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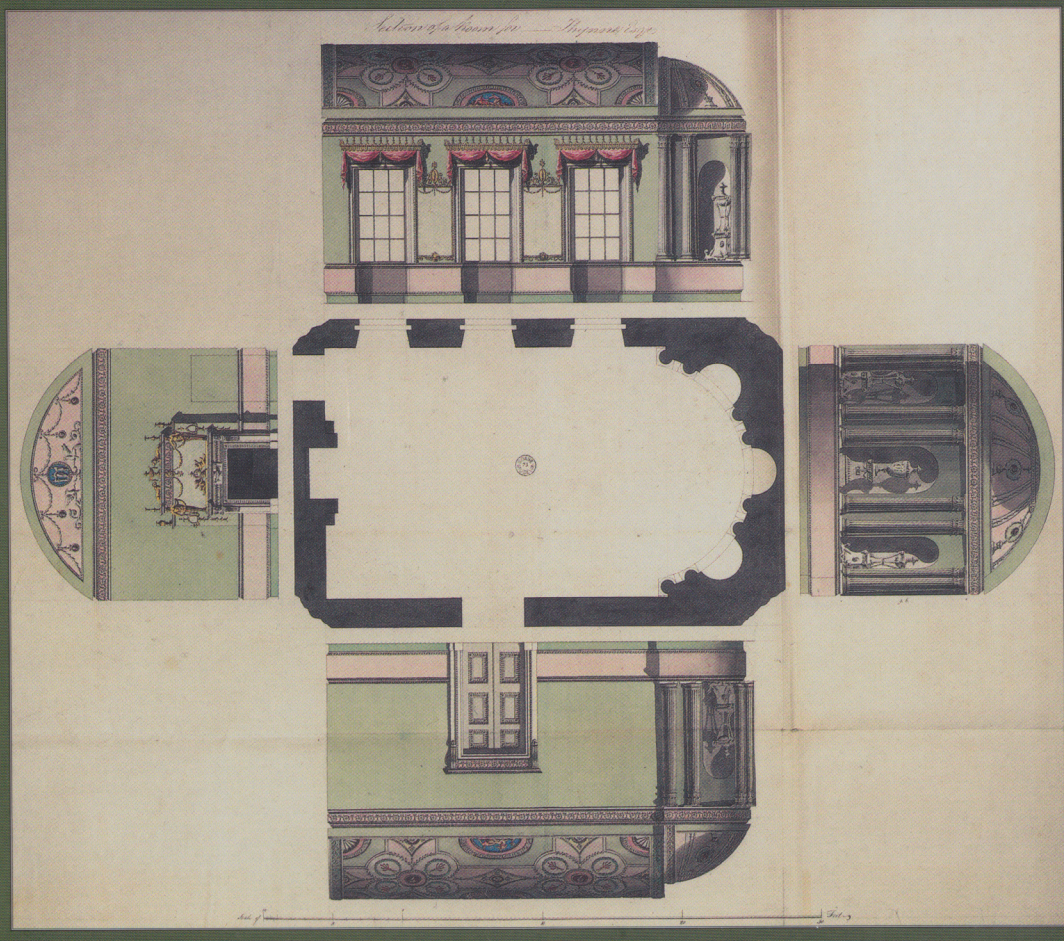
Architectural Space in Eighteenth-Century Europe

Constructing Identities and Interiors

Edited by
DENISE AMY BAXTER and MEREDITH MARTIN



Architectural Space in Eighteenth-Century Europe

Constructing Identities and Interiors

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32. G. West to Elizabeth Montagu (25 May 1752), MO 6686, and G. West to Elizabeth Montagu (30 May 1752), MO 6634.

33. G. West to Elizabeth Montagu (19 June 1752), MO 6635. When Montagu demurred from the size of the figures and rockwork, Linnell offered to replace the figures with japanned birds, the designs of which Montagu thought looked like horses. Elizabeth Montagu to G. West (13 June 1752), MO 6688.

34. For examples of such treatment, see Christopher Gilbert and Anthony Wells-Cole, *The Fashionable Fireplace* (Leeds: Temple Newsam, 1985).

35. Linnell recommended the carved canopy, rather than a painted *trompe l'oeil* canopy, which West urged Montagu to accept in G. West to Elizabeth Montagu (10 June 1752), MO 6635. Montagu conceded to West's opinion in Elizabeth Montagu to G. West (13 June 1752), MO 6688.

36. I am grateful to David Pullins for his conversation with me about the appearance of this furniture.

37. Helena Hayward and Pat Kirkham, *William and John Linnell: Eighteenth-Century London Furniture Makers*, 2 vols (New York: Rizzoli, 1980), 1:107–8.

38. Elizabeth Montagu to Gilbert West (13 June 1752), MO 6688. Matthew Montagu mistakenly put the text of this letter in the middle of a 26 May 1752 letter to West, *Letters*, vol. III, 182–6.

39. Eliz. Montagu to Gilbert West, 13 June 1752, MO 6688.

40. On women and the amateur arts, see Katherine Sharp, 'Women's Creativity and Display in the Eighteenth-Century Interior,' in *Interior Design and Identity*, eds Susie McKellar and Penny Sparke (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 10–26; Ann Bermingham, 'The Aesthetics of Ignorance: The Accomplished Woman in the Culture of Connoisseurship,' *Oxford Art Journal* 16, no. 2 (1993), 3–20; and her more recent book, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

41. Frances Courtenay to Elizabeth Montagu (7 April 1752), MO 721.

42. The earliest among these books, Stalker and Parker, *Treatise of Japanning and Varnishing* (London, 1688) was reprinted throughout the century. *The Ladies Amusement, or Whole Art of Japanning Made Easy* (London, 1762) was another popular text, whose name points to its intended audience.

43. Records books for neither the Linnell firm nor Montagu's household survive, and thus it is difficult to know exactly how much was spent. With characteristic rhetorical flourish, Montagu bemoans the cost of the room at its completion in autumn of 1752 in a letter to West. See Elizabeth Montagu to Gilbert West (16 November 1752), MO 6691.

44. Quoted in Angela Rosenthal, 'Angelica Kauffman Ma(s)king Claims,' *Art History* 15, no. 1 (March 1992), 38–59.

45. Elizabeth Montagu to Matthew Robinson (10 September 1769), MO 4767, quoted in Elizabeth Eger, '"Out Rushed a Female to Protect the Bard": The Bluestocking Defense of Shakespeare,' in *Reconsidering the Bluestockings*, eds Nicole Pohl and Betty A. Schellenberg (San Marino CA: Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 2003), 127–51.

46. On the idea of the exemplary woman in another context, see Mary D. Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman: Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

47. Quoted in Eger and Pelz, 104.

48. Elizabeth Montagu to Hannah More, quoted in Wahrman, 260.

The Space of the Mask: From Stage to *Ridotto*

Marc J. Neveu

In this chapter, I consider the means of participation within the public sphere of eighteenth- century Venice. My interest is to flesh out the nature of discourse within interior institutional spaces, and I will do so through a discussion of two related phenomena. First, I will examine the role of the mask, which by the eighteenth century had become synonymous with Venetian carnival and debauchery. Indeed, Venice in the eighteenth century gained much of its naughty reputation due to the exploits of *Sior Maschere*. Masks, however, were not only worn for amusement or the possibility of anonymous pleasure. During the carnival season, masking was regulated and required for entry into interior public spaces such as *ridotti* (gaming halls) and theaters.

Ironically, at the same time that masks were regulated within the theater of the city, they began to leave the stage of the theater proper. In the second part of the chapter, I will discuss this shift through exploring the transformation of the nature and subject matter of theatrical productions, from the tradition of the *commedia dell'arte* to character plays. The significance of character plays was embodied in the public quarrel of two playwrights: Carlo Goldoni and Carlo Gozzi. In each writer's work, unmasked characters replaced the masked roles of the *commedia dell'arte*. The words and actions of the unmasked characters, however, must be read as thinly masked attacks by each author against the other. My wager is that the existence of such masking – one physical, the other symbolic – created a nuanced form of participation within the evolving public realm and had a direct affect on identity and the self in the eighteenth century.

Participation in the Venetian Public Sphere

Although Jürgen Habermas, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), does not discuss eighteenth-century Venice, his critique of the

emergence, transformation, and disintegration of the bourgeois public sphere is relevant to this analysis.[1] Distinctions between the contexts discussed by Habermas and the social conditions in Venice do, however, exist. Unlike other European cities, there was never a court culture in Venice, as patrician families had ruled the Republic since its beginnings. The social hierarchy of Venice's inhabitants was essentially set in 1297 after the *serrata*, or closing, of the ruling class, but by the eighteenth century real cracks were evident in this hierarchy. The financial disintegration of the patrician class and the opening up of this ruling class to the *cittadini* (merchant class) is just one marker of this transformation.[2]

My interest in Habermas's work is less about his analysis of consumerist politics than it is about public participation. According to Habermas, participation in the public sphere required that institutions must share at least three criteria. First, the social intercourse that occurred in such institutions disregarded status. Next, such discussion included issues, like the intent and meaning of cultural production, that would not have been present prior to the appearance of these institutions; and thirdly, these issues were open for debate.[3] One sign of such participation is the explosive growth of journals, pamphlets, and other publications that spurred public debate and introduced foreign topics to the citizens of Venice.[4] In the 1760s Cesare Beccaria declared that publications such as *il Caffè* and the *Gazzetta Veneta* promoted 'public utility, the spread of Enlightenment, and an increase in the number of readers, and of readers disposed to the truth.'[5]

The range of literary genres, from editorial to dialogue, also included more satirical styles such as fables and apologues. This diversity of writing shows that although discussion may have been open, multiple readings – ironic, sardonic, and even humorous – were also present.[6] Discussion of the topics found in the various literary and scientific journals could be had in the growing number of cafés and salons, institutions described by Habermas in other cities.[7] Indeed, there were over 200 cafés in eighteenth-century Venice, each with its own colorful name. The most well-known café was *Venezia Trionfante* (Triumphant Venice), which still sits in Piazza San Marco and was later renamed for its first owner, Floriano Francesco. It is known today as Florian's. Concurrent with the emergence of such institutions in Venice were two other public interior spaces: the *ridotto* and the theater.

The word '*ridotto*' is derived from the past participle of the verb *ridurre* meaning 'enclosed' or 'reduced,' and was used to describe the infamous gaming halls of Venice. The term was also used, though with less frequency, to name the closed or private sessions of the Inquisition. The nature of *ridotti* changed from the seventeenth through the eighteenth century.[8] They began as intimate rooms either within or close to one's home for conversation and games amongst invited friends, often with secret doors for entry and exit. Such rooms began to occupy entire floors and were eventually opened to

8.1 Francesco Guardi, *Il ridotto di Palazzo Dandolo a S Moisè*, 1746, oil on burlap, 108 × 208 cm (42½ × 82 in.); Ca'Rezzonico, Museo del Settecento Veneziano

anyone who wished to enter. The first legally operated room opened in the area of San Moisè in 1638, and by 1744 there were at least 118 *ridotti* in the city of Venice. By that time, the scale of the operations had increased dramatically, especially during carnival. In 1774 the Venetian government outlawed all games of chance due to the extreme reduction in the wealth of patricians. By extension of the legislation, all *ridotti* were closed.

Francis Mission, a visitor to Venice, described the scene at a *ridotto* during his trip to Italy in 1688:

> There are Ten or Twelve Chambers on a Floor, with Gaming-tables in all of them. You can scarcely turn yourself in them; but tho' the throng is so great, yet there is always profound Silence. None are permitted to enter into these Places without Masks: at least a Postiche Nose, or a Mustachio.

He continued by giving a picture of other rooms within the *ridotto*:

> Besides the Chambers for Gaming, there are Some Rooms for Conversation, where they also sell Liquors, Sweetmeats, and such-like Things. Nobody puts off his Mask, or Nose; and by the Privilege of this Disguise, provided a Man be pretty well dress'd he may speak to the Ladies, and even to those whom he may suppose to be of the highest quality.[9]

A painting by Francesco Guardi shows one of the more famous *ridotti* in the eighteenth century, the palazzo Dandolo near San Moisè (Fig. 8.1). The scene shows the main floor of a somewhat typical Venetian palazzo in which smaller

rooms flank a larger main space on each level. The painting by Guardi shows a large group of masked characters in the main hall of the palazzo, each in active conversation. Through each of the doorways, Guardi has depicted the gambling that took place in the smaller rooms flanking the main hall. The use of the entire main floor of a palazzo indicates the popularity of gambling amongst Venetians and tourists as well as the scale of operations if one considers the number of *ridotti* scattered throughout the city.[10] What is essential to note in the painting is that almost everyone in the crowd of patrons, including the small child, is wearing a mask. Only those who handled the house money did not wear a mask; they were forbidden to do so. This practice transformed the experience of an intimate card game amongst friends into a theatrical event, where the potential to socialize with those individuals with whom one might not normally interact increased dramatically.

Masks were also required for entry into the theater.[11] Almost all of the theaters in Venice conformed to a similar layout known as the *teatro all'italiano*, characterized by an open ground level surrounded by a wall of *palchi* (boxes) that sat opposite to the stage.[12] To offset the construction and operational costs, patrician families who owned the theaters would lease the *palchi* for the theater season to other patricians. Though there are some reports of class mixing facilitated by the wearing of masks, there existed a very clear hierarchy within the physical and social organization of the theater.[13] *Palchi* could be closed off from the corridor that led to them as well as from one to another. This separation from other patrons allowed for the disreputable behavior for which they became known.[14] Although *palchi* were leased to specific people, by the eighteenth century it was not uncommon for Venetians and visitors to the city to rent a room for an evening. An etching by Gaetano Zompini, which was part of a larger set of typical Venetian street scenes originally published in 1753, shows a masked couple, whose identity or relationship to each other remains hidden, negotiating the use of a *palco* (Fig. 8.2).[15] The etching shows two masked characters framed by a partial archway with the colonnade of the Procuratie Vecchie of San Marco in the background. The framing of the scene and background in San Marco takes on the quality of a stage set.

A night at the theater was not, however, only for entertainment. Cardinal de Bernis, a French ambassador to Venice in the 1750s, noted the importance of masking for international relations:

> It must not be supposed that, although the Venetian nobles are forbidden to hold any intercourse with ambassadors (a very wise severity; if the Republic ever renounces it, she will lose her morals, and soon she will change her laws; the one follows the other) it must not be thought, I say, that in spite of this rigour foreign ministers do not have any sort of intercourse with magistrates; they speak to one another by third parties; they communicate many things by signs at the Opera, a circumstance which renders the frequenting of theaters and the use of the mask necessary to foreign ministers.[16]

8.2 Gaetano Zompini, *Fitta Palchi*, 1785, etching, 27 × 19 cm (10¾ × 7½ in.), From Gaetano Zompini, *Artic he vanno per via nella città di Venezia* (Venice: n.p., 1785), 27; Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California

The theater season coincided with the opening of the *ridotti*, and both were determined by the schedule of the carnival. In each, the mask played an essential role.

Masking the Theater of the City

Unlike the evening-long masquerades in England or France, Venetian carnival in the mid-eighteenth century had been extended to last almost a full six months.[17] Carnival began on the first Sunday in October, paused briefly for Christmas, and then continued from *Befana* (Feast of the Epiphany) until Lent. Masks, an essential component of carnival, had been worn in Venice at least since 1268.[18] Historically the masks were taken directly from the tradition of the *commedia dell'arte* and filled both the stages of the city's theaters and its squares. For a visitor to carnival in the late seventeenth century, the city of Venice itself resembled a theater. Francis Mission again explained:

> You may put yourself in what Equipage you please, but to do it well, you must be able to maintain the Character or the Person whose dress you have taken. Thus, for example, when the Harlequins meet, they jeer one another and act a thousand Fooleries. The Doctors dispute; the bullies vapour and swagger; and so of the Rest. Those who are not willing to be Actors on this great Theater, take the habit of Noblemen; some Polonian Dress, or the like, which obliges them to nothing.[19]

The physical nature of the city itself also encouraged comparisons to the theater. The Piazzetta of San Marco, the small square bordered by the Marciana Library and the Doge's Palace, was regularly fitted with temporary tiered seating for the masked inhabitants to witness various carnival rituals and even executions.[20] Even the most important buildings of the city took cues from the theater. Eugene Johnson has traced such relationships for the Marciana Library and the Procuratory in San Marco.[21] The reverse also occurred. Venice was literally brought into the theater by Giacomo Torelli, who used well-known scenes from the city as a backdrop to theatrical performances.[22]

Notwithstanding the popularity and influence of the *commedia* tradition within carnival, a different set of masks begins to appear in the early eighteenth century with much more regularity: the *tabarro e bauta* and the *moretta*.[23] The *tabarro e bauta* consisted of a tricorn hat, a white half-mask, and a black cloak. This last component completely covered the wearer's clothing and kept him or her warm during the carnival's colder months. The white mask allowed the wearer to speak freely while concealing their facial features. The *moretta*, a smaller, round mask, had no straps but was secured to one's face by a small button on the reverse side of the mouth that the wearer held between his or her teeth. This had an interesting effect: the wearer was unable to speak. It was often worn with a *nizioletto* (shawl) that again had the effect of concealing one's dress. Zompini shows both kinds of masks in the etching of the *fitta palchi* (see Fig. 8.2).

It is interesting to consider that neither mask was related to any of the well-known stock characters from the *commedia dell'arte*, and, as such, did not give the wearer an alternate identity to play. The *bauta* and *moretta* had no 'other.' Rather, these masks signified anonymity, allowed for transgression, and offered an alibi. They were not, however, worn only for amusement. Indeed, the wearing of such masks was regulated and controlled by the *Magistrato alle Pompe* (the Magistrate of Pomp).[24] In an attempt to curb displays of wealth, a law from 1732 required patrons to mask their faces and their clothing when attending the theater, specifically with the *bauta e tabarro*.[25] It is essential to note that, as the wearing of such masks became regulated within the city, masks began to leave the stage of the theater. This shift, from theater to city, not only allowed the masked individuals of the city to engage in transgressive acts, it also directly affected the nature of theatrical discourse.

Unmasking the City of the Theater

Theater in seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century Venice was synonymous with the tradition of the *commedia dell'arte*.[26] According to Allardyce Nicoll, fundamental characteristics of the *commedia* included improvisation, the roles performed, and the masks worn by the players. Each role was recognizable by the clothing that the player wore, the objects carried and, of course, by the player's mask. Pantalone, for example, was known by his red tights and vest, the dagger or handkerchief he carried in his belt, his round black hat, his dark brown mask with a hooked nose, and his pointed beard or moustache. He was Venetian and often played serious roles with comic asides. Perhaps the best-known role was that of Harlequin, whose costume changed over time from a suit decorated with a series of irregular patches to one that featured a more geometric pattern of triangles and diamonds. He excelled in agility and acrobatics and often played the fool, though just enough to wiggle himself out of a bad situation. Such roles, and specifically the masking of these roles, were at the center of debate regarding theater reform in the eighteenth century.

Carlo Goldoni, a physician's son who was trained as a lawyer, was easily the most outspoken and prolific proponent of reform. After studying law in Pavia and practising in Milan, an unexpected return to Venice in 1738 prompted a sudden change of profession: he decided to give up his lucrative position and role as a lawyer to pursue a life in the theater. During his time in Venice, Goldoni was closely linked to the more famous theatres in Venice such as the Teatro San'Angelo (1746–52) and the Teatro S. Luca (1752–61). In all, he wrote more than 150 pieces for the Venetian theater, although in 1761 he left the city – apparently still disgusted with the state of Italian theater – for Paris,

where he continued to write. He died there, poor and almost blind, in 1793. Goldini's work has been singled out for bringing a new sense of realism to the theater in terms of dress, language, mannerisms, and even plot.[27] Specific to his reform agenda was the role of masks on the theater stage. Goldoni felt that masks showed only a general, and not a specific, emotion. Espousing reasoning similar to that offered by an earlier critic of the *commedia dell'arte*, Luigi Riccoboni, Goldoni explained that a comedy without masks was more natural:

> The mask always inhibits the actor in expressing both joy and grief. Whether the character is making love, is irate, or is simply jesting, it is always the same piece of leather on his face. However much the actor gesticulates and varies his tone of voice, he can never show, by means of those facial expressions – which are the interpreter of the heart – the diverse passion agitating his soul.[28]

Although Goldoni understood that the custom of the masks was derived from Greek theater, he did not feel this reasoning was sufficient for their continued use on the contemporary stage. After all, the Greeks' motivation for employing masks was inherently different, as he explained:

> The masks of the Greeks and Romans were the means by which to amplify their voices to all of those in the vast audiences that would be in attendance. The passions and sentiments were not conveyed to that delicate point in which they actually exist. One requires that the Actors today have a soul and a soul under a mask is like a fire under ashes.[29]

Goldoni's most clear statement of reform is seen in his play, *il Teatro Comico*, which was first performed in 1750. It is a critique of the *commedia* tradition as well as a proposal for a new type of theater. The plot of Goldoni's play involves the rehearsal of another play. Actors perform characters that are playing roles from the *commedia dell'arte*. For example, the famous Venetian actor Antonio Mattiuzzi Collalto performed as the character 'Tonino,' who plays the *commedia* role of Pantalone in the play-within-a-play.[30] To add to the character's role-play, various real-life Venetian personalities were represented, often satirically. Goldoni himself, for instance, was represented by the character 'Orazio,' described as an author who has written 16 plays in one year, as Goldoni had done in 1750.[31] In the play, the actors discuss the need for reform of the *commedia dell'arte* and the relative merits of Goldoni's *commedia de carattere* (character plays) when the poet Lelio interrupts them. Lelio embodied both the *commedia* tradition and the critique against reform by the fellow playwright Carlo Gozzi (1720–1806), one of Goldoni's most sardonic opponents.

Carlo Gozzi, brother to the more famous gazetteer Gasparo, based much of his work on the tradition of fairy tales, especially *Pentamerone* and the *Arabian Nights*. As in many of Goldoni's plays, masks and characters mix in Gozzi's work. *Turandot*, for example, which takes place in mythical Persia, was taken directly from the *Arabian Nights*.[32] The play included original characters: the princess Turandot and the prince Calaf as well as roles from the *commedia*, such as Brighella and Pantalone. Though Brighella plays the role of a character (an executioner), Pantalone has no character to perform. Rather, he speaks directly to the audience and supplies a running commentary of critical and ironic lines. He mocks the situation and claims that no one in Venice would believe this story if he were to retell it. In *Turandot*, the role of Pantalone was altered from the original *commedia* tradition. Though Pantalone is recognizable, his role has shifted to become an intermediary between the world of the theater and the lived world of Venice.

Both Goldoni and Gozzi mixed characters and masks on stage, and both were extremely popular with the Venetian audiences. Although Gozzi is often characterized as the defender of the *commedia* tradition against the reforms proposed by Goldoni, his position was not as much a defense of the *commedia dell'arte* tradition as it was a personal attack against Goldoni.[33] The nature of their discourse reveals a nuanced reading of Habermas's description of participation within the public sphere. As stated earlier, one institutional criterion common to the interiors of the emergent public sphere, according to Habermas, was that culture could be constituted as an object for discussion. Cultural issues became general in terms of accessibility and significance. What is distinct in the theatrical context of Venice is that although the issues – role of the masks, development of the theater, the status of the *commedia dell'arte* tradition – were open for discussion, the means of participation was not. Both Goldoni and Gozzi masked their participation in the public sphere through their characters' words and actions. Further, such attacks were played out in the autobiographical publications of each author.

Masking of the Self

Though not common, autobiography as a literary genre emerged in northern Italy in the late eighteenth century. In addition to Goldoni and Gozzi, Pietro Chiari, Casanova, and Vittorio Alfieri also wrote autobiographies. Carlo Gozzi's ironically titled autobiography – *Memorie Inutile* (*Useless Memoirs*) – was appropriate to his character. He introduced himself: 'My name is Carlo and I was the sixth child to drop from my mother into the light, or should I say darkness, of this world.'[34] Gozzi claimed that his Memoirs were 'useless' for two reasons: first, he deemed them unnecessary owing to his humility, and second, he believed that he had not really done or said anything in his life beyond that which had already been done and said in his printed works. In response to the characterization of the dim-witted poet Lelio in Goldoni's *il Teatro Comico*, Gozzi mocked Goldoni in a story of his own.

In his *Memorie Inutile*, Gozzi set the scene. One day during carnival, he and a few other members of the *Accademia dei Granelleschi* (Academy of the Testicles) were in del Pellegrino, a fictional bar that overlooked Piazza San Marco. They saw a truly monstrous mask enter into the bar and, intrigued, asked it to come over to their table. The great mask had four faces and four mouths. Gozzi named the monster as '*il Teatro Comico del Goldoni.*' Each side revealed one of the four faces of Goldoni's supposed reform. The first face was representative of the plays that Goldoni wrote simply by adding a few roles to existing comedies. The second was symbolic of new romantic pieces, such as *la Pamela*. The third referred to the plays that dealt with common Venetians like *de'Pettegolezzi delle Donne* and *de'Rusteghi*, and the final face represented Goldoni's performances set in faraway places, for example *la Sposa Persiana*. Though the mask tried valiantly to defend itself, Gozzi critiqued il Teatro's smug and shallow morality. In the end the monster opened his pants to reveal yet another mouth, which, weeping indecently, begged for grace.[35]

While Gozzi in his memoir blurred the distinction between autobiography, theatrical performance, and satirical attack, Goldoni was explicit in his collapse between the world of the theater and the theater of the world. Indeed, in the pages of his autobiography, he often referred to his life in such terms.[36] Goldoni did not exaggerate when he claimed that his life was taken from two books: the book of the world and the book of the theater. According to Goldoni, the book of the world offered a look into the natural character of man, including his habits, vices, and virtues. The book of the theater contained ways of representing the passions of man so as 'to delight with wonder and laughter.'[37] I would argue that, for Goldoni, these were very often the same book. The Pasquali edition of Goldoni's *Delle commedie* (1761) includes a series of frontispieces that depict Goldoni's own life from an early age (Fig. 8.3). In the preface he explained:

> Each and every frontispiece, as I have always said, represents a piece of my life, from the time I was eight years old, which was the time when my flair for the comic theatre began to develop. This was compounded by the fact that my childhood corresponded to the wonderful childhood of the Italian Comedic Tradition.
>
> ...
>
> I had hoped to make a summary of my life in the frontispieces, which had already been dispersed in various letters, prefaces, and some scenes of my own previously printed work.[38]

At the beginning of each volume is an image and a short textual summary of Goldoni's life.[39] The plays are also introduced with an image (taken from a scene in the play) and a short summary. The order of the plays across the 17 volumes is important. Rather than organizing plays chronologically or alphabetically, Goldoni ordered them thematically, corresponding to the

8.3 Antonio Baratti after Pietro Novelli, *Opere di Carlo Goldoni*, 1761, etching, 13 × 8 cm (5⅛ × 3⅛ in.), from Carlo Goldoni, *Delle commedie di Carlo Goldoni, avvocato Veneto*, vol. 1 (Venice: Giambattista Pasquali, 1761), frontispiece; Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California

events in his life. *L'Avvocato* (*The Lawyer*), for example, is included in volume 8 of *Delle commedia*, in which Goldoni describes his choice to become a lawyer and his enrollment into the Collegio Ghislieri. Not only does Goldoni collapse the history of Italian theater to his own history, he also conforms the theater tradition to events in his own life story.

Making the collapse between his book of the world and the book of the theater complete, Goldoni masks various personalities that surrounded his life. Actresses in the Medebach Company at the Teatro San'Angelo, for example, were mocked in his productions. His 16-play season of 1750 included at least two that caricatured the situation of his actors: *La Finta Ammalata* was based on the hypochondriac wife of the troupe leader, Teodora Medebach. Another, *La Donna Volubile*, mocked one of the more capricious actresses in the company. *De'Pettegolezzi delle donne* was based on an old Armenian man whom he had found in the Piazza San Marco, and whose haggard appearance was the object of much teasing and gossip amongst unmarried Venetian women.[40] It is clear that in the work of Goldoni and Gozzi the characters of the city of Venice – and even the two authors themselves – take their place on the theatrical stage, however much they are masked by satire and caricature.

Conclusion

Ronald L. Grimes has outlined four effects of masking: concretion, concealment, embodiment, and expression.[41] Such a characterization of masking offers a fruitful conclusion to my discussion. Within the *commedia dell'arte* tradition, physical masks made an identity concrete: the mask of the Harlequin, for example, allowed the wearer to become Harlequin. Such masks and their related characteristics were still present and understood within both Goldoni's and Gozzi's repertoires. It is interesting to note that although there were a few famous players known for the roles they played in the *commedia dell'arte* tradition, the identity of the actors was of little significance. With the shift to character plays by Goldoni and Gozzi, the identity of the actor became more important. Such identities, as I have mentioned, were even mocked by the playwrights in their productions. Ironically, at the same time that the identity of the actors on the stage was being revealed, the identities of those in the city were concealed by the *bauta* and *moretta*. Such an ability to conceal is, according to Grimes, the second characteristic of masking. Whereas Harlequin, and all of his traits, was recognizable by virtue of his mask, the *bauta* and *moretta* masked even the wearer's public dress. In the theater of the public sphere, such markers of identity – gender, class, and race – could be hidden, if so desired. The effect of this was to allow for transgressive acts to occur: loss of money at the gaming table, illicit affairs, and sexual acts. It is precisely this effect that allows for the third category outlined by Grimes: embodiment. The foreign tourist taking on the role of Harlequin is an example of this, but so too is the ambassador taking on the role of the anonymous *Sior Maschere* to converse with Venetians in the boxes of the theater. While the conversation would have clearly identified those speaking, the masking offered an excuse. The same excuse was offered to anyone who walked into the *ridotto* to gamble carelessly through the night while flirting with another. Both actions would have certainly been curtailed if the person were not wearing their mask. In a sense, much of the allure of Venice was the possibility that one could be anonymous, that one's actions would have little or no consequence.[42] This ability to be masked, I argue, allows for Grimes's final category, expression. As I have described, the mask offered wearers a chance to act anonymously and express themselves in ways they might not otherwise if their identity were known. Such activities were certainly allowable in certain contexts while wearing a physical mask, but masking also occurred in a more symbolic manner.

Specifically in the context of the theatre, both Gozzi and Goldoni used theatrical production to mask their identities and express their positions in the debate regarding the reform of the theatre. Such satirical masking was also used as a means by which to discuss, mock, and comment upon the daily life of Venice. Personal opinions regarding the theater were expressed not through open debate at the café but through characters – the dolt Leilo or the four-headed 'comic theater,' for example. For Goldoni and Gozzi, the life of the theater and their public personas, masked by satire, reveal what Ortega y Gasset has termed a 'visible metaphor.'[43] This is what allows one to believe that an actor is both themselves and the role they are playing. A good performance, for Ortega y Gasset, is when the actor ceases to be the person they are, and the role they perform takes on new life with reference to previous performances. Certainly we can see Goldoni as Orazio – the character that supports his views on the theater in his *il Teatro Comico*. The patrons of the theater certainly do not miss such satirical play between the playwright and his characters. The important distinction here is that we still do not know the interior personality that makes Goldoni an individual. His identity, his self, remains at the level of a character in his own performances.[44]

I would propose, therefore, that the emergent public sphere is present in the examples I have discussed. However, it is not simply the existence of physical and institutional public interior spaces – such as the *ridotti*, the theatre, or the café as described by Habermas – that allows for participation within the public sphere. It is also masking – either literally with the *bauta*, or more symbolically through irony and satire – that allows for participation to occur. The mode of participation is clearly different than that described by Habermas. It is not open and free, allowing 'the better argument to win.'[45] Rather, we can follow the discourse on the nature of the theater, but only in an oblique way, through the masking of the characters in Gozzi's and Goldoni's works. The conversation is masked by double meanings and inside jokes. Further, the

discourse and activities that occurred in the public institutions so important to Habermas's argument could, in Venice, only have occurred while one was wearing a mask. Masking offered an alibi to act freely, openly. I would claim, then, that a more nuanced sense of public interior space emerged in Venice in this period – the space that existed between one's face and the mask that was worn.

Notes

I am very grateful to Denise Amy Baxter and Meredith Martin for their thoughtful and precise reading of the text and suggestions for its improvement. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

1. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1991).

2. See James Davis, *The Decline of the Venetian Nobility as a Ruling Class* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962). Davis describes how merchants were able to buy their way, though not officially, into the patrician class.

3. Habermas, 36–7.

4. There is a well-documented growth of *giornale* culture in eighteenth-century Venice. See, for example, *Giornali Veneziani del Settecento*, ed. Marino Berengo (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1962); Franco Venturi, *Settecento Riformati* (Turin: Einaudi, 1969); and Emiliana Pesca Noether, *Seeds of Italian Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).

5. Cesare Beccaria, 'De'foglie periodici,' in *il Caffè 1764–1766*, eds Gianni Francioni and Sergio Romagnoli (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1993), 418: 'la pubblica utilità, lo spandimento della luce, l'accrescimento dell numero de'lettori, e de'lettori docili alla verità.'

6. See, for example, Rebecca Messbarger, 'Double-Crossing: Female Impersonation in Gasparo Gozzi's "Gazzetta veneta,"' *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 35, no. 1 (Spring, 2002), 1–13. Messbarger describes a fictional dialogue in which Gasparo Gozzi plays himself, the Gazetteer, and three Venetian women. The dialogue occupied ten of the final eleven issues and discussed the role of women in society.

7. For more description of life in the cafés of Venice, see Maurice Andrieux, *Daily Life in Venice at the Time of Casanova* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1972), 22–4. A *casinò* (salon) was a room or small group of rooms owned by wealthier Venetians that was not connected to the homes in which they and their families lived. Through the seventeenth century, these rooms tended to be more selective in their rules of admittance. Such rooms were often rented out to entertain, gamble, or do whatever else one might consider doing behind closed doors.

8. For further discussion, see Jonathan Walker, 'Gambling and Venetian Noblemen c. 1500–1700,' *Past and Present* 162 (February 1999), 59; and Emanuela Zucchetta, *Antichi ridotti veneziani: arte e società dal Cinquecento al Settecento* (Rome: Flli. Palombi, 1988). Zucchetta supplies a list of *ridotti* in Venice.

9. Francis Mission, *A new voyage to Italy* (1688), quoted in *A Traveler's Companion to Venice*, ed. John Julius Norwich (New York: Interlink, 1990), 361.

10. Although the scene is considered to be typical, Alice Binion has argued that Guardi is painting a scene from Carlo Goldoni's play *Donne Gelosi*. See *Antonio and Francesco Guardi: Their Life and Milieu* (New York: Garland, 1976).

11. Though at least eight theaters were operational in the eighteenth century, only two – *La Fenice* (1792) and *S Benedetto* (1755) – were constructed in that century. Legislation was passed in 1756 that forbade new construction due to the financial risk.

12. Most scholarship dates this design to the mid-seventeenth century, though a recent account has dated it a century earlier. See Eugene J. Johnson, 'The Short Lascivious Lives of Two Venetian Theaters, 1580–85,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (Autumn, 2002), 936–68.

13. Evidence of such hierarchy is found in the surviving lists of box holders for *La Fenice*. Patricians from the ranks of the original families held the first three levels – the *pepian* (ground floor), *primo ordine* (second level), and *secondo ordine* (third level) – almost exclusively. More recently elevated patricians held the upper two levels. For a more detailed analysis, see Martha Feldman, 'Opera, Festivity, and Spectacle,' in *Venice Reconsidered*, eds John Martin and Dennis Romano (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), esp. 220–24. A more 'middle-class' example is provided by Jonathan E. Glixon and Beth L. Glixon in 'Oil and Opera Don't Mix: The Biography of S Aponal, a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Opera Theater,' in *Music in the Theater, Church, and Villa*, ed. Susan Parisi (Sterling Heights MI: Harmonie Park Press, 2000), 131–44. Though, again, patricians occupied the best seats, the Glixons describe San Aponal as having a more 'middle-class' and therefore open arrangement of the upper levels of *palchi*.

14. A 1711 proclamation by the *Provveditori alle Pompe*, for example, attempted to regulate immodest and scandalously dressed prostitutes in the public theater, as well as overly luxurious meals. See Franca R. Barricelli, 'Civic Representations: Theater Politics, and Public Life in Venice, 1770–1806' (PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1994), 337. Barricelli lists theater legislation in Venice from 1508 to 1794. It is clear from legislation, anecdotal evidence, and even rental agreements that courtesans were very much present in the life of the audience.

15. Gaetano Zompini, *Le Arti che vanno per via nella città di Venezia* (1753; Venice: n.p., 1785). The inscription reads: 'La Piazza de S Marco semo avezzi, Fitar palchi i ogni sera in sie teatri, D'opera, e de Commedia a varii prezzi.' [In Piazza S Marco I distribute keys, each evening, renting boxes at six theaters, for Opera and Comedy, at varying prices.]

16. Cardinal de Bernis, quoted in Norwich, 291.

17. For the masquerade in England see Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1986). Castle offers a fascinating history of the masquerade in England and then demonstrates how the motifs of masquerade influenced English fiction.

18. For a history of carnival in Venice, see Danilo Reato, *Storia del carnevale di Venezia* (Venice: Amministrazione della Provincia di Venezia, 1988).

19. Francis Mission, *A new voyage to Italy* (1688), quoted in Norwich, 360.

20. Some of the carnival rituals included the *volo del turco* (flight of the Turk), *forze d'Ercole* (human pyramids), and even a mock trial of 12 pigs. The space between two columns in the piazzetta (one for San Marco, the other for San Teodoro) was the setting for many public executions: it is still considered bad luck to walk between the columns. For further discussion of the origins of the Venetian carnival rituals, see Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 156–81.

21. Eugene J. Johnson, 'Jacopo Sansovino, Giacomo Torelli, and the Theatricality of the Piazzetta in Venice,' *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 59, no. 4 (December 2000), 436–53. Johnson relates Sansovino's Marciana library to the Theater of Marcellus in Rome, describes the theatrical use of the Piazzetta San Marco, and shows how the city of Venice was portrayed in the theater stage.

22. For a description of such performances, see Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Los Angeles CA: University of California Press, 1991), esp. 110–53.

23. A third mask also began to appear at this time, though with much less regularity. The mask was known as a *gnaga* and was simply a man dressed as a woman.

24. Sumptuary laws were originally intended to control and condemn what was seen as avarice, solidify class structure, and respond to the fear of foreign influence. Historically the *Magistrato alle Pompe* controlled everything: the amount of dowries, the display of jewels, the cost and cut of clothing, the amount of oysters that could be served at a banquet, the type of music that could be played, and so on. The laws habitually proved to be difficult to enforce. See Giulio Bistort, *Il Magistrato alle Pompe nella Repubblica di Venezia* (Venice: Tipografia Libreria Emiliana, 1912).

25. For a list of legislation related to the carnival, see Reato, 85–91, and Barricelli, 336–40. Jutta Sperling has shown that as early as the seventeenth century a paradox existed between the representation of the glory of Venice through displays of material wealth and the very real threat of bankrupting her patricians. See Jutta Sperling, 'The Paradox of Perfection: Reproducing the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, no. 1 (January 1999), 3–32.

26. Scholarship on the *commedia dell'arte* is extensive. Allardyce Nicoll, in *The World of Harlequin: A Critical Study of the Commedia dell'Arte* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1963), provides a precise description.

27. The view that Goldoni presented a more 'realistic' theater was established by the extensive scholarship of Giuseppe Ortolani. See, for example, *Voci e visioni del settecento veneziano* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1926), and also Ortolani's commentary in Carlo Goldoni, *Tutte le Opere*, ed. Giusepe Ortolani (Milan: Mondadori, 1936), vol. 1.

28. Goldoni, *Tutte le Opere*, 349: 'Le masque doit toujours faire beaucoup de tort à l'action de l'Acteur, soit dans la joie, soit dans le chagrin; qu'il soit amoureaux, farouche ou plaisant, c'est toujours le même cuir qui se montre; et il a beau gesticuler et changer de ton, il ne fera jamais connoître, par les traits du visage qui sont les interpretes du cœur, les différentes passions dont son ame est agitée.'

29. Goldoni, *Tutte le Opere*, 349: 'Les masques chez les Grecs et les Romains étoient des epeces de porte-voix qui avoient été imagines pour faire entendre les personages dans la vaste étendue des Amphithéâtres. Les passions et les sentimens n'étoient pas portés dans ce tems là au point de délicatesse que l'on exige actuellment; on veut aujord'hui que l'Acteur ait de l'âme, et l'âme sous le masque est comme le feu sous les cendres.'

30. 'Tonino' is not the only one. 'Orazio' plays Ottavio, 'Placida' plays Rosaura, 'Eugenio' plays Florino, 'Anselemo' plays the role of Brighella, 'Gianni' plays Arlecchino, and 'Vittoria' plays Columbina. It is interesting to note that the characters were instructed by Goldoni to speak in a Venetian dialect when they were playing the roles of the *commedia*. For the complete list of actors and the roles their characters played in the original production see Goldoni, *Tutte le Opere*, 1329.

31. Goldoni, *Tutte le Opere*, 1053, 1051. There is a continual play between the context of the audience watching the performance, the actors performing, and the *commedia* within the performance. An example of this is in scene 13 when Vittoria is asked to answer the door and responds by saying: 'Eh, io son la serva da burla, la farò anche davvero.' ('I'm a pretend servant, but now I'll do it for real.') The 'real' here refers to the world of the audience.

32. The play was a huge success, leading Gozzi to claim that the popularity of a play did not depend upon the realism or morality of Goldoni. Puccini, more famously, translated Gozzi's play into an opera.

33. Nicoll writes, 'Gozzi defended the commedia dell'arte, it is true, but he defended it, not because he appreciated its virtues and wished to preserve them, but only because his central purpose of attacking Goldoni was served by his so doing (210).'

34. Carlo Gozzi, *Memorie Inutile*, ed. Giuseppe Prezzolini (Bari: Giuseppe Laterza & Figli, 1934), 27.

35. For the complete story, see Gozzi, *Memorie Inutile*, 212–15.

36. For example: 'nella Commedia della mia vita si cambia scena' and 'Non può negarsi, ch'io non sia nato sotto gl'influssi di stella comica, poichè la mia vita medesima è una commedia…' Goldoni, *Tutte le Opere*, 655, 634. See also, 'Ho intrapreso a scriver la mia Vita, niente per altro, ch per fare la storia del mio teatro, ma il preliminare è sì lungo, e la mia vita sì poco interessante.' Carlo Goldoni, *Delle commedie di Carlo Goldoni, avvocato Veneto* (Venice: Giambattista Pasquali, 1761), vol. 12, i.

37. This is clearly a central aim for Goldoni and he discusses it length. See his *Tutte le Opere*, 769–70, and his *Delle commedie*, vol. 1, vii.

38. Goldoni, *Delle commedie*, iii–iv: 'Ciascun frontispizio, come dissi istoriato, rappresenterà un qualche pezzo della mia vita, principiando dall'età d'anni otto, in cui il genio comico principiava in me a svilupparsi, composta avendo in sì tenera età una Commedia, di quell valore, che aspettar si potea da un bambino. … Ho pensato di dare ne'frontispizi un sommario della mia vita, sparsa già da gran tempo in varie lettere, e prefazioni, e in qualche scena ancora delle opere mie fin'ora stampate.'

39. For further information see *Cambridge History of Italian Literature*, eds Peter Brand and Lino Pertile (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 395–6; and Andrea Battistini, *Lo spechio di dedalo: autobiografia e biografia* (Bologna: il Mulino Coll. Saggi, 2007). One of the earliest examples of modern autobiography in this context is Giambattista Vico's, which was intended, perhaps similarly to Rousseau's, for the education of youth. See the *Autobiography of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Max Harold Fisch and Thomas Goddard Bergin (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1962); and Donald Phillip Verene, *The New Art of Autobiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). Carlo Lodoli, a Franciscan monk and professor of architecture, spearheaded the effort to get Vico's work published and even named the new genre as *periautografia* – literally a 'writing around oneself.'

40. Many actresses, singers, and other creatures of the theater were being caricatured in print at this time by Anton Maria Zanetti. For examples and descriptions see *Caricature di Anton Maria Zanetti*, ed. Alessandro Bettagno (Venice: Neri Pozzi Editore, 1969).

41. Ronald L. Grimes, 'Masking: Towards a Phenomenology of Masking,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 43, no. 3 (September 1975), 508–16.

42. To use a more modern expression, we might say that what happened in Venice, stayed in Venice.

43. Jose Ortega y Gasset, 'The Idea of the Theater: an Abbreviated View,' in *Phenomenology and Art* (New York: Norton, 1975), 163–96.

44. Dror Wahrman has made the distinction between various understandings of 'identity.' Identity may describe the unique individuality of a person (as in an 'identity card') or the common relationship between an individual and a group (as in 'identity politics'). Both respond to the question 'Who am I?' See *The Making of the Modern Self* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2004), xii. Deidre Lynch has shown that identity, at least as characterized in novels, art, and the theater, was generic. The identity of characters was more akin to type than to individual distinctions. See Deidre Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998). Goldoni is certainly playing a type – as 'Lawyer,' or as 'Playwright' – but it is through these types that we get a sense of his individual self.

45. Habermas, 36.