CARLO GOZZI

A STUDY OF THE PLAYWRIGHT,
HIS MAJOR WORKS, AND THE TIMES IN WHICH HE LIVED

by

VERA JESSIE JONI YAWNEY
B.A., University of British Columbia, 1965

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department
of
Hispanic and Italian Studies

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
September, 1970
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that
the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study.
I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis
for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or
by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication
of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my
written permission.

Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date Sept. 10, 1970.
ABSTRACT

Eighteenth Century Venice witnessed the rise to popularity of Carlo Gozzi, a playwright whose life and works have provoked a spectrum of controversial opinions ranging from the over-enthusiastic evaluation of the German Romantics and the harsh criticisms of more realistic Italians, to the temperate judgements of modern literary critics.

To understand why this prolific dramatist and dedicated opponent of the Enlightenment aroused such diverse impressions, one must study the period in which he lived and, with this in mind, proceed to examine his political, social, and moral views as they are expressed in his works, then attempt to reconstruct the personality of the author himself.

Accordingly, I have included in this thesis a brief summary of the Enlightenment and the influence it had upon Italian cultural life. Against this historical background, I have presented the essential opinions of the author in order to determine his reasons for so resolutely opposing the concepts of the Enlightenment.

These socio-political views are closely bound to the medium he chose. It, therefore, proves worthwhile to study his ideas on the theatre, its purpose, its rights and responsibilities, its actors and dramatists, and the genre which Gozzi used in his works, the commedia dell'arte. Although his plays are our most obvious and direct source of information, his memoirs and his treatise on the theatre are also essential. In them
he describes the state of Italian theatre as he found it, his desire to rejuvenate its proud theatrical tradition, improvised comedy, his polemical and didactical reasons for writing plays, and his means of achieving the effects he believed every play should have on an audience. Gozzi's ideas also come to light in his criticism of his theatrical rival, Carlo Goldoni, whose plays reflected current social change.

The fact that, until recently, literary critics judged Gozzi mainly on his theatrical productions has led them away from the fascinating personality of the author. Modern studies emphasize Gozzi, the man, as he reveals himself in the Memorie inutili, his last and most intimate work. The memoirs reveal the inner conflict of a man caught between past and future, torn between a dying culture of which he was a part, and a new one in which he could find no place.

In conclusion, I maintain that only by considering his theatrical works in the light of the Memorie inutili and the Ragionamento ingenuo can one hope to give a comprehensive evaluation of Carlo Gozzi - dramatist and man.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. R. Giese and to Dr. G. De Stefanis for the assistance and encouragement they gave me during the preparation of this thesis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Enlightenment in Italy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gozzi against the Enlightenment</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gozzi as a playwright</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gozzi as a writer on theatre</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gozzi and the critics</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gozzi's <em>Memorie inutili</em></td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td></td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first half of the Eighteenth Century was a period of transition, reflection, and preparation throughout all of Europe. The balance of power which had followed the Hapsburg-Bourbon struggle for supremacy, was proving increasingly more difficult to maintain. Dynastic disputes, partition of small states among more powerful ones, attempts at paltry territorial gains, all resulted in costly wars without real political significance. Hastily negotiated alliances collapsed. The extravagance of royal courts, modelled after the splendour of Louis XIV, was draining already heavily-taxed economies. As the age of absolutism drew to a close, the basis of international political life in Europe changed, affecting not only the relationship among sovereigns, but more significantly, that between rulers and their subjects.

During this time, the Italian States, prostrated by years of political oppression and moral corruption, were for the most part anxious spectators rather than active participants in the political and cultural affairs of Europe. Italy was not yet ready to assimilate the ever-increasing flow of ideas from empirical England and pre-enlightened France - the obscurantist tradition was still too strong. Having suffered the severity of the Counter-Reformation, she feared the results of scientific research and the unbiased examination of religious and social problems. Her intellectuals and political thinkers were still threatened by the menacing and unyielding doctrines of the Church, enforced by the Inquisition.
Later, with the decline of absolute ecclesiastical authority and with the period of relative peace brought on by the economic unfeasability of war all over Europe, conditions in Italy began to favor the acceptance of new ideas.

A philosophical renewal marked the first step in Italy's return to active participation in European affairs. The philosophies of Descartes and Locke, which first penetrated the universities of Naples and Padua, spread throughout the peninsula, encouraging freedom of expression and inducing a gradual change in mental attitude by breaking down Aristotelian doctrine and Jesuit culture.

The resumption of scientific research, long repressed by the Inquisition (one need only recall the bitter experience of Galileo, in 1633, a mere fifty years earlier), led to the founding of such organizations as the Fisiocritici (1691) in Siena and the Instituto delle Scienze (1722) in Bologna.

A powerful new cultural medium, the journal or periodical, soon appeared, informing Italians as never before of developments throughout Europe. The literary periodical Giornale dei Letterati (1668) published in Rome, was followed by journals in Parma, in Modena, and in Venice. Initially an instructive bulletin acquainting readers with the publication of new books, the journal quickly became a critical review, analysing and debating, often suggesting points for further study. This new tone demonstrated that journalists had become aware of the cultural impact their publications could wield. Two of the most influential journals of this period were the Giornale dei Letterati d'Italia (1710-40) which was founded in Venice by Apostolo Zeno and Scipione Maffei, and the Novelle
Letterarie (1740-92) initiated by Giovanni Lami.

The re-awakening of research led to a re-examination of history and to the study of archaeology. The publication of Giambattista Vico's Scienza Nuova (1725) gave Italian scholars a new view of the principles governing the course of history. Francesco Bianchini's Storia Universale (1697) had already revealed the use of archaeology as a means of authenticating historical events. Visits of Mabillon and Montfaucon and the subsequent publication of their discoveries (Museum italicum - 1687-89; Diarium italicum - 1702) encouraged Italians to sift through archives to study manuscripts. The scholarly compilations of Ludovico Antonio Muratori brought forth many documents and chronicles of the Dark and Middle Ages which were published in three extensive collections: Rerum Italicarum Scriptores (1723), Antiquitates Italicae Medii Aevi (1742), and Annali d'Italia (1744-49).

Increasing awareness of social conditions brought about the study of economics and governmental systems. Publications such as Sallustio Antonio Bandini's Discorso sopra la maremma di Siena, emphasized the importance of agrarian reform and the need to foster trade by abolishing restrictions and taxes. Criticism of despotism was becoming more and more overt, moulding public opinion in favor of liberalization. The historian Pietro Giannone, in his Istoria Civile del Regno di Napoli (1723), staunchly defended the independence of the lay state. In his treatise Orazione in lode dell'augustissimo imperator Carlo VI (1741), Giuseppe Maria Buondelmonte, a Tuscan jurist, denounced the way in which rulers used the law for their own purpose.

Economic and socio-political issues of this nature were to be the main concern of Italian intellectuals in the years that followed.
The second half of the Eighteenth Century witnessed the strengthening and consolidation of these liberal tendencies. Between 1752 and 1762, powerful new voices in France denounced not only the economic and social concepts, but also the religious and political institutions of the Old Regime. Italians rapidly accepted and adapted the ideas of the mature Enlightenment.

The extent of this influence and the force of the reaction depended largely upon the varying political and social climate of each Italian state. In Lombardy, for example, the enlightened Austrian rule initiated by Joseph II (1741-1790) facilitated the rapid diffusion of French thought. With the founding of the Accademia dei Pugni (1762) and the controversial periodical Il Caffè (1764-66), intellectuals such as Verri and Beccaria found an outlet for the expression of their ideas.

The nobleman, Pietro Verri, acknowledged leader of the Academy and editor of Il Caffè, wrote many articles on subjects close to the Enlightenment: Meditazioni sulla felicità (1763), Osservazioni sulla tortura (1769), Meditazioni sull'economia politica (1771), and Considerazioni sul lusso (1771). But it was Cesare Beccaria, also a nobleman and a close friend of Verri, who gained recognition throughout Europe with the publication and subsequent translation into French, Spanish, German, Greek, and Russian of his Dei delitti e delle pene (1764). In this impassioned work, Beccaria calls for the abolition of torture and the death penalty. Both Verri and Beccaria were employed in the Hapsburg administration and helped mould policies of governmental reform.

The widely-travelled Carlantonio Pilati, a native of Trento,
published *Di una riforma d'Italia ossia dei mezzi di riformare i più cattivi costumi e le più perniziose leggi d'Italia* (1767). Although not really revolutionary in scope, the "reform" nonetheless attacked the power of the Church, demanding the dissolution of the monastic orders, a reduction in the number of secular priests, and strict state control over the activities of the clergy.

During the twenty-five years' reign of Prince Leopold, Tuscany witnessed an era of autocratic reform unrivalled in the rest of Italy. Leopold, gathering around him as ministers some of the most progressive intellectuals in the state, set about reshaping political and social institutions. He revised the criminal code, putting into effect Beccaria's plea for abolishing the use of torture and the death penalty. Influenced by such enlightened advisors as Pompeo Neri (1706-1776) and Francesco Maria Gianni (1728-1821), the prince greatly improved conditions of the agricultural populace by abolishing serfdom and by removing duties and trade restrictions. The Inquisition was suppressed and ecclesiastical jurisdiction limited to purely spiritual offences. With such direct contact between reformers and ruler, there was obviously little need to publish protests. Therefore, few were written by the cultural elite in Tuscany during Leopold's time. Neri published a *Memoria sopra la materia frumentaria* (1767); the prince's unofficial advisor, Gianni, published a treatise outlining the new constitution proposed by Leopold, which would have allowed the Tuscan people representation in the government had the political situation in Europe not intervened.

During the reign of Charles III (1735-59), the kingdom of Naples experienced a period of relative independence, of intellectual revival, and of limited social and political reform. Charles selected as his
advisor Bernardo Tanucci, a Tuscan lawyer whose reformatory zeal was immediately employed. By 1741, Charles had obtained papal authorization to tax Church property, to restrict the jurisdiction of bishops, and to limit the number of clergy. Tanucci introduced long overdue changes in criminal law procedures and in the system of taxation. But neither he nor the king could entirely abolish the feudal rights and privileges of the barony, or codify a legal system based upon eleven different inherited codes.

During this time, Antonio Genovesi (1730-1769) gained recognition throughout Italy with the publication of his *Lezioni di commercio* (1765-67) in which he developed the physiocratic view of trade as the promoter of prosperity and as a civilizing force in society. He ardently upheld the theory that luxury was the basis for circulation of capital and was the positive expression of a mature society. Over a ten year period, Gaetano Filangieri (1753-1788) wrote and published the extensive *Scienza della legislazione*, an unbiased analysis of economic and social conditions in Naples. He pinpointed such sore spots as the abuses of the baronial courts and the feudal system still powerful forces outside the major centres.

When Charles was called to the Spanish throne in 1759, he left Tanucci as head of a Council of Regency for his son Ferdinand. The policies of anti-clericalism and reform continued until, under Ferdinand and his Austrian wife, the era of revival came to an abrupt end.

Contrary to the favorable conditions in Lombardy, Tuscany, and Naples, the political atmosphere of Piedmont, first under the rule of Victor Amadeus II, then of Charles Emanuel III, was hostile to the Enlightenment. Innovators and purveyors of French thought were promptly
dealt with by the authorities and a strict censorship was imposed on all forms of written matter. Carlo Denina felt the bite of this restricting environment when he was forced to suspend publication of the periodical *Il Parlamento ottaviano* (1762). Despite his attitude of reserve towards Voltaire, Rousseau, and other French thinkers, he was considered too liberal-minded by the Piedmontese civil authorities and clergy. His treatise, *Delle rivoluzioni d'Italia* (1769-70), although not offering particularly constructive and practical solutions, did define the problems by denouncing the inadequate education system, the decadent life of the nobility, the corruption of the clergy, and the unequal distribution of wealth.

Dalmazzo Francesco Vasco (1732-1794), Denina's compatriot and a confirmed opponent of the Old Regime, was twice arrested and imprisoned by the government for his enlightened ideas. In prison, he wrote a *Discorso sulle imposizioni in uno Stato monarchico* (1767). Later in Turin, he and his brother Giambattista, published the periodical *Biblioteca oltramontana*. His *Saggio politico intorno ad una forma di governo legittimo e moderato da leggi fondamentali* provoked a second arrest in 1791, and a severe imprisonment from which he never recovered.

Perhaps the most stagnant and immobile Italian state during this time was the once-splendid Republic of Venice. The oligarchic structure of its government made innovation almost impossible. The ruling aristocracy, declining in number and in wealth, refused to accept and deal with social change. The economic developments of countries previously dependent upon Venice, was gradually strangling trade and commerce in the Republic. The government maintained strict control over all public and private activities, frequently preventing publication
of books and presentation of theatrical productions. What rebellions there were, such as that of Angelo Querini in 1761, were aimed not at reconstruction of the antiquated governmental system to prepare it for coping with the future, but at the restoration of the traditional constitution in the vain hope that this would bring back the glorious days of the Republic. The attitude of Venetians not only toward politics, but also toward cultural and social affairs, was one of preserving the status quo - of shunning foreign influence as a corruptive force, or at best of fitting new ideas into the structure of the traditional local environment. So strong, indeed, was this conservative tendency that when he visited Venice in December of 1769, the moderate Lombard reformer, Carlantonio Pilati, was expelled from the Republic because he was considered "troppo celebre autore di libri empi e sovversivi."  

In such a restrictive atmosphere there could not possibly develop a strong, positive, and unified reaction to the Enlightenment, as in Tuscany or Lombardy. There were, however, a few rather isolated voices. 

Giammaria Ortes (1713-1790), a widely-travelled abbot and student of mathematics, envisioned the development of society to be based upon a rigid geometrical rhythm. He defended such time-worn institutions as the mortmain and upheld the usefulness of celibacy. Rather bizarre ideas such as these, while not particularly valuable per se, would not have found expression before the Enlightenment and therefore do reveal a change in attitude. 

A fervent believer in the new philosophy and an active publisher
of periodicals concerned with practical means of progress was Francesco
Griselini (1717-1787). A student of the natural sciences, he was also a
man of letters. In fact, he wrote two plays which he dedicated to
Carlo Goldoni. He organized and directed the periodical Giornale d'
Italia spettante alla scienza naturale e principalmente, all'
agricoltura, alle arti ed al commercio (1764-76). In 1775, after the
publication of a study on the Sixteenth Century scholar and scientist,
Paulo Sarpi, Griselini left Venice for Milan where he was appointed
secretary of the official organ for economic development.

Three younger intellectuals who followed the example of the Giornale
d'Italia were Alberto Fortis (1741-1803), Elisabetta Caminier (1751-1796)
and Giovanni Scola (1737-1820). They used the periodical as an instrument
for spreading French ideas among their fellow Venetians. Fortis, a
student of economics and the natural sciences, founded the Europa
letteraria, and with Caminier, published the Nouvo giornale enciclopedico
(1782-89). His best known work Viaggio in Dalmatia (1774), is a study
of the economic and agricultural conditions in Dalmatia. Scola took
over publication of the journal during Fortis' absences and wrote many
articles on aspects of agricultural life.

On the threshold of the Revolution, these Venetian journalists
revealed the wide gap which existed between the relatively modern
opinions of the cultural elite, and the static beliefs of the patricians
and government during the last years of the Republic.
CHAPTER 2

GOZZI AGAINST THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The Age of Enlightenment was the period in which Carlo Gozzi lived his long and full life, fought his many battles, and presented his polemical and theatrical works. It was, in fact, the influence of the new French philosophy in Italy that provoked Gozzi to record his bitter opposition to the whole movement. His major works - the *Marfisa bizzarra*, the *Tartana degli Influssi*, the ten *Fiabe*, and his memoirs - all arose from polemics Gozzi had with contemporaries who, with varying faces, represented to him the spectre of the Enlightenment. Rejecting all that was new, identifying it with social excess and moral corruption, Gozzi turned to spiritual, social, and artistic concepts which were attested by tradition.

Religion was the most controversial topic to come under the objective scrutiny of the French rationalists. In their scientific approach, they criticised dogmatism and denied the authority of the Church to intervene in civil matters. The deism of Voltaire and the pantheism of Rousseau both expressed the desire to liberate man from spiritual institutionalism. The Italians, due to the effects of the Counter-Reformation, were more conservative in their re-appraisal of religion, limiting themselves to proposing reforms in Catholic institutions.

Possibly Gozzi was unaware of the more moderate nature of the reform in Italy, possibly he chose to ignore it. He rarely mentioned in his works attempts at reform in his own country; he directed his attack explicitly against the French:

* I am bound to believe that religion and its accessories are beneficial to society and nations. But our new-fangled philosophers have dubbed all these things the prejudices of intellectuals enfeebled
and intimidated by seductive superstition. Consequently, religion, that salutary curb on human passion, has languished and become a laughing-stock.  

He attributed the moral decadence he saw around him to what he considered the atheistic tendencies of such thinkers as Voltaire and Rousseau. Their philosophies were responsible for a breakdown in social order because, Gozzi believed, they were encouraging people to question spiritual and temporal authority and to assert their rights as individuals rather than accept their duty as subjects of God and of the King. Religion, in Gozzi's opinion, was the only true guide of men, and the Church, the only means by which this guidance could be put into effect. There was no place for deism or pantheism in Gozzi's system - God and the Church were inseparable.

One must not, however, overlook the fact that although in polemics Gozzi advocated the preservation of traditional religious principles, he often unwittingly revealed himself to be on the verge of skepticism. When one of his sisters decided to become a nun, Gozzi did all he could to dissuade her. The highly humorous tone of his remarks was hardly that of a steadfast believer:

"She entreated with a holy stubbornness to be left in prison, to be indulged in her desire to pass her lifetime in that blessed aviary of virgins. ...If she still persisted in her pious fanaticism, I promised to play the part of executioner at her request....When I insisted, she met me with rather less than heavenly doggedness by remarking that nothing short of cutting her in pieces would make her quit the convent-gratings. Though I did not believe that this ultimatum was dictated by the angels, I bent my head in order to avoid a scandal."

He was not, however, so skeptical as to risk eternal damnation. On one occasion, thinking himself near death, he sent for a priest - just to be on the safe side.
"Our modern sages may laugh at this plebian wish of mine to make my peace with Heaven; but I have never been able to dissociate philosophy from religion. Satisfied to remain a little child before the mysteries of faith, I do not envy wise men in their disengagement from spiritual terrors."

Naturally, Gozzi's formal views on religion made him repudiate the political and social reform proposed by the "new philosophers" as he called them. While they were demanding the overthrow of absolutism in favor of popular sovereignty and saw the state as the rational instrument for progressive development, Gozzi upheld the absolute authority of the monarchy. The state was the means by which God's will was expressed on earth. Church and state worked together to guide man in fulfilling the Divine Purpose.

Gozzi again seemed unaware of practical reforms such as those carried out in Lombardy and Naples, whereby political corruption was being contained.

The maintenance of social order, a subject dear to the Enlightenment, was not a complicated matter for Gozzi. To use his own words: "In the midst of the vast sea of good and evil in constant turmoil and opposition, experience, the best instructor and philosopher, has made it unmistakably known that only two things can preserve peace: Religion and the gallows." That is to say, moral and civil law. Thus, well after the publication, in 1764, of Beccaria's treatise on capital punishment, and after the example in Tuscany under Leopold, whereby the death penalty was abolished, Gozzi still defended it:

"The gallows is beneficial to society, being an instrument for punishing crime and deterring would-be criminals. But our new-fangled philosophers have denounced the gallows as a tyrannical prejudice, and by so doing have multiplied murders on the highway, robberies and acts of sacrilege, a hundred-fold."
When Gozzi spoke of "legal warfare", the practice of law as he knew it from personal experience, he was prompt to label it hypocritical and unjust:

"Inveterate abuses, introduced in the remote past, and complicated by the ingenuity of lawyers through successive generations (most of them men of subtle brains, some of them devoid of moral rectitude), have been built up into a system of pleading as false as it is firmly grounded and imbued with ineradicable insincerity. This system consists, for the most part, of quibbling upon side-issues, throwing dust in the eyes of judges, cavilling, misrepresenting, taking advantage of technical errors, doing everything in short to gain a cause by indirect means. And from this false system neither honourable nor dishonest advocates are able to depart."

One wonders why he did not recognize efforts of enlightened Italians, such as Gaetano Filangieri in Naples and Dalmazzo Francesco Vasco in Piedmont, who were trying to bring about legal reforms.

Two other means of preserving order in society, according to Gozzi, were the maintenance of social classes and the 'proper' education of the masses. The Enlightenment, working for the destruction of class distinction, proclaimed equality on earth. Gozzi, following Church doctrine, held the opinion that all men were equal before God, but that on earth social classes were necessary as each was preordained to fulfill a specific function. He expressed this clearly in his last Fiaba, Zeim, re de' Geni, through the character Dugme, an enslaved princess. She relates the advice given her by the old sage who raised her:

"Ei sempre mi dicea, che a servir nata / era ... Che sacra, non intesa Provvidenza / tutto dispone, e che mirabil opra / era de' grandi il posto, e grado a grado / veder le genti, insino alla minuta / plebe, operar subordinate a' primi, / era cosa celeste....Rispetta, figlia, i grandi, amagli, e soffri / nella tua istituizion quanto par grave, / e l'invidia sopprimi entro al tuo seno. / Non è agli occhi del ciel più grata l'opra / giusta de' grandi, della giusta azione / de' servi più meschini, e non è aperta /
Gozzi was himself a nobleman and, for all that he tried to convince the reader of his memoirs that he "would feel no resentment if this title were refused" him, he was proud to be Count Carlo Gozzi. Providence had destined him to be a nobleman and he willingly assumed the role. Respect for his social position brought him pleasure and a much-needed sense of security at a time when, as we have seen, patricians in Venice were losing ground to the merchant class. There is no small amount of self-satisfaction in Gozzi's paternal attitude towards his "proteges", the actors of the Sacchi troupe, whom he patronized for twenty-five years, or in the manner in which he either gave away his writings or published them at his own expense. Rather complacently, too, he often called himself a "silent observer of men and things", and enjoyed the reputation of being a 'loner' which won him the pseudonym of "Il Solitario" in the Accademia dei Granelleschi.

What then was his appraisal of his fellow man? Let him explain:

"I have always shared the hardihood of politicians, who dare to raise their minds aloft, and look down from a height upon the lowly vale in which humanity resides. But with this difference: they regard the valley as inhabited by a swarm of insects, whom it is their art to sway, oppress, and drive about in their interest; nor do they stoop to fraternize with these same insects until death reduces all to one brotherhood. I regard the valley as peopled by creatures of my kith and kindred, making observations on them, laughing at their grotesque gestures, motions, and contortions; then I descend to their level, associate once more with my neighbour, assure him that we are all alike ridiculous, and try to make him laugh at himself no less than at me by the proofs I give him of my proposition."10

Throughout his works, Gozzi had much to say regarding the education of his "neighbours". To the view expressed by proponents of the Enlightenment that education of the masses was a necessary step in man's progress
and that any attempt to keep them in ignorance constituted political tyranny, Gozzi replied that rather than tyranny it was charitable, mature prudence to raise the people in that simplicity which he would not have called ignorance. He would consider a tyrant anyone who sought to arouse the masses with sophisms and with a "dangerous sublimity", leading them to revolt against that subordination and restraint which the laws had established. He added:

"Il sostenere con efficacia ed industria continuamente il ius di natura; il dipingere co' più vivi tratti della eloquenza i superiori da mal consiglio ingannati, fallaci e tiranni; pregiudizi le ben fondate regole delle famiglie e le leggi; ingiustamente divise le facoltà; lo spargere delle palliate e ingegnose empietà nel mezzo alla commozione degli animi e alle nobili passioni, e quella sublimità ch'io abborrisco, e quell'educazione popolare ch'io non vorrei."

In addition to fomenting rebellion, this "sublimità" would destroy the indispensible image of religion and would thus impair the beneficial control of the Church, the only true educator of the people. In short:

"L'educazione del minuto popolo ... sta nella religione, nell'arti esercitate con sollecitudine e senza fraude, nella cieca obbedienza del suo principe, nell'abbassar la fronte nel bell'ordine della subordinazione a' grandi della società."

Gozzi's appraisal of science is not unexpected in the light of what has been said above. Seeking to go beyond Divine Order was not only committing a crime against the State, but also a sin against God: science for Gozzi was just such an attempt. Its investigations and discoveries offered man social and moral horizons beyond the sacred limits, thus tempting him to question their value. The inevitable result was moral decay in the individual and disorder in society.

In economics and agriculture, physiocrats implemented concrete
reforms based upon scientific studies. Although Gozzi recognized the need for such changes, he also maintained that they should be put into effect only after the people of a developing region had received a sound moral education, and were, as a result, capable of intelligently effecting such reforms. Citing as his example the illiterate Morlacchi of Dalmatia, Gozzi contended that were they properly educated, they would become an asset rather than an expense to the Venetian government. "I have continually maintained and published," he further stated, "that we ought to begin by cultivating heads and hearts ... The real miseries which I noticed in Dalmatia, the wretched pittance which proprietors draw from their estates, and the dishonesty of the peasants, suffice to demonstrate my principles of moral education beyond the possibility of contradiction."\(^{13}\)

Gozzi here shows acute perception of the way in which economic aid and reform may be misused due to lack of appropriate direction and guidance.

In one of his many attacks on foreign influence in Italy, Gozzi called upon his native people to shun what in France was considered 'culture': "...non è che lusso sterminatore di tutte le famiglie di quella nazione". In accordance with his conservative nature, he considered luxury a corruptive force in society because it bred discontent and envy in the masses. He, therefore, totally opposed the controversial opinion of enlightened intellectuals, such as Pietro Verri, that abundance signified social progress:

"It is my firm opinion that the economists of our century are at fault when they propose material improvements and indulge in visions of opulence and gain, without considering moral education. Wealth is now regarded by the indigent with eyes of envy and the passion of a pirate; rich people act as though they knew not what it was to possess wealth, and make a shameless abuse of it in practice. The one class need to learn temperance, moderation, and obedience to duty; the other ought to be trained to reason and subordination. The sages of the present day entertain very different views from these."
In their eyes nothing but material interest has any value; and instead of deploring bad morals and manners, they seem to glory in them.\textsuperscript{14}

The enlightened view of luxury as cultural refinement Gozzi branded immoral because, by encouraging excess and avarice, it undermined the principles of religion:

"L'avvezzare i popoli universalmente a sottilizzare e a riflettere con troppa acutizia e vivacità, darà ai popoli delle colte, aggradevoli e comode persone, ma ancora dei sottili e colti ladroni, degli acuti e colti insidiatori, dei sublimi e colti cavallatori, degl'ingegnosi e colti traditori, che terranno in trambusto l'umanità."\textsuperscript{15}

The journals, powerful instruments for the diffusion of enlightened thought, also met with Gozzi's disapproval because he felt that they fostered a capricious approach to study and education:

"Non mi pento d'aver detto che i nostri letterari fogli volanti e i nostri giornali siano peste vera de' ben fondati e regolati studi della solida educazione, ed efficacissima annichilazione al commercio nell'arte delle stamperie, perciocché non fanno che introdurre una lusinghiere superficialità delle materie, che fa disinnamorare della fatica negli studi e sperare di saper tutto senza saper nulla."\textsuperscript{16}

He criticised \textit{L'Europa letteraria}, the above-mentioned journal published by Alberto Fortis and Elisabetta Caminier, stating that it did no more than communicate in very poor Italian what foreign periodicals had published in their native tongue.

One could easily imagine how Gozzi would have reacted to a progressive periodical such as \textit{Il Caffè} which proclaimed itself "Promotore e stimolatore dello spirito critico e dell'attività ... dei concittadini, combattendo prima di tutto l'inerzia o l'indifferenza e tutti quei vincoli di leggi arretrate e più ancora di consuetudini radicate e di pregiudizi che rendevano la vita torbida e stagnante".\textsuperscript{17} One could also understand why he parodied academies such as the \textit{Accademia dei Pugni} with one of his own design,
the Accademia dei Granelleschi, the purpose of which was to "promote the study of our best old authors, the simplicity and harmony of chastened style, and above all the purity of the Italian tongue".  

Two of Gozzi's works, La Marfisa bizzarra, a long poem written between 1761 and 1768, and the dramatic fairytale, L'Augellino belvedere, first staged in 1765, are directly concerned with the disturbing influence of the Enlightenment. He himself stated that La Marfisa bizzarra was nothing less than an historical description of the moral corruption of his age and an allegorical prediction of his country's fate should conditions not change. The poem depicts the degeneration and collapse of the chivalrous Middle Ages and seeks to defend the absolute authority of Church and State. For lack of proper moral and spiritual guidance, society has fallen apart: brave knights have become effeminate cavalier serventi; the family, the basic unifying social institution, is decaying; and the clergy and aristocracy have sunk below the level of those they should inspire and lead. Gozzi's social comment displays a bitter pessimism: he offers no solutions, demolishing without rebuilding. While focussing on his native Venice, his allegory also alludes to the results of deistic and democratic philosophies prevalent throughout Europe. His criticism is possibly exaggerated, but it is certainly not without foundation as events in France were soon to prove.

Gozzi continued his polemic against the new age in L'Augellino belverde. Through the protagonists of the play, Renzo and
Barbarina, the author caricatures followers of the Enlightenment. Calmon, "antica statua morale, Re dei Simulacri", as he is described in the list of characters, voices the opinions of the author. He preaches Christian doctrines which teach humble submission, firm faith in an afterlife, and a dutiful respect for the ecclesiastical and temporal hierarchy. When Renzo and Barbarina meet the statue, he refutes their conviction that self-love determines all human action by saying:

"Stolto filosofastro, tu ragioni / col linguaggio degli empi, che a' difetti, / a' vizi lor, sprezzando la fattura / dell'eterno motore onnipossente, / cercano scusa. Ov'amor proprio alberga, / compassion, pietà, de' casi di morte, e dell'etere angoscia. / Non adombrare il vero. È l'uomo parte / del sommo Giove, e, se medesmo amando / ama il suo creator." 20

Despite such harsh criticism of the Enlightenment, Gozzi, in memoirs written some fifteen years later, while still clinging to his conservatism, would have his reader believe that he had felt nothing more than amusement at the changes he saw around him:

"Sustained by my natural, keen sense of the ludicrous, I have never felt saddened by seeing the morality, which I held for sound and sought to diffuse through my writings, turned upside down by the insidious subtleties and sophisms of our century. On the contrary, it amused me vastly to notice how all the men and women of this age believed in good faith that they had become philosophers. It has afforded me a constant source of indescribable recreation to study the fantastic jargons which have sprung up like mushrooms, the obscure and forced ways of expressing thoughts, spawned by misty self-styled science, invested with bombastic terms and phrases alien to the genius of our language....These things ought perhaps to have presented themselves to my eyes in the form
of a lamentable tragedy; yet I could never see
in them more than a farce, which delighted while
it stupified me." 21

This statement, however, is merely an introduction; a few para-
graphs later the author reverts to his characteristic acridity:

"Let the freethinking pigs and hens rout in their
mud and scratch in their midden; let us laugh
and quiz them, or weep and pity them; but let
us hold fast to the beliefs transmitted to
us by an august line of philosophers, far wis-
er, far more worthy of attention, then these
sages of the muck and dungheap. The modern
caprice of turning all things topsy-turvy,
which makes Epicurus an honest man, Seneca
an imposter; which holds up Voltaire, Rou-
seau, Helvétius, Mirabeau, etc., to our ven-
eration, while it pours contempt upon the fa-
thers of the Church; this and all the other
impious doctrines scattered broadcast in our
century by sensual fanatics, more fit for the
mad-house than the university, have no fasci-
nation for my mind. I contemplate the disas-
trous influence exercised by atheism over whole
nations. This confirms me still more in the
faith of my forefathers." 22

Gozzi lived during a time of transition and, therefore,
found himself caught between what had been and what was to be.
P. Hazard, in his work *La crisi della coscienza europea*, with
keen perception defines this transition:

"Allora avvence nella coscienza europea una cri-
si: tra il Rinascimento, da cui derivava diret-
tamente, e la Rivoluzione francese, che pre-
parò, non ce ne fu nella storia delle idee ness-
suna di più importante. A una civiltà fondata
sull'idea del dovere, i doveri verso Dio, i do-
veri verso il sovrano, i nuovi filosofi tenta-
rono di sostituire una civiltà fondata sull'i-
dea di diritto: i diritti della coscienza in-
dividuale, i diritti della critica, i diritti
della ragione, i diritti dell'uomo e del citta-
dino." 24
Although Gozzi proposed the revival of "doveri", he himself was unable to live by the old code. The present, he realised, held in it the beginnings of a totally unacceptable future, one in which he, a nobleman by birth and an anti-realist by nature, would find no place. Sensing impending turmoil, yet, through social position and character, deterred from effectively combating the Enlightenment, he could only satirize and scoff at the present, defend and idealize the past, and turn to a world of parody and fantasy.

As a Venetian nobleman, he belonged to a sterile and diminishing class within the immobile society of the Republic. The only time he ever left this environment was as a youth during his military service in Dalmatia. Such significant political events as the War of Austrian Succession, the Seven Years' War, and the American Revolution must have seemed distant and inconsequential to him, as they are never mentioned in his works. Such rulers as Maria Theresa and Joseph II of Austria should have captured his interest since their benevolent despotism was much closer to his way of thinking than the popular sovereignty proposed by followers of the Enlightenment. In his criticism of social change, he tended to make vague statements based, it would seem, more upon emotion than reason. Consider the following, for example:

"Sembra in questo secolo che alcuni ingegnosi scrittori pensino di farsi immortali col rovesciare tutto ciò che nelle massime fondamentali fu stabilito per il meglio nei trasgressi secoli da saggi ingegni, dalle osservazioni e dalla sperienza. Se il nostro se-
From this passage, and others similar in tone, it becomes evident that Gozzi's character to a large extent prevented him from coming to terms with the present.

Critics have often labelled Gozzi misanthropic and reactionary, yet it is possible that this disgust and conservatism concealed the doubt-ridden mind of a man trying to preserve some semblance of order, not only in the society around him, but also within himself. His egocentric nature and his social position gave him an outward air of superiority which he supported, as we have seen, by his interpretation of the function of religion and politics in society. Behind this mask of superiority, however, fermented a deeply-rooted and ever-increasing fear of future chaos. From this apprehension arose the need to justify his thoughts and actions to others and above all to himself. His last and most intimate work, the Memorie inutili, abounds in trivialities given the importance of major events: the family squabbles, centered around his brother Gasparo's wife, Luisa Bergalli; his love affair with an actress, Teodora Ricci, and the subsequent scandal involving the diplomat, Pietro Gratarol.
Gozzi described in lengthy detail quarrels he had with his mother and sister-in-law over the management of family finances, sensing himself the victim of their malice. He summed up the mood of these chapters in the following subtitle: "I become, without fault of my own, quite unjustly, the object of hatred to all members of my household." 25

The desire to justify his actions also provoked Gozzi to devote thirteen chapters of his memoirs to describing his five year relationship with Teodora Ricci and to relating his side of the ensuing dispute with a rival who sought and won her favor. A note of hypocrisy creeps into the narrative when Gozzi declares that he gave his controversial play, Droghe d'amore, in which one of the characters satirized Gratarol, to the Sacchi troupe only because he had nothing else ready:

"In fact, I had nothing on hand but the Love-Potions. Pestered by perpetual applications for this comedy, in an evil moment I drew it from its sepulcher and tossed it over to the capocomico... It was impossible to foresee that a chain of untoward circumstances would convert this harmless drama into an indecent personal satire upon Signor Gratarol.... I was placed in a false light - shown up to public curiosity as the prime agent in a piece of vulgar retaliation, the victim of a weak and jealous fantasy.... Far be it from me to assert that Gratarol was not brought upon the stage in that very comedy of my creation. He certainly was. But he owed this painful distinction to his own bad management, to the credulity with which he drank the venom of a spiteful woman's tongue, to the steps he took for prohibiting my play which aroused the curiosity of the whole city and gave it a succès de scandale...." 26

Without going into tedious detail, suffice it to say that once
again Gozzi felt it necessary to demonstrate that he was misrepresented, and, in this case, to remove any blame from himself for the series of events which culminated in Gratarol's flight from Venice.

In addition to obvious personal reasons for attacking Gratarol, Gozzi saw in him a representative of the new age: a decadent dandy and corrupt government official. Commenting on Gratarol's visit to his home, Gozzi wrote: "I was positively taken aback to hear a secretary of the august Venetian Senate, an ambassador-elect from the most Serene Republic to the court of a monarch of the Two Sicilies, discussing such a frivolous affair with so much seriousness and making such a fuss about it". Yet Gozzi himself was too much involved in the scandal to perceive that it was a manifestation of decadent conditions in the Republic - a 'tempest in a Venetian teapot', so to speak.

The duality of Gozzi's character, as revealed above by the juxtaposition of his religious and political thoughts and his actions, often caused him to contradict himself. His stern moral preachings tend to remain cold and abstract, part of the mask he presented to the world outside. Although in theory he upheld the Old Regime, and although the Enlightenment with its fraternity of mankind naturally provoked his disgust, he was nonetheless a product of those very times against which he fought. He demanded authority and orthodoxy, yet was himself a non-conformist whose pseudonym was "Il Solitario" and whose motto was "far da sè, non comandato"; he preached Catholicism, yet there
was little evidence of deep dedication to religious principles. He seemed to grasp at the certainty to dogma and authority more from an inner need of stability than from conviction.

Able to approach the present only with scorn and bitterness, Gozzi sought strength in the past. At a time when men such as Muratori were breaking down blind veneration for the past with objective and scholarly research, he glorified the beliefs and traditions of his forefathers. He did not fail, however, to perceive the decadence of the past, as well as that of the present, when he was writing the *Marfisa bizzarra*. It was during this same period that he turned to composing dramatic fables, preferring a world of fantasy and parody in which he could record his ideas far from the ugly realities of the present and the threatening prophecy of the future. Polemics had made him a writer; polemics and imagination were to make him a playwright: he would, therefore, be a satirist.

Although we may find Gozzi at times too given to pessimism and adverse criticism of the Enlightenment, we must nonetheless acknowledge justifiable reasons for his conservatism. Much of his opposition to the Enlightenment was due to his awareness that the high ideals of the French philosophers would be misunderstood and misused by the people: the result, he realized, would be anarchy.

He recognized the danger inherent in the concept of popular sovereignty. The masses, he knew, were not yet ready to accept the responsibilities which accompanied their freedom. Rather than
prejudice their immature minds with ideas they could not comprehend and handle intelligently, "sophisms" as Gozzi called them, he quite possibly felt that the masses should be instructed and guided by their leaders, in much the same way as a parent raises a child, gradually increasing responsibility as the child matures. Thus, it was the duty of the cultured members of a society to lead and advise the uneducated. He did not conceive of this taking place in any other than a class-structured society. That, in the Eighteenth century, the intelligensia belonged, for the most part, to a specific class, the nobility or the clergy, was merely an historical fact, not something Gozzi particularly favored— it was simply the social situation he was faced with.

He, therefore, placed responsibility upon the only groups which, in his time, were in a position to discharge it: the clergy and the aristocracy. He censured them for failing in their duty to the people as severely as he censured the masses for their lack of respect for spiritual and temporal authority. He opposed the view that material gain indicated social progress because he found that this wealth was not accompanied by a sound moral commitment: he decried both the immoderation and the irresponsibility of the wealthy and the envy and discontent of the commoners.

The fervid way in which Gozzi expressed his view has led many critics to label him as ultra-conservative and reactionary. In the examples cited above, however, he reveals himself more clearly as a man who valued moderation, both in society and in the individual, although he did not always exemplify it in his own
life and writings. He sincerely valued moral principles which are not yet as outdated as some would have us believe.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTERS I AND II


3. ibid., p.92.

4. ibid., p.30.


7. ibid., p.86.


10. ibid., p.166.


12. ibid., p.1054-1055.


14. ibid., p.44.


16. ibid., p.1153.


22. ibid., p. 101.


26. ibid., p. 245.

27. ibid., p. 238-239.

28. Gozzi, Opere, p. 11.
Chapter 3

Gozzi as a Playwright

Social and political thought of the Eighteenth century naturally made its way into the contemporary theatre. Although as yet having little political strength, the rising bourgeoisie did find an outlet for its opinions in the theatre through such playwrights as Carlo Goldoni. Thus a social class more or less ignored in the higher forms of literature was now presented on the stage. In dramatic productions, the common man had previously assumed a comic or secondary role, such as a buffoon or servant, subordinate to heroes and heroines of the nobility. He now appeared on stage as a hero in his own right, spotlighting the traditions, beliefs, and problems of his particular class. A whole way of life heretofore portrayed only in a comic way, now received the playwright's sympathy and was treated with understanding, sobriety, and an ever-increasing realism.

Not everyone supported this theatrical innovation, reflecting as it did, the change in political and social environment. Not surprisingly, it found a staunch and zealous opponent in Carlo Gozzi.

In order to follow the development of his views on the theatre one must begin by determining why Gozzi, a nobleman by birth and an aristocrat by nature, should have turned to writing plays. While still a child, he dabbled in the theatre: he relates in his memoirs how he and his brothers and sisters delighted one and all with the improvised farces they staged at the family
country estate. Gozzi and his sister, Marina, imitated the coarse ways of the nearby villagers: "The imitation", he assures his reader, "was so exact that our bucolic audience hailed it with Homeric peals of laughter." At the age of twenty, while in military service in Dalmatia, he was chosen to represent a commedia dell'arte character, the servetta, in a group of male dil­letants who performed at the court theatre. He explains that he adapted this role to suit its new setting by assuming the man­ners and dress of a Dalmatian servant-girl, and by using a mixture of Venetian dialect and Illyrian pronunciation and phrasing. If we are to believe him, this character of his own cre­ation was a great success and enlivened many an improvised comedy.

The many theatrical productions, including his best known plays, the Fiabe, which he wrote in Venice over a twenty-five year period, were given without exception to the Sacchi troupe, one of the last companies to perform extemporaneous plays.

His Fiabe emanated from a theatrical feud with two contemporary playwrights, Carlo Goldoni and Pietro Chiari. Although Gozzi had ridiculed them earlier, in the publications of the Accademia dei Granelleschi, it was in 1757, with the Tartana degli influssi, that he really began his attack on the playwrights of the new theatre. Feigning that he was publishing the almanac of a now-deceased friend, he dedicated it to one of the founders of the Academy, Daniele Farsetti.

Goldoni sharply retorted that Gozzi's was a mere bystander's
criticism of an already successful dramatist:

"Ma conceder si può questa licenza
A chi in collera va colla fortuna,
Che per lui non ha molta complacenza.
Chi dice mal senza ragione alcuna,
Chi non prova gli assunti e gli argomenti
Fa come il can che abbaia alla luna." 2

Angered at this gibe, Gozzi hastily wrote *Il Teatro Comico all'Osteria del Pellegrino*. In it, he and the other members of the Academy are assembled at an inn one day during Carnival, when a monstrous creature wearing a four-faced mask approaches them. It is an allegorical caricature of Goldoni's *Teatro Comico*, a play in which the author had presented some of his theatrical methods and innovations. In the ensuing dialogue with the monster, Gozzi censures his future rival for his demagogical love of the common people, for his ironic attacks on the nobility, and for his lack of moral seriousness. Although he declined to publish this work, Gozzi continued to harass Goldoni by printing articles in the *Atti dei Granelleschi* until the conflict later rose to an artistic level, when Gozzi presented the first *fiaba*, *L'Amore delle tre melarance*, on January 21, 1761.

With this play Gozzi initiated the most productive period of his long career as a dramatist. He launched a new assault on Goldoni and Chiari, proposing to 'beat them at their own game'. In the memoirs he explains:

> Without pursuing the details of this literary war which raged between the years 1757 and 1761 I will only touch upon those circumstances which led me to try my fortune on the stage as a dramatic writer. Both Goldoni and Chiari professed themselves the champions of theatrical reform; and part of their programme was to cut the throat
of the innocent *commedia dell'arte*, which had been so well supported in Venice by four principal and deservedly popular masks: Sacchi, Fiorille, Zannone, and Darbes. It seemed to me that I could not castigate the arrogance of these self-styled Menanders better than by taking our old friends Truffaldino, Tartaglia, Brighella, Pantalone and Smeraldina under my protection." 3

Calling Gozzi a verbose wordmonger, Goldoni asserted that the popularity of his own comedies was proof enough of their worth and that it was one thing to be a critic, quite another to be an artist. Gozzi accepted this challenge and declared that with no more than "old wives' fairy stories" he could fill the theatres of Venice:

"Shouts of incredulous and mocking laughter, not unnaturally greeted this Quixotic challenge. They stung my sense of honour, and made me gird up my loins for the perilous adventure... I made a present of *L'Amore delle tre melarance* to Sacchi's company of comic players, and the extravaganza was produced in the theatre of San Samuele at Venice during the Carnival of 1761.... Who could have imagined that this twinkling spark of a child's fable on the stage should have outshone the admired and universally applauded illumination of the two famous talents, condemning them to obscurity, while my own dramatized fairy-tale thrived and enthralled the public for a period of many years? So wags the world!" 4

In his introduction to the play, Giuseppe Petronio comments that it was a literary satire against Goldoni and Chiari. The fabulous and grotesque stage devices served to ridicule the two adversaries, their theatre, and even the metre they used. At the same time, Gozzi's recourse to the traditional forms of *commedia dell'arte* sought to demonstrate the vitality of the genre. The fable-like naivity of the theme sought to disprove
the assertion that Goldoni's success was due to the realism of his plots and dialogues.  

Why did Gozzi choose commedia dell'arte as his means of opposing the new theatre, especially that of Goldoni? Since he was unable to compete with his rival in presenting something new, he determinedly selected what he considered the antithesis of Goldoni's socially imbued theatre. As Petronio discerningly observes: "...è naturale che, come misura estrema, non avendo la forza di contrapporre cultura a cultura, ideologia a ideologia, si ricorra alla teorizzazione dell'arte-puro-divertimento, pascolo degli occhi e degli orecchi, estranea quanto più sia possibile alla vita reale." Gozzi, therefore, found in commedia dell'arte a traditional and national theatrical genre which was relatively free of ideological content and based, not upon the ideas of its author, but upon sheer technique and acting ability. The masked characters gave him types which were detached from reality. Their buffoonery supplied a comic atmosphere which excluded any possibility of idealization of the lower classes. By its very local color, this "national pride of Italy" as Gozzi called it, would enable him to combat the corrupting influence of foreign ideas.

Gozzi, therefore, began his theatrical career by proclaiming himself the defender of improvised comedy and the protector of the Masks. But what, in fact, was he so fervently defending and protecting?

Regardless of how outstanding commedia dell'arte had once been, by Gozzi's time its prestige had already considerably de-
clined. Relatively few were the truly talented actors carrying on the tradition of extemporaneous theatre. The vast majority were mere tradesmen, reduced to using caricature, crude allusions, and obscenities to gain the applause of their audiences. Gozzi himself judged the quality of such acting:

"Intorno all'esercitare l'arte loro, tutta la scola e l'educazione che hanno è il saper leggere e scrivere, chi più e chi meno scorrettamente. Ne ho conosciuti di quelli e di quelle che non avevano nemmeno queste facoltà, e tuttavia facevano leggere la parte, che era loro conseguita, da qualche amico o da qualche congiunto tante volte quante bastavano a imprimer di quella un abbozzo nella loro memoria. L'orecchia attenta al suggeritore bastava a far rappresentare un eroe o un'eroina senza alcuna verità, ricchi di contrasensi, di tardanze, di retrocessioni, e più ignoranti del comico o della comica che li rappresentava." 7

With such artists, the commedia dell'arte could not be rejuvenated. The scenarios of this period did little more than repeat already worn out plots. Improvised comedy of the Eighteenth century was, in short, a rigid and static art form, which could not be further developed without essential renovation.

Commedia dell'arte was basically a comedy of movement, not of character and of feeling; of fun, not of wit; of easy dialogue, not of eloquent speeches; popular, not courtly. Both Gozzi and Goldoni, therefore, had to modify it considerably. Whereas the less impetuous Goldoni moved slowly and moderately in his theatrical reform, his fiery rival plunged ahead in a flurry of ideas and counter-ideas. Opposing Goldoni's method of reform Gozzi zealously set about to put his own into action. It was to be not a reform, but a restoration, an ennobling of the once
proud Italian theatrical tradition.

While proclaiming himself its champion, Gozzi in fact, strayed far from the crux of extemporaneous theatre. In his plays, the pompous verse and the introduction of philosophical and moral concepts gravely inhibited the spontaneity of commedia dell'arte. Whereas Goldoni made his characters familiar enough to be accepted, Gozzi relied on the superficial familiarity of the Masks and on the uncommon serious characters to attract his audiences. The Masks, moreover, formed only the background of the action, centre stage was reserved for the often cold and abstract serious characters, who existed, it would seem, merely to voice their author's opinions. The scenario, basic plot outline for an improvised play, he also drastically modified.

After reading Gozzi's many statements about reviving commedia dell'arte, one would logically expect to find his plays consisting mainly of the traditional collection of scenarios; of the ten fiabe, however, only the first, L'Amore delle tre melarance, even remotely resembles the usual plot sketch. It is a most extraordinary scenario: not only does it describe the stage setting and summarize the action, but it also paraphrases in detail, or even directly quotes the actors' lines. More curious are Gozzi's own explanations of his satirical purpose and his comments on how well the audience received various parts of the play. Throughout the work, he makes such remarks as: "Ringrazio il Sig. Chiari, che m'ha dati vari specchi nelle sue Opere per far una parodia caricata dicaratteri....Tutte queste trivialità, che rap-
presentavano la favola triviale, divertivano l'Uditorio colla loro novità quanto...tutte l'opere triviali del Sig. Goldoni.... Uscivano Tartaglia, e Truffaldino armati, come s'è detto, e uscivano con uncorso velocissimo. Avevano un Diavolo con un mantice, che, soffiando lor dietro, li faceva precipitosamente correre.... Ho infinito obbligo al Sig. Chiari dell'effetto efficacissimo, che faceva questa diabolica parodia. Nelle sue Rappresentazioni, tratte dall'Eneide, egli faceva fare a' suoi Troiani nel giro d'una scenica azione, de' viaggi grandissimi, senza il mio Diavolo col Mantice." 8

At one point, Gozzi even notes an obvious incongruity in the plot, lightly excusing it by implying that his main purpose in such a work is simply to entertain: "Ecco un errore ben degno di censura: se meritasse censura una diavoleria, come fu questo scenico abbozzo." 9 Towards the end of the play, the author gleefully breaks into the action to observe the excellent improvisation of the Masks, Truffaldino-Sacchi and Tartaglia-Fiorilli:

"Le maschere facete delle Commedia all'improviso in una circostanza simile a questo fanno delle scene di sproposti tanto graziosi, di scorci e di lazzi tanto piacevoli, che nè sono esprimibili dall'inchiostro, nè superabili da' Poeti." 10

From the examples cited above, it is obvious that rather than a plot outline, this version of the play is an account of the premier performance which includes a detailed resume of the action. The original scenario, the one used for the first performance, has disappeared; thus we are unable to judge if in it Gozzi was more faithful to the traditional form of commedia dell'arte.

In his preface to the Fiabe, G. Petronio notes that Gozzi
published the "analisi riflessiva", as the playwright called the plot sketch, in order to stress the satirical and polemic intentions of the play and to clarify the allegory, so that what would otherwise have been merely a joke, became a serious work imbued with polemics and satire.  

The second of the *fiabe*, *Il Corvo*, reveals a significant change in the author's intentions and a drastic alteration in form. The purpose of his first play, as seen above, had been to revitalize the *commedia dell'arte* and to reply to Goldoni's challenge that he write a comedy. He remarks in his memoirs:

"I staked my reputation on drawing more folk together than he (Goldoni) could do with all his scenic tricks, by simply putting the old wives' fairy-story of the *Love of the Three Oranges* upon the boards."  

With *Il Corvo*, however, Gozzi sought to demonstrate that "art in the construction of a piece, well-managed conduct of its action, propriety of rhetoric and harmony of diction, were sufficient to invest a puerile fantastic motive, if taken seriously, with the illusion of reality."  

This *fiaba* was to be a lofty tragedy, as Gozzi himself explained, to which he added the comic characters of the improvised theatre, thereby juxtaposing the tragic and the comic in content, in characters, and in language. But by this very intention Gozzi was compelled to deviate from his initial objective of proving the value of *commedia dell'arte*.

We now find the haughty supporter of improvised comedy, who prophesied certain doom for written theatrical pieces, himself composing not only the speeches of the serious characters, but also those of the Masks. He allows improvising only to Truffal-
dino and Brighella, and even their parts are sketched out beforehand. A comparison of short passages from these first two *fiabe* will demonstrate how much more detail Gozzi included in the latter. The following is a scene between Truffaldino and Tartaglia, taken from the first act of *L'Amore delle tre melarance*:

"Usciva quindi il facetissimo Truffaldino per far ridere l'infermo. La scena all'improviso, che facevano questi due eccellenti comici sul- l'argomento, non poteva riuscire che allegri­ssima. Il Principe (Tartaglia) guardava di buon occhio Truffaldino; ma per quante prove facesse non poteva ridere. Voleva discorrere del suo male, voleva opinione da Truffaldino. Truf­faldino faceva dissertazioni fisiche, satiri­che, e imbrogliante, le più graziose, che s'u­dissero." 14

What Truffaldino actually said must now be left to the imagination of the reader. The following scene from *Il Corvo*, between Brighella and Truffaldino, however, leaves very little unexpressed:

"Brighella - Esce frettoloso con del rumore. Truffaldino - lo minaccia con cenni, perché non desti la Maestà del Re. Brighella - che sono suonate le nove ore, è venuto per destar il Re. Truffaldino - con voce bassa, che sono le sei. Brighella - con voce bassa, che sono le nove. Non vuol preminenze, egli è capo­caccia, sa ciò, che fa. Si riscaldano, si mi­nacciano. Truffaldino sempre sostenendo, che le ore siano sei, e mostrando grandissimi ri­guardi, perché il Re non sia distato, alza le sue grida smisuratamente. Il Re si desta." 15

In *Il Corvo*, except for a few short scenes, the speeches of all the Masks are written in full. Gozzi explains in the preface to the play that he was compelled to write out the parts "...non so­lo dal capriccio, ma dalla necessità e dall'arte". He alludes to artistic reasons for having too severely limited the improvisa-
tion; could there be another, more subtle explanation, one concerned not with the form or content of the plays, but with the character of the author himself?

The theatrical battle with Goldoni and Chiari suited Gozzi well. His rivals were attempting something new, an innovation, and to Gozzi this in itself constituted good reason to attack. Defending *commedia dell'arte* also suited him; he was protecting a tradition, an ancient and glorious Italian art form. Yet this was not enough. He was too egotistical and proud to remain in the wings. Any piece which he wrote had to be recreated on stage exactly as he, its author, had envisioned it - identical in form and in content, assisted only by the carefully controlled interpretation of the actors, so that its allegorical, satirical, or polemical purpose was accurately presented. Because Gozzi was using his theatrical works as weapons in the battle against Goldoni and the Enlightenment in general, he could not allow inaccuracies or misinterpretations of the actors to interfere with the ideas he wanted to express. In this respect he could hardly have chosen a type of theatre less suited to his character and artistic ability than *commedia dell'arte*. In order to continue using it, therefore, he was more and more obliged to adapt and modify it, not only in form, as we have just seen, but also in content.

From the very beginning, in his theatrical productions Gozzi consciously changed the setting of his plays from that of the traditional *commedia dell'arte*. The earthiness of the village square gave way to the ceremonial splendor of a royal hunt or of a court.
ball. In keeping with his view that the theatre should not portray situations of everyday life, Gozzi deliberately divorced the action of his plays as far as possible from this reality. In direct contrast to Goldoni, he ignored especially the class he both hated and feared - the bourgeoisie. To the basic structure of commedia dell'arte he superimposed his own fairytale settings and characters which could have only an allegorical relationship to reality. The masked characters, therefore, find themselves in the fantastic realms of Gozzi's imagination or in such distant places as the Imperial Court of China, far from their native Italian piazza.

In traditional improvised comedy the Masks, as the main characters, provoked the action. Other characters, such as the lovers, were secondary. In Gozzi's plays, however, it is the Masks who play the secondary role. Surrounded by kings, princesses, magicians, and the like, the commedia dell'arte characters merely supply comic relief to the dramatic situations of the serious characters.

True to his view of social order Gozzi presented as main characters in his Fiabe only the upper class and royalty although he oftentimes disguised them as poor people or slaves. In accordance with his idea of justice, good was always rewarded, evil severely punished: in the last scene of L'Augellino belverde, for example, the wicked queen-mother, Tartaglionia, is transformed into a donkey. After transformations, breaking of spells, discovery of true identity, the involved plots invariably close with
either a royal wedding or court feast at which the Zanni entertain actors and audience alike.

What specific roles do the commedia dell'arte Masks play in Gozzi's *Fiabe*? In some instances, regardless of their alien surroundings, they remain much the same as in the original scenarios. A battle of words between Truffaldino and Brighella from *Turandot* preserves the familiar commedia dell'arte mood:

"Brighella - Detesta la crudeltà della Principessa. Dovrebbe maritarsi e troncare quella miseria, ec. Truffaldino - Che a non volersi maritare ha ragione, ec. Sono seccature indecrite, ec. Brighella - Che parla da Eunuco inutile, ec. Tutti gli eunuchi odiano i matrimoni, ec. Truffaldino - Collerico, che odia matrimoni, temendo che producano dei Brighelli. Brighella - Irritato; ch'è un galantuomo, ec. Che le sue massime sono perniziose, che, se sua madre non si fosse maritata, non sarebbe nato. Truffaldino - Che mente per la gola. Sua madre non fu mai maritata, ed egli è nato felicemente. Brighella - Si vede, ch'egli è un partorito contro le buone regole. Truffaldino - Ch'egli è capo degli Eunuchi; non venga ad impedir gli affari suoi, e vada, giacch'è maestro dei Paggi, a fare il suo dovere...." 16

Throughout the *Fiabe* Truffaldino is lively and amusing, animating the stage with his devilish tricks, always ready with a quick retort. His character oscillates between stupidity and cunning, between awkwardness and agility. Gozzi in creating him and Sacchi in portraying him have actually borrowed much from the other traditional Zanni, Brighella. There had already been, however, in fairness to Gozzi, a certain mixing up of the roles of the Zanni before he created his Truffaldino and Brighella. While enlivening the comedy, this blending nonetheless does detract
from the comic balance created by the interactions of the two buffoons. Often, as in *Il Corvo*, for example, Brighella, when confronted with the boldness of Truffaldino, is forced to retire timidly to the sidelines. At other times, however, he is the traditional greedy, idle, intriguing and cowardly hypocrite whether he plays the *commedia dell'arte* role of a servant, as in *La Donna serpente* and *La Zobeide*, or of a captain of the king's guard, as in *Il Mostro turchino* and *Zeir, re de' Geni*.

Tartaglia, a sly blend of dishonesty and hypocrisy, more or less preserves his traditional personality. His roles vary from that of Prime Minister or Lord Chancellor to that of a Prince. The maid-servant Smeraldina, one moment timid, the next moment bold, is the same facetious and merry flirt found in the improvised scenarios. Yet her facetiousness seems an exterior characteristic; she lacks the spirit of her prototype.

The least representative of the *commedia dell'arte* Masks in Gozzi's *Fiabe* is Pantalone. For all his mask and traditional costume, Pantalone, unique among the Masks, becomes a living character; yet precisely because of this he is the most out of place. Ernesto Masi says that into the character of Pantalone is woven all the spirit, good-naturedness, and cordiality along with the keen judgement and humor of the citizens of Venice as a whole. Can such a representative Venetian be at home in Gozzi's world of fables? And, even more crucial, could Gozzi, who so severely criticised Goldoni for putting the rank and file of Venice on the stage, possibly include in his own works an unaltered Pantalone? Placing the Masks in such foreign settings as oriental
courts and making them ministers, prophets, poets, and hunters according to the requirements of the plot, Gozzi could not preserve Pantalone's traditional character as a Venetian merchant. In the Fiabe, accordingly, one finds him as an Admiral, the Emperor's Secretary, the King's Minister, a tutor, and even a beggar - everything, that is, except a merchant. Oddly enough, the only merchant in the plays is Tartaglia, "ricchissimo mercante di Samarcanda", in I Pitocchi fortunati.

While he was composing the Fiabe, and to a greater degree when he wrote his memoirs, Gozzi's attitude toward the masked characters changed. Forgetting that in his first fiaba, he was seeking to rejuvenate the stricken commedia dell'arte, he composed the second, Il Corvo, as we have seen, for artistic purposes, to refute Goldoni's charges that the play's popularity was due only to the superb acting ability of the four Masks. In the Memorie inutili, written some fifteen years later, the reader is surprised to find the following passage. Replying to his rivals who viewed him as the "bolsterer-up of theatrical ineptitudes", and his "prolusions in a new dramatic style as crumbling relics of the old commedia dell'arte", Gozzi states:

"Everybody will allow that the masks which I supported as a tour de force of art and for the recreation of the public who rejoiced in them, play the least part in my scenic compositions; my works, in fact, depend for their existence and survival on the sound morality and manly passion, which formed their real substratum...." 17

In what amounts to an appeal to posterity, Gozzi asks that he be considered not as the restorer of commedia dell'arte, but as the
creator of a "dramatic new style". He hopes that future generations will see in the Fiabe not just his use of improvised theatre but also their "real substratum", their "sound morality and manly passion". This plea that his moral intent be recognized is in keeping with what he later wrote, as we shall see, concerning a playwright's responsibility to instruct and guide society. For this reason, perhaps, he now seems almost ashamed of the Masks, that very part of his theatrical productions which, according to his first declarations, was to have constituted their principal merit, their raison d'être. This change in attitude is evident even before Gozzi completed the Fiabe. On April 28 and June 21, 1762, between the first performance of Turandot and that of La Donna serpente, he staged two tragicomedies. They were performed by the Sacchi troupe, first in Mantua, then later that same year in Venice. In the preface to the plays Gozzi wrote:

"Il Cavaliere amico e la Doride sono due tragi­commedie ch'io composi pregato dal Sacchi. Egli desiderava d'introdurre nel Teatro, ac­creditato per le valenti Maschere, delle rap­presentazioni senza di quelle....L'attenzione di questo diligente, e bravo Comico Italiano, che intende le circostanze dei tempi, ha ri­dotta ora la sua truppa capace, e ben intesa in tutti i generi....La necessità di dover impiegare il Pantalone, il Tartaglia; senza le Maschere, e la Servetta, per iscarsezza di at­tori, mi fece scrivere in prosa la parte di questi tre personaggi, non atti a recitare in versi, e abilissimi per la prosa." 18

Obviously, Gozzi himself realized just as did Sacchi that change was necessary. Yet, Goldoni, almost twenty-five years earlier, in fact, had used a maskless Pantalone, in Momolo cortesan, and had done so not from necessity but because he felt the moment
had arrived "di tentar quella riforma in mira da si lunga tempo". 19

To consider Gozzi, as some critics have, the restorer and continuer of the _commedia dell'arte_, is an oversimplification. Possibly more than Gozzi, it was his rival Goldoni, who, by tearing the masks from the characters, thereby freeing them to laugh or cry maskless as they had done at their very beginning, was giving new impetus to the traditional comedy. True enough, Gozzi had presented the Masks, but by using them for his own specific purposes, he had rendered them relatively ineffectual because he had limited their improvisation, thus taking from them that very spontaneity for which they were admired by audiences and by Gozzi himself.

Hence, when composing the _Fiabe_, Gozzi deliberately modified and adapted _commedia dell'arte_, adding anything which suited his immediate intent, be it a Neopolitan fairy-tale or an Oriental legend. We therefore find an alteration in the form and content of the plays and in the intentions of the author. The form changes from the more or less improvised spectacle, _L'Amore delle tre melarance_, through the tragi-comic fables containing almost no improvisation, to the philosophical fable, _L'Augellino belverde_, and its sequel, _Zeim, re de' Geni_. Likewise in the content, magic and satire in the first fiabe yield to character study in _Turandot_ and finally to moralizing and allegory in the last two fables. Gozzi's purpose in writing also developed from specific satirical jabs aimed at rival playwrights in his native Venice to general social satire which condemned the En-
lightenment and its influence on Italian culture.

As Gozzi's artistic concepts matured, so did his opinions regarding the purpose of the theatre: he began a serious study of the theatre and its actors.

---

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER III


4. ibid., p. 182.


6. ibid., p. 25.


9. ibid., p. 69.

10. ibid., p. 77.

11. ibid., p. 27.


13. ibid., p. 185.

15. ibid., p. 109.

16. ibid., p. 259.


CHAPTER 4
GOZZI AS A WRITER ON THEATRE

In addition to composing plays, Gozzi also wrote about the theatre in his memoirs and in a treatise called the Ragionamento Ingenuo. He had very definite ideas regarding the close-knit relationship of author, actor, and audience; the value of extemporaneous versus written plays; and the purpose of the theatre.

Throughout these two works, Gozzi repeats that in his opinion, a playwright should never "let his pen out for hire". His own writings, he emphasizes, were always marked by freedom, boldness, pungency, and satire upon public matters; at the same time, moral and playful in expression. This was only possible because he had obligations to no one. As his plays were not sold, they gained the advantage of an independence, which secured for them toleration, appreciation, and applause on their own merits. Had he been paid for them, Gozzi continues, they would have lost their prestige: his antagonists might have stigmatized them as written merely for monetary gain. Moreover, payment either by publishers or by a theatrical troupe, would incur endless harassment and frustration. "The wretched pence they (the publishers) fling at a writer," Gozzi continues, "for some masterpiece on which he has distilled the best part of his brains, are doled out with the air of bestowing alms....Apollo protect a poet from being reduced to serve a troop of our comedians at wages!...There is not a stevedore who carries half the weight that he does; not an ass who gets more blows and fouler language, if his drama fails to draw the
whole world in a fever of excitement to the theatre."  

Gozzi also maintained that many playwrights were taking advantage of actors in order to make themselves famous, or to make money at their expense. Gozzi felt that a writer should either be paid by a wealthy patron or should publish his works, as he himself did, at his own expense. Likewise, a troupe of actors should receive the support of either a patron in a privately owned theatre or that of the public in publicly owned theatres. (Gozzi, therefore, sharply criticised Goldoni, who was paid by the troupe for which he wrote.) If actors were better educated, they would attain independence from playwrights. The refinements of education, together with better support and remuneration would do much to improve theatrical standards because actors would not have to appeal to vulgar tastes in order to maintain themselves.

The types of plays to be performed by actors also concerned Gozzi. Written plays, he maintained, lose the interest of audiences more quickly from performance to performance, than do their extemporaneous counterparts, because they contain little possibility for innovation. For this reason, he considered *commedia dell'arte* superior, as it offered the actor limitless opportunity to adapt his role to the audience's varying moods and tastes. (He quickly adds, however, that a play, to be long-lived, must contain more than just innovations and novelty: it must be permeated by a moral seriousness which will instruct and inspire theatre-goers.) Improvised comedy, Gozzi continued, throughout its long existence has always proven the most useful to Italian thea-
atrical troupes. It has endured due to insuperable ability to adapt, to be continually modified yet still draw on a three-hundred year old tradition. In keeping with his views on foreign influence, Gozzi saw in the Comedy of Masks an art form never successfully used by any other nation. As an example, he cites the failure of a French troupe of actors to impress the Venetian audience. Only Italian actors could create improvised comedies and with them lay the future of the theatre in Italy: "I bizzarri e ingegnosi personaggi improvisatori, che si guadagneranno la pubblica grazia, saranno ognora la base più forte per far durevole lo spettacolo teatrale tra noi." He then boldly affirms that commedia dell'arte, although in a period of decline, will revive: it will die only if the theatres of Italy close. He attributes the poor state of commedia dell'arte to the diffusion of written comedy.

Gozzi frequently criticised written comedies, especially those popularly called tragedie domestiche and commedie lacrimose, having as their subject matter tragic or comic events which took place, however, no longer in the classical environment of a court, but in provincial settings with the common people, not the nobility, as main characters. That Gozzi considered such theatrical productions socially corruptive is not surprising when one remembers his views regarding religion and the class structure of society. He also found them morally corruptive because in the plots, vices were not punished severely enough. He stated in the Ragionamento Ingenuo:

"Alla umanità, per lo più inclinata ad appagare le proprie sfrenate passioni, sono perniciosissimi maestri gli empi caratteri posti in scena da un'insidia raffinata, specialmente se questi tali empi non hanno un castigo
Here Gozzi is indirectly expressing what he considers one of the purposes of the theatre - to demonstrate, by the example set on the stage, proper moral and social conduct.

Gozzi frequently maintained that the theatre was an instrument to guide society. It was, therefore, the responsibility of a playwright to present in his works only situations which would help to accomplish this aim. Wise writers, he remarked, recognize the need for religion, for restraint, and for virtue, and also recognise the usefulness of splendour for Princes, which awakens veneration, devotion and fearful respect in the ruler's subjects.

The "dangerous sublimity" Gozzi had referred to regarding the education of the masses, when taken up by irresponsible playwrights and presented on theatrical stages, corrupted the people, provoking the following reactions:

"...fa giudice la umana ingordigia e sfrenatezza di se medesima, la irrita contro la subordinazione, che l'ha soggiogata colle provide leggi dettate dal lungo corso della esperienza; spezza il necessario freno alle figliuole, a' figliuoli, alle mogli, a' servi, a' sudditi; distrugge la immagine grande e utilissima della religione e il timore di un giudice punitore invisibile; cagiona i matrimoni disuguali non preveduti, sconvolgitori dell'ordine delle famiglie, i com-miserevoli frequenti suicidi, gli assassini, e persino i non rari abominevoli attentati, a' di nostri, alle sacre vite de' giudici e de' monarchi."

Poor Goldoni would never have imagined that his works could be so potentially evil! Imposters, as Gozzi called the new playwrights, were misusing the theatre and spreading corruption by
arousing the populace against established authority and tradition:

"Se da' nostri impostori si vuole la drammatica inserviente ad un lecito trattenimento, concediamolo; ma non ci scordiamo giammai che il recinto de' teatri diviene una scuola universale. Non difendo la barbarie; ma disprezzo la falsa sublimità della scienza, che d'oltremonti giunge a farsi adottare da noi." 7

Gozzi believed that a theatrical production should be instructive, yet innocent entertainment: an imaginative, fanciful work having at its base a firm moral principle which would have an elevating effect on the audience. A play should amuse, but it should not contain ideological undercurrents or have any relationship to everyday life. As he commented in the appendix to the *Ragionamento Ingenuo*:

"...nessuno potrà levarmi la facoltà di ridere di que' poeti, che pretendono di cagionar ne' teatri, puri recinti di passatempo e di passeggieri riflesi, gli effetti de' pergamì e de' confessionalì." 8

Gozzi thought that the best theatrical means of instructing the masses was to use the genre most natural to them, that is to say, the *commedia dell'arte*, "...la quale non è certamente che o uno spettacolo di mirabile grossolano e popolare, condotto colla oppressione del vizio e l'esaltazione della virtù, o una parodia caricata sul costume, arguta e piacevole, divertimento innocente...." 9

As I have already mentioned, however, Gozzi took from the comedy of Masks only that which he found useful, discarding anything he felt detracted from his specific intention of opposing Goldoni and the bourgeois theatre. How, then, did he use the *commedia*
dell'arte to educate the audience? Rather than present traditional improvised comedies, he took the Masks out of their familiar setting and placed them in a world of fable. Whereas the Masks had formed the main characters in commedia dell'arte, they were secondary characters in Gozzi's works, providing the amusement and comic contrast which he thought a play should contain. But it was to the serious characters that he entrusted the responsibility of instructing theatre-goers. In the same way as the nobility in society was supposed to guide the common people, the serious characters in the fiabe supplied the example of sound moral seriousness, of noble passions, and of elevated thoughts. We therefore find in the Fiabe serious characters such as Prince Calaf in Turandot, who wins the seemingly heartless princess by his valor, and Cherestani, the fairy heroine of La Donna serpente, whose love for a mortal leads her to relinquish immortality so that she may share the same fate as her lover. The thoughts and actions of these characters would, in Gozzi's view, inspire noble thoughts in the audience.

Gozzi's opinion of his great rival, Carlo Goldoni, was moulded to a large extent by personal, social, and artistic differences. Whereas Goldoni was open, sociable and modest in character, Gozzi was irritable, sarcastic, and proud. Goldoni's social position, as a member of the rising bourgeoisie, was of itself enough to arouse animosity in the nobleman.

There was no less disparity in their situation as writers and
in their artistic intentions. Gozzi piqued himself on the fact that he gave away his works and published them at his own expense. He chided Goldoni, who made a living from playwriting by selling his works to acting troupes. Recalling the remarks Gozzi made about "letting his pen out for hire", one can understand why he criticised Goldoni. His rival, if unable to afford the costs of publication, should have sought the support of a wealthy patron, rather than rely upon payment from theatrical companies.

It was due to Goldoni's need of remuneration that he maintained with actors a working relationship, a total involvement, which Gozzi, as the noble patron of the Sacchi troupe, could never have attained. As Goldoni was more directly concerned with the acting profession and did not consider himself socially above the actors, he was really in a better position to perceive how best to reform the theatre. Unlike Gozzi, he was open to theatrical innovation and appreciated the social significance of bourgeois plays, the so-called *tragedie domestiche* to *commedie lacrimose*.

Both playwrights deplored the decadent state of the Italian theatre and shared the desire to give it a much needed impetus. Goldoni, in fact, states:

"I fancied, besides, that the public would derive no little benefit, and he who should succeed no small praise, if some man of talent, inspired by the spirit of comedy, should attempt to lift the Italian stage out of its abasement. The hope of this glory finally enlisted me in the undertaking." 10

Gozzi envisioned his new theatre as national in character. So
did Goldoni:

"The stage must be imbued with national life, brought within the sphere of everybody, for national points of view differ as do customs and languages....During the last two centuries this kind of play had amused all Italy; in fact, my country had become distinguished because of it, no nation having been able to imitate Improvised Comedy." 11

As discussed above, Gozzi united commedia dell'arte with his own world of fable in order to elevate it. Goldoni, on the other hand, used it as the basis for a gradual shift from stylized settings to the realism of contemporary Venetian life. The way in which they adapted commedia dell'arte, therefore, reveals the fundamental difference in the artistic intentions of the two playwrights.

Gozzi was a fabulist, his rival a realist: the former presented the marvellous, the latter the natural. Gozzi's definition of a fable makes clear his opinion regarding the content of a play. It must have "...a grandeur which imposes, some impressive secret which enchants, novelty sufficient to arrest attention, eloquence to enthrall, sententious maxims of philosophy, witty and attractive criticisms, dialogues prompted by the heart, and, above all, the great magic of seduction whereby impossibilities are made to seem real and evident to the mind and senses of the audience...." 12

Goldoni's firm dedication to the real world is clearly defined in the following quotations:

"Comedy is what it should be when we seem to be in a company of neighbors or taking part in some familiar conversation, while in reality we find ourselves in the theatre. Nothing must be shown that has no counterpart in everyday life....I must confess that the two
books upon which I have meditated most and which I shall never repent having used are the World and the Stage. It is a fact that no one becomes a master in playwriting who neglects the study of these books. The first of the two, the World, ...presents to me the depth, the power, the effect of every human passion; and calling my attention to curious happening, it informs me concerning current customs; furnishing me with knowledge of the foibles and defects common in our century and nation, it indicates to me, through the medium of some excellent person, how virtue resists corruption.... The second, that is the book of the Stage, makes me see with what colors the characters, the passions, the actions we read about in the book of the World should be bodied forth,... I learn from the stage what is most likely to impress the minds of men, what will awaken wonder and laughter, and what will cause that delightful sensation which people come to enjoy in the theatre. It teaches me that this is provoked mainly by filling comedy with natural images and by tactfully placing before the vision of the audience those foibles and ridiculous delusions which can be seen in what happens all the time." 13

In his commentary on the theatre, Goldoni often indirectly criticised Gozzi's theatrical methods. He noted that those who had tried to save comedy by introducing... "...elaborate paraphernalia, transformation scenes and magnificent stage sets..." 14 were doomed to fail as soon as the novelty had worn off. Here Goldoni is referring to innovations attempted in the theatre before his time. His criticism, however, touches Gozzi, whose Fiabe, relied upon just such theatrical devices. Regarding Goldoni's and Chiari's response to the success of L'Amore delle tre melarance, Gozzi remarked in the Memorie:

"Its popularity they attributed to the co-operation of the four talented masks, whom they sought to extirpate, and to the effect of the transformation scenes which it contained...." 15
After observing the audience reaction to various plays, Goldoni comes to the conclusion, diametrically opposed to that of his rival, that "...more than the marvelous, it was the simple, the natural that won the hearts of an audience". He continues:

"The style, too, must be proper to comedy, that is to say, simple and natural, not academic or elevated. The great art lies in adhering to nature in all things, never deviating from it. Sentiments must be true, not affected; expression within the comprehension of all. The commonest traits please more than delicate conceits."

Similarly, the characters of a play should be unaffected and expressive. For this reason Goldoni recognized the necessity of removing the masks from the commedia dell'arte characters in order to give them life:

"The masks cannot but hamper the art of the actor. Whether he try to express joy or grief, whether he show passionate or gentle love, it is always the same leather that intrudes. He may gesticulate and vary the tone of his voice as much as he will; yet he can never express through his features, which are the interpreters of the heart, such passions as the character he represents may feel."

Because Gozzi used the Masks only for comic contrast, reserving the expression of human emotions for his serious characters, he was not faced with this problem. Yet it is precisely Goldoni's solution that enabled him to create on the stage characters from real life. Of the unmasked serious characters in Gozzi's plays, few are imbued with this naturalness because they form a vital and inescapable part of the fabulous atmosphere designed by their author. Goldoni's heroes, to use his own words, "...were men, not
demigods. They showed human foibles in the way we all know them to be; they did not carry their virtues and vices to fantastic excess".19 These life-like heroes were often taken from the streets of Venice. In his memoirs, Goldoni cites a good example:

"I left my house for a walk about St. Mark's Square, seeking distraction. I looked about to see if any of the masks or jugglers might furnish me with the subject of a comedy or farce for Shrovetide. I met, under the arcade of the clock, a man with whom I was instantly struck, one who provided me with the subject of which I was in quest. This man was an old Armenian, ill dressed, very dirty, and with a long beard, who went about the streets of Venice selling dried fruits of his country...Nothing more was needed to send me home satisfied. I entered my house, shut myself up in my closet, and began a popular comedy...." 20

As we shall see, Gozzi censured his rival for presenting such people on the stage.

A number of passages in Gozzi's prose works contain his criticism of Goldoni. Perhaps the most concise is the following quotation from the Memorie inutili:

"I recognize in him an abundance of comic motives, truth and naturalness. Yet I detected a poverty and meanness of intrigue; nature copied from the fact, not imitated; virtues and vices ill-adjusted, vice too frequently triumphant; plebeian phrases of low double meaning, particularly in his Venetian plays; surcharged characters; scraps and tags of erudition, stolen Heaven knows where, and clumsily brought in to impose upon the crowd of ignoramuses. Finally, as a writer of Italian - except in the Venetian dialect, of which he showed himself a master - he seemed to me not unworthy to be placed among the dullest, basest, and least correct authors who have used our idiom." 21

Elsewhere in his memoirs and in his treatise on the theatre, Gozzi
defines what he considers major issues. He elaborates on Goldoni's copying, rather than imitating nature, as well as on his lack of moral seriousness:

"Espose sul teatro tutte quelle verità che gli si pararono dinanzi, ricopiate materialmente e trivialmente, e non imitate dalla natura, nè coll'eleganza necessaria ad uno scrittore. Non seppe, o non volle, separare le verità, che si devono, da quelle che non si devono porre in vista sopra un teatro; ma si è regolato con quel solo principio, che la verità piace sempre. Da ciò nasce, che le sue commedie odorano per lo più d'un pernicioso costume. La lascivia e il vizio gareggiano in esse colla modestia e colla virtù, e bene spesso queste due ultime sono vinte da' primi." 22

Giuseppe Petronio's comment on this passage is well worth noting. Gozzi reproaches Goldoni, he writes, for having presented all the facets of reality, naturalistically, so to speak, without selecting. This proposition is really inspired by classicism but behind Gozzi's esthetic reasons are ideological reasons, as he believed that a writer should select only that part of reality which, when portrayed on the stage, would not jeopardize the maintaining of the established order. 23

Regarding the characters of Goldoni's plays, Gozzi writes, "He frequently charged the noble persons of his plays with fraud, absurdity, and baseness, reserving serious and heroic virtues for personages of the lower class, in order to curry favour with the multitude, who are always too disposed to envy and malign the great" 24 Gozzi recognized the implicit significance of such satire on the ruling class and of sympathy for the populace; he naturally viewed it as viciously subversive. He sums up his opinions on Goldoni by
"In my eyes he had always the appearance of a man who was born with the innate sense of how sterling comedies should be composed, but who, by defect of education, by want of discernment, by the necessity of satisfying the public and supplying new wares to the poor Italian comedians through whom he gained his livelihood, and by the hurry in which he produced so many pieces every year to keep himself afloat, was never able to fabricate a single play which does not swarm with faults." 25

He concludes in the Ragionamento ingenuo:

"Se questo scrittore avesse avuto quella colta educazione, che riduce i talenti a rettamente ed elevatamente pensare e a leggiadramente scrivere, e si fosse ristretto a un piccolo numero di commedie ben ponderate, egli era assolutamente un genio capace di fare a se medesimo e all'Italia nel comico genere un onore immortale." 26

The above comparison of Gozzi with his theatrical adversary demonstrates the way in which, both as men and as writers, each reacted to the environment of their native city. Goldoni accepted and welcomed the social change of his age. His attitude and his works, therefore, look toward the future. He represents, as Petronio suggests, what was alive and modern in Eighteenth Century Venice. Gozzi, on the other hand, totally dissatisfied with contemporary conditions, turned to the past; consequently, he exemplifies what was static and immobile in that same society.
FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 4

2. ibid., p. 98.
4. ibid., p. 1047.
5. ibid., p. 14.
6. ibid., p. 1054.
7. ibid., p. 1053.
8. ibid., p. 1103.
9. ibid., p. 1050.
11. ibid., p. 519-520.
14. ibid., p. 519.
17. ibid., p. 531.
18. ibid., p. 521.
19. ibid., p. 522.
20. ibid., p. 534.
23. ibid., p. 1075.


CHAPTER 5
GOZZI AND THE CRITICS

Criticism of Gozzi's works, especially of the *Fiabe*, began while the author himself was still alive. His contemporary, Giu­seppe Baretti, at first considered Gozzi a new Shakespeare, but after having read the *Fiabe*, labelled them a "mucchio d'oro e di sterco" and their author a "scioccone ingegnoso, animale, meritevole d'una buona bastonatura". Baretti had tolerated the Masks on stage, but had imagined to find them suppressed in the written form. He had expected conventional tragedy, not dramatic fables.

Cesarotti and Signorelli voiced the indignation of many enlightened intellectuals at the puerility, improbability, and romanticism of the *Fiabe*.

In Germany, Schiller transformed *Turandot* into a drama, subduing the Masks and the burlesque atmosphere and developing the pathetic eloquence. Goethe admired Gozzi's blending of the serious and the comic in an essentially popular tone, a point which Bouterwek also noted.

By the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, the Romantics had already begun their remarkable transfiguration of Gozzi into a forerunner of their movement: Tieck drew on *La Zobeide* for his drama *Blaubart* and F. Schlegel compared Gozzi to Shakespeare. His brother, W. Schlegel, amplified the theme of the blending of serious and comic begun by Goethe and Bouterwek:

"The wonderful extravagance of the masked parts serves as an admirable contrast to the wild marvel of fairy tale. Thus the character of these
pieces was, in the serious part, as well as in the accompanying drollery, equally removed from natural truth." 1

Hoffmann was enthusiastic about the contrast between lyricism (which really does not exist in Gozzi's works) and the burlesque. This error of the Romantics was carried to an extreme by F. Horn, for whom Gozzi personified the romantic spirit.

Madame De Staël agrees with the romantic view of Gozzi, accentuating his fancy and imagination. Sismondi comments likewise, questioning whether or not the fiabesco is suited to the character of the Italians, with or without the counterbalancing of the comic. Chasles depicts Gozzi as a severe and gloomy person, fighting against the new age. Paul De Musset, seeing in Gozzi another Aristophanes, completes the romantic portrait, drawing support from the chapter in the memoirs called "Life's absurdities and contrarities". Maurice Sand and Guinguene upheld this opinion. Among the romantic admirers of Gozzi were also Schopenhauer and Wagner, the latter drawing on La Donna serpente for his first work, Die Feen.

The realistic Italians saw little in Gozzi. Ugoni objected to his reactionary tendency saying that his fantasy was without meaning, sentiment, or judgement. Of the ten Fiabe, Tommaseo and Settembrini found only L'Amore delle tre melarance of any artistic value.

Approaching more modern criticism, we find a defense by Haym of the mime-like quality of the Masks in Gozzi's plays, a violent attack by Klein in the name of liberalism, and a more reasonable judgement by Schnakenburg, who rated Gozzi, not with Aristophanes,
but with Rabelais and Aretino.

A. Royer, in the introduction to his translation of the *Fiabe* into French, comments: "...je n'annonce ni un grand philosophe, ni un profond moraliste, ni un poét de premier ordre, mais un écrivain bizarre, original....La féerie prise au sérieux, provoquant l'émotion dramatique, voilà le moyen et le but théorique de Gozzi".  

It is De Sanctis, marking the passage from the old to the new criticism of Gozzi, who first perceives that Gozzi's fabulous world is not a spontaneous creation, but a planned jest:

"La naturalezza di questo mondo è nella ingenuità delle sue impressioni, curiosità, maraviglia, sospensione, terrore, collera, pianti, riso, com'è ne' racconti delle società primitive. Questa ingenuità è perduta: la naturalezza di Gozzi è negligenza e volgarità. Quelle apparizioni non hanno per lui serietà, sono giochi e passatempi: perciò scherzi abboracciati e senza alcun valore proprio, che, aiutati dalla mimica, da' lazzzi, dallo scenario, potevano produrre effetto nella rappresentazione, e alla lettura piacciono, senza che ti lascino nell'animo alcun vestigio."  

He also realizes that Gozzi had no concrete and well-disciplined goal in mind when he composed the *Fiabe* and that those very elements which the playwright had considered essential to his works, have become, in fact, superfluous detail:

"Gozzi non ha chiaro lo scopo, e vuole una cosa e fa un'altra, e procede a balzi, tirato da varie correnti. Vuole favorire le maschere; vuole parodiare gli avversari; vuole rifare Pulci e Ariosto, ristaurando il fantastico; vuole toscaneaggiare, e vuole insieme essere popolare e corrente; vuole ricostruire il vecchio e comparir nuovo. Fini transitori, i quali poterono interessare i contemporanei, dargli vinta la causa nella polemica e nel teatro, e che oggi sono la parte morta del suo lavoro."  

The content of the *Fiabe*, De Sanctis continues, is the poetic world
as it is imagined by the people, impressionable, easily moved to laughter and to tears, filled with the marvellous and the mysterious. Its basis is the supernatural in varying forms: miracle, witchcraft, magic. This world of the imagination, more vivid the less intellect is developed, is the natural foundation for popular poetry in its diverse forms: tales, stories, comedies, and farces. Gozzi succeeded in attracting audiences, the critic concludes, because the fantastic world he created has an absolute value and corresponds to certain chords which, when managed by the skilled hands of an artist, always sound in the soul: everyone carries within him some of the simplicity of childhood and of the common man.

Gozzi receives sympathetic criticism at the hands of Vernon Lee. Although influenced by the Romantics, she still pinpoints the fragmentary and incomplete aspect of Gozzi's character and plays:

"Carlo Gozzi, like every imaginative mind, saw in everything much more than it contained, but, unlike the great artist, he could not extract that something and make it his own....Always suggestive and sometimes successful in working out the suggestion - such must be the final verdict on Carlo Gozzi's plays." 6

The diligent historical and bibliographic research of Magrini and Malamani and the thorough criticism of Masi contributed greatly to the understanding of Gozzi and the times in which he lived. Masi edited a new publication of Gozzi's *Fiabe* (until then there had existed only the two editions published by Gozzi himself) accompanying it with a psychological study of the author and an aesthetic criticism of his work. In agreement with De Sanctis, regarding
the fiabesco in the plays, the critic then concludes that the only true judgement of Gozzi is found at a point midway between the enthusiasm of the German Romantics and the contempt of earlier Italian critics. The Romantics had divorced Gozzi from his forerunners in Italian literature; comparing him, as a dramatic poet, to Aristophanes and Shakespeare, and as a humorist, to Richter, Swift, and Stern; and altering both his character and the circumstances of his life. Of Gozzi, they created a legendary personage, of his native Venice, a city of dotards, willingly returning to the pastimes of childhood, of the Fiabe, a spontaneous creation. Masi points out that these conclusions were not based on fact. Italy had had both commedia dell'arte and written comedy. In the scenarios of the improvised comedy, for example in those of Flaminio Scala, one already finds the phantasmagory of Gozzi's fables, the mixing of the Masks with hermic characters, and the setting of plays in China, Morocco, Persia, and Egypt. Calmo and Ruzzante had already attempted to raise the modest aims of popular and rustic comedy. Gozzi himself states that these are the theatrical traditions he wanted to gather and preserve. Regardless of the many contradictions in Gozzi's intentions and practice, Masi concludes, "...ciò non toglie che in Carlo Gozzi non sia giusto riconoscere un ingegno vivissimo, una grande abilità teatrale, una vena straricca d'ironia, di stravaganza e di satira, una libertà ed un'audacia di forme, meritevole anche oggi di ammirazione e di studio".  

Because Masi's accurate criticism did much to dispell the far-fetched image of Gozzi created by the Romantics, it prepared the way
for more reasonable conclusions concerning the author and his work.

More details of Gozzi's life and character come to light in the introduction to Symonds' translation of the Memorie inutili and in an article by Serao, who, while acknowledging the fantasy in the Fiabe, limits its significance. Of the plays, Symonds remarks that they are admirable "...not as finished literature but as the raw material of dramatic presentation. They need the life of action, the adjuncts of scenery, the illusion of the stage." 8

Monnier expresses an essentially romantic point of view. He contradicts it, however, by concluding that Gozzi had no real fantasy since his characters remain mechanical and puppet-like.

One of the first critics along with De Sanctis, to emphasize that when he began writing the Fiabe, Gozzi did not take them seriously, was Pettinato:

"C'è sempre, in fondo alla pagina seria, l'am­micco dell'uomo che ride....Il comico sotto­linea, insomma, continuamente il tragico e il meraviglioso, protesta ad ogni passo che l'autore non crede una parola di quello che dice, mette ad ogni rigo un segno d'intelligenza fra lui e coloro che 'sanno il latino'.

Il pubblico invece prese tutto sul serio; tanto sul serio che, per quelle 'favate', i romantici di Germania credettero in buona fede il Gozzi uno dei loro precursori....Cominciò a sti­mare sè stesso e le proprie Fiabe quando finì di concepirle come fiabe, quando cominciò a ve­dere, nella loro informe materia da riso, il profile severo del muro che avrebbe tentato innalzare contro i gusti del pubblico, con­tro la democrazia e la libertà di pensiero, le 'novità pernizioze' di Francia." 9

Pettinato is also one of the first after Masi to recognize the val­ue of the Memorie inutili.
The ironic counterpoint of the magical and the real, a theme discussed by Schlegel, is taken up by Ziccardi in his analysis of the *Fiabe*. On the whole, he finds Gozzi a gifted playwright and admires his ability to create comic character for the talented *commedia dell'arte* actors of the Sacchi troupe.

Kennard expresses quite an exaggerated and negative opinion of Gozzi, based on the romantic view of Venice noted above, and on the absurd premise that the Italian race is not imaginative and could not, therefore, appreciate the fanciful Gozzi. Regarding the plays, he concludes:

"Gozzi's *Fiabe* amused the puerile and decadent Venetians. But the absurdities and impossibilities would surely weary us moderns. The acceptance by those Venetians of the misconstruction and misinterpretation of French philosophy which is found in these *fiabe*, gives pause for thought." 10

A much more realistic critic, Rusack, in the introduction to his study of Gozzi in Germany, recognizes the predominance of polemics and satire in the *Fiabe*:

"These fairy-dreams, that were the incidental result of literary warfare, and which employed to advantage five of the masks so admirably suited to principal actors of the Sacchi troupe, were not the spontaneous productions of an ardent imagination fired by enthusiastic ideals of art. The were, rather, conceived in a satirical and polemical spirit." 11

This opinion is shared by both Natali and Fubini. The latter, with some exaggeration, considers the *Marfisa bizzarra* Gozzi's most representative work as it best displays, in Fubini's view, his artistic and moral nature.

Croce, pointing out an error made by many critics, maintains that the *Fiabe* should be accepted and enjoyed in the same spirit.
in which they were written. Gozzi intended them to be witty the­
atrical jests, ridiculing his rivals and satirizing current phil­
osophical and social concepts. It is, therefore, in such a light
that they should be considered.

Possibly because he much prefers Goldoni, D'Amico gives an
unduly negative judgement of Gozzi's plays:

"In tutte dieci le fiabe del magnificato, freddo
e inumano Carlo Gozzi, non c'è la decima parte
di quella fantasia che scherza nel variopinto
frastuono delle Baruffe chiozzotte." 12

Ortolani holds much the same view. The opposite opinion,
however, is rather emotionally expressed by Sanesi: the magical
atmosphere of Gozzi's plays captivated his contemporaries, cap­
tivates us and will captivate our descendants until the source
of the imagination, which burns and shines even in the most pru­
dent and positive souls, is extinguished.13

In a well-balanced criticism of the Fiabe, Ghilardi acknow­
eledges Gozzi's theatrical talent, realizing, however, that it is
fragmentary:

"Nelle fiabe gozziane vi sono movimenti vivi,
poetici, in cui l'immagine serena e il can­
dore e l'ironia ravvivano le scene. Non
sono questi, caratteri usuali, ma momenti:
e una drammaticità sicura li domina." 14

Nicoll's study of commedia dell'arte compares Gozzi's use of
the Masks to that of Goldoni, concluding that the Fiabe do not,
in fact, bear out their author's avowed aim to rejuvenate tradi­
tional improvised comedy:

"Despite their charm, Gozzi's fiabe cannot ser­
iously be taken to be works designed to rehabil­
itate the commedia dell'arte, nor did they have any effect of this kind. Their ridicule gave them immediate popularity and eventually drove Goldoni from Venice; their delicacy and charm have kept some of them, in varying forms, alive in the theatre; but they mark in themselves a dead end. Perhaps we may decide that Gozzi was as responsible as Goldoni was for finally destroying the commedia dell'arte in Italy; and it is even possible to find agreement with those who claim to see more of its spirit preserved in the latter's comedies than can be found in the fantastic fables written by the former." 15

In appraising Nicoll's statement, one must bear in mind that he considered Gozzi's plays only in the light of the decaying commedia dell'arte. His comments may be quite valid in the context of his particular study, but one cannot fairly evaluate the playwright by merely determining whether or not he revived improvised comedy.

More or less agreeing with D'Amico's criticism of the fantasy in Gozzi's plays, Sapegno makes the following observation:

"Lo spunto fantastico delle Fiabe s'aggrava e si complica troppo spesso di ragioni satiriche e di motivi polemici, così la fiaba, già per se stessa incerta sempre fra il tono della rievocazione ingenua a quello della noiosa parodia, rischia anche ad ogni passo di precipitare nell'abisso di un fastidioso allegotismo; e nel complesso riesce assai meno fiaba, nel senso di mondo poetico collocato in un'atmosfera irreale, che non le migliori commedie goldoniane, le quali nascono e vivono in un'aria senza paragone più libera chiara e leggera." 16

Recent publications by two most able critics, Binni and Petronio, merit close consideration. Both begin by acknowledging that not just the Fiabe, but all of Gozzi's works were inspired either by personal or social polemics. Binni goes on to say that because Gozzi was not a truly great writer, his works reveal an impatient and pugnacious commitment, rather than a sincere and well disciplined
literary seriousness. Regarding the much discussed theme of the meraviglioso and the fiabesco in the plays, Binni furthers De Santis' discussion, explaining Gozzi's use of the fable in terms of the playwright's character and socio-historic position. Binni finds the magical atmosphere mechanical, lacking the primitive and popular quality of a fable. Gozzi's fabulous world was too intellectualized to be the result of a true outburst of creative fantasy. He continues:

"Che, oltre tutto, il conte Gozzi sentiva il 'popolare' e 'l'ingenuo' con il complicato compiacimento di un letterato frettoloso, ma tutt'altro che incolto, e di un conservatore rigido che amava l'ignoranza, la sanità, le virtù di obbedienza e fedeltà delle classi popolari come salvaguardia dell'ordine aristocratico e autoritario. Mentre il 'meraviglioso' era più frutto di una forte abilità immaginosa e compositiva che non di un sicuro slancio irrazionale e surreale." ¹⁷

Petronio also realizes that Gozzi could never truly abandon himself to fantasy:

"Il secco legnoso Gozzi non sente mai cantar-gliosi in cuore l'abbandono all'esotico o la nostalgia della fiaba....Questo gusto dei geni e delle fate, questo vagheggiare gli errori affascinanti delle favole con la loro grazia familiare, tutto questo è estraneo alle Fiabe di Gozzi, in cui il meraviglioso è decorazione, scenario, spettacolo, deus ex machina, trovata polemica contro un teatro nemico." ¹⁸

Petronio points out that Gozzi's limitations, both as a man and a writer, are historical - a result of the culture and society of his time. His greatest contradiction, the critic concludes, is that of Venice itself, oligarchic and aristocratic, seeing the dangers of the Enlightenment, wanting to combat it, but not having the necessary cultural weapons to do so, because, to a certain extent,
it no longer had a living culture. Under such conditions, Gozzi could not have done other than he did - create witty and lively pastiches in which the heroes or fantastic characters of the fables meet with the plebeian masks, typical of the Venetian lower classes.19

Initially Gozzi had considered his plays innocent entertainment, "pascolo degli occhi e degli orecchi", in which the only rule was that of capturing the attention of an audience; the only purpose, that of ridiculing his theatrical adversaries. To do this he chose two traditions of the people - commedia dell'arte and the folk-tale or fable.

The action of the plays, often motivated by a very complicated engine of plot devices involving mistaken identities, coincidences and mistimings, has the peculiarities of a farce, in which the characters need only be types, puppets moved from behind the scenes as events require. This is the milieu in which commedia dell'arte thrives.

One of the basic elements in this type of comedy is speed: the audience is given no time to ponder one statement or situation because the next is already demanding immediate attention before it, too, dies away. In the Fiabe, Gozzi often sets this rapid pace by the banter and buffoonery of the Masks and by the fast turn-over of situations and characters. Although we are given only a sketch of the following scene from Il Re cervo, we can still imagine the vivacity created on stage by the three comic improvisors:

The Masks are often responsible for quick changes in scenes. They interrupt the action, providing the necessary comic relief which enlivens and accelerates often over-burdened plots, as for example, the following short episode from La Donna serpente:


To the complex plots of farce, Gozzi added two elements foreign to comedy: the magical aura of fables and the solemnity of tragedy. This addition enabled him to considerably vary both the tempo and the scope of his plays.

Gozzi used the irrationality of fables as the deus ex machina to untangle sometimes hopelessly snarled plots, and as a theatric-
cal device to captivate an audience with the unexpected, the uni-maginable, the awesome. One finds a delightful example of the latter in L'Amore delle tre melarance when Truffaldino, hungry and tired, decides to cut open a magic orange:


Employed as a theatrical device, therefore, the supernatural aroused a tension and expectation which quickened the pace of the play. It also gave Gozzi the freedom to include anything he wished, because in a fable all is possible - reason does not limit imagination.

As he became more and more distressed about the social and moral decay of his times, he felt compelled, as we have seen, to voice a protest. In the fiabe he recognized an effective vehicle, but they had to be modified to suit their new purpose. Gozzi needed something to counterbalance the lightheadedness of commedia del-l'arte and the improbability of fables. If his protest was to be considered seriously by audiences, it had to be well presented, by characters worthy of the concepts he wanted to express. Such thoughts could hardly be spoken by Brighella or Truffaldino. Accordingly, Gozzi limited the farcical tone of his plays by severely restricting the improvisation of the Masks. Commedia del'arte was relegated to the sidelines. He also began to use the supernatural as a kind of retributive justice which gave weight to the playwright's ideas, and which inexorably punished the corrupters and evil-doers who represented the philosophers of the new age.
As his mouthpiece, Gozzi sought protagonists whose actions would inspire wonder and admiration and whose words would be heeded by the audience.

Within the framework of farce, therefore, he created characters such as Cherestan in La Donna serpente, whose nobility, emotion and sensitivity have much in common with the heroes of tragedy. A few of them, such as Calaf in Turandot, even succeed in breaking their puppet strings to live, if only for a few moments, beyond the world of their author's ideas. On such rare occasions Gozzi forgets himself and allows his keen sense of theatre to overpower his moralistic didacticism.

The movement in serious passages of the plays naturally slows down, giving the audience time to grasp and weigh what has taken place.

That which one finds in the Fiabe, therefore, is a potpourri of comedy, fable, and tragedy, mixed in varying quantities according to the demands of the plot and the intentions of the playwright. The result is certainly not great theatre - but it is both interesting and entertaining.

Gozzi's view of his own works, as seen above, changed from the initial lighthearted satirical jests aimed at lampooning rival playwrights to the solemn moral lessons aimed at dispelling illusions created by the French thinkers, illusions which were disquieting the masses and leading them towards chaos.

His ultimate opinion of the Fiabe was that they depended for their survival, not upon the comedy of Masks, nor upon the super-
natural atmosphere, but upon the "sound morality and manly pas­
sion" which formed their "real substratum". However, the calcula­t ed morally elevating effect Gozzi wanted his productions to have on the public conflicted with that of the genres he had chosen: a popular comedy or a fable amused and fascinated, but rarely mor­
alized. Although he felt his plays should guide and instruct, not merely entertain with earthy humor and awesome miracles, it is pre­cisely due to their blending of buffoonery and fable that the Fiabe have endured.

If they please us today, two hundred years after they were first performed, it is not because they teach us to live better. It is because, with no small amount of theatrical ability, their author appeals, to that simplicity and innocence of childhood and of unsophisticated society which are a part of everyone - at once per­sonal and universal.

If we enjoy the Fiabe now, it is not as literature, but as theatrical spectacle. They are not, nor were they ever intended to be, highly polished gems of great literary value, but rather, as Symonds and Croce suggest, raw material for dramatic presentation. Their principal merit lies in their theatricality, in their ability to momentarily delight and distract their audience - to provoke laughter, even tears, but not thoughts. Gozzi's first impression of his works as innocent entertainment is possibly the most accurate.
FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 5


4. Ibid., p. 360.

5. Ibid., p. 361.


21. Ibid., p. 396.

22. Ibid., p. 76.
CHAPTER 6
GOZZI'S MEMORIE INUTILI

Of the recent critics quoted in the last chapter, relatively few concern themselves in any detail with Gozzi's Memorie inutili; more often they are content to comment briefly that these memoirs best reveal their author's personality. So they do - and for that very reason they merit closer study.

The memoirs were written in Gozzi's old age, for the specific purpose of refuting the accusation of a Venetian diplomat, Pietro Gratarol, that he had been a hypocrite and a covert libertine. They include glimpses of the author's early years and his few but dramatic love affairs, as well as verbose accounts of family squabbles, of theatrical feuds, and of the public scandal over an actress in the Sacchi troupe, Teodora Ricci.

Intimate and rambling, the memoirs certainly lack, as Fubini remarks, the conciseness and unity of a premeditated and well-planned work. The only unity is given by the central figure, the author himself, who so dominates the narrative that the events of his life and the people he meets merely form varied stage sets in front of which the lead actor recites his monologue.

The Memorie inutili, in fact, could be considered a play, a puppet show in which all the characters are moved by strings controlled by the author. Gozzi himself takes the lead role as a puppet wearing an ironically smiling mask. The subtle line drawn between Gozzi, the actor, and Gozzi, the man, is a fascinating aspect
of the memoirs. Their author had well in mind the character representing himself which he wanted to create - but, fortunately, his puppet fails to convince, enticing us to look for the much more interesting and human author.

Gozzi hoped that posterity would see in him an example of what he thought the nobility should be: righteous and responsible, virtuous and incorruptible. He, therefore, wasted far too many chapters of his memoirs justifying his actions toward people with whom he had come in conflict: Chiari and Goldoni, his family, and ultimately, Pietro Gratarol. The dullness of these episodes reveals that even Gozzi found them otiose, but he needed them in order to maintain his puppet-self, the personal image he wanted us to see. Regarding actions he cannot justify (and often they prove the most enjoyable both to author and reader), he feigns shame, asking the reader to pardon such unworthy conduct.

The events of his youth, especially his years of military service in Dalmatia and his early love affairs, come back to him in his old age as carefree and exciting adventures. These episodes contain not only hints of hypocrisy and some moralizing (both of which arise from Gozzi's determination to disprove Gratarol's accusations), but also a good amount of boasting and bravado, and above all, a seldom found enthusiasm. The mask is almost removed; the satirical tone subdued in favor of the sheer pleasure of narrating. When relating these youthful experiences, not always in keeping with the picture of himself Gozzi wants to present, he assumes an apologetic tone, cautioning young people not to follow his example. The
reader, nonetheless, feels that he is far from regretting his past behavior.

Gozzi certainly did not want posterity to remember him as a humorist. Yet in his own peculiar way he showed himself to be one. His keen sense of the comic, the satirical, and the grotesque is due partly to his talent and experience as a dramatist and partly to his own personality.

His years in the theatre give the narrative of the memoirs a theatrical vividness, spontaneity and humor. The following incident, which takes place in Dalmatia, is a good illustration:

"The provveditore Generale was in the habit of riding in the cool some four or five miles outside the city; a troop of officers galloped at his heels, and I galloped with them. While we were amusing ourselves in this way, his Excellency took a fancy to hear my sonnet over again.... He called me loudly. I put spurs to my horse, while he, still galloping, ordered me to recite. I do not think a sonnet was ever declaimed in like manner since the creation of the world. Galloping after the great man, almost bursting my lungs in the effort to make myself heard, with all the trills, gasps, cadences, semitones, clipings of words, and dissonances, which the movement of a horse at full speed could occasion, I recited the sonnet in a storm of sobs and sighs, and blessed my stars when I had pumped out the fourteenth line.... I was rather afraid of becoming a laughingstock to my riding-companions also. Foolish fear! These honest fellows... were even jealous of a burlesque scene in which I played the buffoon, and sorry that they had not enjoyed the luck of performing it themselves."

Gozzi obviously enjoys depicting bizarre scenes. The one quoted below has all the liveliness of a parade of characters across a stage. Each member of the cast is rapidly sketched by highly descriptive adjectives and phrases:
"The month of November was wearing away when our family began to think of Venice. It amused me to watch the preparations for our journey.... My father, an invalid; my mother, serious and diplomatical; my sister-in-law, the woman of business; my brother, Gasparo, wool-gathering; our little sisters, intent upon the custody of their old-fashioned bonnets; Almoro, plunged in grief at leaving his birds and cages, which he consigned by something like a last will and testament to the bailiff; I, giving myself military airs, quite out of season; some serving-maids and men in worn-out livery; a few cats and dogs; these composed our travelling party, which might have been compared to a troupe of comedians upon the march.... Such as it was, our caravan arrived in Venice, joking and laughing all the way. There we installed ourselves with as much disorder and as little comfort as was proper to a fine large mansion with nothing to fill its empty spaces." 2

If the theatre made Gozzi a humorist, life made him a satirist. To laugh, he might have said, is not to be sad; laughter dispels sadness and allows one to view life with detachment. Gozzi's, however, is not a laugh, but a sardonic smile. As Fubini comments, that which is truly characteristic of Carlo Gozzi, is a smile without sympathy and without cordiality, which has its complete artistic expression in the famous chapter, "Life's absurdities and contrarities", the most disinterested pages he ever wrote. The title and introductory paragraph read as follows:

"On the absurdities and contrarities to which my star has made me subject.

If I were to narrate all the whimsical absurdities and all the untoward accidents to which my luckless star exposed me, I should have a lengthy business on my hands. They were a daily occurrence. Those alone which I meekly endured through the behaviour of servants in my employ, would be enough to fill a volume, and the anecdotes would furnish matter for madness or laughter." 3
So Gozzi chose to smile sarcastically at his "luckless star" thus overcoming the bitterness and disappointment it had brought him. Although this attitude pervades all his works, it is more prevalent in the memoirs. What Pettinato had said regarding the *Fiabe* is, therefore, even more pertinent here: "C'è sempre, in fondo alla pagina seria, l'ammico: dell'uomo che ride...." Gozzi mocks others, derides his times and the contrarities of his life, and laughs at himself with a detachment that often finds expression in unforgettable phrases or adjectives:

"From the year 1735 to 1780, at which date I am writing, I stuck to the same mode of dressing my hair with heroic constancy....My brother Gasparo had taken a wife in a fit of genial poetical abstraction....Something of a military carriage, which I had picked up abroad, but which had no relation to my real self, made our farm-folk stare upon me like a comet....She (Gozzi's sister who wanted to take the veil) entreated me with a holy stubbornness to be left in prison, to be indulged in her desire to pass her lifetime in that blessed aviary of virgins." 4

Gozzi's description of his appearance and characteristics borders on the grotesque:

"In stature I am tall. Of this I am made conscious by the large amount of cloth needed for my cloaks, and by the frequent knocks I give my forehead on entering rooms with low doors. I have the good luck to be neither crook-backed, lame, blind, nor squint-eyed....Though I am gay by nature, as appears from my published writings, yet the innumerable thoughts which kept my brains in a turmoil, through anxieties about our family, lawsuits, schemes of economy, literary plans, and so forth, bred in me a trick of contracting my forehead and frowning, which, combined with my slow gait, taciturnity, and preference for solitary places, won me the reputation among those who were not my familiar friends of being a surly, sullen, unapproachable fellow,
perhaps even an enemy of mankind. Many who have come upon me, pondering, with knitted brows and gloomy downcast eyes, will have suspected that I was planning how to kill an enemy, while really I was constructing the plot of my *Green Bird*." 

Rare moments in the memoirs reveal a more human side to Gozzi's personality, the face behind the mask, so to speak. The respect and love his father inspired in him is depicted sincerely, if somewhat melodramatically:

"Then I raised my eyes, and saw my poor father at a window in the upper storey, with trembling limbs, dragging himself forward on his stick to catch a glimpse of me. All the blood turned suddenly and galloped through my veins. I rushed up the stairs, burst into the room where he was standing, seized one of his hands, and kissed it in a transport of filial affection."

To laugh is not to be sad - but at the end of the memoirs, after Gozzi had described the bizarre, polemical, and amusing events of his long life, he was left with the present. And it was certainly bleak: he had outlived his dear brother, Gasparo, and most of his friends; Sacchi, with whom he had worked for more than twenty-five years, had left Venice forever; he had shared the horror of all Europe in the aftermath of the French Revolution; he was forced to witness the downfall of his beloved Venetian Republic and the collapse of the social traditions and moral values in which he had believed. It is, indeed, a very sad and tired man who records the last chapter of the *Memorie inutili*; a man who still cannot accept the future, but who is now too exhausted and disappointed to fight, or even to laugh: "As years advanced", he begins, "it came to me, as it comes to all, to be reminded that we cannot go on always laughing."
In the last paragraphs, he reminds the reader that he had predicted the disasters which befell Europe. Now it is too late; rather than confront the tragic present, therefore, Gozzi decides to cease writing:

"But now it is time to close these Memoirs.... I lay my pen aside just at the moment when I should have had to describe that vast undulation called the French Revolution, which swept over Europe, upsetting kingdoms and drowning the landmarks of immemorial history. This awful typhoon caught Venice in its gyration, affording a splendidly hideous field for philosophical reflection. 'Splendidly hideous' is a contradiction in terms; but at this period in which we are living paradoxes have become classical....Today is March 18 in the year 1798; and here I lay my pen down, lest I injure my good publisher, Farewell, patient and benign readers of my useless Memoirs!" 8

As should now be manifest, these memoirs, so discursive and personal, contain passages which give the full measure of Gozzi's artistic ability. Freed from the often burdensome task of resolving plots and attracting audiences, Gozzi finds himself alone with paper, pen, and the memories of his long life. For the first time he can just sit down and write. True, the polemic purpose is still there and, as Binni says, it comes to light in the many chapters assigned specifically to it, certainly the most verbose and tedious parts of the work. Yet the comic and the grotesque, which are more suited to Gozzi's indignant and capricious spirit, also find expression in a series of rapid poignant caricatures, sketches of himself and of the people and places which form the background, and in the author's unrestrained surrender to the pleasure of narrating.

It is, therefore, in the Memorie inutili that Gozzi best re-
veals himself not only as an artist, but also as a man. Imagine a photograph of a person standing in front of a group of people. This crowd in the background is slightly blurred in order to allow the camera to focus on the solitary figure in the foreground. In like manner, one could describe the characters Gozzi created in his dramatic works: they tend to coalesce, to become opaque in one's mind, while the imposing figure of their author emerges distinct and well-defined.

This is the image of Carlo Gozzi which lingers in the mind after closing his books: the image of a man, not gloomy and severe, as he was described by the Romantics, but endowed with a sense of humor, a man who could laugh not only at others, but also at himself. Yet life's experiences hardened his spirit and led him to bitterness and sarcasm. This same conflict appears in his works: on one hand, his attraction for the burlesque of commedia dell'arte, on the other, the necessity of being serious when facing life; the desire of entertaining and amusing through escapes into fantasy, and the need of coping with life through moral sermons.

One must remember that Gozzi was, above all, a product of his age. He was confronted with social changes which he recognized as inevitable but which he also feared, because their extreme consequences could destroy beneficial elements of the old culture. He was surrounded by an apprehension which was undermining his own beliefs and moral values. As a result, he turned to a strict defense of the established order. He was not motivated by a hypocritical desire to moralize, but by an instinctive need to maintain a state of balance within himself.
His voice was doomed to fail, to remain isolated and weak. He lived up to his pseudonym, *Il Solitario*, more and more alienated from the world around him. If Gozzi is condemned as retrograde and ultra-conservative, it is because he fell victim to the inevitable course of history.

---

**FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 6**


2. ibid., p. 68.

3. ibid., p. 148.

4. ibid., pp. 96, 22, 62, 92.

5. ibid., p. 96-97.

6. ibid., p. 62.

7. ibid., p. 282.

CONCLUSION

It is difficult to give a purely esthetic appraisal of Gozzi's work, one which would exclude the personality of the author himself. Since he was motivated to write principally by polemical reasons, he forms a vital part of his works.

This becomes quite clear if we compare Gozzi's plays with those, say, of Chekov. We can read the latter's plays ignorant of the playwright's life and times. The ideas are expressed with detachment, without the intrusion of the author. One feels, when reading Gozzi's works, on the other hand, that their author is their dynamic force, that without his presence, through spokesmen in the *Fiabe* and directly in the *Memorie inutili*, the fabric of his work would appear thin. Not that one can deny the artistic value of the plays or memoirs, but that, on the whole, they remain inexorably linked to the dominating figure of the author.

What, then, can be said to be the purely artistic value of Gozzi's works? The *Fiabe* remain, in my opinion, delightful, often scintillating and novel moments of amusement and diversion. Had Gozzi been able to sustain the captivating effect created by such episodes as that of Truffaldoni and the magic oranges, in *L'Amore delle tre melarance*, he could be considered a truly accomplished dramatist; but the fascination kindled by a world of fable, such as that created by Grimm, is, in the *Fiabe*, all too often smothered by the labored polemical and satirical intentions of the author.

The princesses: and magicians of this fabulous world, Gozzi
cleverly interweaves with the earthy and boisterous characters of the *commedia dell'arte*. One cannot deny that even here, the author's polemical purpose caused him to interfere with their noisy fun by restricting improvisation; yet even in the sketches written for them, much of their vivacity still persists. It must also be remembered that much of the sparkle of *commedia dell'arte* is lost to us because the genre itself has disappeared, and we can now only attempt to reconstruct the scenarios and try to imagine the effect created by the buffoonery of the Masks. Nevertheless, the applause of his native Venetians and of audiences throughout Europe is substantial proof that, in this respect, Gozzi had succeeded.

There remain in his plays, however, certain defects too obvious not to be recognized. Gozzi lacked the ability to develop character, therefore, relatively few of the personages he created have the depth which would give them universal value. His plots are often too strained and entangled to be resolved without considerable difficulty.

These shortcomings of Gozzi, the dramatist, fortunately do not affect Gozzi, the prose writer. In the *Memorie inutili*, rid of his bothersome theatrical duties, he was free to unbridle his keen sense of the comic and to abandon himself to the joy of recalling and narrating the past. As a result, many passages of the memoirs are filled with the spontaneity and enthusiasm of one who is at last accomplishing something he has wanted to do for many years. His polemical and defensive intent again interferes, burdening the reader with lengthy details of literary, theatrical and social battles, but
on the whole, it is the intimate and carefree tone of a writer who feels at ease which persists in the reader's mind. His prose, especially when describing scenes or when recalling past adventures, flows smoothly, punctuated here and there by the vividness of an expression of image which betrays his many years in the theatre.

Above all, after reading the Memorie inutili, one remembers not Gozzi, the playwright or writer, but Gozzi, the man. His 'luckless star' had forced him to live in a world with which he was not able to cope. For a person of his disposition, living in the Eighteenth Century was not easy. He found himself constantly bucking the current — in philosophical attitude, in social conduct, and in moral principles. His imagination, his attraction to the bizarre, and his individualism threw him off balance in an age of reason.

He was a member of the ruling class in Venice, a nobleman, and one of the few who realized what responsibility that title brought with it. Although he misinterpreted and exaggerated the concepts of the Enlightenment, he rightly sensed the danger inherent in overthrowing the Old Regime. Philosophers may have been prepared and capable, but the masses, Gozzi knew, were not.

The time of transition in which Gozzi lived in many ways resembles our own. The changes which occurred were to destroy both the good and the bad aspects of the old culture; only after the violence of revolution had passed, and social equilibrium been established, would the truly valid and universal principles of this culture return. For the unfortunate Carlo Gozzi, this new historical moment arrived too late.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

In this bibliography are all the works concerning Gozzi that I have been able to find. It is, I believe, relatively complete, with the exception of Section III, Translations and Adaptations. A concise treatment of this subject is given in the Enciclopedia dello Spettacolo.

I. BIBLIOGRAPHIES:

Gamba, B. Notizie intorno alle ed. delle opere di Carlo Gozzi, Venice, 1824.


Perale, G. "Bibliografia essenziale critica di Carlo Gozzi", Ateneo Veneto, 1940.

II WORKS:


III. TRANSLATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS:


IV. CRITICISM:


Ambra, L. d'. "Turandot di Carlo Gozzi al Costanzi", L'Epoca, Nov. 29, 1925.


Ausonio, L. "Carlo Gozzi", La Maschera, VII, 28 (Nov. 5, 1911).


Baretti, G. "Carlo Gozzi and his plays", The Mask (Florence), III, 7-9, (1911).


-----------------. "Una novella del Firenzuola ridotta ad uso di scena da Carlo Gozzi", Drammaturgia, I, pp. 53-62.


--------. "Carlo Gozzi e la polemica sulla lingua italiana", Convivium, 1951.


Borghesani, E. Carlo Gozzi e l'opera sua. Udine, 1904.


Brocchi, V. "La polemica a teatro", Rivista d'Italia, X, 5 (1907)


Cajumi, A. I cancelli d'oro. Milan, 1926.

Calendoli, G. "I sortilegi del Gozzi piacciono ai registi moderni", Repubblica (Rome), Sept.30, 1948.

Caprin, G. "Carlo Gozzi nelle 'Memorie inutile' ", Marzocco, XV, 46 (1910).


Cerini, M. "Circe e Sinadab", Rivista d'Italia, May, 1917. The Homeric Circe and the transformations which occur in Gozzi's 'La Zobeide'.


Croce, B. "Intorno alle Fiabe di Carlo Gozzi", La Critica, May 20, 1943.


Curiel, C.L. "Una commedia della gelosia: 'Le Droghie d'amore'", Glossa perenne, I, 1929.


Il Settecento Veneziano. n.p., 1939.


Falqui, E. "Una lettera di Carlo Gozzi a Maria Fortuna; May 6, 1784", Quadrivio, July 8, 1937.


Ferrari, G. De la Litterature Populaire en Italie. n.p., n.d.


Gabetti, G. "I riflessi del viaggio in Italia nell'attività poetica del Grillparzer", Rivista d'Italia, Nov.5, 1914. In passing cites Gozzi and the fortune of the Fiabe in Germany and Austria.


Gamba, B. Notizie intorno alle edizioni delle opere di Carlo Gozzi, Venice, 1824.


Guerrieri, A. Le Fiabe di Carlo Gozzi. Catania, 1924.


Horn, F. Über Carlo Gozzis dramatische poesie. Penig: Dienemann, 1803.


Lugli, V. "Ilpregiudizio di Carlo Gozzi", Cronache letterarie, 1911, 58, May 28.

Lualdi, A. "'Turandot' di Ferruccio Busoni", Scenario, April 1940.


---------. Carlo Gozzi e le fiabe. Cremona: Feraboli, 1876.


Marta, G. "Venezia e le sue glorie settecentesche: Carlo Gozzi", Illustrazione Italiana, LIX, 25, 1932.

Masi, E. "Carlo Gozzi, le sue Memorie e la Commedia dell'arte", Studi sulla storia del teatro italiano nel secolo XVIII. Florence: Sansoni, 1891.

---------. "Carlo Gozzi e le sue Fiabe teatrali", ibid., (first published as Introduction to Le Fiabe. Bologna: Zanichelli, 1884.)


Meisling, S. Dramatiske Eventyr af Carlo Gozzi. Copenhagen, 1821.

Melchiori, L. Lettore e letterati a Venezia e a Padova a mezzo il sec. XVIII. Padova, 1942, pp.29-50.


Molmenti, P. "La 'Turandot' di Gozzi", Secolo, Nov.6, 1925.

----------. "Carlo Gozzi inedito", G.S.L.I., LXXXVII (1926), p.36.


----------. "Il Conte Carlo Gozzi - uno strano personaggio", Fiera Letteraria, March 15, 1953.


Pisani, V. "'Il Corvo' di Carlo Gozzi e un racconto corrispondente dell'novellistica indiana", Rassegna Italiana, 1925, p.354.


Rebora, R. "Come si recita Gozzi?", Fiera Letteraria, Sept.21, 1952.


Rivelli, G. Carlo Gozzi contro Carlo Goldoni nella 'Marfisa bizzarra'. Lanciano: Carabba, 1907.


Regarding Gozzi's stay in Dalmatia.


Schandorph, S. *Goldoni og Gozzi*. Copenhagen, 1874.


--------. "Carlo Gozzi inedito", *Corriere della Sera*, March 10, 1926.


Tommaseo, N. *Storia civile nella letteraria*. Turin, 1872.


---------. *Il teatro italiano dalle origini ai giorni nostri*. Milan: Modernissima, 1924.


Vaccaluzzo, N. "L'invasione della lingua francese in Italia in uno scritto inedito di Carlo Gozzi", *Nuova Antologia*, May 1, 1932.


Zicciardi, G. "La Marfisa bizzarra", *Rassegna critica della letteratura italiana*, vol. XXIV (1919).


Count Carlo Gozzi was born in Venice on December 13, 1720, of an economically ruined patrician family. Sixth of the eleven children of Jacopo and Angela Tiepolo, and a younger brother of Gasparo, he was educated first by tutors, then by priests in an academy. Early in life, he exhibited an inclination for writing, and as a child, composed poems and acted out plays with his family. During his adolescence, he wrote essays, innumerable verses, and four long poems. By the time he was twenty, he had become aware of the family's desperate financial situation and of the domestic turmoils which were diminishing the family estate. In 1741, following the example of his older brother, Carlo took up a military career and for three years served in Dalmatia. During these years abroad, he was chosen to portray the servetta in a group of male amateurs who performed at the court theatre. On his return to Venice, in 1744, Gozzi found the family on the verge of financial catastrophe. For some time he remained outside the domestic quarrels, but finally took up the cause, and was, consequently, involved in litigations and law suits for years thereafter.

In 1747, Gozzi was among the founders of the Accademia dei Gran­nelleschi, a half serious, half facetious parody of the scientific and literary academies.

With scorn, Gozzi watched the rise to prominence of Carlo Goldoni and Pietro Chiari, playwrights of the new bourgeois theatre. Eventually, irritated by their successes, he wrote and published La Tartana degli influssi in 1757. This satirical work provoked a
theatrical polemic which lasted ten years and which made Gozzi a playwright. A series of attacks and counter-attacks followed. Gozzi's contributions between 1757 and 1761 were two satirical works, *Il Teatro Comico all'Osteria del Pellegrino* and *I Sudori d'Imeneo*, and verses published in the *Atti Granelleschi*.

This theatrical feud culminated when Gozzi composed the ten *Fiabe*, from 1761 to 1766, for the Sacchi company of actors. Their popularity eventually drove Chiari into obscurity and forced Goldoni to seek more favorable audiences in France.

While writing the *Fiabe*, Gozzi was also working on a long satirical poem, *La Marfisa bizzarra*, which was not published until 1772, when he edited the first edition of his works. Meanwhile, he abandoned theatrical fables and turned to adapting translations of Spanish plays for Sacchi.

In 1771, the actress, Teodora Ricci, joined the Sacchi troupe. For the next four years Gozzi was her intimate friend and protector. After he ended his relationship with her, he wrote *Droghe d'amore*, first presented in 1777. This play gave rise to a tremendous scandal when the rumor spread that in it Gozzi had mocked Gratarol, a Venetian diplomat and lover of Teodora Ricci. Finally, Gratarol fled Venice, his career ruined, and in Stockholm published his *Memoria Apologetica*. Spurred on by the attacks made against him in these memoirs, Gozzi set himself to writing his own *Memorie inutili* which, however, the Venetian government prevented him from publishing until 1798. In 1800, he began a fourteen volume edition of his works. Two years later, when his troupe disbanded, the aging Sacchi retired from Venice forever. His departure brought to an end
Gozzi's long career as a dramatist. After three years spent editing his works, he died at the age of eighty-six in Venice on April 14th, 1806.