Flamminio: Olà, temerario che siete. Vi farò pentire di tanta audacia. Io
sono Cavaliere e voi siete un vile mercante, un uomo plebeo.
Anselmo: Un vil mercante, un uomo plebeo? Se ella sapesse cosa vuol dir
mercante, non parlerebbe così. La mercatura è una
professione industriosa, che è sempre stata ed è anco al di
d’oggi esercitata da Cavalieri di rango molto più di lei. La
mercatura è utile al mondo, necessaria al commercio delle
nazioni, e a che l’esercita onoratamente, come fo io, non si dice
uomo plebeo; ma più plebeo è quegli che per avere ereditato
un titolo e poche terre, consuma i giorni nell’ozio e crede che
gli sia lecito di calpestare tutti e di viver di prepotenza. L’uomo
vile è quello che non sa conoscere i suoi doveri, e che volendo a
forza d’ingiustizie incensata la sua superbia, fa altrui conoscere
che è nato nobile per accidente e meritava di nascer plebeo.

(II, 11)

Anselmo explains that his own profession is useful to the world and is necessary for
international trade, which cannot be disputed. He believes that those who do
nothing productive with their day and whose lives concentrate on vile and unjust
pursuits are wasteful in their efforts.

Similarly, Don Flamminio’s wife, Donna Claudia and friend, Donna Virginia
are openly criticized for their idle lifestyles filled with gossip, inactivity and frivolity.

93 Il Cavaliere e La Dama, II, 11.
Cavallini notes the *riti ridicoli* of this subset of the aristocracy are inclined “all’ozio e alla frivolezza, dedita al pettegolezzo e alla malDICenza, impegnata seriamente nella galanteria e nella fatua mondanità scettica ma sensibilissima alla vanità e al puntiglio dettato o da capriccio o da arroganza.”

They are undoubtedly obsessed with their self-created world full of senseless gossip, conversations and trivial relationships linked to the construct of the *cavalier servente* (which will be discussed more in detail in chapter 4). These characters, creations of Goldoni, embody the superficial and arrogant side that was prevalent in his time, whose daily activities did nothing but propagate indolence and fulfill capricious desires.

There is no positive or fruitful outcome from their undertakings and in effect they detract from the lives of others by adding unnecessary drama and suffering. Many critics of “women’s gossip more or less explicitly emphasize that disturbing power, which derives, certain moralists recognize, from female minds as well as female tongues, and which potentially threatens the order of society by investigating what should remain veiled.”

The power that these characters purloin from gossip, both the act and the actual words, disrupts the delicate balance within the social order and requires supplemental resources to restore. As demonstrated, characters such as Donna Eleonora, Don Rodrigo, Anselmo and even Colombina, Eleonora’s servant, must waste time and resources defending themselves and correcting the misspoken statements and ill-perceived situations, resources that could be better spent on more industrious activities.

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94 p 78.
95 Meyer Spacks, p 151.
Meaningless and often troublesome gossip is a vice that touches all of the social classes. Gossip is an activity devoid of purpose and meaning and ensures further separation among the social divides. “It derives from unconsidered desire to say something without having to ponder too deeply. Without purposeful intent, gossipers bandy words and anecdotes from other people, thus protecting themselves from serious engagement with one another.”

Those engaging in gossip readily share stories about others while failing to truly represent themselves. Meyer Spacks highlights that although gossip damages reputations, it “can also solidify a group’s sense of itself by heightening consciousness of ‘outside’ (inhabited by those talked about) and ‘inside’ (the temporarily secure territory of the talkers.)” At the moment of sharing their tale, the gossipers create a new social group that separates itself from outside relationships and dynamics. Although it may seem that this interaction brings people closer, in reality, it tears at the very fabric holding society together.

As can be seen with the fictitious and invented stories of Claudia and Virginia, gossip and storytelling with no foundation can cause irreparable harm to the reputations of those allegedly committing the misdeeds. In La Bottega del Caffè, the character of Don Marzio is guilty of gossip and of retelling stories he hears. Don Marzio is another example of an aristocrat full of title, empty of purpose. His days revolve around sitting at the caffè and watching others. He attempts to engage in conversation with Ridolfo, the proprietor who prefers to tend to his own business. When prompted to provide information regarding other patrons and citizens,

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96 Meyer Spacks, p 5.
97 Ibid.
Ridolfo tells Don Marzio, “voglio badare a’ fatti miei”\(^{98}\) and “dei fatti degli altri non me ne curo molto.”\(^{99}\)

Don Marzio has something to say about everyone and when he is taken in confidence regarding an issue or situation he immediately reports it to whoever will listen. Don Marzio believes himself to be very important and essential to the well functioning of their microcosm of a society. He says, “Grand’uomo sono io, per saper ogni cosa! Chi vuol sapere quell che passa in casa di tutte le virtuose e di tutte le ballerina, ha da venire da me.”\(^{100}\) Ridolfo and Eugenio discuss Don Marzio’s character:

Ridolfo: E dice male di tutti.
Eugenio: Non so come faccia a parlar sempre de’ fatti altrui.
Ridolfo: Le dirò: egli ha pochissime facoltà; ha poco da pensare a’ fatti suoi, e per questo pensa sempre a quelli degli altri. (I, 11)

Not only does Ridolfo so keenly observe that Don Marzio speaks badly of others but also notes the reason for which he does it. His apparent lack of power in life requires that he find it elsewhere, through the practice of gossip. As Meyer Spacks states, “Voyeurism, shared secrets, story-telling: these private forms of power supplement the more public ones involved in circulating rumor and shaping reputation.”\(^{101}\)

Where he is powerless and impotent in other areas of his life, gossip helps him find a sense of purpose and dominance.

\(^{98}\) La Bottega del Caffe, I, 4.
\(^{99}\) Ibid, I, 6.
\(^{100}\) Ibid, I, 9.
\(^{101}\) p 11.
From the initial line of dialogue, he speaks negatively of Lisaura, the ballerina, who lives across from the caffè, and chips away at her character by describing the way in which she takes men in and out of the non-existent back door of her residence. Even though Ridolfo attests to the fact that he never sees anyone coming or going, Don Marzio insists that everyone else is crazy and that she “ha la porta di dietro; pazzo, pazzo! Sempre flusso e riflusso.”102 The manner in which he repeats “sempre flusso e riflusso” is a constant blow to Lisaura’s character, which at the end proves to be untrue. He is curious always to find out what is happening, especially when two characters are speaking secretly. While watching Ridolfo and Eugenio speak, he attempts to decode that which they are discussing and says, “Qualche grand’affare. Sono curioso di saperlo.”103

Don Marzio’s role is the invisible hand throughout the play, and his malevolent comments are the strings that move the characters to and fro throughout the scene. The characters begin to understand the extent of Marzio’s mischievousness and Eugenio finally exposes the truth to all involved. “Sì, che l’ha detto, e l’ha detto anche a me e dell’una e dell’altra. Della pellegrina, che è stata l’anno passato a Venezia a birboneggiare, e della signora ballerina, che riceve le visite per la porta di dietro.”104 Leandro agrees, “Signor sì, signor sì. V.S. ha fatto nascere mille disordini; ha levata la reputazione colla sua lingua a due donne onorate.”105 Other business owners such as the barber and the waiter from the

102 Ibid I, 6.
103 Ibid, I, 8.
104 Ibid, III, 22.
105 Ibid, III, 23.
locanda call him “Signore spione”\textsuperscript{106} and “Signora spia”\textsuperscript{107} and request that he never return to their establishments again. At first, he is shocked that he is being blamed and denies his own culpability. Through his final monologue, we see a change in his own mind and his own words justly taking responsibility for his actions.

When it is revealed that he was the one responsible for the miscommunications and untruths, he fully realizes the scope of what he has done. It is in this wasteful action of gossip that threatened to ruin the lives of so many, that has caused so much trouble and unnecessary worry and harm. This vice is a true detriment to society with the only remedy being extraction. This final action of exile reiterates the fact that gossip has no place in a civilized society and the only recourse is to remove it entirely.

Along with gossip, Goldoni severely criticizes the use of flattery to deceive and mask the truth from others. The play that plainly criticizes this vice is entitled precisely “the Flatterer” or L’Adulatore. In the preface, Goldoni succinctly explains his disgust for this particular vice. He begins by saying that,

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid, III, 25.  
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid, III, 26.
Non vi è fra gli uomini il più pernicioso alla società oltre il perfido adulatore; poiche distruge negli animi quell rossore, ch’è talvolta freno alle colpe, e colorisce i vizi talmente che più non si ravvisano da chi li coltiva, ed è disperata l’emenda.  

He gripes that these people are never satisfied and in order to promote their own wants and desires will cajole others and fill them with false ideas and hopes. He calls the art that they practice “maligna, scandalosa” e “inumana.” Flattery has a percunious effect on family and social dynamics because it is based on lies and untruths. A flatterer’s statements are by definition worthless and empty; trusting in the information presented can have negative repercussions, especially for someone in power. To Goldoni and other Enlightenment writers, the word represents reason and logic, thus, the words of flatterers are especially dangerous because they embody the opposite: illogical, deluded and corrupt ideas. This is not the first time that the use of flattery is denounced in literature and in fact, Dante holds it as one of the most serious of offences as well. In his conception of Hell, the flatterers are confined to the eighth circle, called Malebolge and are punished for the evil degeneration of their words by being submerged in excrement for eternity.  

The use of flattery by the protagonist, Don Sigismondo has reduced him to an unfaithful and dishonest person and Goldoni feels that all of his statements stem from his ambition to profit in the long run. His secret agenda is, in fact, to become the cavalier servente of Donna Elvira and all of his powers focus to achieve this end. Sigismondo is the secretary to Don Sancio, the Governor of Gaeta. Sancio, is portrayed by Goldoni to be lazy and disinterested in the proper execution of his

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108 L’Adulatore, p 169.
109 Ibid.
110 Alighieri, Dante, Inferno, Canto XVIII, lines 112-136.
political role. Sancio relies heavily on Sigismondo for advice and repeatedly asks him if he is being sincere and truthful. He constantly questions Sigismondo’s honesty and inquires, “voi mi adulate”\textsuperscript{111}, “ditemi sinceramente” and “mi assicurate.”\textsuperscript{112} Sigismondo assures Sancio that he is operating with “il vero, il bene, la ragione e il giusto”\textsuperscript{113} and openly denies his use of flattery.

He not only flatters his boss, Sancio, but also his wife, Luigia. Luigia expresses other Goldonian vices such as jealousy, ambition and the desire to keep up appearances, but the worst of all is her outward envy and competition with her own daughter. Instead of correcting this behavior and creating a positive effect on the family, Sigismondo feeds into her vain tendencies, provides her with false counsel and aids in her deluded fantasies. Sigismondo is fully aware of the impact of his actions and the nature of those with whom he is dealing. He manipulates Sancio and Luigia in order to achieve his own personal goals. He sums up his entire situation and reason for employing flattery to his boss and his wife,

Eccomi in una carriera che mi promette la mia fortuna, scortato dalla dolcissima adulazione. Questo è il miglior narcotico per assonnare gli spiriti più vigilanti. Eccomi con questa ingegnosa politica fatto padrone del cuore del Governatore, secondando la sua pigrizia, e di quello della di lui moglie, adulando la di lei invidiosa ambizione. Queste imprese sono a buon porto; non mi resta, per esser felice, che superare l’ostinata avversione di donna Elvira, la quale, troppo inamorata di suo marito, non soffre le mie adorazioni. (I, 3)

He continues to explain the end to his means in hoping to separate Elvira from her husband and create a necessity for himself in her life. He fuels his plan with the use of flattery to appease everyone so that he can proceed unencumbered. The

\textsuperscript{111} L’Adulatore, I, 1.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
carelessness regarding those around him is of no consequence, for he only wishes to achieve his own personal agenda.

Two of Goldoni’s characters do not fall victim to Sigismondo’s flattery and in fact utilize reason and well-spoken dialogue to highlight their positions against him and his malevolence. Both Brighella, one of the family’s servants, and Donna Elvira are aware of the ulterior motives behind Sigismondo’s flattery. Elvira wants no part of his affections or flattery and uses her wits to combat almost every comment that he aims at her. She manages to cut through all of his inappropriate advances and false words by changing the subject or simply highlighting his flawed statements. She tells him directly that there is no need to flatter her, “che vaglia a lusingarmi.”114 When Sigismondo feels that he is not getting anywhere with her he admits that he adores her beauty. His compliments enrage Elvira and she chides him for completely crossing the line from flattery to something more serious, “Se prima mi avete adulata, ora mi avete offesa.”115 He cannot move past his own desires and will do or say anything to attain his ultimate goal, her. Elvira is aware of the power he holds and that his reality is skewed. She insinuates that he is starting to believe his self-created fantasies. She tells him, “Siccome adulate tutti, adulerete anche voi medesimo.”116

After learning of her husband’s false imprisonment, Elvira believes it to be the work of Sigismondo to make his ‘friendship’ essential to her. In echoing the sentiments expressed by Goldoni in the preface, she delivers one of the most

114 Ibid, I, 16.
115 Ibid.
116 Ibid.
vehement lines of dialogue to bring act 2 to a feverish ending and demonstrate all of her faculties in pointing out the errors in his thoughts and actions.

Orsù, v’intendo. L’amore, la passione, il dolore mi hanno lusingata soverchiamente di poter sperare da voi grazia, giustizia, discrezione, onestà. Siete un’anima indegna, siete un perfido adulator, e siccome credo opera vostra la carcerazione di don Filiberto, così spero invano vederlo per vostro mezzo ritornato alla luce. So con qual prezzo mi vendereste la vostra buona amicizia, ma sapiate che più di mio marito, più della mia vita medesima, amo l’onor mio: quell’onore che voi non conoscete, quell’onore che voi insidiate; ma spero vivamente nella bontà del cielo, che l’innocenza sarà conosciuta, che le mie lagrime saranno esaudite, e che voi sarete giustamente punito. (II, 22)

Her statements undoubtedly foreshadow the ending in which everyone comes to realize Sigismondo’s flattering ways and he is brought to justice.

The historical practice of the “duel” also appears throughout the comedies of Goldoni and is extremely criticized as a vice of the noble class. A main reason for the duel’s negative perception is that it was believed to be irrational and against the laws of human nature. Frederick Bryson writes, “The duel was regarded as illogical, in the first place, because the instruments of proof were arms, which signify only violence.” During the Enlightenment, violence was especially deplored as a means for settling disputes, while the use of reason and law was reinforced. Additionally, many of the independent Italian governments prohibited the duel by law. Bryson highlights, ”Milan, Piedmont, Naples, and Venice, for example, had laws directed against the parties to a duel, its instigators, and those whose interest in it was due to mere curiosity; and among the prescribed penalties were confiscation of property,

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branding as infamous, imprisonment, hanging, and quartering.”  
Venice supported the court system as a means for settling disputes and added higher sanctions to provide support to those testifying in court, “By a law of April 10, 1535, those who had been witnesses in courts of law should not be challenged to duels on account of their testimony.”  
Shortly after, in 1540, Venice enacted a law that punished those who fought in duels “by ten years’ imprisonment and other penalties.”

Many examples can be cited and all denounce its existence as a wasteful one with no affirmative societal repercussions. When a noble man is insulted he feels an obligation to honor his title and family name by engaging in a duel. This behavior has no foundation in rational or logical thought and springs primarily from succumbing to anger and passion. Donna Eleonora’s ruined financial state in Il Cavaliere e La Dama is a direct result of the consequences of her husband, Don Roberto engaging in a duel. Although not portrayed in the comedy, it is learned that Don Roberto participated in a duel and subsequently killed the challenger. He and his wife are punished for this criminal act by losing all of their financial holdings. In addition, Don Roberto is exiled from society, while Donna Eleonora is left penniless and alone. His irrational involvement in the duel causes irreparable damage to Donna Eleonora and forces her to live in destitute circumstances.

In the same play Don Flamminio becomes enraged and offended by Don Rodrigo, publicly revealing that he fabricated his claims of Don Roberto’s excellent

118 Ibid, p 102.
119 Ibid, p 103.
120 Ibid.
health. Flamminio immediately challenges Don Rodrigo to a duel for having openly ridiculed him, to which Rodrigo pens an immediate refusal. With the counsel of his good friend Don Alonso, he writes a response to Don Flammino,

Rispondo alla vostra disfida, non poterla, né doverla io accettare, poichè tutte le leggi me lo inibiscono. Se non vi fosse altro da temere, oltre le pene pecuniarie ed afflittive fulminate dai Sovrani Decreti, forse mi esporrei a soffrirle, per darvi pruova del mio coraggio; ma poichè le leggi cavalleresche dichiarano infame il Cavaliere duellista, ricuso assolutamente di venire al luogo della disfida, Vi dico però, nello stesso tempo, ch’io porto la spade al fianco per difesa della mia vita e dell’onor mio, e che in qualunque luogo avrete ardire di provocarmi, saprò rispondervi da Cavalier qual sono. (III, 3)

Rodrigo does not accept the duel for two specific reasons. One reason he cites is that the laws set out by Venice prohibit duels and the punishment is not one that he wishes to face. The other reason comes from an unwritten code, *le leggi cavalleresche*, or chivalry laws that all men of this class should follow. These ‘codes’ followed by true Cavaliers influence their comportment and conduct; two aspects that Rodrigo strictly lives by. His decision to refuse the duel demonstrates a true testament of his character and adherence to social norms, hence his personal productivity. The duel, along with the other petty and capricious behaviors associated with Don Flamminio’s type of nobility have no foundation in a rational and civilized society and thus must not be accepted by a paragon such as Don Rodrigo. Goldoni utilizes the words and actions of Rodrigo to demonstrate behaviors that should be employed by noble men to ensure a more constructive society.
**Productive Behaviors of the Aristocracy**

In contrast to the previous section, Goldoni does represent true and virtuous characters that exemplify the worthwhile and productive members of the aristocratic class. In his play, *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto*, Goldoni utilizes the title character, Conte Ottavio as his spokesperson for virtue and productivity in the highest of the social classes. The traits of good taste and moderation, often the keystones of the bourgeois class, are here also represented and regarded for the aristocracy as necessary measures to a well functioning society. Goldoni dedicates this play to Giovanni Mocenigo, who is praised by the author as a model and archetype of a true to life *Cavaliere di Buon Gusto*. Goldoni writes in the dedication that Mocenigo is a “prototipo de’ Cavalieri, ed il di Lei buon gusto può servire di regola di moderazione, di esempio.”\(^{121}\) He not only pays a kind compliment to one of his patrons but also highlights for Venetian society a true representative of that which he values and hopes will serve as an example for others in similar circumstances.

This example is reverberated in the character of Ottavio, a *cavaliere* who does not let his affairs go unmanaged, but rather, is illustrated as having a more than active role in the development and augmentation of his business dealings. He values his servants as vital members of his household, who provide invaluable services to him and are rewarded for their hard work and service with fair and adequate compensation. This is not the case in many of the aristocratic or bourgeois households represented in Goldoni’s comedies, where many of the servants go

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\(^{121}\) *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto*, p 413.
underappreciated and often unpaid due to lack of resources. Three qualities that Ottavio values and requires of his servants are “puntualità, attenzione, e pulizia.”

These three qualities are key in the maintaining of a household or a business, and society as a whole. He knows that rewarding and appreciating his staff will optimize their output, as he is a true businessman even in his personal life. He values the loyalty and faithfulness of his servants, especially Brighella, whom he honors with the title ‘maestro della casa.’ This title allows him economic control of the dealings of the household, that is to say a sort of Chief Financial Officer of Ottavio’s estate.

Ottavio instructs Brighella, as he would a member of his business team, how to be successful and exercise good judgment while making economic decisions for the household. He tells Brighella,

> Siate economi nello spendere, in situazazioni di variare sempre nei piatti, di farli saporiti e di gusto, ma che non getti superfluamente; mentre tutto quello che io spendo, ho piacere che si goda, e se spendo sei, desidero se si può farlo comparire per dieci. (I, 5)

No aspect is too small to go unnoticed in the household operations and Ottavio wishes to engage in smart, productive measures to ensure the wellbeing and enjoyment of all that share his household. Unlike the avaricious character of the same name in *Il Vero Amico*, in this play Ottavio wishes to spend but also to get value for his money.

Ottavio (as Goldoni’s spokesperson) believes that the nobility should not ride solely on their titles or their patrimony, but should engage in behaviors and activities that will extend the reach of their current assets. He also believes that

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those with titles are also obliged to live with a sense of moderation. Ottavio
criticizes his sister-in-law, Beatrice, who demands respect for holding a title. He
says, “Grandezza di nascita e umiltà di tratto costituiscono il vero merito della
nobiltà.” Ottavio does not wish to close himself off into the world of the
condescending and haughty aristocracy; this is wastefulness and does not satisfy his
desires for the present or future of his family.

Ottavio enjoys exploring relationships and business dealings with those who
he values and who share his views on the world. Pantalone, represented as a
hardworking merchant, is one person with whom he shares his time as well as his
business dealings. Their verbal exchanges represent the voice of Goldoni, the
economist, who applies his theories of utility and maximizing output regarding
society. Ottavio states that he will continue to do business with Pantalone if it does
not negatively affect his household, “ senza sconvolgere l’economia.” Therefore
as long as he can positively manage his resources, Ottavio will continue to focus his
time and capital toward business dealings with Pantalone.

In his opinion, one thing that is not “worth” his time or resources is getting
married. Although Goldoni usually considers marriage a productive social system,
here, through the words of Ottavio, the reader notes the economic disadvantages of
marrying. The main resource being discussed is that of ‘time.’ Scarcity of resources,
the main foundation of economic theory, propels people to make decisions based on
how to allocate these resources or to choose which resources are ‘worth’ more to
them. Time, for Ottavio, is a resource that he would rather employ in other areas of

123 Ibid, I, 6.
124 Ibid.
his life such as his business or his free time activities. In economic terms, the opportunity cost of any decision is the value of the next forgone opportunity.

Marriage, for Ottavio, ‘costs’ the time that he could dedicate to his business affairs or relationships with other people.

Similarly, the character of Donna Eleonora, in *Il Cavaliere e la Dama* represents the nobility in a positive manner. Although destitute and without physical resources, she survives without degrading herself or her reputation. As Günsburg states, she “shines out as an example of idealized noble femininity in that she is neither materially grasping nor pretentious. Relations with her maid are excellent, and despite the impoverishment caused by her husband’s exile, she refuses to compromise her chastity and modesty by accepting gifts of money.”

She maintains her honor and nobility of character even though her circumstances are difficult and the temptation to take help from others is abound. Her strength is noted throughout the comedy in her spoken dialogue, and although she does not have many resources to spend, she explains what is truly necessary in life. “La vita si può sostenere con poco. Gli adornamenti non sono necessari, ma l’onore merita le più zelanti attenzioni, e chi è nato nobile, ha maggior obbligo di custodirlo.”

Donna Eleonora is aware of the sincere responsibility she holds, not only to her husband, but also to her social position. Here, depicted in Eleonora, is the paradigm of the noble woman who is obliged to maintain her honor and dignity, not only because she is a woman, but even more importantly, because she is noble of birth.

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125 p 203.
126 *Il Cavaliere e La Dama*, I, 6.
The Working Class (Il Popolo)

As mentioned, Goldoni valued all members of society, for the role they currently played and through their own personal productivity, that which they had the potential to contribute to society. Notwithstanding his affiliation to the bourgeois class, Goldoni harbored an intense fondness for the working class and depicted them predominantly with grace and dignity in their daily routines. His portrayal of fishmongers, seamstresses, servants and other domestic workers is filled with detail and understanding and done with the utmost respect of their values, hard work and abilities. Fido declares, “A poco a poco, la ricchezza psicologica e affettiva, la dignità del popolino sono scoperte e proclamate nell’ambito di una nuova, spontanea fiducia nei valori umani, per cui distinzioni e gerarchie tradizionali si troveranno a un certo punto eluse di fatto, senza bisogno di confutazioni polemiche.”127 His working class characters are amongst the most colorful and enjoyable and demonstrate his intense love and hope for them and their futures. For the purpose of this examination, I will divide the working class into two parts, servants/domestics and all other working class professions.

The servant

The servant, both female and male, is a figure found in almost every one of Goldoni’s comedies. The servant class found itself, as with the piccola borghesia, to be in a very interesting and powerful position economically. They found new opportunities to grow both socially and financially along with their masters.

127 Fido, Guida a Goldoni, p 44.
Although the servant could be viewed as a tertiary figure to a comedy, often times, Goldoni has his servants at the center of the drama, not as bystanders, but as representatives of the world. He focuses on what they think and feel and these sentiments are sometimes influenced by their masters’ feelings and actions. In many situations, the servant criticizes his master’s behavior and provides model behavior or the voice of reason. For example, in the *Villeggiatura* trilogy, the servants criticize their masters’ actions and provide “una denuncia assai più dura dei padroni, e del loro assurdo rapporto con la campagna.”

Goldoni also has his servant figures interacting in a microcosmic world that imitates their masters’ and mistresses’ behaviors such as their own relaxed morals while on villeggiatura. Fido highlights that “Il loro piacere, anzi, deriva proprio dal fatto di imitare e criticare le azioni di modelli che essi al tempo stesso invidiano e disprezzano.”

The traditional servant figure from the historical *Commedia dell’Arte* became in Goldoni one of two possibilities. The first maintained the traditional ties to the Arlecchino or Brighella figure full of wit, slyness and hunger. The second demonstrated the goldonian touch and was transformed into a deeper character serving as the pillar of good sense, reason and moderation. As Marchini-Capasso states, the traditional figure of the servant “deriva in Goldoni qualche tipo di servo scaltro e disonesto, che non si toglie tuttavia dall’ambito della verità; ma più spesso derivano quei servi accorti e di buon senso, fedeli amici del padrone, prudenti e pronti a levarlo d’impiccio anche nelle avversità.” In early comic tradition, the

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128 Ibid, p 119.
129 Ibid, p 118.
130 p 18.
servant figure was central to the entire action of the play. They would, “inventar trappole per aiutare il padrone giovane inamorato e castigare l’avarizia del padrone vecchio.” At times they even replicate in their world, the behaviors and relationships that they were surrounded by. “Dalla buffoneria allegra di Arlecchino esce invece la classe dei servi vivaci, burloni, motteggiatori pronti dei difetti e dei costumi della società inguantata che servono.”

In the Servitore di due Padroni (1749), it is evident the close ties to the traditional servant figure from the improvised comedies, but Goldoni develops the character of the servant and often times utilizes him as a vehicle for social reform in bestowing upon him a more profound characterization. Fido highlights,

Questi domestici al tempo stesso integrati e alienati, che praticano con accanimento le virtù (e aspirano in cambio alle soddisfazioni) borghesi, rappresentano l’estrema metamorfosi di un vecchio personaggio, il punto di arrive in un processo di relativa promozione sociale alla cui origine sta il famelico e irriverente servo dell’Arte.

Goldoni’s servant figure morphs from the traditional ridiculous buffoon or deceiving and underhanded charlatan into a stalwart member of society rich of morals and good sense. The servant becomes a keen observer and, “are also often in possession of superior knowledge compared to their masters and mistresses.” They provide a close analysis of the situation at hand and offer ‘their’ thoughts and beliefs. As Fido notes:

Gli ultimi servi goldoniani non sono né buoni né cattivi, ma descrivendo o rappresentando i propri padroni senza identificarsi con loro, essi conservano

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131 Fido, Guida a Goldoni, p 102.
132 Marchini-Capasso, p 18.
133 Fido, p 105.
134 Günsburg, p 186.
la capacità di vedere e far vedere come relativo tutto quello, dall'amore alla gelosia alla moda al puntiglio, che la vicenda e i protagonisti borghesi di queste commedie tendono a presentare e a vivere come assoluto.\(^{135}\)

Their own behaviors and reactions to those of their masters provide an interesting comparison and reveal the dichotomy of the classes in terms of morality.

In the *Villeggiatura* trilogy, the servants are often the voice of reason and good sense and advise their masters to regulate their behaviors and spending, advisements which usually are not heeded. Paolo, in *Le Smanie della Villeggiatura*, not only exhibits exemplary values and *buon senso* but is also the epitome of a loyal servant. He does his duty within the home but also provides wise guidance to both Vittoria and her brother Leonardo. He explains to Vittoria that there is hardly enough money to run the household and encourages her to pay off her debts and not recklessly spend money that she does not possess. He says, “Regolar le spese, cambiare sistema di vivere. Abbandonar soprattutto la villeggiatura.”\(^{136}\) He believes, as does the author, that *Villeggiatura* is a wasteful exercise of vanity, especially for those who cannot afford it.

Once in the country, the servants in the *Villeggiatura* trilogy openly criticize the behaviors of their masters and gossip about their affairs. While this is not lauded behavior, the reader can see the comedy and perceptions of the lives of the masters through the servants’ eyes. At times, their criticisms highlight the problematic values plaguing the middle class. As the *Avventure della Villeggiatura* opens, the servants are together discussing their respective masters and the

\(^{135}\) Ibid, p 120.
^{136} *Le Smanie della Villeggiatura*, I, 1.
negativity associated with the trip to the country. They do not believe that their masters appreciate or enjoy the country, but rather continue their city lives with a change of scenery. Brigida comments, “Per loro, la città e la villa è la stessa cosa. Fanno per tutto la medesima vita.”\textsuperscript{137} Tita criticizes the manner in which her mistress, Costanza, is vacationing in the country while her master is working in the city. “Il mio padrone è a Livorno, e la padrona sta qui a godersela. Il marito fatica in città a lavorare, e la moglie in campagna a spendere e a divertirsi.”\textsuperscript{138}

The country atmosphere also lends itself to a relaxed sense of morality, since there are fewer restraints keeping unmarried, young people in the confines of their homes under the inscrutable eyes of their guardians. Paolo declares, “Nascono in villa di quegli accidenti, che non nascerbbono facilmente in città.”\textsuperscript{139} He and Brigida in this scene discuss the events occurring between Giacinta and Guglielmo and offer their opinions to each other openly. The fact that they can be out together in the woods speaking candidly is due to the complete relaxation of all accepted moral codes. Throughout the scene, in which they are given a lengthy opportunity to discuss the behavior of their masters, they display similar tendencies in reflecting and mimicking the behaviors that they are in fact criticizing.

More often, servants behave with immense levels of honesty and honor and are treated well in return. As mentioned previously, in \textit{Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto}, Ottavio highly values his servants and treats them fairly and with high regard. Brighella, Ottavio’s servant, understands the immense relationship between him

\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Le Avventure della Villeggiatura}, I, 2.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid, III, 1.
and his master and acts accordingly in the exchange. He appreciates his position and the manner in which he is treated. He states, “Sarà dodes’anni, e me par dodese ziorni. Ho sempre ringrazià el cielo d’esser al servizio d’un cavalier tanto benigno come V.S. illustrissima, e spero de terminar in sta benedetta casa i mi ziorni.” That is to say that he reciprocally values his master as he is valued and is truly appreciative of the situation in which he finds himself. The character of Trivella in *Il Vero Amico* also demonstrates the loyalty and honor felt by servants even as they pass from one generation to another. In addition, it is easy to note the protective role they fulfill in the well being of their masters and the level of trust afforded within these relationships. In speaking to Florindo, Trivella says, “ella sa la mia fedeltà, e si ricordi che il suo zio, in questo viaggio che le ha accordato di fare, mi ha dato l’onore di servirla, come antico di casa, ed ha avuto la bontà di dire che si fidava unicamente di me e che alla mia fedel servitù appoggiava le sue speranze.”

Loyalty in his vocation, Brighella, of *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto*, exhibits the highest qualities respected by Goldoni in servants. This is in stark opposition to the figures inherited from the *Commedia dell’Arte* featuring the servant figures prone to trickery and thievery regarding their masters as can be seen in *La Famiglia dell’Antiquario*. The reader can note that the interventions and behaviors of the servant figures only add to the negative productivity of the family. The character of Brighella in this play knows the defects of his master and instead of helping to correct his behaviors, he prays upon them by scheming with Arlecchino to further deplete the family’s resources on fake antiquities. He fully knows that Anselmo

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140 *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto*, I, 5.
141 *Il Vero Amico*, I, 2.
exhibits wasteful behavior and says, “el me pardon l’è impazzido per le antichità; el
tol tutto, el crede tutto; el butta via i so denari in cosse ridicule, in cosse che non val
niente.”142 This behavior, exhibited by Brighella totally contradicts the values and
beliefs that Goldoni portrays as promoting and maintaining a productive society.

Female servants

Goldoni truly valued women and the role that they held in every echelon of
society, from the aristocracy to the servant class. His characterization of the female
servant comes as well from the traditional mask of Colombina. Goldoni’s support
and appreciation for women is apparent in all of the female roles he created. “Con
Colombina, Goldoni snodò le fila più delicate della sua psicologia femminile, bonaria
e indulgente, in generale verso quanto è difetto nella donna, esaltatrice ottimista di
quanto è virtù.”143 She becomes reborn from a trivial minded lively young girl–
counterpart to Arlecchino, into two distinct types of female servant figures, which
both retain some elements from Colombina. One represents the prudent and
rational-minded young lady who proves invaluable to her mistress while the other
promotes the scheming and self-interested servant girl. Goldoni’s conception of the
female servant appears as the devoted maid next to “dame prudenti, di mogli oneste
e di amanti accorte e di spirito.”144 Her influence is noted in verbal exchanges they
have and it is often the words of these Colombina figures that hold the reason and
truth that their padrone so desire to hear. Some of Colombina’s roles include

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142 La Famiglia dell’Antiquario, I, 16.
143 Marchini-Capasso p 23.
“complemento quasi fisso d’una padroncina innamorata cui dà lezione di civitteria, o d’una padrona di spirito di cui compie la scaltrezza, o d’una moglie saggia e prude nte con la quale offre l’effetto di contrasto.”\textsuperscript{145} These Colombina characters have the

somma abilità di una serva amorosa capace di man naggiarsi delicatamente per il bene degli altri, fedele e pronta ai più alti sacrifici per il trionfo della giusta causa, finissima e nobilissima nel saper nascondere sotto la risata allegra dolori profondi, così da tocare ad un tempo due corde, quello del riso e quella della commozione.\textsuperscript{146}

A noteworthy example is found in the servant figure, Colombina in \textit{Il Cavaliere and la Dama}, who displays her noble heart in demonstrating the utmost devotion and dedication to her mistress. Despite her padrona’s unfortunate financial circumstances, she refuses to abandon or make demands of her. She remains stalwart and supportive to Donna Eleonora throughout the entire comedy. Günsburg highlights that Colombina’s dedication to her mistress despite her terrible circumstances is common for the servant figures in Goldoni’s plays. “Domestic servants commonly endure conditions of poverty, sleep deprivation and most frequently, hunger and abuse...”\textsuperscript{147} Colombina even speaks in defense of her mistress when she is being falsely accused by Donna Virgina’s and Donna Claudia’s evil gossip. Margarita, of \textit{La Buona Madre} helps Barbara both to realize her son’s transgressions and aid in remedying his situation. In \textit{La Pamela}, the eponymous servant girl has a leading role and demonstrates all that Goldoni stands for in the way of virtue and good sense in her conduct. She not only performs her role well,

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid, p 28.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid, pp 25-26.
\textsuperscript{147} p 206.
but has a spirit about her, which supersedes her station in life and is extremely valued by those around her.

Lisetta, Eugenia's maid in *Gli Innamorati*, is the voice of reason and honesty and a foil to her mistress who is caught up in the reigns of passion and irrationality. She is the one who explains Eugenia’s defects and provides a deep analysis of her mistress’s state of being. Through her vastly rational discourse, Lisetta employs Cartesian logic and is endowed with a level of understanding far beyond her station.\(^{148}\) Brigida, a servant figure in *Le Smanie della Villeggiatura*, is rewarded for her intelligence and the way in which she utilizes logic in presenting her argument for accompanying the family to the country. In comparing herself to Fulgenzio, she presents her case well, to which her master Filippo responds, “Brava, io non ti credeva si spiritosa. Hai fatto un bel panegirico al signor Ferdinando. Basta, se sarò costretto a pagare il viaggio al signor cavalier del dente, sarà servita la signora contessa della buona lingua.”\(^{149}\)

Colombina, in *La Famiglia dell'Antiquario*, is an example of a selfish and scheming servant who plays both sides of the tenuous relationship between her mistress Isabella and her daughter-in-law, Doralice. As Günsburg states, she is of the class of servants who “subvert their position in the household to their own ends.”\(^{150}\) There is no loyalty or honor depicted in the actions of Colombina. At one point, she accepts Doralice’s offer to be her personal servant by doubling the salary that Isabella had been offering. She promises faithfulness to both feuding women,

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\(^{148}\) Fido, pp 110-1.

\(^{149}\) *Le Smanie della Villeggiatura*, II, 7.

\(^{150}\) p 212.
and in reality adds to the drama by inciting anger and jealousy between them in order to serve her own agenda. She says, “Per uno zecchino il mese, non solo riporterò quello che si dice di lei, ma vi aggiungerò anche qualche cosa del mio.”

Later she defends her actions by saying that, “Io sono una ragazza di buon cuore. Fo servizio volentieri a chi è generoso con me.” She claims to be ‘good’ in her intentions, however her loyalty fluctuates to whomever can compensate her financially.

What Colombina promotes with her duplicitous ‘loyalty’ is hostility and scandal within the family, which, in the eyes of Goldoni, is an institution most sacred. As the Cavaliere observes quite justly, “Tante e tante volte, dipende la quiete di una famiglia dalla lingua di una serva o di un servitore.”

Her lies and underhanded schemes in reporting misinformation to both women is not only a wasteful endeavor, but also undermines the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law which is the prime cause of unrest within the household. The Cavaliere, who serves as cicisbeo to Isabella, states clearly the repercussions of Colombina’s actions and fully blames her for the women’s poisoned relationship.

“Che maladettissima cameriera! Costei è causa principale deli’ scandali di questa casa. Ella riporta a questa, riporta a quella: le donne ascoltano volentieri tutte le ciarle che sentono riportare; quando odono dir mal, credono tutto con facilità, e si rendono nemiche senza ragione.”

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151 La Famiglia dell’Antiquario, II, 3.
152 Ibid, II, 8.
153 Ibid.
154 Ibid.
Cavaliere, incites the passions of the female characters, which in turn further degrades the family’s situation.

Other working class professions

Goldoni’s representation of the working class aside from the servants and domestics provides a colorful and vivacious look into the lives of the people of the time. His comedies featuring the working class display quotidian occurrences which, when staged, touched members of the audience who could recognize themselves in the performances. These characters were presented in an extremely different manner than the noble or bourgeois characters had been in previous comedies. Ferrone highlights, “I nuovi personaggi sono vivi e interessanti proprio perché del tutto diversi dalla figure dei nobili e anche dei mercanti: ogni aspetto dello loro vita può diventare commedia, essi sono registrati nelle loro effettive condizioni di lavoro e di vita, in una precisa tradizione di costumi.”

Goldoni portrays the working class in the most realistic way possible and demonstrates the comedy found in everyday interactions.

One of the most celebrated plays depicting the popolo is Le Baruffe Chiozzotte. In this play, the comedy is born from a ridiculous and seemingly insignificant action—the gift of some squash. Jealous behavior, stemming from the absence of reason, culminates to threats at knifepoint and a visit to the criminal court where the characters provide their ‘testimony.’ The fault is ultimately placed on Lucietta for accepting the gift of zucca from Toffolo and as she is told, ‘perché no

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155 Ferrone, Siro, p 81.
gh’avè giudizio; perché sè una frasca.” She displays a lack of *giudizio*, good judgement or common sense when she accepts the gift of squash paid for by Toffolo, a man to whom she is not betrothed. At the time, the acceptance of gift from men, as with Rosaura in *La Vedova Scaltra*, could carry negative implications.

Throughout the comic representations of these characters, Goldoni provides insight on the lives the fishermen who dedicate themselves to their occupation, risking their lives at sea in order to provide for their families. They criticize the inequitable distribution of profit procured by the fish vendor resulting from their labor. Toni says, “Se andemo in mari de sti bazariotti, no i vuol dar gnente; i vuol tutto per lori. Nualtri, poverazzi, andemo a rischiare la vita in mare, e sti marcanti col bareton de veludo I se fa ricchi co le nostre fadighe.”156 Goldoni presents us with the reality facing the laborers who feel unjustly represented by the economic system. Near the end of the comedy, Titta, a young fisherman defends himself and his state of being to Isidoro, the assistant to the *Coauditore del Cancelliere criminale*, who is questioning the characters regarding the alleged threats at knifepoint. After Isidoro addresses Titta in a condescending manner, Titta responds, “Comuodo pàrlela, lustrissimo? So poveruomo, so un poveryo pescaore; ma so galantumo, lustrissimo.”157 Although he is poor, he behaves in accordance with the dictates of society and considers himself a gentleman. Equality, being a relatively new concept of the time, knows no social class and as Titta highlights, he should be spoken to in an appropriate way regardless of his social station.

156 *Le Baruffe Chiozzotte*, I, 5.
157 Ibid, III, 12.
In the Locandiera (1753), Mirandolina represents a woman emerging into a new social role being that she is the padrona of herself and the inn. She is doted with extreme wit and intelligence and the ability to articulate herself well but also the traditionally male role of proprietor of an inn. Goldoni values astuteness in women and celebrates it with Mirandolina. The use of wit and intelligence is a positive addition to society, it reflects the principles of reason and is necessary to the Enlightenment ideal. She is also quite established in her use of the “female arts” and employs her words and astuteness to get what she wants from the men around her. Her female gifts and rational business sense become intertwined in her running of the inn and often times one gets in the way of the other. She is a perfect example of the progressive female who happens to be part of the popular class. She has, according to Marchini-Capasso, a “carattere comicamente perfetto, di donna accorta che sa far bene i conti, che ha vinto una scommessa, e l’ha spuntata contro un presuntuoso cavaliere.”\textsuperscript{158} She knows her place in the end and knows that to proceed honestly and virtuously she must not maintain the path she cut out and must retreat into the arms of her Fabrizio to preserve her virtue and decorum. She exemplifies the limitations of a woman; she can only go so far on her own, until she needs a man to ‘save’ her from herself.

Productivity and pride in one’s job is highlighted in many of the comedies. Goldoni stresses through his characters, to utilize resources wisely, to save and invest money in order to reap the most rewards. As for the working class, their resources lie primarily in their labor. In I Pettegolezzi delle Donne, Merlino

\textsuperscript{158} p 32.
complains about having to work. Catte delivers a harsh and needed dose of reality when she responds to him, “Se ti vol mangar in sto paese, bisogna che ti laori.”\textsuperscript{159} He suggests that instead of working, he can beg for food and money from others, to which Catte rebukes, “Certo, se ti domanderà la limosina, tutti te cazziera via; va a laora, i te dirà, furbazzo, va a laora.”\textsuperscript{160} Thus for these people, working is a necessary part of their everyday existence and unlike Merlino, Catte and a host of other characters represented by Goldoni are praised and depicted as working diligently to the best of their abilities. The fishermen in \textit{Le Baruffe Chiozzotte} work hard at sea to make their living and are happy and proud to do so. Anzoletta in \textit{Pettigolezzi delle Donne}, is praised for her ‘goodness’ regarding her work as a seamstress. Beatrice says, “Costei è una buona ragazza, e ha un buon mestier nelle mani.”\textsuperscript{161} Doing one’s job well is celebrated and esteemed and translates to one’s character and role in society.

In \textit{La Bottega del Caffè}, Ridolfo provides his workers with positive reinforcement to encourage them as they start their day of work. “Animo, figiuoli, portatevi bene; siete lesti e pronti a server gli avventori, con civiltà, con proprietà: perché tante volte dipende il credito di una bottega dalla buona maniera di quei che servono.”\textsuperscript{162} He reminds them to do their duty and to serve the clients with civility and decorum, because he is fully aware that the success of his business depends on its workers. As he is a proud and hard working entrepreneur, he wishes for his values to translate to his workers. Mirandolina in \textit{La Locandiera} understands that

\textsuperscript{159} I, 5. 
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid, I, 11. 
\textsuperscript{162} \textit{La Bottega del Caffè}, I, 1.
the success of her locanda lies in her ability to please her customers and protect her reputation and that of her business.

Ridolfo also refers to making a living honestly as opposed to the proprietor of the gambling hall who profits off of others’ misfortunes. Ridolfo criticizes Pandolfo, “Bel mestiere! Vivere sulle disgrazie, sulla rovina della giovantù!” He is thankful and proud of his state in life and values his profession and what he has built for himself.

Io mi contento di quello che il cielo mi concede, e non scambierei il mio stato con tanti altri, che hanno più apparenza e meno sostanza. A me nel mio grado non manca niente. Fo un mestiere onorato, un mestiere, nell’ordine degli artigiani, pulito, decoroso e civile. Un mestiere che, esercitato con buona maniera e con riputazione, si rende grato a tutti gli ordini delle persone. Un mestiere reso necessario al decoro della città, alla salute degli uomini e all’onesto divertimento di chi ha bisogno di respirare. (II, 2)

He stresses the fact that he exercises his profession with honor, civility and decorum. His desire to run his business in this way instills values and positive beliefs in his staff, which will ultimately result, in his opinion, in adding to the civility and propriety of the city as a whole. Through Ridolfo, it is possible to note the beliefs of the author, who is hopeful that a renewed Venice is possible.

\[163\] Ibid, I, 2.
Chapter Three: Relationships and Roles within the Bourgeoisie

The middle class, for Goldoni, holds a special place and is represented with profound insight and respect. His plays clearly demonstrate his preference and allegiance to this class. Paget highlights, “Goldoni vastly preferred the middle classes, shopkeepers, doctors, and lawyers, people of more domestic life and easier manners, into whose houses it was less difficult to introduce the audience.”\(^{164}\) Being part of this class provides Goldoni with an insider’s view of the inner workings and sentiments of its members, for he feels them too. Goldoni celebrates the hard-working and virtuous members who are proud of their accomplishments, maintain good families and add value to society by their words and deeds. Good taste and good sense in the enlightened mind leads to more positivity and growth. The characters exhibiting modesty and reason are represented honorably and serve as models of behavior for others. As Goldoni commend some behaviors, others he severely criticizes. Goldoni endeavors to represent the true vices afflicting the middle class that detract from their growth in the hopes of correcting the defects and move society toward its optimum level of productivity.

Historically, the bourgeois class was on the rise both proportionally and financially. It exhibited an economic well being that is highly appreciated by Goldoni, because it directly resulted from their dedication and hard work. Cavallini states, “La classe borghese mercantile, dedita al commercio e alle professioni artistiche e intellettuali,[...] gode però di un notevole benessere economico e va

\(^{164}\) Paget, p 398.
acquistando un peso crescente in Venezia nel corso della prima metà del Settecento.” 165 This growing power of the middle class signaled an immense change in the workings of society. Their newly acquired wealth was crucial in maintaining Venice’s commercial and political power. This financial awareness led this class to become more cognizant of its true power, which threatened the social hierarchy.

Some merchants were able to enter into the nobility, as Günsburg highlights, “by the purchase of land and a title, or by marriage.” 166 Wealthy merchants were conscious of these two possibilities for ascending into the nobility. At the time, select nobles were experiencing financial hardship and the Venetian government was considering ways to garner additional sources of income. Kennard explains,

Venetian merchants providing wealth for the state began to become conscious of their own power and importance, especially in the 18th century when the oldest and largest aristocratic estates were threatened with ruin and the Senate made money by offering for sale titles and honours, till then reserved to birth and rank, it was not then, certainly, that the merchant would surrender any of his well-earned pride. 167

The financial control and new sense of social standing resulted in a greater desire to be accepted in higher ranks of society, notably by the aristocracy. In fact, most of the problems facing the borghesia of Goldoni’s time are directly related to the need to feel adequate or ‘as good as’ the aristocracy regarding appearances. This constant need for approval, led to many issues highlighted by Goldoni as vices that threatened the middle class and potentially cause both economic and personal ruin. Some of these vices include: gambling, excess expenditures, the ‘need’ for the

165 p 46.
166 p 13.
167 Kennard, p 47.
latest fashions/objects, extreme vanity and maintaining appearances. All of these vices are rooted in the unnecessary, which wastes both money and resources. Other criticisms Goldoni highlights come from the opposite side of the spectrum and focus on the extremely avarice and tyrannical characters that do not move forward with a modern sense of awareness.

Goldoni’s model middle class has a greater understanding of prudence and moderation and follows a somewhat conservative code of morality. He values wealth, which is a testament to their diligence and hard work, but dissuades people from placing too much emphasis on material objects. True-to-life characters are portrayed in the comedies to lend in the didactic process without straying too much from tradition. There is a development of characterization from masks rooted in the tradition of the Commedia dell’Arte to a more modern and positive representation of the Venetian merchant. “Il vecchio Pantalone vizioso e ridicolo della Commedia dell’Arte cede così il posto a un personaggio nuovo, preso dalla realtà veneziana contemporanea e appartenente alla società borghese e mercantile.”168 The new merchant manifests qualities such as generosity, honesty, honor and punctuality in a more balanced and positive existence. As Dazzi notes, “Pantalone...è il sale della borghesia...È attraverso lui [che] la rappresentazione goldoniana della borghesia s’imposta sulla serietà di questa classe.”169 He works hard, is not extravagant and enjoys life and wants those around him, namely his family, to do the same. The modernized Pantalone figure also aids in the reform of other characters and utilizes

168 Cavallini, pp 17-18.
169 pp 164-5.
his bourgeois ‘good-sense’ and rationality to point other characters to the light of reason.

Positive qualities found in the middle class characters will be highlighted to demonstrate the model behaviors Goldoni wished to impart upon his compatriots. Moderation, regard for others, use of reason, honesty and virtue will be discussed as they pertain to particular characters and examples. The theme of friendship and the value in maintaining relationships is prevalent as well. These characters are paragons of behavior to which all should aspire in order to be a productive member of society. The negative qualities are also pivotal in the didactic process, for in highlighting the vices or excesses, one can see the error of his or her ways and receive aid and resources to promote change. Goldoni’s obligation to society, to create more aware and constructive citizens, rested in the hands of the bourgeois class. “Il Goldoni ha fiducia nella sua borghesia, trova in essa le forze della sua esistenza e il rimedio dei suoi eccessi.”170 It was a great faith that Goldoni had in himself and in his fellow middle class citizens to promote the change that society required to move ahead in a more industrious and fruitful manner.

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170 Dazzi, p 164.
**Negative Middle Class Qualities and Vices**

Goldoni outwardly condemned excess expenditure on fashion or other items by the middle classes. The members of the aristocratic and noble families throughout history donned ornate costumes and gilded their homes to demonstrate the magnitude of their wealth. Venice of the 18th century saw a decline in the wealth of the aristocracy but not in their spending or need for money. The middle class, feeling their financial power and social ascent, emulated the noble and aristocratic families by acquiring things that would validate their wealth and position in society. Kennard notes, “The middle class imitated patrician example. Merchants would not restrict their expenses, lest they betray the change from the enormous profits formerly made in business; they rather developed a new spirit of competition in spendthrift extravagance.”

This extravagance and wastefulness of resources on items, solely to promote one’s image, was highly criticized by Goldoni and is a common premise in many of his comedies. This occurrence had no positive influence on society and in fact was a detriment to the middle class, because money intended for necessities was often spent on useless status objects. Günsburg highlights, “the prodigal, with no thought to productive investment, spends it freely on gambling, womanizing and liberality towards male friends and acquaintances.”

In *Gli Innamorati*, Goldoni notes that the family doesn’t have money to spend on food or wine, but have paintings (copies of masters) to give the appearance of

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171 p 254.
172 p 175.
wealth and privilege.\textsuperscript{173} Fabrizio, the head of the household, lives in an invented state in which he fails to employ reason and reasonable decisions. This artifice of luxury and wealth stems from the desire to appear to be part of a higher social class and impress those around him. Mario Baratto sums it up as being, “la fabulazione continua di Fabrizio, il \textit{tic} con cui riempie automaticamente il nulla del vissuto con l’iperbole dell’immaginato…”\textsuperscript{174} This \textit{tic} to which Baratto refers suggests a psychological reason or a \textit{pazzia} that causes Fabrizio to act in this manner. Like an empty shell with nothing inside, Fabrizio’s appearances lack depth and true wealth to sustain the façade.

In \textit{Le Smanie della Villeggiatura}, brother and sister Leonardo and Vittoria cannot afford to support their daily expenses or pay their current debts to local merchants and establishments, but do not wish to miss a season in the country. Their need to maintain their image in the face of society causes them to incur more debts with no concern for practicality or prudence with their spending. This is the opposite of the values prized by Goldoni and for the promotion of the family unit. Günsburg states that their lack of moderation “operates in opposition to patriarchal family values by prioritizing the present pleasures of financial risk-taking over planning for the future material stability of the family unit and the well-being of offspring and future heirs.”\textsuperscript{175} Instead of paying off debts incurred, the siblings continue to direct their resources outside the family. Leonardo and Vittoria are

\textsuperscript{173} \textit{Gli Innamorati}, I, 6.
\textsuperscript{174} p 146.
\textsuperscript{175} p 176.
consumed with living a life of “excess that must be moderated, and a passion that
must be controlled through the use of reason.”  

Although coming from a wealthier family, Giacinta also exhibits being caught
up in the social aspect and fears the scrutiny of society if certain standards are not
met. Giacinta is concerned about how others in society will perceive her if she does
not make her yearly trip to the country, even though it may not be a prudent
economic decision for her family. “Un anno senza andare in villeggiatura! Che
direbbero di me a Montenero? Che direbbero di me a Livorno? Non avrei più ardire
di mirar in faccia nessuno.”  

The phenomenon of la villeggiatura causes many
characters to lose sight of reason and modest living. This customary seasonal
tradition of traveling to the country to escape city life eventually became an artificial
scene of relaxed morality and decorum created to promote one’s image and wealth,
which was not productive to society. In fact, Franco Fido writes that, “the practice
of going to the country when it began to get cold,” was “not in order to do some
useful work on one’s own land, but to repeat the leisurely and often harmful
activities of the town in the inappropriate context of the country.”  

La Villeggiatura: an Exercise in Vanity

Goldoni dedicates many plays to this concept known as la villeggiatura,
which once being “l’innocente divertimento della campagna,” he notes has become

\[176\] Ibid.
\[177\] Le Smanie della Villeggiatura, I, 12.
\[178\] Fido, Franco, “Goldoni and Comedy”, p 359.
“una passione, una mania, un disordine.”\textsuperscript{179} The main focus of this section will derive from the examples of behaviors found in the trilogy of plays dealing with this topic: \textit{Le Smanie della Villeggiatura}, \textit{Le Avventure della Villeggiatura} and \textit{Il Ritorno della Villeggiatura}. Goldoni has imprinted as part of his legacy the concept of villeggiatura as

Immense parties of five or six families, huddled together on the top of some hill or on the banks of some stream, for ever going in and out of each other’s houses, for ever gambling, eating, drinking, singing, dancing, love-making, gossiping, squandering during a month the revenue of a year—villeggiatura!\textsuperscript{180}

In the first play of the \textit{Villeggiatura} trilogy, Goldoni demonstrates the preparations that are involved with going to the country. In the preface, Goldoni describes these as “i pazzi preparativi.”\textsuperscript{181} By no means does leaving the city decrease one’s desire to make appearances or relax and enjoy nature. Goldoni writes, “i villeggianti portano seco loro in campagna la pompa ed il tumulto delle città, ed hanno avvelenato il piacere...”\textsuperscript{182} The intended purpose of the country, to relax and escape daily life in the city was completely distorted and began to mirror city life itself. Thus the immense resources wasted to prepare and travel into the country served no concrete purpose but to support a falsely painted image. The entire activity of villeggiatura, therefore, required an enormous amount of time and resources, which had no productive consequences.

Leonardo, at the beginning of the play, \textit{Le Smanie della Villeggiatura}, states that all the pageantry and appearances are necessary for whoever wishes to make a

\textsuperscript{179} \textit{Le Smanie della Villeggiatura}, p 3.
\textsuperscript{180} Paget, p 400.
\textsuperscript{181} \textit{Le Smanie della Villeggiatura}, p 3.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid.
good impression in society. He says, “Chi vuol figurare nel mondo, convien che faccia quello che fanno gli altri. La nostra villeggiatura di Montenero è una delle più frequentate, e di maggior impegno dell’altra. La compagnia con cui si ha da andare, è di soggezione. Sono io pure in necessità di far di più di quello che far vorrei.”

Thus it is not only necessary to have the right clothes to wear and food to serve, but also to have the most influential and popular people frequenting one’s events. All of these separate items play into the appearance of having the most impressive and sought-after country home. The main obstacle to Leonardo and his sister, Vittoria, is their lack of financial means to orchestrate this type of villeggiatura. Paolino, Leonardo’s servant and the voice of reason and good sense, cautions him, “Vossignora non è obbligata di fare tutto quello che fanno i marchesi fiorentini, che hanno feudi, e tenute grandissime, e cariche, e dignità grandiose.” Paolino’s comment highlights Leonardo and Vittoria’s desire to appear noble-like and garner prestige.

Leonardo’s spending philosophy employs the ‘buy now, pay later’ mentality, but disregards the fact that neither does he have the money now, nor will he have it later. His and Vittoria’s irrational behaviors concerning their spending do not go unnoticed by other characters. Ferdinando derides their blatant indifference to rational spending. He states, “Già tutti lo dicono: fratello e sorella sono due pazzi. Spendono più di quello che possono, e consumano in un mese a Montenero quello che basterebbe loro un anno in Livorno.” To Goldoni, this is an unacceptable and

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183 Ibid.
184 Ibid.
185 Ibid, I, 7.
indecent waste of money and resources, not to mention the damage to one’s reputation. Even the more established Filippo wishes to provide a similarly elegant appearance during his *villeggiatura* and it is noted by his good friend, Fulgenzio, his annual need to borrow money.

Ma permettetemi che io vi dica un’osservazione che ho fatta. Io veggo che voi venite a domandarmi denaro in prestito quasi ogni anno, quando siete vicino alla villeggiatura. Segno evidente che la villeggiatura v’incomoda; ed è un peccato che un galantuomo, un benestante come voi siete, che ha il suo bisogno per il suo mantenimento, s’incomodi e domandi denari in prestito per ispenderli malamente. Si, signore, per ispenderli malamente... (II, 9)

Fulgenzio, displaying reasonable and logical lines of thought, must enlighten Filippo to the error of his ways in spending. A rational person should not spend money that he or she does not have to create a desirable atmosphere of which people can take advantage.

Costanza and her niece Rosina, make their appearances in *Le Avventure della Villeggiatura* and *Il Ritorno della Villeggiatura*. Costanza is well known for the way in which she appears in the country and the efforts she wastes to maintain her *figura* in Montenero. At the beginning of the *Avventure*, her servant Tita discusses with the other servants how Costanza’s husband stays in the city working while she enjoys time in the country. Paolo and Beltrame agree with Tita’s assessment of her mistress and add their own judgements of her character.

Paolo: Si, certo, la signora Costanza fa qui la sua grande figura. Chi non la conoscesse, non direbbe mai che è moglie d’un bottegaio.

Beltrame: Capperi, se fa figura! La chiamano per soprannome la governatrice di Montenero. (*Le Avventure*, I, 7)
Costanza maintains a façade that is far removed from her actual state or status in the city. She is the wife of a “bottegaio,” or a shopkeeper in Livorno, but in the country, attempts to display a status more elevated and refined to elicit respect and esteem from others. The conflicting way in which she keeps her country and city homes also reflects her desire to appear differently in villeggiatura. While her home in Montenero is lavishly decorated, the home in Livorno is not up to these standards. In fact, Rosina notes, “Per dire la verità, c’è una gran differenza da questa casaccia al ben casin di campagna.”¹⁸⁶ In the country, Costanza has a greater feeling of veneration from others that she does not feel in the city. Even Giacinta notices the incongruence of the country and city residences. In commenting on the difference she notes, “tanto sfarzo in campagna, e sta qui in un porcile.”¹⁸⁷ Costanza would prefer to stay longer at her home in Montenero because, “Almeno li sono rispettata.”¹⁸⁸ This respect that she feels is not genuine, because it is a result of a falsified sense of self, promoted by elaborate displays and illusion.

Having the right people attend one’s villeggiatura is a reoccurring desire felt both by Filippo, in the need to borrow so much money to ensure lavish feasts, and by Leonardo who wishes to procure the presence of Ferdinando, a known scrounger. Leonardo describes Ferdinando as “uno di quelli che si cacciano da per tutto, e si fanno merito rapportando qua e là i fatti degli altri.”¹⁸⁹ Although he does not possess a virtuous character, in the country, people like having him around because he provides entertaining stories of other’s misfortunes and actions and

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, III, 7.
¹⁸⁸ Ibid.
¹⁸⁹ *Le Smanie della Villeggiatura*, I, 4.
enjoys himself with the other guests. Leonardo further explains to his sister the importance of having many fun and desirable people attend their functions.

Vedete bene: in campagna è necessario aver della compagnia. Tutti procurano d’aver più gente che possano; e poi si sente dire: il tale ha dieci persone, il tale ne ha sei, il tale otto, e che ne ha più, è più stimato. Ferdinando poi è una persona che comoda infinitamente. Gioca a tutto, è sempre allegro, dice delle buffonerie, mangia bene, fa onore alla tavola, soffre la burla, e non se ne ha a male di niente. (I, 4)

In addition, fare la bella figura or making a good physical impression is incredibly important to these characters. Vittoria even prefers arriving to the country with Ferdinando rather than with her brother. She says, ‘farò meglio figura a andar in calesso con lui, che con mio fratello.”\textsuperscript{190} It is all a show to promote one’s ability to provide such lavish and beautiful events, and give off the impression of being affluent.

Maintaining one’s image is especially important in the country and no woman would want to be seen without the most modern fashions directly from Paris. In the beginning of the play, Vittoria states that not having the right dress is a direct hit to one’s ‘credibility’ in society. “La mancanza di un abito alla moda può far perdere il credito a chi ha fama di essere di buon gusto.”\textsuperscript{191} Later she reveals that in the country she actually fears being inadequate regarding her attire. She retrims and restyles her older pieces to give them a modern twist so that they will appear new and appropriate for her villeggiatura. In addition to Vittoria’s own personal desires to wear the appropriate fashionable apparel, she is also extremely jealous of and feels intense competition with Giacinta, who is betrothed to her brother.

\textsuperscript{190} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid, I, 3.
Giacinta expresses that acquiring new clothing is a ‘necessity’ and not simply a desire. When requesting a new silk cloak, she states that it is, “Necessarissimo.” Filippo, her father, voices a comedic tirade on women’s fashion, “Ho veduto in pochissimi anni cuffie, cuffiotti, cappellini, cappelloni; ora corrono i cappuccietti; m’aspetto che l’anno venturo vi mettiate in testa una scarpa.” This comment refocuses the audience to the extremely shallow desire of the women to keep up with the ever-changing styles and the need to appear ahead of the trends and one another.

While attention heightened concerning one’s physical countenance or figura while vacationing in the country, there was an opposite, almost relaxing, view regarding moral conduct. The country, in Goldoni’s theater, seems to project a less strict view of standard eighteenth-century middle class values of modesty and decorum. Maggie Günsburg states, “In this context, the country is not always represented as a morally ‘good’ place in Goldoni’s plays.” Behaviors and situations that would never be permitted in the city atmosphere are considered the norm in villeggiatura. While at home, the unmarried young ladies were watched attentively and were hardly permitted out of the family’s house. Vaussard states that family members closely supervised young girls, especially of the middle class. Young ladies were not permitted to be unescorted by a male relative on trips outside of the home or left alone with a man who was not her husband or relative.

Even while entertaining her intended husband, a young unmarried lady of the 1700s

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192 Ibid, I, 10.
193 Ibid.
194 p 43.
195 Vaussard, p 92.
required a chaperon at all times and young lovers would never be left alone. The situation changes completely when outside of the city environment. “In comparison with the town, the country is often particularly portrayed as a space that allows more liberty for female characters.”\textsuperscript{196} The loose constructs of \textit{villeggiatura} provide ample space \textit{for} impropriety and opportunity to engage in behaviors, which deviate from social norms.

\textit{I Rusteghi}

The ideal father figure, represented by the Pantalone character in many of Goldoni’s comedies, personifies true love and an innate desire for the well being of his offspring. In \textit{I Rusteghi}, Goldoni portrays the opposite of the paternal archetype in the eponymous figure of the \textit{rustego}. The comedy contains four characters, nicknamed \textit{i rusteghi}, that embody a severe adherence to tradition and an unwillingness to adapt to progress and modernity. Each character demonstrates a varying level of \textit{rusteghità}, in which the most rigid would be Simon, then Lunardo, followed by Maurizio and Canciano. These patriarchs hold steadfast in the beliefs and traditions of the past, without paying much consideration to the present. These men do not want to move forward or embrace the ideals of the era, but while holding onto their antiquated ideals of the past, they fail to participate in the current situation of their families. Although the four men are intrinsically hard working, honest merchants that want the best for their families, Goldoni criticizes this type of father who seems not to empathize with his children and relies on antiquated rules

\textsuperscript{196} Günsburg, p 43.
to govern, without any measure of subjectivity or flexibility. Lunardo is old and “un prudente marito, un perfetto educatore; è padre, non di una famiglia pur che sia, che basti a fornire i personaggi dell’intrigo, ma di una famiglia che reproduce tutto il caratteristico di una vecchia casa veneziana di grassi mercanti borghesi.”

Lunardo does not consider the family that he has; he is absorbed in an antiquated family ideal that no longer exists. This detached attitude to one’s family and especially one’s children does not facilitate a movement forward; the stubborn attachment to the past hinders both the family’s progress but also society’s progress as well.

In the preface, Goldoni defines his conception of rustego as “un uomo aspro, zottico, nemico della civiltà, della cultura e del conversare.” The portrayal of the characters is extremely accurate to this definition, in that all four men lack the desire or ability to engage in cultural activities or conversation. Canciano, one of the rusteghi, states, “mi son omo de poche parole; no stago su le novità, e no amo troppo la conversazion.” The rusteghi’s aversion to conversation and therefore communication is a major criticism of Goldoni regarding this type of person. In an era where human intellect and reason are celebrated, those who refuse to participate in dialogues or exchange information with others are deliberately undermining the spirit of the time. Margarita, Lunardo’s wife, reminds her step-daughter of Lunardo’s inability to discuss matters rationally or consider anyone’s feelings but his own. She explains, “Ma save chi è vostro pare. Con elo no se pol

197 Marchini-Capasso, p 13.
198 I Rusteghi, p 665.
199 Ibid, i, 9.
In other words, it is impossible to speak with him and provide another opinion when his position is already established. The men’s lives are based upon their work and their words relate directly to actions or activities. In fact, Lunardo expresses distaste for greeting or exchanging even basic conversation with his wife and daughter, he would much prefer to ‘speak’ through productive work; that is a language that he understands and appreciates.

Lunardo keeps himself and his family closed off and rules his home in a tyrannical fashion, not considering the possibility of change. “Mi penso a casa mia, e no penso ai altri.” His desires are paramount and refuses to go anywhere but his own home. Accepting dinner invitations is also unfavorable, “In casa de nissun mi no vago; mi no vago, vegnimo a dir el merito, a magnar le coste a nissun.” The rustego philosophy rests in being financially independent of others and not taking advantage of another’s hospitality. They consider themselves to be living an honest lifestyle without any desire for social prestige or acceptance.

The four incarnations of the rustego all refrain from frivolity as it applies to conversation, entertainment, fashion and, of course, matters pertaining to the children. These areas fall under the control of the women who are regarded with condescension by the rusteghi. Lunardo provides insight on why they esteem women to be of lower stature, “Perché vu autre donne sè tropo demesteghe. No ve contentè dell’onesto; ve piacerare i chiasseti, i pacchieti, le mode, le buffonerie, i

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200 Ibid, II, 1.
201 Ibid, I, 2.
202 Ibid.
While Lunardo criticizes the women’s ability to relate to their children, enjoy their lives and the company of other people, it is obvious that Goldoni celebrates these behaviors. The women are endowed with the ability to engage their children, share their feelings and provide them with positive models of behavior to aid in their development and consequently their future prospects in society. Cavallini states, “la donna appare più disposta a prestare ascolto alle esigenze dei giovani e a mettere in discussione, con lucida razionalità, il suo ruolo familiare e sociale per riscattare o promuovere se stessa, facendosi così interprete delle istanze di rinnovamento e di progresso connesse con l’evolversi dei tempi.” In providing the contrasting practices of the women, Goldoni highlights the ridiculousness of the immensely rigid nature of the rusteghi. Their behavior is not constructive and in fact inhibits the progress of their children and accordingly, society as well.

The rusteghi are extremely controlling of their households and are vocal about being their own masters. In response to many different questions, Lunardo repeatedly answers, “son paron mi.” This recycled response ends discussions with his wife and daughter almost as to say, “Because I said so,” and exerts his tyrannical control of all family business. Lunardo and Maurizio discuss the impending marriage of their children and make all of the decisions regarding the nuptuals.

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\begin{align*}
\text{Maurizio:} & \quad \text{E semo paroni nu.} \\
\text{Lunardo:} & \quad \text{E la muggier no comanda.}
\end{align*}
\]

\textbf{203} Ibid.  
\textbf{204} pp 14-15.  
\textbf{205} \textit{I Rusteghi}, 1, 3.
Maurizio: E i fioi sta da fioi. (I, 5)

In this exchange, it is evident that the men are exhibiting traditional roles of sole authority over their respective families. The desires of their wives or children are not taken into account or even consulted for they alone control their own respective domains.

*Avarice*

The virtues of moderation and good sense are a result of the application of reason within the individual. The absence of reason, as noted, results in vices that are not acceptable in an honorable society. Goldoni reveres the merchant and the positive economic additions that he makes within Venetian society. Those who demonstrate avarice are withholding that money from participating in the business cycle. For Dante, avarice was a sin against God; however, for Goldoni, both avarice and prodigality are social misdemeanors. They are both excesses resulting from one losing himself to passion—the passion for hoarding or squandering money. “In Goldoni’s plays, avarice and prodigality both represent the mismanagement of capital, thereby transgressing the mercantile principles sustaining a civil society.”

Goldoni solely views avarice and prodigality as means of detracting from the productivity and advancement of society. These characteristics, personified in Goldoni’s plays, thwart the emotional well being of the family unit and the economic well being of the social environment. Knowing how influential and indispensable the

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206 Günsburg, p 169.
207 Ibid.
bourgeois capital was to the prosperity of Venice, it was imperative for Goldoni to put in motion the reform of those individuals harboring avaricious tendencies.

In addition to avarice depleting the economic coffers of society, it also is detrimental to the family unit. Ottavio, in Il Vero Amico, refuses to provide a dowry for his daughter Rosaura, claiming that he is poor. In reality, he hoards money and has difficulty parting with his beloved gold for any reason. The vice of avarice itself detracts from the productivity of society but also causes a chain reaction of waste within the microcosm of the household. He micromanages the spending of his household, not in a positive light, as seen in Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto, but to a point of ridiculesness. To not overspend, Ottavio requires that his servant must go to each vendor to insure that he is getting the best price, which is a waste of his time and resources. He knows the cost of that which Colombina, his daughter’s maid, eats down to the fraction. He insolently rebukes her, “sai tu che in due anni, e un mese che sei in casa mia, hai mangiato duemila duecento ottanta paghotte.” To ensure that Trappola has obtained the largest eggs for the cost, Ottavio has him running back and forth to measure and then return them for larger ones. The result of this comic scene is that the eggs fall on the ground and break, truly a waste of resources.

Although claiming to be poor, others are aware of the gold that he keeps hidden in the wall. He denies the existence of his scrigno or chest full of gold, “che scrigno? Io non ho scrigno. Una cassa di stracci una cassa di stracci. Maledetto sia

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208 Il Vero Amico, II, 12.
chi nomina lo scrigno; maledetto me se ho denari.” He is even wasteful in denying the chest—his irrational thoughts are reflected in his erratic speech. Ottavio is so consumed with his passion for gold and his avarice that he becomes detached from reality. In a monologue, Ottavio, alone in his room at the opening of the third Act addresses his beloved chest of gold:

Qui sta il mio cuore, qui è il mio idolo, qui dentro si cela il mio caro, il mio amatissimo oro. Caro, adorato mio scrigno, lasciati rivedere, lascia che mi consoli, che mi ristori, che mi nutrisca col vagheggiarti. Tu sei il mio pane, tu sei il mio vino, tu sei le mie preziose vivande, i miei passatempi, la mia diletta conversazione: vadano pure gli sfaccendati a’ teatri, alle veglie, ai festini; io ballo quando ti vedo; io godo, quando s’offre ai miei lumi l’ameno spettacolo di quell’ell’oro. Oro, vita dell’uomo, oro, consolazione dei misteri, sostegno dei grandi e vera calamità de cuori. (III, 1)

His words reveal how his passion distorts his views of all human needs and experiences such as food, water, relationships and love. These, for Ottavio are supplanted by his love for money. He no longer can participate in rational society, for he lacks the ability to feel any true human emotions. In place of real relationships and interactions with others, he relishes his time with his precious gold. Through this scene, the viewer and reader can sense the purpose of Goldoni in representing the character of Ottavio; he demonstrates the ridiculous in his extreme loss of reason.

The money and desire for money consumes Ottavio and replaces all other interactions in his life, even that with his own daughter. Rosaura criticizes her father’s avarice, “Gran passione è quella dell’avarizia! Mio padre si fa miserabile e

209 Ibid II, 15.
nega darmi la dote.””

His decision to deny a dowry to his daughter has greater social implications on the future of his line. Without a dowry, the marriage options of a young lady are severely depleated. In the comedy, Lelio would not be able to marry her without the promised dowry, leaving Rosaura with the only option of marrying a man who can accept her without it. Günsburg states, “Ottavio’s individualist self-interest and focus on the present are opposed to the greater social goal of the family in its future, particularly his daughter’s putative offspring who would inherit the combined patrimony of his line and that of Lelio.”

Ottavio not only withholds money from his daughter but also paternal love that springs from his avarice, a “compulsion that goes beyond reason and reality.”

Gambling
Card playing and gambling were a customary part of the social life in Venice; even Goldoni shared a passion for this pastime. Various card games are named throughout Goldoni’s comedies and most often their mention provided insight into the harmless activities in which he and his contemporaries engaged. Gambling was legal and ‘sale da giuoco’ or gambling halls existed in Venice. Bruno De Cesco states that these halls were always open and did not limit anyone from entering. He states, “La Repubblica di San Marco consentiva che il Ridotto e le sale da giuoco restassero aperte e funzionanti ventiquattro ore su ventiquattro e non poneva limiti di sorta all’ingresso, perché uomo o donna che fosse—se non voleva farsi riconoscere—era

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210 Ibid.
211 p 172.
212 Ibid.
This widely practiced social pastime also was taxed by the Venetian government, which provided revenue into its coffers. Card playing and gambling were considered amusements. However Goldoni himself knew full well what horrors could result when an individual took this harmless pleasure to the excess. In regards to a male character engaging in gambling, Günsburg highlights, “the portrayal in the plays of the negative effects on the family when its male head gambles rather than trades, signals a condemnatory attitude to excessive gambling as a vice.”

Goldoni had many experiences in these gambling halls. De Cesco highlights, “il nostro commediografo non lasciava mai occasione proprizia per sedersi con gli amici o con sconosciuti al tavolo da giuoco.” Due to his experiences with il giuoco, Goldoni had the opportunity to become acquainted with many people who inspired roles in many of his comedies. For example, in the Villeggiatura trilogy, Vittoria hopes to ‘earn’ enough money playing cards to pay off some of her debts incurred at the dressmaker. She plans to return from the country with money won while playing il faraone and tells Paolo of the ease she experiences winning at cards. “E facilissimo. In campagna si gioca. Io sono piuttosto fortunata nel gioco, e probabilmente l’avrei pagato senza sacrificarne quel poco che mio fratello mi passa per il mio vestito.” Her irrationality is accentuated further when she explains that playing cards is enjoyable to her, but she plays primarily because she must. “Vo’

\[214\] Ibid.
\[215\] p 9,
\[216\] pp 34-5.
\[217\] Le Smanie della Villeggiatura, II, 1.
giocare, perché mi piace giocare, perché ho bisogno di vincere, ed è necessario che io giochi...”  

There is a need, both to play and to win that guides her decision to follow this detrimental and counterproductive way of life. Instead of pursuing reason and living with moderation, Vittoria is blinded by her irrational passion to gamble as a means to earn money.

In La Bottega del Caffè, Goldoni presents “il giovane mercante di stoffe Eugenio,” that “passerà giorno e notte alla bisca di Pandolfo rovinandosi fisicamente ed economicamente e mettendo in disperazione la sua buona moglie Vittoria...”

Eugenio, along with Vittoria from Le Smanie are cases of gamblers losing their abilities to reason to their passions for winning. Ridolfo, the voice of moral reason in La Bottega del Caffè, denounces gambling and those who try to earn a living by gambling. “Non v’innamoraste mai di questo guadagno, perché la farina del diavolo va tutta in crusca.”

He speaks to his waiter Trappola regarding the extremely negative and absurd behavior that Eugenio exhibits because of his gambling. Despite having a beautiful and respected wife and station in life, his behavior is not conforming to the proper social norms. “Che poco giudizio! Ha moglie, una giovane di garbo e di proposito, e come dietro a tutte le donne, e poi, di più, giuoca da disperato.”

Eugenio has not left the gambling hall for at least an entire day and finds himself trapped in an alternate universe where gambling rules his every decision. He is even described as not knowing whether it is day or night and being

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218 Ibid.  
219 De Cesco, p 35.  
220 La Bottega del Caffè, I, 1.  
221 Ibid.
in a state of confusion or stralunato. Ridolfo comes to his defense and explains to his wife, “è confuso: non sa quell che si faccia.”²²²

Eugenio’s wife also condemns the vice and attributes it to the ruin of both her and her husband’s reputation. She calls it a “maledettissimo vizio” and it is evident that gambling not only affects the person involved, but also his family and loved ones. Gambling is affecting both the emotional and economic well being of Eugenio and Vittoria’s family unit. He is wasting precious resources such as his talent, money and time, resources that can be better utilized elsewhere. Vittoria asks, “E sempre ha da far questa vita? Un uomo di quella sorta, di spirito, di talento, ha da perdere così miseramente il suo tempo, sacrificare le sue sostanze, rovinar la sua casa?”²²³ Until he is saved by Ridolfo’s efforts, Eugenio is on the path of self-destruction, taking his wife down with him. Thanks to Ridolfo’s example of hard work and moderation can Eugenio be saved and converted to follow his lead.

²²³ Ibid, I, 19.
Positive Middle Class Qualities and Virtues

Hard work, moderation and dedication

Hard work is fully personified by Ridolfo in the Bottega del Caffè. From the opening of the play, Ridolfo advises and promotes hard work as a mainstay in the life of the middle-class citizen. As an individual who changed his own economic state and social class, he fully understands and promotes the need to work honorably and be productive. He always did his job honorably and by being prudent and dedicated, he was able to save his money and become proprietor of his own caffè. In the face of others who choose to live their lives differently, he says,

Non me ne importa niente. Finora sono stato a servire, e ho fatto il mio debito onoratamente. Mi sono avanzato quattro soldi, e coll'aiuto del mio padrone d'allora, ch'era il padre, come sapete, del signor Eugenio, ho aperta questa bottega, e con questa voglio vivere onoratamente, e non voglio far torto alla mia professione. (I, 2)

His dedication and honorable employment of the economic gains he was afforded allowed for his ascent both socially and economically. Despite this vertical move, he has not lost sight of from where he came and consistently continues to work as he always did to live respectably and justly. This is a stark contrast to other characters who do not value work or their financial wellbeing, such as Vittoria and Leonardo from the Villeggiatura trilogy or Eugenio from La Bottega del Caffè. Goldoni highlights the behaviors of Ridolfo and at times speaks through Ridolfo, bringing positive messages of economic reform to those in the audience listening, viewing or reading.
Women utilizing logic, intelligence and reason

Female characters found in Goldoni’s plays include mothers, wives, widows, daughters and often times are placed in an idealized role of feminine behavior. Goldoni manages to bestow upon some of his women an artful and cunning nature, which straddles the gap between virtue and vice. Dazzi states, “La donna vince nella commedia goldoniana battaglie oneste, persino con un certo suo giuoco ardito.” 224 They do not sit idly and allow their lives to be decided for them; they make use of their intelligence to arrive at their preferred objective, while acting with honor and civility. “These female characters can be described as artful in that they use their wit (or ingegno) in proactive and highly dramatic ways to fulfill their aims, rather than languishing in a state of passive acquiescence punctuated by lengthy moralizing monologues and soliloquies.” 225 They are able to modify a situation with the use of their wits and feminine talents without straying from social norms. Günsburg notes that there are two divisions within the category of artful women. The first maintains virtue as an underlying theme in their efforts, which is often marriage or maintaining a family’s ties. The second group utilizes schemes, which conflict with the accepted ideals of female behavior. 226 Whichever the category, Goldoni’s women are a celebration and tribute to a relatively unheard voice in literature of the time. The Enlightenment ideals of reason and logic as guiding forces through life’s decisions do not pertain solely to the pursuits of men, but to those of women as well.

224 p 168.
225 Günsburg, pg 103.
226 Ibid.
As mentioned, Goldoni had an open and ever present interest for women, especially for the women who “possedeva in maggior misura, o le usava con raffinata scaltrezza, le doti della grazia e della civetteria femminile. Cioè per la giovane vedova.” Young widows were common within Venetian society given that many arranged marriages were between a young maiden and a much older man. Early in the term of the marriage, the husband would die, and the young bride would find herself “improvvisamente come l’aria con la sua prorompente giovanezza, con una casa guarnita di ogni ben d’Iddio, con un’eredità copiosa e con una irresistibile sete d’amore.” Widows at the time were allowed more freedoms than single, unmarried women, but still were aware of the invisible line of social acceptance that guided their activities and choices.

Rosaura, the astute and shrewd widow, for whom *La Vedova Scaltra* is named, utilizes logic and reason throughout her process of choosing a new husband. She is a highly respected woman *di garbo*, or exhibiting good manners, who understands her place in the world, and at the same time demonstrates a modernity and progressive nature revealed through her comments. Marchini-Capasso states that Goldoni’s depiction of Rosaura is “il ritratto di una donna amabile e disinibita capace di pensare e di decidere.” In the play, four suitors pursue her: an Englishman, a Spaniard, a Frenchman and an Italian Count. They each in their own manner attempt to court her by sending notes and gifts, the most outrageous being a gold ring from the Englishman, Milord Runebif. This seems highly inappropriate to

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227 De Cesco, p 86.
228 Ibid, pp 86-7.
229 p 87.
Rosaura who feels that such an extravagant gift is perhaps an attempt to buy her affections and would generate the wrong impression publicly if she were to accept it. She states that gifts such as these may create a sense of indebtedness or obligation on the part of the recipient. “Alcuni forestieri hanno di noi altre italiane una pessima prevenzione. Credo che l’oro e le gioje che portano dai loro paesi, abbiano a dirittura a renderci loro schiave.” Rosaura demonstrates her command of reason and intelligence by way of her analysis of the interactions with the other characters.

Later in the first act, Rosaura is visited by il Conte del Bosco Nero. Rosaura does not appreciate his jealous nature, which causes tension in their discourse. When he makes insulting comments toward her, she asserts herself with an amazing sense of self and command of language. She demands his attention and asserts herself,

Sono io cosa vostra? Mi avete forse comprata? Sono vostra moglie? Dichiaratevi, con qual autorità? Con qual fondamento? Conte, io vi amo, e vi amo più di quello che voi pensate, ma non voglio per questo sacrificarvi la mia libertà. La conversazione, quand’è onesta, è degna delle persone civili. La donna di spirito tratta con tutti, ma con indifferenza. Cosí ho fatto sinora, e se alcuno ho distinto, voi siete quegli, ma se ve ne abusate, io vi rimetterò nella massa degli altri, e forse vi sbandirò affatto dalla mia casa. (I, 10)

She is outraged by any implication of inappropriate behavior and prides herself on always acting with the utmost of virtue and propriety. The Count’s jealousy is not only unfounded, but creates, as has been noted previously, a sense of negativity and waste. Rosaura, the spokesperson for the strong assertive woman, refuses to be
treated in a manner unbefitting of her stature and will not sacrifice her beliefs for any man.

Her final decision for her husband will be a result of a logical analysis of all four candidates, not guided by any affection she feels for the men. Love and loyalty are the attributes she seeks in her husband, not outward appearance. She references a scientific advance, the microscope, as a metaphor for the need to examine closely with prudence and logic in deciding her future.

E credimi nel risolvere non mi consigliò col cuore, ma con la mente. Non cercherò la bellezza, ma l’amore e la fedeltà. Son vedova, conosco il mondo, e so distinguere che, per scegliere un amante, serve aprire un sol occhio, ma per scegliere un marito, conviene aprirgli ben tutti due e, se non basta, aggiugervi anche il microscopio della prudenza. (II, 17)

She will be using reason not passion to choose the most appropriate suitor. With Enlightenment references to light and the use of one’s eyes, she states that in choosing a husband, she will have both eyes open and will add extra prudence to her conclusion. “Rosaura è nemica del <<troppo>> e si serve della ragione per trovare il giusto distacco, che le consenta di non affondare tra i marosi della vita: critica le mode e non è moralista.” Rosaura also adds that her decision will be well thought-out and not capricious, “La scelta ch’io farò non sarà capricciosa, né sconsigliata, ma figlia di buoni riflessi, giusta e doverosa.”

She is proud of the person she is and the result of her thorough examination and final determination regarding her choice of husband. The use of astute intelligence serves her well as she operates within the confines of what is socially

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231 Marchini-Capasso, p 88.
232 La Vedova Scaltra, III, 25.
acceptable. Rosaura knows that throughout the process, she never allowed the situation to become indecorous and always acted with prudence and good sense. Her final words reiterate this belief and her hope to be applauded and perhaps envied by those in the audience. “Confesso di aver operato nelle mie direzioni da scaltra, ma siccome la mia scaltrezza non è mai stata abbandonata dalle massime d’onore e dalle leggi della civil società, così spero che sarò, se non applaudita, compatita almeno, e forse forse invidiata.”

Another female character bestowed with rationality is Giacinta from the Villeggiatura trilogy. Goldoni devises her character as a triumph of reason over passion and bestows upon her an overwhelming amount of dialogue to display her logic and well-thought out words. Giacinta is the epitome of the modern woman who is aware of her power, intelligence and place in society. With her impending marriage to Leonardo, Giacinta does not want to enter into a relationship clouded by jealousy or lack of faith, which could compromise her freedom. She, along with many goldonian women, employs honesty and moderation in every decision and demands reciprocation in terms of freedom and respect. She is offended by the jealousy Leonardo feels for Guglielmo and believes that it demeans her character. She speaks to him with full knowledge of herself, with a confident sense of what she wants for her life. She stresses that in love, there needs to be faithfulness, respect and esteem for one’s partner, and without these pivotal pieces, love cannot exist.

La gelosia che avete di lui, è un’offesa che fate a me, e non potete essere di lui geloso, senza credere me una frasca, una civetta, una banderuola. Chi ha della stima per una persona, non può nutrire tali sentimenti, e dove non vi è stima, non vi può essere amore; e se non mi amate, lasciatemi, e se non

Her words are not suggestions or allusions, but stark demands and requirements for her future husband. She is in control of the situation and will not settle for less than she deserves.

When she does err, Giacinta fully recognizes the mistake that she made was the result of allowing passion to override reason. In allowing Guglielmo to travel and stay with them on their *villeggiatura*, Giacinta realizes that this has compromised her feelings for Leonardo and that she has not acted with honor. She confesses to her maid, “Brigida mia, conosco che sono stata una pazza, che sono una pazza, e che le mie pazzie mi voglion far sospirare.”\(^{234}\) She fully takes responsibility of her actions attributing them to her being insane and does not hide behind excuses for her behavior. Her *pazzie*, moments of insanity, are a result of her allowing her passions to guide her actions. For example, her ability to convince her father to acquiesce to her wishes is one of the illogical things to blame for her current state. "Mi pento bensì, ed amaramente mi pento, d’aver insistito ad onta di tutto di voler con noi il signor Guglielmo, e di aver permesso che mio padre lo abbia alloggiato in casa."\(^{235}\) Giacinta is fully aware that it was her ambition and loss of reason that failed her.

In the third act of *Le Avventure della Villeggiatura*, Goldoni dedicates an entire scene to Giacinta’s realizations and rationalizations regarding her current state.

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\(^{234}\) *Le Avventure della Villeggiatura*, II, 1.

\(^{235}\) Ibid.
situation between her love for Guglielmo and her contracted marriage to Leonardo. Her decision to marry was not well thought-out, but based on what she believed to be true. In accordance with her contracted obligation, Giacinta knows that reason must be paramount to passion and that she must marry Leonardo. “Quegli ha da essere mio marito, e voglia o non voglia, s’ha da vincere la passione.”\(^\text{236}\) Wants and desires are secondary to her obligation and duty. Even her process of speaking and thinking shows her commitment to embracing logic over passion.

As many female characters do throughout Goldoni’s comedies, Giacinta must reason with Guglielmo and bring him to see the logic in her argument. She encourages Guglielmo to reflect and think for himself what could come out of their decision to be together. She explains to him that succumbing to their passion will cause much damage to their lives, “il peggio si è, andiamo a perdere il decoro, l’estimazione, l’onore.”\(^\text{237}\) In addition, they will not fulfill their many obligations to their families or friends. Giacinta especially feels an immense responsibility as a daughter, future bride, and “fanciulla saggia e civile.”\(^\text{238}\) The qualities of honor, obligation, civility, friendship and decorum are supreme values of Goldoni’s middle class and any behavior that would threaten them is considered unworthy and absolutely forbidden. Giacinta pleads with Guglielmo to understand her perspective and to retreat from their connection in order to maintain their honorable ways. She entreats him to not sacrifice her character to his passion, “avrete voi un animo si crudele di sacrificarne alla vostra passione una povera sfortunata, che ha avuto la

\(^{236}\) Ibid.
\(^{237}\) Ibid, III, 3.
\(^{238}\) Ibid.
debolezza d'aprire il seno alle lusinghe d'amore?” To avoid her feelings, Giacinta will do all that is possible to escape him and she demands that he do the same. Guglielmo is convinced and abides by Giacinta’s proposals in his decision to marry Leonardo’s sister, Vittoria. He must fulfill his duty and overlook his feelings; he says in an aside, “ceda la passione al dovere.”

The third play in the trilogy, *Il Ritorno dalla Villeggiatura*, demonstrates Giacinta’s rebound from the unfortunate pulls of passion and return to the happiness found when following reason. In reflecting on past events, her renewed perspective aids her in fully understanding the mistakes that she made and that presently she feels restored. She explains to Brigida, “parmi di avere avuto una malattia ed essere perfettamente guarita.” Goldoni compares passion to an illness or disease, with the only cure being reason. Giacinta begins the play in full control of herself and fearless, she will embark on the next phase of her life. When she receives a visit from Guglielmo she reassures herself with encouraging words, “Coraggio ci vuole. Superiamola quest'indegna passione.” With courage and conviction, she is able to resist temptations and follow the correct path.

Goldoni adds a bit of ‘scientific explanation’ by way of Giacinta to aid his audience in following her example. She quotes from a book she found by chance called *Rimedi per le malattie dello spirito*. The ‘book’ teaches through ‘science’ and reminds her that when she thinks of Guglielmo, all she has to do is employ reason and through reason, she will vanquish passion. “Per esempio, s’apre nel mio

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239 Ibid.
240 Ibid, III, 4.
cervello la celletta che mi fa pensare a Guglielmo, ho da ricorrere alla ragione, e la ragione ha da guidare la volontà ad aprire de’ cassettini ove stanno i pensieri del dovere, dell’onestà, della buona fama.”

Although continuing to struggle, Giacinta says, “la ragione ed il cuore mi parlano con due diversi linguaggi,” she is finally able to break the chains of passion and embrace her future with Leonardo.

Siora Felice of *I Rusteghi* demonstrates another example of women’s use of reason and wit to attain their desired results. In the play, the old-fashioned and traditional mentality of the title characters, i rusteghi, or the uncivilized men, prohibit two young people from meeting before their upcoming wedding. The more progressive women, Felice being the most modernized character, oppose the surly and unyielding ways of the *rusteghi*. The traditional and tyrannical fathers impose their antiquated philosophies upon their children, which are detrimental to the young people and do not positively contribute to the wellbeing of the family. Led by Siora Felice, the women cannot allow the archaic approach to marriage and devise a scheme to allow for the young people to meet. While the *rustego* is closed off and motionless, the comedy highlights the fact that, “la donna è azione.” Felice is confident in her plan and says, “so mi quel che gh’ho da dir.” She is fully aware and knows what she has to do and say to have the encounter come to fruition. Her ability to speak and utilize reason in her arguments convinces the cantankerous *rusteghi* to understand her (and the women’s) rationale. She is willing to take the

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244 Ibid, II, 11.
245 Marchini-Capasso, p 159.
246 *I Rusteghi*, II, 8.
fault for everything but not without first being heard. Felice explains to the four

rusteghi,

Se gh’ho torto, me dare torto; e se gh’ho rason, me dare rason. Prima de tuto, lassè patroni, che ve diga una cossa. No andè in colera, e no ve ne abië per mal. Sè tropo rusteghi; sè tropo salvadeghi. La maniera che tegni co le donne, co le muggier, co la fia, la xè così stravagante for a de l’ordinario, che mai in eterno le ve poderà voler ben; le ve obedisse per forza, le se mortifica con rason, e le ve considera no marii, no padre, ma tartari, orsi e aguzini. (III, 2)

She highlights that their actions and the manner in which they treat people does not employ reason and that they are not fathers or husbands, but act more like uncivilized beasts.

Credit is also given to Marina, Filippetto’s aunt, for wanting the betrothed couple to meet before being married. Felice argues that their actions were well intentioned and that though the scheme has caused some negative repercussions, there is no actual harm inflicted and the matrimony should proceed. She speaks as a lawyer would, with precice and deliberate words in a logical fashion, “Mi ho opera per buon cuor. Se sè omeni, persuadeve, se sè tangheri, sodisfeve. La puta xè onesta, el puto non ha falà; nualtre semo donne d’onor. Ho finio la regna; laudè el matrimonio, e compati l’avocato.”247 Her use of reason and logical thoughts persuade the men to agree with her and her cause. Felice acknowledges her success in employing reason, “I ho messi in sacco, ma con rason.”248 She understands the value of the spoken word and that the ability to speak well carries great strength. The female characters’ wit and reason coupled with their ability to speak allows them not only to convey their thoughts, but also to attain their goals. At the end,

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247 Ibid, III, 2.
248 Ibid.
good sense and rationality are victorious and create a sense of equality and connection between the sexes and generations.

*Custodian of the Financial Well Being of Others*

There is a sense of fraternity between people and a hope to remedy and reform the shortcomings of others in terms of financial wellbeing or the ability to manage one's finances. There is the basic principle of sharing one's wealth with those less fortunate such as with Anselmo in *Il Cavaliere e La Dama*, who offers Donna Eleonora money in her time of need. He offers his view on helping others and states, “In questo mondo abbiamo da assisterci l’uno coll’altro. L’intenzione del cielo è che tutti abbiano del bene. Chi è più ricco, deve darne a chi è più povero...”

As Cavallini highlights, “Fin dalla prima scena in cui compare, il borghese Anselmo dimostra di essere animato da un ideale di solidarietà verso gli altri, nel quale confluiscono fiducia nell’umanità e buon senso.” It is a dedication to his fellow human beings and a belief system grounded in moderation and good sense that guides Anselmo’s actions to aid others in need. Ridolfo reiterates this belief in *La Bottega del Caffè*, “Ogni uomo è in obbligo di aiutar l’altro quando può.”

The desire and ability to offer financial advice and assistance to other characters in need and often times aid in their rehabilitation demonstrates Goldoni’s desire to promote goodwill and fraternity in society resulting in increased solidarity and productivity.

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249 *Il Cavaliere e La Dama*, I, 2.
250 p 88.
251 *La Bottega del Caffè*, II, 2.
After marrying his daughter into a noble family, Pantalone in *La Famiglia dell’Antiquario*, must intervene and utilize his bourgeois ‘good sense’ and mercantile prowess to save the failing family from financial and emotional ruin. Always the caring father, Pantalone could never leave his daughter in a potentially disastrous situation and takes reign of the family’s finances, when the true patriarch, Anselmo, is powerless in doing so. Pantalone is aware of the father’s place at the head of the home and the responsibility to ‘manage’ the family’s interests. “El capo de casa xè quello che fa bona e cattiva la famiglia.”

Since Anselmo has forsaken his responsibility, Pantalone intervenes to play the peacemaker and attempt to reconcile the relationship between his daughter, Doralice and her mother-in-law. He reasons with his daughter to promote accord in the household by remembering her roots and acting in a manner befitting her new status as a Countess. Pantalone says, “Sè muggier de un Conte, sè deventada Contessa, ma el titolo no basta per farve portar respetto, quando no ve acquistè l’amor della zente colla dolcezza e colla umiltà.”

He continues with his advice for her, “Portè rispetto ai vostri maggiori; siè umile, siè paziente, siè bona e allora sarè nobile, sarè ricca, sarè respettada.”

Doralice’s father encourages her to act with humility, patience and respect and thus will be respected. Unfortunately, Isabella’s inability to accept her, and the manner in which she treats Doralice makes it impossible without Anselmo’s help.

In Pantalone’s mind, it ultimately is Anselmo’s responsibility as the patriarch and leader of the family to be attentive to the activities within the home in order to

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252 *La Famiglia dell’Antiquario*, III, 8.
253 Ibid, I, 19.
254 Ibid.
maintain a well-run household. It is Anselmo’s failure to manage his finances and
discourage his family’s negative practices and discord that has led them into
disfunction and bankruptcy. Pantalone warns, “Mo no sàla che, quando el capo de
casa non gh’abbada, tutto va alla roversa.”255 Since Anselmo is impotent in
correcting his own behaviors, much less those of his wife, the bourgeois merchant
must step in to resolve the condition of the family. Pantalone is given the authority
to rectify the misdeeds and once again return the family to good standing. Giacinto,
Doralice’s husband, entreats Pantalone to do what his father could not, “sì, caro
signor suocero, prendete voi l’economia della nostra casa; assisteteci per amore del
cielo; fatelo per vostra figlia, per il vostro sangue.”256 As many other goldonian
bourgeois characters intervene and offer assistance on behalf of other less fortunate
characters, Pantalone fully embraces his responsibility and offers both financial and
personal recommendations to the individual family members. His abilities,
influenced by ‘good sense,’ honor and moderation help to save an otherwise
hopeless family.

In the Villeggiatura trilogy, Fulgenzio proves to be the epitome of the
bourgeois spirit in guiding young Leonardo through his irrationality and wasteful
prodigality. In Le Smanie della Villeggiatura he advises him to be prudent,
especially concerning the upcoming trip to the country. The passion concerning la
villeggiatura, the excessive spending and unnecessary purchases, is threatening to
financially ruin Leonardo. On the horizon, is the dowry provided by Filippo when he

255 Ibid, II, 10.
256 Ibid, III, 8.
and Giacinta marry. Fulgenzio recommends to Leonardo to utilize 'good sense' and intelligence with this generous sum of money,

Ma, caro amico, soffrite dalla mia sincerità due parole ancora. Maritatevi per far giudizio, e non per essere piučché mai rovinato. So che le cose vostre non vanno molto felicemente. Ottomila scudi di dote vi possono rimediare; ma non li spendete intorno di vostra moglie, non li sacrificate in villeggiatura; prudenza, economia, giudizio. Val più il dormir quieto, senza affanni di cuore, di tutti i divertimenti del mondo. Fin che ce n’è, tutti godono. (III, 1)

Leonardo is encouraged to take control of his circumstances, to be responsible for his financial wellbeing and independence and to never lapse back to his present state of financial ruin. Fulgenzio helps with Leonardo's current financial crisis and becomes the custodian for his personal affairs. He explains to Leonardo, "Metterete i beni vostri nelle mie mani, ed io mi farò mallevadore per voi: pagherò i creditori, e col tempo vi render i vostri effetti liberi, netti, e ben custoditi." Only with prudence, fiscal responsibility and good judgement, will he be able to rest easy and truly enjoy his life. These goldonian elements of a productive life are highlighted here to stress the importance of these virtues in order to promote a more civil society.

Caught in the illicit world of gambling, Eugenio, in La Bottega del Caffè is rescued by a friend of his father’s, Ridolfo. In this particular instance, Ridolfo is compelled to correct the misguided young man from experiencing full financial ruin due to gambling. Ridolfo entreats Eugenio to put an end to his irrational behavior and addiction to playing cards. He cautions him that the path he is following can only result in his utter ruin, “Questa che vossignora tiene, è la vera strada di andare in rovina. Presto presto si perde il credito e si fallisce. Lasci andar il giuoco, lasci le

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257 Il Ritorno della Villeggiatura, III, 3.
male pratiche, attenda al suo negozio, alla sua famiglia, e si regoli con giudizio.

Poche parole, ma buone, dette da un uomo ordinario, ma di buon cuore.”

Ridolfo is a man of integrity and of action. He cannot sit idle and allow the son of his former master to be consumed by this horrible vice. Even though at first Eugenio does not heed Ridolfo’s advice, Ridolfo does not see his attempts as a waste of time. Good deeds always retain their worth and will find their way through the irrationality. He says, “quel che ho fatto, l’ho fatto per bene, e del bene non mi pentirò mai.”

At the end, Eugenio does reform his ways with Ridolfo’s assistance. Without Ridolfo’s insight and dedication to the cause, Eugenio would be unable to separate himself from the vices. Ridolfo’s efforts were successful for they put an end to Eugenio’s senseless behaviors and brought to light Goldoni’s prized middle class virtues of temperance and reason. Eugenio appreciates being guided and enlightened by Ridolfo’s beliefs, “Voi, siate Benedetto, m’avete aperto gli occhi, e un poco coi vostri consigli, un poco coi vostri rimproveri, un poco colle buone grazie, e un poco coi benefici, mi avete illuminato.”

Goldoni references enlightenment themes, such as ‘opening ones eyes’ and being ‘enlightened’ to ones vices which is in accordance with the optimistic belief that reason is the guiding force to reform both the individual as well as society. Eugenio is transformed into a new man, undoubtedly indebted to the fine example provided by Ridolfo’s character.

258 Ibid, I, 11.
259 La Vedova Scaltra, II, 20.
260 Ibid III, 18.
When no parents are present or living, there are characters who intervene and serve as a guardian concerning a marriage contract, such as the case with Zamaria of *Una delle Ultime Sere di Carnovale* (1762). The marriage of two young people is often more a business deal rather than an act of love, and the absence of a dowry could impair a young lady’s ability to find a husband. Since Agustin’s parents passed away and Elenetta was without a dowry, Zamaria stepped in to arrange the union of Sior’Elenetta and Agustin. He states, “Sto matrimonio l’ho fatto mi. El xè restà fio solo, senza padre e senza madre. L’ho fatto passer capo mistro testor. L’ha tolto in casa sta putta; la gh’ha dà dei bezzetti; la gh’ha una madre, che per el teler xè un oracolo.”

Zamaria mediated the union by providing a dowry for Elenetta and negotiating the contract on behalf of Agustin to ensure the future happiness of the couple and promote their entry into society.

*Friendship*

Negating the thrall of passion and following one’s reason is undeniably a pivotal concept for Goldoni. There are unwritten laws or codes that make up a civilized society; following these laws is imperative to the well-functioning society. Friendship is one of these codes or social norms that Goldoni values, so much so, that an entire play is dedicated to this theme, *il Vero Amico*. Throughout the comedy, Goldoni mentions and discusses the ‘laws of friendship’ and the imperative to follow these laws. These ‘laws of friendship are also mentioned in *Le Avventure della Villeggiatura* when Giacinta reminds Guglielmo that his actions in pursuing her

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261 *Una delle Ultime Sere di Carnovale*, I, 2.
romantically are against this unwritten code. She tells him, “voi mancate alle leggi dell’amicizia, dell’ospitalità e della buona fede.” In a sociological framework, people often make decisions or act by norms maintained by society. Failure to adhere to these set values is a detriment to the moral and social codes of acceptable behavior and will not be tolerated. In the preface to Il Vero Amico, Goldoni encourages his audience to observe and identify the true character of friendship and its greater impact on society. “Vi troverete, io spero, il vero carattere dell’amicizia, superiore all’interesse ed alla passione.” Not only does he wish his audience to see an example of true friendship but also to understand how friendship should be esteemed higher than one’s own interests and above passion.

In this play, Goldoni demonstrates that the virtue exhibited through friendship is greater than that of romantic love. He writes, “io non ho immaginato questa commedia per il trionfo dell’amore, ma per quello dell’amicizia; ed è sempre lodevole il sacrifizio che proviene dalla virtù.” Above all else, a true friend puts the wellbeing and interests of his friend before his own; this exhibits true virtue. Florindo, the protagonist, gives life to this concept in his opening line of the play to validate the infinite importance of friendship. “Sì, vi vuol coraggio, bisogna fare un’eroica risoluzione. L’amicizia ha da prevalere, e alla vera amicizia bisogna sacrificare le proprie passioni, le proprie soddisfazioni, e ancora la vita stessa, se è necessario.” Friendship is not depicted here in the abstract but as a concrete part of the characters’ daily experiences and feelings. Putting one’s personal welfares

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262 Le Avventure della Villeggiatura, III, 3.
263 Il Vero Amico, p 575.
264 Ibid, I, 1.
and passions aside and acting in the interest of a friend is a worthwhile and positive contribution to society as a whole.

The author mentions the existence of various ‘laws of friendship’ that guide individuals. One of these unwritten rules is to avoid rivaling a friend in romantic relationships, which is the focus of the comedy. At the end of the play, when Florindo is thought to have broken this law, Lelio is outraged and says, “Voi amante di Rosaura? Voi rivale del vostro amico? Voi commettere un’azione simile contro tutte le leggi dell’amicizia?” Fortunately, they reconcile this situation and Goldoni reinforces the example provided by Florindo and Lelio. They are the archetype of friends from which the audience and reader are directed to learn. Florindo says, “Lelio è il più caro amico ch’io m’abbia...A Venezia l’ho tenuto e l’ho trattato in casa mia come un fratello, ed a lui ho giurato una perfetta amicizia.” The promise and promotion of this relationship is an actively enforced ideal, not only for the sake of convenience, but with deep roots in moral correctness.

These ideals of friendship must be maintained even by force, if necessary. Florindo finds himself with amorous feelings for Lelio’s betrothed but knows that it is impossible and his feelings must be disregarded. He knows that friendship is valued above love (another of Goldoni’s virtuous abstractions) and states vehemently, “L’amore va superato colla forza e colla violenza.” He knows that he must do the right thing and must put his feelings aside for the sake of friendship: “Sagrificherò il

\[266\] Ibid, I, 2.
\[267\] Ibid, I, 3.
cuore, trionferà l’amicizia.” Even later in the play when speaking with Rosaura, he highlights the importance of self-sacrifice for the ideal of friendship. When responding to her question regarding to whom his heart belongs, Florindo responds, “lascio il mio cuore ad un caro e fedele amico.” Later he also states that any respectable friend, “per un punto d’onore è stato capace di sacrificarare all’amico la sua passione.” Not only is it considered virtuous to sacrifice passions for a friend, but also blood if necessary. When Lelio needs Florindo to help defend him from enemies, Florindo responds, “vado subito a sacrificar per l’amico anche il sangue, se fa di bisogno.”

It is of the utmost importance to encourage a friend in the pursuit of all things virtuous, but to aid in the evasion of vice. In Goldoni’s conception, it is up to each individual, in the name of friendship to ensure and support each other to embrace virtuous and positive endeavors in life. This is notable in Le Smanie della Villeggiatura, when Fulgenzio attempts to be a good friend and advisor to Filippo and Leonardo equally. It is very important under the pretext of friendship to give good advice and ensure that friends make good decisions. He advises it not be prudent to have Guglielmo, a family friend, stay with them during their villeggiatura. Since Giacinta is betrothed to Leonardo, it would be quite improper to have another man staying in the same house as an unmarried girl. Fulgenzio states, “Credo di

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268 Ibid, I, 6.
269 Ibid, I, 12.
270 Ibid, II, 3.
aver ben servito il signor Leonardo. Ma ho inteso di servire alla verità, alla ragione, all’interesse al decoro dell’amico Filippo.”

Equally and perhaps more importantly, it is the responsibility of friends to correct each other’s vices and to have a direct interest in the productivity of a friend’s behavior. This obligation to reform the vices found within the individual is reminiscent of the purpose of the author and his works. By way of his comedies, Goldoni is the benevolent friend, ensuring the reform and conversion of the vices of the Venetian society into virtue. Ridolfo, in La Bottega del Caffè, also assumes the role of friend attempting to convert his friend. He highlights the fact that as humans, all are subject to make mistakes, but the remorse and desire to change are virtues in themselves. “Siamo tutti uomini, tutti soggetti ad errare. Quando l’uomo si pente, la virtù del pentimento cancella tutto il demerito dei mancamenti.”

As mentioned previously, the plays themselves provide the opportunity for the spectator or reader to notice these negative behaviors on the stage and in realizing these behaviors within themselves, correct them. Here it is not only the individual’s responsibility to correct these vices but now becomes the concern of one’s friends as well. Once Eugenio is enlightened to the errors in his ways, he appreciates the qualities of friendship shown by Ridolfo. “Grand’uomo è Ridolfo! Gran buon amico!” In addition, Il Vero Amico, Florindo perfectly iterates this concept attributing it to another ‘law of friendship,

La legge d’amicizia obbliga l’uomo a secondar l’amico nelle virtù, e non nei vizi, nel bene, e non nel male. Fino che Lelio ama, come amico sono obbligato

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272 Le Smanie della Villeggiatura, II, 9.
273 La Bottega del Caffè, III, 4.
274 Ibid, III, 6.
a secondare il suo amore; se Lelio odia, non ho da fomentare il suo odio. Se Lelio ama la signora Rosaura, l’amo ancora io; ma se l’odiasse, procurerei disingannarlo, fargli conoscere il merito, e far che tutto il suo sdegno si convertisse in amore. (I, 12)

Hate is considered a vice that is to be corrected in the behavior of a friend, whereas the virtuous love a person feels for another will be reflected by one’s friend in turn.

Throughout the play the theme of friendship overcoming passion is highlighted and enforced. Goldoni considers friendship a virtue of the borghesia and must be part of the moral fiber of the entire social class. Honor, honesty and virtue are words common throughout the comedies focusing on the ideal middle class behaviors that are productive to society. Friendship is the frame for which these values can be demonstrated and multiplied. Through a series of issues regarding Rosaura’s dowry first being nonexistant then materializing at the end, Florindo’s sense of honor and duty toward friendship is put to the test. At the end he truly sacrifices himself and his feelings for the sake of Lelio. “Far che l’amore ceda il luogo alla buona amicizia. Far tutto per salvare quell’onore che è la vita dell’uomo onesto, e il miglior capitale delle persone ben nate.”275 His actions have a didactic effect on Rosaura as well. She later comes to find out the truth but even her passions are corrected and redirected by the amazing example provided by Florindo and Lelio’s friendship. She exclaims,

O cieli! Non credeva si desse al mondo una sì rara, una sì perfetta virtù. Vi ammiro, signor Florindo, vi ammiro e non vi condanno. Spero il mio matrimonio felice, come opera di un cuor virtuoso, voi m’insegnate a superar le passioni, e prometto di trionfarne col vostro esempio. (III, 25)

This virtuous sense of friendship sacrifices the individual but provides only positive repercussions for the other characters involved and for society as well.
Chapter Four: Productivity Within the Family and in Amorous Relationships.

The family

The family has an extremely vital role within the works of Goldoni, and it is evident what great value he places on promoting and maintaining the family unit. One can see the family as the backbone of society and its welfare resonates on a larger scale and strengthens the prosperity of society as a whole. The family is one’s first social group and has extreme importance in developing socialization and shaping a person’s “attitudes, behavior, and social identity.” It is also responsible for functions that determine an individual’s ability to behave in society through education and instruction. According to Macionis, “Ideally, parents help children become well-integrated, contributing members of society.” In addition, parents provide and pass on to their children, information regarding their social identity and place in society.

Goldoni stresses the moralization of the family and each member of the family must fulfill his or her role in a manner that embodies the accepted moral tenets of the time. Since families have the ability to provide the basis for social monitoring for its own members, correcting and maintaining a moral balance within the individual family units will directly translate to a more principled and productive society. The most basic social relationships begin within the family, and

277 p 468.
278 Ibid.
these relationships later guide an individual’s success or failure in social associations. De Cesco suggests that Goldoni’s concern with the family as a central concept of his comedies, relates to the lack of a nuclear family he experienced during his own upbringing.

Il suo radicato concetto della famiglia, vista come perno centrale, come colonna portante, come nucleo vitale di tutta la società era stato da lui sempre sostenuto, anche se in proposito la sua diretta e quotidiana esperienza giovanile non gli avesse fatto godere sempre dei vantaggi di un nucleo familiare armonioso e ben ordinato.\textsuperscript{279}

It is possible that Goldoni’s own family experience, with his father traveling and his mother, in effect, his sole caregiver, guided him to realize the intrinsic necessity that a strong centralized family had on the positive functioning of the individual and society as a whole. It is obvious from his \textit{Memorie} the importance his mother had on his life, especially in times of need. He writes, “Ci amavamo entrambi, mia madre e io; ma che differenze fra l’amore d’una madre per un figlio e quello d’un figlio per la madre! I figli amano per riconoscenza; le madri amano per impulso naturale, e l’amor proprio non ha minor parte nel loro tenero affetto.”\textsuperscript{280} This self-proclaimed ‘digression’ regarding maternal love demonstrates the importance of a mother’s role in supporting her child and educating him or her for future relationships.

One can note the importance of family in Goldoni’s dedications to his numerous protectors and esteemed patrons. As Günsburg highlights, “Goldoni’s dedications indicate the primary role of the family in his perceptions of the smooth functioning of society.”\textsuperscript{281} These families are typically aristocratic and are not only

\textsuperscript{279} De Cesco, p 171.
\textsuperscript{280} Goldoni, \textit{Memorie}, I, 18, p 80.
\textsuperscript{281} Günsburg, p 71.
his protectors and patrons, but also influential and well known throughout the Venetian state. Throughout the social classes, Goldoni represents a wide variety of relationships and types of families from older, established aristocratic families with an extensive lineage to small families of the *borghesia* or *popolo*. It is not remiss to add that the primary characters of many of Goldoni’s comedies are defined by their family roles; for example, *La Figlia Obbediente, La Famiglia dell’Antiquario, La Moglie Saggia* or *La Vedova Scaltra*. Thus, “The central importance of the family in the Goldonian universe can also be discerned in the titles of the plays, which often point to key aspects of his interest in this social unit.”\textsuperscript{282} The characterization of his comedies draws emphasis on the family roles rather than the particular character name to clearly demonstrate to the audience the lesson he wished to provide.

The intrinsically productive traits and roles of the individual family members are universal across all of the social classes. Regardless of class, wives and mothers are expected to be extremely dedicated and devoted to the family and running of the household while preserving their integrity and goodness. Fathers and husbands are revered for being hard-working and providing a good life for their families, while being progressive and open to the opinions and feelings of their wives and children. Children, especially daughters, are expected to respect and be obedient to their parents/uncles/older custodian and submit to their wishes. All conscientious members of society are entrusted with conducting themselves with virtue and reason as to not bring shame to their family. After all, the reputation of the family depends on the actions of its individual members.

\textsuperscript{282} Ibid.
It is under the instruction and guidance of parents, that children are nurtured and learn proper and acceptable behaviors. Not to be underestimated is the love, care and affection given by mothers and fathers to aid in the ultimate ability of the children to function in society. Throughout Goldoni’s comedies, it is evident that society’s productivity and success relies on the well functioning family unit. There are examples throughout the comedies of positive roles and relationships that aid in the success of the family as well as negative behaviors that lead to a family’s ruin.

Eppure Goldoni ogni qualvolta gli si presentava l’occasione propizia non trascurava di illuminare nei suoi lavori teatrali il ruolo sociale indistruttibile della famiglia, dimostrando come tale nucleo, quando è alimentato da sinceri rapporti affettivi, resista e trionfi su qualsiasi avversità, ed indicando per converso come l’egoismo, la scioperatagglione, l’infedeltà, la mancanza di economia, di sincerità, di modestia porti la casa alla completa rovina.283

The way in which Goldoni portrays familial roles is evidence of his commitment and desire for and betterment of society. The individual characters, organized and examined by their roles within the family will shed light on the appropriate and valued behaviors and relationships Goldoni wished to demonstrate as models for his audience.

Mothers and Wives

There is a definitive patriarchal hierarchy within the family structure that recognizes a male figure, husband/father, as head, but the wife/mother also retains a critical role in the family dynamic. She is ultimately responsible, often in a self-sacrificing manner, for the education of her children, management of the household and, at times, the correction of her husband’s negative behaviors. The ideal feminine

283 De Cesco, p 176.
characters according to Günsburg "set an instructive example to the audience by internalizing patriarchal values, despite the cost to themselves. Their self-victimization helps to reinforce stereotypes of idealized femininity in the three principal areas of chastity, modesty and domesticity."  

Although Goldoni does demonstrate mostly stereotypical roles of mothers and wives, he also manages to give them a more liberal slant and grants them a newfound sense of rationality and the ability to express themselves brilliantly. It is obvious to the reader that the characters that are mothers and wives enjoy their roles, but feel part of a more modern mindset of women who use reason, while maintaining virtue, to assist their families. Goldoni does embrace the social constraints of the somewhat repressed woman but he endows most of his progressive female characters with a purposeful rationality that frees them intellectually from their societal chains. The mother figures deliver well thought out and logical statements that enlighten those around them, while still representing their actual place in society. The goldonian mothers and wives always exhibit modesty and honesty in their interactions. It is this strength of character coupled with their insights that the author so highly esteems as positive contributions to society as a whole. Goldoni uses the concept of onestà to guide many of his characters’ behaviors, but more often it is a prized trait of his women. Günsburg highlights, "the substantive onestà and its derivatives are omnipresent in the many descriptions of female characters by other characters with which the plays

284 Günsburg, p 29.
abound.”

Being honest and honorable is highly regarded in wives and daughters along the social classes whether noble, bourgeois or working class.

Goldoni’s characters that are wives and mothers are held to a high standard of comportment and responsibility. The epitome of a wife must temper her husband’s excesses through her employment of moderation and reason. She becomes responsible for guaranteeing her husband and family lead a good and decorous life. Goldoni prides the traditional role of the woman who personifies virtue and puts the wellbeing of her family above all else. As Giuseppina Sconamiglio states, “egli fa risaltare la virtù di donne che s’adoperano per il bene della famiglia.”

Where the husband’s role lies in the workplace, the wife/mother’s realm is within the literal four walls of the house, managing the household’s economy and maintaining order. She not only raises and educates her children; she must also manage the servants and the household spending. It is also the role of the wife to restrain her husband’s excesses “both sexually (in terms of womanizing) and materialistically (in terms of gambling, prodigality and occasionally its opposite, avarice).”

In Il Cavaliere e La Dama, Donna Eleonora exhibits her moral virtue and fidelity to her husband, even though his actions have caused his own exile and her destitute circumstances. Even in the face of hardship and adversity, Eleonora will not lose sight of her honor and obligation to her husband. She states, “La necessità non m’insegnerà mai a scordarmi del mio dovere. Il povero mio consorte, che ha

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285 p 30.
287 Günsburg, p 78.
tutto perduto, non ha che una moglie onorata, che vaglia a sostenere il decoro della desolata famiglia.”

Even in the direst of conditions, her honor and dedication to her family is held above all else. She will not risk any damage to her own reputation or to that of her husband. Unlike the other female characters in the comedy that engage in conversations and relationships with other men, she is cautious of the company of Don Rodrigo, even though his intentions exemplify respect and honor. She is dedicated to sustaining her family’s dignity and is prepared to sacrifice whatever necessary to maintain it. She states, “Io sosterrò a costo della mia vita, e se vedrò che la presenza di don Rodrigo possa mettere in maggior pericolo la mia virtù, priverommi ancora di quest’unica conversazione, volendo io tutto sacrificar al dovere di sposa fedele, di donna onesta e di dama povera, ma onorata.”

Donna Eleonora epitomizes the aristocratic wife/woman as someone who maintains her honor and dignity in any and every circumstance.

In *La Bottega del Caffè*, Eugenio's wife Vittoria employs her duties of faithful and supportive wife by attempting to rescue her husband from his addiction to gambling. Even after her husband’s absence and the threat of financial and marital ruin, Vittoria’s obligation as a wife encourages her to search for him and assist in reforming his vice. Although she is suffering, a direct result from his gambling, she is constrained by her love for him and will sacrifice whatever she must to correct the situation. She explains what an honest and loving wife must do, even when her husband does not reciprocate, “perché una moglie onesta deve obbedire anche un marito indiscreto...non vi potrete dolere dell’amore mio. Ho fatto quanto fare

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*Il Cavaliere e La Dama*, I, 6.

Ibid.
poteva una moglie innamorata di suo marito.”

Vittoria is pushed to her limits by Eugenio's actions and, even with Ridolfo's assistance; she finds the situation almost impossible to bear. Undeterred yet understandably shaken by the events, she reveals her immense sacrifice to Ridolfo, “voglio poter dire che ho fatto tutto per un marito.” Thus, regardless of the conclusion, she is appeased, knowing that she did all she could to save Eugenio and their relationship.

Maggie Günzburg emphasizes that the archtypical self-sacrificing wife/mother character has roots in the Decameron. She states, “the key elements of willing suffering and self-sacrifice on the part of the ideal wife and mother in deference to the patriarchal husband and father are to be found not only in La Griselda, but also in the comedies whenever idealized femininity takes an extreme form.” A paramount example of this figure can be seen in Rosaura in La Moglie Saggia. Immediately from the title, the reader is informed of the protagonist’s role of ‘the wise wife.’ Goldoni explains in the preface that no lady should have to tolerate her husband’s bad behaviors. However, if it occurs, it is her responsibility to remedy the situation, without losing sight of her virtue. “Non è che una donna onorata, e molto meno una dama, abbia da tollerare tranquillamente i torti che dal marito gli vengono fatti, e di trattare con amicizia una persona che intorbida la pace della sua famiglia; ha da cercare di rimediare, ma con prudenza.”

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290 La Bottega del Caffè, II, 20.
292 Günzburg, pp 28-9. Günzburg names this the “Griselda complex” after the tale from the Decameron and Goldoni’s adaptation of it in a tragicomedy written in 1735. Griselda is put to the test by willingly suffering and enduring endless tests, proving that she is the ideal wife and mother.
293 La Moglie Saggia, p 59.
believes that, along with honor, another wifely virtue is prudence and it is recommended that she should always act with prudence, especially with attempting to correct a husband’s vice. Rosaura’s prudence and virtue is that which will enlighten Ottavio and put him on the correct path. “Un marito guadagnato per questa strada, convinto ed illuminato con tal condotta, si può credere realmente pentito e totalmente cangiato, e ciò che non avrebbero ottenuto nè le querele nè i rimproveri, nè i maneggi, conseguisce perfettamente la virtù, la docilità, la prudenza.”

Goldoni states that a husband can only be truly “cured” by his wife's exhibiting these traits when attempting to rid him of a particular vice.

Rosaura is portrayed as an idealized woman, both daughter and wife, who accepts her fate through her marriage to Ottavio. She acknowledges her obligation and responsibility as Ottavio’s wife even when he plainly expresses intense hatred toward her through his verbal abuse. In addition, she is aware of the inappropriate relationship, obviously an extra-marital affair, that Ottavio is experiencing with Beatrice. Rosaura is upset but is resigned to suffer her fate even when her father suggests she leave Ottavio. She states, “vo’ resistere fin ch’io posso, prima di abbandonare un marito, convien pensarvi moltissimo. L’onestà, il decoro, sempre discapita; ed è assai meglio soffrire le domestiche dispiacenze, di quello sia esporsi alle dicerie, alle critiche, alle derisioni del mondo.”

Her honor (and that of her family) would be severely compromised if she decided to exit the marriage. She would rather live secretly in an unpleasant domestic situation than leave and be outwardly criticized by society.

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294 Ibid.
295 La Moglie Saggia, I, 17.
Although Rosaura finds herself in a terrible situation, her husband serving as *cicisbeo* to another woman, she uses reason and intelligence to rectify her condition. She will never be dishonest or underhanded and refuses help from others even when Brighella, Ottavio’s servant, wishes to show her a letter from her husband to Marchesa Beatrice. Goldoni endows his female characters with superior reason and intellectual abilities, which he views as the key to happiness and productive results in both the family and in society. Rosaura knows that her actions going forward must be honest and logical and says that she will analyze the situation to determine how she will proceed. She says, “studierò qualche via ragionevole e onesta per rimediarmi.”  

The guiding force throughout her plight is reason and honor.  

When she approaches Beatrice in the following act, she employs a well thought-out premise for her visit. She explains to Beatrice that she requires her help and advice in dealing with her unfaithful husband. Rosaura is able to direct the blame on a mysterious third party, although both women are extremely aware that the intended recipient is Beatrice herself. Rosaura uses the word ‘reason’ or *ragione* two times in her discourse with Beatrice and another time later when speaking with Ottavio. Although ‘reason’ may also mean ‘intention’ or ‘motivation,’ it is not lost on the reader the dual meaning of the word, that of ‘logic’ or ‘wisdom.’ Rosaura says, “vengo da voi, ed eccone la *ragione*...”  

After explaining to Beatrice her concern regarding her husband’s infidelity, Rosaura asks her to speak to Ottavio and tell him that he should not mistreat her or give his affections to another woman. Rosaura

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says, “so chi siete, e per questa ragione vengo a gettarmi nelle vostre braccia.”

This comment itself has a double meaning. Rosaura knows ‘who’ Beatrice is, meaning who she is socially; a duchess and a friend to Ottavio, but also that she knows that she is the ‘other woman.’ Rosaura continues to describe this unnamed ‘evil woman’ intervening in her relationship and appeals to Beatrice’s knowledge of this type of woman, “a voi non è ignoto, che una donna che turbi la pace di una famiglia, è la più indegna femmina della terra. Che chi tenta sedurre i mariti altrui, merita uno sfregio sul viso. Che chi coltiva amori illeciti, amicizie sospette, conversazioni pericolose, è un’indegna, una perfida, una scellerata.”

In this way, Goldoni presents Beatrice, and all women in her situation, to his audience as the antithesis of Rosaura, with the underlying message of how ‘not’ to be. Through her use of intelligence and logic, Rosaura is able to confront Beatrice in a manner that does not directly shift the blame her way, but allows the truth to be heard. After the situation transpires, Corallina, Rosaura’s maid, voices acknowledgement of her mistress’s intelligence and wit, “oh questa sì è una moglie savia e prudente.”

Rosaura’s prudence and use of reason is challenged by Ottavio’s blatant lack thereof. Ottavio’s abandonment of reason leads him to poison Rosaura’s limonata, which is discovered by Brighella. Rosaura, nonetheless, does not let her emotions take hold and employs reason to illuminate the negative behaviors committed by Ottavio. When she approaches him, she says that she wants him to be at peace with

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298 Ibid.
299 Ibid.
300 Ibid.
his decision, "per questo solo motivo, vengo io a ragionarvi."\textsuperscript{301} She does not want to speak with him, but as highlighted, she comes to reason with him. She needs to show him, through her words and actions, the faults within his. When he interrupts her and stops her from drinking the unpoisoned (which he thought was poisoned) \textit{limonata}, he comes to realize that Beatrice, “è la cagion di tutto.”\textsuperscript{302} He does not take any blame on himself, but names Beatrice as the culpable party. He attributes his conversion to \textit{il cielo} and to Rosaura's virtue. He says that, “io era già sul punto di precipitare. Il cielo mi ha illuminato. Rosaura mi ha soccorso, la sua virtù mi ha assistito.”\textsuperscript{303} Thus Rosaura's approach and ultimate self-sacrifice was necessary to convert Ottavio and force him to realize his mistakes. Since he committed a social injustice by having an extramarital affair, Ottavio suggests they leave \textit{Montopoli}. Often in Goldoni's comedies, characters that are not productive in their present social situations choose self-exile. This is an acknowledgement of their errors against the accepted social norms and an attempt to return order to society.

As previously discussed, Siora Felice also proves to be a wife that tempers not only the behaviors of her own husband but interprets the role of the mother figure by intervening on behalf of other children in need. As Goldoni demonstrates in \textit{I Rusteghi}, the woman holds the productive role of caretaker of the children but also intermediary between the antiquated regime and modern progressive thought. She does not discount the children's feelings, but rather attempts to satisfy their needs by discussing and providing rational arguments on their behalf. Cavallini

\textsuperscript{301} Ibid, III, 7.  
\textsuperscript{302} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{303} Ibid, III, 9.
states, “la donna appare più disposta a prestare ascolto alle esigenze dei giovani e a mettere in discussione, con lucida razionalità, il suo ruolo familiare e sociale per riscattare o promuovere se stessa, facendosi così interprete delle istanze di rinnovamento e di progresso connesse con l’evolversi dei tempi.”

The female figure fills a productive gap between generations to ensure progress of the familial unit within society.

In La Buona Madre, Goldoni portrays a somewhat negative example of a mother, whose overwhelming love blinds her from being aware of her son’s true nature. With regards to her daughter, Giacomina, Barbara proves to be a fairly positive mother figure, teaching her the value of hard work and economic lessons. Conversely, she fails to teach her son Nicoletto any responsibility or independence, which inhibits his ability to mature into a self-sufficient man. Geron states, “In definitiva Nicoletto è un ragazzotto di bell’aspetto ma di testa debole, fattosi uomo nel fisico ma rimasto psicologicamente bambino, incapace di uscire dal bozzolo materno.”

Her efforts to protect him under the guise of love inadvertently stunt his emotional development. Although her love for her son is evident, Barbara is criticized for not being attentive to her son’s activities and failing to properly guide him to becoming a productive member of society.

The author writes in the preface, “ho sempre detestato e abborrito i Genitori disattenti verso de’ loro Figliuoli, e specialmente le Madri che per soverchio amore

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304 pp 14-15.

Throughout the play, Barbara disregards any negative comments revealed to her and defends her son, thinking him to be innocent and blameless. Barbara’s lack of attention and inability to see the truth concerning her son’s actual character is a vice, which risks his and the entire family’s ruin. Thankfully, with the help of her servant Margarita, Barbara is made aware of her son’s treachery. When realizing the truth, Barbara exclaims, “Ah sassin! Ah infame! Ah traditore de la to povera mare!”

She feels betrayed by her son’s lies and is extremely overwhelmed with the realization of his deceitfulness. She knows that it is her responsibility to help him and rescue him before any further damage ensues.

“Za vedo che mio fio no xe più quell che el giera. L’ho scoverto busiardo, non ghe credo più. Ma remediemoghe, se se pol.” She takes full responsibility for her part in Nicoletto’s problems, “el ciel farsi me vol castigar per el troppo amor per mio fio, e per qualche artifizio che in sto proposito posso aver praticà.” In the end, multiple marriages solve Barbara’s problem and temper any inappropriate social implications and regain the threatened moral equilibrium in the comedy.

Countess Isabella in *La Famiglia dell’Antiquario* is another character that fails to live to this paradigm of the ideal wife, mother or mother-in-law. She does not provide the love and support to her family or offer any self-sacrifice in any way. Neither does she attempt to put the family’s finances in order by restricting her husband’s foolish spending. Doralice, in turn, does not accept the role of daughter-in-law very favorably. She adds to the anxiety and chaos within the home by using

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306 *La Buona Madre*, p 213.
308 Ibid, II, 17.
309 Ibid, III, 12.
her money and power to lure Colombina away from Isabella. Isabella’s inability to undertake the appropriate role of mother/wife has a hand in the utter ruin of her family. Goldoni uses this situation as an example of what results when the mother/wife does not put the best interests of the family before her own.

Fathers

The ideal father, as with the ideal mother, in Goldoni’s eyes is one who puts the wellbeing and education of his children above all else and also maintains control of his family with his love and support. Pantalone, in La Famiglia dell’Antiquario outwardly expresses his love for his daughter and that all his life’s efforts are for her benefit. He states, “Via cara fia, dame un poco de consolazion. No gh’ò altri a sto mondo che ti. Dopo la mia morte, ti sarà parona di tutto. Tutte le mie strussie, tutte le mie fatighe le ho fatte per ti.”310 The evolved Pantalone figure is the archetype for the father figure who loves his children, teaches and promotes morality, provides well for his family and is understanding of their wants and needs. “As head of the patriarchal family, the almost ubiquitous character of the father, or father-substitute, teaches the daughter the path to the ideal feminine virtues of chastity, modesty and domesticity, often under the guise of simple ‘morality’.”311 In the dedication preceding I Rusteghi, Goldoni praises the parenting technique of Il Conte de’ Baschi d’Aubais and the necessity to teach one’s children moral virtue. Goldoni deems that the Count’s children are “lo specchio della esemplarità, del buon

310 I, 19.
311 Günsburg, p 27.
These esteemed qualities of good manners and morals are paramount to the functioning of society, no matter the social class and are taught by the family.

The father figure must demonstrate a positive economy within the household and spend money with prudence and foresight. It is a father’s duty to maintain the family’s financial and emotional standing as well as the family’s reputation in society and behavior as a whole. In Le Smanie della Villeggiatura, Fulgenzio advises Filippo to be observant and vigilant of his daughter’s actions and plans, “Un padre dee tener gli occhi aperti sulla sua famiglia, e voi che avete una figliuola sola, potreste farlo meglio di tanti altri....” He reminds him of the necessity to monitor and guard his daughter; even though she seems ‘good,’ she is still a woman and must be protected from her own devices and weaknesses. Even after her marriage to Giacinto, in La Famiglia dell’Antiquario, Doralice’s father continues to provide her with advice and attempt to moderate her behavior towards her mother-in-law and exhibit positive borghese manners and ideals. In I Rusteghi, Maurizio takes his daughter’s moral guidance to heart, albeit in an extreme manner in teaching her the value of work and honesty.

Fathers have ultimate control of the future marriages of their children, mainly daughters and often have ulterior motives regarding this contract. As Günsburg notes, some fathers are extremely severe in their interpretations of their rights in engaging their children in marriage, such as in La Figlia Obbediente, while

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312 I Rusteghi, p 662.
313 Le Smanie della Villeggiatura, III, 10.
others are more lax and allow for the children’s consent. Many of Goldoni’s daughter figures follow the recommendations of their fathers (or male guardians) regarding their marriage contracts. In fact, in La Locandiera, Mirandolina ultimately marries the suitor chosen by her father before his death. Rosaura in La Figlia Obbediente directly obeys the commandment to marry set out by her father, though her feelings do not concur. Giacinta, of the Villeggiatura trilogy, like Rosaura, obeys the choice of her father while her heart points elsewhere. Conversely, in La Vedova Scaltra, Rosaura’s father is extremely open to the desires of his daughters regarding their intended husbands. When Pantalone expresses interest in courting Rosaura’s sister, Eleonora, il Dottore states, “Io per me sarei contentissimo...Basta che Eleonora sia contenta, prendetela, ch’io vel’accordo.” Eleonora’s father is open to the proposed marriage, but esteems his daughter’s input in the decision; he even considers suggestions by Rosaura regarding possible suitors.

A practice brought to the forefront by Goldoni is the arrangement of marriage of a wealthy bourgeois young lady with a man of nobility. This cross-class marriage is a manifestation of a father’s ambition for his daughter to escalate within the social ranks. In Doralice’s case in La Famiglia dell’Antiquario, Pantalone is fully aware of his own transgressions related to his desire for her to be noble. He recognizes his faults in wanting his daughter to ‘marry up,’ and wonders if she would have been better off staying within her own social class. “No gh’ho altro a sto mondo che sta unica fia; no vòi morir col rammarico de vederla sagramida. Oh, quanto meggio che giera, che l’avesse maridada con uno da par mio! Anca a mi me

314 Pp 34-5.
315 La Famiglia dell’Antiquario, I, 12.
xè vegnè el catarro della Nobiltà.”³¹⁶ It was his personal ambition coupled with his desire for her to have a more esteemed title that prompted him to ‘sacrifice’ her ultimate happiness.

A similar situation is portrayed in La Moglie Saggia. The comedy centers around Rosaura, of bourgeois origins, married to Ottavio, a count. Goldoni clearly delineates the discord between husband and wife primarily caused by the differing social classes. During her two years of marriage, Rosaura expresses that she has not enjoyed peace or happiness, which she blames on her father’s ambition. “In due anni ch’io sono moglie del conte non ho mai avuto un giorno di bene. Mio padre ha voluto sacrificarmi.”³¹⁷ Her father, Pantalone, takes full responsibility for his ambitious desires when he witnesses the extent to which Rosaura is unhappy and mistreated. He states, “Me son anca mi lassà acciecar dall’ambizion, credendo che el farte contessa bastasse per far la tua e la mia felicità.”³¹⁸ In both comedies, Pantalone’s ambition is based on the ill-conceived notion that nobility is equated with happiness; that being noble is ‘better’ and ‘worth’ their daughters’ happiness. Both characters realize the errors of their thinking, (a nod to the worth of the borghesia) and as the consummate merchants, productively work toward correcting their daughters’ respective situations.

Throughout his comedies, Goldoni provides many examples of father figures that embody the ideal and others, such as i Rusteghi, Count Anselmo, from La Famiglia dell’Antiquario, Ottavio from Il Vero Amico and zio Bernardino and Filippo

³¹⁶ Ibid, II, 11.
³¹⁷ La Moglie Saggia, I, 10.
³¹⁸ Ibid, I, 15.
from the *Villeggiatura* trilogy who fail to exhibit this behavior. Although the four figures nicknamed *i rusteghi* do embody revered bourgeois traits such as hard work and moral fortitude, their fathering techniques are too far antiquated to be successful in their era. As previously mentioned, the mode of parenting is a detached, almost tyrannical system without regard for the feelings of those being ‘governed.’ Their inability to communicate with their children and strict restrictions regarding their whereabouts do not foster an open parent/child relationship.

Like the *rusteghi*, Count Anselmo has a completely ‘hands-off’ approach regarding the communication within his family, but where they are in complete control of the moral and financial well-being of the family, he neglects this entire domain. Goldoni’s criticism lies in Anselmo’s blindness of his family’s situation due to his extreme passion for his ‘antiques.’ Unlike the exemplary Pantalone, he is careless with his finances and lacks any type of business acumen. In fact, his own servant, Brighella, takes advantage of his stupidity and swindles him with false items. Anselmo’s family situation, the crux of which is the volatile relationship between his wife and daughter-in-law, is in complete financial and emotional turmoil, of which he will not take control. His obsession with his collection blinds him to the reality of his condition and that of his family. Pantalone, knowing the importance of a father/husband’s duty, is forced to step in and provide guidance and fiscal responsibility to the household. This is one instance where Goldoni’s character does not see ‘the light’ and reform, resulting in the family’s inability to live in a traditional social situation.
Goldoni cautions the audience regarding the ill effects of being blinded by too much love for one’s children and the inability to deny them their desires. Goldoni stresses that the father figure retains the ultimate control of the family’s economic and emotional welfare, although the mother has the primary role with the latter. Filippo, in the *Villeggiatura* trilogy, finds himself as a widower with a daughter. His main motivation is to ensure Giacinta’s happiness and to acquiesce her every demand and request. He tells her, “sapete ch’io desidero soddisfarvi.” Although not practicing financial economy himself, he advises her “Ma circa l’economia, studiatela un poco più, perché, se vi maritate, sarà difficile che troviate un marito del carattere di vostro padre.” Her every desire is met without resistance, whether it is a new dress or the desire to bring a male friend away to the country. Filippo states, “non so dir di no, non son capace di dir di no, e non dirò mai di no.” Thus, Filippo, with the best of intentions, grants his daughter’s every wish without judging for himself if it is the appropriate choice. As in *La Buona Madre*, Goldoni cautions parents from losing sight of what is truly occurring in the lives of their children and to be present in the situation to prevent negative situations.

Ottavio of *Il Vero Amico* is the epitome of the avaricious miser. His role as a father is completely secondary to his love of money. Goldoni’s portrayal of Ottavio sheds light on the irrationality stemming from this sinful and counterproductive behavior. Rather than part with his beloved gold, Ottavio recinds the offer to provide his only daughter with a dowry. Once the dowry is negated, Rosaura’s

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319 *Le Smanie della Villeggiatura*, I, 10.
320 Ibid.
321 Ibid.
prospects for marriage are reduced to the few suitors who would not require she have one. The refusal to provide his daughter with a dowry not only limits her ability to marry and produce children, but also limits the use of money productively in society. Both these activities are instrumental to the society’s functioning and promotion. Similarly, zio Bernardino, in the Villeggiatura trilogy also embodies the role of the stingy miser when he refuses to help his niece and nephew escape their financial troubles. Although Fulgenzio comes to the rescue of Leonardo, the appointed legal guardian, zio Bernardino prefers not to part with his money in order to aid his family. The avaricious miser, Bernardino is harshly criticized for his inaction, as he remains “chiuso nella sua casa com’è chiuso dentro al proprio egoismo.”322 He turns away from his familial obligations and like Ottavio in Il Vero Amico substitutes his love of money for love for his family.

Children

For the most part, during the eighteenth century, children’s lives were at the mercy of their parents. With few exceptions, fathers and sometimes mothers decided the future paths and spouses of their children, rarely taking their desires into account. As marriage was technically a contract, the benefit of linking families was considered far above the feelings of the betrothed parties. The ultimate choice to marry the man of her father’s choosing falls upon Rosaura, the archetype for a goldonian daughter. She is the eponymous character, La Figlia Obbediente, whose obedience is valued above all else. Goldoni presents the archetype for the daughter

322 Marchini-Capasso, p 150.
figure in Rosaura who feels “Il conflitto fra amore e dovere, fra genio e obbedienza alle norme imposte dalla consuetudine.” Marchini-Capasso highlights, “il cuore di Rosaura, innamoratasi secondo tradizione d’un uomo diverso da quello che le ha destinato il padre, non avrà il sopravvento sulla ragione, e nemmeno però vorrà cedere al compromissorio <<aggiustamento>> della ragionevolezza.” Rosaura consents to do as her father wishes. He is following the accepting social standards of the time by choosing a husband for his daughter, and she as well accepts her destiny.

In La Buona Madre, Giacomina, in stark contrast to her brother Nicoletto, fulfills her role as a ‘good’ daughter even accepting her mother’s desires as her own. She works as a seamstress and learns the value of hard work and saving from her mother. Instead of being reckless with her money, she heeds the advice of her mother who recommends, “No, no, fia mia, xe meggio far come che digo mi. Se suna i bezzi, se va in Marzaria, se varda, se cerne, se dise el fatto sòo, se tira più che se pol, se ghe dà i so bezzi, se paga, e bondi sioria.” She respects the lessons given by her mother and chooses to save her money rather than buying on credit. Her productive views on managing money will help her to achieve a better and more positive economic role in society. In addition, Giacomina, as Rosaura in La Figlia Obbediente,

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323 Marchini-Capasso, p 115.
324 Ibid. Italics from original quote by author.
325 La Buona Madre, I, 1.
is the epitome of the ‘good’ daughter and will fulfill her obligation by marrying whomever her mother chooses. When speaking of possible husbands, her mother’s friend Agnese asks her whether or not she thinks Sior Rocco is handsome. In the embodiment of a obedient daughter, she responds, “Co siora madre me lo dasse per Mario, no varderia che el fusse né belo né brutto.” 326

326 Ibid.
Couples and Lovers

Goldoni believed marriage to be a worthwhile endeavor and most of his characters usually share a longing to find their partner in love and marry. As Günsberg notes, “There is an almost universal desire in the plays, both across the genders and the classes, to get married. This is no doubt informed by Goldoni’s view of marriage as the ideal state...The moment of betrothal is key in the formation of new family units and the forging of alliances between families.”327 Society valued marriage often not as a linking of lovers but as a contract entered into between families. Goldoni seems to appreciate the aspect of love included as well into the historically legal marriage contract as can be seen in many of his plays. The presence of love within the marriage contract is a reoccurring phenomenon in Goldoni’s plays across the class dynamic. In fact, Fido highlights that for Goldoni, love is a positive and productive attribute when it applies to the realm of marriage, although traditionally, love was not a prerequisite for a betrothed couple. “Nel mondo borghese e <<moralizzato>> del nostro commediografo non si può concepire l’amore se non in una prospettiva rigorosamente matrimoniale. D’altra parte, per un apparante paradosso, il matrimonio non richiede affatto come condizione o presupposto l’innamoramento dei personaggi.”328

In terms of amorous relations, Goldoni definitely sets forth positive and negative models that serve as teaching tools for his audience. Often time in his comedies, the audience will note behaviors such as jealousy and anger that stem from losing one’s mind to passion. Being obedient, virtuous and honest in terms of

327 Günsberg, pp 71-72.
one’s obligation to family and status in society were crucial above all else and choices dictated by amorous inclinations solely were not highly regarded by the society of the time. Whenever possible, these situations brought forth by passion’s guidance were cast into the spotlight and deemed negative and wasteful and all indications by Goldoni (and the characters who served as his spokespeople) were to lead the ‘lovers’ into the light and utilize reason in their future decisions. Those behaviors that were reasonable and just in terms of societal expectations of the time were praised and cast as archetypes for the populace to witness.

Positive attributes deemed indispensible in the sphere of love, whether married or unmarried, derive from Goldoni’s core values for a civilized society: honesty, honor, decorum, virtue and reason. Those characters who held themselves to high standards regarding these values were celebrated in Goldoni’s plays. Their behavior was a testament not only to their character but also to their family. Goldoni stressed the need to behave with modesty and correctness to represent properly not only one’s self but also the family as a whole. Goldoni’s comedies provide examples regarding constructive behaviors for husbands and wives. It is evident that the bulk of the responsibility for the family’s success rests on the wives and mothers, who are the backbone of the family, provide love and support to their partners and above all keep their husbands in check.

_Virtue in Love_

One comedy in which the title character is lauded for her positive behavior in the sphere of love and later rewarded for her virtuous and prudent ways is Pamela
in *La Pamela*. Goldoni explains to the audience in the preface, that one’s virtue is a trait preferable to wealth or titles. Exhibiting virtue is important in all of life’s dealings, but it is truly Pamela’s decorum in handling her affections that Goldoni emphasizes in this play. From the first act, the audience is offered access to the main character, Pamela, a discrete and honorable servant whose mistress has recently passed away. All esteem her highly and throughout the play, Goldoni highlights constant examples of her commendable comportment. The manner in which she is described casts her into a class far outreaching her actual servant status. Pamela’s goodness and virtue merit her attaining positive things in life, including love. Jevre, another servant and mother figure for Pamela, tells her that she merits being loved because she is a “giovane savia, virtuosa e prudente.”

Since Pamela’s mistress has died, it is unsuitable for her to remain in the home while the master of the home, Cavalier Bonfil, remains unmarried. Although his honest and virtuous traits are equally praised, he, in Pamela’s words, “è uomo.” Simply stated, she cannot allow any possibility of impropriety or damage to her reputation to occur.

From the onset of the comedy, there is an allusion to the link between Bonfil, the mistress’s son and Pamela, but due to their different ranks socially, their union could and would never be a possibility. As Maurice Vaussard asserts, the social separation of classes was prevalent especially in Venice in the 18th century. “At Venice, where the marriage of a nobleman with a plebeian would never have been authorized, the people had a deep affection for the aristocracy and gave them

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329 *La Pamela*, I, 1.
330 Ibid.
faithful and constant service.” As mentioned previously, everyone knew his or her place in society and what was proper decorum within one’s social class. Although Pamela has feelings for Bonfil, neither of them will benefit from being together. She will be accused of the sin of ambition by aspiring a man higher than her standing and he will do injustice to his nobility by lowering himself to her. In her soliloquy the audience notes her logical and reasonable estimation of the situation, which overcomes decisions deriving from passion. Bonfil and Pamela discuss their situation and through a thoughtful and reasonable conversation, it is decided that nothing can come from their feelings.

Throughout the comedy, Pamela’s virtue and steadfastness is never unwavering and always employs reason in her decisions, while Bonfil becomes overwhelmed by passion and could be led astray. The main obstacle disallowing their union is social convention, which is criticized by Goldoni throughout exchanges between Bonfil and Artur and other characters in the play. It is revealed that a noble man can marry for affection someone below him, but it is not prudent to do so. Bonfil and Artur discuss the idea of prudence in regards to marrying for affection further,

Bonfil: Non sarebbe prudenza il farlo? Ditemi: in che cosiste la prudenza dell’uomo?
Artur: Nel vivere onestamente; nell’osservare le leggi; nel mantenere il proprio decoro. (I, 8)

They continue to reason through why and how a marriage between Bonfil and Pamela can be justified and decide that it cannot be against the laws of nature

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331 Vaussard, p 29.
because they are both honest, but it is against common opinion. Artur accuses Bonfil of being lost to passion for even entertaining the idea of marriage to Pamela and this idea surrounds Bonfil (passion over reason) for the entirety of the play. He argues, however, that he is being reasonable in his feelings for Pamela. He claims that her “pregio” is “in estraordinaria virtù, in una illibata onestà, in un’ammirabile delicatezza d’onore.” Artur does not want Bonfil’s decision, which will impact his life and that of his family, to be rooted in desire and reminds him of his obligation to society. He says, “esser dovere dell’uomo onesto preferire il decoro all’amore, sottomettere il senso all’impero della ragione.” That is to say, an honest man must prefer decorum to love and suppress feelings to reason.

Later in the play, Pamela is disrespected and insulted by another Cavaliere, Ernold. This action affects Bonfil greatly and he becomes jealous and angry, two emotions that Goldoni has cautioned are born from passion and are repeatedly denounced as imprudent. Artur proves to be a good friend, and forewarns Bonfil that his love for Pamela is being confused with his honor and the honor of his house. Bonfil is so overcome with the negative feelings stemming from passion that he has lost control of his reason and feels “fuor di me steso.” Pamela’s virtue is credited with the positive resolution to the comedy, with a bit of help from the author. Due to the revelation of Pamela’s noble birth, their union is no longer restricted and the two honest and virtuous lovers are rewarded. Bonfil and Pamela’s collective virtue is lauded and demonstrated to be the true victor in the completion of the story.

332 Ibid, II, 2.
333 Ibid.
334 Ibid, III, 2
Artur: Ecco premiata la vostra virtù.
Bonfil: La virtù di Pamela, che ha saputo resistere alle mie tentazioni.
Artur: La virtù vostra, che ha saputo superare le vostre interne passioni.

(VIII, 10)

Virtue, highly prized by Goldoni, is responsible for bringing the characters to a positive place and helping them utilize reason in love. This trait is a powerful one and will always be a productive addition to society as a whole. Employing virtue and reason will limit all of the other negative behaviors plaguing society which are leading to its degeneration. In closing the play, Pamela directs a comment to the audience and attests to the glory and triumph achieved by being virtuous, “Apprenda il mondo che la Virtù non perisce; che’ella combatte e si affanna, ma finalmente abbatte, e vince, e gloriosamente trionfa.”

Passion and irrationality in love

An overarching leitmotif throughout the Enlightenment is employing reason and logic, while avoiding succumbing to one’s passions. When an individual is overtaken by any passion, be it for love, money or gambling, he or she acts in a manner devoid of reason. The resulting behaviors from affective motivations are not only unproductive for the people involved, but also detrimental to society as a whole. The time, energy and resources dedicated to passion, jealousy and anger could be better applied elsewhere to achieve more efficient results. One comedy that exemplifies the negativity and inefficiency is born from passion and love’s

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335 La Pamela, III, 17.
irrationality is Gli Innamorati. The young lovers Eugenia and Fulgenzio are criticized throughout the comedy for their behaviors, which are exacerbated by their deep feelings for one another. Throughout the play, one can plainly see the voice of Goldoni in Flamminia (Eugenia’s sister) proving to be the voice of reason as well. Regarding the manifestation of their negative qualities in love, Flamminia states at the beginning of Act II, “Sono innamoratissimi, ma sono tutti e due puntigliosi. Mia sorella è sofistica. Fulgenzio è caldo, intollerente, subitaneo. Insomma si potrebbe fare sopra di loro la più bella commedia di questo mondo.”

This quote highlights both the reality of this type of love, and also the excess, which Goldoni seeks to provide in his representation. In the preface, Goldoni explains that comedy and comic action can spring from honest love and that this play, entitled Gli Innamorati represents a more profound and violent love. The overpowering emotion leads to excessive behaviors that lend themselves perfectly to comedy. Goldoni states that with the serenity found in love’s embrace are also storms that are born during the calm. He denounces the wasteful behavior deriving from passionate love and warns to its weakening and detracting from the world. Jealousy and jealous suspicions are a “debolezza che inquieta il mondo, e arriva a far impazzire chi a tempo non sa guardarsene o moderarla.” Goldoni considers jealousy to be a sickness that must be healed in order to maintain a healthy society.

As Mario Baratto states, “la gelosia, questa viene a sua volta identificata con una

337 Gli Innamorati, II, 1.
338 Ibid, p 518.
339 Ibid.
pazza di cui bisogna saper guarire: una degenerazione patologica dell’amore…”

In a direct commentary with the audience, Goldoni addresses the young listeners and readers and instructs them to look at these lovers and laugh at their actions, but warns not to behave as they do, or risk being laughed at. “Specchiatevi, o giovani, in questi Innamorati ch’io vi presento, ridete di loro, e non fate che si abbia a rider di voi.”

The opening of the play shows two sisters, Eugenia and Flamminia who are discussing Eugenia’s love interest, Fulgenzio. Eugenia and Flamminia prove to be on opposite sides of the spectrum when it comes to appropriate behavior in 'love.' Flamminia’s experience flows from a place of reason, while Eugenia’s actions and comments stem from her overwhelming feelings of love and passion for Fulgenzio. Baratto suggests that her irrational behaviors may also be a result of the economic inequality that Eugenia senses between herself and Fulgenzio. Eugenia is the ward of her uncle Fabrizio, who has little real wealth and maintains an artificial façade of luxury. Her behaviors could be, according to Baratto, a desire to equate herself or surpass Fulgenzio, a man of higher economic standing to whom she is betrothed. “Eugenia cerca perciò di riagire al proprio stato effettivo di merce cercando di sostituire alla realtà economica una diversa realtà di ordine affettivo: ponendosi anzi come un valore assoluto, che le assicuri non solo un’equivalenza ma

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340 Baratto, p 142.
341 Gli Innamorati, p 518.
342 Baratto, p 148.
fin una superiorità rispetto all’agiatezza di Fulgenzio.” Her feelings based in this insecurity and jealousy are the vehicle for advancing the comedy.

She engages in many wasteful actions that could cause much unnecessary harm and hardship if she cannot learn to overcome them. In the beginning of the comedy, the Flamminia discusses how badly Eugenia treats Fulgenzio. While Eugenia is caught up in the passion and games, Flamminia is a logical observer from the outside and, in criticizing Eugenia’s behavior, she warns, “Io tengo dalla ragione. (Guai se non facesi così; è una vipera).” Eugenia practices games, contradictions and manipulations in her feelings for Fulgenzio. These games and artifice are a waste of time and detract from the beautiful and positive institution of love. Flamminia responds that she has never employed, nor could even know how to utilize, these meaningless tactics due to her rational mind. She states, “Io non l’ho mai usata questa politica, e non la saprei usare.”

Eugenia is overcome by jealousy when Fulgenzio must attend to his sister-in-law while his brother is away on business. This is a common and respectable practice of the time, but Eugenia finds it deplorable for it detracts from the attention directed toward her. Fulgenzio forgives and tries to understand her feelings, he says, “la povera Eugenia è gelosa, e l’eccesso della sua gelosia è partorito da un eccesso d’amore.” Again as in many of Goldoni’s explanations it is noted that negative behaviors are a result of excess and, out of excess, comedy is born.

Eugenia’s manic jealousy reverberates not only within her relationship but casts

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343 Ibid.
344 Gli Innamorati, I, 1.
345 Ibid.
shadows on others as well. Her uncle’s servant Lisetta provides further insight into her actions when she observes both the rationale and results of her jealousy. As with Flamminia, a keen observer can see the voice of the author through Lisetta, who outwardly criticizes the doubt, fear, jealousy and rage that are all wasteful consequences of Eugenia’s passions.

Succinctly and logically, Lisetta presents the motivations behind Eugenia’s irrational behaviors. Thus, Goldoni is telling his audience that excessive passion brought to this point is not productive. This excess of ‘love’ and succumbing to erratic passion result from internal weakness and causes the couple and those around them much angst and avoidable drama. This does not bring them to peace and love, but rather to the opposite point of discord, which not only threatens the relationship but also may then manifest into society as whole.

The key overarching intellectual theory absent from Fugenzio and Eugenia’s thought processes and subsequent activities is pivotal to Goldoni’s thematic register
and to the time period: the use of reason. Fulgenzio at least realizes that he lacks reason and reveals to Eugenia,

L’amor che ho per voi, è arrivato all’eccesso, è arrivato a farmi perdere la ragione, son diventato brutale, nemico degli uomini e di me stesso. Ma tutto questo sarebbe poco, se non mi facesse essere indiscreto, incivile e quel ch’è peggio, ingrato al mio sangue e sprezzatore del decoro della famiglia. (III, 5)

His plummet into irrationality has further effects spreading from his personal reputation and decorum to that of his relatives and family. Eugenia ridicules Fulgenzio for his declarations; he calls her out on her possible lack of reason as well. He retorts, “la vostra ilarità in un caso simile dipende, o da poco amore, o compatitemi, da poca ragione.”347 Flamminia scolds Eugenia and implores her to reflect on her errors, “L’ingratitudine è odiosa agli uomini e ai numi. Voi trattate male con chi vi ama; cercate di affliggere le persone innocenti; odiate chi vi consiglia al bene; tradite voi stessa, calpestate i doni del cielo: e non arrossite di voi medesima?” 348 To reiterate Eugenia’s state of irrationality, Fulgenzio accuses her of being a “nemica della ragione.”349

The audience is reminded at the closing of the comedy to notice how much it represents real life and to appreciate through applause, everyone’s common condition in life. “Oh quanti si saranno specchiati in noi! Deh quelli almeno, che si trovassero nel caso nostro, alzin le mani, ed applaudiscano alle nostre consolazioni.”350 Goldoni knows that it is part of the Italian character to harbor a bit of jealousy, especially between lovers and, through the relationship of Eugenia and

347 Ibid.
348 Ibid.
349 Ibid, III, 6.
Fulgenzio, he is representing an actual part of society. There needs to be a balance between the intense passion and reason that will provide the ‘cure’ for jealousy. As Baratto notes, “Se l’uomo è razionale, come il Goldoni è indotto ottimisticamente a pensare, è chiaro che la gelosia è infermità, pazzia di cui si può guarire; che è possibile cioè trovare un equilibrio tra <<ragione>> e <<passione>>, per usare termini ricorrenti nella commedia.”\textsuperscript{351} Goldoni does believe that people can act rationally and that those in his audience receiving his message and guidance are able to correct their defects relating to jealousy.

\textit{Il cavalier servente}

In a return to a more conservative attitude toward morality, another behavior strictly denounced by Goldoni is the phenomenon of the \textit{cavaliere servente} found in Venetian society. This criticism is solely for the purpose of social reform and displays his attitude in regard to the much discussed and misunderstood practice.\textsuperscript{352} Kennard explains the Venetian style of the \textit{cavaliere servente} as, “a duplicate of a husband in almost all social and familiar transactions, a hybrid between the lover, the friend, the chaperon and the lackey.”\textsuperscript{353} At the time this custom propagated from the chivalric behavior to accompany a woman in public and ensure that she would not be alone and arouse inappropriate suspicions. When her husband became too important and engaged to attend to his wife’s needs, this position of attendant was entrusted to another man. To Goldoni, in its purest

\textsuperscript{351} p 142.
\textsuperscript{352} Kennard, p 272.
\textsuperscript{353} p 273.
conception it was acceptable but often it allowed within the construct of marriage, an opportunity for dishonesty and corruption to occur. There is “the inherent threat to the chastity and reputations of both wife and husband in this custom.”\textsuperscript{354} It is never explicitly stated that anything adulterous or sexual in nature is occurring in Goldoni’s plays, but there is a subtle allusion to the impropriety of the institution itself. His semantics and word choices shed light on what is truly occurring in society without spelling it out clearly or displaying it on the stage. As Günsberg illustrates in \textit{La Casa Nova} (1761), Lucietta, a maid, refers to Cecilia’s ‘cavalier serpente’ rather than servente. “Her perversion of servente into serpent is a supremely comic Goldonian moment which cleverly foregrounds the dangerous sexuality inherent in \textit{serventismo}. It does so by alluding to the stealthy serpent in Eden, which, in the absence of Adam, seduced Eve (albeit with the temptations of knowledge rather than carnality).”\textsuperscript{355}

The act of \textit{cicisbeismo} is showcased in a few of Goldoni’s plays such as \textit{Il Cavaliere e La Dama}, \textit{La Famiglia dell’Antiquario}, \textit{La Dama Prudente} (1751) e \textit{L’Adulatore}, while alluded to in various others. In \textit{Il Cavaliere e La Dama}, an inside look is given into the perplexing and often times unimaginable (by modern standards) world of the \textit{cavalier servente}. Goldoni puts into scene two opposite paradigms of society, the noble woman who refuses to ruin her reputation and virtue, Eleonora, and a group of noble men and women who openly engage in serving and being served by various people in a merry-go-round of ever-changing partners. Eleonora, whom Goldoni praises in the dedication as a “dama ricca di

\textsuperscript{354} p 153.

\textsuperscript{355} Ibid.
merito e di onestà,” finds herself in a dire situation, having her husband exiled for killing someone in a duel and her wealth confiscated by the government. Although experiencing extreme poverty, she is very proud and will not accept help from anyone. Upon a suggestion from her servant, Colombina, to take help offered by a Cavaliere, Don Rodrigo, she wisely replies, “Una donna che chiede è poi soggetta a concedere; e l'uomo che dona, non ha intenzione di gittare il suo senza speranza di ricompensa.” She would never want to be put in a compromising position with anyone, especially not a man that is not her husband. She and Don Rodrigo share a friendship and an occasional conversation, but do not engage in the negative aspects of the practice of cicisbeismo. As Kennard explains, Goldoni does not seem to be so against the practice in its purest and noblest forms, such as between Donna Eleonora and Don Rodrigo, whose dialogues reflect a pure and wholesome friendship. These relationships can be productive and useful to both parties; however, the converse is true when the institution becomes perverted from its honorable form.

He (Goldoni) seems to discover a test of character in the interpretation and practice of servantism. Thus, for him, a woman of noble feelings would develop the highest features of her character in her intercourse with the man who serves her. The delicacy of her conscience in accepting that which it is honourable for her to accept, in effusing that which it would be dishonourable to both even to mention, has its counterpart in the duty, which she recognizes, of giving gratitude, constancy, and every proper show of attention, politeness, kindness for the service she receives. On the other hand, a vulgar minded woman, even if belonging to the highest rank, will reveal all the lowness of her real character in her exacting, peremptory ways toward her cavalier servente, or, if she had impure inclinations, hidden by

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356 Il Cavaliere e La Dama, I, 1.
fear for her reputation in her social intercourse, she is sure to betray her natural depravity in her treatment of her cavaliers.\textsuperscript{357}

Women such as Donna Eleonora fall into the first group of ladies who engage in friendships and conversations and glean only positive repercussions from the situation. Don Rodrigo, clearly the voice of Goldoni, states that “[non] impedirei all’onesta moglie che si lasciasse opportunamente servire. Servitù semplice non è riprensibile.”\textsuperscript{358} That is, in its purest form, an honest Cavaliere serving a woman demonstrates no disgracefulness, but when it departs from this point and becomes clouded is when sinfulness enters. The other women, Donna Claudia and Donna Virginia represent those in the second group who reveal a sickening and vile side of themselves and the institution by flaunting their servants and deriding them. Goldoni openly criticizes this latter group, including Donna Claudia, Donna Virginia, Don Flamminio and Don Alonso. This can plainly be noted by the manner in which he presents their unnecessary and trite behaviors and discourse. Donna Claudia is married to Don Flamminio, but is served by Don Alonso. At the same time Don Flamminio serves her friend Donna Virginia, who is also served by a countless (even to her) number of other cicisbei. Don Flammino asks to Alonso rhetorically, “Io servo donna Virginia, voi favorite mia moglie, e per questo che male c’è?”\textsuperscript{359} The ‘male’ according to Goldoni is that the entire group is engaging and entering into roles that have completely been reversed and restructured to the point of unrecognizability. The roles of husband and cavalier servente become extremely

\textsuperscript{357} Kennard, p 276.
\textsuperscript{358} \textit{Il Cavaliere e La Dama}, II, 7.
\textsuperscript{359} Ibid, I, 10.
tangled and the noble convention is lost to the characters’ misuse of its purpose. At one point, in a dialogue between Claudia and Alonso, this crossing of roles can be noted when Claudia asks Alonso to ensure she is respectful and obedient, which should be the duty of her husband.

Claudia: Anzi ci dovete entrare e tocca a voi a farmi portar rispetto e farmi obbedire.
Alonso: Questo appartiene a vostro marito.
Claudia: Mio marito non abbada a queste cose. Egli si prenderà tal pena in qualche altro luogo, e a voi tocca a tener in dovere la mia servitù. (1, 8)

Not only is Alonso being asked to perform duties traditionally held by her husband, Claudia mentions that Flamminio is himself engaging in this role for someone else in another place. The true serving is being replaced with playing the role of stand-in husbands and exhibiting behaviors not originally associated with the true cavalier servente. Goldoni is extremely opposed to the nature of these relationships; they are immoral and indecent and cause much disruption to the actual marriage.

Donna Virginia has even further debauched the ideal of the cavalier servente by utilizing the role as a means to parade a numerous number of cicisbei in her company. In speaking of Virginia, Cavallini states, “nella sua frivolezza si coglie anche l’altra faccia di cicisbeismo, cioè il capriccio femminile che denuncia la futalità più ancora che l’amoralità.” 360 She views this construct in a trivial manner, which results from her capricious and superficial tendencies. She mentions to Donna Claudia that although her husband Don Flamminio visited her in the morning, it was il Marchese Ascanio, a foreigner, who accompanied her in her carriage. When asked

360 p 79.
if he would be there to escort her home she responds, “O egli stesso o vostro marito, o il Signor Barone o l’inglese o che so io! Qualcheduno.” This quote details how debased this institution has become in her hands and Goldoni outlines the ridiculousness of her behavior and casual attitude toward her misdeeds. In the same scene this point is reiterated and emphasized by a dialogue between Claudia and Virginia regarding her exorbitant number of serventi.

Claudia: Non vi mancheranno i serventi.
Virginia: Ne ho tanti, che non mi ricordo di tutti.
Claudia: E il più caro qual è?
Virginia: Tutti eguali. Non mi importa un fico di nessuno. (I, 9)

In contrast to Donna Eleonora who truly values Don Rodrigo as a friend and has affection for him as a person, Virginia does not feel any attachment to any of these men, which is a far departure from the origins of this practice. She exhibits a vulgarity in her treatment of these men, does not show them a bit of kindness and does not appreciate any of the actions that they provide to her. Virginia does not conduct herself with any virtue or honor as a lady of nobility.

As usual, out of negative behaviors comes further wastefulness and out of excess comes emotions such as jealousy and anger. These are part of society’s burdens and Goldoni aims to reverse the inefficient passions and practices into those that are positive and productive. To have the characters see the light and truly realize their folly, Goldoni has them sink even deeper into the depths of their negative condition. In the final scene, Claudia reveals the insight in her transformation by witnessing the pure and virtuous characters of Eleonora and

361 Il Cavaliere e la Dama, I, 9.
Rodrigo and can attest to their existence. Virginia is also converted and conveys to the audience that “Donna Eleonora potrà servire d’esempio all’onesto modo di conversare.” That is, all women being served by a Cavaliere should look to Donna Eleonora as their example, for she has proved to be honest and virtuous in having been served in this manner. The modeled virtue of Eleonora allows for the scandalous characters to reform and to adjust their behaviors in order to become more productive members of society.

The presence of the cicisbeo is also criticized for threatening the purity and morality of the family unit. Roberto Bizzocchi notes that the image of the cicisbeo that “is vitally portrayed in Goldoni’s moral program in which he advocated prudence, economy, judgment, and, more specifically, a reasoned view of matrimony and conversation between the sexes.” Goldoni’s bourgeois sense of morality promoted and preserved the idea of the family unit, which at times was disrupted by the presence of the cicisbeo or cicisbei as the case may be. In La Famiglia dell’Antiquario, amidst the tensions of a noble family grappling with the introduction of a middle-class daughter-in-law, the cavalieri serventi add to the already explosive family dynamic. The head of the household, Anselmo, trapped in his self-contained world of ‘antiques’ shows no feelings or jealousy of any kind related to the cisisbei that his wife employs. The Doctor and Cavaliere del Bosco play the roles of the obsequious, ever ready to please servants who at the beginning of the play both

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362 Ibid, III, 16.
attend to the countess, but toward the middle split their allegiances between the countess and her new daughter-in-law, Doralice.

Isabella, the countess, regards the men with disdain and in the manner befitting Virginia, in *Il Cavaliere e La Dama*, expresses capriciousness in her dealings with the Cavaliere del Bosco. When he does not tell her what she wants to hear, she tells him, “Andate, andate, che sia un mal Cavaliere; e se non volete voi abbracciare l’impegno, ritroverò chi avrà più spirito, che avrà più convenienza di voi.” Thus, as in Donna Virginia’s case, the *cicisbeo* is completely replaceable and the relationship they share lacks any pure feeling or affection. The Doctor plays into her affections by submitting to her every desire and mood swings and appears to be emasculated in his role. When he offends her, he immediately begs, “Oh, signora, mi perdoni! La non può dire così. Dal primo giorno che ella mi ha onorato della sua buona grazia, non può dire che io abbia mancato di servirla in tutto quello che ho potuto.” Later in the action, while counseling Doralice, il Cavaliere agrees with her point of view and says, “Dirò tutto quello che dite voi.”

During the play they fill the role of *consiglieri* and counsel their ladies in matters concerning the family, a task that should be handled by the husband figure. Goldoni presents, as in *Il Cavaliere e La Dama*, the role reversal of the *cavalier servente* with that of the husband when dealing with matters concerning the household. Their interventions, intended to be positive, cause more damage due, to the manner in which they constantly acquiesce to the desires of their respective lady

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364 *La Famiglia dell’Antiquario*, I, 14.
365 Ibid, I, 11.
366 Ibid, II, 8.
and do not promote the truth in order to remedy the situation. Finally at the end, the words of Pantalone, Doralice’s father, provide a resolution to the situation, but not before he criticizes the deeds of the cicisbei. His values do not provide him with the ability to approve of such an arrangement and he attributes much of the negative and slanderous activities in the house to their doing and requires that they both be removed from the house. He says that both his daughter and her mother-in-law are “nemighe per causa de una serva pettegola e de do conseggieri adulatori e cattivi; remosse le cause, sarà rimossi i effetti.” Thus, here, Pantalone, representative of the modest and honorable middle class blames the family’s dissent on a servant’s gossip and on the two adulterous and evil counselors, that is to say the cavalieri serventi. Goldoni, through the words of Pantalone, reveals the true nature and possible destructive ability inherent in the cicisbeo on the family unit, an entity so intrinsic and vital to society and its progress.

367 Ibid, III, 11.
Chapter Five: Socio-Economic Exploration of Goldoni’s Venice.

Goldoni painted a thorough portrait of Venetian Society during the time period in which he lived. Through his comedies, the modern reader has an unparalleled view on the customs and comportments of the time. Throughout this examination, I have highlighted and analyzed behaviors as to ascertain their positive contribution or negative effect on society as a whole. With the aid of a socio-economic lens, a new perspective of Goldoni’s comedies and more specifically the behaviors of the individual characters can be further investigated. Theories from disciplines of sociology and economics and the hybrid socio-economics are utilized in this analysis.

According to Amitai Etzioni, an individual’s actual decision-making is a radical departure from the standard (also referred to as neoclassical) decision-making model, which is favored by pure economic theory. He writes,

\[\text{The neoclassical decision-making model draws on one variation or another of the information-processing means-end scheme. Individuals are assumed to have ends (clear and orderly) and to set out to collect, process and interpret information about alternative means to serve those goals, drawing proper inferences as to the most efficient means—the decision.}\]^{368}

Etzioni further explains that the majority of decisions people actually make largely draw on “affective involvements and normative commandments.”^{369} Thus as noted here, economic theory itself is not comprehensive enough to explain or analyze an individual’s decision-making thus it is necessary to take into account possible

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^{368} Etzioni, p 93.

^{369} Ibid.
external factors that influence an individual such as affective motivations, stemming from one’s feelings, or socially deemed norms.

Within the field of socio-economics, “economic imperialism” describes the application of economic theory in a traditionally social context. Gary S. Becker, defines “economic imperialism” as the “application of rational choice theory or economic theory to problems that would traditionally be treated by sociologists, political scientists, historians, or anthropologists.”

Although, initially, the discipline of economics may seem limited in light of the vast array of social problems and situations, it is truly the basis for which all decisions can be linked and as Nankivell states, “The more realistic perception of economics is of an activity inextricably locked into vast forces at work which track out a path that society at large has to follow.” Thus theories rooted in economics and sociology are truly pivotal in analyzing human behavior and the motivation behind decision-making.

The theories of Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, proposed over a century after Goldoni penned his plays, aid in the analysis of the different societal phenomena portrayed in his comedies. According to Max Weber, “Sociology is a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects.” It is a social science, which analyzes interactions between individuals in order to explain behavior patterns. These sociological perspectives will shed new light on the

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characters and relationships, both familial and societal, found throughout the comedies of Carlo Goldoni and explain various societal trends in terms of sociological and economic theory. Although no social theory is without flaw when put into practice, it is interesting to view the social behaviors and interactions of Goldoni’s characters in terms of proposed social theories and provide evidence of his intended reforms in order to achieve a maximized societal ideal.
Social Classes and Class Theory

In every society there is an unwritten social order that determines an individual’s place. This social structure provides the base upon which all other social constructs rest. Louis Althusser, provides a metaphor in order to visualize this concept, “It is easy to see that this representation of the structure of every society as an edifice containing a base (infrastructure) on which are erected the two ‘floors’ of the superstructure.” The infrastructure consists of the people divided into social hierarchies while the superstructure refers to the legal, religious or political systems governing the society. It is also understood that the superstructure is created and propagated by the infrastructure, which then is endowed with the authority to enforce laws and codes upon them. The metaphor proposed by Althusser identifies that there is a concrete certainty, “that the upper floors could not ‘stay up’ (in the air) alone, if they did not rest precisely on their base.” That is to say that the strength and success of any country or political entity rests entirely on the society that ‘supports’ it.

At the time of Goldoni, Venice was experiencing a decline, which was both economic and political. Although the Industrial Revolution was taking shape in Britain and advances in science delivered new technologies, Venice, as a power, was falling behind. Despite the fragile economic state, Venice was experiencing a rebirth for the visual and performing arts as well as an increase in the number of festivals

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374 Ibid.
and celebrations, especially during Carnevale. Venice became a tourist attraction for those who wished to engage in pleasure activities and festivities. Steward declares “such public events were thus a kind of disguise, camouflaging the realities of decay and decline to which so many of Venice’s inhabitants were subjected.” Goldoni was aware of the unfavorable political state of his beloved city as well as the collective moral deterioration. Many literary historians provide evidence on the state of Venice at this time. Andrieux writes, “The whole Venetian Settecento appears like one grand festival, all enjoyment and comfortable lack of moral stress, as Venice in her mortal danger laughed and sang.” The futility and façade that Venice showed to the public, masked its true state of deterioration and near-extinction. The hope of a renewed Venice and a possible return to her onetime splendor rests solely, as Goldoni believed, on a strong and productive society. The political and civic superstructure could only be healthy and powerful, as demonstrated by Althusser’s metaphor, when resting on an equally healthy and powerful base. A return to moral fortitude and productive behaviors could and would create the durable base, to provide hope to the Venetian State.

As mentioned, Venetian society was divided into three main categories, the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and the working class. These categories follow the practice of social stratification and differentiating people based on an inherited rank or economic situation, universal in civilized societies. “Social stratification refers to

a system with rather predictable rules behind the ranking of individuals and groups...’’ whose existence, “implies some form of legitimation of the ranking of people and the unequal distribution of valued goods, services and prestige.”378 Thus inherent in any society, people are divided in a class structure, dependant mostly on economic factors. During Goldoni’s time, this was mostly accurate. However, the highest class, the aristocracy, was not determined by wealth, but by birth.

In most modern societies, the social strata are not fixed, and exit and entry are possible. In eighteenth-century Venetian society, the aristocracy was primarily restricted to certain established families, but select moneyed merchants were permitted access by way of their wealth. The Venetian state had been supporting a group of nobles who had lost most of their financial holdings. As Andrieux highlights, “Old family fortunes had been diminished or entirely swallowed up in the chances and changes of life, to say nothing of the effects of personal extravagance, and there existed a whole definite class of ruined noblemen.”379 In order to offset the payments made out, some merchants and select families were permitted to purchase titles in order to raise money for the Venetian state. In fact, in 1770, forty families were allowed to ‘buy’ access to the aristocracy.380 Although now titled, these new members of the nobility were never truly accepted by the old aristocracy.381

379 Andrieux, p 66.
380 Ibid, p 64.
381 Ibid.
Goldoni highlights the difference between the two types of people within the nobility in *La Locandiera*, through the characters of the Marchese di Forlipopoli and the Conte d'Albañorita. The former is a member of the decaying aristocracy while the latter has purchased his title as a result of his economic wealth. Their interaction, demonstrated in the exchange below, exhibits the feelings shared for one another:

**Marchese:** Fra voi e me vi è qualche differenza.
**Conte:** Sulla locanda tanto vale il vostro denaro, quanto vale il mio.
**Marchese:** Ma se la locandiera usa a me delle distinzioni, mi si convengono più che a voi.
**Conte:** Per qual ragione?
**Marchese:** Io sono il Marchese di Forlipopoli.
**Conte:** Ed io sono il Conte d’Albañorita.
**Marchese:** Si, Conte! Contea comprata.
**Conte:** Io ho comprato la contea, quando voi avete venduto il marchesato.
**Marchese:** Oh basta: son chi sono, e mi si deve portar rispetto. (I, 1)

The Marchese harbors feelings of superiority over the Conte who is part of the ‘new’ aristocracy and even points out the fact that the Conte has purchased his title. One can note the contrasting beliefs and perspectives of these two characters, one who wishes to provide ‘protection’ with his title and power, and the other whose power speaks through his wealth. Goldoni uses the perspective of each of these characters to reflect the problems with the other; in fact the two nobles rely on the other for validation throughout the comedy. “Il Marchese e il Conte, del resto, sono necessari l’uno all’altro, non solo nella rivalità verso Mirandolina, ma in quel continuo opporsi in cui finiscono coll’esaurire la loro esistenza: tale meccanico puntiglio li rinvia, battuta per battuta, al loro stato sociale e alla loro pochezza morale.”

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382 Baratto, pg 132.
Marchese and the Conte are cognizant of the defects in the other, but are unable to see the faults within themselves. They are examples to the audience of both faces of the nobility, neither of which are positive examples of the aristocracy.

Karl Marx proposed that social classes exist and continue in existence due to social forces keeping them in place. “In any relatively stable society, there exists an equilibrium between the mode of production, the social relations which are integral to that mode of production, and the ‘superstructure,’ which, through the medium of class domination, is tied in with it.”\(^{383}\) The mode of production can be defined as the forces that come together to produce in an economic system or society, for example, human labor, equipment and physical capital. Thus the governing body of a society creates its own rules regarding production, which then dominate and regulate the society itself. “Those in control set the rules against which behavior and performance are judged; they are also given a great deal of room to manipulate social institutions, and influence many aspects of social policy.”\(^{384}\) The social machine operates and is regulated from within; appropriate behavior from others is an expectation. Goldoni’s characters all have the knowledge of their role in society and accept their fates, content with their place in society. For example, Anselmo, in *Il Cavaliere e La Dama* and Ridolfo in *La Bottega del Caffè* are proud to be honest merchants and businessmen and appreciate their social status. They are aware of the limitations their class provides them, but do not aim to change their station. The eponymous characters in *I Rusteghi* exhibit extreme pride and satisfaction with

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\(^{384}\) Nankivell, p 74.
what they have accomplished and created for themselves. Goldoni’s characters follow norms set by society and understand the impossibility of marrying someone outside of their own class. This phenomenon known as endogamy, or marriage within one’s social category,\textsuperscript{385} is the accepted custom for Goldoni’s time. Pamela, for example, knows that she is a servant and can never marry the aristocratic Bonfil (until her true lineage is revealed). Doralice’s marriage into the aristocracy results in a fractured family situation with unresolved issues at the conclusion of the play. The few characters that do not follow the paradigm of contentment with one’s social class, such as Leonardo and Vittoria in the Villeggiatura trilogy, usually reform their ways by the end of the play and conform to the class ideal.

Marxist literary theory suggests looking to the social class of the author in order to fully understand the message set forth through the works. From a class perspective, Goldoni himself belongs to the borghesia. He is the son of a doctor and himself a lawyer by trade. A major part of his comedies focus on the problems facing the middle class and that which threatens the morality and ruin of his peers. Goldoni’s place as a member of the borghesia reinforces his mindset and views on the positive aspects of a mercantile and capitalistic society. His merchants and entrepreneurs are hard working, generous and open to helping others. As he portrays his fellow bourgeois individuals, Goldoni also handles characters of the aristocracy and those in the working class with fond and kind representations.

Across the social spectrum, it seems that what is stressed for one is stressed for all; there is a supreme law of good vs. bad that governs all members of society. With the

\textsuperscript{385} Macionis, p 464.
exception of a few ambitious social climbers, Goldoni’s characters do not seem to wish to have a different station in life. His characters have a genuine happiness in their current states and are proud of their accomplishments. Especially those in the working class demonstrate a natural love of life without desire or ambition to social climb. In fact, according to Andrieux, the working classes of the Settecento were content with their lives and did not envy those above them or want to ascend from their class. \[386\] *I Pettegolezzi delle Donne* and *Le Baruffe Chiozzotte* are two plays that showcase typical working class individuals who live a seemingly pleasurable existence and are portrayed with an esteemed and kind representation.

All members of society, with the exception of the irrational outliers, live by a moral code and interact in a manner according to the dictates of society. Giddens writes that according to Marx, “The productive activity of individuals, in inter-relationship with one another and with nature involves a continual and reciprocal interaction between social behavior and consciousness: the ideas which are thus generated are conditioned in their diffusion or acceptance by the structure of class domination.” \[387\] Thus the classes are maintained by society itself and each class remains guardian and promoter of its own acceptable behaviors and interactions. In theory, Marx suggests that eventually the social order will be challenged through revolt, in Goldoni, we do not see much dissidence amongst the social classes (maybe only the fishermen in *Le Baruffe Chiozzotte* who criticize the vendors for reaping all the benefits from their labor while they remain poor) and only a positive view of capitalism and its powers to generate more possibilities for the future of society.

\[386\] p 89.
\[387\] Ibid, p 42.
**Social Dynamics and the Collective Well Being**

There is imbedded in the culture depicted by Goldoni, an established code of acceptable customs and norms. In fact, Goldoni’s comedies effectively display the central set of beliefs held by Venetian society, which in one way or another govern the characters’ decisions and behaviors. As social theory explains, individuals tend to behave in a manner that follows the customs or norms of the society with which they identify. Emile Durkheim writes, “The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society forms a determinate system with a life of its own. It can be termed the collective or common consciousness.”

Thus, the set of beliefs esteemed by a society creates an unwritten code or collective consciousness, which, in turn, governs that society. The collective consciousness of Venetian society as described by Goldoni, centralizes around a solid morality and the use of ‘good sense’ and judgment; that is to say, rationality. It is apparent throughout the characterizations and leitmotifs of the comedies, that Goldoni stresses central beliefs stemming from employing reason, demonstrating good sense, working industriously, etc., and that these behaviors have positive repercussions toward society. These beliefs and norms guide all of society regardless of class distinction. Smelser highlights that in society, people are thought to behave with rational self-interest. However in reality, people often make decisions not solely based on rationality, but by a value system set forth by society,

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388 pp 38-9.
that is to say, a standard of behavior expected by society.\textsuperscript{389} This is where the disciplines of economics and sociology overlap. Economists believe that an individual’s behavior is based on rationality, where sociologists take into account the fact that people tend to be influenced by others in society when making a decision.\textsuperscript{390} Following both of these constructs, it is apparent that Goldoni intends for his characters to act in a rational manner that also reflects the expectations set forth by society. These characters are a product of the author’s conscious ties to the established social norms and the desire to represent a rational model of accepted behaviors for the reader and audience.

The model behaviors that are valued by Goldoni, as demonstrated, add to the productivity of society and contribute to the greater good. Durkheim likens society to an organism whose value in the aggregate is greater than the sum of all of the individuals comprising it.\textsuperscript{391} In Goldoni’s presentation of Venice, all classes depend on each other for the smooth functioning of society. Their embracing of diverse tasks and positions in society exhibit an organic solidarity, which “stems not simply from acceptance of a common set of beliefs and sentiments, but from functional interdependence in the division of labour.”\textsuperscript{392} As each part of an organism works together to promote the life and health of the creature, here individual members of a society are responsible for doing their part, to ensure the smooth functioning and maximizing the possible output. The concept of “division of labor” was first

\textsuperscript{390} Swedberg, p 42.
\textsuperscript{391} Giddens, p 66.
\textsuperscript{392} Ibid, p 77.
revealed in the work of Adam Smith, whose book, *The Wealth of Nations*, paved the way for the modern discipline of Economics. Smith explains that an operation is more productive when each man is responsible for a particular task in the creation of a final product, rather than creating the entire product himself. In dividing the production into smaller tasks, an individual becomes more efficient with his task that in turn increases the efficiency of the entire production.

To apply the concept of division of labor to society, every person in society does his part in order to contribute to the productivity and success of society as a whole. Many of Goldoni’s characters express the knowledge of their obligations whether to their family, their employer or to their craft. These obligations as dictated by societal conventions are followed to ensure the smooth functioning of the societal organism. It is notable in Goldoni’s comedies, when there is a situation in which a character is not contributing, either their behavior must be reformed or they are removed from the social group in order to preserve the efficient social organization. For example, Pantalone learns what negative repercussions ensue when he arranges the marriage of his bourgeois daughter into an aristocratic family in *La Famiglia dell'Antiquario*. He realizes all too late that his ambition and desire to ascend socially has caused his daughter to be sentenced to a life of misery and the only remedy to the resulting dysfunctional family is to divide the feuding parties into separate living spaces. Thus, when an individual’s behavior does not conform to the norms, they must be removed from society or reform their behavior. This notion is also reinforced with Don Marzio’s exile in *La Bottega del Caffè*. His actions

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in spreading gossip and untruths were not accepted forms of behavior and at the end of the comedy he was forcibly removed from the social microcosm. Any action that works against the norms of society is considered ‘unlawful’ as it offends the systems that society has created. As Durkheim states, “We should not say that an act offends the common consciousness because it is criminal, but that it is criminal because it offends the consciousness.”\textsuperscript{394} The collective society is the definitive judge for acceptable behavior and itself rejects behaviors that threaten its well being and progress.

Social theory can explain why Goldoni intended his characters to behave in the manner that they do and why, as I assert, that productivity or positive behavior was so valued by the author. The questions that many social theorists sought to answer were concerned with the relationship of individuals to each other and how individuals’ behavior was influenced by society and would ultimately affect society as a whole. Goldoni’s characters spanned the societal range and displayed a variety of relationships within their own social class and beyond. In examining the three social classes, the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and the working class, it is easy to note the societal bonds holding the individual within his class as well as the bonds linking those with members of the other classes. In addition to the collective functioning of society, it is important to examine the relationships held between individuals in a society. According to Lewis Coser, Emile Durkheim “was convinced that without stable social bonds, without social solidarity, individualism would lead

\textsuperscript{394} p 40.
to the decay of society."\textsuperscript{395} I believe that Goldoni's characters support Durkheim's theory of social solidarity in so much as they sense their own place in society and are aware that their individual roles aid in the creation of a greater whole. For example, Ridolfo, in \textit{La Bottega del Caffè}, has an understanding of his place, as a hardworking caffè owner and suggests that his efforts in serving the public, work toward a greater good for all of society. He carries pride in his profession, representative of his place in society and because he never wishes to "far torto alla mia professione," he dedicates himself to working diligently and living honorably. In addition, as discussed in chapter 2, many characters such as Anselmo in \textit{Il Cavaliere e La Dama}, exhibit the duty and necessity felt by all members of society to provide aid to each other in times of need and taking the responsibility to correct deficient behaviors in others for the greater good.

The role of women in society is one that Goldoni explores heavily throughout his works. The obvious esteem that Goldoni holds for women and their growing place in society is evidenced in comedies such as \textit{i Rusteghi}, \textit{La Vedova Scaltra} and \textit{La Locandiera}. The traditional family roles of women are represented, but often these female characters are endowed with enhanced abilities to reason and express themselves in ways that aid in promoting the well being of their families. Goldoni’s women are conscious of their societal potential but are also aware of the limitations still existing for them within society. The wise widow, Rosaura, is aware that “la vedova è soggetta alla critica più d’altra donna”\textsuperscript{396} and that to preserve her

\textsuperscript{395} Coser, Lewis, xiv (introduction to Durkheim, Emile. \textit{The Division of Labour in Society}.

\textsuperscript{396} \textit{La Vedova Scaltra}, I, 17.
reputation, she has two choices, to remarry or to live completely alone. She is independent in choosing a new husband and makes a decision to preserve her best interest. In *La Locandiera*, the eponymous innkeeper, Mirandolina is an intelligent woman performing a role traditionally held by a man, yet her abilities afford her the possibility of running a successful business. Since the physical location of the inn allows for a variety of social classes to mix, she finds herself serving and entertaining many different members of society. As Baratto highlights the inn is, “un luogo neutro consente più facilmente, da una parte, la libertà e la sorpresa degli incontri e dei contatti, la sovrapposizione delle consuetudini e delle novità, e permette più agevolente dall’altra il coesistere di personaggi a diverso statuto sociale...”

Although she is as capable as any man, when her reputation is threatened as a result of her ‘game of wits’ with the Cavaliere, she must marry Fabrizio in order to conform to the dictates of social norms and expectations and ultimately protect herself and her reputation. In addition, Flamminia of *Gli Innamorati*, is the voice of reason in the midst of an illogical situation. She knows her interventions are necessary to remeding the rift between two lovers, as she constantly wants to do her part to help others. She states, “Io sono naturalmente di buon core, portata a far del bene a tutti, se posso.”

Her place in the world, amongst living an honorable life, is to provide remedy and aid to others in order to promote the collective wellbeing.

As briefly mentioned, the notion of all members of society working toward a common societal well-being, was coined by Durkheim as ‘organic solidarity.’ He

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397 p 127.
398 *Gli Innamorati*, II, 1.
believed that “organic solidarity found within society could develop from spontaneously arising consensus between individual actors who, just because they were engaged in different roles and tasks, were dependent on one another. “399

Anzoletto, in *Una delle Ultime Sere di Carnovale*, demonstrates a workingman's perspective regarding one's occupation and the relationship to the greater good of society. As he is describing his plan to leave Italy and pursue his career in Russia, he leaves his friends with these words,

Farò el mio dover. De questo me comprometo; l’ho sempre fato, e procurerò sempre de farlo; e se la mia insuffienza no permetterà che sia applaudido in Moscuvia le mie operazion, almanco cercherò d’imparar; tornerò qua con dele nove cognizion, con dei novi lumi, e provederò i mii testori, e servirò la mia patria, che ha sempre avudo per me tanta clemenza e tanta benignità. (I, 15)

He is proud of what he does, he understands his contribution to society and asserts that if his efforts are not well received abroad, that he plans to return with all that he has learned to serve his homeland that has always provided for him. Anzolotto’s place in society, as everyone else’s, is important and affects others in order to establish interdependency.

399 Coser, xv.
Social action, interaction and socio-economic principles

The rational motivation governing social actions and interactions within Goldoni’s comedies directly reinforce theories established later by sociologists and socio-economists. It is interesting to note that Goldoni’s characters display behaviors that follow and support later established sociological and economic theories. Due to the realism associated with Goldoni’s characterizations, it is possible to examine their behaviors and interactions as one could with real world examples. According to the theory of Max Weber, all human behaviors constitute an ‘action’ and, as the theory of Durkheim dictates, are expected to reflect the values held by society. Economists would also argue that an individual is rational when committing an action. Weber identifies four types of social actions, which can be identified through many examples provided by Goldoni’s characters. According to Weber, the four modes of social action are: rational orientation to a system of discrete individual ends, rational orientation to an absolute value, affectual and traditional. The first type of social action describes an individual who “rationally assesses the probable results of a given act in terms of a calculation of means to an end.” This individual acts with reason, contemplates all possible outcomes and acts purposefully to attain the maximum possible outcome. An example of this type of action is by Rosaura, in La Vedova Scaltra. Her decision of whom to marry is not made without conscious thought and consideration of all possible outcomes. She chooses to marry the person who will maximize her utility and makes her decision

400 Weber, p 88.
401 Ibid, pp 115-17.
402 Giddens, p 152.
based on her logical assessment of all candidates. Ottavio in *Il Cavaliere di Buon* 
*Gusto*, also demonstrates this type of logical approach to his behavior. Every action, 
even his decision whether or not to marry, is rooted in calculations of opportunity 
cost and marginal utility. His ultimate decision to remain a bachelor is the result of 
careful contemplation and the best use of his resources.

The second type of action is also rational, but only considers options that 
fulfill the overarching values as set by society. Giddens explains, “All actions which 
are solely directed to overriding ideals of duty, honor, or devotion to a “cause,” 
approximate this type.”\(^{403}\) Some examples of this mode of action can be found 
exhibited by Goldoni’s women such as Rosaura, in *La Figlia Obbediente* and donna 
Eleonora in *Il Cavaliere e La Dama*. The former chooses her husband based on the 
man her father has chosen for her and the latter behaves in a manner befitting her 
duty as a wife. These ladies act in a rational manner, but are also guided by an 
obligation or duty set forth by society. The third type of action, affectual, is a result 
of one’s actions being influenced by emotion rather than reason. Behaviors of type 
are demonstrated by an overabundance of Goldoni’s characters regardless of their 
class association. Some examples of emotionally motivated actions are Don 
Sigismondo’s use of flattery to motivate his own agenda in *L’Adulatore*, Eugenia’s 
passion filled irrational treatment of her intended husband in *Gli Innamorati* and 
Vittoria’s obsession with spending and gambling in the *Villeggiatura* trilogy, to name 
a few. These social actors are motivated only by their own feelings and are not 
guided by any rational motivations.

\(^{403}\) Ibid.
The fourth type of social conduct as identified by Weber is a traditionally followed action that is directed by long established customs or habits of a particular society. The action is not rationalized nor emotionally motivated, but a result of longstanding customs. The actions and behaviors of I Rusteghi demonstrate this fourth orientation. Although the four characters that embody the rustego mentality exhibit ranging degrees of rusteghezza, their outlooks and motivations are rooted in a time since past. The way in which they treat their wives and children as well as their philosophy on work and career are entirely steered by time honored (in their opinion) beliefs and mentalities. Both affectual and traditional types of social conduct provoke criticism from Goldoni, being that these actions spring from passion and not reason.

Goldoni's characters that exhibit the use of reason and logic in their behaviors are lauded, as these behaviors reflect the societal norms of the time. Those who are overcome and guided by their feelings exhibit irrational behavior and denigrate the social order. Weber asserts that irrational conduct stems from, “Emotional reactions such as anxiety, anger, ambition, envy, jealousy, love, enthusiasm, pride, vengefulness, loyalty, devotion, and appetites of all sorts.”404 In theory, all social actions are rational and are made in order to maximize the return or reward to the individual, known in economic terms, as utility. To equate social interaction with economic principles, Huppes states, “one sees man as a social actor behaving similarly to a consumer maximizing his utilities, then again one finds exchange relations operating in accordance with the law of comparative costs, or,

404 Weber, p 92.
differences in rank and power being explained in a way reminding one of the theory of income distribution.” In other words, the way a consumer desires to maximize his utility (level of enjoyment) when making a purchase or decision, a social actor will behave toward another actor in a way that will similarly maximize his utility in the social exchange.

In describing Weber’s theory of social relationships, Giddens asserts, “A social ‘relationship’ exists whenever there is reciprocity on the part of two or more individuals, each of whom relates his action to acts (or anticipated acts) of the other.” Thus each of Goldoni’s plays which represent a facet of Venetian society provide examples of social relationships amongst the individual characters. These various social relationships, exchanges and outcomes support that which socio-economic theory predicts.

Exchange takes place only when both parties involved think it will be to their advantage...The satisfaction which both parties experience in a social relationship—social rewards—should exceed the effort, or the satisfaction attainable in alternative relationships—social costs. Social relationship will not persist, i.e. the exchange is discontinued, unless all parties involved are making a profit. Social behavior, like economic behavior is a function of its pay-offs.

Rational social players will only engage in a social relationship or exchange when they will reap social rewards, profit of sorts, which is a return on their effort, or investment in the relationship.

In *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto*, the title character Ottavio, expresses a keen knowledge of economic principles that govern both the way he runs his business

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405 Pg 33.  
406 Giddens, p 151.  
407 Huppes, p 32.
and his personal decisions. The relationship between master and servant that he experiences with Brighella is a supreme example of both parties benefiting and profiting from the exchange. He has high expectations of Brighella, in terms of attentiveness, loyalty, punctuality and comportment, but fulfills his part with appropriate financial compensation and respect. Ottavio seems aware that his staff will maximize their output when they are rewarded and treated well. In addition, he chooses not to marry, which is in effect a social action. In refusing to enter into this exchange, Ottavio demonstrates that the benefit he will receive will not exceed his costs, that is to say, energy and resources that he can dedicate elsewhere. It is interesting that others notice his actions, in fact, his cousin Clarice states, “Ottavio è un cavaliere prudente; e quello che ha fatto, l'avrà fatto per utile della famiglia.”

Clarice uses the word *utile*, which can be defined as useful or beneficial, but it is interesting to note that economically speaking, utility is the enjoyment experienced from a chosen behavior or decision. Thus Ottavio’s decisions, what he has done, is done to maximize both his utility, but also that of his family, and for the greater good.

Although the behavior is highly criticized by Goldoni, the institution of the *cavalier servente* or *cicisbeo* is an excellent example of a social relationship, which will only occur and continue to transpire if both parties enjoy rewards that exceed their ‘costs.’ This social relationship is based on reciprocity. In theory, the gentleman ‘serving’ receives female companionship from an aristocratic lady while the lady profits from having a male confidante and public escort. At a time in history

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408 *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto*, I, 10.
when marriages, especially those of the aristocracy, were for the most part business contracts, this social relationship allowed women and men to socialize in an ‘acceptable’ construct with someone that they actually enjoyed. It is evident that the individual parties enter willingly into the arrangement which will only continue if the satisfaction or utility that they receive from each other exceeds what would be attainable in alternative relationships.

In the comedy La Pamela the situation of an aristocratic man marrying a servant girl comes into question. Although Pamela is of humble origins, she is described as being extremely virtuous in terms of personal character. There are barriers prohibiting their relationship from occurring. From Pamela’s perspective, she will be viewed as being ambitious or social climbing while Bonfil risks damage to his reputation and merit by ‘lowering’ himself to her. Although there is no law prohibiting their union, it is against social custom and common opinion. If the situation remained as described, their union would not be ‘profitable.’ The rewards may not exceed the costs of entering into a relationship, thus most probably, the social exchange would not occur. When news of Pamela’s secret noble origins emerges, no barriers continue to prevent the two from entering into a social relationship. The social costs inhibiting their relationship having disappeared, Bonfil and Pamela can enjoy a relationship in which their utility and reward are high.

In accordance with Weber’s theory on social relationships, a person will evaluate all costs before entering into an exchange, and will act only if the outcome is profitable. Most people exhibiting rationality in their decision-making strive to
minimize costs and maximize the productivity of their behaviors. When a behavior is no longer profitable to one or more of the parties involved, according to theory, the relationship will be terminated. In her book, Gossip, Patricia Meyer Spacks explores the economics of gossip and ponders what both parties are benefiting from the exchange. In her opinion, those engaging in gossip trade their points of view and information; but also gain reassurance.409 “Participants assure one another of what they share: one of gossip’s important purposes. Gossip may involve a torrent of talk, yet its most vital claims remain silent. Seldom does anyone articulate the bonding that it generates or intensifies. The sensibility that gossip helps to create is dual: a mode of feeling and of apprehending which rises, as it were, in the space between the talkers, enveloping both.”410

Many examples of gossip can be cited in the comedies of Goldoni. In La Bottega del Caffè, don Marzio is held accountable for his reproachful behaviors regarding other members of the social construct. His slanderous words were proving destructive to other characters within his immediate social network. Don Marzio participates knowing fully aware that his action both removes him and ties him to those he is speaking about. “Don Marzio, il maldicente che sa essere insieme estraneo e intrinsico alla vicenda (anche lui è attraversato dal tema dell’utile e del denaro, che percorre la commedia come un’ossessione).”411 His contributions to that society were no longer positive or fruitful and thus the relationships with him were severed resulting in his ultimate exile. As Huppes identifies, “Diverging behavior

409 Pg 22.
410 Ibid.
411 Torresani, p 103.
eventually leads to disintegration, not only of the group, but of its members as well." The individual defying the group equilibrium will no longer reap ‘rewards' and in turn will be forced to conform or exit society. Don Marzio was not given the choice, but rather was forced out of the social relationship.

As society turned on and expelled Don Marzio as a result of his behaviors, people not exhibiting appropriate behaviors do not find a part in any social relationship. In *Il Vero Amico*, avarice is personified in the character of Ottavio who shuns all social relationships, for they do not compare to the rewards he perceives through money. Ottavio, as depicted by Goldoni, is an exception to rational human behavior. He refuses a relationship with his own daughter, preferring his beloved gold to her company. Characters and people such as Ottavio do exist, in fact Huppes highlights that “Eccentrics, fools, eager beavers and grumblers; one may meet them all in social life. Nevertheless they are exceptions. Usually people behave ‘normally' and it seems necessary that they do so. Deviant behavior is not tolerated.”

People who exhibit these tendencies, as represented by characters such as Don Marzio, Ottavio and even Sigismondo, the flatterer, will always be held on the fringes of society, never really being accepted into concrete social exchanges.

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412 p 37
The Role of Economic Theory in Society

The field of socio-economics takes into account the fact that many social behaviors can be explained with economic principles. It is notable that Goldoni advocates and esteems behaviors that follow basic economic concepts regarding productivity and market theory and that these basic principles can be expanded to apply to human behavior as well. In preceding chapters, textual analysis provided concrete passages in which the author demonstrates examples of behaviors that exhibit principles such as productivity, marginal utility and opportunity cost. Since economics is a social science, and as Parsons and Smelser highlight, “the economy is a sub-system of a larger system—the society,” it follows logically in the application of pure economic concepts to explain social behaviors and decision-making. This chapter primarily has discussed Goldoni’s theater in terms of sociological and socio-economic theories. In this section, I would like to expand the analysis to include economic principles as they generally apply to social systems, but more importantly, Goldoni’s portrayed society.

Human capital

For any entity desiring to produce a good, there are three main factors of production necessary: land, labor and capital. Capital can exist as a physical asset, such as machinery or a financial indicator, such as money. Economists have termed human capital as an individual’s personal abilities, knowledge, training or talents. Anzoletto’s knowledge of his craft in the textile industry, in Una delle Ultime Sere di

414 p 46.
Carnovale, is an example of human capital as is Goldoni’s writing ability. The bourgeois merchant’s hard-working mentality and core value system is also viewed as human capital. Development of these abilities is known as an ‘investment in human capital.’ Therefore, economists regard expenditures on education, training, medical care, and so on as investments in human capital. They are called human capital because people cannot be separated from their knowledge, skills, health, or values in the way they can be separated from their financial and physical assets.”

In any city or nation, assuming that a well-functioning society is the intended ‘product,’ the primary factor of production is human capital, that is to say, what each individual personally possesses to contribute to the final result. In addition to entertainment purposes, Goldoni’s comedies serve to instruct and provide moral lessons to the audience. As it has been discussed, the desire to ‘reform’ society in terms of morals and productive behaviors is apparent throughout the comedies. If an individual’s values and knowledge are viewed as human capital, when purchasing a ticket to the theater and viewing one of Goldoni’s comedies, one is ‘investing in their human capital.’ The lessons presented by the author are aimed at each person, and in what way he or she can be a productive member of society.

Education of one’s children, both in the sense of instructing and rearing, was forefront in the mind of Goldoni. Although the theme of school and education is not overwhelming, the author stressed the necessity to teach the youth the ways of morality and honor, which then later translates to society as a whole. Goldoni

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believed that one’s virtue and moral excellence was a measure of intrinsic worth. He speaks throughout his comedies of virtue and honor as guiding forces in one’s life, which are manifested through behaviors and relationships with others. An individual’s actions and behaviors are instrumental in the acquisition of personal merit, which according to Goldoni was a benefit, or rather, part of one’s human capital. In the dedication prefacing I Rusteghi, Goldoni writes about the personal worth of Il Conte de’Baschi d’Aubais, “Se parliamo di merito personale, che è il vero merito, non ereditato dalla fortuna, ma acquistato cogli abiti virtuosi.” The moral virtue demonstrated by Il Conte is not bestowed at birth, but rather is developed through his actions and deeds. This can be considered a facet of his human capital. Through education, in passing these lessons to his children, he makes an investment in their human capital and continues the cycle of the development of these traits for the future of society. The merits of La Signora Cecilia Querini Zorzi, praised by Goldoni in the dedication of La Figlia Obbediente, are also attributed to her “ottima educazione.” Margarita of I Rusteghi describes being well taught by her mother, and given lessons, which helped her develop into an upstanding member of society. “Son stada arlevada ben. Mia mare giera una donna sutila, e qualcossa no ghe piaseva, la saveva drier e la saveva menar le man.” Thus parents are entrusted with the ability to affect the worth and ‘human capital’ of their children as future participants in society through education and proper upbringings.

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416 I Rusteghi, p 662.
417 La Figlia Obbediente, p 159.
418 I, 1.
Money & Finance

It is evident from his writings and his life that Goldoni understood the need for money and increasing earnings potential through personal development. His various experiences in fields other than the theater developed his abilities to observe and comprehend human nature in many forms. These various involvements are the inspiration for the overarching concept guiding his work, the duality of il Mondo and il Teatro. His decisions regarding where to work, for whom to work, as well as the actual arguments of his plays, were all economically motivated. Unlike other places in Italy, the theaters in Venice were patronized by all members of society and “flourished by the favor of the public, quick to show their approval or disapproval of a play.”419 Thus a well-received play had the potential to earn the playwright not only financial gain in the present, but future appointments and patronage. Goldoni understood what his audience craved, hence the need to reform the Commedia dell’Arte, to present more morally appropriate comedies for the bourgeoisie. With the success of comedies written around the working class, Goldoni answers the demand of his audience by supplying additional comedies showcasing this class. He defends to his critics the choice of writing another play about the popolano, “dirò loro francamente che la natura e l’esempio mi hanno consigliato a tentarlo; e la riuscita delle prime Commedie mi ha autorizzato a produrre le altre.”420 Thus, the success of previous plays, or increased demand by the audience, made it a rational choice to supply additional comedies of the same

420 Le Baruffe Chiozzotte, p 321.
subject. In fact, Goldoni explains in financial terms that since it was rather inexpensive to attend the theater, “il bottegaio, il servitore ed il povero pescatore possono partecipare di questo pubblico divertimento.”\(^{421}\) Fully aware of this knowledge, Goldoni displayed economic prowess in being able to supply what the audience demanded and fill theaters.

Goldoni was extremely prolific in his lifetime, which was primarily due to his financial needs. In fact, his final choice to leave Italy, allegorically presented in *Una delle Ultime Sere di Carnovale*, was driven by economic motivation and the desire to regain the esteem that he once had. “The offer from Paris was financially tempting. The position at the Comédie-Italienne was important,...and Goldoni was constantly in need of money: hence, partly, his productivity in the theater.”\(^{422}\) His constant desire for financial wellbeing translated to his characters; many of his lauded bourgeois and mercantile characters demonstrate a keen ability for personal economy and entrepreneurship.

Simon and Lunardo, in *I Rusteghi*, discuss money matters and recount how they initially earned it and how, through investment and personal economy, they were able to grow their fortunes. Ottavio, in *Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto*, is praised for managing his business interests. Although noble, he maintains attentiveness in his business affairs and utilizes his abilities and resources to maximize the productivity of his holdings. The household economy does not escape his concern; he instructs Brighella how to be more efficient when spending money on domestic items and food. In *La Buona Madre*, Barbara instructs her daughter Giacomina that only

\(^{421}\) Ibid, p 322.
\(^{422}\) Steele, p 32.
through hard work is one able to “vadagnerè dei bezzetti.”

In addition, she recommends not purchasing with credit, but to save her money and then buy what she desires. Paolo, one of the servants in the *Villeggiatura* trilogy, uses *buon senso* in advising Vittoria to pay her current debts and not accrue more, “Regolar le spese. Cambiar sistema di vivere.”

These characters embody the ability of financial prowess and good sense and demonstrate the importance of securing oneself financially in order to promote a more productive society.

**Consumerism**

Many of Goldoni’s comedies highlight excess expenditures and consumerism. It is notable how illogical decisions regarding increased spending refute the basic economic principle of diminishing marginal utility. This concept states that for every additional unit consumed, the individual will experience less and less enjoyment. In fact, the choice to live more simply, “suggests that there is a declining marginal satisfaction in the pursuit of ever higher levels of consumption.”

The ideology of consumerism is polemically opposed to this economic principle and encourages expenditures in order to increase happiness.

Consumerism is justified largely in terms of the notion that more goods and services a person uses, the more satisfied a person will be. Early economists thought that people had a fixed set of needs, and they worried what would motivate people to work and save once their income allowed them to satisfy their needs. Subsequently, however, it became widely agreed that people’s needs can be artificially enhanced through advertising and social pressures,

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423 *La Buona Madre*, I, 1.
424 *Le Smanie della Villeggiatura*, II, 5.
425 Etzioni, p 14.
and hence they are said to have, if not an unlimited, at least very expandable consumeristic needs.\footnote{Etzioni, pp 11-12}

The goldonian characters that embrace the ideology of consumerism are depicted in a negative fashion; their anti-productive behaviors regarding spending are highly criticized. Consumerism and the capitalistic system often dictate items as ‘needed’ to survive, where these items are in truth, “needed to meet status needs.”\footnote{Ibid p 17.} These types of items are highly visible ‘measures’ of social achievement or worth in the eyes of the individual. In Goldoni, these status items and their pursuit are often symbolic of larger problems within the household or social dynamic. Petraglia highlights, “il bisogno di acquistare e di mettersi in mostra è un motivo ricorrente nelle commedie goldoniane e viene spesso a significare un conflitto centrale quando impediscono la serenità economica e la pace familiare.”\footnote{Petraglia, Christina. “Donne alla moda nel teatro goldoniano,” Carte Italiane, 2:5, 2009, p 36.}

Giacinta and later Vittoria both desire to be seen in the latest Parisian fashions and the mari
gage becomes synonymous with the ladies’ aspirations to be viewed with higher social status. “Il mari
gage simboleggia il coinvolgimento individuale nel dinamismo sociale perché seguire l’ultima moda è uno strumento per affermare la propria appartenenza ad una comunità ben definita (quella femminile borghese), che conferisce alla donna la possibilità di individuarsi all’interno di quell’ambiente.”\footnote{Ibid, p 39.} This objective is reflectd by both ladies’ desire to obtain the coveted dress, but Vittoria’s desire is also fueled by ambition. Giacinta says, Vittoria, “È ambiziosissima. Se vede qualche cosa di nuovo ad una persona,
subito le vien la voglia di averla. Avrà saputo ch’io mi ho fatto il vestito nuovo, e l’ha voluto ella pure.”

The *mariage* also causes much distress to Costanza when she sees Vittoria donning it and her extreme jealousy prevents her from revealing her admiration. When Vittoria enters the scene, Costanza says in an aside, “Oh, che ti venga la rabbia! Ha il *mariage* alla moda.”

Having the newest and most original fashions of the day, no matter the internal motivation to acquire these fashions, goes hand in hand with the desire to *fare una bella figura* and portray one’s intended ‘status.’

Not only was possessing a *mariage* imperative, but being the first woman to wear it in public was a huge coup from the perspective of social status. The item itself takes power over the women and in fact becomes a driving force, causing jealousy and animosity amongst the female characters. The longing to consume and acquire the latest and newest objects does not bring happiness, as the individual intends or hopes, but rather creates a cycle of desire, never satisfied by the goods themselves.

It seems that Goldoni proposes a healthy balance; in no way does he promote an extreme absence of spending, as seen with the miser figures or with the anti-consumeristic *rusteghi*. Unlike Vittoria and Giacinta, Maurizio and his rustic cohorts are tremendously conservative in their spending patterns concerning items that are unnecessary, such as clothing. In fact, when discussing his future daughter-in-law’s wardrobe, Maurizio describes the simple way Lucietta will dress after

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430 *Le Avventure della Villeggiatura*, II, 12.
431 Ibid, I, 10.
432 Petraglia, p 40.
marrying his son. He says, “In casa mia no voggio sea. Fin che sono vivo mi, l’ha da andar co la vesta de lana, e no voi né tabarini, né scuffie. Né cerchi, né toppè, né cartoline sul fronte.” These characters do not conform to social status expectations and see no value in many of the excessive objects such as jewelry and on-trend clothing. Goldoni’s ideal middle class society member finds a balance somewhere between the conservative rustego and the spendthrift villeggiatura character. He conveys the necessity to enjoy one’s life and spend money to a degree, but always to maintain good sense and personal economy with finances. The optimal way of life is to reach equilibrium, the ideal point between saving and spending in order to uphold the bourgeois lifestyle and promote a healthy society.

433 I Rusteghi, 1, 5.
Summary

In examining behaviors and relationships found within the comedies of Carlo Goldoni, the use of both sociological and economic theories provide a unique perspective and explanation regarding the themes of productivity and waste throughout the works. Goldoni was extremely perceptive of human nature and the way in which people operated and made decisions. His works clearly display this understanding and also convey his desire to improve the morals and condition of society as a whole. It is interesting to further examine these actions and relationships, chosen by Goldoni, with the aid of social and economic theory to enhance the argument presented in this discussion. Marx’s class theory lends a rational explanation to the social hierarchy found within Venice of the time. It is therefore understandable why contributing and following the guidelines of one’s class were positive attributes and further propagated class division.

The theory presented by Durkheim regarding social norms and the collective consciousness explain society’s desire to conform to accepted practices and codes of behavior. Overall, the ‘norm’ in Goldoni’s comedies is to employ ‘good sense’ and virtue and follow moralistic guidelines throughout one’s life. These behaviors coincide with the accepted social norms and are thus interpreted and presented by Goldoni as ‘productive.’ Actions that offend the group are wasteful and must be reformed, lest the interloper be exiled from society. All social interactions, as Weber highlights, have a ‘cost,’ which determines whether or not the relationship will transpire. Various social phenomena such as *cicisbeismo* and marriage were discussed to support this theory. It is notable that the interaction between two
parties would only come to fruition when the utility experienced by each party was greater than the costs incurred.

In terms of costs and utility, a final section of this analysis was dedicated to pure economic theory as applied to social constructs. If one were to envision society as the end product, the major factor of production necessary is that of human capital. Goldoni prizes the industrious members of society as well as those who exhibit strong morals and virtue. He also esteems people and characters that imparted this knowledge to their children. These are traits that enhance an individual and translate to the productivity of society as a whole. Personal economy and control of one’s money play a large role in the comedies and stem from the author’s constant desire to achieve his own financial stability. Goldoni stresses the necessity to balance savings and spending and never favor one extreme. Neither the miser nor the spendthrift contributes positively to society; in actuality their tendencies detract from society. Following the rational economic theories sustained by Goldoni is the formula for achieving future advancement and productivity.
**Conclusion**

Giddens writes, “Each individual is [...] the recipient of the accumulated culture of the generations which have preceded him and, in his own interaction with the natural and social world in which he lives, is a contributor to the further modification of that world as experienced by others.” This quote is extremely applicable to Goldoni in that his comedies are the culmination of his experience and observation of the world around him and, in turn, serve as a means to reintegrate good sense and moral reform throughout society. Goldoni’s work is invaluable for the modern reader to understand the Venice of his time and to note the shifting paradigms of thought and social status. This very society, the object of Goldoni’s comedies, was the recipient of a new type of comedy presenting the verosimile, actual people and behaviors with which the audience could identify. These comedies provided didactic lessons under the guise of entertainment and highlighted positive characters and morally sound relationships and situations, which, the author hoped, would translate back to society.

I believe that Goldoni was deliberate in his presentations of each character and interaction throughout his comedies. His focus included examples from every social class and stressed that each member should in his or her way behave and perform in a manner befitting a productive member of society. I have identified direct examples from the comedies demonstrating productive behaviors in each of the social classes. Characters who expressed reason and logic in their behaviors and

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434 Giddens, p 13.
decisions are depicted in a positive light and serve as inspiration to others. They may falter, but ultimately act rationally and do not let their feelings interfere. Conversely, those who succumb to their passions (gossip, jealousy, gambling, etc.) and do not employ reason are demonstrating behaviors that detract from society. Their energy and resources are wasted on following their passions and could be better focused elsewhere. It seems that through his comedies, Goldoni’s goal was to “encourage civic virtues that make life’s burden easier to bear.”

Kennard continues,

Thus Goldoni’s ideal manhood is not merely kindness, benevolence, the absence of vice, but it is the man who works hard, and yet does not complain. Il Cortesan, il Cavaliere, l’Avvocato, Pantalone, his favourites, are gay, active, eager to enjoy life and make life enjoyable for those who depend on them. The miser, the grumbler, the gossip, his peculiar bugbears are miserable people and make life a burden to their dependents. Even in women he admires the active spirit, the mirthful disposition that blesses all those that come within reach...

No matter what role one fulfilled, each person knows their place and does his or her part to contribute to society in a constructive manner, which results in a more productive society.

Each of Goldoni’s characters depicted a part of society, whether positive or negative. Modern social and economic theories substantiate the behaviors portrayed by these characters and further explore the theme of productivity and waste throughout Goldoni’s comedies. It is possible that Goldoni was aware of the advances in economic theory that were in circulation at the time. Many of Goldoni’s characters display an acute understanding of economic concepts such as the

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435 Kennard, pg 514.
436 Ibid.
division of labor, utility, productivity, opportunity cost and marginal returns. They make choices taking into account the opportunity cost of the next best alternative and understand that their resources are scarce and need to be allocated effectively. I rusteghi, Ottavio (of Il Cavaliere di Buon Gusto) and the shrewd widow Rosaura are fluent in the language of economics and rely on its principles in their lives and when making decisions.

Productivity and waste relate to the efficiency of the production of a good or service. I believe that these aspects also relate to behaviors and social interactions. With the help of sociological theory, I was able to further analyze Goldoni’s comedies in terms of the characters’ individual behaviors and whether or not they were productive. Individual behaviors that did not conform to the social norms of the time were criticized by Goldoni and were found to be wasteful in terms of resources or energy. Those characters that could not or would not reform their behaviors were cast out, as social theory predicts. Social efficiency can only be maximized when people use their resources wisely, make rational decisions and maintain their own wellbeing and that of the collective. It is my contention that through his comedies, Goldoni presents a formula for increasing efficiency and eliminating the waste detracting from society’s development and progress. In following Goldoni’s examples, every individual has the capability, by utilizing reason and buon senso, to influence the advancement and productivity of society.
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