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The early *commedia dell'arte* (1550–1621): The mannerist context

Castagno, Paul Christopher, Ph.D.

The Ohio State University, 1989

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**THE EARLY COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE (1550-1621):
THE MANNERIST CONTEXT
DISSERTATION**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University**

By

Paul Christopher Castagno, B.F.A.,

*** * * * ***

The Ohio State University

1989

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To Marion and Molly

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation establishes a Mannerist context for the early *commedia dell'arte* during its advent in the latter half of the sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth century. The geographical area is based in Italy, with consideration of Mannerist and *commedia dell'arte* influences in other European countries. Because the term Mannerism originates from an art historical basis, a major emphasis will concern the early iconography of the *commedia dell'arte* as a Mannerist phenomenon. Mannerism will then be applied to other *commedia* phenomena in order to establish them within the Mannerist historical and stylistic context.

Commedia dell'arte is an encompassing term that embraces the *compagnie* (acting companies), their productions, and their itinerant lifestyle. As such it also refers to the stock comic types (*comici*) who made up the first professional acting troupes: Harlequin, Pantaloon, the lovers, Dottore, Pulcinella, and the buffoon-like *zanni*. Their performances were based upon scenarios, that is, plot-outlines, into which they also wove *lazzi* (farcical actions), and *generici* (stock speeches). Since the stock speeches, *lazzi*, and scenario plots were established prior to performance, the productions mixed rehearsed and improvised material. During the period examined in this work, the *comici dell'arte* performed in courts throughout Europe with great success. In addition, they also gave numerous public performances upon mountebank stages, in the open air *piazze*. Their

outdoor performances, while immensely popular, drew the invectives of the Counter-Reformation, which attempted to curtail such often obscene and "diabolical" presentations.

While theatre historians have provided considerable information on the development of the *commedia dell'arte*, to my knowledge only one scholar to date has attempted to link it with the prevailing post-Renaissance style of Mannerism.¹ Mannerism, as a historical and stylistic term, has been useful to both general historians and those in the visual arts, literature, and in music. It is utilized to describe both the late sixteenth-century period of socio-economic unrest and crisis which is causally linked to changes in the arts, and as a stylistic term that distinguishes Mannerist characteristics from those of Classicism. Traits of Mannerism vs. Renaissance Classicism include exaggeration vs. restraint, distortion and non-adherence to natural or scientific laws vs. fidelity to nature and utilization of scientific principles, ornamentation vs. formal clarity, non-unity of parts vs. unity as ideal, fantasy vs. reality, twisted unbalanced poses vs. balanced, graceful, and harmonious figures. A complete vocabulary of Mannerist terms is included at the beginning of Chapter IX.

Mannerist painters such as Pontormo, Rosso, and Parmigianino discarded objective reliance upon nature and rules in favor of a subjective vision, or the inner design (*disegno interno*). Mannerist poets abandoned Renaissance codes of metric symmetry to create poetic love 'conceits', that were marked by ambiguity, hyperbole, and a variety of figures of speech. These poems, were often set to music, which used chromaticism and

¹ Eva-Marie Weidemann, "*Komik und Commedia dell'Arte*," Diss. Universität Wien, 1983, pp. 158. Cited in Thomas F. Heck, *Commedia dell'Arte: A Guide to the Primary and Secondary Literature*, New York: Garland Press, 1988, p. 88, annotation included.

dissonance² in an attempt at the *effetto meraviglioso* (marvelous effect). Whether exhibited in art, literature or music, Mannerism sought style and virtuosity over substance, bizarre effect over deeper truth, and ambiguity over clarity. Unity gave way to what Wylie Sypher terms the "revolving view," whereby change, levels of contrast, and contradictions exist side by side, in strange, disharmonious juxtapositions.

Methodology

This dissertation establishes parallel developments in art and theatre that encompass nearly one hundred years (1520-1620). Part I explores the phenomenon of Mannerism: Chapter I proposes a definition that encompasses both historical and stylistic points of view. It then proceeds to review the historiography of Mannerism. Chapter II examines the historical background of Mannerist art, and describes many of its typical characteristics. Chapter III discusses Mannerist theory, particularly the various notions of *maniera*, the word from which Mannerism is etymologically based, and other concepts such as *disegno interno*, *licenzia*, and *gusto*. Chapter III demonstrates how *maniera* entered into the sister arts and the world of courtly behavior.

Part II attempts to provide the necessary background of the *commedia dell'arte* without prematurely linking the *commedia dell'arte* to a Mannerist context. This is in order to set out the two parallel lines of development. Chapter IV reviews the major theories of origin, and considers the staging contributions of the cinquecento learned comedy. From this Classicistic influence we turn to the anti-Classical theatre practices of Ruzante and Calmo.

² Chromaticism is the use of tones other than diatonic to obscure key relationships and to make aesthetic use of dissonance.

Their innovations historically and stylistically paralleled, in many cases, the individual efforts of the early Mannerist artists. They also served as immediate precursors to the development of the *commedia dell'arte*. Chapter V details the traveling nature of the early troupes, their contracts, conflicts with the Church, and staging practices. This culminates with a discussion of *commedia dell'arte*'s "Golden Age." Chapter VI identifies the significant stage figures of the *commedia*, separating them into comic and serious types. The serious figures are discussed in relation to the rhetorical acting theories prevalent in the cinquecento.

The parallel lines of historical development of Mannerism in Part I, and the *commedia dell'arte* in Part II, are linked in Part III through a synchronic method. Chapter VII demonstrates how the synchronic approach has been used by historians to establish various conjunction points between contemporaneous phenomena. Chapter VIII explores such a link between the Mannerist *pittore vago* ("wandering painters"), and the itinerant performers of the *commedia dell'arte*. Then, in Chapter IX, I give a detailed analysis of select iconography from the early *commedia dell'arte*, after first defining the regular stylistic terms of Mannerist practice and theory. By way of conclusion Part IV, Chapter X, then demonstrates how these terms can be applied in the theatrical sense to aspects of the *commedia dell'arte*. By applying the criteria for Mannerist art (deduced from the previous analysis of Mannerism in general and the *commedia dell'arte* iconography in particular), to the salient performance features of the *commedia dell'arte* (described in general in Chapters V and VI), this theatrical form and practice can be seen to be part of a Mannerist context.

Mannerist terms are listed and defined before the iconographical analysis in Chapter IX. They are also explored in detail throughout Part I. *Commedia dell'arte* terms will be defined the first time they appear in the body of the text. Examples are generally provided. Mannerism and Mannerist are capitalized, in order to designate the specific historical period and historical style, and to distinguish this usage from the generally pejorative connotations of "mannerisms" or "mannered." *Commedia dell'arte* is italicized and in lower case, except when used in a heading, or when the first word begins a sentence. It is italicized because the word is not yet included in dictionaries of the English language, and in order to provide some degree of emphasis.

On the other hand, cinquecento and seicento, have been included in English dictionaries for some time, and are therefore dispatched in the standard type. Foreign proper names and figures like Pantalone, Capitano, and so on, also remain in standard type. However, lower case foreign adjectives and generic nouns such as: *sprezzatura*, *discordia concors* ; or, *lazzi*, *zanni*, and *innamorata*, will be italicized. Foreign book titles and journal titles are in standard type and underlined. This differentiates them from foreign article titles, and quotations, which are italicized. The translations are almost always in the text, while the original is footnoted. Unless otherwise noted the translations of the Italian and French are mine. In some cases I have modified a previous translation. Explanations are included in the footnotes.

PART I

CHAPTER I

Mannerism: Towards a Definition

While most historians are in agreement that after 1520 the character of Renaissance activity in the arts begins to change, there has been no consensus among them as to whether this change marked the beginning of Mannerism. Nor are they in accord as the meaning of Mannerism as an aesthetic or stylistic term. There is also the problem of defining the sister arts in terms that originated for art historical purposes. For this reason the problem of establishing a workable definition for Mannerism was addressed unsuccessfully at two international conferences on the subject which were held in the 1960's.¹ The view reached in papers by Ernst Gombrich, Craig H. Smyth and Sidney Freedberg concluded that "Mannerism was less the spirit of the age than a conception of art held during it."² In their view, Mannerism referred to an aesthetic phenomenon shaped primarily by artistic concerns. However, that view was opposed by Hauser, Weise, and Sypher, among others, all of whom acknowledged larger historical influences. Nevertheless, a unifying

¹ The 1960 conference sponsored by the Roman *Accademia dei Lincei* dealt primarily with literature--Manierismo, barocco, rococò: concetti and termini, [sic.]; its proceedings were published in 1962. *The Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art*, which in the main considered art historical matters, was held in New York in 1961 (proceedings published in 1963). The debate had raged particularly during the nineteen-forties, fifties and into the sixties over the extent of the definition of Mannerism, whether was legitimate claim to literary Mannerism, and the sociological implications of the term.

² James Mirollo, Mannerism and Renaissance Poetry: Concept, Mode, Inner Design (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1984), p. 37.

definition is possible providing Mannerism is seen both as an historical and stylistic phenomenon, rather than being mutually exclusive. Nikolaus Pevsner has cited this view:

"Today more than ever, art historians tend to neglect the basic historical framework in favour of the study of formal development, and this easily leads to misconceptions to the conditions under which works of art have been produced and consequently to errors of interpretation."³

Therefore, we will proceed by initially defining Mannerism as an historical period existing from 1520 to 1620, in Europe, centered in Italy but with a number of foreign influences both contemporary and historical, during which a characteristic style emerged. Thereafter, we will consider *maniera* as an aesthetic concern, particularly in Mannerism's mature development, or what Hauser has called second-generation Mannerism (after 1550). We will therefore recognize in Mannerism a style that is typically exaggerated, distorted, lacks compositional unity, substitutes rhythmical effects for harmony and balance, obscures spatial relationships, utilizes figural crowding, *sprezzatura*, *effetto meraviglioso*, and other definable traits that make it distinctive from the Classicistic Renaissance style.⁴ Once formulated we can test our definition in the light of the plastic arts and then as a mode of historical analysis to its sister arts. Finally, we will use our definition to examine the iconography and practices of the *commedia dell'arte* as a Mannerist phenomenon.

³ Nikolaus Pevsner, "The Counter-Reformation and Mannerism," in Mannerism and Baroque (New York: Walker and Co., 1968), p. 13.

⁴ These terms are all defined in detail in Part III, Chapter VII.

Backgrounds to Mannerism

Historical Approaches

Mannerism begins around 1520 in Italy, a signal year which marked the death of the great Renaissance master, Raphael,⁵ culminating the period known as the High Renaissance. This year also formalized the Protestant Reformation with Luther's burning of the papal bull of excommunication at Wittenberg. Within a year the epicurean Pope, Leo X, had died, ending the reign of the humanist popes. These same years saw the deaths of Signorelli, Perugino, Carpaccio, Giovanni Bellini, Piero di Cosimo and the musical innovator Josquin.⁶ The years from 1520-1527 saw a series of economic and political crises. Then in 1527 the unthinkable happened. Robert Erich Wolf explains the state of siege that culminated in the sack of Rome in 1527:

⁵ The death of Leonardo da Vinci in 1519 also accented the demise of the High Renaissance.

⁶ Best noted as creator of the *ars perfecta*, Maniatis sees as one of the major influences on early Mannerism.

"The temporal order was plunged into chaos when the French were driven out of Milan in 1521 and fought their way back in 1525. The Hapsburgs, and the Spanish and French invaders, shattered the gates of paradise and broke Italian nerve. To the new attitudes, new ideas, new modes the enemy introduced were added the still stranger ones of German and Dutch merchants and of a motley crew of foreigners who came to learn in the universities and in the ateliers of the artists. In custom and politics, numerous Italian cities and princes bowed before the foreign influences, seeking some temporary advantage which could scarcely conceal the fact that in truth, they had become mere vassals of a foreign empire. In Florence and Venice, as elsewhere there were revolutions. When in 1527, Rome was sacked it was as if the final holocaust had arrived. Voices of doom were raised in the streets of the widowed city; visionary preachers came down from the hills to proclaim that the apocalypse had come at last."⁷

Historians, like Wolf,⁸ have described Mannerism as a movement that was provoked by socio-cultural forces; the arts, then, became a sign of changing economic and political realities. Part of the reason for the renewed historical interest in Mannerism in this century has been the tendency of historiographers to correlate the old and the new: post-Renaissance phenomena and such non-classical, non-naturalistic movements as French Surrealism or German Expressionism. Wolf's terminology ("holocaust," "apocalypse," and "chaos,") is familiar in having been used to describe the terrors of the two World Wars. Foreign occupation continued to be a common theme for the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries. Art historian Arnold Hauser, while acknowledging the birth of Mannerism in the cinquecento, argues from a socio-cultural stance that Mannerism recurs throughout history as a universal expression of the inner anguish of the artist in relation to a

⁷ Robert Erich Wolf, "Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque: Three Styles, Three Periods," in Les Colloques de Wégimont, 4 (1957), p. 38.

⁸ Wolf is interested in these cultural effects upon the development of the madrigal, which we will develop later.

specific society.⁹ Thus, as he points out, German expressionism and French Surrealism in this century are characteristic of this historically intermittent "mannered" tendency.

Other art historians, like Battista, point out that the connection between culture and art may create a diversity of styles :¹⁰

"the internal changes always going on in society are inevitably reflected in the emergence of new styles in the arts."¹¹

Battista argues that there are exceptions to Hauser's generalization, citing Titian and Velasquez, who cannot be 'typed' as Mannerists, yet were prominent artists in the cinquecento.¹² In the main body of his text, however, Battista presents a view of cinquecento life that supports a clear break from the Renaissance. By using the term *antirinascimento* Battista is clarifying an historical period, which has been obscured by the 'other' use of the word Mannerism, that describes it as a recurring, cyclical phenomenon.

⁹ Hauser, pp. 94-111. Indeed, Hauser pays more than lip service to the concept of alienation. Consider his chapter title --"Alienation as the Key to Mannerism." He measures periods of integration such as the Renaissance against periods of disintegration--Mannerism.

¹⁰ Eugenio Battista, *L'antirinascimento: i fatti e le idee* (Milano: Fetrinelli, 1962). Battista here implies one must acknowledge the difference between official and unofficial style.

¹¹ Sypher, p. 125.

¹² Battista, p. 24.

Another side-effect of this century's renewed interest in Mannerism, has been to remove it from its historical context and regard it only as a stylistic phenomenon. This is the emphasis of literary theorist E. R. Curtius,¹³ who has concentrated on the:

*"Stilgeschichte, and identifies literary Mannerism with formal eccentricity, verbal ornamentation, and pointed thought. A recurring phenomenon in the history of style, and typified by rhetorical excess, it breaks out like a rash after and even during periods of perennial human inclination to order, symmetry, balance, clarity and restraint (in sum, the so-called classic values) by reveling in excessive verbal artifice and complex meaning. . Curtius proposed that Mannerism as he defined it be substituted for Baroque henceforth as the more appropriate term for recurring literary phenomenon not tied to any particular century."*¹⁴

Curtius suggested that Mannerism was a deviation from Classicism. He defined Classicism as the natural raised to its highest degree. It was also Curtius's quest to find a critical language to define Mannerism not replete with terms gathered from sources of art history. He found the answer in resorting to ancient rhetorical texts, that delineate between Greek and Asiatic styles.¹⁵ His cyclical approach traced a path of historically intermittent periods during which artificial styles prevailed. For instance, Mannerism, Rococo, and the Romantic periods all move away from realistic, objective strivings--toward the imaginative, subjective and decorative. These "unstable" periods are interpolated with periods of stylistic stability: Renaissance, Baroque, Neoclassicism, Realism. Curtius was actually using a variation of Wöfflin's dialectic approach in which he contrasted Renaissance and

¹³ Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages trans. by William R. Trask, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953).

¹⁴ Mirollo, p. 32.

¹⁵ Curtius, pp. 34-40.

Baroque art in terms of polar opposites.¹⁶ Curtius's theory remains a useful tool in the detection of underlying "mannerisms" which can be apprehended in the stylistic analysis of cinquecento Mannerist literature and poetry.

If the first impulse in the renewed interest of Mannerism was inspired by the interest in Surrealism and Expressionism, a second impulse, undertaken by general historians, was to explore the historical concept of "crisis." Crisis theory examines points of contention within a society, in relation to institutions, beliefs, economic and demographic conditions and cultural forces. When enough of these are in question at a given moment, society is in crisis. In the field of general history, Princeton historian Theodore Rabb described Mannerist art as indicative of the instability and unease of the late cinquecento, one that would eventually find resolution in the seventeenth century.¹⁷

"Nowhere is the disquiet, the evanescence of calm assurance, more apparent than in the dominant forms of painting. Especially by comparison with their immediate predecessors, Mannerists emanated discomfort, imbalance and restlessness. Nothing seemed solid or dependable."¹⁸

Rabb defined this *Zeitgeist* as a period of crisis--indicating the historical passage into the modern era, a period of doubt and unease:

¹⁶ Heinrich Wöfflin, Renaissance and Baroque, first ed. 1888, trans. Kathrin Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966); The Classic Art, trans. by Peter and Linda Murray (London: Phaidon, 1959).

¹⁷ Theodore K. Rabb, The Struggle for Stability in Early Modern Europe (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

¹⁸ Rabb, p. 41.

"...that both the rising fever and the final resolution centered on the location of authority. To the question 'where does authority come from?' or 'what is authentic authority?' there were a number of corollaries: 'are there solid and stable certainties?' or 'what is order and how certain is it?' or 'what is truth and how is it achieved?' or, most extreme, 'can one rely on anything?'"¹⁹

Although Rabb is a general historian, and in this context is considering the largest possible view of European society in the sixteenth century, the question of "location of authority" was a major concern throughout sixteenth-century Europe.

A third historical approach to the problems of the sixteenth century, was taken by the historians of the so-called *Annales* school. The *Annales* school employed several innovative approaches,²⁰ among them the study of contemporary literature in an effort to determine the *mentalité* of a culture:

"Or if you prefer, by the hidden operation of the conditions of life that a particular period creates for all the conventions and all the manifestations that meet on its common ground -- and on which it leaves the imprint of a style never seen before, and never to be seen again."²¹

¹⁹ Rabb, p. 33.

²⁰ *Annales* was founded by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre in Paris in 1929. The *Annales* refers to the name of the journal that was used to publish their ideas of history. The *Annales* approach is from the standpoint of social history; studies of town records, correspondence, real estate contracts and so forth that document everyday life. Through their study of the *mentalité* they attempt to strip away moralizing and anachronistic judgments of history, in an attempt to understand as much as possible about the life and thought inside the particular historical moment, restricting as much as possible the tendency to generalize, or view historical events through today's perspectives.

²¹ Lucien Febvre, The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais (Harvard University: Cambridge, 1982), p. 5.

Mentalité (which may be translated as "ways of thinking or mental tools") refers to the thought processes of an age, what was thought, how it was formed, and implies the importance of recognizing the historical distinctions between earlier periods and our own.²²

"The problem is not (for the historian at any rate) to catch hold of a man, a writer of the sixteenth century, in isolation from his contemporaries, and, just because a certain passage in his work fits in with the direction of one of our own modes of feeling, to decide that he fits under one of the rubrics we use today for classifying those who do or do not think like us . . ."²³

Lucien Febvre, co-founder of *Annales*, examined Rabelais works and letters, in an attempt to understand the question of unbelief in the sixteenth century.²⁴ His approach, although conversational in tone, has meticulously detailed obscure writings on ethics and morality in regard to the serious questions of faith and authority in an attempt to put together a composite of sixteenth-century religious thought in France. Sixteenth-century France was under the influence of the Reformation as is evident in the worldly scepticism of Montaigne,²⁵ who questioned the established institutions of authority. Laity as well as clergy began to realize the potential of independent thought, but were caught up in a vortex of conflicting ideals. The Council of Trent, recognizing the crisis within the Catholic

²² Febvre tells us in his introduction that parallels can be drawn between codes of conduct. He compares the gravity of calling a person an *atheist* in the sixteenth century, with calling them an *anarchist* at the turn of this century, and with the label *communist* during the McCarthy era; within each one of these eras they meant about the same thing.

²³ Febvre, p. 5.

²⁴ Febvre, p. 11.

²⁵ Montaigne, Montaigne: Complete Works, edit. by Donald Frame (Stanford: Stanford University, 1958).

religious and lay community, accepted the charge of the papacy to re-assert established authority. In this campaign, the Society of Jesus rose to prominence, and with its leader, Ignatius Loyola, it stressed above all else the vow of absolute obedience to papal authority. In consequence, Pevsner relates:

"The idea of the renunciation of the will, the suppression of the human personality, reflects the prevalent tendency of the age towards mysticism; the Jesuit order is thus deeply bound up with the *Zeitgeist* of the Counter-Reformation in its strictest form."²⁶

Werner Weisbach statement defines the context of the underlying *Zeitgeist* :

"One of the mysterious processes of history is that by which a development in form and a development in the evolution of thought takes place side by side and merges one in the other so that in the last resort the form appears as the appropriate expression of the intellectual development."²⁷

Pevsner brilliantly relates this to Mannerist art:

²⁶ Nikolaus Pevsner, "Mannerism and Baroque," in Studies in Art, Architecture and Design: Volume One Form Mannerism to Romanticism (New York: Walker, 1968), p. 19.

²⁷ Werner Weisbach, Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation, (Berlin: Cassirer, 1921), p. 16.

". . . Dvorák showed that the suppression of the individual significance of the human being lies at the last phase of Michelangelo's work.²⁸ The mature art of Tintoretto (born 1528)²⁹ and Barocci (born 1526) subordinates the human figure to an abstract linear schema; and in the work of Vasari (born 1511),³⁰ Salviati (born 1510) Zuccaro (born 1529) and his school, the Bolognese and the Milanese, the individual form loses its significance in favour of unmanageably crowded, or decoratively-ordered pictorial elements. This negation of the individual significance of the human being, this constraint which submerges it in a welter of forms, stretches it out of its natural shape, or immobilizes it in heavy draperies, constitutes the deepest and most important link between the art of Mannerism and the dominant ideas of the Counter-Reformation."³¹

Pevsner here presents a clear example of form and substance intertwining in the *Zeitgeist* of the cinquecento. But the link between the Council and the artists of the cinquecento extended beyond the idea of *Zeitgeist*.. Early examples of the Council's role were established in the dialogues between Aretino and Ludovico Dolce, through which the Council extended its authority into the realm of secular art. The erotic illustrations of Aretino's sonnets by Guilio Romano (most famous of the artists in the School of Raphael)³² were contested and acknowledged as an impropriety by Dolce and the Council.³³ A treatise regarding the standards of sacred art, published in 1563, neutralized the growing political "voice" of the artists who, particularly under Vasari, had

²⁸ Crucifixion of St. Peter, *Cappella Paolina, Roma*.

²⁹ Moses Striking the Rock, *Scuola di San Rocco, Venice*

³⁰ Immaculate Conception, Paul III receiving the Homage of Foreign Nations.

³¹ Pevsner, pp. 19-20.

³² See Fig. 17 in Appendix.

³³ cited in James Mirollo, Mannerism and Renaissance Poetry (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 23. See also Lodovico Dolce, *Dialogo della pittura intitolato l'Aretino* (1577), in Barocchi, *Trattati d'arte*, 1:143-206.

consolidated their strength by the formation of academies. The Council, while certainly interested in the moral objectives of painting, also became increasingly critical of the techniques involved in the creation of works. Arnold Hauser elaborates:

"The liberalism of the church in relation to art gradually ceased; artistic production came under the supervision of theologians, and painters, particularly when undertaking church commissions, had to abide by the instructions of their spiritual advisors. Later during the decoration of Caprarola, Taddeo Zuccari was given instructions even about the choice of colors, and during his work at the Sala Regia Vasari adhered strictly to the advice of the Dominican Vincenzo Borghini, the great authority on art matters of his time."³⁴

Certainly documentation of this kind is crucial for the historian attempting to determine how art was created in the sixteenth century, and under what conditions. For it demonstrates how socio-cultural approaches to history can have genuine validity. Here the abstract theory of Weisbach gains credibility when it is supported by the concrete evidence of Pevsner. And Pevsner's evaluations are convincing, when seen in the light of the empirical proofs which Hauser provides.

Another historical approach to Mannerism involves the use of a dialectical method. Dialectical oppositions have been used effectively in art since Wöfflin,³⁵ which is testimony to that nineteenth-century historian's debt to Hegel. Hauser, more significantly, used these oppositions to conclude that the process by which Mannerism was produced was a result of the:

³⁴ Hauser, pp. 209-210.

³⁵ Heinrich Wöfflin, Classic Art (op. cit.).

"tension between Classicism and anti-Classicism, naturalism and formalism, rationalism and irrationalism, sensualism and spiritualism, traditionalism and innovation, conventionalism and revolt against conformism; for its essence lies in this tension, the union of apparently irreconcilable opposites [sic]."36

This is an effective argument, one which readily applies to Mannerist art, and has been applied by historians in the field of music and literature. It is perhaps helpful to think of these opposites as juxtaposed on a continuum where there is a range of free play between the poles. The oxymoron *discordia concors* best describes this paradoxical linking of irreconcilables. Maria Rika Maniates has posited its importance in sixteenth-century culture and art:

"If paradox is a prominent feature of form it is an even more salient ingredient of content, for Mannerist thought seeks to place extremes in daring apposition. *Discordia concors* functions as an intellectual password. Nicolas Cusanus, a precursor of the Neo-platonic school uses the words *coincidentia oppositorum*. But whereas Cusanus intends the harmonious resolution of opposites into an organic whole, Mannerists experiment with attenuated dualities. The opposites never lose their individuality; and the further apart the irreconcilable elements are, the more significant their ingenious combination. . . . Paradox aims at revealing hidden meaning by concealing it in enigmatic trappings. Again, this approach can be charged with serious philosophical import or it can be simply frivolous teasing. It also varies from extreme subtlety to coarse fatuity. Thus, paradoxical expression vacillates between illusionistic surprises and impenetrable puzzles."37

The paradoxical *discordia concors* spread through all the arts, including the marriage of music and poetry in the cinquecento madrigal. Gesualdo, a gifted madrigalist of the late cinquecento offers an example:

36 Hauser, p. 12.

37 Maria Rika Maniates, Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1979) p. 5.

"[Gesualdo] preferred texts that abound in oxymora and other imagery which are capable of contrasting musical treatment. . . This leads to a disruptive musical style, characterized by alternations of the diatonic allegro and the chromatic adagio--akin to the familiar 'juxtaposition of irreconcilable elements' typically associated with Mannerism, in the visual and literary arts."³⁸

Considering the self-obfuscating nature of the madrigal form, Watkins concludes:

"The finished product, the madrigal, though brief and limited in subject, is marked by a density of idea, complexity of relationship and persistent diversity born of a reflection of attendant literary *meraviglie*. The result is an overload. Precisely because abundant *gestures* [italics mine], and allusion is accompanied by compactness of form, the clarity and precision of countless details are ultimately rendered obscure by their very profusion in so tight a space. Yet the fascination resides not only in the labyrinthine dimension of such a tiny cosmos but also in its flickering iridescence and tentative stability."³⁹

In some cases historians become indignant, almost insulted by Mannerist practices, and the paradoxes inherent in its style:

"This is the basic problem of the [Mannerist] style ; there was a definite contradiction between ends and means. The aim was the expression of individual, personal, unique, subjective sentiments ; the means were polyphonic, that is, multiple, impersonal, generalized and objective. Four or five voices all proclaim their intention of dying for lack of a kiss from one shepherdess ; pretending all to be the voice of St. Peter, they cry out in horror at his betrayal of Christ ; they invite the bride to enter their bed. This was nonsense. It was unintelligent and unjustifiable and stupid even. It was a perfectly evident violation of the emotional meaning of the words sung."⁴⁰

³⁸ Glenn Watkins, Gesualdo: The Man and his Music (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), p. 109.

³⁹ Watkins, p. 109. The madrigal will be discussed in greater detail in the section on *maniera* later in this chapter.

⁴⁰ R. Wolf, p. 43.

While illuminating upon the paradoxical essence of Mannerism, Wolf is also demonstrating the value-oriented approach to inquiry. Rather than accepting the basic artificiality of method, he condemns its flight from the apodictic.

Returning to Maniates statements regarding the relativity of the *discordia concors*, we can see it took comic and tragic forms.⁴¹ A comic example of this paradoxical principle of juxtaposition is exhibited by the "frivolous" *commedia dell'arte* character of Harlequin. Harlequin can be both "fatuously" slow-witted or express great wisdom, highly agile or clumsy and physically awkward, a gourmand or an *innamorato*. This cultivated ambiguity of personality traits that has created the essence of Harlequin's appeal, is born of the Mannerist *discordia concors*.

Wylie Sypher cites the "serious philosophical import" concealed in the "enigmatic trappings" of the character, Hamlet. Shakespeare has created a character who wants to act, but cannot; and who feigns madness, but is actually consumed by melancholia.⁴² Sypher states that to find Hamlet's nature, we must take one of two incompatible points of view; either we must narrow our view and see him as a "revenger," or:

⁴¹ Words and expressions quoted from Maniates statements on page before.

⁴² Melancholia was an trait associated with artists of the period. Vasari description of Pontormo's life bears this out. "His personality was often oppressed by a melancholy that seems to have been assuaged only by protective isolation or the companionship of friends." See I. L Zupnick's "The Aesthetics of Early Mannerists," *Art Bulletin*, 35, (1953), pp. 302-306. Vasari tells that Pontormo made frequent withdrawals to the monastery at Certosa and the fact that his room was approached by a ladder which he could draw to protect his isolation. Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. by S.G.C. Middlemore (London, 1945), pp. 250-253.

"we must look at him from many angles as if we circulated about this figure. The Mannerist artist is always experimenting with points of view and approaches. If we take a "revolving view" of this Mannerist hero as we are surely tempted to do, he corresponds to Michelangelo's *figura serpentina* in sculpture. . . Wrested into foreshortenings, overlappings, and spirals, the Mannerist flamelike statue cannot be satisfactorily seen from any one point of view. . ."43

In Michelangelo's sculpture *Victory* (Fig. 44),⁴⁴ we have an example of the *figura serpentina*, or twisting S-shaped figure, which presents the illusion of motion, and the Mannerist characteristic of offering multiple viewing angles, or points of focus. So too does Hamlet present the viewer with a complexity of viewing angles, allowing a diverse range of interpretive and psychological perspectives.

John Shearman demonstrates how the Mannerist vocabulary can be applied to forms of rhetoric. For example the *contrapposti* of the *figura serpentina* are juxtaposed to the verbal *contrapposti* or *antithesis* of Guarini's rhetoric in the *Pastor Fido*, where they aim at the common goal of artificiality. The Mannerist novelties of the Guarini pastoral, were then combined with the strikingly bizarre effects of Mannerist composers like Marenzio.⁴⁵

43 Wylie Sypher, "Mannerism," in Four Stages of Renaissance Style: Transformations in Art and Literature (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1955), pp. 157.

44 In Appendix. Bologna's sculpture, *Mercury* is a later well-known example of the *figura serpentina* in sculpture.

45 See Maniates, p. 349. In 1594, the composer Marenzio, created a masterpiece of the five-voiced madrigal based on Guarini's pastoral. "Marenzio's main affective weapons are unorthodox dissonances and other forbidden intervals. Rather than restrict those to diatonic passages, Marenzio uses them most prominently in chromatic ones, and this odd technique produces a heretofore unknown *meraviglia*. After a pair of triads whose roots move by a semitone (A major B flat major; three linear semitones) Marenzio interlocks a third-related pair (B flat major, G minor) whose lack of linear semi-tone is compensated by a piquant suspended dissonance in the bass voice. At measure 15 we find a dominant-seventh" massing". . . Maniates continues here to write about the ambiguous root-orientation of tritones.

Sypher, as a practicing proponent of the *Zeitgeist*, and international world-view orientation, deciphers a Mannerist code from Jacobean literature,⁴⁶ mainly through the use of metaphors based upon painting, sculpture and architecture. His interdisciplinary methodology establishes a psychological frame, whereby terms like "unresolved tensions," and "shifting planes of reality," describe the phenomenological effect of Mannerist art upon the spectator or audience. In addition, coded metaphors like "shifting planes of reality,"⁴⁷ can effectively correlate structural principles underlying the phenomenon of the divergent disciplines:

⁴⁶ As does John Greenwood, Shifting Perspectives and the Stylish Style: Mannerism in Shakespeare and his Jacobean Contemporaries, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988). Greenwood expands upon Sypher's concepts. The Mannerist period for Sypher refers to a range of about 100 years from 1530-1625. Sypher acknowledges that Mannerism in literature occurs later than in the plastic arts. He also takes an international scope including Jacobean and late Elizabethan literary forms.

⁴⁷ Sypher is creating structural paradigms with expressions like "revolving view," "shifting levels of reality," that move from the level of reality in the discussion of objects of art, to the level of metaphor in regard to literature. What he attempts to accomplish is clearly described by Roland Barthes, "Structuralist Activity" in Critical Essays, trans. by Richard Howard (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), pp. 214-215. "The goal of all Structuralist activity whether reflexive or poetic, is to reconstruct the "object" in such a way as to manifest thereby the rules of functioning ("the functions) of this object. Structure is therefore actually a simulacrum of the object, but a directed interested simulacrum. since the imitated object makes something appear which remained invisible or is one prefers unintelligible in the natural object. Structural man takes the real decomposes it then recomposes it. . . of structuralist activity: creation or reflection are not, here, an original "impression" of the world but a veritable fabrication of a world which resembles the primary one, not in order to copy it but to render it intelligible. . ."

"The cruel plot of The Duchess of Malfi develops in some darkness where the love of the Duchess and Antonio seems not to belong to this world into which they are cast. Antonio says despairingly: 'Heaven fashioned us out of nothing, and we strive to bring ourselves to nothing. . .'. Tintoretto must have had some such vision when he painted on the wall of the ducal palace in Venice a Paradise that has the dissonance of hell; its white souls dance wildly within the ultimate night."⁴⁸

Sypher's work, in the main, attempts to synthesize universal structural principles that appear in Mannerist art with the historical context in which they appear.⁴⁹ His approach, which is to find analogies across the arts, ultimately leads to a definition of style.⁵⁰

Sypher's study clearly broadens the perspective of Mannerism by appropriating the language of the visual arts to describe phenomena in painting, architecture and dramatic literature.⁵¹ In Mannerism he notes the "interpenetration" of the arts, which causes an "ambiguous" transformation of the arts. We have noted this in the relation of music to

⁴⁸ Sypher, p. 177.

⁴⁹ This is the difficulty in regarding the international style versus a more limited approach. Mannerism did not occur simultaneously in European countries, nor did it occur simultaneously in the various disciplines. Therefore, strictly historical interpretation based on chronological considerations, reduces the interpreter's perspective considerably. In Mannerism we have the problem of *periodization*, which has to be determined both historically and stylistically. For instance, Stephen Orgel's Illusion of Power, considers the Masque in the Jacobean and Carolingian court as signifying the baroque notion of art used as a symbol of power. Sypher uses examples from Jacobean literature as representing Mannerism. The terms are useful when they give insight into the various works.

⁵⁰ Sypher, p. 8-9.

⁵¹ For a discussion of the caveats of discussing literature in terms of art historical concepts see: Branimir Anzulovic, "Mannerism in Literature: The Adventures of a Concept," Diss. Indiana University 1973. ". . .the attempt to define literary Mannerism with the help of art historical concepts abound in instances of too simplistic procedures of tracing analogies and influences. In opposition to such methods there appeared another extreme solution: renunciation of all art historical concepts and the attempt to define literary mannerism exclusively in terms of literary criticism, or, more precisely rhetoric." This was the intention of E.R. Curtius. pp. 34-35.

poetry, in the creation of the madrigal. It can also be seen in the advent of the emblem,⁵² and throughout the art forms.

For instance, in Mannerist architecture, the sequence of rooms at the *Palazzo del Tè*,⁵³ Mantua, present extreme examples of Sypher's principles of the "shifting planes of reality," "the interpenetration of the arts," and the psychologically-centered effect:

"Consequently in Mannerist art the psychological effect diverges from the structural logic."⁵⁴

Architect, Guilio Romano abandoned all traditional restraints and principles, creating a plan that totally lacks consistency. Würtenberger elaborates:

⁵² See Don Harran, " 'Mannerism' in the Cinquecento Madrigal?" *Musical Quarterly*, 55, (1969), p. 537, note 45. "In the emblem, artists translated literary statements into visual allegories. Emblematic art brings the word and its representation into symbolic alliance. The effect is much like that of the : "imitazioni " of the madrigal, reconciling verbal and sonorous ideas through a symbolism of their own. Both actualize their content on different planes of understanding be they literary-musical (in the madrigal) or literary-pictorial (in the emblem). One of the great collections of European emblems , the *Emblematum liber* came out in 1531; the first collection of Madrigals, *Madrigali de diversi musici* dates from 1530. The popularity of the emblem book--it went through 150 editions--seems to indicate how deeply entrenched was that attitude that allowed variant systems of meaning to convene within a single frame; and not merely to convene but to conjoin as a viable form of artistic expression. Alciatus said "words symbolize, and things are symbolized by them. Yet things too may sometimes be symbolized by other things. . ." Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* is a well known emblem book of the time; the more complex form of the *impresa* will be discussed later.

⁵³ See Fig. 5, Appendix.

⁵⁴ Sypher, p. 127.

"The range of moods is quite astonishing, heaviness can follow lightness, and gaiety melancholy; brightness and gloom can succeed each other, the relaxed and beautiful find its partner in the gloomy and oppressive. The psychological contrast between spacious, pleasant well-lit banquet halls and small cramped almost windowless private apartments was also exploited. The spectator's ability to experience his surroundings is tried higher when walking through these rooms than it is in any suite of apartments built earlier. The visitor's receptivity is ruthlessly, heedlessly, and violently handled by the artist. Well-being and happiness change suddenly to oppression and anxiety. The extremely varied techniques and materials which were used, also help to increase the diversity of effects. Easily worked white or coloured stucco appeared next to the fresco. Reliefs could be played off against sculptures in the round. Often surprising variations in the system of dividing the pictorial areas occur. The Classical divisions of walls into large areas by pilasters is combined with tightly woven small fields. Walls and ceilings can be treated in totally different ways. This happens in the *Sala dei Giganti* where walls and ceiling are completely negated in their architectonic function."⁵⁵

Little, of course, will surpass the *effetto meraviglioso* of Romano's monumental frescoes (see Fig. 5) in which the crumbling columns surrounding the painted giants gives the viewer a sense of vertigo, and of suspended gravity, juxtaposed to the architectural stability of the wall onto which it is rendered. The Romano specialist E. H. Gombrich was prompted to write:

The *Palazzo del Te*, is a characteristic product of its time. Its function seems to have been from the beginning to entertain and impress. Hence Giulio pulled out all the stops to create those *bizarrie* which his predecessor Leonbruno had promised in vain.⁵⁶

What is pivotal about these observations is the spectator-orientation of Mannerist art, a movement away from the notion of the supremacy of the object, to the supremacy of effect. Wolf explains:

⁵⁵ Württemberg, pp. 153-154.

⁵⁶ E. H. Gombrich, "Architecture and Rhetoric in Giulio Romano's *Palazzo del Te*," in *New Light on Old Masters* (Phaidon: Oxford, 1983), p. 161.

"The Mannerist tensions demanded a dramatic resolution. . . Since the aesthetic aim was no longer re-presentation of an ideal and ultimate reality, as in the true renaissance, what was sought was *presentation*, the *direct* experience of emotion and event." ⁵⁷

In the next section we will develop this concept further, as we look at the historical antecedents to Mannerist style, and concentrate our focus upon the major painters of the early period, from whom many of the Mannerist tenets derive.

We have seen, to this point, that Mannerism suggests a number of possible interpretations, and points-of-view, both historically and stylistically. Often divergent terms like Sypher's "interpenetration of forms" and Hauser's "disintegration-re-integration of forms" suggest similar meanings. At other points there are divergences, such as Curtius's non-historical literary Mannerism based on non-art historical terms, and Sypher's literary historical Mannerism which appropriates the language of art-history. The other numerous differences of historians that were listed at the beginning of the section need not be repeated here. Perhaps Sypher underscored the polemical nature of this period when he said:

"Mannerism completes the transformations that had begun to take place in renaissance arts, and brings the aesthetic world into more complex, variable relations with world with where we live."⁵⁸

In sum, Sypher's reference to the complex and variable nature of Mannerism, implicitly suggests the divergent conclusions of its interpreters.

⁵⁷ R. Wolf, p. 43.

⁵⁸ Sypher, p. 173.

CHAPTER II

The Development of Mannerism in Italian Art

Let us now examine the works of the early Mannerists and their precursors, namely Raphael and Michelangelo. Although both Raphael and Michelangelo are considered High Renaissance artists, some of their works are typical of the Mannerist style, and influenced its early development. Michelangelo's theoretical writings are important for their establishment of a broad picture of sixteenth-century artistic concerns. Both Raphael's paintings, and Michelangelo's paintings and sculptures were copied by the later *maniera* artists. These artists establish a context for the later growth of Mannerist art.

Raphael and Michelangelo worked in Rome during the early cinquecento; a number of their works during this period exhibit tendencies that are Mannerist. Hauser describes Raphael's *Fire in the Borgo* (1512) as the first large scale work exhibiting a Mannerist vision:

"The chief Mannerist feature of the *Fire in the Borgo* is the treatment of space, that is to say the distribution of the figures in the picture. Not only is the usual function of the foreground and background reversed, but the amassing of figures is uneven and unusual."¹

This work presents a surprising contrast to the serene and calm style of the frescoes done for the *Stanze della Segnatura* in the Vatican (1509-1512).²

¹ Hauser, p.158. *Fire in the Borgo* is currently under restoration (May 1989)

² Maniates, p. 35.

Contrapposto and gesticulating figures in no apparent unity are crowded onto the foreground. Most bizarre is a nude male hanging from a diagonal wall that has no apparent architectural function. The major action, entailing the papal blessing that extinguishes the fire, is relegated to the background plane, and set off from the vanishing point, accenting the disharmonious effect. The architectonic purity is disturbed by the mixture of Classical, Renaissance and early Christian influences.³ The archway, that frames the entire painting, anticipates the proscenium arch, and sets the entire scene as a staged, theatrical *tableau vivant*.

The significance of this painting besides its 'plastic' innovations, is that it demonstrates the will of a great painter to overcome hitherto established rules and orders, and to create a design that challenges objective reality.

The figures of Raphael represent a model of grace and what Dolce called, *dolcezza*.⁴ Raphael's figures were widely imitated by other painters, throughout the cinquecento; and became a model for the "*bella maniera*." (see later section of *maniera*).

³ Hauser, p. 159. Hauser also points out the antiquarian elements such as the finely drawn columns, and the young man, *Aeneas*, carrying the old father, *Anchises* on his back, which "recalls Hellenistic sculpture." These antiquarian elements became a major ingredient in Mannerist painting and sculpture, and are involved in the notion of *maniera*.

⁴ See Craig Hugh Smyth, *Mannerism and Maniera* (Locust Valley, N.Y: J.J. Augustin, 1960), p. 69, n. 130. Regarding *dolcezza*, Dolce was referring to the lightness, smoothness, and agility of Raphael's characters and found earlier in Leonardo's nudes, in contrast to the overly muscular and sculptural figures of Michelangelo. The *dolcezza* was more widely imitated by the practitioners of *maniera*. Dolce argued that some artists took refuge in *dolcezza* because they were inept at the handling of musculature. He cites the clumsy draftsmanship of Van Mander as an example. For a view of the two versions of the same subject see Vasari's drawings and paintings of the *Immaculate Conception* (Figs. 2a, 2b, 25,26) in Smyth.

Raphael was surrounded in his workshop by numbers of students, who after his death in 1520 attempted to carry on his style and method of painting. Others, like Marcantonio Raimondi, continued Raphael's highly refined style into the area of printmaking. However, the student who later evolved his style most successfully into the Mannerist mode, was Guilio Romano. What seems incongruous, if we consider Guilio Romano's huge frescoes at the *Pallazzo del Tè*, such as *Stricken Giants* or *Collapsing Columns* in the *Sala dei Giganti*, is the monumental carriage of the figures. Certainly not exhibiting *dolcezza*, these figures seem influenced more by the monumentality of Michelangelo's work.⁵

Ultimately, Michelangelo was the artist who continually influenced the development of Mannerism throughout the cinquecento. His prodigious talent and vision prompted Vasari to call him 'divine' and inspired generations of artists to copy his work, with the hope that they might attain a glimmer of his virtuosity.⁶ While remaining historically a figurehead of the High Renaissance, Michelangelo achieved numerous innovations of interest to later Mannerists, theorists and philosophers. His writing prompted controversy in the question of the *paragone*,⁷ the victory of *disegno*; and the practice of *rilievo*. The *paragone* dispute, which reached a syncretic culmination in the writings of Benedetto Varchi,

⁵ For excellent color reproductions of the Romano frescoes consult Franzsepp Würtenberger, *Mannerism: The European Style of the Sixteenth-Century*. trans. by Michael Heron. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963), pp. 137 and 141.

⁶ Evelyn March Phillips, *Tintoretto* (Methuen: New York, 1911), p.15. Tintoretto expressed his debt to Michelangelo in the area of *disegno*, and in his handling of the figure. See Würtenberger, p. 36ff. *Del Piombo's* figures are representative of painters who copied Michelangelo's muscular figures. Also Baldinelli's sculptural style looks Michelangelesque.

⁷ First considered by Leonardo, see *Selections from the Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, edit. by I.A. Richter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 128.

attempted to find a hierarchic relation between the arts of painting and sculpture and poetry and painting. Leatrice Mendelson's recent study of Varchi's *Lezioni* attempts to sort out the complexities of this debate, which was strongly influenced by Michelangelo:

"Varchi interpreted the *paragone*, the relative roles and positions of painting and sculpture, in the light of Michelangelo's comparison between sculpture and the art of love. . . . Sculpture is said to be like poetry in its ability to define, that is, to reveal "essences." The poet and the *ottimo artista* (the sculptor) share one Platonic identity based on the paradigm of the lover. The sculptor could reveal the inner beauty hidden beneath the surface of the marble in the same way that the lover revealed the soul of his beloved hidden beneath her external beauty. Sculpture was like poetry because it expressed *il di dentro* (what lies within). . . which are concepts (*concetti*) and the "passions of the soul." . . In the *paragone* dispute the painter was conceived of as one who "describes" rather than "defines." Unlike the poet and the sculptor the painter expresses only *il di fuori* (external things)."⁸

Vasari contrasted Raphael's *invenzione*⁹ with Michelangelo's *disegno* allying the former more with painting and thus *il di fuori*, as did Dolce.¹⁰ In the Dolce dialogues with Aretino, Raphael and Michelangelo represent the two genres of painting. Raphael is associated with painting and color, Michelangelo represents *disegno*, and drawing, which is more associated with sculpture. Eventually, Michelangelo determined that *disegno* was the father of the triumvirate of the arts: painting, sculpture, and architecture,

⁸ See Leatrice Mendelsohn, *Paragoni: Benedetto Varchi's, Due Lezioni and Cinquecento Art Theory* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982), pp. 132-133.

⁹ Walter Friedlaender, *Mannerism and Anti-Mannerism in Italian Painting*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1957). Friedlaender has associated *invenzione* with motifs, as in Pontormo "imitated the motifs of Dürer." In an Aristotelian sense, derived from the Poetics, *invenzioni* is closely linked with imitation, although there is an element of idealization as Aristotle suggests. The notion of *disegno* derives however from an idea, or an intellectual principle, and is Platonic in a philosophical sense. Thus it is closer to divine and eventually becomes associated with the notion of *grazia*. Varchi's philosophy of art attempted to reconcile the Aristotelian and Platonic views of art.

¹⁰ S. L. Alpers, "'Ekphrasis' and Aesthetic Attitudes in Vasari's 'Lives.'" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* Vol. 23, (1960), p. 190.

since it was from initial drawings that all else was or could be born.¹¹ The concept of *disegno* is further developed in the later cinquecento by Zuccaro, and is a prime area of importance in an understanding of Mannerist art.¹²

Of great influence to later *maniera* painters was Michelangelo's attempt to link painting with sculpture through a study of relief (*rilievo*):

I say that painting seems to me more uniformly good when it goes toward relief, and relief is uniformly bad when it approaches painting, and perhaps to me only it seems that sculpture was the lantern of painting and that from one to the other was that difference that is from the sun to the moon."¹³

As we will see in the section on *maniera*, the *maniera* painters copied extensively from the reliefs of the antique Roman sarcophagi. On a more philosophical plane, Michelangelo's allusion to the well known comparison between the sun and the moon testifies to a sophisticated interpretation of the relationship between the two arts, similar to the one proposed by Varchi, of the soul to the body.¹⁴

It must be considered that Michelangelo outlived many of the early Mannerist artists, and many of his later works such as the sculpture, *Pietà*, at St. Peters, or the fresco painting,

¹¹ Erwin Panofsky, Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance (New York: Harper and Rowe, [Torchbook ed.] 1962), p. 45.

¹² See later section on cinquecento art theories.

¹³ From Mendelson, Appendix A, quote from Michelangelo also in Craig Smyth *Maniera*. I disagree with Mendelson's translation as too free, my translation attempts to be very literal, "*Io dico che la pittura mi par più tenuta buona quanto più va verso il rilievo e il rilievo più tenuto cattivo, quanto più va verso la pittura e però a me solea parere, che la scultura fussi la lanterna della pittura e che da l'una a l'altra fussi quella differenza, che è dal Sole all Luna.*"

¹⁴ Mendelson, p. 158. This is implying a relationship to Neoplatonic theories which I discuss later.

Last Judgement, would have been influenced by "frenzy of the new style."¹⁵ The non-naturalistic coloration, monumentality and spatial crowding of the *Sistine Chapel* characterize the mood and compositional style of Mannerism.¹⁶ Hauser sees Michelangelo's paintings at the Sistine Chapel as symbolic of the crisis of the Renaissance. Gone is the humanist ideal of harmony and balance linking man and faith with the divine. Instead, Renaissance ideals of balance and repose are replaced with an unease that demonstrates a kind of fatalism. Other Mannerist tendencies such as the *horror vacui*,¹⁷ and the disproportion of the human figure for artistic purposes are evident. Walter Friedlaender details the Mannerist concept of the figure in space:

". . .the figures of the rhythmic anticlassical painter function otherwise, for in themselves they express neither an established rule of nature, nor in any unambiguous rationally understood space. In a word, for them the problem of three-dimensional space vanishes. . . .The volumes of the bodies more or less displace the space, that is, they themselves create the space. . . .an unreal space, just as the figures are "anormal" that is, unreal."¹⁸

Michelangelo's greatness stretched far beyond his contributions to practice and theory. He was also in large measure responsible for the rise of the art connoisseur, and the changing

¹⁵ Friedlaender, p. 13

¹⁶ (I viewed Michelangelo's works at the Vatican Museum on May 27, 1989). Friedlaender argues that the *Junius tomb*, at the Sistine Chapel would not be in the anti-Classical mode. Later evidence of Michelangelo's Mannerist architecture is evident in the design for the Medici Chapel. See, p. 15.

¹⁷ *Horror vacui*, or the horror of empty space, results in the crowding of the picture plane with an excessive amount of figures. Many Mannerist painters practiced this technique including Tintoretto, Salviati, and Vasari, and lesser known artists like Marco Dente, in *Strage degli innocenti*. In the antique reliefs, evidence of this device is plentiful particularly in battle scenes where bodies fill the space eliminating any sense of spatial depth. Vincenzo Rossi (1525-1587) was a Florentine master of relief, *Andata al Calvaria* represents an example of the crowding technique.

¹⁸ Friedlaender, pp. 8-9.

sense of patronage.¹⁹ Michelangelo was in demand, and this gave him enormous leverage in the marketplace. The successful artist could create what he desired with a market assured for his talents, and no longer had to rely on specific commissions. Smaller works, often of an eroticized nature, came into vogue,²⁰ as did a larger market for works of a decorative character.²¹ This signalled a shift of priorities, away from the content of the artifact, to the style of the artist, and the effects that the art created.

This shift was felt most strongly in Florence, where the first generation of Mannerist painters rose to prominence. The most important are Jacopo Pontormo and Rosso Fiorentino; both studied with the great Florentine master of the Renaissance, Andrea del Sarto. It has been recognized since the mid-cinquecento's statements of Vasari,²² that Pontormo's development was influenced by his study of the prints of Dürer, thereby becoming one of the first of this generation of painters to allow the anti-classical Northern

¹⁹ Hauser, pp. 560-561. Hauser, and Zupnick (see note below), relate this changing sense of patronage to the desire for more complex works of art, replete with ambiguity, and satisfying the sophisticated *cortigiano*, with complex references to antiquity, or demonstrating an ineffable mysticism.

²⁰ See Il primato del disegno: Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del Cinquecento (*Electra Editrice: Scala* 1980). Catalog of Exhibit. The etchings of Jacopo Caraglio, after the designs of Rosso and Perino, such as *Venere e Amore*, *Mercurio e Erse* are examples.

²¹ Battista explores the minor arts in great detail, including work with crystal, see, ill. 23. Württenberger examines interior design including the *trompe l'oeil* effects at the *Rittersaal* in *Trausnitz Castle*, p. 129 ff.; Tintoretto's *Scuola di San Rocco*, Main Hall, p. 121 ff.; and numerous examples from the interiors at *Fontainebleau*.

²² Vasari, The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects, trans. by A.B. Hinds, III, (London, 1927,) pp. 234. Hauser, Weise, Freidlaender and most historians acknowledge this influence.

European 'gothic' spirit to affect his work.²³ However, under the brush of the Mannerist Pontormo, the figures of Dürer are transformed. Friedlaender describes:

"Dürer's robust male figure, executed in a thoroughly anatomical way, has in Pontormo turned into a swaying supernaturally elongated figure. All that is physical whether in Andrea del Sarto's or Dürer's sense has vanished--there remains only the delicate, bright, almost bodiless appearance. . ."24

Such is the case with the *Deposition* (1525-1528), where a riot of bright primary colors are "juxtaposed in disturbing proximity to each other,"²⁵ clothing figures who seem weightless. Color takes on a decorative non-functional capacity, unrelated to realistic depiction. The composition whirls in a kind of serpentine shape, without apparent direction or focus. F. David Martin argued in his article addressed to Bernard Berenson aptly titled "On Enjoying Decadence," that these characteristics mark the advent of a "post-classic" art:

"The faces are mask-like, figures lack mass, movement is strained, proportions are strange but to be fully aware of these peculiarities necessitates contrasting them imaginatively, to a large extent automatically in the trained observer, with the classic forms. for otherwise they would not be felt as either peculiar or meaningful. The classic forms are presupposed in Pontormo's creative process. They must have been as ingrained in him as a mathematician's postulates, for everything he did artistically derives from them. He and the other Mannerists of any worth were playing out and making concrete unrealized possibilities that the classic forms still suggested to their imaginations" 26

²³ Maniates, Haar, and Harran all clearly posit Mannerist's musical origins to the north, particularly to the Flemish composers Josquin and Willaert.

²⁴ Friedlaender, p. 27.

²⁵ Maniates, p. 38.

²⁶ F. David Martin, "On Enjoying Decadence," *Journal of Aesthetics*, 17 (1959), p. 445. For Berenson's argument see *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, Vol. I, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1938), pp. 301-302. Berenson stated that "and this new beauty that they [the Mannerists] preferred to see isolated, and of course exaggerated, as everything is when isolated from its native concomitants." Martin argues that Mannerism was not isolated from the context of the Renaissance.

These "unrealized possibilities" moved the human figure away from naturalism, and classical proportions, towards elongation and unnatural poses, and became a trademark of early Mannerism.²⁷ The context of the Renaissance was not lost, but was transformed to fit the needs and artistic desires of the artist.

Pontormo, as Sypher, Friedlaender and Hauser remind us, historically connects the notion of Mannerism with the inner psychological angst of the artist. In the *Deposition*, Pontormo uniformly depicts anguish in the expression of the figures. Perhaps, this attitude of melancholy, which was fashionable at the time, was also promoted by the influence of Dürer. Friedlaender posits:

"The new way of feeling germinating in him, but not in him alone, permitted the young and popular artist to cling to Dürer's graphic work because it appeared as something akin to his own feeling and usable in his reaction against the ideal of the High Renaissance."²⁸

The popularity of engraving's such as Dürer's *Melencolia I*,²⁹ pre-figured the self-possession of the artist in his work, and placed in vogue the concept of the artist as a tormented soul.³⁰ Vasari depicted Pontormo, in *Lives*, as an artist obsessed with privacy

²⁷ See Friedlaender, pp. 38-39, Parmigianino's *Madonna dal Collo Lungo*, painted between 1535-1540, indicates Pontormo's influence toward verticalism.

²⁸ Friedlaender, p. 4. It would appear Friedlaender is proposing a subjective *Zeitgeist* tendency that is influencing the artistic growth of Pontormo, rather than the implementation of Dürer's motifs by rational means.

²⁹ For more information regarding *Melencolia I* see Panofsky, pp. 210-211, and next note.

³⁰ Erwin Panofsky, "Symbolism and Dürer's *Melencolia*," in Morris Weitz's *Problems in Aesthetics: An Introductory Book of Readings* (Macmillan: New York, 1970) pp. 467-489. In his iconographic study of this print, Panofsky establishes its importance as a kind of self-portrait which tells us about the artist as well as the subject, or where the artist and subject merge. Panofsky also points out the notion of humours, whereby their

to the point of living at a monastery where his only access to his room was to prop a ladder to its second story window. I. L. Zupnick suggests the "the artist suffered neurotic anxiety about his work," and that this tendency can be seen in other Mannerist artists.³¹ The comments of Panofsky, Friedlaender and Vasari, establish an anguished psychological or self-conscious profile that the artist translated into his work.³² This concept points to the significant fact that Mannerism is indeed a subjective art form. Whether the means are *invenzione* or arrive from *disegno*, the vision of the artist prevailed over obeisance to nature or rules. As Giordano Bruno said of the poet: "the artist alone makes the rules, and they exist insofar and in the same number as there are artists."³³

Rosso and the School of Fontainebleau

Rosso Fiorentino's paintings, drawings and prints complete the transition to the new style of Mannerism. His palette becomes more radical than either del Sarto's or Pontormo's; he juxtaposes rather than blends or models tones. Rosso's remarkable painting, *Moses*

constitution determined an individual's disposition. Melancholy came under the influence of the planet Saturn, and was celebrated in Neoplatonic works, such as Cornelius Agrippa's, *De Occulta Philosophia*. Zupnick's work [next note] fully discusses Ficino's influence on early Mannerism.

³¹ I. L. Zupnick, "The Aesthetics of the Early Mannerists," in *The Art Bulletin*, 35, (1953), p. 303. "Rosso [whom we will discuss next] exhibited violent behavior, mixed with natural timidity that shrank from reprisal, and he died by his own hand after falsely accusing a friend of robbing him," see n. 12. Parmigianino deserted painting for alchemy in a search for quick wealth, and became a melancholy eccentric.

³² Württemberg finds its most frequent symbol in the extreme agony of the *Laocoön* motif popularized by Baldinelli's sculpture in 1525, and later in a painting by Tibaldi, and ultimately in El Greco's most famous depiction.

³³ Zupnick, p. 304.

Defending the Daughters of Jethro (1523),³⁴ utilizes expressionistic³⁵ colors and design in a totally unique way. Rosso's use of colors is the strongest of the Mannerists, most of whom used a lighter, more subdued palette.³⁶ There is no indication of depth through perspective, but rather the movement of depth is created by the parallel interlocking of successive layers of figures. This trademark of later Mannerist painting represents one of the pictorial principles of Mannerism.³⁷ Other characteristics typical of Mannerism include a strong vertical plane just inside the picture frame. Here the figures while overlapping, present a strong vertical thrust that dominates the composition. There is the ambiguous relationship between figures, whereby the gestural actions are inconsistent, and the meaning of the interactions is unclear. Front and profile views dominate. A linking device for unification, in addition to the overlapping planes, is the strong line carried through several planes. However, this zig-zag or serpentine line which starts at the lower left corner in the form of the foreshortened figure, actually creates a rhythmical effect, enhancing the frenzy, rather than stabilizing the composition. Finally, as in most Mannerist painting, there is no sense of atmospheric perspective.

Rosso's series of etchings entitled *Gods in Niches*, exhibit the Mannerist tendency toward humor.³⁸ An overall display of eroticism in the handling of the form is evident in the series

³⁴ I viewed *Moses Defending the Daughters of Jethro* at the Uffizi Palace, in May, 1989.

³⁵ Here used to define a strong emotional quality, rather than a naturalistic, or subdued quality.

³⁶ Friedlaender, pp. 32-33 (Figure 11).

³⁷ Anne Armstrong Wallis, "A Pictorial Principle of Mannerism," *Art Bulletin*, 21, (1939), 280-283. Wallis compares Mannerist principles with those of cubism.

³⁸ The cartoonish quality is also characteristic of Mannerist drawings. For comic examples in painting, see Tàtrai, (op. cit.) Plate 40, for Ventura Salimbeni's (1567-1613) *The Annunciation*. Salimbeni of the Siennese school handled this serious religious theme in

of etchings *Gli Amori degli Dei*, for instance; *Plutone e Prosperino*, certainly *Mercurio e Erse*. The incongruous humour of the lion's eyes in the engraving entitled *Ops*, gives some of Rosso's work an almost cartoonish quality.³⁹ Importantly, Friedlaender notes a changing sense in the treatment of gesture in Mannerist painting, notable in the works of Rosso:

"Gesture, become too rhetorical during the Renaissance, now acquires a new meaning, pointed (almost caricatural) in its sharpness and expressive through its stylization."⁴⁰

In fact, gesture for the most part, surpasses and replaces facial expression, as the major locus of expression in Mannerist figures. Note for instance the dramatic gestures of figures in Rosso's *Descent from the Cross* (1521);⁴¹ not only do the secondary figures dominate the composition, but Rosso seems more concerned with creating frenzied, anguished poses, than with the content of the subject matter.

A recent major exhibition of Rosso's drawings and prints at the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., demonstrates that Rosso had a major influence on the development of

parodic manner with bright yellows, and a sense of irony in the relationship between Gabriel and the Blessed Virgin. For comic drawings see Battista, (op. cit.), chapter "*Dal "comico" al "genere," Studi di caratteri dalla Salita al Calvario di Giocomo Jaquero (s. Antonio di Ranverso)*". In sculpture, Pietro Tacca, fountain (*Firenze, piazza della SS. Annunziata*), pp.160 ff.

³⁹ See *Rosso Fiorentino: Drawings, Prints and Decorative Arts*, edit. by Eugene R. Carroll, (Washington D.C: National Gallery of Art, 1987), p. 101, plate 22. Engravings by Caraglio. Caraglio also worked with Parmigianino, when both he and Rosso were in Rome.

⁴⁰ Friedlaender, p. 31. It will later become clear that Friedlaender's statement on gesture here applied to Mannerist painting, will also define the gestural nature of the early *commedia dell'arte*.

⁴¹ Friedlaender, p. 10, at Volterra, Pinacoteca.

Mannerism.⁴² Rosso was responsible for bringing the changing face of Italian art to France, in 1530, at the invitation of François I. It was here that Rosso founded the famous First School of Fontainebleau. Fontainebleau represents the victory of Mannerism as a courtly style. Most of the great Italian artists of the day, including Cellini, Bronzino, and Parmigianino were invited to work there and contributed to its artistic legacy. Great attention and effort were allotted to the interior treatments, including ceiling, wall paintings and frescoes, and floor design. At Fontainebleau, Rosso worked side-by-side with Primaticcio, who carried on after Rosso's death in 1540. Primaticcio is responsible for the design of the decorative frames and interior panelings. These show a Mannerist concern for extreme detail and refinement, foreshadowing a kind of proto-Rococo in his exuberant linear style.⁴³ Primaticcio's painting exhibits many of the traits of Parmigianino, while with a greater sense of delicacy or grace, they begin to achieve a defined gallicization.⁴⁴ Primaticcio and his assistant Nicolò dell'Abate brought the architects Vignola and Serlio to Fontainebleau in the middle of the sixteenth century.⁴⁵ These Italian masters introduced

⁴² Rosso Fiorentino (op. cit.).

⁴³ See commentary on Sidney Fiske-Kimball [below].

⁴⁴ Primaticcio was given to red underpainting, which give his flesh tones a rosier tone than the cool porcelain-like finish of the Italians, particularly Bronzino. The Fontainebleau school established the French as the masters of the nude.

⁴⁵ Marian Davis, The School of Fontainebleau: An Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings, Etchings and Sculpture 1530-1619 (Fort Worth Art Center: Fort Worth, [15 September-24 October], 1965), pp. 5-15.

the secrets of perspective to ceiling painting, and whetted the French court's unquenchable thirst for theatrical spectacle and machinery.⁴⁶

Primaticcio (1504-1570), and his assistant, Nicolò dell'Abate (1512-1571), were responsible for the growing interest at court in what was termed the "cult of nude."⁴⁷ This involved *repoussoir* nudes marginally veiled, in various settings including the pastoral. Many of these have a distinctly erotic effect, the graceful eroticism heightened by the use of diaphanous veils which 'hide' the desired area from sight, creating the paradoxical Mannerist effect, whereby the hidden or covered object calls attention to itself, and serves as the *topos* of focus. *Venus, Cupid and the Graces* (1560) represents a fine example of this effect, the viewers' eye is drawn to the translucent veil covering Venus, while the three attendant nudes are partially clad and discreetly overlapped in the composition.⁴⁸ The emphasis here is on grace, elegance, and a rhythmical asymmetry of juxtaposed contours. A similar quality is achieved in Bronzino's erotically charged *Venus, Cupid and Jealousy*. Here, the allegory relates to the long literary tradition of bittersweet love. Masks strewn about on the ground call attention to the 'vanitas' traps of simulation and deception. A monster in the background relays the fact that this painting depicts the lower levels of love, the snares of carnal desire. A diaphanous veil again draws attention to, rather than covers

⁴⁶ Great spectacle and *fêtes* were a hallmark of this age, not only in France, but in Italy, under the Medici, with the fantastic designs by court artists' Buontalenti and Vasari. At Fontainebleau these spectacles took on allegorical meaning, as the King was depicted as one of several mythological gods, and the courtiers played various figures, or at times, even one of the four elements. The pastoral was a popular court form, and took on various forms. For a complete view of this phenomenon see Cesare Molinari, *Le Nozze degli Dei* ["The Marriage of the Gods"] (Mario Bulzoni: Roma, 1968).

⁴⁷ *School of Fontainebleau*, p. 9.

⁴⁸ *School of Fontainebleau*, pp. 40-41.

the upper thigh of Venus.⁴⁹ While the Horatian and humanist notion of "*ut pictura poesis*" ("as is painting so is poetry") was still in apparent effect, Mannerist artists like Bronzino and Rosso deviated from the narrative, by focusing on the *topoi*, or upon aesthetic concerns.⁵⁰

Works such as *Night* [after Michelangelo] and Michel Lucchese's *Dream of Michelangelo* demonstrate the reclining nude, but with the addition of masks, which became a popular motif in later Fontainebleau paintings. The enigmatic *The Actors*, which is discussed in detail in Chapter VIII, depicts the flavor of genre painting within a Mannerist context of ambiguity and concentration of figures on the frontal plane. Zanni is masked and the "characters are garbed in fantastic costumes."⁵¹

In the works of Benevenuto Cellini at Fontainebleau the veil served as the *topos* or trope. Cellini expands the concept of the veil popularized by Petrarch in the *Rime* ⁵² as both the

⁴⁹ Vilmos Tátrai, Cinquecento Paintings of Central Italy (Budapest: Museum of Fine Arts, 1983), pp. 30-31. See also Sodoma's *Death of Lucretia*, where the delicately painted veil rather stresses than covers the nakedness of the milk-white body. Note the melodramatic approach. Peruzzi said of Sodoma that nobody could paint a fainting person better than he. Tátrai, pp. 14.

⁵⁰ Rensselaer W. Lee, Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanist Theory of Painting (New York: Norton, 1967). The notion of "*ut pictura poesis*" relies on the expression of a general truth through the "ideal imitation of human action," and also must seek to instruct as in the Horatian ideal. Mannerism, while utilizing the mythological and religious conventions of humanism, subverted their ends through a focus on effects like eroticism, exaggeration, distortion and so on. *Topoi*, or *topos*, singular, is rhetorical term referring to place, or site. A *topos* in Bronzino's painting for instance is the hands.

⁵¹ School of Fontainebleau, pp. 31-32. Between 1571 and 1588 the Italian comedy often played in France.

⁵² Note Andrea del Sarto's *Portrait of a Girl Holding a Volume of Petrarch* (Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi) also note Bronzino's, *Portrait of Laura Battiferri* (Florence Palazzo Vecchio), in which the sitter is also holding a copy of Petrarch's poetry, and wears a

hider and the revealer. This evolved further in the sixteenth century where a shift occurred from what Thomas M. Greene's study of imitation in Petrarch indicated to be the notion of the "penetrable veil and the discoverable truth." Greene posits an alternative concept to the idea of text as veil, by stating that the poems represent an autonomous, autoreflexive set of signs.⁵³ While it is preferable to acknowledge a latitude of difference between the object of art and that which it is imitating or describing, we must also consider allegorical, symbolic, and even Neoplatonic referents to be consistent with the sixteenth century vision. In this semiotic sense works of Mannerist art are, in my opinion, multi-reflexive.⁵⁴

diaphonous veil around her head and shoulders. Petrarch in the cinquecento was often copied by lesser poets, and is the literary equivalent to Raphael in art, inspiring the *maniera* of the latter-half of the cinquecento.

⁵³ Thomas M. Greene, "Image and Consciousness in Scève's *Délie*:" In The Meaning of Mannerism, edit. by Franklin W. Robinson and Stephen G. Nichols, Jr. (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1972), pp. 25-32.

⁵⁴ Michael Murrin, The Veil of Allegory (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1969), pp. 56-75. In The Veil of Allegory, Michael Murrin describes how the veil carries an association with the notion of allegory, where reality is 'hidden' behind pastoral or mythological forms. As indicated in the paintings of Cesari, like *Diana Turning Acteon into a Stag*, allegory underwent a transition from Classical and Renaissance interpretations, often becoming ambiguous, or parodic. In this Mannerist depiction of the ancient Ovid myth, we have the pretense of panic among the nude bathers, and so really are left with an ambiguous statement, since there is an element of curiosity in Diana's expression toward the hunter rather than the hatred implied in the original myth. . . Later, in the Baroque, allegorical references became clearer, and generally referred to those in power. For further information on the phenomenon of allegory in the Jacobean court masques of Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones, consult Stephen Orgel's, Illusion of Power and with Roy Strong, Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973). A thorough study of the courtly feasts of Louis XIV can be found in Sidney Fiske-Kimball's, Age of Rococo (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1938).

Cellini's use of the veil, at Fontainebleau, served to point out a relevant aspect of the Mannerist vision, the idea of nature seen under glass. The veil creates a sense of artifice, changing contours and softening forms, and reflecting a crystal light.

"... that I had put a veil over the said statue in order to hide its faults. This was indeed a very thin veil that I had placed over the said statue of Jove with beautiful grace, to increase its majestic appearance; so that, upon hearing those words. I began to take it off, lifting from below, and thereby revealing those beautiful genitalia; and then, with a bit of evident annoyance tore the whole thing off. She thought that I had uncovered those parts in order to scoff at her." ⁵⁵

Cellini here places the veil over Juno's statue to increase its majestic appearance that is, to enhance art with artfulness."⁵⁶ The veil becomes the *topos* of the *effetto meraviglioso*.⁵⁷ The use of the veil as Mirollo argues in this case was to make art more beautiful than its classical forerunner, in a sense to rescue it from antiquity. Cellini uncovered the sculpture to shock the King Francis' mistress Madame d'Etampes (to whom this passage is addressed), who wished it removed from its prominent position in the loggia at Fountainbleau. Cellini's dramatic unveiling upon the King's evening arrival, was accomplished with the artificial light of a taper held by the statue, and was made to seem alive by the slow movement of the statue toward the king. The theatricalization of art, so much embodied in this Mannerist effect, created a strikingly dramatic moment in which manner of presentation assumed a sensational, provocative and persuasive posture,

⁵⁵ Mirollo, pp 110. "...che io avevo messo un velo addosso alla ditta figura, per coprire gli errori. Questo si era un velo sottilissimo che io avevo messo con bella grazia addosso al ditto Giove, perché gli accrescessi maestà: il quale a quelle parole io lo presi, alzando per di sotto, scoprendo quei nei membri genitali e con in poco di dimostrato istizza tutto lo stracciai. Lei pensò che io avessi scoperto quella parte per proprio ischerno."

⁵⁶ Mirollo, quoted from chapter: "Visage and Veil: The bel viso and the bel velo," p. 139.

⁵⁷ In the Part II, we will see how this *topos* corresponds to the mask in the characters of the *commedia dell'arte*.

overshadowing, in a sense the substance of the sculpture itself. In this case with Cellini,⁵⁸ there was a making strange, a kind of *Verfremdungseffekt*.⁵⁹ Mirollo describes:

"That something more, a stimulating or disturbing complexity of form and content, comes about when inner design unexpectedly comments on itself or other realities, when it suddenly illuminates with its deployed artificial light those odd corners of being where mimetic natural light has not penetrated."⁶⁰

Mirollo here describes the quintessential Mannerist effect, that which not only dazzles or astonishes, but also makes fantastic correspondences to the magical, mystical or esoteric domain.

At Fontainebleau the Italian painters influenced not only generations of French artists, from Chartier to Callot, but also a significant number of Flemish painters. Conversely, the Flemish influenced the later masters of Fontainebleau, under the rule of Henry II, by introducing the subjects of landscape and genre painting.⁶¹ The Italian influence remained

⁵⁸ Mirollo, p. 140.

⁵⁹ Arrigo Subiotto, "Epic Theatre: a Theatre for the Scientific Age," in *Brecht in Perspective*, edit. by Graham Bartram and Anthony Waine (Essex: Longman Group, 1982), p., 36. *Verfremdungseffekt* here Subiotto translates as Brecht's V-effect, "a technique of taking human social incidents to be portrayed and labelling them as something striking, something that calls for explanation and is not to be taken for granted, not just natural. The object of this effect is to allow the spectator to criticize constructively from a social point of view." The thought here is that Cellini's presentation was a striking portrayal of the different social attitudes towards art in the late cinquecento, and that it tells us a great deal about the times, placing the depiction of a work of art on equal footing with the work itself. Würtenberger uses the term *verfremdungseffekt*. to describe a common practice in portrait painting; for instance Jean de Dinteville, ambassador to England, appears as St. George in a portrait by Primaticcio.

⁶⁰ Mirollo, p. 178. Mannerist lighting effects were found in painting, as in Tintoretto's *Santa Maria*. Here light transformed the space into a magical netherworld, creating a visionary, idealistic effect.

⁶¹ The Flemish influence, which is discussed in Part III, in large part defines the Second School of Fontainebleau. Also, the Flemish influence was evidenced to the far south in the school of Rome most noticeably in the paintings of Guiseppe Cesari, whose pupil was the

powerful in France, until the humiliation and banishment of Bernini from Paris in 1665, which signalled the end of the Italian Baroque style in France and issued in the French Baroque or Academic style.⁶²

Arcimboldo and the Prague School

It is significant that the school of Fontainebleau begins in the 1530's, three years after the Sack of Rome by Charles V. The sack of Rome de-centered the cultural activity of Europe, and led to the migration of many artists. It also created new political alliances that influenced the taste in art towards Mannerism. In fact, it was in 1527 that the Milanese painter Arcimboldo was born. Milan soon lost its independence in 1535, becoming a province under Spanish domination. In 1562, Arcimboldo was summoned to Vienna to the court of Ferdinand I, who was the brother of Charles V. The importance of this connection is two-fold. First, the Spanish influence in Northern Italy, Austria, and Bohemia had become very strong;⁶³ second, Phillip II's predilection for the ambiguous content and richly imaginative style of Hieronymus Bosch caused him to endow the *Museo del Prado* with the largest collection of Bosch's works in Europe. This collection, and the extant correspondence between members of the Hapsburg Empire, indicate an acquired taste for Mannerist art.⁶⁴ There was a strong taste for the strange, Mielich's, *Duke*

brilliant Caravaggio. *Diana Turning Acteon into a Stag* exhibits Flemish handling of the background landscape and flora, and treatment of the dogs.

⁶² Sidney Fiske-Kimball, *Age of Rococo* (op. cit.). Kimball finds evidence in Mannerism for the rise of the grotesque in ornamentation, and a move away from the solidity and mass associated with the Baroque style.

⁶³ Through the marriage alliances with the Hapsburg Empire. Ferdinand I, Maximilian and his son Rudolph II, had all studied in Spain and were exposed to the refined, exotic tastes of the Spanish court.

⁶⁴ Feliciano Benvenuti, *The Arcimboldo Effect: Transformations of the Face From the 16th Century to the 20th Century* (Abbeville: New York, 1987), p. 61. Bosch was liked

Wilhelm IV on his Deathbed ;⁶⁵ the monstrous, Arcimboldo's *Project for a Costume: The Sea Dragon* ;⁶⁶ Jacopo de Barberi, *Divinità Marine* ;⁶⁷ for allegorical complexity of meaning, as in Bartholomeus Spranger's, *Minerva Victorious over Ignorance* , or *Allegory on the Death of His Wife*, and Martin Van Heemskerck's *Mars and Venus Caught in the Net, and Shown by Vulcan to the Gods* ;⁶⁸ and for *capricci* ; *Little Statue*, an assemblage of shells on wood and *papier mâché* (see Fig. 41);⁶⁹ *bizarri*, Cioli's, *The Court Dwarf Pietro Barbino Riding on a Turtle* ;⁷⁰ and the grotesque: Arcimboldo's *The Four Seasons, Winter*.⁷¹

It was during his residence at Prague, first with Maximilian and then with his successor Rudolf II, that Arcimboldo created his greatest works. Here Arcimboldo painted his famous heads, which are actually *trompe l'oeil*⁷² combinations of fruits, vegetables, and animals of various types, that are arranged to appear as human heads. These 'heads' are

for his *fantasie*, his astonishing imagination, the enigmatic assembly of disparate elements, integrated in absurd and multiple creatures. This interest continued with the later growing successes of Breughel, whom Württemberg considers a "Northern Mannerist." Benvenuti discusses Phillip's taste for all forms of the precious in art, and his interest in alchemy and magic.

⁶⁵ Bavarian National Museum, Munich.

⁶⁶ *Gabinetto Disegni e Stampi degli Uffizi*, Florence

⁶⁷ Monaco, *Staatliche Graph, Sammlung*.

⁶⁸ *Kunsthistorisches Museum*, Vienna.

⁶⁹ *Museo degli argenti*, Florence.

⁷⁰ Boboli Gardens, Florence.

⁷¹ Former Cornelia Collection.

⁷² Paintings which literally trick the eye, usually with realistically depicted forms close to the picture plane.

grotesque in their peculiar ugliness, in their degradation of the human face.⁷³ However, as Bakhtin points out in his study of the comic in Rabelais, the grotesque, in the sixteenth century, also existed on the parodic level, and ultimately on the level of transformation and renewal. In the case of *The Four Seasons*, parody existed on a number of levels. Heads were modelled after members of court. Comanini, a contemporary theorist and painter, noted that the horns of the animals in a version of Earth formed a royal crown. Most bizarre of all is the depiction of King Rudolf II as *Vetumnus*, god of the parts of nature. Here, plants, fruits, flowers, and vegetables combine to make up the king's portrait.⁷⁴ Although degrading as a portrait, it is at this parodic level that the work takes on a regenerative level. First, is the allegory of the King as the synthetic force, *Vetumnus*, through which all grows and is sustained. Next, is the notion, as explained by Lomazzo, of the 'alchemical' powers of the painting, in which vegetation miraculously changes into a human face.⁷⁵ Third, is the Neoplatonic concept of transforming mundane separate objects into a unified idealized whole.

Arcimboldo is an important Mannerist figure because his paintings combine a grotesque humor with a high level of sophistication and refinement. He demonstrates how the 'stranieri'⁷⁶ Italian painters were influenced by the Flemish and by the international

⁷³ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. by Helen Iswolsky, (Indiana University: Bloomington, 1984), p. 19-24. For a complete analysis of Bakhtin's discussion of the grotesque see Part III.

⁷⁴ See *Arcimboldo*, p. 165, ff.

⁷⁵ Giampolo Lomazzo, *Il Trattato de l'arte de la pittura di Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo pittore*. (Milano: Appresso Gottardo Pontio, 1584), Chapter 50. Also from *Arcimboldo Effect*, p. 156. Lomazzo's work which has been analyzed by Klein demonstrates how the 16th century looked at painting and the role of mysticism, astrology, and particularly alchemy, which was a fascination of Lomazzo's.

Zeitgeist or "spirit of the times." His 'fantastic' paintings point to the strange tastes of an era that was intrigued by monsters, witchcraft, alchemy, grotesque fountains, machines, and novelties of the most exotic type.⁷⁷ In piquancy of taste, the Mannerist period was as complex, ambiguous, and bizarre as the artifacts that remain from it.

⁷⁶ *stranieri* refers to the influence of Italians in foreign courts, and the converse influence of foreigners in Italy like the sculptor, *Giovanni di Bologna*. See Chapter VII.

⁷⁷ See Battista's *Antirinascimento* (op. cit.) for a full compilation of these *bizarri*, including many photos, and drawings.

CHAPTER III

Mannerism: Theoretical Approaches

Parmigianino and the *Disegno Interno*

The Fontainebleau School nurtured the full flowering of Mannerism from the bold, dramatic and evocative early works typical of Rosso, to the more delicate, ornamental, gallicized style of Primaticcio. In Italy, an impulse towards an elegant, cooler, courtly style, typical of Florentine Mannerism, became evident in the mature works of Parmigianino and Bronzino.¹ Their works became paradigms of the *nuovo stile* and were widely emulated by *maniera* artists. Using these painters as exemplars of the evolution in sixteenth-century art, theorists like Vasari and Zuccaro were inspired to develop an intellectual methodology for the creation of art that ultimately led to academicism. Vasari's approach was to envision art as an evolving historical phenomenon. In his Lives, he traced the historical development of the major artists through the Renaissance, and developed his conceptual bases for *maniera* as a natural progression in the historical evolution of art.

Zuccaro's metaphysical approach to art established a philosophical link with Neoplatonism.² Lomazzo's theories considered both astrology and mysticism as necessary

¹ Sypher, Hauser, and Freedberg would agree that the later drawings, sculptures and paintings of Michelangelo should be also be considered (op. cit.). It is notable that Michelangelo outlived Parmigianino. He inspired Vasari's early comments on *bella maniera*, as one of the artists worthy of emulating. He established the superiority of *disegno*, which prompted Vasari to claim: "*madre di ognuna di queste arte*," "mother of every one of the arts," regarding painting, sculpture and architecture. Hauser, pp. 163-178.

² According to Robert Klein, "The Theory of Figurative Expression in Italian Treatises on the *Impresa*," in Form and Meaning: Essays on the Renaissance (New York: Viking,

in evaluating an artist's propensity to *divina grazia*.³ Lomazzo also stressed the importance of astrology in determining the disposition of humours in the artist's natal chart. Benedetto Varchi and a host of others utilized the contemporary translations of Aristotle's Poetics to develop and extrapolate their own theories on art and poetics.⁴ Spurred by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation,⁵ these works often attempted to define a moral purpose for art.⁶ We must also consider the cinquecento's need to understand the growing complexity in art, evidenced in the Italian treatises regarding the *impresa*.⁷ This new wellspring of mental activity in the arts, created the need to find centers where both the theory and practice of art could be nurtured and disseminated. The desire to find a training ground for

1979), p. 20. The mind as a creator of symbolic images is primarily an idea of Renaissance Neoplatonism.

³ Klein, p. 21.

⁴ Starting with Alessandro Pazzi's Latin translation of the Poetics, 1536. Bernadino Daniello's vernacular version in the same year. Robertellus (1548), Trissino (1549) and Scaliger (1561), Castelvetro (1570) follow mixing in their own theories. Bernardo Segni translates the Rhetorica, Nicomachean Ethics and Poetics in 1549 to greatly influence the neo-Aristotelian Benedetto Varchi's Due Lezioni (op. cit.).

⁵ Particularly evident in the rise of emblems, and *vanitas* paintings in Northern Europe.

⁶ Scaliger and Vasari came under the influence of the Council of Trent.

⁷ See Robert Klein, pp. 3-24. On page 209, Klein lists 18 treatises on the *impresa* written between 1555-1613. The *impresa* consisted of a pictorial design with a written motto beneath. Sixteenth-century theorists defined it as representing speech and design at the same time; but it also suggested *ingegno* (ingenuity, intellect, wit), *concetto* (clever or cunning figure of speech), and for Cesare Ripa, author of the emblem book Iconologia, the pleasurable sensation of an art that makes us "feel with our intellect and understand with our senses."

both theory and practice was addressed by the art academies in the latter half of the sixteenth century.⁸

In this section, we will review specific concepts of the cinquecento that are essential for an understanding of sixteenth-century art. We will explore first the concept of *disegno*,⁹ particularly *disegno interno*; then we will investigate the complex notion of *maniera*. These concepts demonstrate a specific mode of interpreting the creative process and evaluating the artists' product. In addition, they suggest a pedagogical methodology for the training of artists. Supplementary terms and concepts will be analyzed, as will the main figures responsible for the art theories of the cinquecento.

The critical work of Sydney Freedberg will be helpful in our understanding of the contribution to Mannerism by Parmigianino,¹⁰ not only as an artist but as a contributor to the sixteenth-century idea of art. Parmigianino exemplifies the notion of *disegno interno*, and represents the transition to the second phase of Mannerism; one which issues in a self-conscious insistence on a specific methodology that prevails throughout the latter-half of the cinquecento.¹¹

⁸ The interest in theoretical approaches and popularity of the *maniera*, continues through the *cinquecento* but is arrested in the seventeenth-century by the more intuitive natural approaches of artists like the Carracci and Caravaggio. This is the subject matter of the latter-half of Friedlaender's work *Mannerism and Anti-Mannerism in Italian Painting* (op. cit.), and a detailed study more recently by Sydney Freedberg, *Circa 1600* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1983).

⁹ Discussed earlier in regard to the *Paragone*--the question of superiority of sculpture over painting, in *Due Lezioni*, see note below.

¹⁰ Sydney Freedberg, *Parmigianino* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1950).

Freedberg states that to varying degrees both the early and high Renaissance artist was dependent on visible reality. In Mannerism, however, the incipient point was the inner image, more perfect than what could be produced externally by nature. The sixteenth-century critics described this as the *disegno interno*,¹² originally correlating the term with a kind of divine grace,¹³ in which the artist became a micro-god in the realm of his self-created painterly universe.¹⁴ Cinquecento theorists like Benedetto Varchi recognized the artistic life as the highest--bridging the earthly realm with the divine.¹⁵ For Vasari the *arte del disegno* represented a path, a *via*, by means of which a man can rise from temporal life to eternal glory.¹⁶ Federico Zuccaro draws a parallel between the activity of the artist and the activity of nature in the act of creation. The *disegno interno*, or idea, of Zuccaro is an intellectual principle like that which guides nature to its appropriate goals and operations. It

¹¹ Mirollo, p. 35, argues that Mannerism was one movement that existed along or side-by-side with products of art and literature that bore no traces of *maniera*, or characteristics typically described as Mannerist.

¹² Federico Zuccaro, *Scritti D'arte*, edit. by Detlef Heikamp (Florence: Olschki, 1961). Zuccaro originated the term *disegno interno* distinguishing it from *disegno esterno*, or drawing.

¹³ *Divina grazia*. See Richard Haydocke's, A Tract Containing the Artes of Curious Paintings Carvings and Buildings (1584, reprint Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1970). An abridged translation of Lomazzo's *Trattato*. Lomazzo was a late cinquecento art theorist. He platonizes the sense of *disegno* to depict an inner ideal of eternal beauty, a divine imprint on the soul. The *disegno interno* is not the imitation of the external appearance of nature but an intuition of its intended perfection. See also, Freedberg, p.3., Mirollo, p.24.

¹⁴ "Micro" refers to the Neoplatonic sense of the word. The concept of the "macro" and the "micro" is explained thoroughly in Frances Yates, Theatre of the World. In simple terms the artist's creation on canvas parallels God's creation of the universe

¹⁵ Leatrice Mendelsohn, Benedetto Varchi's Paragone (op. cit.).

¹⁶ Mendelsohn, p.84.

therefore exists *a priori* to the actual experience, as the creator.¹⁷ Robert Erich Wolf has pointed to this concept as a fundamental difference between the Renaissance and Mannerist philosophy of art:

. . . [In the Renaissance] The artist's task was to find the proportions as they exist in the real world, or in the ideal reality abstracted from it, not to *create* them. To the artists of that time only God could be the creator, not man. Man does not invent ; he finds. He is *trouvère*. To the extent that he achieves the ultimate illusion of reality— that is of the ordered universe known to and lived in by artist and audience — to that extent he arrives at perfection and may receive the name of genius. . . [later Wolf defines the Mannerist difference]. . . The artist is no longer free to take action, to paint, compose, sculpt, write with the help of a seen, known, comprehended environment but, instead, must at each step, create for himself a picture of that environment according to the imperfect image of it within his own mind. He ceases then to be artist in the etymological sense of maker, and becomes instead artificer, creator, one who makes something where nothing had been before, a rival of God himself. He does not find, he *creates*, he brings into being forms which have no ideal model in reality and are rather the expression of feeling than the objective imitation of the known.¹⁸

The *disegno interno's* connection with Neoplatonism elevated the status of the artist,¹⁹ ultimately enhancing the effect of the artist's vision upon the audience. Thus, this emphasis on inner design over adherence to either visible reality or formal rules of balance,

¹⁷ Mirollo, p. 24. Seen in this light we could say that the *disegno interno* prefigures Kantian aesthetic theory and the notion of the categorical imperative. For instance, Kant suggests that beauty exists first as an *a priori* "imprint" against which man judges beauty in nature, or art. The underlying 'divine' natural force suggests the categorical imperative.

¹⁸ Robert Erich Wolf, "Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque: Three Styles, Three Periods," *Les Colloques de Wégimont*, 4 (1957), pp. 37, 39.

¹⁹ See Zupnick's article (op. cit.) for a full treatment of Neoplatonism in early Mannerism, although it is not considered in relation to inner design. A better source is Panofsky's *Iconology in Art*. Associated with philosopher Marcello Ficino, the philosopher responsible for its renewal in the Renaissance. Ficino, and the Neoplatonists tried to secure themselves against a purely subjectivist theory, by assigning a subordinate role to the rules. The rules '*regole*' became "preparations," as in the reading of the tarot, "preparations" in the magical sense. They allowed the artist to ready himself for the reception of *grazia divina*--or *maniera* in the practical sense. The *disegno* became part of the rule preparation. See Klein, p, 57.

harmony and form, created, in the sixteenth-century sense, a more subjective artist;²⁰ allowing for the free flight of the imagination, the artist turned to creating marvelous effects, to the fantastic, and bizarre.²¹ Hauser, diverging from Zuccaro's appropriate metaphor between artist and nature, describes the subjective approach as a deliberate and conscious deviation from nature:

"Now the fundamental differences between art and reality began to be perceived for the first time, and divergence from nature was made the basis both of artistic practice and theory. With that, however, art entered a phase of development that can be called critical in more ways than one. For, if spontaneity is regarded as a 'natural' quality of an artistic attitude, the mere circumstance that Mannerism was associated with a conscious purpose, and not only the choice of means, but also of ends, had become a matter of deliberation, can be regarded as a critical symptom. In this sense Mannerism was a totally new and unprecedented phenomenon--the first sophisticated, deliberately adopted, artistic style of the western world, the first in which one has the feeling of conscious choice rather than of necessity, of driving rather than of being driven, of the spontaneous impulse being subject to control." ²²

What Hauser suggests by "the critical symptom" is the removal not only of natural "spontaneous" elements, but also the diminution of established formal principles. The *disegno interno* licensed the artist to reshape formal considerations of harmony and balance into a personal, pictorial system;²³ or disregard the Classical canon of unity in favor of simultaneity and the inclusion of contradictory or ambivalent elements. Parmigianino, for

²⁰ Klein, p. 61. Also regard that part of the "preparations" involved the alignment of the planets, and their aspects in relation to the subject's birth sign, so creativity was subjective but not in the contemporary sense.

²¹ Wolf, p. 40. I am leaving out Wolf's tag line "rather than a deeper search for truth," since from the standpoint of the theories of the cinquecento, it would seem the artist was after a deeper "correspondence," which the pragmatism of our own times renders to the occult.

²² Hauser, p. 28

²³ Freedberg, p. 104. Parmigianino's famous self-portrait as a distorted convex mirror image is a perfect metaphor for the *disegno interno*'s dominant [and perhaps perverse] relation to nature, and the idea of the *concetti* as the ruling force of art.

instance, shaped the human form according to a subjective proportional code that marked idealized ratios between body parts, without regard for Classical rules of proportion; or a sense of unique physical traits that might delineate personality differences.²⁴ Further deviations from the established canon are present in his compositional principles.

For instance, in *Madonna Colla Lunga*, Parmigianino breaks down the rules of axial balance by overstressing the verticality of the composition, a characteristic previously noted in the works of Pontormo and Rosso. Parmigianino distorts, albeit with elegant results, circles into ovals and squares into rectangles, the overall tendency enhances, stresses, even apparently stretches the vertical plane. Lost is the sense of the form firmly anchored in perspective space. Depth is continually encroached by the utilization of overlapping planes.²⁵

What is pivotal, however, is the rhythmical effect that emanates from these elongated shapes. The combination of shapes culminates in the serpentine pose of the figure where the suggestion of rhythm is the dominant quality.²⁶ In addition, the emphasis is totally away from the High Renaissance effect of balance around opposite axes. Two central characteristics of Mannerism are entertained here. First, by ignoring or de-emphasizing the horizontal axis, the Mannerist painter, in the main, was no longer concerned with the development of a deep perspective space which had hitherto preoccupied Renaissance

²⁴ Freedberg, p. 34. See his description of *Madonna Colla Lunga*.

²⁵ *Marriage of St. Catherine (Parma Galleria)* shows a Mannerist proclivity to use overlapping figures to create a sense of depth, within an indeterminate spatial field. Freedberg. Pl. 20. As we can determine at this point, the figure in overlapping planes as a substitute for perspective depth was a common signature of Mannerism.

²⁶ Freedberg, p. 4.

artists, designers and theorists.²⁷ Second, the concern with rhythm was a revolutionary formal principle, that opposed the Classical preference for stasis or repose, thereby offering an alternative, or even substitute, to rules of harmony, balance and proportion.

Parmigianino, however, solved the rhythmically complex compositional problems of his paintings with *grazia*, displaying what Freedberg calls a "swift, almost volatile mellifluousness."²⁸ Harmony, now shifting meaning, is established not as a somewhat fixed compositional attribute, but rather as the concert of the work with the subjective aesthetic ideal, the *disegno interno*.²⁹

The mirror of Parmigianino's *disegno interno* was his depiction of the human figure. In Parmigianino's treatment, the figure becomes an extension of his own aesthetic ideals; it lacks individuality or personality.³⁰ The painter prevails over his subject, and those elements of the subject which do not conform to his aesthetic ideal are avoided or

²⁷ The interest in perspective continued in the sense of extreme foreshortening of the figure or the *sotto in su*, in which both vanishing points and horizon lines are highly manipulated. This is particularly evident on ceiling paintings such as Beccafumi's *Ceiling in the Palazzo Pubblico*, at Siena. In another sense, stage designers utilized techniques of perspective to achieve ingenious effects at the great spectacles for the court of Medici in Florence. These scenic innovations continued with the development of opera at the beginning of the seicento, and culminated with the perspective virtuosity of the *scena per angolo* in the early Baroque. In regard to Buontalenti and the great spectacles at the Medici court, Shearman and others (Molinari, op. cit.) have considered stage designs as part of the Mannerist phenomenon that dominated artistic life in the late cinquecento. Buontalenti's designs, while employing a perspective spatial grid, were highly stylized and non-naturalistic in execution, possessing colors and forms that were often fantastic.

²⁸ Freedberg, p. 4.

²⁹ To determine the extent of the *disegno interno* one can look to the preparatory drawings and sketches, that the artists' used in planning projects. The sixteenth century saw a great rise in the interest in drawing. As Michelangelo pointed out, drawing could show both the preliminary *disegno* of painting or sculpture. Theorists like Benedetto Varchi, in his *Due Lezioni* also attribute great prominence to drawing as a measure of the *disegno interno*.

³⁰ First noticed by Vasari who said of Parmigianino's figures, "that he attempts to find one ideal figure for all figures." See Smyth, p. 8.

eliminated. As such, these are quintessential Mannerist traits: form, style, and ultimately effect (*effetti meravigliosi*) supersede content. An examination of Parmigianino's *Amor* will bear this out:

"The content of the *Amor* could operate within the frame of any number of possible iconographic schemes. The particular one chosen here, however, appears basically to be "Triumph of Love," as traditionally conceived in the conventional Renaissance "triumph" series. The *Amor* steps on two great books so symbolizing his conquest over science and knowledge, while to indicate his victory over strength he carves a bow out of the club of Hercules. . . . However, whatever symbolic or specific narrative meaning the picture contains, it is certainly but a minor aspect of its content; that emerges rather from the aesthetic and psychological elements in Parmigianino's representation of the chief actor in this humanistic charade."³¹

This response is triggered by the naked rearward exposure of the young boy,

"a subject of overtly homosexual connotation. . . ; it demands an intense immediacy of contact and an intimate psychological response."³²

Whether the painting stimulates desire, disgust, or ambiguity, the Mannerist artist was successful in confronting and manipulating the spectator at an hitherto untapped level of psychological response. The advent of the print in sixteenth century brought about the ability to proliferate works of art; it also increased demand from collectors for smaller more intimate etchings, often of a highly erotic nature. As was mentioned earlier, a group of these etchings by Raphael's disciple, Giulio Romano, appeared as illustrations for a volume of poems by Aretino, but were censored initially because of their erotically charged content.

³¹ Freedberg, p. 89. We noted this same ambiguous effect in Cesari's depiction of the *Diana and Acteon* myth, in which the psychological effect of the painting overwhelms its iconographical import.

³² Freedberg, p. 88.

Freedberg reminds us that Parmigianino's faces were mask-like, describing little of the inner soul, but depicting a generically noble quality, refined, but detached and aloof. The aristocratic ideal during the unsettled times of the late cinquecento was to hide, or mask, one's feelings behind a cool exterior. This cool detached mask-like quality was later apotheosized in the portraits of Bronzino,³³ which generally depicted a more lifeless, academic quality.

For the sixteenth-century critic, the effect of Neoplatonism, even mysticism, were felt in words like *grazia*, *disegno interno*, and *venustà*, which translates to mean "loveliness." Dolce's description of *venustà* points out the attempt of the sixteenth-century theorists to fix a particular concept within the governance of the intellect, imagination, intuition, humours, or somewhere betwixt and between internal and external reality:

"loveliness, which is that I know not what, so much to like, so in painters as in poets in such manner that it fills one's spirit with infinite delight, not knowing from what part it comes, that so please us."³⁴

³³ Compare by example the "Portrait of Laura Battiferri," Bronzino's imitation of del Sarto's "Portrait of a Girl Holding a Volume of Petrarch." Note the cool mask-like quality in the Bronzino silhouette, in contrast to the three-quarter posed face of the del Sarto which demonstrates a humanly warm, natural quality. Note also the difference in the hands. Bronzino's depiction of the sitter's hands, like the her *bel viso*, are "distractingly ambiguous in appearance being neither still nor active neither flesh nor stone, but a flattering visual paradox--an animate ivory. . . . They are also posed in a somewhat awkward fashion. . . the left hand seems indeed to be posed. . . ." see Mirollo, p. 140.

³⁴ Ludovico Dolce, *L'Aretino, Ovvero Dialogo della Pittura* (Milan: Daelli, 1873, ed. Téoli; [original ed. 1557]). The speech is placed by Dolce in the mouth of Aretino. Also in Freedberg, p. 6. I have modified his translation, ". . . la venustà che e quel no so che, che tanto suole aggradire, così ne' Pittori, come ne' Poeti; in guisa, che empie l'animo d'altrui d'infinito diletto, non sapendo da qual parte esca quello, che a noi tanto piace. . . ."

Here, Dolce is describing something intangible that happens to the subject upon viewing a painting by Parmigianino, intimating that Parmigianino is endowed with a divine grace, *divina grazia*.

Before discussing *maniera* in some detail, it may be helpful to consider the notion of *gusto*. *Gusto*, or taste, became more or less personalized in the later cinquecento; Klein describes it as "indicating a personal affinity of the artist with the master he must follow, to form the sort of style which suited him best."³⁵ Deriving his essential argument from Lomazzo, Klein posits:

"taste determines style, which is the sort of involuntary self-portrait of the artist."³⁶

Therefore, *gusto* becomes the discriminating factor in the individual artist's *maniera*. *Gusto* was determined in large part by the artist's temperament, even his astrological chart.³⁷ *Maniera* and *gusto* are complementary. As Mannerism, under Vasari, moved more towards academicism, *gusto* began to take on a more pre-determined impersonal or normative quality reflecting collective taste.

Maniera

The theories of *maniera* evolve in the second half of the cinquecento and establish a second and third generation of Mannerist artists. These notions of *maniera* hinge together

³⁵ Klein, p. 167.

³⁶ Klein, p. 167.

³⁷ Lest we think that the Mannerist artist is totally under an irrational and sensual definition of taste, Klein points to the evolution of *gusto* from *giudizio*, meaning discretion, which was used earlier in the Renaissance, a quality between the intellect and the senses. But *giudizio* also implied a rational element. As a product of learning and culture the artist could discriminate choice through other faculties than his *ingegno* (genius, talent).

practices (*pratica*) in cinquecento painting with a new found interest in theory (*teoria*), and the attempt to found a philosophy of art. Prompted by the cinquecento translations and extrapolations of Aristotle's Poetics, and the countervailing tendencies toward Neoplatonism and mysticism, the artist's craft was supplemented in fact by the inclination to theorize at all costs. Many of these theories derived from practicing artists like Vasari and Zuccaro.

Vasari's approach to *maniera* was developed in the *proemia* of his Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects.³⁸ It was the first attempt at a history of art. The *Lives* is essentially a portrayal and description of many of the living and dead artists of prominence during the Renaissance. Therefore, Vasari's theories of *maniera* have an historical basis, since he is demonstrating *maniera* as the logical evolution of contemporary art. For Vasari *maniera* represented the striving for the ideal in art; because although greatness had been achieved in quattrocento painting, those works lacked *grazia* and *raffinato* and Vasari considered them labored and crude. As means to supplant these shortcomings, Vasari considered *manierismo* the essential ingredient that would make cinquecento art victorious over its Renaissance predecessor.

Vasari's first use of the word *maniera* describes "*semplicemente la forza proprio della artista*," or what can be considered as the artist's individual style. Style here can be a combination of *ingegno* (talent, wit) and *pratica* (skill). Skill has the ability to overcome *difficoltà* with *ingegno*, and is the measure of the artist's *virtù*. In lesser artists the *pratica* dominated any sense of *disegno*, resulting in *manierato*,³⁹ and the negative implications

³⁸ (op. cit.).

so often attributed to *maniera*. Vasari recognized that a true sign of skill (*pratica*), was the artist's ability to work quickly, without losing quality in painting. Indeed, this had the added advantage of allowing the artist to carry out many commissions in a short time.

However, Craig Hugh Smyth suggests the fundamental monotony of this approach:

"the more or less consistent application of principles that governed form and movement--principles of posing figures at rest or in motion and of delineating, lighting and grouping them. It is striking how uniformly they were applied and how inescapable is their effect on the eye. "Habits," "formulae," "conventions" are words they always bring to mind and equally, the word "peculiarities." Ever since the seventeenth century at least, they have seemed odd."⁴⁰

This is what Vasari's contemporary, Dolce, recognized as stereotyping or what has come to be called "stylization" in art.⁴¹ Friedlaender posits:

"Accordingly a manner is something unoriginal, since it always repeats manually something predetermined--often so exactly that it becomes tedious or unbearable. Today we would use the word "cliché" or "carbon copy." In Florence and Rome the (end of cinquecento) artist of the third and fourth rank set the pace. . . .the artists belong to "*de petite manière*. . . ."⁴²

In the nineteen-sixties John Shearman defined Mannerism as deriving exclusively from *maniera*, which in "all cases may be translated into the English word style."⁴³ Shearman calls Mannerism the "stylish style,"

³⁹ Craig Hugh Smyth, *Mannerism and Maniera* (J. J. Augustin: Locust Valley, New York, 1962), p. 5. Also "*cattiva maniera*," as attributed to Dolce, Smyth. Smyth provides a survey to the notion of cinquecento *maniera*.

⁴⁰ Smyth, pp. 9-10.

⁴¹ Shearman, p. 18.

⁴² Friedlaender, pp. 49-51. Friedlaender establishes Pontormo, Rosso, and Parmigianino as the major figures of Mannerism. He is generally derogatory in his comments concerning later figures like Vasari, Naldini, Allori, although he reserves great praise for El Greco.

"it should be drenched in *maniera*, conversely should not be marked by qualities inimical to it, such as strain, brutality, violence and overt passion. We require in fact poise, refinement, and sophistication and works of art that are polished, rarefied, and idealized away from the natural: hot-house plants cultured most carefully."⁴⁴

Shearman therefore disqualifies earlier cinquecento painting as Mannerist, and disavows

Mannerist associations with the so-called anguished school of Hauser and others.

Discussing the limits of the field, Shearman cleverly resorts to a "Mannerist" play of words:

"Mannerist art should not be identified with mannered art, for while the first is always to some extent mannered, the second is not always Mannerist, since it may be anything but graceful and accomplished. . . ."⁴⁵

However, if we consider Friedlaender's premise that the later *maniera* artist was "*de petite manière* " and of the third rank we can also demonstrate that their work was not always graceful and accomplished. Shearman's etymological 'semantic' basis for the meaning of Mannerist art, is certainly enticing:

". . . The whole of the meaning of *maniera* with positive and negative aspects is the origin of our term and it is this that must be the basis of our selection . . ."⁴⁶

However, Shearman's etymological approach fails to recognize the importance of external influences in the development of cinquecento art. For instance, Weise points to the

⁴³ Shearman, p. 17.

⁴⁴ Shearman, p. 19.

⁴⁵ Shearman, p. 19.

⁴⁶ Shearman, p. 19.

importance of Northern Late Gothic prints as having a determining impact on Mannerist style.⁴⁷

"An undeniable importance in the formation of the Mannerist conventions belongs, in my opinion, to the return or the continued influence of the late gothic print observable in the painting and sculpture of the cinquecento"⁴⁸

Weise, in fact, establishes that this prolonged effect begins with Dürer's influence on Pontormo, and continues through the later period when *maniera* painting was in full bloom. What makes Shearman's argument more specious is the consideration of music historians like James Haar, who consider *maniera* in music to originate in the north, by composers like Josquin des Pres, and Willaert.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that historians like Shearman present the basis for a positive interpretation of *maniera*. By stressing *maniera's* synchronic meaning in the sixteenth-century Shearman emphasizes an understanding of the taste of the times, one that demanded complexity, ambiguity, and virtuosity of execution.

". . . it was in the sixteenth century that *maniera* was most appreciated in works of art."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Georg Weise, *Il Manierismo* (Firenze : Leo S. Olschki, 1971), pp. 31-33.

⁴⁸ Weise, p. 33. "*Un'importanza innegabile per il formarsi delle convenzioni manieristiche spetta, anche a mio avviso, alla rivincita oppure al continuato influsso degli stilemi di impronta tardogotica, osservabili nell'pittura e nella scultura del Cinquecento.*"

⁴⁹ See "Classicism and Mannerism in 16th-Century Music," *The International Review of Music Aesthetics and Sociology*, 1 (1970), pp. 55-67.

⁵⁰ Shearman, p. 22.

Vasari's second observation on *maniera* alludes to its rediscovery of antiquity, and concerns the statement "*più di maniera, che di imitazione natura.*"⁵¹ In regard to ancient sculpture, Vasari refers to the treatment of hair which was not treated realistically; that is, as hair falls and looks in nature, but artificially, as in thick sets of curls. In this sense Vasari uses *maniera* to mean an excess of artfulness that supersedes nature. Carrying this theme further he describes the need for the artist to have flexibility over Classical laws; strict measurement may not lead to grace and beauty:

"But one ought to not use any other better measure than the judgement of the eye."⁵²

Thus *maniera* allows the artist to control *misura* and play more of a determining factor; the balance is tipped to favor *maniera* over fidelity to nature.

This notion of *maniera* extends to include the treatment of draped fabrics, the depiction of armor, colorization of figures, and finish of hands, hair, face and beards. Vasari cited Parmigianino's depiction of hands for their exceptional grace and stylized treatment. Freedberg suggests the affectation of Parmigianino's hands creates a sense of grace and refinement, which represents a triumph of *maniera* over nature, and thereby creates a 'signature' effect for the artist.

⁵¹ Mirollo, p. 11. From *Proemio*, 1:154: "more style or convention than imitation of nature."

⁵² Mirollo, p. 11. Pl. 155. "*Ma non si debbe usare altra miglior misura che il giudicio dello occhio.*"

According to Georg Weise,⁵³ the most acceptable and widely used definition of *maniera* is its form as "*bella maniera*," a term first used by Dolce.⁵⁴ *Maniera*, in this sense, designates the practice of repeated "copying" after the great masters of the Renaissance, and early period of Mannerism. The artist looked neither to nature, nor to rules, but rather through repeated attempts sought to capture the virtuosity and grace of the master. Smyth suggests that this could be extended to include the best qualities of several artists:

"the new and unified sweetness in colors (*dolcezza ne' colori unita*) begun by Francia and Perugino; Leonardo's vigor and boldness in *disegno*; the grace of Raphael's heads, Corregio's contribution of soft feathery hair; Parmigianino's improvements on Corregio in grace and ornaments; . . ."⁵⁵

Vasari sees the *bella maniera* as part of art's evolutionary process because it seeks an idealized version of the original, as, for example, was the aim of Parmigianino in his treatment of figures.⁵⁶ Developing the concept of *bella maniera* further, Vasari relates the *idea di bellezza* ("idea of beauty") to the concept of *licenzia*, literally, artistic license or freedom. The *maniera* artist accomplished an idealized extension of the fundamental style through *licenzia* and the intervention of *fantasia*, or *capricci*. Through this extrapolation on the original the *maniera* artist was able to supersede and idealize the original work he was copying. Underlying the notion of the *bella maniera*, however is that many of its conventions are derived through exaggeration and novel treatments based upon Renaissance practices.⁵⁷ For instance, the later generations of Fontainebleau artists made

⁵³ Weise, pp. 171-184.

⁵⁴ Smyth, pp. 3-5.

⁵⁵ Smyth, p. 8.

⁵⁶ Freedberg, p. 12.

⁵⁷ Smyth, p. 12. *Licenzia* was seen as a supplement to, or substitute for, the Renaissance canon of *regola* (rule).

engravings based on the work of Raphael and Michelangelo, and even extensive copies after Rosso and Primaticcio.

The accomplished *bella maniera* was one of the charges of the first academy of art founded by Vasari in 1561, the Florentine Academy of Design.⁵⁸ It was his attempt to implement theories of *maniera*, and instruct students in its practice and design.⁵⁹ The purpose of this first school of art was multi-fold, and as is typical of the Mannerist phenomenon in general, involved contradictory impulses. While offering students training in painting and design, it also stifled the individual vision, or *ingegno*, which had been evident in the early Mannerist works of Pontorno, or even Michelangelo.⁶⁰ The result was that Vasari's academy proffered the monotonous repetition of copying Renaissance masters.⁶¹ However Vasari's school, to some extent, became the paradigm for later academies of art and represents the origin of academicism in art.⁶²

⁵⁸ Hauser, pp. 207-212.

⁵⁹ Vasari desired *bella maniera* rather than the *manierato* which implies a poor technique. By the development of individual virtuosity, Vasari's school was able to turn out painters who could paint with great facility and quickness. Often this propensity to speed led to a lack of formal clarity and dull coloration, therefore *manierato*.

⁶⁰ While art historians would not generally argue that Michelangelo was a Mannerist many of the characteristics of his painting were later copied by the *maniera* painters; for instance, his alteration of proportions among the body parts, use of severe foreshortening, masculine treatment of feminine forms. The works of Mannerist artist Rosso Fiorentino, among others, are derivative of the genius of Michelangelo. See Rosso Fiorentino: Drawings, Prints and Decorative Arts, (op. cit.).

⁶¹ Hauser, p. 208.

⁶² We can acknowledge that Leonardo began an academy of art as early as 1507-1510; for the full background of these phenomena see Pevsner's Academies in Art.

The practice of *bella maniera* was not limited to the copying of Renaissance and contemporary masters, but also concentrated on antique sources. A. Reigl has pointed out that the Roman sarcophagi of the second to fourth century A.D. inspired *maniera* in a number of ways:

" . . .the flattening of figures (especially keeping both shoulders *en face*); their action in two dimensions; the isolation of principal figures and groups of figures from each other; the role of light and shade in emphasizing the separation, the simplified contours and surfaces; the frequent emphasis on arms and legs and the system of linear composition; with its stress on diagonals in the pattern of figures and limbs; agitated movement; the lack of compositional focus; surface patterns that have little to do with the action; the impression that faces, forms, and movements are more or less alike."⁶³

These characteristics prefigure the conventions of *maniera*. "In *maniera* their more extreme manifestations were followed, modernized, and exaggerated."⁶⁴ Armenini suggested that the study of antiques was essential for mastering *maniera*.⁶⁵ The beginner learns more from copying statues, arches and sarcophagi than from anything else because, "they impress themselves on the mind by being more certain and true."⁶⁶ Rosalind Grippi draws a parallel between antique poses and motifs and *maniera*, citing Salviati's *David Refrains from Killing Saul*, and a similar figure at the right of Bronzino's tapestry, *The Coming of Jacob into Egypt*, as deriving from the Bacchic sarcophagi in the Walters Gallery.⁶⁷ The repetition of the same pose by Salviati and Bronzino is characteristic of *maniera*.

⁶³ See Smyth, p. 14. Original source A. Reigl, *Spätromische Kuntsindustrie* (Vienna, 1927), pp. 127 ff., 139 ff., and 144 ff.

⁶⁴ Smyth, p. 14.

⁶⁵ R. Goldwater and M. Treves, *Artists on Art* (New York, 1945) pp. 108-109.

⁶⁶ Smyth, p. 15.

⁶⁷ Smyth, p.16.

The concept of *maniera* is also described in architecture and music. In architecture the antiquizing element results from *licenzia*. Vasari states that this allows us to see the old in the contemporary. The notion of *licenzia*, as an attribute of *maniera*, personalizes art and puts the individual artist at the helm of his creation. The practice of *maniera* included an active *licenzia*, which re-interpreted the conventional concepts of *regola* (rule) and *ordine* (order).⁶⁸ Vasari heralded the victory of *maniera* when he added *maniera* to the four canons of Vitruvian architectural theory: *ordine, regola, misura, disegno*. Thus, in *maniera* architecture one might mix Doric, Corinthian and Ionian orders, or blend the archaic with the Classical. A fine example of this is the *Facade of the Palazzo Zuccaro*, Florence by the Mannerist artist and theorist, Federigo Zuccaro. This facade combines Doric and archaic elements, with antique relief, in a kind of *capricci or bizzari*.⁶⁹ Another example of peculiar power and agitation is Leone Leoni's *Facade with Busts* at the *Palazzo degli Omenoni*, Milan. Here the facade is given impetus or movement by the *maniera* poses of the statuary, 'tenuously' attached to the pilasters.⁷⁰

Maniera and Music

⁶⁸ Smyth, p. 5.

⁶⁹ Würtenberger, (op. cit.), p. 161.

⁷⁰ Würtenberger, p. 63.

In music the *bella maniera* has been defined by Maria Rika Maniates⁷¹ to have several meanings. It is generally associated with cinquecento poly-vocal music, particularly the madrigal; through its development in the sixteenth century this meant music for four, five or even six voices. Mannerism in music broke from the Classical laws of polyphony, by allowing the individual artist a greater range of expression in intervallic choices (harmony),⁷² meter, and in the musical relation to textual material. In its early phase Mannerist composers sought to link the emotional strength of poetry with music in order to achieve the *effetti meravigliosi*, recognized by Zarlino as the dramatic stirring of the passions:⁷³

"Solo singing in antiquity could paint concrete affections and extrinsic conceits because it was dramatic recitation based on four indispensable ingredients: harmony, meter, narration, and subject. Modern [Renaissance] polyphony, on the other hand, relies solely on the first two of these, and therefore cannot match the rhetorical eloquence of ancient song."⁷⁴

We can see that the *bella maniera* in sixteenth-century music, as in art and architecture, was also largely inspired by antiquity, as it was understood by the theorists of the time.

Another aspect of *maniera* concerns the *imitazione delle parole*, the idea that music should imitate the speech and conceits of poetry,⁷⁵ including matching the "wit, elegance and

⁷¹ Maria Rika Maniates, (op. cit.) p. 69.

⁷² And through enharmonic and chromatic *genera*, not allowed in classical practices. The *genera* activated peculiar tunings that allowed semi-tones, and radical shifts in intervallic relations.

⁷³ Maniates, p. 244. Zarlino was the one of the incipient writers on musical *maniera*.

⁷⁴ Maniates, p. 245.

⁷⁵ See Varchi's *Paragoni*, Notes for Appendix A, quote from Mendelson, "Throughout his career Vasari executed a number of preliminary drawings and finished paintings of

grotesqueness of poetic invention with a barrage of pictorial devices."⁷⁶ These are typically seen as "eye" music (for the singer's delectation) or as aural figures (for the listeners). As with painting, musical figures (sighs, *appogiaturas*, etc.) were repeated over-and-over until they become stereotypical clichés, or what is called madrigalisms. Eye music was reliant upon punning tricks, most noticeably the use of black notes to "color" works. Einstein remarked:

"in Marenzio's work, no passage involving *notte*, *color*, or *disolora* is allowed to go by without an abrupt shift to black notation: conversely, all passages involving 'light' or 'day' are written in 'white'."⁷⁷

Marenzio's fancy reached remarkable heights in his musical punning of Petrarch's *O bella man* (1585), "the phrase *di cinque perle* inspired the appearance of five breves strung on a single line of the staff."⁷⁸ Eye music reaches its extreme in Monteverdi's *Non si levava ancor a* (1590; Tasso). In this poetic conceit, Tasso likens the embracing of lovers to the convoluted shape of the acanthus plant. In Monteverdi's score the visual outline of the notes suggests the shape of the acanthus leave while their sound elicits the passion of their embrace.⁷⁹

battle scenes in which he appears to transfer literary technique to pictorial technique. The ceiling decorations for the *Sala di Giovanni della Bande Nere* and the *Sala de Cosimo Vecchio*, in the *Palazzo Vecchio*. . .

⁷⁶ Maniates, p. 200.

⁷⁷ Alfred Einstein, *The Italian Madrigal*, trans. by Alexander H. Krappe, Roger Sessions and Oliver Strunk (Princeton: New Jersey, 1949), p.242.

⁷⁸ Maniates, p. 332.

⁷⁹ Maniates, p. 332.

Two technical terms of musical *maniera* present at this time are the *madrigali cromatici* or *madrigali a note nere*; which were often set to Petrarchan poetry.⁸⁰ Chromaticism refers to the use of non-harmonic tones (accidentals) in the musical fabric, to create poignant dissonances and harmonic tension at appropriate moments. Regarding the "black note" or *note nere* madrigals, Harran writes:

"the *madrigali a note nere* marks the first round in that game of "*ut pictura poesis*" that later madrigalists were to play with zest. All these bespeak a new approach, then, on the part of the composer. As with his artist confreres, it leads him to "disrupt and distort" the older style. It is in this sense that the *madrigale cromatico* partakes of, or is directed by a Mannerist consciousness."⁸¹

One feature of *note nere* madrigals was their lack of a melodically coherent structure. Because the poetry itself avoided any sense of repetitive scansion, there could never be any sense of predictable form involving a consistent melodic line. Wolf describes:

"No structural inevitability led to cadences; they occur for poetic, dramatic emphasis and assume a variety of forms, some strong some weak but always dictated by the expressive content of the text."⁸²

The use of new intervals included the tritone, which created diminished triads and dominant seventh sonorities with the potential for ambivalent tonal centers.⁸³ These dissonances were not accepted as appropriate in Renaissance musical theory.

⁸⁰ See Mirollo (op. cit.) for a detailed account of Petrarchism in cinquecento Italy. We will discuss literary devices in a later chapter.

⁸¹ Don Harran, *Some Early Examples of the Madrigale Cromatico*, *Acta Musicologica*, 41 (1969): p. 247. Harran traces the development to the twenties and thirties, Autenfrancesco Doni considered it a pyrotechnical wonder in 1540; Girolamo Scotto remarked in the same year that these tunes were more easily composed than sung.

⁸² Wolf, p. 42.

One theorist, however, tried to reconcile theory with practice by sanctioning the use of the so-called "enharmonic" and "chromatic" genera within a composition.⁸⁴ Nicolo Vicentino revived the notion of ancient modes in lieu of the standard diatonic scale.

Maniates claims that *maniera* in music parallels that in the arts of painting, sculpture and literature. This became particularly evident in the later cinquecento as composers sought increasingly grotesque exaggerations⁸⁵ in music to set themselves apart from the mediocre composers given to the repetition of Mannerist devices which quickly became clichés. So *maniera* in music, as in the sister arts, established both positive and negative implications. The stylizations in the graphic arts based on antique models, which were evident in *maniera*'s debt to the Roman sarcophagi, were echoed in musical *maniera* in the early use of the chromatic and enharmonic genera; and later in the development of monody. It was from monody (solo singing) that the form opera evolved in the early seventeenth century.⁸⁶

Maniera and Behavior

⁸³ For instance both E flat dominant 7, and A dominant seventh, contain the tritone, G, D flat (C sharp). E flat and A also are tritone intervals. Maniates cites Marenzio's treatment of Guarnini's *Il pastor fido*, as an exemplar of this effect see p. 350.

⁸⁴ Maniates, p.266. The semitones of the chromatic and enharmonic genera can be programmed into electronic keyboards such as the DX-7. I witnessed a demonstration of this at the Central Renaissance Conference (Indiana State University, Terre Haute, April 1988) panel on music and theatre in the Renaissance. The genera discount the notion of enharmonic equivalents between A sharp and B flat, or F sharp and G flat; rather in the genera we hear the microtonal differences; the result is a non-western sounding scale, which some people today find bizzare and humorous.

⁸⁵ Maniates, p. 349, for a listing of these grotesque effects.

⁸⁶ Maniates p. 428.

To this point we have considered *maniera* in its relation to art and music, and referred to its importance in literature. As in most things Mannerist, the definition of *maniera* itself contains multiple meanings. *Maniera* as style; as a deviation from nature; as "*bella maniera*," or more derived from another art work than from nature or rules. To this we can now add a fourth, that is *maniera* as a form of courtly behavior which gained prominence in the sixteenth-century and derived from "cavalier literature and the late medieval courts and in the kind of writing for the purpose of education."⁸⁷

Here Weise is referring to an artificially refined, *artificiosità raffinata*, and a preciously (softly) refined, *preziosità ingentilita*, mode of behavior that had been in favor a century earlier in France. This behavior was emulated and taught at court. Weise relates that the expansion of the cavalier mode, and the concept of *maniera*, and "*le parole corrispondenti penetreranno*" ("the corresponding words penetrated") into Italy in the late quattrocento acquiring increasing favor and a large diffusion with the spread of the "*tendenze medievalizzanti*."⁸⁸ The emissaries of the courtly *maniera* that was victorious in cinquecento Italy, were the "*pellegrino*." *Pellegrino*, which literally refers to a wanderer or pilgrim, also has the connotation of an exotic. Weise defines:

"Also the vogue of the adjective "*pellegrino*," employed to express an ideal of peculiarity and originality, in contrast with the classical attitude and their aspiring to the norm, universal, and measured, it seems to me symptomatic of that current ideology, associated with the stylistic phenomenon of Mannerism."⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Georg Weise, *Il Manierismo* (op. cit.), pp. 176-177. "... *letteratura cavalleresca e cortigiana del tardo Medioevo ed in specie negli scritti a scopo educativo*."

⁸⁸ Weise, p. 177.

Shearman also acknowledges *maniera*'s debt to a courtly style, although consistent with his own theory of delimiting the diachrony of mannerism, he does not acknowledge Weise's theory of a medieval origin.

"[*Maniera*] was borrowed from the literature of manners, and had been literally a desirable quality of human deportment, it signified a courtly grace, *maniera* in this sense is a term of long standing in the literature of a way of life so stylized and cultured that it was in effect a work of art itself; hence the easy transference to the visual arts.⁹⁰

Weisbach defines *maniera* as originating within the aristocratic sphere, and depicting a kind of worldliness that was unequivocally positive. Weisbach links late medieval ideals of an "elegant worldliness" and "aristocratic perfection," and of behavior that expressed "affected grace" and a "hypersensitive genius" or "inspiration," to the works of Parmigianino. The determining elements are a "refined light," and "precious behavior."⁹¹

Castiglione's famous work *Il Cortegiano* (The Courtier), written in the early cinquecento, had proposed a victory of style over content, of good manners over distinctions of an

⁸⁹ Weise, p.177. "Anche le voga dell'aggettivo "pellegrino" impiegato per esprimere un ideale di singolarità e di originalità, in contrasto con l'atteggiamento classico e con le sue aspirazioni a norma, universalità e misura, mi sembra sintomatica de quella corrente ideologica, associabile al fenomeno stilistico del Manierismo.""

⁹⁰ Shearman, Mannerism, pp. 17-18.

⁹¹ Weise here quotes Weisbach, translating his German to Italian, whence I translate the Italian to English. ". . .il Weisbach vedeva nel Parmigianino l'esponente più cospicuo di un ideale di mondanità elegante e di perfezione aristocratica, di stilizzazione artificiosa e ricercata dell'aspetto delle persone e del loro comportamento; "affezione graziosa" e "un estro ipersensitivo" si associano, secondo lui, nella corrente artistica risalente alParmigianino di cui "elemento determinante "(Lebenselement) sono "un lusso raffinato ed in comportamento prezioso." Weisbach, Der Manierismus, (op. cit.), pp. 169- 176.

intellectual or spiritual order. His notion of the impeccable *cortegiano*, particularly in regard to his refinement or education, perhaps derived from Weise's earlier "*pellegrino*."⁹²

Castiglione provided the courtier with a code of behavior that sharpened distinctions between the court and commoner.⁹³ Later, Giovanni della Casa (1558) proposed specific social mores for the young *gentiluomo*: detailed such virtues as the suppressed yawn, the silent sneeze, vocal tones fitting for various addresses, the position of arms while walking, and other affectations upon natural behavior.⁹⁴ Harran suggests a certain relation between music, poetry, and courtly life:

"Between the calculated graces of our *gentiluomo* and that deliberate floundering in circumstantial detail that hallmarks much of the art and music of the Cinquecento there exists a not uncertain affinity. Both issue from a frame of mind in which greater import is attributed to superficialities than to cogency of structure or statement — the madrigalist fastening on verbal characterizations as an alternative for a binding larger form, the poet grasping at an "exquisite, subtle, accomplished, highly ornamented way of expression" out of the feeling that "language threatens to fail," and the courtier embracing a set of dilettantish refinements as an excuse for genuine intellectual or spiritual eminence. . . ."⁹⁵

Harran's tone is typical of those who discover in the *maniera*, the *manierato*, or the *cattiva maniera*, first disclaimed by Dolce, and fully acknowledged in the seventeenth-century treatises of Bellori and Malvasia. Thus, Harran's evaluation of *maniera* in its various manifestations differs from the positive emphasis of Dvorak, who justifies Mannerism as an original idea:

⁹² *Il libro del cortegiano*, Book 1, Chapter XXX in *Opere di Baldassare Castiglione, Giovanni della Casa, Benevenuto Cellini, editore C. Cordié (La letteratura italiana, storia e testi, Volume XXVII; Milan, 1960)* pp. 52-55.

⁹³ Don Harran, "Mannerism in the Cinquecento Madrigal," (op. cit.) , pp. 533-37.

⁹⁴ See *Il libro. . .* , pp. 367-435.

⁹⁵ Harran, p. 334.

"[the creators] insisting on an individual and anti-classical character of their art, on a function that emancipated and innovated all the productions of painting, and also that poetry of modern times."⁹⁶

Conclusion

While it is generally evident that most historians evaluate the intentions of Mannerism and *maniera* in a positive light, the consensus of historians seems to establish that later generations of the *maniera* fall into decay, and fail to achieve a lasting vision. Perhaps this testimony accredits Kenneth Burke's comment about cinquecento painting as a "failure of nerve." Weise intimates that therein lies the unresolvable paradox of Mannerism:

"the positive drive of wishing to transform Renaissance art was mingled with the equally popular notion that Mannerism represented a disintegration."⁹⁷

The treatment of *maniera* and Mannerism by historians is seemingly a tug-of-war being played between its innovative, subjective and original approach to art and courtier life, one that sought to "perfect" the "crudities," and "plainness," and orientation-to-function of the Late Renaissance. Against this we have heard, with increasing volume since Bellori in the seicento, the disclaimers of preciousness, schematic repetition, empty forms, endless artificiality, ornament over substance, imitation of art over nature, conceits over wisdom, disorganization over unity, wordplay over meaning, that plagued historical Mannerism. Ultimately, it is the task of the historian to distinguish forms and symbols from diachronic

⁹⁶ Weise, p. 179, translated from Dvorak, *Italienische Kunst*, "... *insistendo sul carattere individualistico ed anticlassico della loro arte, sulle funzione emancipatrice ed innovatrice di questa, . . . tutta la produzione figurativa ed anche quella poetica dei tempi moderni.*"

⁹⁷ Weise, p. 180.

values, since forms and symbols transmit different values when removed from their original context. Thus, in evaluating the Mannerist canon, one must be aware of the influences determining the interpretative stance.

We reach a problem of distinction when we attempt to qualify Mannerism solely in regard to *maniera*, as was the case with Shearman. The distinction between *maniera* and Mannerism, as Craig Hugh Smyth has stated, is that *maniera* tells us about a specific mode of forming art in the cinquecento, and relates to a clearly defined set of gestures, and poses. It also suggests the tendency to academicism in art and letters, and therefore is helpful in delineating it from other popular forms. Friedlaender side-stepped the issue by calling the early Mannerist period "Anti-Classical," (thereby concurring with Shearman), and the post *maniera* period, "Anti-Mannerist," which saw the rise of the Carracci and Caravaggio. Friedlaender discounts *maniera* Mannerism as repetitious, schematic and the work of third and fourth-rate artists. However, a study of *maniera* is absent from his text, which certainly makes a case for negation: two parts anti-parts and one part voided all together. Humor aside, Friedlaender's point is that the great innovators of Mannerism: Pontormo, Rosso, and Parmigianino all created their significant works in the first part of the cinquecento (1520-1550), then were widely imitated later on. Hauser takes a broader, inclusive picture, as do Sypher and Weise, by combining *maniera* and Mannerism.

In the context of this study, Mannerism will represent the larger picture, one that sees the break with the Renaissance, but is also inclusive of non-*maniera* forms.⁹⁸ Both positive

⁹⁸ Thus we will use the term similarly to Battista's use of the term *antirinascimento*. Battista describes *antirinascimento* as the variety of forms that were evident in the cinquecento, and of importance to both courtier and commoner. Perhaps the form that bridged the gap between the levels of society most successfully was the *commedia dell'arte*.

and negative aspects of *maniera* and Mannerism exist, often simultaneously, in the same work. However, we must always be aware that our interpretations, along with the historians of this century, are clouded and simultaneously aided by the methods of inquiry that have developed over the last four hundred years. The major focus of this study is to demonstrate Mannerist characteristics in the phenomenon of the early *commedia dell'arte*, and not to establish ethical or moral judgments based on these characteristics.

PART II

CHAPTER IV

Theories of, and the Origins of the Commedia dell'Arte:

A Historiography

Over the years a number of theories have arisen concerning the origins of the *commedia dell'arte*. In 1728, Luigi Riccoboni, a member of the 'Italian Comedians' in Paris, traced the origins of the *commedia dell'arte* to the Atellan Farces, ancient Roman mimes, and the classical comedies of Plautus and Terence. Among other claims, Riccoboni declared that *zanni* is etymologically connected with *Sannio* a clown, and Harlequin is linked to the '*Mimus centunculus*'.¹ Riccoboni's motive, however, was not directed toward historical accuracy, but rather aimed to legitimize the Italian theatre to French audiences.

Atellan, Classical, and Medieval

Besides Riccoboni, a number of sixteenth and seventeenth-century theorists and critics (Benedetto Varchi, *Ercolano*, 1561; Perrucci, *Dell'arte Rappresentativa*. . . , 1699; Minturno, *Ars Poetica*, 1573) posited the strong relation of the Atellan Mimes to the masks and practices of the *commedia dell'arte*.² In a recent study concerning the dramatic form of

¹ K. M. Lea, Italian Popular Comedy: a study in the commedia dell'arte, 1560-1620, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1934), Vol. I, p. 225. Also see Riccoboni's Histoire du Théâtre italien (1728). pp. 17-26.

the *commedia dell'arte*, Ferdinando Taviani suggests that a major reason for theorists in the sixteenth-century to associate the Atellan farces with the *commedia dell'arte*, came from the widely disseminated translations of Pollux's *Onomasticon*, in which Pollux speaks of the masks of the *Commedia Nuova* (new comedy), which he links to the Atellan farces.³

Pollux posited *circa* 178 B.C.:

"The comic characters (*maschere* 4) of the antique comedy were for the most part similar to the characters that now perform in plays or that are deformed in a caricatured manner (*maniera*) .

The *maschere* of the *commedia nuova* are instead: the first Pappo, the second Pappo, the general, the old man with a long beard and flowing hair, Hermione, the old man with pointed beard, Licomedeo, the procuress or pimp, And these are the *vecchi* (old men)."⁵

Pollux goes on to list the entire makeup of character types in the Hellenistic New Comedy, a number of which could be seen as prototypes of the *commedia dell'arte*. Among the most important factors linking this ancient form with the *commedia dell'arte* was the use of women, such as the courtesan and the coquettish servant, which are found in both forms.⁶

² A. G. Bragaglia, *Pulcinella* (Gherardo Casini: Roma)1953, p. 4. See for full citations of above. . . Also Vincenzo De Amicis, *La Commedia popolare latina e la commedia dell'arte*, 1882.

³ Ferdinando Taviani, "*La compositione del dramma nella Commedia dell'Arte*," *Quaderni di teatro*, vol. 4, no. 15 (Feb. 1982), p. 168, incl. n. 11.

⁴ For a complete discussion of this term see "Stage Figures of the *Commedia dell'Arte*" later in this chapter.

⁵ Iulius Pollux, (gr *Iulios Poludeukes*) *Onomasticon*, Book IV, no. V, translated from the Latin by Ferruccio Marotti, see *Lo Spettacolo dall'Umanesimo al Manierismo* (Feltrinelli: Milan, 1974) pp. 92-93. "*Le maschere comiche della commedia antica erano per lo più simili ai personaggi che mettevano in scena o che venivano deformati in maniera caricaturale. Le maschere della commedia nuova invece sono: il primo Pappo, il secondo Pappo, il generale, il vecchio dalla barba lunga e dalla chioma fluente, l'Ermonèo, il vecchio dalla barba a punta, il Licomedèo, il lenone, l'Ermonèo secondo. E questi erano i vecchi.*"

⁶ Marotti, p. 94, for a list of female characters.

The fact that Pollux's *Onomasticon* was translated into Latin (1541), and was widely read during the formative years of the *commedia dell'arte*, has led Taviani to infer:

"perhaps the professional companies resumed an element of the classical performance and its function just as the scholars [above] had attested."⁷

On the other hand, Bragaglia suggests that considerations of Classical origin cannot be proven, nor can a direct line of continuity to the *commedia dell'arte* be established. This is the consensus view held by historians such as Nicoll and Lea. Their twentieth-century histories of the *commedia dell'arte*, while acknowledging ancient prototypes,⁸ are generally concerned with immediate artistic influences and developments in the sixteenth century. While mid-twentieth-century opinion suggests that Atellan and related prototypes contain recognizable characteristics of the *commedia dell'arte*, clear derivations and lines of continuity linking antiquity with the *commedia dell'arte* appear impossible to prove.⁹

It would be possible to devote an entire study to the theories surrounding the origin of the *commedia dell'arte*. Indeed, many have been published.¹⁰ Historian Federico Doglio has established traces of the *commedia dell'arte* masks in the medieval mystery and morality plays.¹¹ Paolo Toschi's ethnographic approach to the Italian Theatre, *Le origini del teatro*

⁷ Taviani, p. 168. ". . . --le compagnie professionistiche riassumono forse un elemento dello spettacolo classico e la sua funzione così come erano stati testimoniati dagli eruditi. "

⁸ Such as Nicoll's, *Masks, Mimes and Miracles* (New York: Cooper Square, 1963), which traces the development of the mask throughout theatre history in the western tradition.

⁹ Lea, Vol. I, p. 229.

¹⁰ For annotations on the full range of theorizing, see Thomas F. Heck, *Commedia dell'Arte: a guide to the primary and secondary literature* (op. cit.). Of special significance are Sections D and E.

italiano,¹² notes Harlequin's precursor Hellequin in northern European carnivals of the Middle Ages. Lorenzo Stoppato referred to profane examples from the *Rappresentazione Sacre*, a late medieval dramatic form, which anticipated *commedia dell'arte* characters and situations.¹³ Hermann Reich hypothesizes that the *commedia dell'arte* bears significant resemblance to both the Karagöz or Turkish Shadow Puppet Theatre, and the eastern mimes.¹⁴ Enrico Fulchignoni posits the oriental influence on the development of *commedia's* masks.¹⁵ Tonelli notes similarities between the medieval farces and the *commedia dell'arte*.¹⁶ Anya Peterson Royce supports the vital influence of the Venetian buffoons and precursors such as playwright and performer Andrea Calmo on the early *commedia dell'arte*.¹⁷ Sometimes opinions differ strongly. For instance Maurice Sand's

¹¹ Federico Doglio, "*Maschere e travestimenti negli spettacoli medioevali*" in Arte della maschera nella commedia dell'arte, edited by Donato Sartori e Bruno Lanata (Casa Usher, 1983), pp. 25-41.

¹² Paolo Toschi, Le origini del teatro italiano (Torino: Einaudi, 1955).

¹³ Lorenzo Stoppato, La commedia popolare in Italia, 1980 reprint by (Bologna: Forni) original (Padua, 1887).

¹⁴ Lea, Vol. 1, p. 234. Reich's theory is found in Der Mimus (1903). "He suggests that after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 the Byzantine mime had its third migration into Italy by way of Venice, and combining with whatever the Middle Ages had preserved of the Roman mime generated the *commedia dell'arte*." In Saggi sulla letteratura italiana del seicento (1911), vol. i, p. 261, Croce cites that this evidence is not conclusive: Venetian performance records of the sixteenth century can be understood without referring to the Byzantine mimes, and the connection between Karagoz and Pulcinella is specious since Pulcinella is a Neapolitan figure, who arrives on the scene some time later.

¹⁵ Enrico Fulchignoni, "*Le influenza orientale sulla commedia dell'arte*" in Le théâtre italien et l'Europe (Presses Universitaires de France, 1983), pp. 125-143.

¹⁶ Luigi Tonelli, Il teatro italiano (Milano, 1924).

¹⁷ Anne Royce Peterson, "The Venetian commedia: actors and masques in the development of the *commedia dell'arte*," Theatre Survey, vol. 27., no. 1/2 (1986), pp. 69-87.

nineteenth-century assessment that Angelo Beolco was the father of the *commedia dell'arte* is contested by Kathleen Lea, among others.¹⁸

In this chapter we shall attempt to survey the many and often contradictory theories, and compelling arguments regarding the origin of the *commedia dell'arte*. Of particular importance will be our review of such sixteenth-century tendencies as the imitation of Classicism, encountered in the *commedia erudita* and its staging practices, and of such anti-Classical theatrical forms such as those created by the innovations of Angelo Beolco (Ruzante) and Andrea Calmo.

Commedia Erudita and its Staging

A sixteenth-century dramatic form that was based upon humanist motives and principles was the *commedia erudita* (learned comedy), a form which in various manifestations influenced the development of the *commedia dell'arte*. The advent of the learned comedy in the sixteenth century has been the subject of a number of studies; perhaps the most widely recognized is Marvin Herrick's work, Italian Comedy in the Renaissance¹⁹ and the more recent examination by Douglas Radcliff-Umstead, The Birth of Modern Comedy in the Renaissance.²⁰ The subject itself is vast and far beyond the range of this dissertation,

¹⁸ K. M. Lea, p. 233. Sand's work that is cited: Masque et Bouffons, 1860. Also contesting Sand's conclusion is A. Nicoll.

¹⁹ Marvin Herrick, Italian Comedy in the Renaissance (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1960).

²⁰ Douglas Radcliff-Umstead, The Birth of Modern Comedy in the Renaissance (University of Chicago, 1969).

however, it is important to consider the major factors surrounding its influence upon the *commedia dell'arte*.

Commedia erudita is generally considered to have reached its highest point in the early and middle cinquecento; thereafter it falls into redundancy and decline, with a few exceptions.²¹ However, its development extends backward for a period of almost two hundred years. Radcliff-Umstead places the beginning of development with the lost comedy of Petrarch, *Philologia* (1348), citing it as the first of the Latin Humanist plays. Frances Yates acknowledges, in this quote by Valla, that Petrarch may be considered an avatar of the humanist spirit:

"Though not the initiator of Renaissance humanism, Petrarch was its first great representative, devoting his life as a scholar to the recovery of Latin antiquity, and his life as a literary man and poet to meditation on the moral and politico-historical themes which his new approaches to the ancients inspired."²²

The Latin Humanist plays were written in Latin and loosely modeled after the works of Terence. Herrick considers that only certain elements of this form are prototypical of *commedia erudita* :

". . . it is divided into five acts with the Terentian labels of *protasis* (Acts i and 2), *epitasis* (Acts 3 and 4) and *catastrophe* (Act 5). . . The play is still medieval however, for its structure is episodic and the scene shifts frequently from place to place [sic]."²³

²¹ Herrick notes the works of Della Porta and Oddi as representing high moments in the later comedies.

²² Frances A. Yates, Renaissance and Reform: The Italian Contribution, Vol. II (Routledge and Kegan Paul: London, 1983) p. 74.

²³ Herrick, p. 16.

In 1428, twelve hitherto unknown works by Plautus were discovered by Nicholas Cusanus, creating a great stir among the Italian Humanists; by 1472 the first printed edition of Plautus' plays appeared.²⁴ Terentian works were also widely published in the latter quarter of the quattrocento, usually accompanied by the fourth-century commentaries of Donatus, which had been discovered in 1433.²⁵ This commentary was crucial to the development of the *commedia erudita* :

"Donatus, by his general remarks on the nature of comedy and by his analyses of five out of the six plays, taught Italians how to construct comedy in the Terentian form. It is this classical form that distinguished the *commedia erudita* from the Latin plays of the humanists, from the sacred dramas, and from the early Italian farces."²⁶

Publications flourished and eventually led to productions by Pomponius Laetus and the Roman Academy, in the late quattrocento. Elsewhere, a production of *Andria* by Terence was performed by students at the Medici house in Florence in 1478.²⁷

Outside of Rome productions of Terence took place in Florence (1476), by students of Latin, and later (1488) a major presentation of the *Menaechmi* was performed by clerics for the Medici. The staging of these Renaissance versions of Terence are suggested by the woodcuts for his *Andria*, completed at Lyon in 1493. John H. McDowell describes their appearance:

²⁴ Douglas Radcliff-Umstead, The Birth of Modern Comedy in the Renaissance (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1969), p. 60.

²⁵ Herrick, p. 60.

²⁶ Herrick, p. 60.

²⁷ Ibid. 61.

"The setting consists of a back-wall composed of five simple columns supporting four arches, the spaces between the columns being closed by curtains, which can be drawn, behind which are tiny rooms with rear windows. Each compartment denotes a separate house with a character name over it. The back wall is flanked by two statuettes symbolizing Phoebus and Liber, while the whole stands on a plain platform supported by trestles. As nothing was known of the Greek stage until about 1484, naturally the medieval conventions were freely used; at least the conventional *case* or houses were chief of these, thus showing a classical interpretation of a common medieval practice. The woodcuts from *Heautontimoroumenos*, *Hecyra*, and the *Adelphae* show variations of the same idea."²⁸

While Terentian comedy was performed in and outside of Italy, it was in Ferrara, one of the major literary centers of the Renaissance, that *commedia erudita* first blossomed, and the inchoate Italian translations of the Plautine plays were produced.²⁹ A letter from Isabella d'Este to her husband Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, dated February 2, 1502, describes the festivities at Ferrara for the marriage of her brother to Lucrezia Borgia, in which a number of Plautine plays were performed in verse translation.³⁰ Apparently, the translations were poor,³¹ as Isabella found the ancient comedies dull compared to the spectacle and excitement of the *intermezzi*.³²

²⁸ John H. McDowell, "An Iconographical Study of the Early *Commedia dell'Arte* (1560-1650)" Diss. Yale, 1937, p. 28, n.1.

²⁹ George Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy* (Princeton, 1952), p. 399.

³⁰ Radcliff-Umstead, p. 62.

³¹ Apollonia, *Storia del Teatro Italiano* (Florence, 1951), 2: 11-12. Speaks of the poor translations and the excuses of court poets.

³² See Cesare Molinari, *Le Nozze degli dei* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1968). The *intermezzi* contained dance, stage machinery and spectacle including special effects, songs and music, which were played between the five acts of the comedy.

The first major work of the learned comedy is *La Cassaria* (1508) by the Ferraran "father of *commedia erudita*" Ludovico Ariosto.³³ Typical of *commedia erudita* plays, *La Cassaria* begins with a prologue, contains five acts, and observes unity of place, unity of time (takes place in under 24 hours), and unity of action. As in the *commedia dell'arte*, we recognize intrigues, the relation between servant and master, and comic material which centers around properties (*La Cassaria* means chest, and is used to hide characters for eavesdropping, as an example).

In *I Suppositi*, Ariosto introduces the character of Cleandro, the doctor of laws.³⁴ The sixty-two year old doctor ridiculously attempts to marry a young girl. His pretentious nature "shows him to be a pedant, a caricature of the humanists who paraded their stupid erudition."³⁵ Radcliff-Umstead posits that Ariosto introduced *dottore* as a theatrical type.³⁶ The first production was performed in Ferrara, on February 6, 1509, ten years later it was performed at the Vatican for Pope Leo X, with settings designed by Raphael.

By the second decade of the sixteenth century, scenery for the comedies had substantially evolved from that depicted in the Lyons woodcuts. In large measure this was due to the Roman Academy's rediscovery of the text *De Architectura* written between 16 and 13 B.C.

³³ Herrick, p. 67.

³⁴ Herrick points out that this comedy is known to English readers through George Gascoigne's adaption, *Supposes* (1556).

³⁵ Radcliff-Umstead, p. 80.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 80. See later section on stage figures of the *commedia dell'arte*. Ariosto's later plays moved further away from classical imitation and reflect an independent style that found an equilibrium between realistic observation of life, and classical influence.

by the great Roman architect, Marcus Vitruvius Pollio which was translated, disseminated, and³⁷ :

" . . .when fully revealed served as an impulse for theatre and scene construction, resulting in the Renaissance ducal theatre built according to the laws of perspective. . . .Vitruvius gave classical authority for the use of scenery in plays. He advised scenery involving painting in perspective. He presented the rules for the construction and use of stage entrances and exits [as stated in Pollux' *Onomasticon*]. . .the idea of changing scenes in performance . . .the use of machines and engines. . .He established the custom of public entertainment as a function of a ruler, a feature most enthusiastically utilized by the various dukes. And what is more important, Vitruvius prescribed the formal differentiation of scenery according to the genre of the drama to be presented"³⁸

Using the writings of Vitruvius as a model, Sebastian Serlio wrote and published the seminal *De Architettura* (Paris, 1545),³⁹ which codified the laws of perspective for theatrical application, and became the standard for sixteenth-century staging practices. Since Serlio's contribution is germane to the staging of the learned comedy, it is important

³⁷ Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, was first translated and published in 1486.

³⁸ McDowell, pp. 29-30. Also see p. 31. n. 1. "To Brunelleschi (1377-1446) is given credit for having been the first of the moderns to rediscover perspective. The first reasoned work on the principles and practice in perspective was the *De Architectura*, *De Sculptura*, and *De Pictura* of Leon Battista Alberti. Bramante of Milan (c. 1444-1514) revived the art, but the first scientific work was begun by Piero dal Borgo, who built up the generalized rules for perspective drawing. Baldassare Peruzzi (1481-1537) studied Piero's work, making many drawings to illustrate Vitruvius, which were inherited by his pupil Sebastian Serlio, who used them in his great work. A treatise by Viator, *De artificiali perspectiva* (1505) was the first book dealing exclusively with perspective, and was illustrated with figures supposed to be from Piero or Peruzzi. *La pratica della prospettiva* (Venice, 1559) by Daniello Barbaro, based on Vitruvius, took precedence over all earlier works except Serlio. . . ."

³⁹ See below, *The Renaissance Stage* which contains germane examples from this seminal treatise.

to consider it here.⁴⁰ Serlio's concept of scenic theory and practice reflects a tendency of sixteenth-century art; that is, to mix forms and historical styles. McDowell posits:

"With Serlio the medieval *décor simultané* [simultaneous setting] and the classical met. He made use of the medieval multiple setting, the *case*, or mansions, the *platea*, and, by applying the laws of perspective drew them into classical union. He established the architectural type of scenery, and carried on the Vitruvian genre of specific scenes for tragic, comic and satyric drama. So important was his contribution to scenic art that it has been found convenient by historians of the theatre to refer to "Serlian scenes," and the architectural type of scenery has come to be termed a Serlian winged "house."⁴¹

A typical Serlian scene consists of a flat, rectangular stage platform serving as an apron, behind which is a steeply raked stage; both are "laid out in geometric lines adapted to the perspective."⁴² The raked stage supports winged "houses" which increase in height until they reach the back shutter. The shutter is a painted flat extending across the back of the scene, and usually continues the perspective by representing buildings that would be in the middle of the street. McDowell describes the "houses":

". . . a set piece made by joining two flat frames at right angles. Both faces of the angle (the one parallel to the audience is the flat face while the one following the perspective line is the perspective face) are covered with canvas and painted to represent the architectural feature desired."⁴³

⁴⁰ Historians widely acknowledge that Serlio was not so much an innovator, as a compiler of practices that were in wide use at the time.

⁴¹ McDowell, p. 31.

⁴² Ibid. p. 31.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 32.

Serlio gave no indication of changing scenery, a practice developed and refined by architect-designers such as Furttenbach and Sabbattini.⁴⁴ The static scene would have worked well, however, for the learned comedy required unity of place. While the proscenium theatres did not come about until the late sixteenth century, (The Teatro Farnese at Parma was one of the first), the Serlian scenes often employed elaborate curtains.

Hewitt describes the effect on the audience :

"Both for this effect of disclosing the scene to the waiting audience and as a beautiful cloth, the curtain was an important part of the spectacle. Several handsome examples are described in the accounts of the early sixteenth-century court performances, as especially the curtain Raphael painted for the performance of *I Suppositi* before the pope in 1518, with a figure of "Father Mariano with a crowd of devils gamboling around him."⁴⁵

The employment of Raphael at the height of his artistic prowess and fame, suggests the importance placed upon the scenic image in the development of the learned comedy:

"Distinguished artists like Raphael, Giulio Romano and Vasari designed sets for performances. In a darkened princely hall, stage scenery with a perspective background adorned the performances of comedies."⁴⁶

Bibbiena's *La Calandria* is another comedy of note from the early period which enjoyed such great success that Pope Leo X had it produced at Rome in 1514. Here Baldassare Peruzzi produced scenery of such distinction, that it caused to Vasari to remark in *Vite* :

⁴⁴ See *The Renaissance Stage: Documents of Serlio, Sabbattini and Furttenbach* edit. by Bernard Hewitt (Coral Gables: University of Miami, 1958). Joseph Furttenbach, *Architectura Civilis* (Ulm, 1628), Nicola Sabbattini, *Pratica di fabricar Scene e Machine ne Teatri* (Ravenna, 1638). Changing scenery was of course a requisite of the *intermezzi*.

⁴⁵ Hewitt, pp. 6-7. Quote from Lily Bess Campbell, *Scenes and Machines on the English Stage During the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1923) pp. 52 ff.

⁴⁶ Radcliff-Umstead, p.1.

"One cannot imagine how in such a narrow site he had accommodated such roads, such palaces and such bizarre temples, and cornices so well constructed that they seem not fictional but real, and the plaza is not something painted but is real and very large."⁴⁷

The sense that the scenery combines classical principles in the creation of a contemporary scene,⁴⁸ is reflected in the structure and content of *La Calandria* which combines classical dramaturgy with contemporary situations:

"For instance, in relating how the twins Lidio and Santilla were separated by a Turkish raid on the Greek city of Modon, Bibbiena draws from contemporary political and military events to provide a background for the comedy. The Turkish menace was real to sixteenth-century Italians, since pirate raids on the Italian coast were common."⁴⁹

Of interest is the integration of a magician figure, Ruffo, which adds a fantastic element to the play. The maid figure Samia, is reminiscent of the *seconda donna* in the *commedia*

⁴⁷ Quote from Aulo Greco, *Roma e la commedie del rinascimento*, also see Vasari's *Vite*, (op.cit.) vol. II, p. 260.

⁴⁸ See *Le Nozze degli dei*, p. 238: pl. 2, 3, 4, 5. The learned comedy utilized Renaissance perspective in a referential manner that served humanist aims; that is, to make a likeness of the city on the stage, in order to examine man as a citizen within his environment, where proportion and harmony could be controlled, and man was the measure of all things. On the other hand, late cinquecento designers like Buontalenti utilized perspective in an entirely different way, particularly in the spectacles designed for the *intermezzi*. Here, figures were overwhelmed within huge perspective vistas, which mixed fantastic images of heaven and hell with the earthly realm. Side wings took on monumental, expressionistic features that receded into the panoramic distance, at times space seemed to embrace infinity. Figures were often relegated as scenic objects themselves and arranged to enhance the recessional effect of extreme depth. Often they were costumed to represent assorted allegorical and mythological figures.

⁴⁹ Radcliff-Umstead, p. 154. First performed in Urbino during the first decade of the sixteenth century. The Turkish element exists in numerous *scenari* from the Scala collection including *Isabella's Madness*; *Isabella, The Astrologer*. *Gelosi* notable, Francesco Andreini was captured by Turkish pirates in his youth, and later escaped. The plot is a twist on the *Menaechmi*, in *Il Calandria* the twins Lidio and Santilla are boy and girl.

dell'arte, more than a maid she acts as a progenitor in the action.⁵⁰ There is also the typical device of the woman, Fulvia, dressing up as a man in order to search for her lover.⁵¹ The original performance of *La Calandria* utilized a prologue by Castiglione author of *Il Cortigiano*.⁵² Castiglione extols the praises of the new comedy: in prose, not verse; modern, not ancient; vernacular, not Latin. Castiglione, in effect, writes the canons of the learned comedy. Prose should be used since people speak in prose. Courtly language is to be used in the Italian tongue which has as much grace as Latin, Greek or Hebrew. Castiglione also posits that modern fashions and settings are more delightful than ancient ones which have grown stale through long use. Finally, he views *La Calandria* as an intelligent imitation of Plautus [*Menaechmi*].⁵³

In the *Two Happy Rivals* (*I due felici rivali*, 1513), Jacopo Nardi introduced the first braggart warrior in Italian comic theater, the soldier Trasone.⁵⁴ Daniel Boughner's The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy, fully traces this development and list of character traits,⁵⁵ which reach culmination in *commedia dell'arte* figures such as Capitano Spavento, and Capitano Matamoros. Nardi also develops the *ruffiano* type, a kind of

⁵⁰ Later we will also see examples of the *seconda donna* as played by a man. Males would play women's parts in learned comedy.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 147.

⁵² Ibid. p. 144. Apparently Bibbiena sent his prologue too late for the actor to memorize it.

⁵³ Ibid, pp. 144-145.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 112. Menander created the type in his *Misoumenos*. Plautus' *Pyrgopolinices* is the most famous of his *Miles gloriosus*.

⁵⁵ Daniel Boughner, The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954).

procurer servant, and similar to the Bergomask ruffian found in Andrea Calmo's *Lo Spagnuolo*.⁵⁶

Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Mandrake* (*La Mandragola*, circa 1513-1520), represents a high point in the construction of learned comedy. The play employs the three unities, and is thoroughly Classical in its fidelity to the pattern prescribed by Donatus in his fourth-century commentary on Terence's *Andria* :

"The prologue of *The Mandrake* is followed by a *protasis*, a statement of the situation, the necessary exposition, and the start of the action; an *epitasis*, in which the plot thickens; and a *catastrophe*, the final comedic resolution."⁵⁷

The Mandrake deviates from the Classical format, however, in its realistic depiction of contemporary life. It draws upon the novella tradition of the Decameron in its portrayal of lust behind clergy walls. Machiavelli's work is more satirical than the typical *commedia erudita* play, and is considered more farcical than the norm.⁵⁸ *The Mandrake* combines Classical structure with language, characters and situations that reflect contemporary Italian society, while reflecting the unease, amorality, and parodic sense that marks an anti-Classical spirit.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Radcliff-Umstead, p. 132.

⁵⁷ *The Comedies of Machiavelli*, edited and translated by David Sices and James B. Atkinson (University Press: Hanover, 1985) p. 15.

⁵⁸ Ibid. pp. 18-20.

⁵⁹ Hauser notes this as well in *Mannerism* (op. cit.). See p. 84. This passage from the *Prince* relates to the double moral standard, or moral relativism which "distinguishes Machiavelli as a modern thinker": "A man who wishes to make a profession of goodness in everything must come to grief among so many who are not good. Therefore it is necessary for a prince who wishes to maintain himself to learn how not to be good, and to use this knowledge and not use it, according to the necessity of the case."

As we have seen, the early writers of *commedia erudita* drew their inspiration from the classical plays of Plautus and Terence, from the novella collections, and in varying degrees from everyday life. All of the above employed the format of five acts, and the three unities. The major revival centers of Ferrara, Mantua, and Urbino also became the nurturing *loci* of the *commedia erudita*. By the end of the first quarter of the cinquecento a new comic genre had been developed.⁶⁰ The second wave of writers in the *commedia erudita* tradition mixed modifications with standard practices, although by the middle of the sixteenth century innovation generally ceased.

Judged against the standards of the learned comedy, Piero Aretino's work is neither as well integrated, nor are the final effects harmonious. Critics have considered him a master of the character sketch, albeit the humor of these sketches is often so great as to disturb the overall balance.⁶¹ Radcliff-Umstead has even accused Aretino of formlessness: in which the five-act edifice serves only to give Aretino a semblance of formal clarity:⁶²

"The classical tradition set the stage for him, along with the various character types. Despite this literary heritage, Aretino sought for creative liberty, and in the development of particular episodes he foreshadowed the *commedia dell'arte*."⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 155.

⁶¹ Apollonia, *Storia...*, Vol. 2, pp. 85-87.

⁶² Ibid. p. 187-188

⁶³ Ibid. p. 188. Also see Giorgio Petrocchi, *Pietro Aretino tra Rinascimento e Controriforma* (Milan, 1948). Petrocchi considers the structural weaknesses, as a foreshadowing of the *commedia dell'arte*.

Aulo Greco posits that while Aretino's comedies like *La Talanta*,⁶⁴ possessed the vigor of a Plautus, and a strongly satiric tone, his was a style not favored by the authorities of the Catholic reform, who opted for a milder, moral tone, as indicated in the works of Terence.⁶⁵ Aretino, who Radcliff-Umstead considers a rebel writer, created plays and poetry⁶⁶ that were often erotic in both tone and intent, with no apparent moral purpose, such as *La Cortigiana* (The Courtesan).

In the second half of the cinquecento the learned comedies such as Leonardo Salviati's *Il Granchio* (*The Crab*, 1566), and Francesco D'Ambra's *Il furto* (*The Thief*) acquire a more serious tone and assume a more pronounced didactic function.⁶⁷ During this period literary critics such as Cinthio (1543), Robortello (1548), Trissino (1549), Scaliger (1561), Minturno (1563), and Castelvetro (1570), published commentaries on Aristotle's *Poetics*, which attempted to link the moral and didactic purposes of drama, with the newly translated *Poetics* of Aristotle.⁶⁸ While the combination of aesthetic and rhetorical traditions

⁶⁴ Title reflects name of lead character who is a courtesan.

⁶⁵ Greco, p. 30-31.

⁶⁶ Recall my earlier allusion to Dolce's outrage at Giulio Romano's erotic drawings of a collection of poems by Aretino. See Chapter I.

⁶⁷ Herrick, p. 125.

⁶⁸ See Herrick, p. 164. For a closer view of these theories consult Barrett Clark, *European Theories of the Drama*, Bernard Dukore, *Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, and J. E. Spingarn, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*. Cinthio favored the five act form, the double plots of Terence, happy endings to both comedy and tragedy (tragicomedy); Robortello wrote the first complete commentary on the *Poetics*, advised playwrights not to use episodic form, but should strive to attain verisimilitude in character, diction and thought relationships. Trissino posited the use of maxims and *sententia*, and the notion of laughter deriving from the ugly or ridiculous. Scaliger states that the end of drama should be rhetorical (persuasive) and didactic; comic plots must move from a confused to a happy state. Minturno stressed the need for a moral tone in comedy. Castelvetro posited the unities, verisimilitude, and a stricter adherence to Aristotelean

produced what theatre historians term neoclassical comedy, Herrick considers that, for the writers of the cinquecento, Terence, Donatus, and the rhetorical tradition remained more significant and influential than the *Poetics*.⁶⁹

In addition to Ferrara, Mantua, and Urbino, at Siena theatrical groups were inaugurated for the production of original plays. In 1531 a group of Siennese artisans founded the *Accademia dei Rozzi*, a non-academic theatre company which performed fragmented farces, pastorals, and satires of local peasants and authorities.⁷⁰ Meanwhile erudite comedies were performed and written by members of the Siennese *Accademia degl'Intronati*. Beatrice Corrigan posits that in order to be admitted as a member of the *Intronati*, a candidate had to compose a comedy.⁷¹ Among the most famous is *Gl'Ingannati* (*The Deceived*, 1531) by Ludovico Castelvetro,⁷² which English critics have seen as a prototype of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Corrigan suggests that as part of the courtly tradition, most of the plays of the *Intronati*, including *Gl'Ingannati*, were addressed to women in the audience. Umstead explains:

superiority of action. In the plays of the mid-to-late cinquecento references to these works were often made in the prologues of dramatists like Luigi Groto, Annibal Caro and Giovanni Maria Cecchi. Often their prologues condemned other writers for slavishly imitating the works of Plautus and Terence, and repeating the same themes over and over, while suggesting they were new, independent writers familiar with the modern teachings of Aristotle.

⁶⁹ See Marvin Herrick, *Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois), 1964, pp. 1-35. Fuller discussion on rhetorical principles in section on the *innamorati*.

⁷⁰ Similar to the *rederijker* tradition in the Netherlands.

⁷¹ Beatrice Corrigan, "Il Capriccio: An Unpublished Italian Renaissance Comedy and its Analogues," *Studies in the Renaissance*, vol. 5 (1958), p. 76.

⁷² Has also been attributed to Alessandro Piccolomini. See Herrick, p. 98.

"The Sienese erudite dramatists were interested in representing youthful love, the aristocratic cult of fair ladies, and the satire of Spanish conquerors and corrupt clergymen."⁷³

In *Gl'Ingannati*, the character Gherardo, represents a *senex* (old man). Here the old suitor is prototypical of the Pantalone type. There is also a satirical portrayal of the Spanish soldier, Giglio, an early example of this type in Italian comedy. In his struggle to conquer the maid of Gherardo, he is humiliated. Giglio eventually flees from Gherardo in the typically cowardly fashion of the braggart type. Piero, the pedant instructor, suggests a precursor of the Dottore: both sprinkle their discourse with Latin phrases whenever possible to demonstrate erudition.⁷⁴ As the title would indicate this is a play of deception and intrigue, fueled by youthful passion. For example, to avoid being sequestered in a convent while she awaits her marriage to Gherardo, Lelia disguises herself as a man, in order to seek out her love, Flamminio.⁷⁵ Typical of the second generation of learned comedy plays, the device of deception through disguise is not only derivative of Plautus' *Menaechmi*, but also "owes something to Bibbiena's *La Calandria* as well."⁷⁶

In the later phase of *commedia erudita*, plays of romantic love and tender sentiment predominate, although no works attain the stature of Machiavelli's *The Mandrake*. Sforza degli Oddi's *La prigioniera d'amore* (Love's Prisoner) performed in 1590 at Perugia, actually comes closer to tragicomedy.⁷⁷ This play juxtaposes broad comedy with tragic love scenes

⁷³ Ibid. p. 232. An important dramatist is Alessandro Piccolomini who authored *L'Amor Costante*, is best known for his development of the romantic love themes in his comedies.

⁷⁴ Radcliff-Umstead, p. 200.

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 201.

⁷⁶ Herrick, p. 98.

that take place in a prison. Woodcuts from an early publication of the play, provide examples of the setting and acting style which were employed by the learned comedy.⁷⁸

Later *commedia erudita* works tended to repeat the established patterns of their precursors, and there was little attempt at modification or innovation.⁷⁹ However, the learned comedy was a significant force in the development of the *commedia dell'arte*. Certain character types were established or refined during this period, such as the Dottore, pedant, Capitano, *vecchi*, and the *servetta*. Also, plays such as Love's Prisoner promoted and developed the part of the *innamorata*. We also find developing in the *commedia erudita* an increasing reliance on spectacle, whether in the comedies themselves or in their *intermezzi*. In the comedies, the *piazza* scenes represented contemporary life and were understood as a symbol of real life. Thus, it can be assumed that the acting style would generally follow these same principles, serving as a reflection of the quotidian.⁸⁰ Importantly, the 'Serlian scene' is found in many examples from *commedia dell'arte* iconography: the Corsini drawings, and the Amfiparnaso prints are sixteenth-century examples.

Herrick posits that a number of *commedia dell'arte* scenarios were based on literary plays:

⁷⁷ Herrick, *Italian Comedy*. . . p. 190.

⁷⁸ From the TRI collection. Microfilm 4703.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 232. Some experimentation continued in Naples with writers like Giordano Bruno and Giovanni Battista Della Porta.

⁸⁰ *Erudita* acting style is reflected in the writings of Ingegneri, which I treat in a later section on the *innamorata*, and the rhetorical tradition of performance.

"It was common practice for the comedians to base a scenario on a literary play. The comedies of Della Porta, for example, were favorite sources, and Della Porta himself may have written *scenarii*. Other dramatists whose comedies provided *scenarii* were Bibbiena, Dolce, Piccolomini, Secchi Razzi, D'Ambra, and Groto."⁸¹

Conversely, the *comici* performed literary drama, and a number of performers including Isabella Andreini, and her son Giovan Battista, wrote plays often from extant *scenarii*.

The earliest published play by a *commedia* performer is the tragedy *Afrodite* (1579) by the famous *innamorato*-poet of the *Gelosi*, Adriano Valerini. The connection between the written and 'improvised' form is posited by Herrick:

"The *commedia dell'arte* was not only intimately connected with the *commedia erudita* but was often inseparable. The Italian comedians based their plots, their characters, and even their speeches on the learned comedy. They usually made these plots, characters, and speeches broader, more obvious, more ridiculous and put more emphasis on pantomime. They apparently used music and dance throughout the performance in contrast with the usual practice of the learned comedy which put most of the music and dance in the *intermezzi*. . . . One is tempted to conjecture that the professionals curtailed many of the long-winded speeches that most learned comedies abounded in. The fact that the scenarios were divided into three acts instead of five supports such a conjecture."⁸²

⁸¹ Herrick, p.215. Croce opposes this view. Benedetto Croce, "*Sul significato storico e il valore artistico della commedia dell'arte: nota letta all'Accademia di Scienze Morali e Politiche dell'Società Reale di Napoli*", Napoli: Tipografia Sangiovanni, (1929). His view explains the phenomenon of the comedians as professional buffoons, with a non-literary basis. However, consider the many similarities in titles [I utilized Heck's (op. cit.) index of scenari, pp. 332-356, compared with Herrick's index of learned comedies]: *La Fantesca* (Parabasco, Della Porta, same title no. 286 (LOC, i, 17); similar to *Il Furbo* (CORS); *Gli duoi fratelli rivali* (Della Porta), same title no. 234 (CORS, i, 15); *Emilia* (Luigi Groto), same no. 270 (NAP, ii, 29); *La Giostra* (Grazzini), same no. 378. (LOC, ii,41). *Il Granchio* (Leonardo Salviati), same no. 392. (CORS, ii, 79) and 393. (LOC, i, 46). These are but a few cases where *scenari* have been derived from learned comedy scripts. The evidence supporting this influence is overwhelming.

⁸² Herrick, p. 222.

While it would be difficult to verify all of Herrick's claims,⁸³ it can be noted that *commedia dell'arte* manipulated, compressed, and took license (*licenzia*) with the learned comedy:

"At the hands of the professional comedy this drama met the fate it deserved. It had never been the drama for poetry, and its prose was staled by repetition: the *commedia dell'arte* rendered it in dialogue and slang. With an unerring instinct for what was theatrically effective they presented their versions of Ariosto, Della Porta, Groto, Piccolomini, Secchi and D'Ambra at the risk of vulgarity and melodrama. The academic comedy was treated joyfully, irreverently and whisked into a new lease on life."⁸⁴

Lea gives an example of how the *commedia* compressed boring monologues into dynamic action:

"There is a dull verse soliloquy in Groto's *Il Tesoro* (Locatelli, ii. 49) rendered by the *lazzo* of the dropped coin. Zanni wants to bring a message to the Ruffiana, he wheedles her out of doors to help him look for an imaginary piece of gold and as they jostle each other in the dust contrives to whisper his plans."⁸⁵

As Lea suggests the changes made in adapting a *commedia erudita* play into a scenario are quantitative:

"The chances of buffoonery are multiplied: instead of comic speeches from a parasite, we have practical jokes, and instead of incidental flirtations, a regular love-plot between zanni, Burattino and Filippa in imitation of their betters. Meanwhile plot encroaches more subtly in another direction by handing over a share of the main plot to Pantalone and Gratiano. However air-tight the plot a bubble of laughter is let in with them. . . ."⁸⁶

⁸³ There is no evidence, for instance, that Harlequin was derived from the learned comedy.

⁸⁴ Lea, I, p. 174.

⁸⁵ Lea, I, p. 174.

⁸⁶ Lea, I, p. 179. This is in reference to the *commedia* adaption of the play *L'Amor Costante* by Piccolomini.

These lead to qualitative results in which values are altered as the new influences take hold. Less emphasis is placed on moral, poetic, and literary aims than on the objectives of parody, comic effect, and fast-paced farce.

With this in mind, let us now turn to two other important sources that were closer to the *commedia dell'arte*'s farcical nature: the works of Ruzante, and the Venetian influence, including the tradition of professional buffoons, and the works of Andrea Calmo.

Beolco/Ruzante

Radcliff-Umstead calls Beolco a "puzzling figure," one who "does not fall into any easily drawn category."⁸⁷ Part of the reason for Beolco's uniqueness is attributable to his legacy as both a playwright (Beolco), and an actor (Ruzante). Mario Barutto writes:

"This having been established when I propose to speak of a theatrical adventure [happening], I intend to underline in the first place, the singularity, you could say the uniqueness, in several ways within the panorama of early sixteenth century theatre, of a work that tends to identify with its creator; given that there is a coincidence between the author, whose greatness we recognize today, and the actor of this theatre, famous in his time to the point of being called the new Roscius (the famous actor as you know, that acted the comedies of Plautus)."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Radcliff-Umstead, (op. cit.) p. 209.

⁸⁸ Mario Baratto, "L'avventura teatrale di Ruzante," in *Arte della maschere nella commedia dell'arte* (Firenze : Casa Usher, 1983), p. 41. "Ciò premesso, quando mi propongo di parlare dell'avventura teatrale, intendo sottolineare, in primo luogo, la singolarità, potrei dire l'unicità, per non pochi aspetti, nel panorama del teatro del primo Cinquecento, di un'opera che tende a identificare col suo creatore: dato che c'è coincideza tra l'autore, del quale conosciamo oggi tutta la grandezza, e l'attore di tale teatro, famosissimo ai suoi tempi al punto da essere chiamato un nuovo Roscio (il famoso attore come saprete, che recitava le commedie di Plauto)."

Such is the relation of the author Beolco, to the actor, Ruzante,⁸⁹ literally, 'the gossip' "or as we understand from his practice the man who talks to himself."⁹⁰ Jackson Cope posits that Beolco's plays are "the best evidence for the difficulties of dealing with self-awareness in an art which finally defined life as dramatic form."⁹¹ Ludovico Zorzi comments:

""In his dual personality of author and actor, Beolco assimilated the great wealth of the tradition of jesters and Paduan poetry, whose roots lie well within the preceding century. He restores them enriched with the seal of an individual artist, knowledgeable and mature."⁹²

As the playwright, Angelo Beolco, he combined the mocking quality that is evident in the paintings of Rosso, and apotheosized in the fantastic grotesques of Brueghel. His work is based in a kind of realism, but always transformed through his unique subjective vision

⁸⁹ There is no consensus choice between Ruzante and Ruzzante, in terms of the second 'z'. This preference has not hitherto been addressed by historians.

⁹⁰ Lea, p. 235. Lea does not cite her etymological basis for this semantic choice. We should note that the theatricalized version of a subjective character, would be best demonstrated in character who talks to himself. Radcliffe-Ulmstead notes that the verb "ruzzare" means to romp with animals, and suggests that it serves to further qualify Ruzante's predilection for peasant subject matter. See Radcliffe-Ulmstead, p. 211.

⁹¹ Jackson Pope, *Dramaturgy of the Daemonic* (John Hopkins: Baltimore, 1984) p. 14. The self-conscious expression or portrait of the artist in his work which Panofsky recognized in Dürer's *Melencolia*, has manifestations throughout the Mannerist period. In Petrarchan poetry for instance, the object of desire is often subordinate to the self-reflective voice of the poet. Beolco's self-expression undergoes a transformation or metamorphosis similar to Parmigianino in *Self-Portrait* through a concave glass. Yet Ruzante is the transfigured image seen through the mask. The distorted form of Parmigianino through the concave glass, or Dürer's self-portrait through the 'veil of allegory', echo Beolco's presence as Ruzante. In the sense that Mannerism theatricalized art, Beolco theatricalized life, marking a shift from the sterile style of most learned comedy. See Part I, Chapter II.

⁹² Ludovico Zorzi, "Tradizione e innovazione ne "repertorio" di A. Calmo," in *Studi sul Teatro Veneto Fra Rinascimento ed Eta Barocca*, edit. by Maria T. Muraro (Firenze: Olschki, MCMLXXI) p. 230. "Nella sua duplice personalità di autore e di attore, il Beolco assimila le molteplici affluenze di una tradizione di giulleria e di poesia pavane, le cui tracce risalgono bene addentro nel secolo precedente, e le restituisce elaborate dal sigillo di un'arte individuale, sapiente e matura."

into the grotesque and comic. Hauser's description of Brueghel can be applied as well to

Beolco:

"Particularly when his genre paintings [plays] of peasant life are considered in isolation, he seems to be a robust naturalist, who does not fit at all into the intellectual, problem-ridden, and equivocal world of mannerism. In reality, however, his outlook and philosophy of life are just as sophisticated and unspontaneous as those of other mannerists; not only in the sense of self-consciousness in which all post-Renaissance art is the opposite of naïve, but also in the sense that the artist does not merely offer us a rendering of reality but deliberately and consciously presents us with his own personal interpretation of it. . ."93

As a playwright, Beolco channeled his subjective interpretation into redefining the art of the theatre, in a manner that was similar to the most innovative artists of the early cinquecento.

Angelo Beolco (1500?-1542)⁹⁴ was the illegitimate son of a Professor of Medicine at the University of Padua.⁹⁵ Beolco was both well-educated and well-situated. His family's estate provided him with a means of living, so that he could pursue his theatrical inclinations.⁹⁶ At the age of eighteen he formed an amateur company which performed

⁹³ Hauser, p. 248. For instance both Beolco's *Bilora*, and Brueghel's *Fool's Paradise* go beyond a comic or realistic portrayal of drunkenness, and disclose a kind of 'alienation' of the self (*Bilora* is discussed below). Dissertation committee member Professor Thomas Heck disagrees with my parallel between Beolco's theatre and Brueghel's art.

⁹⁴ Sources place his birth at either 1500 or 1502, but as he was illegitimate, it is not possible to ascertain the exact location and date of his birth.

⁹⁵ Carlo Grabher, *Ruzzante* (Milan, 1953) See Introduction. Padua had a long heritage as a learning center centered around the presence of the university. Unlike Florence, which came under the influence of Plato and Neoplatonism, Padua was heavily influenced by Aristotle and the interpretations of Pompanazzi, who founded the heretical Aerrorists. In the arts we must acknowledge the great romanist painter Mantegna, and his follower Carpacci. Mantegna mixed his love for antiquity, with an attention for detail that Kenneth Clarke attributes to the Northern Gothic influence.

⁹⁶ Lea, p. 235. As administrator of his family's estates, Beolco also came into contact with the peasants who inhabited the surrounding areas.

under the peasant names of Menato, Vezzo, and Bilora.⁹⁷ They won the patronage of Alvise Cornaro, a wealthy Venetian, who had been refused admittance into the esteemed group of elder patricians that governed Venice.⁹⁸ Ruzante is included in Marin Sanudo's accounts of carnival life in Venice from 1520-1526.⁹⁹ The 1526 account accuses Ruzante and his fellow performers of lascivious behavior and use of profanity,¹⁰⁰ foreshadowing the declamations of Counter-Reformation treatises against the *crapula* (debauchery) and *lascivia*, and frequent *sporchi* (profanities) of the *commedia dell'arte* troupes.¹⁰¹

In 1728, the historian Riccoboni attempted to establish Ruzante as the originator of the *commedia dell'arte*, citing Ruzante's use of dialect, some use of fixed parts, and a degree of improvisation. Riccoboni erred outrightly, however, when he described the presence of Pantalone and *Il Dottore* in Beolco's work, neither of whom had appeared.¹⁰² A little over a century later, in Masques and Buffoons,¹⁰³ Maurice Sand resurrected Ruzante

⁹⁷ Radcliff-Umstead, p. 210.

⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 210.

⁹⁹ Lea, Vol. II, Appendix C, pp. 474-477. For example "a new and wonderful comedy by the Paduan's Ruzante and Menato." (Jan. 9, 1521). Ruzante delivered an address for Corner later that year. In 1522, he again appears at carnival with Menato. In 1525 at the feast of the Triumphant, February first, Sanudo notes profanities and lasciviousness in their performance. The last notice in 1526 finds Ruzante and Menato performing *a la vilanescha*, on the same bill with Cherea, and Cimador and Zan Polo.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 476. see above.

¹⁰¹ See Fig. 29, Appendix. *Crapula e lascivia* is the title of a late sixteenth-century emblem painting by Johannes Sadeler, in which *commedia dell'arte* figures are denounced as bearers of vice. See M.A. Katritsky's "Lodewyk Toeput" in Renaissance Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1987).

¹⁰² Lea, p. 233, n. 2. Actually Andronico, as a Venetian *senex*, must be considered a Pantalone type.

from obscurity, portraying him as the prime originator of the *commedia dell'arte*. In this century, however, that conclusion has been challenged:

"the theory that the Commedia dell'Arte was invented by Angelo Beolco seems to have originated with Riccoboni and was popularized by Maurice Sand's study of Ruzante in *Masques and Bouffons*." ¹⁰⁴

Katherine Lea posits that similarities between Ruzante and the *commedia dell'arte* are specious:

"Beolco's creation of the mask of Ruzante is the most cogent reason for associating him with the Commedia dell'Arte, but here again there is no direct connection. No one inherited the mask, it superseded his own surname and at his death was put aside together with the rustic Paduan dialect had been the vesture of his wit. The radical difference between the use of dialect by Ruzante and the '*comici dell'arte*' has a modern parallel in the contrast between the use of a brogue by the Irish Players which has an artistic value, and the pseudo-Irish of the music-hall anecdote which is a comic handicap. Beolco is the J.M. Synge of the early sixteenth century and his peasants the Playboys and tinkers of north-east Italy." ¹⁰⁵

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What Lea recognizes in determining Beolco to be akin to the writer Synge is a kind of realism in his depiction of the peasant class, which while acknowledging that his characters are subject to ridicule, suggests that they elicit an emotional response or feeling. In his prologue to *Bètia*, Ruzante posits that the characters in his plays behave naturally:

¹⁰³ Maurice Sand, *Masques and Buffoons*, (Paris, 1880).

¹⁰⁴ K. Lea, Vol. I, p. 233. Lea posits that Riccoboni (Riccoboni wrote the first history of the Italian Stage which was published in France during the reign of Louis XIV. This work, written in French, is a defense of the Italian theatre from its beginnings in antiquity, and presents the *commedia* as a product of an historical and literary tradition) may not have known Ruzante's comedies: "in attributing the masks of the *commedia dell'arte* to his invention he implies that Ruzante introduced Pantalone and the Bolognese doctor, personages who never appear in his work."

¹⁰⁵ Lea, II, p.237.

"...the natural is the finest thing there is, and consequently everyone ought to proceed naturally and honestly; for when you remove anything from the natural it becomes confused."106

Ruzante's statement is highly ironical when we consider that he worked with a number of artificial and symbolic forms derived from medieval traditions, and frequently mixed these with characteristics of *commedia erudita*. In addition, Ruzante evidently promoted the use of the mask, which had been absent from *commedia erudita*, and in itself is a negation of naturalness. Beolco's mixture of forms (*mescolare*, "to mix"),107 includes the late medieval rustic farce, and its carnival offshoots the *mariazi* and *contrastì*. Luigi Tonelli defines the farce popular at this time:

"The characteristics of farce are: rather simple arguments, taken almost always directly from reality; comic, satirical, grotesque characters, among whom nearly fixed, those of the villain and fool; use of dialects; buffooning, mischievous, low acts, slapstick, mimic action, here and there some hints of improvisation; sometimes (Beolco, Calmo) the actor and the author are the same. Nowadays we pretend that these characteristics are exaggerated, exasperated, and altogether mixed in the same composition; It is precisely that the plots thicken, the performers stiffen themselves in grotesque poses, the dialects are used with the greatest freedom, each person being characterized by his own mimicry, exaggerated to gigantic heroic proportions. Improvisation becomes the rule and essential requirement and perhaps the actors would be professionals . . . We would have in essence the Commedia dell'Arte."108

106 Translated by Marvin Herrick, *Italian Comedy*, pp. 43-44.

107 Here, *mescolare*, the infinitive, is used in the sense of a noun.

108 Luigi Tonelli, *Il Teatro Italiano*, (Milano : Modernissima , 1924), p. 217.

"Le caratteristiche della farsa sono: argomenti piuttosto semplici, tolti quasi sempre direttamente dalla realtà ; personaggi comici, satirici, grotteschi, fra i quali, quasi fissi, quelli del villano e dello sciocco ; uso dei dialetti ' buffonate, scurrilità, bastonature, scene mimiche ; qua e là, qualche accenno d'improvvisazione ; talvolta (Beolco, Calmo) l'autore, attore egli stesso. —Ora facciamo che codeste caratteristiche sieno esagerate, esasperate, e tutte insieme mescolate, in uno stesso componimento ' è precisamente che gl'intrecci si complichino, i personaggi s'irrigidiscano nel grottesco, i dialetti siano usati con la maggiore varietà, ogni personaggio essendo caratterizzato da un suo mimica, s'ingrandisca fino al gigantesco ed eroico ; l'improvvisazione diventi regola ed esigenza non trasgredibile e però gli attori sieno gente di mestiere. . . Avremmo in essenza la Commedia dell'Arte.""

Tonelli posits the major difference to be *commedia dell'arte*'s reliance on the *scenarii*, whereas the farcical works by Beolco are scripted. Maurice Sand had contended that Beolco's plays were first improvised and then written *a posteriori*, but that position has been challenged and refuted by Lea and others.¹⁰⁹ The '*mariazi*' (wedding farce) were usually performed in the May festivals, while the '*contrasti*' are evident in the *Sacre Rappresentazione*, and noted in Carnival. Paolo Toschi notes that in Carnival the *contrasti* were represented by the images of the *vecchio* (old man) and the *vecchia* (hag or witch). According to Toschi these images assume larger symbology, defining in fact the contrast between Carnival (*vecchio*), and Lent (*vecchia*).¹¹⁰ Popular comic forms such as the *mariazi* and *contrasti* were embedded in the *Sacre Rappresentazioni*, which, although based on religious subject matter, had become increasingly secularized by the cinquecento:¹¹¹

"It was observed by Emilio Giudici in The History of Theatre, that the comic parts of the '*Sacre Rappresentazioni*' were made up of '*Contrasti*', the '*Histories*', the '*arguments*', the '*Frottole*', and the '*Farces*' of which a good number remain."¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ K. Lea, Vol. I, p. 233. Radcliff-Umstead refutes the Sand position on grounds of Beolco's strong academic background and familiarity with Classical dramaturgy.

¹¹⁰ Thus, Beolco juxtaposed the rational, classical form of the *commedia erudita*, with the symbolic, medieval form of the *contrasti*, and *mariazi*.

¹¹¹ Sacre Rappresentazioni Toscane (Olschki: Firenze, 1969), edited by Paolo Toschi. Contains a number of woodcuts from actual *Sacre*. This dramatic form arose in the thirteenth century, and centered around liturgical themes especially lives of the saints, miracles, etc. It was both literary, containing dialogue and narrative in vernacular, and spectacular in regard to design elements. For a complete discussion of the *Sacre Rappresentazioni* in English and the other forms leading up to the Renaissance, Marvin Herrick's Italian Comedy (op. cit.) offers a detailed analysis. Herrick is essentially concerned with the *commedia erudita*. Lorenzo Stoppato, La commedia popolare in Italia (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1980), Reprint of Padua edition, 1887, pp. 61.

Sometimes farcical elements were ensconced within the structure and form of *commedia erudita*. Emilio Lavorini, has found evidence of a *mariazi* in Beolco's *La Moschetta* 113:

"In the history of Ruzante's theatre, Emilio Lavorini, in his detailed and attentive study of *La Moschetta*, attributed a passage from the rustic *mariazi* to Beolco's comedy." 114

La Moschetta (1526-28), unlike Beolco's earlier verse works, follows many principles of the *commedia erudita*. *La Moschetta* uses prose, is structured in five acts, and transports the peasant characters to the city environment of Padua.¹¹⁵ In this play Ruzante is made a cuckold by his wife Bètia who, during the action of the play, has an affair with the soldier Tonin, a Bergomask variation on the braggart type. Ruzante and his wife quarrel throughout the play making this a veritable *mariazo*.¹¹⁶

The 1528 performance accounts of *La Moschetta* posit that Beolco created a dynamic scenic picture in his staging of the rustic farcical elements:

112 Stoppato, p. 61-62. "*Fu già osservato (par Emiliani Giudici, Storia del Teatro) che la parte, a dir così comica delle Sacre Rappresentazioni è riposta nei Contrasti, Istorie, Contenzioni, Frottole, Farse, ecc. dei quali ci rimane un buon numero.*"

113 See A. Mortier, *Ruzzante* (Paris, 1926) which contains the collected works of Beolco.

114 Mario Apollonio, "Angelo Beolco detto Il Ruzzante," *Commedia Italiana: Raccolta di commedie* (Bompiani: Milano, 1947), p. 151. "*Nella storia del teatro del Ruzante La Moschetta, che il suo studioso più operoso e attento, Emilio Lavorini, riporta all'anno 1528, segna il passaggio dai rustici Mariazi alla commedia.*"

115 Radcliffe-Ulmstead, p. 212. The city setting is typical of most *erudita* comedies, which employed settings based on the Serlian mode of steep perspective scenic backdrops.

116 Ibid. p. 212. Beolco's use of medieval forms in addition to elements from the formal Renaissance comedy (he also translated Plautine comedies into his native Paduan) is consistent with Georg Weise's discovery of late medieval forms in Mannerist art, which we referred to in Part One.

" . . . and the news of this performance from the Paduan circle of Alvisé Cornaro to the d'Este court of Ferrara, where the tradition of comedy defined itself in a manner most complex, confirmed this most fully and watching the employment of an art that intoned a grotesque and grand inner dithyramb of rustic life and savage love, and having laughed to dissipation, I then looked with intent eye. It provided a composition in a proportioned scenic picture within most exacting limits."¹¹⁷

This account focuses upon the *effetti* of the performance; that is, the perceptions and reactions of the spectator, their sensual response, through excessive laughing, visual engagement and the visceral reaction to the dramatic action.¹¹⁸

At other times, farcical elements were juxtaposed with the musical form of the madrigal. Apollonia recalls a *festa* at the Ferrara court, in 1529, where Ruzante and others performed *madrigali* to the delight of d'Ercole d'Este:¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Apollonio, p. 151. ". . . . e la cronaca delle sue rappresentazioni, dalla cerchia padovana di Alvisé Cornaro alla corte estense di Ferrara, dove la tradizione della *Commedia* si definiva nei suoi modi più complessi, conferma questo più ampio e sorvegliato impegno di un'arte che intonato un grottesco e grande inno ditirambico della vita rusticana e dell'amor selvatico, e aver riso di enormità dissipate, pur guardate con occhio intento, provvede a comporsi in un quadro scenico proporzionato entro limiti più esatti."

¹¹⁸ A recent study on laughter has attempted to establish it as internal to the work itself. L. E. Pinsky's essay "The Laughter of Rabelais" posits laughter as the basic organizing principle of his novels. According to Pinsky, Rabelais characters are not generally satirical but rather personifications of laughter. See Bakhtin, p. 140-141. One of the reasons *commedia dell'arte* is difficult to study accurately as an art form, relates to the primacy of effect in *commedia dell'arte* performance, particularly to such effects as laughter.

¹¹⁹ Glenn Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and his Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1973), p. 37. Ferrara was a center for literary activity including such Renaissance figures as Ariosto, and later the Mannerists, Guarnini and Tasso. The taste for the madrigal did not diminish until the beginning of the seventeenth century. Evidence of this exists in the work of Gesualdo, who was court composer for the Este rulers between 1594-1596.

" It was in 1529 for the feast celebrating the return of Hercules d'Este. We know something of it from the account of Christopher of Messiburg given on the 24 of January. At six o'clock Ruzante and his five companions including two women, sang Pavanian madrigals with the greatest beauty, and then they went about the table contending together over peasant matters [Probably a kind of *contrastì* or *mariazi*]." 120

It has been the fashion of recent Italian theatre historians and theorists of dramaturgy to perceive Beolco's work in Marxian, socio-economic terms. Ludovico Zorzi considers *Il Bilora* representative of the changing structure of the peasant classes, a result of severe economic conditions in which many of the '*contadini*' (peasants) lost their land and possessions.¹²¹ In this play the displaced peasant Bilora is a boatman, whose beautiful wife, Dina, has been seduced by Andronico, a wealthy Venetian *senex* who foreshadows a kind of *Il Magnifico* type. Bilora pursues Dina to the city in an effort to win her back from Andronico. She gives him money for food, and is apparently going to return with him. However, in an ensuing scene, Dina denies to Andronico that she has seen Bilora and vows to stay with him. Meanwhile, the cowardly Bilora takes on the guise of the Spanish braggart. However, in a twist of the comic genre--which, if conventionally plotted, would ultimately establish that Bilora and Dina (youth and youth) would be restored and renewed--Bilora stabs Andronico to death. Thus we have the notion of genre alienated from itself, a kind of comic-tragedy.¹²² In *Bilora*, Beolco utilizes the grotesque imagery of kicking a

¹²⁰ (*Libro novo nel quella s'insegna a far d'ogni sorte vivanda, Venezia, 1557*) in Mario Apollonio, *Storia del Teatro Italiano*, Vol. II (Firenze: G.C. Sansoni, MCMLI), p. 108. Documents attest that Ruzante appeared often at the courts of Ferrara, Mantua, and Florence between 1520-1542. "Vi fu in 1529 per le feste celebrate al ritorno d'Ercole d'Este : cosi sappiamo un po' a caso, dalla descrizione che Christoforo di Messiburgo fa di un banchetto dato il 24 gennaio. dove, all sesta portata "cantorono Ruzante et cinque compagni et due feminine canzoni di madrigali alla Pavana bellissimi, et andavano intorno alla tavola contendendo insieme di cose contadinesche.

¹²¹ C. Molinari and F. Mastropasqua, "*Lecture Sceniche Tendenziöse Dei Dialoghi di Ruzante* ," *Ruzzante e Arlecchino* (Parma: Studium Parmense, 1977), pp. 19-88.

dead man to inject a spirit of tragedy into the ending of what appears to be a comic play.¹²³

Jackson Cope relates:

"Knife in hand, Bilora leaps upon his older rival and instantaneously becomes a soul as divided as the division between the comic promise of renewal and the tragic end of isolation. He kicks the corpse about, even while lamenting his action, astonished that the comic *contrasto* associated with the *maggi*, the marriages, with renewal, could end this time just where it always threatens to stop: debate becomes the image of its final conclusion, death. "*Te l'hegi dito?*" Bilora concludes in astonishment, "Didn't I tell you?" It is the magnificent testing of the limits of that potentially fatal play which comic form always redeems until a Bilora or Beolco steps outside of expectation just once in a long while to infuse it with tragic possibilities.¹²⁴

This is the cruel fate of Bilora made a cuckold by the Pantalone-like Andronico who has captured his wife with his wealth. The long journey of the boatman to bring back his wife proves futile, but his pathetic need for food and his exaggerated claims recall the Spanish Capitano. From the beginning of his quest, Bilora wails and boasts the haunts of the alienated man.

". . . above all alienation means the divestiture of self, the loss of subjectivity; a turning inside out of the personality, exteriorizing and driving out what ought to remain within, with the result that what is ejected in this way assumes a nature completely different from the self, becomes alien and hostile to it, and threatens to diminish and destroy it. Meanwhile the self loses itself in objectifications, faces an alienated form of itself in them."¹²⁵

¹²² It could not be a tragi-comedy which by Cinthio's definition entails a "reversal" from misery to happiness. See Marvin Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984) pp. 41-45.

¹²³ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. by Helene Iswolsky (Indiana: Bloomington, 1984). Death is a popular image in the grotesque. In the works of Rabelais we find another major indication of the comic grotesque tradition in the sixteenth century. Other examples in Beolco's work are on a grosser level, such as the use of Ruzante's nickname Scagazato, "shit-covered," in *Fiorna*, or his gorging of food in the mock-pastoral, titled simply *La Pastoral*. The transformation of genre by the grotesque has been detailed by Battista in *Antirinasimento*, and Mikhail Bakhtin's study of Rabelais.

¹²⁴ Jackson Pope, *Dramaturgy of the Daemonic* (John Hopkins: Baltimore, 1984) p. 23.

¹²⁵ Hauser, p. 96. Hauser describes alienation as the "Key to Mannerism."

Zorzi and Molinari ascribe an underlying Brechtian quality to Beolco, whereby the mask of Ruzante becomes a kind of grotesque alienating device:

"Feeling alienated in this world, men are not resigned to remaining so; they wish to have an alienating and startling effect on others. Therefore the artist not only chooses strange and startling subjects, but also tries to render the most ordinary things in a startling way. The purpose is not merely to surprise and unsettle, but also to state that it is impossible to feel at home among the things of this world or make friends with them."¹²⁶

Ruzante's mask becomes an alienating device, because it alters the context of the character's world. The mask distances the spectator's perception both from the context of reality, and from the notion of character identification. This "de-contextualizing" of the stage figure from his environment¹²⁷ establishes the Brechtian "v-effect."¹²⁸ Bilora's mask creates the paradoxical effect of alienating the individual's relation to the city, which was a major concern of Renaissance humanism; while it simultaneously draws us closer to the social plight of the displaced *contadini* (peasants) in an unfamiliar environment.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Ibid. p. 114.

¹²⁷ C. Molinari, "*Bilora* " in *Lettere* . . . (see above note) p. 20-21. Molinari suggests that Bilora used a (*scorcio*) foreshortened Serlian setting of the *Piazza San Marco* (Figure 3) which presented a realistic view of the city, and a specific referent into which the stage figures were placed. Thus the mask would have been strangely juxtaposed to this "real" image.

¹²⁸ For an explanation of this phenomenon, please consult Part I, Chapter II, where I discuss Cellini's use of the veil as trope.

¹²⁹ Thus displaying the Mannerist "*discordia concors*."

Beolco was an avatar in repackaging extant or moribund forms into a new synthesis, foreshadowing the processes of the *commedia dell'arte*, which as we will see, synthesized a number of forms and traditions. His independent style juxtaposes grotesque elements, dialects, and medieval rustic farces within the five-act form of *commedia erudita*. Thus, Ruzante presented material that was highly theatrical, within a structure that was dramatically refined. This "*mescolare*" of parts demonstrates a compositional style that was reflected in a great deal of sixteenth-century art.¹³⁰ Beolco's reliance upon his own dramaturgical credo allowed him to deviate from the three unities, or to subvert traditional genres into unique dramatic statements. However, he was equally comfortable translating Plautus into his native Paduan to impress members of the academies. Beolco's written comedies attest to an understanding of dramatic form that raises his art to a sophisticated level. In the pre-eminence of Ruzante, Beolco marks the transition from the primacy of the author to the primacy of the actor, which culminates in the improvisational style of the *commedia dell'arte*. In a more important sense, Ruzante, the mask,¹³¹ establishes the primacy of the actor in the theatricalization of performance.

Calmo and the Venetian influence

¹³⁰ See Chapter II, Part I, where *mescolare* is noticed within the early works of Pontormo.

¹³¹ Ruzante's mask represented more than one type as his critics have attested, although he was always the peasant type in various manifestations. Thus we have an early case where the stage figure dominates the script, once established, the mask, in a sense exists *a priori* to the text. This is amplified in the *commedia dell'arte*, where the mask defines given characteristic, situations, and in a sense controls the plot, thus subordinating the role of author.

"The chronology of Calmo is linked to the occurrence of the *commedia dell'arte*."132

The death of Andrea Calmo in 1570 coincided with the earliest successes of the *commedia dell'arte* and its subsequent dissemination throughout Europe. By the time of his death, Calmo had synthesized many of the diverse comic threads that prevailed not only in Venice but throughout most cinquecento comedy. In this section we will explore the significant role of Calmo and his contemporaries as precursors to the *commedia dell'arte*.

Although the major companies of the *commedia dell'arte* are generally Tuscan in origin, there can be no question as to the historical significance of Venice in *commedia*'s early development. Both Calmo and the *comici dell'arte* owed a great debt to the tradition of professional buffoons in Venice.¹³³ The success of Zan Polo in the early cinquecento gave us the nomenclature: *commedia degli zanni*, and *commedia dei buffoni*, names that were appropriated to describe the early *commedia dell'arte*. Zan Polo was popular with the aristocracy and academic sectors of Venetian society, and performed in a variety of forms and venues. On February 15, 1515, Zan Polo acted, with helpers, before the *Accademici Immortali* :

132 Mario Apollonio, "Il duetto di magnifico e zanni" in Studi sul teatro veneto fra rinascimento ed età barocca (Firenze: Olschki, 1971), p. 218. "La cronologia del Calmo è legato alla vicenda della *commedia dell'arte*."

133 This points to the primary difference between Beolco's and Calmo's work: in Calmo's work we laugh at everyone, the feelings of justice or sympathy which are provoked by Beolco's characters are never aroused. It also suggests a major difference from the *commedia erudita* --the Horatian ideal professed that comedy should teach a moral lesson by exposing a moral vice for comic cleansing. The common end of moral purpose evident throughout Renaissance comedy, with the important exception of the ribald amoral comedies of Piero Aretino, is not present in the works of Calmo. Aretino lived and worked in Venice during the mid-cinquecento.

"... a new comedy, feigning that he was a necromancer and that he went to Hell, and showed a Hell with Furies and Devils [*lazzi* of the Devil and the necromancer] ; and then he represented the God of Love and was carried to Hell ...there was a dance, then music of nymphs in a triumphal car who sang a song."134

Marin Sanudo's diaries (1504-1533) attest to the amount of activity in the first half of the cinquecento by buffoons like Zan Polo and his son Cimador, 135

particularly during carnival.136 In fact, Calmo as Magnifico, and the buffoon Cimador, offer the early prototype of the Pantalone and Zanni exchange. Zorzi posits Calmo's link to the buffoons:

"The links of Calmo with the nurturing consortium of buffoons, actors and virtuosos, is demonstrated by the fact that this group thrived in the city from the century's beginning; they bear witness to a rapid change which occurred particularly about the central lagoon of Venice in the course of a relatively few years; and in the rapport that existed between the theatre world and the public; and therefore in the very way of conceiving and giving life to the theatre."137

In "the Venetian *Commedia*," Anya Peterson Royce posits the significance of the *autorelattore* Andrea Calmo(1510-1571) on the development of the early *commedia dell'arte* characters:

134 Winifred Smith, The Commedia dell'Arte (New York: Blom,1964) p. 52. Original quote from Rasi, *Comici ital.* II, 748.

135 Lea, V. II, pp. 474-478, Appendix C.

136 Carnival begins on the feast day of the Epiphany and ends Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent.

137 Ludovico Zorzi, "*Tradizione e innovazione nel "Repertorio" di A. Calmo,*" in Studi sul teatro veneto fra rinascimento ed età barocca (Olschki: Firenze, 1971) p. 231. "*I legami del Calmo con la nutrita consorte di buffoni, di attori e di virtuosi, allignati in città fin dai primi del secolo, stanno a dimostrarlo; e testimoniano di una rapida modificazione, soppravvenuta nel centro lagunare in un giro d'anni relativamente breve, nei rapporti tra i teatranti e il pubblico, e quindi nei modi stessi di concepire e di dar vita al teatro.*"

"If the most important character in the plays of Beolco was Ruzzante, the rustic, it was in the work of Andrea Calmo that we find the prototype of *Il Magnifico*, the representative of the upper classes of Venice. The title, *Magnifico* was granted to the patrician class and predated the use of "Excellency." This proto-Pantalone appears first in the 1549 work of Calmo, *La Spagnolas*,¹³⁸ in the character of M. Zurloto. . . ."¹³⁹

A consensus of theatre historians favor the opinion that Calmo was responsible for the growth and prominence of Pantalone. Nevertheless, Lea conjectures that Zan Polo may have first performed the part:

"It is just possible that as an individual he is to be more closely associated with the *commedia dell'arte* as the first Magnifico, the predecessor of Pantalone."¹⁴⁰

However, most historians attest to the Magnifico character which Calmo acted as well as developed in his plays, and acknowledge him as the precursor of this *commedia* type.

Nicoll posits:

"Zilioli (in *Vite dei poeti italiani*) declares that Andrea Calmo acted the part of Pantalone, and although this is not substantiated fully, it is interesting to note that in Calmo's work the names of the old men types are of a form similar to the later famous Pantalone dei Bisognosi—Zurloto di Ugnoli, Cocolin di Zucoli, Algreto di Liquidi."¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ "In *La Spagnolas* the crude motives, fast pace and physical comedy, and the 'picturesqueness of the dialectical abuse' prefigure the *commedia dell'arte*." Lea, p. 246.

¹³⁹ Anya Royce Peterson, "The Venetian Comedy," *Theatre Survey*, (op. cit.) p. 72-73.

¹⁴⁰ Lea, Vol. I., p. 248. The confusion here rests on two counts. There is no attribution of Zan Polo as Magnifico in the Sanudo diaries (see below), and Zan Polo's "assumption of the name *Cantinella* tempts the researcher to theorize that he is to be identified with the actor Benedetto Cantinella who appears as the Magnifico in the *Canti Carnascialeschi*." Zan Polo was an excellent buffoon who performed as a professional mime, transformist, and acrobat in Venice during the first half of the sixteenth century. He spoke six dialects and Latin and Greek. An example of a solo performance appears from the *Libero del Rado Stizuxo* printed in Venice in 1533, "that on this occasion Zan Polo burlesqued the exploits of the heroes of the chivalric romances speaking a mixed dialect of Venetian and Dalmatian." Lea, p. 248.

Recognizing Calmo's contributions to the development of Pantalone, Apollonio acclaims:

"The inheritance of Calmo. . . , sustained by the iconographic monologue of his Letters, provided the character of Pantalone."142

Le Lettere are a collection of letters written by Calmo to various individuals including his illustrious contemporaries Titian¹⁴³ and Tintoretto. Ludovico Zorzi affirms:

"To some of the major artists then active in Venice Calmo dedicated his letters ; but with exaggerated praise he addressed Aretino and Tintoretto.¹⁴⁴

The Mannerist painter, Tintoretto seems to have been influenced by his relationship with Calmo as is evident in his painting *Susannah and the Elders*. This painting exhibits the Magnifico 'type' attempting to peer at a voluptuous nude. Barolsky describes:

"As Tintoretto's beautiful and luminous maiden sits by her bath, surrounded by garments and jewels, two lecherous elders peer at her around a trellis of roses. The bald bearded elder in the foreground, sneaking a peek at the young beauty looks absurd carrying on in such fashion at his age. . . In his interpretation of a subject that is frequently painted seriously, Tintoretto dwells on the grotesque quality of the lecherous old man."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Allardyce Nicoll, Masks, Mimes, and Miracles , (New York: Cooper Square, 1963) p. 299, n. 8.

¹⁴² Ibid. p, 219. *L'eredità del Calmo. . . , sostenuta dalla iconografia monologia delle Lettere, condizione il personaggio del Magnifico."*

¹⁴³ Paul Barolsky, Infinite Jest: Wit and Humor in Italian Renaissance Art (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1978) p. 169. Re: *Venus and a Musician* by Titian. "We are reminded by Titian's musicians of yet another Venetian love letter, this one written by Andrea Calmo to Madonna Taffuri in which Calmo asks for the privilege of the lady's "melliflous cavity" : "vi domando il fausto, et trionfo, el privilegio de la vostra concavitae meliflua. " "This subject of the courtier's concern, like Calmo's, is what an anonymous sixteenth-century French poet referred to as the *bien suprême*. " See Jacques Bosquet, Mannerism (New York , 1964) p. 185.

¹⁴⁴ Zorzi, p. 223. "Ad alcuni dei maggiori artisti allora attivi in Venezia il Calmo dedicò delle lettere ; ma, dietro agli elogi iperboliche egli indirizza all'Aretino o al Tintoretto. . ."

The voyeuristic element of this painting is also evident in other depictions of *commedia* figures and will be discussed at greater length in Part III. What makes Tintoretto such a theatrical painter is evident here. The Venus figure is actually exposed to the viewer while the strained viewing angle and veil hide her from the two *vecchi* (old men), thus heightening the *effetto meraviglioso*.¹⁴⁶ In addition the extreme *scorcio* (foreshortening) of the Magnifico figure on the lower left not only increases the grotesque nature of his gesture, but determines his viewing angle to be the Mannerist "*sotto in su*," as was hitherto mentioned in Chapter II.

Other painters seemed directly influenced by Calmo's plays. A painting by the "*pittore vago*," Ambrose I. Francken, a Flemish painter working in Venice during the 60's, seems to describe a scene from Calmo's *La Spagnuolo's* in which Zurlotto (Magnifico) is carried by a collier to the house of his *amore* (love interest).¹⁴⁷ In addition to the Magnifico type, *La Spagnolas* contains a prototype of the Spanish Capitano:

"In this play too, is the precursor of the Spanish Capitan later made famous by Francesco Andreini in the form of Capitano Spavento del Vall'Inferno. Here the character is the Albanian or Greek mercenary, terrible in words and cowardly in deeds. He was probably played by Antonio da Molin, Il Beulchiella, a Venetian and a friend of Calmo. Burchiella would have been quite capable of carrying on the dialogue in the mixture of Greek and Italian in which it is written since he himself composed poetry in Greek."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Barolsky, pp. 177-178. The painting itself is a marvel of Tintoretto's unique sense of *disegno*.

¹⁴⁶ Visual irony and in this sense dramatic irony.

¹⁴⁷ See M.A. Katritzky, "Lodewyk Toeput: some pictures related to the *commedia dell'arte*" (op.cit.) Artist is Flemish, may be Ambrose I. Francken or Lodewyk Toeput: *Scene from the commedia dell'arte*. p. 99.

Concerning the soldier part, in this case the second lover, Stradioto, Lea argues:¹⁴⁹

"the name (Stradioto) suggests that he was meant to be a caricature of the Greek soldiers of fortune who plagued Venetian society, as the Spaniards plagued Naples and Milan."¹⁵⁰

Although the Braggart Soldier was drawn from the cultural history of a given area, in the hands of Calmo he was transformed more by invention than by any penetrating insight, as was the case with Beolco's Braggart.¹⁵¹ The notion of invention was also true in regard to Calmo's use of dialect. Lea points to the fact that for Calmo dialect was used exactly in the manner adopted by the *commedia dell'arte*, "each character is given a particular jargon as a comic handicap."¹⁵² By counterposing high Venetian with the Bergomask dialect¹⁵³ in the characters of Zurloto and his servant Rosato, Calmo had established the

¹⁴⁸ Peterson, p. 72-73. For full detail on the background of this soldier type see Daniel C. Boughner's *The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy*. Beolco's *Il Parlamento di Ruzzante* (c. 1525) is a "farical satire of the peasant recruit, a combination of braggart, coward and cuckold." p. 101, Boughner's began his quest with an analysis of Shakespeare's Falstaff, and suggests that the this type with a well-developed list of characteristics is found in many forms of Renaissance Comedy.

¹⁴⁹ It appears that Stradioto is depicted in the Francken painting as entering through the curtain, and receiving a bludgeon from a porter.

¹⁵⁰ Lea, p. 245.

¹⁵¹ The idea of *invenzione* suggests the notion of fabrication, and conceit generally regarding familiar sources. It is considered the first canon of rhetoric. Roland Barthes posits that *inventio* is less about invention than about discovery, for if "everything already exists one must merely recognize it. This is more an 'extractive' notion than a 'creative' one." The other four canons of rhetoric are *dispositio*: ordering what is found; *elocutio*: adding the ornament of words, of figures; [*pronuntiatio*] or *actio*: performing the discourse, made up of and dealing with the techniques of speech and gesture; *memoria*: committing to memory. Rhetoric was included as learning principle across all the disciplines. Roland Barthes, *The Semiotic Challenge*, translated by Richard Howard (Hill and Wang: New York, 1988) p. 51.

¹⁵² Lea, p. 242. For the full variety of dialects used see Zorzi (op.cit.), p. 225.

¹⁵³ Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge: London, 1987) In the mid-cinquecento

prototype of the Pantalone-zanni interchanges which found prominence in the *commedia dell'arte*.¹⁵⁴ Mario Apollonio affirms that the Pantalone-Zanni opposition establishes a dynamic that effectively serves as a substitute for the rigorous mechanisms of *commedia erudita* :

"The opposition between Zanni and the old man can substitute for the rigorous comic mechanisms, and the inventive play of comic dialogue."¹⁵⁵

These exchanges grew in popularity and during the period of the *commedia dell'arte*'s initial growth, pamphlets of these "duets" were often published:

Bembo was attempting to establish the Venetian dialect as the equal of Tuscan. In fact, in cinquecento Venice, Latin was losing favor as the common language of the learned and being replaced by Venetian. "Dialect was not a symbol of informality as it later became, because it was spoken on a number of formal occasions." p. 85. Bembo also promoted the Aristotelian and the Classicistic idea that class is reflected in the level of diction.

¹⁵⁴ Peterson, p.72. On p. 85, Peterson mentions a dialogue between Pantalone and Zanni that exists in the *Biblioteca Nazionale* in Florence. This exchange which centers around a sonnet, suggests a bizarre parody of Petrarchism: "In it the Magnifico tells Zanni he is dying of love for the fair young woman he has seen on the balcony and asks him to convey his desires to the woman in the form of a sonnet he has written. Zanni wants to know who the woman is and there is more by-play as Magnifico tells him. More argument takes place when Zanni wants his scudo in advance, and finally the Magnifico relents and gives him the *scudo* and the sonnet. Zanni reads the sonnet and says that it was written by Petrarch. Magnifico denies this fact. Magnifico orders Zanni to tell the young woman that he is rich and a liberal spender. Zanni is incredulous but finally goes off on his errand. When Zanni returns, Magnifico tries to find out what his love said but Zanni launches into a long description of how kind she was to him in giving him white bread and cheese to eat and promising cake the next time he came. Magnifico finally demands to know what she had said about him and learns that Zanni forgot both his errand and the sonnet. In fact, he used the paper on which the sonnet was inscribed to wrap some fish."

¹⁵⁵ Apollonio, p. 219. "*Vi si sostituisce il meccanismo comico più rigoroso, ed il giuoco inventivo del dialogo comico, con l'opposizione del Vecchio e dello Zanni.*"

"Around 1570 they begin to publish in a series of pamphlets and libretti the contents of many of the dialogues and *contrasti*, but often also poems, in which there are protagonists, or in which there appears masks of the *commedia dell'arte*. Some like the beautiful Dialogue of a Magnifico with the Zanni Bergamasque could be considered with their dramatic development true small comedies: Apollonia called them "the original nucleus, as some have thought, of the *commedia dell'arte*." (Apollonio, Storia della commedia dell'arte, 1930) 156

In Venice, the theatre played a greater role in everyday life than in Padua, where it was regarded as "*l'episodio eccezionale*" ("exceptional episode").¹⁵⁷ Also, for the first time, there was a demand for repertory, as audiences became more sophisticated and grew weary of the "*le magre scene dell'intermedio buffonesco*"¹⁵⁸ or the sterile productions of the *commedia erudita*, which required elaborate preparations "*senza profitto*" ("without profit"). Calmo was able to dissect from a number of sources in his creation of a successful repertory. However his enduring legacy arises from his contributions in the craft and technique of the theatre. Zorzi posits:

""[Calmo presented] an archetype of the theatre of craft. The prestige of his theatre was especially based upon the freedom of argument and movement, which can be positioned against the rigidity of the erudite comedy. The work of Calmo gave rise especially to the formation and the perfection of the technique of theatre. In this sense it was certainly the most genuine contribution given by the Italian comedy to the modern theatre."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Cesare Molinari, La Commedia dell'Arte, (Milano :Arnoldo Mondadori, 1985) p. 18. "*Attorno al 1570 si cominciarono a pubblicare in serie opuscoli e libretti contenenti il più delle volte dialoghi e contrasti, ma spesso anche poemetti i cui protagononisti sono, o nei quali compaiono, le maschere della commedia. Alcuni, come il bellissimo Dialogo de un Magnifico con Zanni bergamasco, possono considerarsi delle vere piccole commedie con un loro sviluppo drammatico: "il nucleo originario, qualcuno ha pensato, della commedia dell'arte."*

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 231.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. "the weak scenes performed by buffoons during the *intermedi*." Zorzi points out that costumes were designed by such great artists as Titian and Vasari, which were solicited by the *Compagnia della Calza*, a group of young aristocrats who often joined the professional buffoons in performances of various types.

Zorzi posits that Calmo, unlike Beolco, saw the theatre as a means to make a living, and therefore approached it from the perspective of economic need.¹⁶⁰ Paolo Mazzinghi implicitly supports Zorzi's argument by demonstrating that Calmo's texts were established as vehicles to be theatricalized. Mazzinghi also suggests that Calmo realized the primacy of the actor in performance:

" But the originality of Calmo's comic writing is to be found in the capacity to construct a structural basis. For Calmo, the 'eye' must be more attentive to the **rhythms** and to the necessities of **performance** than to literary qualities. [It is this structural basis] which would serve as a track for the evolution (comic, mimic, acrobatic, and singing) of the actors."¹⁶¹

The stress that Calmo places upon rhythm and theatricalized presentation, (which, in the above quotation, I have outlined in boldface) are of primary importance to both the structure and success of the *commedia dell'arte*. Calmo directed himself toward fulfilling the tastes and desires of his audience; and the primary motive in his comedies and performances was to achieve captivating theatrical effects upon the stage. To accomplish such effects, Calmo, unlike most writers of learned comedy, made extensive use of

¹⁵⁹ Zorzi, p. 238-239. ". . .archetipo di un teatro di mestiere, il cui prestigio fu soprattutto l'elemento popolaresco e la libertà di argomenti e di movimenti che essa poté serbare contro l'irrigidimento della commedia erudita, l'opera del Calmo concorse specialmente alla formazione e al perfezionamento della tecnica teatrale ; e tale fu certamente l'apporto più genuino dato dalla commedia italiana alla creazione del teatro moderno."

¹⁶⁰ Calmo lacked Beolco's learned background and according to Zilioli was the son of a fisherman.

¹⁶¹ Paolo Mazzinghi, "Parti "improvvisate" e parti musicali nel teatro di Andrea Calmo." p. 25. Originally cited G. Padoan, *La commedia rinascimentale veneta* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1982), p. 182. "Ma l'originalità di Calmo commediografo è da ricercare proprio nella capacità di costruire una struttura di base che, con occhio attento più al **ritmi** e alle necessità della **rappresentazione** che a . . . la lettura, servisse come tracci per le evoluzioni (comiche, mimiche, acrobatiche, e canore) degli attori ."

"*didascalie*" (stage directions) in a number of his plays. For example, here are excerpts of directions from *Rodiano*, first published in 1553:

"Here a cat jumps from the balcony"; "Here Felicity feigns drowning herself and Cornelia comes outside"; "Here Corado the German suffers from insomnia." ¹⁶²

The use of stage directions ¹⁶³ suggests that the dramatist, Calmo, was less concerned with creating the "*eccellente poema*" ("excellent poem") to achieve the "*corona di gloria*" ("crown of glory"), than in realizing specific actions upon the stage. ¹⁶⁴ Moreover, Calmo sketched out scenes with little dialogue. Actually, these sketches were supplemented by a measure of improvisation in his productions. ¹⁶⁵ The improvisation used in Calmo's performances of the Pantalone type were derived from his own letters which constitutes a sort of *zibaldone* :

"... it is significant in that sense that Calmo's Lettere constituted the primary repertory of language and technique for the "tirade" of the Venetian Magnifico." ¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Originals in A. Calmo, *Rodiano* (S. di Allessi: Venezia, 1553) respectively, [IV, 2, p. 78; IV, 8, p.84; IV, 9, p.85; V, 1, p.98]. "*Qui salta una gatta dal balcon*"; "*Qui Felicità finge di annegarsi e Cornelia vien fuori*"; "*Qui Felicità intra in casa e serra Cornelia fuori*"; "*Qui Corado todesco fa l'insonio*"; Mazzinghi, p.25.

¹⁶³ The *didascalie* prefigure their extensive development in the scenario. Ludovico Zorzi, pp. 234-256.

¹⁶⁴ Roberto Tessari, *La Commedia dell'Arte: la Maschera e l'Ombra* (op.cit.) See Chapter One. These terms refer to the goals of the amateur writers, particularly from the academies. Stage directions are directly related to the craft of theatre, and suggest Calmo's professional approach to the theatre as a business.

¹⁶⁵ Mazzinghi, p.25.

¹⁶⁶ Zorzi, p. 235. "... è significato in questo senso che le stesse Lettere di Calmo costituiscono il primo repertorio tecnico e linguistico per le "tirate" del Magnifico veneziano."

This is significant not only for its specific relation to the origins of the Pantalone, but also because the letters of Calmo suggests a prototype to the working methods, the *pratica*, of the *commedia dell'arte*. The *Lettere* offer us an early example of the "generici" (stock speeches) of the *commedia dell'arte* many of which were included in the extant *zibaldoni*. The tirade later became part of the stock speeches of a number of *commedia dell'arte* figures, particularly of the fulminating hero (Capitano) or heroine (*innamorata*).¹⁶⁷ Eventually the tirade was assimilated into the formal literary drama of Spain, England, and France.¹⁶⁸

It was the gradual diminution of textual significance that Mazzinghi sees as Calmo's major contribution to the theatre:

"The lot of his innovations, from the theatrical point of view, is the disintegration of the literary text. The comedy of Calmo presents itself for the most part as a mixture of optional and interchangeable parts (often unrelated and weakly plotted) that ruin the continuity of the text, permitting a variance in its rhythm and the extrapolation and modification in its parts, according to the needs of the performance, without troubling the general equilibrium and the display of the action."¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Muraro, cited by D. Bruni in prologue.

¹⁶⁸ For example, Molière makes often use of the tirade in his satires.

¹⁶⁹ Mazzinghi, p.26. "*La "disgregazione" del testo letterario è in fondo il prezzo della sua carica innovativa dal punto di vista teatrale. Le commedie di Calmo si presentano per lo più come insieme di parti opzionali e intercambiabili (spesso slegate fra loro e dal debole intreccio) che, pur facendo perdere in continuità il testo, permettono di variare il ritmo e di estrapolarne o modificarne parti, a seconda delle esigenze dello spettacolo, senza turbare l'equilibrio generale e il dispiegarsi dell'azione.*" *Slegate fra loro*," here meaning "disconnected among themselves," suggests the Mannerist notion of the '*discordia concors*', which we defined in Part I, that Sypher and others have used to characterize Mannerist art. The stress on parts in lieu of the whole, a fundamental principle underlying all Mannerist art, was a cornerstone of the theatre of Andrea Calmo.

The move away from structural unity, where each part of the text was proportioned and harmoniously balanced with the whole, signals a major shift that prefigures the compositional structure of the *commedia dell'arte*. The "disintegration of the literary text" posits its hierarchical decline as the ruling force of production (as in *commedia erudita*). The end result in actual practice is the movement toward the primacy of the actor. In Calmo's case these changes were apparently driven by immediate economic need.¹⁷⁰

Another aspect of Calmo's craft which has great importance for the subsequent development of the *commedia dell'arte*, was his integration of music into the spectacle. It appears he learned this technique from the example of such *comici buffonesci* as Dominico Taiacalze and Zan Polo,¹⁷¹ who had employed it with success.¹⁷² He used it particularly in scenes with the *innamorati*, which would otherwise take on a certain "*stanchezza*" ("dreariness"), and in other scenes which were marginally funny, or had no dialogue as in the scenes with buffoons and acrobats. The biographer of Calmo, Zilioli, posits him "*un ottimo cantore*" ("superb singer"),¹⁷³ and in each of Calmo's works for the "*vecchio veneziano*" there is material to be sung.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ See James Mirollo, *Mannerism and Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale, 1985) p. 95. Mirollo speaks of the yearning for fame and economic success of the sixteenth-century artist. For instance regarding Benvenuto Cellini's (1500-1571) sculpture of "Perseus with Head of Medusa," Mirollo posits Cellini's need to show great virtuosity in his work as a kind of eternal imprint, was reliant upon his standing out from other artists through a particular display of virtuosity. Virtuosity was required "to mitigate the harsh realities of the actual milieu in which they were consumed." Mirollo here draws the connection between virtuosity and the demands of consumerism, which by this time had made art a commodity.

¹⁷¹ See Lea, Appendix C, for Taiacalze's contributions listed in the Sanudo diaries.

¹⁷² Mazzinghi, p.26.

The use of music was a constant factor in the works of Calmo. Usually songs were drawn from the popular repertoire of the time, although at times Calmo composed in the more sophisticated madrigal form.¹⁷⁵ Little attention has been given to Calmo's *Rime*, although one of the songs *Dura passion* appears in the script of *Fiorina*, and caused Gino Belloni to recognize "*le molte discordanze*" ("a great deal of dissonance")¹⁷⁶ Although Mazzinghi posits that Calmo in fact experimented with imitations of Petrarch, following the fashion of *maniera* poets and composers' *imitazione delle parole*, he acknowledges Calmo's debt to numerous authors and musicians.¹⁷⁷

"We should not furthermore lose sight of the fact that in the course of the sixteenth century the *Canzoniere* of Petrarch was completely set to music by different authors. . . . But beyond his imitation and parody of the *Canzoniere*, other rhymes of Calmo refer to earlier texts of other authors and former virtuoso musicians."¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ A. Zilioli, *Vita del Calmo, ms. della Raccolta Durazzo di Genova; copie nei codici marciani* It., Cl. X, 1 (=6394) e It. Cl. VII, 288 (=8640). Lea warns us that Zilioli is not to be totally trusted as factual.

¹⁷⁴ We are to assume that the old Venetian was Calmo as the Pantalone figure. Many of these songs are contained in the *Lettere*.

¹⁷⁵ See Chapter 3, Part I for a discussion of Mannerism in Music. See Maria Maniates, *Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture 1530-1630*, (op.cit.) demonstrates the full development of Mannerism in music during this period. The madrigal is a polyphonic form of vocal music, utilizing chromaticism, arbitrary cadences, and requiring a great deal of skill.

¹⁷⁶ G. Belloni, *Per il testo delle "Bizzarre rime" di Andrea Calmo* in *Studi di Filologia Italiana* (XXXVI, 1978) p, 419 n. 2. The reader will of course recognize that Petrarch was the author of the *Rime*, which was widely imitated and parodied in the mid-cinquecento.

¹⁷⁷ See Chapter III for a discussion of *imitazione delle parole*. Scholars have posited that monody which develops later into the style favored for opera, is general term to describe the solo song, see Maniates, p. 410-421.

¹⁷⁸ Mazzinghi, p. 32. "*Non dobbiamo inoltre dimenticare che nel corso del' 500 il Canzoniere del Petrarca fu complemente musicato da diversi autori. . . Ma oltre a quelle di*

Calmo's reference to previous texts and music is evident in his use of five titles from "*Il terzo libro de Madrigali di Verdelot insieme con alcuni altri bellissimi Madrigali di Constantio Festa et altri eccellentissimi autori, novamente stampati [1537]*," 179 A more important example was the madrigal : *Son vecchio innamorato e volentieri m'allegro e canto*, which was adapted by Calmo for a "lovers lament" or a "serenade" of Il Magnifico; it is related to the ballad *Io mi son giovinetta e volentieri m'allegre e cant* 180 which closes the IX day of the Decameron,¹⁸¹ and was put to music in 1542 by Ferrabosco.¹⁸²

As a theatrical innovator, Calmo is significant. His Lettere reflect not only the development and *generici* of the Venetian Pantalone, but also forecast the working methods of the *comici dell'arte*. It provides a model for the development of the stock speeches, which are built upon conceits, exaggeration, bombast, and extrapolation, and an understanding of the inherent comic value in the varied use of dialect on the part of the virtuoso performer.

Calmo's use of '*mescolare*' (mixing) diverse elements for theatrical effect with little regard to coherence or unity was later utilized effectively in the *commedia dell'arte* as a technique

imitazione e parodia del Canzoniere, altre rime di Calmo fanno riferimento a testi precedenti di altri autori e già musicanze [sic]."

¹⁷⁹ Mazzinghi, p. 32.

¹⁸⁰ Translations of the madrigal titles: "I am an old lover and would like to be happy and sing;" "I am a young woman and wish to be happy and sing."

¹⁸¹ As we have seen in our examination of the *commedia erudita*, Boccaccio's novellas were an influence on the development of literary comedy.

¹⁸² See Il Primo Libro di Madrigali de Diversi Eccellentissimi autori a misura di breve (. . .) *Quattor vocom* (A. Gardane: Venezia, 1542) p. 28; edizione moderna di A. Einstein, The Italian Madrigal, cit, III, pp. 56-58. See also O. Chiselotti, *Una canzone celebre nel Cinquecento. "Io mi son giovenetta" del Ferabosco*, in Rivista Musicale Italiana, I (1894), pp. 446-453.

of composition. His innovative use of stage directions prefaced their further development into scenarios. *Scenarii* are in fact plot outlines with occasional stage directions, and contain little dialogue or speech-making.¹⁸³ Calmo integrates improvisational elements into performance, creating a shift from the primacy of the author to that of the actor, and diminishing the importance of the literary form. Finally Calmo's use of music, served many purposes: entertainment, as when performing the popular songs of the day; underscoring the scene to advance the dramatic action; performing madrigals to demonstrate virtuosity. The attraction of music was recognized and utilized by the *commedia dell'arte*.

The work of Calmo, like that of his predecessor Ruzante, reveals the movement from an emphasis upon written text, to that upon the performance process. In this sense he reflects the pattern of his age in which he retains many of the themes of the earlier Renaissance while altering them towards a more dynamic representation.¹⁸⁴ Calmo uses his vision of the world to transcend established normative techniques in playmaking, and in the process achieved a design for theatrical expression based on anti-Classical principles. The career of Andrea Calmo thus represents an initial interweaving of the art of the theatre with the impending Mannerist *Zeitgeist*.

Summary and Conclusion

¹⁸³ As evidenced in the Flaminio Scala collection. Henry Salerno, Scenarios of the Commedia dell'Arte (New York University: New York, 1987).

¹⁸⁴ In a sense this could be said about Tintoretto's "Susannah and the Elders" a work which contemporizes an old theme. According Barolsky, (see above).

Chapter Four has examined historical influences and underlying principles which affected the early development of the *commedia dell'arte*. A number of theories exist concerning the origin of the *commedia dell'arte*. One of the most persistent of these theories, which was first posited in the sixteenth century by theorists such as Minturno, links the origin of the professional companies to the ancient Atellan farces. The Atellan farces represent an ancient prototype of the *commedia dell'arte*: masks, the improvisational form, the presence of women parts, the professional troupes, have been suggested by historians as a few of their shared characteristics.

A more immediate influence was the *commedia erudita*, a written form of cinquecento comedy, that sought to combine the classical conventions put forth in the comedies of Plautus and Terence, with selected aspects from contemporary Italian language, life, and literature. In performance, the development and refinement of perspective allowed images of the city to be represented upon the stage. The 'Serlian stage' gave life to the humanist notion that placed man as the measure of all things, and as a citizen within an established an ordered social frame. The humanist spirit was reflected as well in the classical virtues found in the writings of Plautus, Terence, and Vitruvius. The aesthetic principles of Aristotle were extensively translated and published during the sixteenth century; these combined with the dogma attributed to Donatus, and later cinquecento theorists, which formed the basis of the cinquecento comedy: five-act form (based on Terentian model); the three unities, decorum, verisimilitude, appropriateness, and so on. While the five-act form presented a literary model of unity and consistency, in performance the comedies were broken up by *intermedii* or *intermezzi*, which were song, dance, or spectacular scenes, usually unrelated to the main plot. As the sixteenth century progressed the *intermedi*

surpassed the turgid comedies in interest.¹⁸⁵ A number of characteristics of the learned comedy were adapted into the *commedia dell'arte*: the plots of the five-act comedies, became the basis for the compressed, three-act *scenarii*; character figures such as the Dottore and Capitano were popularized; speeches and dialogue were adopted; 'Serlian scenes' are found in early *commedia dell'arte* iconography, for example. From the standpoint of a Mannerist context, the transition from *commedia erudita* script to *commedia dell'arte* scenario represented a victory in *licenzia* (improvisation) over *regola* (prescribed text), since the individual actor was now allotted a greater degree of expression and potential for virtuosity.

While the immediate impact of the learned comedy is apparent, other theatrical forms of the sixteenth century also influenced the development of the *commedia dell'arte*. The playwright-actor, Angelo Beolco as Ruzante, mixed elements of the learned comedy with the traditions from the rustic farces. He also employed masks in his plays, and allowed for some degree of improvisation. Beolco also utilized dialect in his plays, and gave prominence to grotesque servile types, whom he represented as Ruzante. Ruzante was also an excellent singer, and songs were included in his performances before members of court. As a member of the Academy at Padua, Ruzante was trained in classical traditions, and translated a number of Plautine plays into his native Paduan. More importantly, however, Ruzante reflects the sixteenth-century compositional tendency of mixing forms and genres into a unique subjective vision of reality. In another sense he prefigures the *commedia dell'arte*'s significant shift in hierarchal importance, from the playwright to the actor.

¹⁸⁵ Shearman regards the *intermedi* as a Mannerist concept because of its focus on marvelous effects, over literary substance; and its reliance on the fantastic, and the bizarre, in costume and scenery.

The Venetian Andrea Calmo reflects this change in emphasis from the text to performance. Calmo innovated certain technical conventions, such as a greater reliance on stage directions, and the importance of rhythmical pacing in productions. He, like Ruzante, also employed music and improvisation in his plays. Calmo the actor developed and refined the prototype of the Pantalone figure, and in his *Lettere*, he lists a number of stock speeches and traits of *Il Magnifico*. Calmo utilizes dialect for comic effect, and introduces the Bergomask *ruffiano* type, a prototype of zanni.

Venice is important for its tradition of professional buffoons, which are detailed in the Marin Sanudo diaries. The Sanudo document demonstrates Venice to be a major theatrical center in the first half of sixteenth-century Italy. Among the most celebrated of the early buffoons are Zan Polo and his son Cimador. While the buffoons were highly skilled at physical comedy they also performed written works before the academies. The presence of early amateur companies, such as the *compagnia della calza* (company of the sock), prefigures the later formations of the *compagnie* of the *commedia dell'arte*. Finally, theatrical developments in Venice suggest a *Zeitgeist* that anticipated the beginnings of the *commedia dell'arte*.

In conclusion, *commedia dell'arte* drew from a number of sources in its early development. Its major thrust reflects an anti-Classical tendency that was evident in a number of its precursors, and felt throughout the arts of the sixteenth century. Herrick's contention that the *commedia dell'arte* and the learned comedy were intimately intertwined and even "inseparable," ignores a great deal of the 'other' forces in cinquecento comedy that we have just examined. The *comici* of the *commedia dell'arte* utilized and discarded

erudita elements as they saw fit. For instance, the use of the mask must be considered an anti-humanist characteristic because it negates the notion of individuality, largely defined by the features of the face. The *comici* often ignored any moral sense to their comedies, and avoided as well the unities of place, time and action. These and other characteristics of the *commedia dell'arte*, which will be brought to light in Chapter Five, were generally opposed by the learned comedy.

Calmo, like his predecessor Ruzante, marks the transitional move from the text to the theatricalization of the theatre art. In this sense he mirrors the Mannerist painters who utilized the themes of the Renaissance, but altered the forms to create a more dynamic and sensational visual picture. As professionals, Calmo and the Venetian buffoons prefigured the *commedia dell'arte*'s focus upon commercial appeal, and staging techniques. Like other aspects of sixteenth-century art, these precursors of the *commedia* simultaneously combined the refined with the grotesque; the obscene image with the learned conceit. In this sense, the *commedia dell'arte* cannot be considered a purely Renaissance phenomenon as historians like Nicoll have hitherto suggested. As a descendent of its anti-Classical prototypes, the *commedia dell'arte* represents the continuing manifestation of anti-Classical trends in sixteenth-century theatre.

CHAPTER V
History of the Organization and Operation of the
Commedia dell'Arte Companies

The beginnings of the *commedia dell'arte* have been noted by a number of scholars as "fragmentary" and "disparate."¹ This section will attempt to weave together some of these disparate threads, and establish the inchoate foundation of the *commedia dell'arte*.

Nicoll refers to the presence of an Italian *comico*, André (Andrea) who as early as 1530 was "to make and compose the finest possible farces and moralities."² Although Nicoll argues that we have no means of ascertaining who Andrea may have been, documents of payment to the actors Matteo, Andrea and Frosia in Rome on January 23, 1551, suggests that this actor carried on his career into the middle of the sixteenth century. The first noted constitution of a professional company of theatre actors took place at Padua in 1545, only three years after the death of Ruzante.³ Here, a fraternal company of actors from Rome

¹ Luciano Mariti, "*Le collocazioni del teatro nella società barocca: dilettanti e professionisti*," in *Alle origini del teatro moderno, Atti del convegno di studi, Pontadera, 28-29-30 maggio, 1976* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1980) pp. 62-79.

² Nicoll, *Masks, Mimes. . . .* (op.cit.), N. translates--"*de faire et composer des farces et moralitez les plus exquises*." Original Baschet, p. 4. Nicoll, p. 299. a

³ Roberto Tessari, *La Commedia dell'Arte: la Maschera e l'Ombra*, (op. cit.) p. 45. Tessari states that the connection between this date and that of Paduan Ruzante's death in 1542 would seem to establish Padua as a seminal area for the development of the early *commedia dell'arte*.

under the direction of *Maphio ditto Zanini* conceived and organized a contract that prefigured those of the *commedia dell'arte*.⁴

"The undersigned colleagues, Ser Maphio known as as Zanini from Padua, Vencentio from Venice, Francesco Moneybags, Hieronimo from San Luca, Zuandomengo known as Rizo, Zuane from Treviso, Thofano de Bastian and Francesco Moschino being desirous to form a brotherly company which is to continue in being until the first day of next [Lent], that is to say in the year 1546. . . have together concluded and resolved that the said company must continue in brotherly love until the said time without any hatred, rancour or dissolution and, . . . promise to observe all articles hereunder written without quibbling, under penalty of loss of monies written hereunder . . ."⁵

Nicoll traces the early efforts of this troupe,⁶ which travelled extensively throughout Italy finally coming to a violent end in Venice.⁷ In constitution, their personnel did not express the full range of *commedia dell'arte* characters, it lacked women for instance. However, the contract and its stipulations indicate the professional direction that the later comedians would take. Tessari places this phenomenon within its synchronic context, echoing the "crisis theory" of historians such as Theodore Rabb and Arnold Hauser:⁸

⁴ Taviani links the beginning of the *commedia dell'arte* with the first year of the Council of Trent, both began in 1545: Ferdinando Taviani and Mirella Schino, *Il Segreto della Commedia dell'Arte* (*La Casa Usher: Firenze*, 1982), p.11.

⁵ Giacomo Oreglia, *The Commedia dell'Arte*, translated by Lovett F. Edwards (Hill and Wang: New York, 1968), pp140-141. This is widely quoted source material see Schino, Taviani, *Il Segreto*. . . p. 184-185. Earlier cited in Ester Cotto, *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 1915. Tessari, p. 46. Passage begins . . . "*Desiderando li infrascripti compagni, zove ser Maphio ditto Zanini de Padova, Ventio da Venetia. Francesco da la lira, Hieronimo da s. Luca, Zuando . . .*"

⁶ Nicoll, pp. 300-301.

⁷ Maphio was apparently murdered in a duel. Nicoll, p. 302. Citations of violence and murder plague the history of the early comedians. Trioano killed a fellow muscian in a duel and was banished from the Bavarian court.

⁸ See Chapter One for an explanation of the "crisis approach" of these historians.

"Let us confirm, however, that the birth of the true and real *commedia dell'arte* rises during this period. . . . Sir Maphio and his colleagues are without a shadow of a doubt, the signal of a condition of economic and social crisis. They ingeniously and bizarrely invented the appropriate solution: the creation of new craft, with the perspective of selling to a large consuming public."⁹

Generally, contracts of the early *commedia dell'arte* troupes list the terms of agreement as specific *items*, which range from the period of residence, amount of performances, and housing requirements, to restrictions upon 'crude' language, lewd contact, and performances on the Sabbath. A contract drawn up in Naples on July 5, 1575, cites one of the early troupes that not only employed women,¹⁰ but was led by Maria di Tommaso, *Lepido* 11 :

"Item, it is agreed that each of the said actors must go to confession thrice in the year. . .

Item, it is agreed that, if by chance (*quod absit*) any of the actors should utter a swear word, whichever of his companions may overhear him is obliged to immediately report him to the authorities."¹²

Contracts are a primary source of specific information regarding dates, travel, and conditions of artistic works or performances. In the 1550's and 60's contracts regarding

⁹ Tessari, p. 46. *Ci conferma, comunque, che la nascita della vera e propria Commedia dell'Arte risale a quel periodo, . . . Ser Maphio ed i suoi colleghi sono, senza ombra di dubbio, il segno d'una condizione di crisi economica e sociale che s'inventa ingegnosamente e bizzarramente la propria soluzione: l'apertura di un nuovo artigianato, la prospettiva di vendere una Commedia trasfigurata in spettacolo di largo consumo.*"

¹⁰ Constant Mic, *La Commedia dell'Arte* (Chez Schiffrin: Paris, 1927) p. 163. Mic posits that *commedia*'s use of women provoked immense repercussions in the development of the theatre art. Although women appeared on stages during the Middle Ages, only in the *commedia* were they given the prominence that was in a large part responsible for their great success.

¹¹ This troupe was From Siena. Nicoll's utilizes the method of citing the actor's role or stage name in italics following their true name, as many of the performers were better known by their role, or stage name.

¹² Nicoll, p. 298.

troupes led by "Marcus Antonius *venetus* appear with a degree of consistency;"¹³ they were apparently rivals to the Maffeo troupe. In France, payment records from the royal treasury in Lyon dated March 2, 1572 to "Soldoni and other Italian players" are cited by Baschet,¹⁴ "on account of their expenses in journeying from Paris to Blois in order to provide his Majesty Charles IX with some amusement." One such contract furnishes information regarding the size and type of Soldoni's troupe:

"From a later warrant date March 25, 1572, we learn that Soldino of Florence had with him eleven actors and acrobats ; this payment was made "in consideration of plays and acrobatic shows which they performed daily before his Majesty."¹⁵

Karl Trautmann cites Antonio Soldoni's performances in Munich and Linz in 1570, 1571, and 1572, at times with the well known Pantalone, Giulio Pasquati.¹⁶ Soldoni, while a minor figure in the history of the *commedia dell'arte*, may be recognized for spreading the *Zeitgeist* of the *commedia* to Northern countries, in a sense 'paving the way' for the major troupes.¹⁷ Evidence of the growing popularity of *commedia dell'arte* in the north is found in a performance account from Bavaria dated two years before Soldoni's performances at Munich and Linz.

¹³ Ibid. p. 299.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 300. Baschet pp. 34-35.

¹⁵ Nicoll, p. 300

¹⁶ Karl Trautmann, *Italienische Schauspieler am Bayrischen Hofe (Jahrbuch für Münchener Geschichte, i, 1887, 193-312)*. Cited by Nicoll, n. 1, p. 301. Pasquati later performed with *I Gelosi*.

¹⁷ Nicoll cites certain members of the Soldoni troupe with the surname Bassani. Interestingly, if not coincidentally, M.A. Katritsky has cited the Bassani as one of the few Italian painters interested in depicting the *commedia dell'arte*, *Renaissance Studies*(op. cit.).

In 1568, court composer and musician Massimo Troiano marked the first written scenario of a *commedia all'improvviso* ¹⁸ performed in Munich. ¹⁹ The improvisational effects and audience reactions are duly noted in various sources. ²⁰

"Massimo Troiano, the court choirmaster who invented the "delightful plot," reports the play at first-hand in a conversation with a friend, a dialog which is one of several describing the entertainments at the Duke (Albert V) ²¹ of Bavaria's wedding in Munich. After explaining that the "improvised comedy" was thought out in under a day, the principal speaker in the dialog says: "At first there was a peasant '*alla caviola*' (*farsa cavaiole*) were performances of the peasants of Cava, a southern Italian town) so ridiculously dressed as to seem the very ambassador of laughter." He then goes on to tell the hearer there were ten persons in the play and that the parts were so divided as to give him Massimo, three, namely the prolog, Polidoro (the young lover) and the Spanish "disperato." The other parts were taken as follows: a Magnifico, Messer Pantalone di Bisognosi (played by Orlando' di Lasso, another professional musician; there were also parts for a Zanni, and servants of various types." ²²

¹⁸ Lea, p.12. Listed in the program of March 6, 1568, as a '*comedia all'improvviso all'italiana*,' [sic.], it should be noted that the performers were professional musicians of the Bavarian court, not a *compagnia* in the sense of *Gelosi*. However, from Troiano's account it can be ascertained that Di Lasso, as Pantalone and Scholari as Zanni, had mastered the dialect of their characters and performed the *lazzo* effectively together. Records of other performances by di Lasso suggest that these musicians by trade were highly versatile performers, singers--reminiscent of Calmo. Franz Rauhut points to records of 1579, which show Zanni Saltore in the hire of the court along with the writer of comedies, Jacopo da Venezia. p. 251. Rauhut posits that these were not dilettantes in the common sense of the word. See Franz Rauhut, "*La Commedia dell'Arte italiana in Baviera: teatro, musica, pittura, scultura*," in *Studi sul teatro veneto fra rinascimento ed età barocca*, (op. cit.).

¹⁹ Gunther Schöne, "*Les Fêtes de la renaissance à la cour de Bavière*," in *Le Lieu théâtral à la renaissance*, edit. by Jean Jacquot (Paris: Editions du C.N.R.S.), pp. 171-182. After the wedding in Munich, the royal couple then resided at Trausnitz Castle.

²⁰ Massimo Troiano, *Dialoge: Die Münchner Fürstenhochzeit von 1568* (Verlag Emil Katzsbichler: München, 1980) translated with original Italian text. Parts of Troiano's dialogue are found in Smith's *Commedia dell'Arte* (op. cit.). Also noted by Stoppato and Lea, among others. This was not a true *commedia dell'arte compagnia* as these were not professional comedians, although there are records of payment to Troiano. Lea, p.11.

²¹ Franz Rauhut, pp. 241-242.

²² Smith, pp. 103-104. The characters of Pantalone, Zanni and the *servetta* are also the principle characters present in the Trausnitz frescoes.

Although Stoppato considers this comedy of Troiano's as attaining the "high-water mark"²³ of the *commedia dell'arte*, this should be considered rash in light of it being the only surviving scenario from this period. While the Munich scenario is presented in a dialogue format, generally :

"scenario or *canovaccio* is a schematic description of the performance; it gives a list of the characters and of the 'props' required, the division into acts and, by the use of brief and stylized instructions, the entries and exits of the characters. The plots given in the scenarios may be comic, tragi-comic, and occasionally comic-pastoral. They are developed by the use of the most varied devices: disguises, identifications, misunderstandings, kidnappings, loves of the young people, the jealousies and rivalries of the old ones and the intrigues of the zanni. . . When the scenario involved historical personages or particularly epic themes, the play was known as an *opera regia* or *opera eroica*."²⁴

Usually the *scenarii* were the products of the professional comedians, however, the performers at Munich were not a professional *compagnia*, but rather an amateur performance group that was arranged quickly,²⁵ and included members of the court. Nevertheless, of importance is the representation of several stage figures of the *arte* : *Pantalone di Bisognosi*, the Spanish "bravura figure," the Zanni, and *servi* of various

²³ Stoppato, *Commedia popolare*. . . (op. cit.), p. 139. Cited also by W. Smith, p. 111.

²⁴ Giacomo Oreglia, p. 18-19.

²⁵ Cesare Molinari, *La Commedia dell'Arte*, (op. cit.) p.34. The Renaissance comedies which relied heavily upon *memoria* and stage settings, usually took three months to stage, and were considered projects. Il Guarini lamented that his *Pastor Fido* could not be performed because it would take too long (three months) to mount it properly. Although amateurs also performed the learned comedies, it is no wonder that they would enjoy the short rehearsal time. [However, we should not lose sight of Perrucci famous statement that only one actor in ten is capable of improvising effectively].

types. Also, the fact that costumes were prepared in advance has led historians to conjecture that performances of *commedia improvviso* at Munich were not uncommon.²⁶

"The new style of the *commedia dell'arte* inspired not only the painting, as we shall later examine, but also the music."²⁷ Troiano mentions 'adornments' of dance and music, of particular interest is a "five-voiced madrigal arranged by Orlando di Lasso."²⁸ Troiano suggests that the madrigal was presented after the prologue where it served both the function of delighting the courtly spectators, and the more mundane purpose of 'covering' Troiano's costume change.²⁹ Nevertheless, Rauhut credits Orlando di Lasso with being the first to use polyphonic music in a *commedia dell'arte* performance.³⁰ As these were professional musicians, and not actors, we can assume that the music was of a high caliber, and suggest that the performers were able to dispatch with virtuosity the intricacies of the madrigal. While music in the Bavarian performance functioned as *intermezzi*, often in

²⁶ Rauhut, p. 250. Cites also Trautmann.

²⁷ "*Il nuovo stile della commedia dell'arte ispirò non soltanto la pittura, ma anche la musica.*" See Rauhut, p. 262.

²⁸ Lea, p. 7. "Orlando di Lasso, a Flemish composer and organist, came to Munich in 1556 at the behest of Albert V, and from 1563 to his death in 1594 he was chief organist to the Dukes of Bavaria. In 1570 the Emperor Maximilian conferred upon him the patent of nobility. He travelled often to Italy between 1567 and 1574 to engage musicians."

²⁹ This may have created an effect somewhat like the *intermezzo*, although in this case we are substituting the improvised comedy for the learned written comedy. The context of a Mannerist culture at Munich is suggested by the reference to five-voice madrigals, and the court's delight in *intermezzo*-like form, later by the completion of the fresco painting at Trausnitz, which scholars such as Würtenberger consider in the Mannerist mainstream. Another factor in determining the taste (*gusto*) of the the court finds Lasso ennobled by Maximilian during Arcimboldo's tenure as Maximilian's court artist. Orlando's madrigals are found in his *Vilanelle, moresche, et altre canzoni, a 4.5. e 6. voci*, (Antwerp:1582).

³⁰ Rauhut, p. 264. "*Tuttavia Orlando di Lasso può esser stato il primo a servirsi di motivi della commedi dell'arte per questo tipi di composizione.*"

commedia dell'arte performances it would be more clearly integrated and serve a comic function.³¹

For example, music occupied an important place in the role of the *zanni*.³² A number of illustrations indicate his playing of a guitar. In a recorded testimony of a buffoon each instrument is linked to a particular city:

". . . His violin to Cremona, his bass to Piacenza, his viola to Milan, his harp to Naples, his trombone to Genoa, his mandoline to Perugia, his drum to Bologna, his lute to Ferrara and all other instruments to Florence."³³

In the Scenario *I Tappeti* (Bartoli), Zanni performs various musical *lazzi* and also sings a serenade. Mic cites the existence of a particular genre of comic songs full of onomatopoeia and animal cries known as *Canzone Balbuziente* (Songs of the Stutterer).³⁴ Perrucci cites how these examples might be used; from character: Fiorilli singing like a cat; scenario, *La Caccia* (Scala, The Hunt) and from a brochure *Geneologia di Zan Cupella*, which contains a poem in couplet form describing a number of these sounds (1600).³⁵ There are numerous examples of the lovers serenading as well, for instance in *Il Vecchio Geloso* (Scala, The Jealous Old Man), Oratio makes Pantalone fall asleep while his melody

³¹ Not in all cases, however. Nicoll, for instance, does not cover music which he considered incidental to the dramaturgy. "A cantarina, a ballerina, and the like, enter in only for divertissement, and hardly ever play a definite part in the development of the scenario." Nicoll, p.245.

³² Constant Mic, p. 166.

³³ Ibid. p. 167. Original in *Infermita, Testamento e Morte di F. Gabrielli*, 1638.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 167 "Il existait un genre particulier de canzonettes comiques remplies d'onomatopées et d'imitations de cris d'animaux."

³⁵ ibid. p. 167.

awakens his love.³⁶ Both Isabella Andreini and Orsola Cecchina were fine singers and Orsola was also an excellent musician. As Mic posits:

"Each troupe possessed one actress especially for singing the couplets and to participate in the musical interludes."³⁷

The instrument most often used was the guitar, there are also many illustrations of mandolins and tambourines, and exaggerated or bizarre instruments that could hardly be played in any traditional musical sense.³⁸ The illustrations for the Corsini scenarios indicate the use of trumpets and drums, and castanettes (*gnacchare*).³⁹

The utilization of music in its various forms was part of the legacy of the *commedia dell'arte*, and allowed them to play at performances of different types, for instance, at the "opéra-ballets."⁴⁰ Historians such as Mic and Prunières consider music to have played a major part in the attraction and widespread success of the early *commedia dell'arte*.⁴¹

³⁶ *ibid.* p, 167.

³⁷ *ibid.* p, 167. "*Chaque troupe possédait d'ailleurs une actrice spécialement pour chanter les couplets et prendre part aux intermèdes musicaux.*"

³⁸ See Thomas Heck, "The Musical Iconography of the *commedia dell'arte* : an Overview," given at the Society for Italian Studies conference in London, October 1988. To be published in the proceedings of the conference: The Commedia dell'Arte from the Renaissance to Dario Fo (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990). (The Italian Origins of European Theatre, VI).

³⁹ Mic, p. 168.

⁴⁰ Mic, p. 168.

⁴¹ See H. Prunières, L'Opera italien en France, avant Lully, (1913), which studies in detail the role of music in the art of the Italians who played in France. Cited Mic, p. 168.

Before we examine the great troupes of the golden age, it is important to acknowledge the intermingling of the legitimate *comici* of the *commedia dell'arte*, with the numerous *vagabondi* that come under the generic title of *saltimbanchi*, e.g. literally (to jump on a platform). They are known under a variety of names such as: charlatans, *cerretani* (a kind of false cleric),⁴² or *truffaldoni* (cheats and swindlers). Piero Camporesi describes how the social uprooting of the sixteenth century created a changing class structure that promulgated the expanding phenomenon of the *saltimbanchi* :⁴³

"the new and more rigorous church organization issued by the Council of Trent, the reorganization of public assistance and of beneficence also on the part of the city and lay community, the incipient changes of societal structure and of the organization of work, the wars, the increasing population and progressive diminution of real salaries, and the corresponding rising cost of living, followed by a revolution in prices, brought on the European scene a new waves of poor people. . . this new heterogenous and uprooted group arrived, mixing a poverty of new extraction, often coming from the middle class, from the petty bourgeoisie and the artisans, driven to the streets and made vagabonds by hunger and misery, fragmented into braggarts, adventurers, delinquents of every kind, cheats, whores, gamblers and loafers of all types. . ." ⁴⁴

⁴² Piero Camporesi, *Il Libro dei Vagabondi* (Einaudi: Torino, 1973) pp. xcv, xcvi. Camporesi describes *cerretani* as a group of heretic priests who were exiled from Rome in the late Middle Ages. They wandered about the countryside, and were marked by secret codes and manners of dress.

⁴³ Camporesi, pp. xcvi, xcvi.

⁴⁴ Quote from Camporesi. Also see A. Fanfani, *Studi del lavoro in Italia dalla fine del secolo XV agli inizi del XVIII* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1943) pp. 135-143. "La nuova e più rigorosa organizzazione ecclesistica uscita dal Consiglio di Trento, la riorganizzazione dell'assistenza pubblica e della beneficenza anche da parte della città e delle comunità laiche, l'incipiente modificazione delle strutture sociali e dell'organizzazione del lavoro, le guerre. . la crescita demografica la progressiva diminuzione del salario reale e il corrispondente aumento del costo del vita, conseguenza della rivoluzione dei prezzi, portarono sulla scena europea nuove ondate di poveri. . . i nuovi, eterogenei e sradicati sopravvenuti, accozzaglia di poveri di nuova estrazione, spesso provenienti dal ceto medio, dalla piccola borghesia e dall'artigianato, spinti sulle strade e al vagabondaggio dalle fame e dalla miseria, frammischiati a bravi, avventurieri, delinquenti d'ogni risma, bari, bordellieri, giocatori scansafatiche e fannulloni d'ogni genere.."

Vagabonds of various types were often highly organized, and relied on secret signs and language codes to hide messages from officials and outsiders. Ironically, in 1595, Italian officials categorized the troupes of vagabonds into nineteen *compagnie*, by defining specific dress, behaviors and approaches that were characteristic of each.⁴⁵

Those *vagabondi* that were *saltimbanchi*, sometimes called mountebanks, sold bogus potions made from snake oil and other ingredients, and offered cures of all types for such diverse ills as impotency and baldness. However, they were aware of the commercial attraction of the *commedia dell'arte* deriving from obscene, grotesque and erotic effects, and often joined forces with a *zanni* and *meretrice* (prostitute), who played the part of an *innamorata*.⁴⁶ These 'performances' were played upon mountebank stages. McDowell describes them:

"The mountebank stage in its simplest form was a crude wooden rectangular or square platform on trestles, which could be placed in a public square, against the Doges palace, under a tree, along a road-side, or in a building. This form frequently had a ladder at the back, or side, for the use of the actors, and was devoid of any attempt at scenery, having merely a medicine chest for the charlatans to store their unguents. . . . The most elementary attempt at scenery was the placing of a curtain supported by poles across the back part of the stage. Frequently the curtain was split to permit entrances, and very often it was painted with some design. Garzoni speaks of a 'a trestle stage' with 'scenery scrawled out with charcoal in the vilest taste'. There is one instance of musical instruments hanging on the curtain. . . . some of the stages had two curtains with the sides enclosed forming a small rectangular space, which sometimes occupied half the platform. . . . Another stage attempts to give the impression of a scene in perspective by having the back curtain higher than the front with designs on the front and sides of the enclosure."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid. CII, CIII. We have numerous instances of *commedia* troupes being turned away from or out of towns. There was always the threat of disease in this era of the black death. Thus it was very important for the troupes to find "protectors," such as the Gonzaga.

⁴⁶ Both Winifred Smith and Constant Mic posit that legitimate comedians may have joined the charlatans as a means of economic survival.

⁴⁷ McDowell, (op. cit.) pp. 21-27.

Other stages, however, took on a more sophisticated appearance:

"The adaption of Renaissance practice to the mountebank stage is seen in another variation which has the platform enclosed on three sides with poles supporting a sloping roof. At the right is a 'place' formed by a boarded partition, or a curtain. Painted on the back curtain is a perspective street scene, and a Serlian winged house. A narrow apron projects beyond the side curtains, and a portion of a curtain at the front of the stage is suspended from the cross plates."⁴⁸

Important to this study, is that the mountebank stage demonstrates a mixing of Classical and medieval elements:

"The curtained rectangular place at the back of the mountebank stages showed a fusion of the medieval and classical influences: from the medieval came the *case* or mansions, which are now represented by split curtains or a curtained off place; from the classical came the idea of unification, permitting all the scenes to be played in a single location. . ."⁴⁹

McDowell observes similarities between the curtained mountebank stage and the curtained stage represented in the Terentian woodcuts.⁵⁰ The comparison is striking in certain ways: both have a narrow, apron-like stage allowing for minimal depth; at the rear, curtains, which can be drawn, are supported by narrow columns; both stages stand on plain platforms supported by trestles. While the aesthetics of the mountebank stage are of concern to an iconographic study of the early *commedia dell'arte*, so too are the descriptions of contemporary observers. In 1610, an Englishmen in Venice noted:

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 27.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 28.

⁵⁰ See Section on *commedia erudita*.

"Heare in the Quadrangle belowe manie Montibanks which on a scaffold doo sett rich Cabinets; and soe show waters, Oyles, and Oyntments of great Raritie: and by Musicks woment and good words promising wonders: doe persuade manie to buie of them."⁵¹

The coarse nature of such performances are documented in unique ways. For instance, in 1552, the poet Grazzini wrote *Sopra l'andare a vedere le commedie del Zanni* (On coming to see the comedy of Zanni), in what Michel Plaisance describes as "*conformément à un procédé de la poésie bernésque* (conforming to a procedure of the facetious poem)."⁵² In this "facetious poem"⁵³ Grazzini contrasts the decorous opening passage of the *innamorata* with the later grotesque, obscene descriptions of the *zanni* replete with *sporchi* (profanities). From Grazzini's perspective in 1552 the incipient *commedia dell'arte* counterposed two realities, the world of the commercial *truffaldino* (cheat), and that of the theatre.⁵⁴ The lusty open air performances of the *commedia dell'arte*, played upon the

⁵¹ *Coryat Crudities*, reprinted from the edition of 1611 (London, 1776), vol. ii., p. 51. Also McDowell, p. 23.

⁵² M. Plaisance, in *Culture et marginalités au XVIème siècle* (Klincksieck: Paris, 1973), pp. 83-84. "*bernésque*" refers to a facetious or ironic style of poetry.

⁵³ Barbara Bowen has dealt extensively with the "facetious" style, in what she determines as a strategy of deception in the writings of Rabelais and Montaigne. The similarities between Rabelais and the *commedia dell'arte* are striking on a number of levels *The Age of Bluff: Paradox and Ambiguity in Rabelais and Montaigne* (University of Illinois: Urbana, 1972). Her work is pertinent in disclosing again some of the underlying aesthetic principles of the sixteenth century. For instance, "...the main difference... is that whereas the writers of the seventeenth century were aiming to satisfy aesthetically and intellectually, those of the sixteenth were seeking to stimulate. Rabelais and Montaigne, ... both want to ask questions rather than answer them. They prod us, demolish our card houses of *idées reçues* and expression *toutes faites*, they astonish and shock us by juxtaposition of different styles or themes, by swift changes in attitude which leave us puzzled." p. 6. On the aim of "bluff," Bowen describes their use of paradox, ambiguity, enigma, argument, antithesis, in an attempt to "disconcert" the reader.

mountebank stages, raised the ire of the Counter-Reformation which rejected the sensual and obscene nature of *commedia* performance. Federico Borromeo addressed this concern in 1597:

"... the soul becomes contaminated by impure thoughts, the eyes by seeing immoral things, the ears by the sound of obscene words, and nothing, in sum, can remain immune from immorality."⁵⁵

Borromeo offered disparaging remarks about the scurrilous comedians who performed along with charlatans. Ferdinando Taviani's searching probe into the treatises prompted by the Council of Trent and the ongoing Counter-Reformation reveal that the authorities failed to distinguish between the charlatans and the legitimate troupes. Beginning with the early proclamations of Charles Borromeo⁵⁶ and culminating with Ottenelli's *Della Christiana Moderatione del Teatro* in 1652, these writings actually create what Taviani calls a "*negativa poetica*," (negative poetics), condemning the *commedia* on moral grounds, and accusing them of the "*disgregazione sociale*" (disintegration of society).⁵⁷ It was these

⁵⁴ See Roberto Tessari, "*Nell'antimondo dei ciarlatani e dei buffoni*," pp. 31-34. Here we draw the distinction, between comici "illustri" e comici "profani" or between troupes such as Gelosi and those led by charlatans or the *cerratani*.

⁵⁵ Ferdinando Taviani, *La Commedia dell'Arte e la società barocca: La fascinazione del teatro* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1969), p. 42. ". . . l'anima viene contaminata da pensieri impuri, gli occhi dalla vista di cose immorali, le orecchie dal suono di parole oscene e nessuna parte, insomma, può rimanere immune dalla immoralità."

⁵⁶ Taviani, p. 27. Taviani points out that Charles Borromeo had conflicting ideas regarding the *commedia dell'arte*, and at one point signed a writ allowing them to play in Milan, although at that point the comedians had left the city. He also respected the *commedia*'s power of attraction what is described by Taviani as *la fascinazione del teatro*.

⁵⁷ Taviani, p. 64. Also brought into account in these treatises are the symbol of the mask as *diavolo* (devil), the world of the *commedia* as a disruptive *antimondo* (a parallel antiworld--hell). The loosening of morals represented by the breakdown of the family unit, and the travelling nature of the troupes. The lewd scenes of the lovers, which mocked the sacrament of marriage. The corruption of youth, and the raising of young carnal desire.

attacks that prompted comedians such as Nicolò Barbiera, *Beltrame*⁵⁸ and Pier Maria Cecchini, *Fritellino*⁵⁹ to write the early defenses on the *commedia dell'arte*, works that while polemical in tone also disclose useful information regarding the *commedia's* practices and working habits.

In the early years of its development, many of the characteristics were shaped that would mark the *commedia dell'arte* during its fruition in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Among those that have been discussed are: the formation of the first professional company, the first contracts, the utilization and prominence of women, the nature of the scenario, the use of music, the traveling nature of the early professional *comici*, the widespread dissemination of the *commedia dell'arte*, the mountebank stages, the performances with charlatans, oppression from the Catholic Church, the popularity of the improvised comedy at court, and so on. Now let us turn our attention to the major companies and figures of the 'golden age of the *commedia dell'arte*,' a period beginning around 1575, and continuing for approximately fifty years, during which the *commedia dell'arte* flourished both in Italy and throughout Western Europe.

The substitution of beautiful poetry for the making of money. The use of foul language and gross behavior.

⁵⁸ Nicolò Barbieri, *La Supplica ricorretta, et ampliata. Discorso Familiare di Nicolò Barbieri detto Beltrame, diretto a quelli che scrivendo o parlando trattano de comici, trascurando i meriti delle azioni virtuose. Letture per que galanthuomini, che non sono in tutto critici, né affatto balordi. In Bologna per Giacomo Monti, 1636 (1st ed Venezia, Marco Ginammi, 1634).*

⁵⁹ Pier Maria Cecchini, *Brevi discorsi intorno alle comedie, comedianti e spettatori di Poer Maria Cecchini comico Acceso et gentilhuomo di S. M. Cesarea. Dove si comprende quali rappresentazione si possino ascoltare, et permettere. . . In Napoli, per Gio. Domenico Roncagliolo, 1616 (1st ed.: Vicenza appresso Domenico Amadio, 1614).*

Compagnie of the Golden Age (1575-1625)

The golden age of the *commedia dell'arte* spanned almost fifty years, from 1575 to 1625, a period in which various *compagnie* and many individual performers achieved both fame and fortune.⁶⁰ The earliest of the major troupes was led by Alberto Naselli, called Zan Ganassa;⁶¹ his troupe adopted the title of his stage name. The *Ganassa* performed in the late 1568 at the court of Mantua and in 1570 in Ferrara.⁶² A large portion of their early popularity can be attributed to the *innamorata*, Vicenza. As one of the first highly-esteemed *innamorata*, Vicenza firmly established and gave prominence to this role, prefiguring the later stardom of Isabella Andreini. Tomasso Garzoni eulogized Vicenza in *Piazza universale di tutte le professioni*, first published in 1585:

"Of the learned Vicenza I am speechless, who imitating the eloquent Ciceronian style, has placed the comic craft (profession) in competition with oratory. In part by her admirable beauty, in part by her indescribable grace, she has built an increased following for herself among the world of spectators, divulging herself as the prime comedienne of our age."⁶³

⁶⁰ Cesare Molinari, *La Commedia dell'Arte* (op. cit.), pp. 65-71. A consensus of historians (Nicoll, Lea, Molinari, Apollonio, and others) establish this era within five years of these dates. Lea states roughly 1570-1620, for example.

⁶¹ Molinari, p.107. Zan indicated a buffoon or ruffian type as in Zan Polo, and is a carryover from that original performer.

⁶² Taviani, Schino, *Il Segreto*. . . (op. cit.) p. 92. For the marriage of Lucretia D'Este. Taviani records this quotation from the banquet which followed the wedding, whence the comedians performed a comic scene and "*con un cinto in mano assai piacevole rintuzzò e fece cagliare un certo Ernandicco spagnuolo*." "With a belt in hand as pleasantly as possible he repelled and a certain Spaniard was curdled." Mantua and Ferrara are two leading centers of Mannerist culture.

⁶³ Thomasso Garzoni, *Piazza universale di tutte le professioni*. . . (Venezia 1585, p. 813. "*Della dotta Vicenza, non parlo, che, imitando la facondia ciceroniana ha posto l'arte comica in concorrenza con l'oratoria e, parte con la beltà mirabile, parte con la grazia*

Garzoni's use of *grazia indicibile* (inexpressible grace) recalls Dolce's expression of *venusta* (inexpressible beauty) in his attempts to define the beauty and grace in the works of Parmigianino.⁶⁴ Garzoni equates Vicenza's delivery to that of an orator, and her learning to that of a scholar. Thus, we have one of the earliest accounts of a refined oratorical style, that contrasted with the more raucous comic elements of the *commedia dell'arte*.⁶⁵

Ganassa's greatest success came outside of Italy,⁶⁶ particularly in France, where Molinari attributes the development of the Arlecchino type to Naselli.

"However the Fossard prints are one of the first print documents on the mask of Harlequin, it seems almost obvious to conclude that this Harlequin can be identified with Alberto Naselli, called Zan Ganassa."⁶⁷

In 1571, the *Ganassa* members travelled to Paris where they encountered difficulties with the parliamentary authorities, who on two occasions issued an *arrêt* (injunction). This forced them ultimately to seek the protection of King Charles IX.⁶⁸ The King granted

indicibile, ha eretto un amplissimo trionfo di se stessa al mondo spettatore, facendosi divulgare per la più eccellente comediante di nostra etade."

⁶⁴ See Chapter III, for Dolce's description of Parmigianino which is remarkably similar in tone to Garzoni's description of Vicenza

⁶⁵ Please see following sections on the 'Serious parts' for a full discussion on the *innamorata*, and the rhetorical tradition.

⁶⁶ Molinari, p.107.

⁶⁷ Molinari, p. 107. "*Poiché le stampe Fossard sono uno dei primo documenti figurativi sulla maschere di Arlecchino, è sembrato quasi ovvio concludere che questo Arlecchino andasse indentificato con Alberto Naselli, detto Zan Ganassa.*"

them two *lettres patentes* which allowed them to perform in public. It is documented that the second *arrêt* was issued because of the excessive ticket-pricing for a particular showing.⁶⁹ The necessity of the King's protection against parliamentary sanctions posits one of the perils of a market place that was not altogether free, and in fact resented the successes of these foreign comedians. Although records from the chronicler Jean Baschet show that this troupe was called *les Galozi*, the second patent was addressed to Alberto Ganassa.⁷⁰ According to available documents it would appear that for their time in Paris the *Ganassa* and *Gelosi* may have merged, although at the end of 1571, *Ganassa* remained in France while the *Gelosi* returned to Italy. The most important record of this company in France is a painting rediscovered by Ducharte and housed at the Bayeux Museum. Nicoll describes the work:

⁶⁸ Taviani, p. 93. Taviani uses the term *Zan Ganassa* to describe this troupe. I am using the anglicized version favored by Nicoll.

⁶⁹ Taviani, p. 93.

⁷⁰ Nicoll, Masks, Mimes. . . (op.cit.), p. 270.

"So far as literary records are concerned, the first, if only we were certain of his authority, would be Pellicer's statement that in 1574 Alberto Ganassa, in Madrid, introduced to Spanish audiences "the characters of Arlecchino, Pantalone, and the Dottore,"⁷¹ but possibly two years before this date was painted the canvas now preserved in the *Musée de Bayeaux* and fortunately unearthed by Ducharte [Titled: *Commedia dell'Arte Types*]. This work, which must have been executed before 1574, when Charles IX died, was from the brush of Pourbus--whether Paul or Frans cannot be ascertained--and apparently depicts a *commedia dell'arte* performance given by professionals, with the assistance of courtly actors. To the extreme left are shown the Fantesca (possibly Fanceschina) and one of the Zanno (Brighella). Immediately behind this pair appears the head of a masked character who seems a kind of Arlecchino. The woman by his side cannot now be identified. In the left foreground are two men and a woman; and the man with the right arm thrown across his breast is Henri, Duc de Guise; the woman is Marguerite de Valois. This Marguerite is knelling before a Pantalone, who is attended by Arlecchino. Behind Pantalone stand Catherine de' Medici, the Duc d'Anjou, and the Duc d'Alençon, while to the extreme right appear Elizabeth of Spain and (standing behind her) the notorious Marie Touchet."⁷²

In 1572, the *Ganassa* troupe performed in England for the Earl of Lincoln.⁷³ The next clear documentation establishes the *Ganassa* troupe's presence in Madrid in 1574, also its trips to Seville in 1575, 1578, and 1583, as well a command performance for Phillip II in Toledo in 1582,⁷⁴ and projections of future work on the King's behalf.

⁷¹ From Don Casiano Pellicer, *Tratado historico sobre el origen y progresos de la comedia y del histrionismo en Espana* (Madrid, 1804), p. 53.

⁷² Nicoll, pp. 270-271. Figure 184. Both attribution to Pourbus and the figures themselves have been questioned by art historian Charles Sterling. See "Early paintings of the *commedia dell'arte*," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. 2, no.1 (1943). pp. 11-32. Sterling attributes the painting to a Flemish hand, but posits that Pourbus was not active in Paris at the time of the painting. He also suggest the notion that the Flemish painters schooled in this Mannerist vein, would paint an entire scene of this type using only a few models. Therefore distinctions between personalities are doubtful.

⁷³ K. M. Lea, I, pp. 260-261.

⁷⁴ Perhaps the most famous foreign painter to study in Italy was El Greco, who later established himself in Spain, particularly in Toledo, during the legacy of Ganassa.

It is only natural that Philip II would have welcomed the strangeness of the masked comedians with their grotesque actions and "tortuous itinerary of 'conceits'."⁷⁵ Moreover, their popularity exceeded that of the minor Spanish playwrights, and was on the level of Lope de Vega.⁷⁶ However, this popularity seems to have undergone a decline. The last testimony from the *Ganassa* troupe, documents that members were jailed in Spain and further contact with the members was lost. Nevertheless, their legacy is clear: they established both the success of the *commedia dell'arte* on foreign soil, and the economic dependence of the companies on travel. As a fitting testimony to this legacy, both *Ganassa* and Steffanello Bottarga (see Fig. 8), who performed as Pantalone, are established as important figures in Spanish comic tradition, as noted by Shergold in Carnival Folklore of Spain.⁷⁷

The most celebrated of the early troupes was the *Gelosi*. Unlike the *Ganassa* troupe, which was named after its leader: *I Gelosi*, *Gli Uniti*, *I Confidenti*, and most other *compagnie* of the golden age, based their titles after the model of the Academies, following a tradition

⁷⁵ Alfonso E. Perez Sanchez, "The Madrid Prague Axis," in The Arcimboldo Effect (New York: Abbeville, 1987), p. 61. Philip II's court magician Juan de Herrera, played an active role in court life. I described in Part One that Philip II endowed the Museo del Prado in Madrid with many of the works of Hieronymus Bosch. Alfonso E. Perez Sanchez posits that Philip II delighted in the *bizarrie*, the grotesque, and in the use of alchemy, and magic. Sanchez, p. 61. . "Don Juan Alcaro de Castilla, a Madrid nobleman, possessed in 1580 two "*capricci* by Arcimboldo," in a notable collection of works. . .some small panels of peasants that recall Brueghel, and of witches enchantments which recall the fantasies of Bosch or of later German artists such as Strigel." The *Ganassa* legacy in Spain suggests a *rapprochement* of *commedia dell'arte* performances with the Mannerist taste of the Spanish court.

⁷⁶ Taviani, p. 94.

⁷⁷ See Molinari, p. 107. Shergold work was published in 1956.

that began in Venice in the early cinquecento with the amateur performers known as *compagnia della calza* (Company of the Sock):⁷⁸

"The companies of the golden era of comedy, that flowered between 1575 and 1625, took names that recall those of the Academies: *Gelosi, Confidenti, Fedeli, Accesi, Affezionati, Costanti*, names that expressed a need to position these groups in the area of high culture, but also reflected the structure of parity; in the academies if there is a principle it perhaps is simply first among equals."⁷⁹

This "*un primo inter pares*" (first among equals) that links the social structure of the Academies with the *compagnie*, also defines the ensemble nature of the early *comici*. However, this democratic ideal may have also been in part responsible for the frequent squabbles among the *compagnia* members, and prompted Orazio Nobili to say of Domenico Bruni "he holds the position of best among betters."⁸⁰ We will examine the effect of rivalries in a moment, but first let us consider the phenomenon of the academies and the role they played in the development of the major troupes.

The mission of the literary academies was to serve as laboratories for the study, practice, and testing of literary and rhetorical theories. They were formed to preserve the Italian language and literary tradition against the seemingly endless series of foreign invasions and political upheavals that constituted the "crises" of the sixteenth century.⁸¹ Although the

⁷⁸ See earlier comments on Calmo.

⁷⁹ Molinari, pp. 70-71. "*La compagnie dell'età dell'oro della commedia, quelle fioriani tra 1575 e il 1625, presero nomi che riecheggiavano quelli delle Accademie: Gelosi, Confidenti, Fedeli, Accesi, Affezionati, Costanti, nomi che esprimevano da un lato l'esigenza di collocarsi in un'area di alta cultura, ma dall'altra riflettevano la struttura paritaria; nelle accademie, se c'è un princeps, è però semplicemente un primo inter pares.*"

⁸⁰ Molinari, p. 101. "*teneva il luogo di buono tra i primi.*"

academies were primarily engaged in the study of letters, spoken exhibitions of 'impromptu' poetry were encouraged. Frances Yates has recorded that the "*improvvisatori*" were not alien to members of the academies,⁸² but were a measure of their learning and regarded as a highly respected skill:

"A poet would be asked to improvise on a theme of which he had no knowledge beforehand and would pour out floods of verse, working himself and his audience up into a pitch of terrific excitement."⁸³

Yates attests that this state of frenzy was evidence of the Neoplatonic system of *furores*, whereby the artist in the act of creation was overcome by a kind of divine fury.⁸⁴ However, one cannot underestimate the amount of rhetorical training, particularly in being able to recall and articulate figures of speech, while pouring forth conceit upon conceit. This is far removed from the distilled Petrarchan style, which is often 'stereotyped' as synonymous with the academic style.⁸⁵

The academies are characterized by similar phenomena. First, the members delighted in assorted games devised to test the wits of the individuals.⁸⁶ Second, each member of the

⁸¹ Frances A. Yates, Renaissance and Reform: The Italian Contribution, Volume II (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 74, for further discussion of 'crisis theory' see Chapter I.

⁸² In addition to that claim, Peter Burke posits that the *cantatore improvviso* (improvised singing) was considered a valid profession in late cinquecento Italy. See The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication (Cambridge: London, 1987), p. 81. I am suggesting that improvisational processes were part of the arts tradition of the time and not limited only to the experiments of the *commedia dell'arte*.

⁸³ Yates, p. 75.

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 75.

⁸⁵ James Mirollo, Mannerism and Renaissance Poetry (op. cit.).

academy was given a nickname indicative of a personal flaw, or shortcoming. It was believed that by using this pseudonym often enough, the targeted person would eventually recognize and overcome their worst qualities.⁸⁷ Third, academies were one of the first established organizations in history to allow *women* memberships,⁸⁸ and the concept of equality among all members applied to women as well.⁸⁹

In addition to the formative concept of "*un primo inter pares*," similarities in the choice of "naming" between the *compagnie* and the academies are striking. *I Gelosi* (the zealous), *I Confidenti* (the confident), and *Gli Accesi* (the inflamed) of the *compagnie*, drew their inspiration from the names of academies, such as *Gli Alterati* (the altered), *Gli Intronati*, (the astounding), *Gli Intenti* (the aimed).⁹⁰ Other examples assume a more oblique quality. For example, the cinquecento theatre theoretician, playwright and director, Leone di Somme⁹¹ was a *scrittore* for *L'Accademia dell'Invaghiti* (Academy of the Lovesick [for knowledge and creativity]).⁹² The Academy of the Bran (*della Crusca*) implied the

⁸⁶ Yates, p. 74. In one of these games two pedants were given a word upon which they were to concoct an entire lecture with etymological nuances and esoteric interpretations, stipulated toward a specific contemporary event. These improvised speeches would occasionally last more than an hour.

⁸⁷ Yates, p. 75. Part of the humanistic idea was the concept of self-improvement and self-controlled destiny.

⁸⁸ Yates demonstrates the example of Sweden's Queen Christiana who formed her own academy in Rome. We have earlier suggested the *commedia dell'arte*, in the main, successfully introduced women to the stage.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 76.

⁹⁰ Molinari, p. 102.

⁹¹ Author of *Quattro Dialoghi in materia di rappresentazioni sceniche*, edited by Ferruccio Marotti, originals published in Mantua between 1579-1587. (Milano: Edizioni Il Polifilo 1968)

notion, that rough unrefined wheat (ideas) could be sifted, and refined into brilliant and pure concepts. Thus, the names implied a mission or enterprise and were represented analogously.

Yates and others⁹³ have linked the names of those academies to the late medieval French codes of chivalry. These names were popularized in the *romanzo cavalleresco* (cavalier novels) which were "*recitarsi sulle piazze*" (recited [acted] on the town squares),⁹⁴ and affected not only the development of late cinquecento cultural forms but also the codes and style of behavior, particularly in regard to the aristocracy:

"Before the adoption of the word "*maniera*," we can observe its vast diffusion - with a sense clearly positive-- in the field of cavalier and courtly literature of the late medieval and especially in the field of writing and education. To the cultural environment of the cavalier French civilization and to its tendency to courtly refinement one must reinforce the original meaning and positive value of the concept in the word, adopted to praise the perfection of an elegant and artificially stylized behavior. In this sense the quality of "*manière*" appears as the virtue and reputation required in a perfect cavalier. One employs the adjective, "*bien affecté*" (nicely affected) and "*ammanié*" (mannered) to designate the result of a complete courtly education, based on the element of artificial refinement and of subtle affectations, that from the beginning constituted a treatment substantially of the gothic era and of the distinctly French ideal. With the expansion of the cavalier civilization and of the French influence the concept of *maniera* and of the corresponding words penetrated into Italy, acquiring increasing favor and a large diffusion, and are associated to the stylistic phenomenon of Mannerism. "⁹⁵

⁹² Leone di Somme, A Comedy of Betrothal: Carleton Renaissance Plays in Translation, editor Massimo Ciavolla, Ottawa: Dovehouse, 1988, (orig. 1550), Translated with Introduction and Notes by Alfred S. Golding, pp. 18-19.

⁹³ Michele Maylender's, Storia delle accademie d'Italia, See Yates, p. 78.

⁹⁴ Molinari, p. 85. The cavalier novels which were tales of knights and chivalry were very popular and at times recited, or acted out on the plaza.

⁹⁵ Georg Weise (op. cit.), pp. 176-177. ". . . prima dell'adozione della parola "*maniera*," . . . possiamo osservare la sua vasta diffusione — con senso chiaramente positivo — nel campo letteratura cavalleresca e cortigiana del tardo Medioevo ed in specie negli scritti a scopo educativo. All'ambiente culturale della civiltà cavalleresca francese ed

Words derived from cavalier literature such as *Gelosi*, *Confidenti*, *Accessi* signified a sense of enterprise, daring, and a spirit of adventure. These titles also:

"express an ideal of singularity and originality, in contrast with the classical attitude with its aspiration to the norm, universal and measured."⁹⁶

The sense of uniqueness was best described through the art form of the *impresa*. The *impresa* is an emblem containing both a motto and image, neither of which are apparently related, but which combine to state a distinctive truth about an individual or small group. Molinari records that the *compagnia*, *I Gelosi* were the bearers of an *impresa*.⁹⁷ The *impresa* depicts a two-faced Janus with the motto "*Virtù, fama ed onor ne fêr gelosi* " (The *Gelosi* are forged with virtue, fame, and honor).⁹⁸ Two-faced Janus is the god of Carnival, which begins in January at the Epiphany and ends in February on Ash Wednesday. Janus is depicted in the print, *Allegory of Winter* by Lodewyk Toeput, a

*alle tendenze di raffinatezza e di ingentilimento aulico si devono riallacciare la provenienza ed il valore positivo del concetto in parola, adoperato per esaltare la perfezione di un comportamento elegante ed artificiosamente stilizzato. In questo senso la qualità di "manière" appare tra le virtù ed o pregi richiesti in un perfetto cavaliere, e si impiegano gli aggettivi "bien affeitié" e "ammanière" per designare il risultato di una compiuta educazione cortigiana, basata su quell'elemento di artificio raffinata e di preziosità ingentilita, che sin dall'inizio costituì un tratto sostanziale dell'era gotica e dell'ideale aulico di stampo francese. Con l'espandersi della civiltà cavalleresca e dell'influsso francese il concetto della "maniera" e la parole corrispondenti penetrarono in Italia, acquistando crescente favore e larga diffusione. . . associabile al fenomeno stilistico del Manierismo." For a further discussion of *maniera* see Chapter III.*

⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 177, "esprimere un ideale di singolarità e di originalità, in contrasto con l'atteggiamento classico e con le sue aspirazioni a norma, universalità e misura mi sembra sintomatica di quella corrente ideologica."

⁹⁷ Molinari, p. 113.

⁹⁸ It is interesting that neither Nicoll nor Lea translate this expression, which typical of *impresa* mottoes uses both Italian and French in combination. *Fêr*, means forge, or could refer to *férie*, festival, or holiday. Or *fêr* can refer to *fare* --to make.

scene that depicts a *compagnie* of wandering comedians entering a village at Carnival time.⁹⁹ Janus symbolizes comings and goings,¹⁰⁰ and is usually represented by a *vecchio* figure. The numerous images of *commedia* figures in Carnival scenes dates back to the first years of the *commedia dell'arte*. One early example composed by Lasca (1562), is recorded in the *Canto carnascialesco dei Zanni* :

"Performing the Zanni and the Pantalone,
we go to every place
and act the comedy which is our art."¹⁰¹

The *rovesciamento* (overturning, revolution) that was so much a part of life during carnival, perfectly suited the bizarre, grotesque, and festive nature of the *commedia dell'arte*. In fact, the first recorded performance of the *Gelosi*, took place during carnival in Milan(1568).¹⁰²

By 1571 the *Gelosi* was in France, and at a performance in *Nogent-le-Roi*, they are defined by the title *comédiens du roi*.¹⁰³ In 1573 they perform the pastoral *Aminta*, by the recognized Mannerist poet, Tasso.¹⁰⁴ In 1574 the company played Venice during

⁹⁹ M.A. Katritsky, "Lodewyk Toeput and some pictures related to the *commedia dell'arte*," *Renaissance Studies*, p. 119.

¹⁰⁰ Paolo Toschi, *Le Origini del teatro italiano* (*op. cit.*). p. 141. Noted in the *contrast* between Carnival and Lent, and the regeneration of spring.

¹⁰¹ Quoted from Toschi, p. 211. "*Facendo il Bergamasco e il Veneziano, n'andiamo in ogni parte, e 'l recitar Commedie è la nostr'arte.*" Toschi is of the belief that characters like *zanni*, Harlequin, and Pulcinella, actually were born in Carnival and predate the birth of the *commedia dell'arte*.

¹⁰² Lea, p. 261.

¹⁰³ Lea, p. 263, Molinari, p. 113.

Carnival, then, after performing in Milan for a short period, returned in May to Venice where they performed at the special request of Henry III.¹⁰⁵ Porcacchi, in an eyewitness account, describes the presence of Simone di Bologna as Zanni, and Giulio Pasquati as Pantalone. Of Simone, Porcacchi accounted in Venice (1574):

"most unique in his performance of a Bergomask porter, but even more unique in his arguments and in his spirited inventions."¹⁰⁶

Porcacchi also considered Simone's "*invenzione*" in terms of a special verbal and scenic order in performance, his dramaturgical plan of *lazzi*, *burla*, and (*inganni*) deceptions that promoted the action. Because of the quality of his *invenzione*, Porcacchi considered Simone's part to be the first rather than the second *zanni*.¹⁰⁷ Porcacchi described Pasquati's Pantalone not as the standard thrashing cuckold, but as possessing grace, albeit with a fullness of capricious statements and *sententia*. Molinari provides an example from *Capricci e fantasie alla veneziana* (1601), that demonstrates the nature of capricious poetry, and its interplay between wit and folly:

"Se donna donna nomina
conditto dotto e savio
che amor umor me incita
a spender spender l'anima
o me uomo l'amo e aprezio
né posso un passo muoverla
che a stridi in strada mostrase
con cridi cruda e asprissima."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ James Mirollo uses Mannerism as a term to describe the poetry of Tasso. Shearman defines the pastoral as a Mannerist form.

¹⁰⁵ Lea, p. 263.

¹⁰⁶ Molinari, p. 114, "*rarrismo in rappresentar la persona d'un facchiino bergamasco, ma più raro nell'arguzie e nell'invenzione spiritose.*"

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 114.

"[if the woman woman named
 conducted with learning and wisdom,
 what passion incites my fluids
 to spend and expand my soul,
 Alas, I, a man, love and appreciate her,
 I can just in passing-by move her,
 to show herself crying in the street
 with harsh and bitter tears]"

By mixing (*mescolare*) *i capricci* demonstrated above, with sententious maxims, Pasquati gave his Pantalone a degree of wit, which played against his often boorish nature and the general folly of his behavior.¹⁰⁹

In 1577 the troupe was captured by the Huguenots at Charité-sur-Loire. Eventually, they were ransomed by Charles IX and reached their destination at Blois where they played the *Salée des Etats* before the king. Later that year they performed in the *Salle de Bourbon*, which they rented from the *Confrères de la Passion*.¹¹⁰ Thereafter, they were banned by *Parlement* and subsequently reinstated by the King. Lea posits that the troupe was also banned from Mantua in 1578. It was probably late in this decade that the Francesco and Isabella Andreini joined the *Gelosi* although the exact dating is not verifiable. During the subsequent 80's and 90's, the *Gelosi* had a veritable revolving-door policy, whereby members shuffled back and forth, leaving to join other troupes, then reappearing with the *Gelosi* some years later.¹¹¹ Part of the reason for the flux is based on personality conflicts within the troupe.

¹⁰⁸ Molinari, p. 114. Poems such as the above can be translated for meaning although the *effetto* is in the play on words, punning, and subtle grammatical interplays.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 114.

¹¹⁰ Lea, p. 263.

¹¹¹ For this reason I will not separate my discussion of the troupes, but will attempt to show the intermingling and fluctuation of the membership that regularly occurred.

Stefanella Ughi's analysis of an unpublished letter by Ludovico di Bianchi to the prince of Mantua dated from Bologna 16 December 1585 suggests that contractual negotiations may be linked to more than one member of the *compagnie*.¹¹² The letter also points to the internal strife created by the jealousy among the *attrici*.¹¹³ Perhaps the most famous of the rivalries was between Isabella Andreini and Vittoria Piisimi, which came to a head at a performance in Florence for the marriage of Ferdinand de' Medici and Cristina of Lorraine in 1589, and resulted in a contest between the two women.¹¹⁴ Other rivalries involved the 'status' of certain parts. Silvia Roncagli performed not only as a *servetta* in the comedies, but she also acted in the *intermezzi*.¹¹⁵ The *Dottore* (de' Bianchi) wrote of Silvia:

"the parts in the *intermedi* are as important as any other parts in the company."¹¹⁶

¹¹² Stefanella Ughi, "Di Ludovico de' Bianchi e dei Comici Gelosi," *Biblioteca Teatrale*, vol's. 10/11, (1974) pp. 184-188. From the Gonzaga archives of Mantua. Bianchi performed as Dottore Graziano, and is cited as a member of *I Gelosi* from 1576-1589. Because of the overwhelming historical presence of the Andreini influence, we may be under the mistaken notion that the Andreini, G.B. and Francesco were the sole leaders.

¹¹³ *Delia* (Camilla Rocca Nobili) and Silvia Roncagli, Ughi, p. 186.

¹¹⁴ G. Pavoni, *Diario descritto da Giuseppe Pavoni delle feste celebrate nelle solennissime Nozze delli Serenissimi Sposi, il sig. Don Ferdinando Medici, et la sig. Conna Christina di Loreno Gran Duchesa di Toscana*, (Bologna: Rossi, 1589), p. 14.

¹¹⁵ Mannerist historians such as John Shearman and Wylie Sypher posit that the *intermezzo* represents the quintessential Mannerist performance form.

¹¹⁶ Ughi, p. 187. "parte tanto necessaria in la compagnia così negli intermedi come nelle altre cose."

Whatever the squabbles may have been, the *compagnie* relied on the carefully orchestrated interplay of parts to be effective:

"The *commedia dell'arte* obviously depended for its success upon the concerted and harmonized interplay of the various characters. . . While a particular Dottore or Arlecchino might win especial fame for himself, and a *corago* (a kind of director) or *capocomico* (head comic) stand in name for the rest of his companions, it was the troupe and not the individual that counted in the end."¹¹⁷

The diverse talents and range of the *Gelosi* made it capable of performing an array of theatrical forms.¹¹⁸ Song and dance were included in performances based on *scenarii*, *intermedi*, or in impromptu scenes of merrymaking.¹¹⁹ One of the *Gelosi*'s most renowned *innamorate*, Vittoria Piissimi, was also considered an excellent ballerina. Giovan Battista Mamiano (1620) spoke of her as the dancing actress.¹²⁰ Generally the *commedia dell'arte* is associated with improvised comedies based on scenarios, however the early *compagnie* also performed written material including "tragedies, pastorals, tragicomedies, *commedia erudita* and frequently parodies or satires of classical masterpieces."¹²¹ For example, records attest to their performance of the aptly titled

¹¹⁷ Nicoll, *Mask, Mimes and Miracles*, p. 298.

¹¹⁸ The versatile nature of the early *comici* may allow us to suggest that the performer, at this stage in *commedia dell'arte*'s development, transcended the fixed nature of the mask. Sometimes characters evolved throughout the course of their professional life: Francesco Andreini, of the *Gelosi*, began as a lover, later became and remained the outrageous, Capitan Spavento.

¹¹⁹ In Part III, these latter scenes will be investigated as part of the iconography.

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 114. "*danzatrice*."

¹²¹ From Kenneth McKee's foreward to Henry Salerno's translation of Flaminio Scala's, *Scenarios of the Commedia dell'Arte: Flaminio Scala's Il Teatro delle favole rappresentative* (New York: New York University, 1967), p. xvi.

tragedy: *la Tragedia* by Cornelio Frangipani.¹²² At times, plots and character types from a variety of literary sources were abstracted into one *scenari* such as the pastoral, *L'Arbore Incantato*, The Enchanted Wood, which is entered in the Scala collection.¹²³ Marvin Herrick, as was posited in an earlier section, declared that many of the *scenarii* are based upon the texts of the learned comedy.¹²⁴ While plays and literary sources provided fertile areas for the development of *scenarii* and *generici* (stock speeches), a number of works were in fact written and published by the professional actors. Among these was the pastoral, *La Mirtilla* (1588), by the most famous *innamorata* of the *Gelosi*, Isabella Andreini.¹²⁵

If the social structure of the early *compagnie* was based on "*un primo inter pares*," its artistic structure was based on the juxtaposition between dissimilar types and influences: a kind of *discordia concors* in which academic, rhetorical and refined qualities were opposed or contrasted with the popular, vulgar and grotesque. Ughi describes:

¹²² Molinari, p. 113.

¹²³ Salerno, p. 388. In fact *scenari* exist for tragedy, tragi-comedy (*Isabella's Madness*, which we will discuss below, for example), and royal opera. A majority of the pastoral *scenari* are contained in the *Raccolta di Scenari piu scelti D'Istrioni Divisi in Die Volumi*. MS in the Biblioteca dell R. Accademia dei Lincei in the Palazzo Corsini, Rome. Codices 45 G. 5 and 6; and *della Scena de Soggetti Comici et Tragici di Basilio Locatello Romano* in two parts 1618 and 1622. MS in the Biblioteca Casanatense, Codices 1211, 1212. From Lea, Volume 2, p. 507.

¹²⁴ See Section I of Chapter IV.

¹²⁵ See Lea, Vol. 2, Appendix B, pp. 462-463 for a complete list of plays published by the professional actors. I am using actor in an inclusive sense (as currently employed in legal contracts negotiated by the Actors Equity Association) which includes the term actress as well.

" in the breast of the *commedia dell'arte* and in particular the *Gelosi*, there coexists in equilibrium, components of the popular type as well as cultured and academic qualities." ¹²⁶

As in Bronzino's *Venus, Cupid and the Graces* we see the mixture of high and low forms in juxtaposition, the monstrous, bestial figure in the background sets against the gracefully erotic Venus, similar to the grotesque antics of the masked *zanni*, ¹²⁷ juxtaposed against the grace, sensual throbbings, and rhetorical style of the *innamorata*.

After 1580 the history of the *Gelosi* is often confused as members left to join other troupes, and a number of other celebrated *compagnie* emerged. The esteemed *innamorato*, Adriano Valerini exited *Gelosi* in 1581, then appeared with *Gli Uniti*. In fact, a number of historians consider Valerini the founder of *Gli Uniti*. ¹²⁸ Also arising at this time is the troupe *Desiosi*, which Montaigne saw at Pisa in 1581 during his travels in Italy. In appearances at Rome in 1588, *Desiosi* performed without women, the same year the pope, at the height of the Counter-Reformation, banned women from the Roman

¹²⁶ Ughi, p. 188. ". . . in seno alla *commedia dell'arte*, ed in particolare nella compagnia dei *Gelosi*, abbiano coesistito, in stabile equilibrio, componenti di tipo popolare ed altre a carattere colto ed accademico." Rather than existing in equilibrium I would argue that these contrasts created a constant state of flux. For instance, the element of improvisation means that the length of a particular scene would be subject to change on a given night.

¹²⁷ Wolfgang Kayser, *The Grottesque in Art and Literature*, trans. by Ulrich Weisstein (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1963). pp. 29-37. Kayser considers the *comici*'s mask his link to the bestial realm. The masked characters of the *commedia dell'arte* are in one sense grotesque because they have traits mixing both human and bestial characteristics. Kayser uses Callot's *Balli di Sfessania* series as an example.

¹²⁸ Lea, p. 264. Lea cites Braga and Pellesini. This is contested by Ughi, and is further obfuscated by the presence of various groups at this time who used this name. Ibid. p. 270. However, in 1584 they were reorganized and "reunited with Pedrolino and supplemented by experienced comedians--'personaggi famosi nell'arte comica'. From D'Ancona (op.cit.), p. 486.

stage.¹²⁹ Ironically it was through the name of the actress, Diana, that the company obtained a license.¹³⁰ Diana achieved great fame not only as an *innamorata* but also as leader of her *compagnie*, and was able to attract such comic stars as Tristano Martinelli, with whom she appeared at the courts of Mantua, Cremona, Modena and Genoa, during the last decade of the sixteenth century.

It was during the late sixteenth century that both players and *compagnie* enjoyed the greatest flexibility, and control of their destiny. For instance, even when the *Gelosi compagnia* performed at court, it retained its autonomy.¹³¹

"The *Gelosi* were never exclusively dependent on anyone, but at the end of their first years of activity were linked to the Gonzaga family, with whom they stayed with for a long time, and by which name they profited in different occasions."¹³²

Records show that eventually Vincenzo Gonzaga, the Duke of Mantua, formed his own company, *Gli Uniti*, consisting of ex-*Gelosi* members, Gabriele Panzanini, as *Francatrippa*, and Girolamo Salembeni, Piombino, and featuring the *innamorata* Vittoria Piisimi (1583).¹³³ The Duke subsequently married a young actress of the *compagnia*,

¹²⁹ Roberto Tessari, "*La Commedia dell'Arte come forma di un'embrionale industria del divertimento*," *Il Ponte: rivista mensile di politica e letteratura*, vol. 34, no. 3-4 (1978) pp. 408-419.

¹³⁰ Lea, p. 270. Diana performs with *Confidenti* in 1586, in 1601 she was with *Accesi*, and Pier Cecchini.

¹³¹ Molinari, p.71

¹³² Ughi, p. 188. "*La compagnia dei Gelosi non fu mai alle esclusive dipendenze di alcun signore ma fin dai suoi primi anni di attività fu legata alla famiglia Gonzaga, presso la quale soggiornò a lungo e del cui nome si giovò in diverse occasioni.*"

¹³³ Lea, I, p. 273.

Aurelia, who had earlier joined "*per poter avanzarsi nella professione*" ([to] advance herself in the profession").¹³⁴ While this may represent an early case of the 'casting couch'; Molinari suggests that the *compagnie* were essentially independent of courtly rule. For instance, Francesco Andreini, early in 1585, refused a contract with the Duke of Mantua:

"I cannot offer the services of *I Gelosi* without the consent of the other company members."¹³⁵

Ludovico Zorzi, a noted *commedia dell'arte* historian and theorist, observed that painters in the sixteenth century also achieved a rising independence and self-determination in their art :

"It seems to me for example that the painter, or the figure artist was joined to a definite corporation in the Medieval period, as for the becoming of the professional painter, we place Titian, since he acquired an autonomy of technique and financial matters (I would not know how to define it differently) that exempt him from definite obligation to customers: that is at a certain moment he can execute not only portraits or subjects that are commissioned, but he could undertake as well the free exercise of artistry as best it seemed to him."¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Molinari, p. 71, humorously tells us that the shortcut to stardom was to 'know' the Duke. Indeed, as these were the first professional acting companies perhaps this was the earliest example of the casting couch.

¹³⁵ From "Letters of Francesco Andreini" (1607) in Molinari, p.71. "*non possa senza il parere degli altri compagni manco offerire la compagnio de' Gelosi al servizio di Altezza Serenissima.*"

¹³⁶ Ibid. p. 142. "*A me sembra per esempio che il pittore, ossia l'artista figurativo aggregato a una determinata corporazione nel Medioevo, diventi un "professionista" della pittura, poniamo Tiziano, quando cioè egli acquisisce una autonomia economico-tecnica (non saprei come definirla diversamente) che lo esenta da determinati obblighi di committenza: cioè a un certo momento egli può eseguire non solo i ritratti o soggetti che il vengono commissionati, ma può intraprendere anche il suo libero mestiere di artista come meglio gli pare.*"

What we have, therefore, in the sixteenth century is a greater range of autonomy for the artist. Nicoll and Tessari view this period as the time of greatest flexibility for the *commedia dell'arte*.¹³⁷ For instance, an early record of Pedrolino¹³⁸ in tandem with his Pantalone, demonstrates that performers did not always act with entire companies, but 'free-lanced' as well. A highly regarded *zanni*, Pedrolino led his own company under this same name, but also formed the *Confidenti* (1580) with Vittoria Piisimi during her hiatus from the Gelosi.¹³⁹ Below is a first-hand account of Pedrolino and Pantalone performing a playful *scherzo* (joke), for Signor Gaspare di Monte, at a party he gave for the Duke and Duchess of Ferrara:

"a central table was set with a hole in the middle big enough for a man to get through ; it was covered by a large, empty pie which had a hole at the bottom to correspond with the hole in the table. A cover was set on the pie, but this could be raised. Pedrolino the actor was concealed under the table ; When they had all taken their seats in the dining hall. . . Pantalone come into the room indicating that he was looking for Pedrolino, since he was a greedy fellow, and called out for him. Pedrolino then raised only his head out of the pie, so that none of his body was seen, and replied that by misfortune his greed had driven him to the kitchen where the cooks had made him into a pie."

By 1594, Pedrolino appears together with Arlecchino and others in the *Gli Uniti*.

Arlecchino, whose surname was Tristano Martinelli, in letter dated December 4, 1595,

"announced that he has left the company headed by Pedrolino because they wanted to be

¹³⁷ Nicoll, *World of Harlequin*, pp. 165-169.

¹³⁸ G. B. Rossetti, *Dello scalco* (Ferrara, 1584). See Nicoll, *Masks*, . . . pp. 306.

¹³⁹ Lea, p. 272-276. The *Confidenti* may have had two companies in 1582, as simultaneous contracts in separate venues might indicate. On April 25, 1582 a license was granted to *Uniti-Confidenti*, where member Pedrolino is shown to perform with *Uniti* member Valerini. By 1584 the *Confidenti* were patronized by Duc de Gioieuse in France. In 1590 Isabella Andreini appears on a list of *Confidenti* players, which was the result of a temporary amalgamation in Florence (1589).

masters and not companions, and remarks that he is not the first to find their insolence intolerable."¹⁴⁰

Tristano Martinelli is noted as part of the original nucleus of *Gli Accesi*, which was formed, under the aegis of the Duke of Mantua, with the specific mission to tour France in 1600-1. Martinelli published a pamphlet in 1601 *Compositions de rhétorique* which he presented to Henry IV upon his wedding to Maria di Medici.¹⁴¹ Nicoll posits Tristano as the earliest known actor to have certainly played Arlecchino, and this record as the first datable representation of that character.¹⁴² What is notable as well is Martinelli's license: his jocular, non-reverential manner toward the royalty.¹⁴³

"But royalty did accept them; even a Queen expressed pleasure in being asked to act as godmother for a child which Harlequin had informed his wife was about to bear."¹⁴⁴

Martinelli was the first to carry his stage character into ordinary life, and to set himself as apart from his companions as a special presence.¹⁴⁵ Martinelli's demand for special attention caused a bitter strife with fellow *Accesi* actor, Pier Maria Cecchini during the

¹⁴⁰ Lea, p. 276, n. 4.

¹⁴¹ See Nicoll, *World of Harlequin*, p. 169. Also refer to Molinari's comments, earlier in this section regarding Naselli's performance (Ganassa) of an earlier Arlecchino.

¹⁴² This may now be under dispute as Katritsky presents an earlier iconographic example dated in the 1580's by Joos de Momper, *February*, dated in the late 1580's. See "Lodewyk Toeput. . . ."

¹⁴³ Nicoll cites examples. He calls the Grande Duke de Medici, 'almost a brother', Cardinal Gonzaga -- "the gossip cock of the scarlet crest," and the duke of Mantua, "most cousinly coz and our dearest gossip."

¹⁴⁴ Nicoll, p. 170.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 170.

Paris trip. However serious the internal strife may have been Cecchini received the admiration of authority as proved by this letter sent to Cecchini by Landraini, Vice-Legate of Bologna:

"I am glad when I know that the people are attending your plays and are not wandering about the streets or settled in places of vice; to make the task of governing them easy I should wish you to stay here the whole year round."¹⁴⁶

Meanwhile the *Fedeli* troupe had formed (1601) under the direction of Giovan Battista Andreini *Lelio*, son of Francesco and Isabella. Here, a bitter rivalry ensued between Flaminia, Cecchini's wife, and Florinda, wife of Andreini, ¹⁴⁷ which continued for a number of years.¹⁴⁸

Later in 1608, the Duke of Mantua played a major role in forming an 'all-star'*compagnie* by joining select members of *Gli Accessi* of Pier Maria Cecchini with *I Fedeli* of G.B. Andreini for a performance before the Queen of France. Here the comedians served the role of "*ambasciatori*" (ambassadors) as they expressed the Dukes homage to the Queen. Molinari posits:

¹⁴⁶ Original from D'Ancona (op. cit.), ii. 532. Also Nicoll, *Masks, Mimes and Miracles*, p. 297. "*Godò quando io so di aver questo popolo intento alle vostre commedie, e non errante per le strade o trattenuto in luogo viziosi, e per quiete del mio governo vorrei che steste qui tutto l'anno.*"

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 171.

¹⁴⁸ In the early seventeenth century the *Confidenti* re-formed with Flaminio Scala as director.

"... the Duke of Mantua founded a *compagnie* from the *Accesi* of Pier M. Cecchini and *The Fideli* of G. B. Andreini. In its only performance as a company they travelled to France to entertain the queen of France in Paris (1608). The comedians became ambassadors, or rather paid homage from the Duke to the great King." 149

Travel, in this sense, not only ensured economic opportunity and perhaps fame for the *comici*, but conferred with it the potential for raising social status.¹⁵⁰ By ingratiating themselves with the aristocracy,¹⁵¹ the most prominent comedians could potentially attain courtier status.¹⁵² Nicoll recalls this as a time of "excessive exploitation of individual personalities"¹⁵³:

"...[which] finds reflection the introduction of new or at least of newly named character parts. Cecchini himself does not remain content with one of the established roles but has to invent his Fritellino; Lorenzo Nettuni caps this with his Fichetto, Niccolò Barbieri with his Beltrame; the Lovers assume fresh designations, and the maid-servants desert the old Franceschina in favour of Ricciolina, Nespola and Spinetta."¹⁵⁴

149 Cesare Molinari, *La Commedia dell'Arte : Un'arte per il teatro* (Arnoldo Mondadori: Milano, 1985) p. 71. "... *un duca di Mantova a fondere gli Accesi di Pier M. Cecchini con i Fedeli di G. B. Andreini in sola formazione che spedisce a Parigi per intrattenere la regina di Francia nel 1608: i comici diventano ambasciatori, o piuttosto omaggi che il duca fa al grande re.*"

150 Nicoll, *Masks, Mimes and Miracles*, p.297. Here Nicoll posits that letters of nobility were granted Cecchini in Vienna, where earlier Arcimboldo had reigned as court painter. According to Hauser, the successful artists of the late sixteenth century would have fallen into the rising bourgeoisie, a class that aspired to the aristocracy and imitated its behavior. Hauser, pp. 56-61.

151 Barbieri writes about this in his *Discorso famigliare*. . . (op. cit.) including the notion of adopting courtly '*comportamento*.'

152 Hauser, p. 61. Hauser points out the interesting reversal that took place in Mannerist culture. The disciplined, organized and increasingly successful bourgeoisie reached a point of success whence they began to relax and emulate the aristocracy, while the aristocracy began to emulate the discipline and organization of the bourgeois.

153 Nicoll, p. 174.

154 Ibid. p. 174.

It was the troupe of *Fritellino* which inspired Callot's engravings of various *commedia dell'arte* characters:

"Callot seems to have definitely represented the troupe of *Fritellino*, son of Fritello (Piero Cecchini). His company travelled to France at the end of 1615 and perhaps in 1618. The famous leader of these comedians was protected by the Duke of Mantua. He came to be ennobled by the emperor Mathias during a tour of Germany."¹⁵⁵

Sadoul's statement, while establishing a relationship between Callot and the troupe of *Fritellino*, also posits that the travelling comedians not only enjoyed the protection of the nobility, but were in fact ennobled themselves.

While the *Fedeli* and *Accesi* continued as celebrated troupes a first hand account by G.Z. Hondelei, in Bologna during November, 1615, posits that the totally reorganized *Confidenti* troupe, under the direction of Flaminio Scala, may have been the most entertaining.

¹⁵⁵ Sadoul (op. cit.), p. 98. "*Callot paraît y avoir surtout représenté la troupe de Fritellino fils de Fritello (Piero Cecchini). Sa compagnie séjourna à Florence fin 1615 et peut-être en 1618. Le fameux chef de ces Zanni était protégé par le duc de Mantour. Il venait d'être anobli par l'empereur Mathias au cours d'une tournée en Allemagne.*"

"This is perhaps the best company that is now on tour, they are always engaged from one carnival to the next, and from here they go to Venice, where they earn what they please. Now as for the personages, first there are two *zanni*, the sly on who does the plotting (*che intriga*) is called Scappino, and the other who is so witty (*grazioso*) that you could never his like is Mezzettino. There are four women, first Lavinia, who is the prettiest, the youngest and acts the best, the second Valeria, and the other two who take the part of the maid-servants are Nespola, and Spinetta, the wife of of Scappino. There are two lovers. Fulvio, the first speaks better, and as I am told once acted at Pesaro in the house of S. Federigo, and this one is the brother of Valeria, who is no chicken (*le quale è assai di tempo*), which [Fulvio] is much of the time. The second is Ortenzio, husband of Lavinia: a Pantalone, a Bergomask Beltrammo [Nicollò Barbieri], a Spanish Capitano, and Italianate Frenchman called Claudione complete the troop. Fulvio however, also takes the part of a Romagnuolo and of a Graziano, and so all play two parts when the occasion demands."¹⁵⁶

It would appear that performances at court took place in the open banquet halls,¹⁵⁷ or perhaps in the ducal theatres that were constructed for the performances of learned comedies.¹⁵⁸ Anna Maria Evangelista has recently uncovered evidence, however, of a theatre built especially for *commedia dell'arte* performances at the Uffizi palace in Florence. The *Teatro di Baldracca* was designed by the noted Buontalenti and was active from 1576-1653. It was considered the most "avant-garde theatre of its time."¹⁵⁹ The *Teatro di Baldracca* was one of the first theatres to have constructed dressing and make-up rooms for the actors (*stanza dei comici*). Don Giovanni Medici was the impresario and

¹⁵⁶ Description from Lea, p. 296. Fulvio was Domenico Bruni who had earlier performed with *Gelosi*.

¹⁵⁷ Iconographical evidence seems to support this contention, in fact suggesting that there was little barrier between the performer and spectator. For instance, *Banquet Scene* by Toeput, or Johannes Sadeler, *Crapula* and *Lascivia* demonstrate performers merging with spectators. See Part III.

¹⁵⁸ This is McDowell's contention (op. cit.). Also see section on learned comedy.

¹⁵⁹ Anna Maria Evangelista, "Il teatro dei comici dell'Arte a Firenze ricognizione dello "Stanzone delle Commedie" detto di Baldracca," *Biblioteca teatrale*, no. 23/24 (1979): 70-86. ". . .all'avanguardia delle costruzioni teatrali del tempo."

protector of Flaminio Scala and the *Confidenti* troupe, and he also presided over the Uffizi palace.¹⁶⁰ Evangelista lists a number of documented records of payment and other transactions between Scala and Don Giovanni Medici that suggest the *compagnia* was dependent upon the good will of the duke,¹⁶¹ who in the modern sense, was also the 'booking agent' at the *Teatro di Baldracca*.

Eventually squabbles and rivalries engulfed the *Confidenti*, and led to Scala's departure in 1618. By this time the concept of the *compagnie* as a shared community of actors built upon "*un primo inter pares* " had broken down almost completely. From this point on the troupes enjoyed less and less independence, as individual members sought particular favors, or courtly protection, and co-operation between members became increasingly difficult.¹⁶²

In the seventeenth century the *commedia dell'arte* in Italy began a period of decline. However, in France, and elsewhere outside of Italy, the *commedia dell'arte* flourished, and through gradual acculturation adapted itself to each particular foreign environment. Ironically, it was during this period of *commedia* 's decline in Italy, that the *comici* faced increasing hostilities from Church authorities such as the Jesuit, Domenico Ottenelli, and numerous other reformers.¹⁶³ As a reaction to these assaults, Pier Maria Cecchini and Nicolò Barbieri concocted defenses of *commedia dell'arte* practices. These early

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 75.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p. 76. See records from 1616.

¹⁶² Lea, p. 336.

¹⁶³ See Tavaini, *La fascinazione del teatro*, (op.cit.) for a complete examination of these treatises.

seventeenth-century efforts provide insight into the methodology and quotidian life of the early *commedia dell'arte*. Also, during this period a number of scenario collections were published, as were the writings of Francesco Andreini (*Capitan Spavento*), and the plays of his son Giovan Battista. Thus, while the seventeenth century brings the decline of the *compagnie*, as it was known in the golden age, there is, on the other hand, an attempt to codify, explain and publish the theories, practices, and related works of the *commedia dell'arte*. These seventeenth-century efforts culminate in Perrucci's discourse on *commedia dell'arte* performance published in 1699, which serves as a most helpful source, as we now explore the major stage figures of the *commedia dell'arte*.

CHAPTER VI

Stage Figures of the Commedia dell'Arte

A characteristic of the *commedia dell'arte* that sets it apart from most theatrical forms is its use of fixed character types. The Prague semiotician Jindrich Honzl points out, that:

"the greatest historical exception to our current understanding of dramatic character is the *commedia dell'arte*, where conventional stage figures like Harlequin and Pantalone were transferred from one scenario to another and exhibited traits that conditioned--even dominated--the events of the plot."¹

Honzl posits another consideration that is pertinent to a clear understanding of *commedia dell'arte* figures:

"A character in a play can allude to or resemble another known character according to the same principles by which texts exhibit "intertextuality." The stage figures of such characters are very specific in their traits, such as costume, makeup, and habits of gesture; this is where they differ from the more normative, more familiar notion of stage "types," such as the stock ingénue or juvenile."²

¹ Michael Quinn, "Svejk's Stage Figure: Illustration, Design, and the Representation of Character," *Comparative Drama*, Volume XXXI, Number 3, September 1988.

² Ibid. pp. 330-331. "According to the Prague School model of the acting sign, as initiated by Otakar Zich, the stage figure stands in intermediate, technical relation to the actor and the incorporeal dramatic character who resides in the consciousness of the perceiving audience: The figure is what the actor makes, the character what the audience sees and hears."

Honzl's notion of "stage figure"³ is helpful in distinguishing the major generic figures of the *commedia dell'arte* as representative of their many variations or offshoots. For example, the stage figure of Arlecchino (Harlequin) includes as well a number of appendant offspring such as Trivelin,⁴ Trufaldino,⁵ Tracagnino,⁶ and with exceptions,

³ Anya Peterson Royce, (op. cit.) uses the term *maschere* in a similar sense to define: "the persona developed by an actor which is consistent across plays and across roles." Virginia Scott, writing about *jeu* and *rôle* in the Italian *commedia* in France, also develops a like notion: "Each performer constructed his own *rôle*, partly from tradition and partly from his own abilities and in response to the tastes of his particular audience. By and large the performer retained his *rôle* throughout his career and the *rôle* retained its characteristics. The result of this condition was the establishment of what Kenneth Burke calls a conventional form. . . The *rôle* is not a dramatic character but a form. It consists of a set of behaviors demonstrating fixed responses to stimuli. The form of Dominique's Arlequin was as invariable as the form of an Italian sonnet or a James Bond thriller." pp. 76-77. Virginia Scott, "The *Jeu* and the *Rôle* : Analysis of the Appeals of the Italian Comedy in France at the time of Arlequin-Domenique," In Mayer, David and K. Richards, eds. *Western Popular Theatre* (London: Methuen, 1977) p. 18. My rationale for using "stage figure," instead of *rôle* or *maschera*, is that those terms connote a variety of other meanings, and interpretations, while stage figure as a semiotic term is essentially scientific, because it conveys a single meaning. For example Raymond Pentzell uses both the terms *maschera* and *role* to define a type of irony "as the contrast between *maschera* and *role* that allows the actor to stand back from his role and appeal directly to the audience." Peterson, p.76. A second reason has to do with both the phenomenological and empirical basis of the "stage figure." Its creation is essentially an *effetto* (effect) perceived in the spectator's mind as a series of gestural, vocal, and movement signs and patterns which are immediately identifiable.

⁴ Nicoll, *Masks. . .* , p. 283, Fig. 199. Trivelin a later French version of Arlecchino is seen in an engraving by Mariette with Brighella (c. 1647)

⁵ Ibid. p. 279, Fig. 197. A "*truffo* " (scoundrel, cheat) servant occurs in Ruzante's *La Vaccaria*.

⁶ Ibid. p. 278, Fig. 196.

Mezzetin.⁷ This examination of the *commedia dell'arte* will consider with exceptions only the major generic figures of the early period.⁸

Stage figure is also a correlative term that may express a semiotic relation to either the figure's precursors, contemporaries, or to evolutionary changes.⁹ Certain characters depicted by Calmo, Ruzante, and the learned comedy, resemble the stage figures of the *commedia dell'arte*. It is possible to link certain characteristic traits in the figures while allowing for a degree of difference. For example, the aging but amorous Venetian merchant, Zurlotto, in Andrea Calmo's *La Spagnoulas*, resembles the cultural, social and economic background, age, and physical characteristics of the *commedia dell'arte* stage figure, Pantalone. However, in Calmo's plays, while his traits remain the same, his surname changes. In addition, he never adorns the fixed mask of Pantalone. In another case, Ruzante's development of the Bergomask peasant signifies a link to the presence and refinement in the *zanni* figure in the *commedia dell'arte*, although the *contadino* figure of Ruzante is a sympathetic figure, whilst the *zanni* is a buffoon, a comic lout. Caputi describes the relationship between the stage figure (*maschere*) and stage character:

"They are not without human interest: they are in love, they are vengeful, they are avaricious, they hunger, they lust, and they feel pain when they are beaten. But these traits are typically simplified and exaggerated so that we see virtually nothing of the complexity which usually accompanies them in human beings. The characters always retain a strange abstractness, "strange" because though

⁷ Ibid. p. 280. See figure 198, which demonstrates the traditional diamond-shaped pattern distinctive of later Harlequins. Mezzetin, also known as Mezzetino, is usually related to Scaramuccia in style of costume (Fig. 204, 214). He first appears in a Callot etching dancing with Riciulina in the *Balli* series. Lea, II, p. 490, App. E, Mezzetin was used by Angelo Costantini as a successor to Biancolelli's Arlechin (Rasi, i, p. 710).

⁸ Earlier in this chapter I pointed out how the later generations of *comici*, gave themselves individualistic stage names to set themselves apart from the previous generation of *comici*.

⁹ Such Pulcinella developed into the English puppet, Punch.

they move in a concrete commonplace world and reflect commonplace needs, they are always notably reduced as human figures. This prompts the beholder to view the total image as if at a distance, prompts him to adjust to the whole, to focus the whole, as he has focused the characters.¹⁰

What Caputi is focusing upon, Tessari has described as the "anti-world of the buffoon," (*nell'antimondo di buffoni*), a kind of "otherness" (*L'Altro*), in which the inhabitants are not fully drawn dramatic characters, but the fixed figures behind the mask, existing in a world alien to the humanist principles of the Renaissance (*humanae litterae*), and the dogma of the church.¹¹

There are also evolutionary aspects to consider in regard to the stage figure. For instance, historians such as Nicoll, Duchartre, and Rasi, consider Scaramuccia which develops in the early seventeenth century (for instance, Tiberio Fiorillo, *Uniti*, 1614) to be based upon the Capitano character, who disappeared during this period. The detection of specific figural traits in *commedia dell'arte* iconography allows us not only to identify accurately the figures as such, but also to measure their degree of variance, in regard to costume, masks, or environment.¹² Thus, stage figure is a term of identity that can be applied either diachronically or synchronically.

¹⁰ Royce, p. 79. Quote from Anthony Caputi, *Buffo*, (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1978), pp. 176-177.

¹¹ See Tessari, . . . *La Maschera* . . . (op. cit.), Chapter Two. "Humanist literature." The church recognized this "otherness" as well but defined it in terms of *diavolo*. The early *commedia* was attacked by both camps.

¹² For instance, when the Pantalone figure appears unmasked, or the *innamorata* appears masked, an accurate identification can be made by assessing their proximity to other *commedia* figures in the scene, or gestural, movement, and costume considerations.

The stage figures of the *commedia dell'arte* are generally divided into two groups: the *parti gravi* (serious parts), and the *parti comici* (comic parts).

The serious parts consist of the two lovers (*innamorato* and *innamorata*), and, to a certain extent, the *serva* of the *innamorata*,¹³ usually known as the *fantesca*. However, since the *serva* was depicted in a more or less bawdy manner in the early *commedia*, and was at times even performed by a man,¹⁴ or seen as the female version of Arlecchino, Arlecchina, she will be considered with the rest of the comic servants (*parti comici*).

Between the serious and comic roles, most historians place the Capitano figure, since he is not as grotesque as the more comic types.¹⁵ In some early scenarios the Capitano even plays the part of the second or third *innamorati*. The first great Capitano, Francesco Andreini (*Capitan Spavento*), actually began his *commedia* career as an *innamorato*. While his costume is typically of the Spanish military dress of the time, he seldom wears a mask.¹⁶ Although he is exaggerated in presence and demeanor, most of his comic strength comes from his rhetorical excesses of braggadocio. This rhetorical proclivity links him with the lovers' parts.

The comic parts include the *vecchi* (old men), Pantalone and Dottore; the *zanni* (servant buffoons) including Arlecchino, from lower Bergamo, usually the second *zanni*; and

¹³ According to Nicoll classification, although the part is considered under the rubric *comico* by John McDowell, for instance.

¹⁴ Nicoll, p. 244. The Franceschina of the *Uniti* in 1584 was a man, Battista da Treviso, or Batista degli Amorevoli.

¹⁵ Nicoll, p. 246.

¹⁶ Exception to both these conditions are seen in the Callot etchings. Capitano is examined in more detail below.

Brighella from upper Bergamo, as the first *zanni*. Sometimes there is a generic porter (*facchino*) or "ruffian" *zanni*, derived from the peasants in lower Bergamo. Although these three types were very popular, especially in the north, not all *zanni* originate from the Bergomask province. Other *zanni* include Giangurgolo, according to the Biancolelle manuscript "a Calabrian actor whose role is to mimic Capitano."¹⁷ Trappolino, derived from *trapporre*, (to put or go between), is considered by Bartoli to be a crafty, intriguing servant.¹⁸ Among the early *zanni* mentioned by Garzoni (1585) is Burattino,¹⁹ whose name was later appropriated to define *burattini* (puppets). Franca Trippa is found in both the Callot and Fossard engravings, and seems to be a typical *zanni* in dress and mask.²⁰ The *zanni* Fritellino (Piero Maria Cecchini) also appears in Callot's *Balli* series; Sardoul posits:

"Callot seems to have definitely represented the troupe of Fritellino, (Piero Cecchini). His company travelled to France at the end of 1615 and perhaps in 1618. The famous leader of these comedians was protected by the duke of Mantua."²¹

Neapolitan *zanni* of note are of course, Pulcinella and the lesser figures of Tartaglia, the stammerer, and Coviello.²² Coviello actually is not typical of *commedia dell'arte* figures,

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 295.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 296.

¹⁹ See print in Duchartre, p. 301.

²⁰ Nicoll, p. 297.

²¹ Sadoul, p. 98. "*Callot paraît y avoir surtout représenté la troupe de Fritellino (Piero Cecchini). Sa compagnie séjourna à Florence fin 1615 et peut-être en 1618. Le fameux chef de ces Zanni était protégé par le duc de Mantour.*"

²² Coviello and Pulcinella are frequent players in the Placido Adriani scenarii. See Suzanne Thérault, *La Commedia dell'Arte: Vue a travers le zibaldone de Pérouse* (Paris: Centre Nationale de La Recherche Scientifique, 1965)

because of his transformable nature.²³ On occasion he portrays a bourgeois gentleman, but in the Correr scenario *L'Amant traidito* he substitutes for Dottore. In this same collection he also plays a merchant in *Le due Sorelle rivale*, and is even found as a servant with Pulcinella.²⁴ Peterson posits the difference between the northern and southern approaches to the *commedia dell'arte* :

"Looking at two of the more famous characters to come from Naples, Coviello and Pulcinella, we can instantly see the difference between a tradition which has a developed *maschere* [Venetian and Tuscan *commedia*] and one which does not. In Naples, Coviello appears as various social types: a father, merchant, doctor, servant, innkeeper, and captain. Yet in playing these various types, the actor playing Coviello presents no persistent or underlying characteristics."²⁵

Thus, Coviello is a mask that resembles Ruzante more than the fixed masks of the *commedia dell'arte*, since both Coviello and Ruzante's traits are determined by the events of the plot, rather than being pre-conditioned or prescribed. Pulcinella is another figure who appears to have different traits in a number of *scenarii*. He rarely appears in northern *scenarii* or early iconography of the *commedia dell'arte* and therefore will not be considered at length here.²⁶

²³ The same can be claimed for the changeable Neapolitan figure of Chola or Cola (see Fig. 43).

²⁴ Ibid. pp. 260-261.

²⁵ Royce, p. 78.

²⁶ See Appendix (Fig. 49) for an exception to this consideration. Also see Anton G. Bragaglia, *Pulcinella* (Roma : Casini, 1953) which is the most thorough source on Pulcinella. This figure really transcends the form of the *commedia*, he often appeared alone in the seventeenth and eighteenth century and was even active in this century, represented by the playwright from Naples, Eduardo de Filippo. From Tiepolo onwards to Severini, he has been present in numerous iconography, although generally seen in later depictions than those appropriate to the scheme of this dissertation.

Beginning with the *vecchi*, followed by their servants, the *zanni*, let us now examine the major stage figures (*parti comici*) of the early *commedia dell'arte*. While these comic figures have distinctive identities they also share certain characteristics. Common to these figures is the presence and principle of the mask. Nicoll describes this phenomenon:

"In introducing masks into its plays, therefore, the Italian comedians were simply keeping true to the spirit of the theatre they served, At the same time, they found that these masks had a special value for their own kind of performances, A mask has a personality of its own. . . it had the further virtue of placing emphasis on the actor's whole body. Harlequin's personality depends partly on his suppleness; since he is masked our eyes are intent upon him in his entirety, not merely upon his features; as a result a witticism emanating from that eternally fixed countenance has a flavour quite different from the witticism issuing out of the lips which are part of a living face; and a gesture which might easily be missed when our attention is directed towards a comedian's features suddenly assumes an unwonted and even strange significance."²⁷

The *parti comici* generally wore half-masks which solved the problem of vocal projection, and also permitted the *zanni* to consume either food or drink on stage. It also allowed for various grotesque acts of the open mouth and protruding tongue, such as depicted in the Callot series of etchings, *Balli di Sfessania*. In addition it established a bizarre juxtaposition with the *parti seri* who were typically unmasked.

Another shared characteristic of the comic stage figures was the use of an appropriate and distinct dialect, what Lea has described as "a comic handicap." This created a kind of aural dissonance which was a major source of the *commedia dell'arte*'s humor, and strangeness. Pantalone spoke in Venetian dialect, while Dottore mixed Bolognese with learned Latin phrases; meanwhile, the *zanni* spoke in Bergomask dialect and broken Italian

²⁷ Nicoll, *World of Harlequin*, p. 41 Nicoll also points out that the mask stressed the essential theatricality of the production.

phrases, while Capitano spoke in Spanish. Other *zanni*, from outside of Bergamo also spoke in their native tongue, adding to the cacophonous effect. Only the lovers' parts utilized the 'correct' Tuscan dialect in their portrayals.

The *vecchi* and *zanni* figures were generally grouped into pairs, although there are a number of exceptions. While the comic parts contained improvisational elements they also relied upon stock speeches (*generici*) of a kind appropriate to each player. These were housed in a *zibaldone*, or common-place book, containing conceits, monologues, quips, dialogues, which were, in effect, memorized.²⁸ A major source for the full range of *generici*, and pertinent character information, is Andrea Perrucci's Dell'Arte Rappresentativa Premeditata e all'Improvviso (1699).²⁹ Let us now consider these characters individually.

Pantalone, also called Il Magnifico, is distinguished by his pointed beard, red tights and vests, Turkish slippers and a black cape called a *zimarra*.³⁰ He generally wears a brimless cap which resembles a fez.³¹ His darkish mask features a pronounced hooked nose. Apparel and mask are supplemented with an oversized phallus or codpiece, usually draped with a handkerchief; those are indicated in many iconographical examples.³² Although he

²⁸ Giacomo Oreglia, The Commedia dell'Arte, translated by Lovett F. Edwards (Hill and Wang: New York, 1968), p.12. These aspects will be discussed in greater length in the next section on the *parti seri*.

²⁹ Text, introduction and bibliography in this updated version, by Anton Bragaglia, (Florence: Sansoni Antiquariato, 1961).

³⁰ Nicoll, Masks . . . p. 254.

³¹ See Duchartre, The Italian Comedy, p. 180 for example of Pantalone's fez from Fossard collection, and p. 183, of same, for example from painting at *Schloss Trausnitz*.

represents the grotesque caricature of the aged Venetian merchant, he can be very wiry and quick. Perrucci relates in more detail:

"The actor who takes this rôle must be skilled in the use of the Venetian dialect in all its varieties, proverbs and phrases. He must give the impression of a decrepit old man who in spite of his age, wishes to pose as a youth. He may learn by heart various speeches for special scenes, such as advice to his son, good counsel for monarchs or princes, curses, and greetings to the woman he is in love with, and other similar bagatelles according to his fancy, aiming at the arousing of laughter by his obstinancy and pride at the appropriate junctures, thus depicting a man ripe in years who is so ridiculous in that, whereas he ought to be a person of authority and good example and moral behavior for others, he is seized by love and acts like a child . . . Even his avarice, which is common to old men, gets surmounted by this greater vice, love.³³

Cecchini points out that the ridiculousness of Pantalone is in part due to a reversal of expectation, caused by a mixing of traits.

"The *vecchio* is always a serious part, but it is mixed among the ridiculous parts by the quality of speech and costume."³⁴

Pantalone, in the comedies, is usually the head of a household, spent his better years pursuing wealth, and now wishes to experience love and sexual gratification, usually with the *innamorata*. Often his rival for the hand of the younger woman is his own son.³⁵ His

³² Katritzky, *Renaissance Studies*, see Figure 1, 2, 3, for examples from the alleged work of Ambrose Francken.

³³ See Petraccone, p. 115, Translation in Nicoll, p. 255.

³⁴ Petraccone, p. 12. "*La parte del vecchio è sempre parte grave, ma vien però mescolata fra le ridicolo per la lingua e vestimento.*"

³⁵ For instance, Orazio in a number of scenari in the Scala collection serves as a rival to his father Pantalone. In the tragedies, Pantalone serves as a counselor, in much the same manner as the familiar personage of Polonius, in *Hamlet*, who gives counsel not only to the King Claudius, but also to his son Laertes. See Act II, Scene I.

pursuit of love causes him to lose dignity, although it allows for comic action and buffoonery with his *zanni*, who often acts as the inept go-between.

In Chapter IV, it was demonstrated that Andrea Calmo was in the main responsible for Il Magnifico's early Venetian development. Calmo's Lettere were used as an important source for the *zibaldone* of Pantalone.³⁶ Prototypes to the stage figure of Pantalone include the '*senex*' figure from the Classical comedies of Plautus and Terence, the 'Pappus' of the Atellan farce, and the 'potent grave and reverend *Signiors* of the *commedia erudita*."³⁷ Contemporary figures with related characteristics include Zanolio, a caricature of the burghers of Piombino. Girolamo Salimbeni of the *Gelosi* was a famous interpreter of this role.³⁸ Another variation was the Siennese figure, Cassandro, who wore a wig and green spectacles.³⁹ Literary mention of Pantalone is first evident in a poem by Bellay of 1555-56, when Pantalone was popular in Rome.⁴⁰ In a previous section on the *compagnie*, we discussed the great Pantalone, Giulio Pasquati of the *Gelosi*, who developed a distinctive, non-stereotypical style. The Pantalone figure is a mainstay of the early *commedia dell'arte* and appears in numerous images, and throughout most of the early scenario collections.

³⁶ First noted by Francesco Andreini in Le Bravure del Capitano Spavento (Venezia, 1607).

³⁷ Lea, I, p. 19.

³⁸ Oreglia, p. 82.

³⁹ Ibid. p. 82.

⁴⁰ Nicoll, p. 256.

The Bolognese Dottore, like Pantalone is generally in his sixties, and depicted as a doctor or lawyer. He is a member of the academies, "a busybody, a muddler, and exceedingly presumptuous, he a great wiseacre, expiating on everything, for the most part inopportunately. His tirades are abstruse and incomprehensible, interlarded with mispronounced and bungled Greek and Latin quotations."⁴¹ Dottore is represented by his dated tabard, and a speech pattern that mixes Latin and Greek phrases, with his native Bolognese. His diagnostic methods include uroscopy (analyzing urine, for melancholia, for instance); or prescribing enemas for any number of conditions. While Pantalone has an appetite for sex, the obese Dottore is hungry for food; thus his motto "the learned and the fat."⁴² He is usually the father of one of the *innamorata*, and neither as wealthy, nor as dignified as his partner, Pantalone. While, Pantalone is agile and makes exaggerated strides across the stage, Dottore sways as he walks mincingly with tiny steps.⁴³

Mario Apollonia suggests that the "duet of the *vecchi*," offers a structural parallel to the two *zanni*; which functions as resistance and opposition to the actions of the *servi* and the young lovers.⁴⁴ However, as much as they seem to be allied against these other forces, Pantalone and Dottore are constantly getting in each other's way, muddling or bumbling the situation (*ingarbuglia*) instead of helping or facilitating each others' objectives.

⁴¹ Oreglia, p. 85.

⁴² Ibid. p. 86.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 86.

⁴⁴ Mario Apollonia, *Storia dell'Commedia dell'Arte* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1982), p. 147. For instance, opposition can be noted in the familiar role of parents as blocking characters to the younger lovers.

It would appear as though Dottore represents a gradual development of the comic doctor, Dosseno, that existed in the early mimes.⁴⁵ Oreglia likens Dottore to the pedagogue Lidus, in Plautus' *Bacchidi*.⁴⁶ Scholars have also linked Dottore to Renaissance literary figures. Ullise Fresco posits the evolution of Dottore from Boccaccio's Calandrino and Messer Simone.⁴⁷ Certainly the pedant type from the *commedia erudita* is similar to Dottore in his use of broken Latin phrases, though Lea cautions that the Pedant is not without his own legacy in *commedia scenarii*.⁴⁸ In addition, the Pedant figure is rarely a parent, which is a significant function of Dottore, although both are depicted as *persone* hopelessly out-of-touch with the real world, a quality signified by the out-of-date nature of their costume:

"He attracted attention by his dark and formal attire, the outrageously antiquated cut of which must have been at least several generations behind the fashion of the day [See Title illustration from "*La Fondazione e origine di Bologna*," (1610). Aniello Soldano in his part of Dottore Spacca Strommolo]. It is as though time had stood still for the doctor, since in the stage comedies he was always depicted as a man of yesterday or the day before."⁴⁹

In another sense Dottore is related to the *ciarlitani*, the quack medicine men who pitched their snake oil and other bogus remedies from the mountebank stages, in the *piazze*

⁴⁵ According to Nicoll, although Lea p. 33, flatly denies any relation to Dosseno of the Atellan tradition.

⁴⁶ Oreglia, p. 84.

⁴⁷ Ullise Fresco, *Una Tradizione novellistica nell commedia del secolo xvi*, (Camerino, 1903). See also Nicoll, p. 257.

⁴⁸ Lea, p. 41. Cites the presence of the pedants Cataldo and Claudione in the Scala scenario.

⁴⁹ Sturl Gudlaugsson, *The Comedians in the Works of Jan Steen and his Contemporaries* trans. by James Brockway (Davaco: Soest, Netherlands, 1975), p. 15-16.

(plazas) and "*théâtres de la foire*" (outdoor fair theatres) throughout Europe. The charlatan was usually accompanied by a zanni and *attrice* or *meretrice* (prostitute). Examples of the mountebank Dottore are not infrequent in *commedia dell'arte* iconography.

Dottore is sometimes simply referred to as Graziano, and appears as such in the *Scala scenarii*. Perucci posits the range of Dottore:

"The part of the Dottore is not as dignified [as that of Pantalone]. He serves as the secondary father. Through his liveliness of spirit and the redundancy of words, his role may be carried somewhat out of the serious sphere--not so much, however, as to drag it down to the level of the second zanni. . . . His speech must be true Bolognese, although, when the actor is playing Naples, Palermo or other cities distant from Bologna, it should be modified a little; otherwise not a word would be understood. . . . The actor playing the part must be learned enough to illustrate his ideas, in the right time and place, with some Latin sentence, some text or pronouncement of authority, such as "Nothing is more powerful than love, *Authentici, quibus modis naturales effiantur legitimi, coll. 6*" or "Friends should have all their affairs open to one another-- *l. Latæ et Amicus, ff. de verborum signif. . . . et cetera.*" A number of years ago there was introduced a special style in the playing of the part, whereby the Dottore mutilated his words, saying, for example, "terrible urinal" for tribunal, . . . but since it was realized that this rendered him far too stupid and clumsy, it has been abandoned. . . . The actor playing this part can memorize: various pieces of advice suitable for a counsellor, speeches urging men to devote themselves to study, condemnations of vice, and above all, long lists of names, dates, and references. The latter provides the greatest merriment, particularly when they are given in the form of recapitulations; here they serve at once to display the ostentatious show of both his academic doctrine and his memory."⁵⁰

Connected with the early tradition of Dottore are Ludovico de' Bianchi and Luzio

Burchiella of the *Gelosi* troupe. Bianchi was the author of Cento e quindici conclusioni in ottava rima del Plusquam perfetto Dottor Gratiano Partesana da Francolin (One Hundred and Fifteen Maxims in Verse by Doctor Graziano of Francolin), a sixteenth-century text that offers entertaining insight into the role of Dottore, and perhaps served as an entry into

⁵⁰ Translation adapted from, Nicoll, p.258. From Petraccone, pp. 119-121.

the *zibaldoni* of the Dottore of the time.⁵¹ An early account of Ludovico's performance of Dottore was recorded circa 1594:

"It is but a few years ago that Lucio, a famous comedian, and well-nigh the modern Roscius, being in Ferrara, noticed the novel fashions and odd mannerisms (*nouvo costumi e strane maniere*) of an old barber called Messer Gratiano from Cotiche a native of Francolino, and drew upon them for the most ridiculous stage role, . . . which was then for a long time excellently played by Ludovico of Bologna. . . ." ⁵²

An example of Dottore's ridiculous style of speech is given in this account by Giuseppe Petrai:

"So you laughed when I stumbled! By stumbling I might have broken my head, the physician would have come and prescribed me some drugs, drugs come from the Orient and from the Orient comes the philosophy of Aristotle; Aristotle was the tutor of Alexander the Great, who was the master of the world; the world is supported by Altas and Atlas has great strength; strength serves to erect columns which support palaces; palaces are made by masons. . . ." ⁵³

I have abbreviated this passage which is more than double the above length, and is indicative of the kind of overbearing extrapolation which is characteristic of Dottore.

While the interplay between the Dottore and Pantalone creates a number of comic situations, the heart of the comic interaction rests between Pantalone and his *zanni*. Earlier in this chapter, I referred to this interaction in the works of Calmo, and made reference to Apollonio's statement that:

⁵¹ Nicoll, p. 364. Published in Bologna, 1587.

⁵² See Lea, I, pp. 36-37, for full account. Commentary contained in Part LXIX of *Il Predicatore, overo Demetrio Falerio*. . . published in Venice in 1642, of a commentary dated before 1594.

⁵³ See Oreglia, pp. 87-88.

"the opposition between *zanni* and the old man can substitute for the rigorous comic mechanisms, and the inventive play of comic dialogue."⁵⁴

The *zanni*, or comic servants generally deriving from Bergamo, are buffoon types, skilled at pratfalls, comic business called *lazzi*, and occasionally perform acrobatics or stiltwalking. *Lazzi* are considered to be an important characteristic of the *commedia dell'arte*. Luigi Riccoboni's definition is widely regarded as the "most satisfying that has been propounded"⁵⁵:

"We call *lazzi* that which Arlecchino or the other masked performers do in the middle of a scene which they interrupt by their terror or other foolery which is irrelevant to the subject of the play, to which they are above all obliged to return. They are those excesses which consist of those jokes which the actor invents according to his genius, that the Italian comedians call *lazzi*."⁵⁶

Perrucci broadens the definition declaring: "a *lazzo* means something foolish, witty, or metaphorical in word or action."⁵⁷ "He adds that the inexperienced performer should rely upon either the leader of the company or the person with the most experience for the working out of *lazzi*, because they would know where the *lazzi* are necessary."⁵⁸ A number of *lazzo* are given titles suggesting not only their commonality, but also their entry into the *comici*'s *zibaldoni*. Nicoll gives this example from Adriani manuscript, entitled the "*lazzo* of weeping and laughing":

⁵⁴ Mario Apollonio, in *Studi sul teatro veneto*. . . .(op. cit.) see section on Calmo for full citation and translation).

⁵⁵ Lea, I, p. 67. Scholars generally agree *lazzi* is an etymological corruption based on the contraction of *l'azione* (action).

⁵⁶ Lea, p. 68. for original. Translation by Edward Leon Sostek, "The *commedia dell'arte* : a study in dramatic form," Diss. University of Iowa 1976, p. 33.

⁵⁷ Nicoll, *Masks, Mimes*. . . .(op. cit.) p. 220

⁵⁸ Sostek, p. 57

"the *lazzo* of weeping and laughing is when a character goes on cheating another. For instance, when the old man weeps at the departure of his son and smiles at the thought of having free opportunity of enjoying, without any fear of jealousy, the women he loves. The son does the same."⁵⁹

Sostek points out that:

"this *lazzo* is merely the framework for a *contrasto* of parting between the father and son, followed by a soliloquy of rejoicing by the one who remains--both of which are easily found in the commonplace books of both characters."⁶⁰

Many of the *lazzi* were apparently crude and vulgar, as indicated in various iconographic examples.⁶¹ An example preserved in a French version of the Biancolelli scenarii, demonstrates a slapstick-like *lazzo* :

"I [Biancolelli as Harlequin] arrive on stage; there I find Trivelin stretched on the ground. I think him dead and try to drag him to his feet; then I let my wooden sword fall down. He takes it and hits me on the buttocks, I turn around without speaking, and he gives me a kick on the back so that I tumble down, Up I get again; I seize and carry him; I lean him against the wings on the right-hand side of the stage, I look around at the footlights, and meanwhile he gets up and leans against the left-hand side-wings. This *lazzi* is repeated two or three times."⁶²

⁵⁹ Nicoll, p. 220.

⁶⁰ Sostek, p. 59.

⁶¹ Such as the grotesque actions of giving enemas, beatings, dung-flinging, and so on. Representations of the first two examples are evident in Callot's *Balli* series.

⁶² Nicoll, p. 221, translation from *Traductions de Scenario de Joseph Dominique Biancolelli, dit Arlequin, et l'histoire du theatre italien depuis l'année 1577. Jusqu'en 1750 et les années suivantes, par M. G. [Gueullette]* 2 vols. in the *Bibl. de l'Opera* (Paris), i. 386.

While the *lazzi* offered a range of freedom regarding its actual performance, we can suggest by the nature of the titles used that it was to a great extent pre-determined, a rehearsed piece of business, that allowed for extrapolation as the situation warranted.⁶³

The use of the word *zanni* predates the origin of the *commedia dell'arte*, and a number of early sixteenth-century texts exist in which the reference to *zanni* appears.⁶⁴ In usage, the word *zanni* refers in a general sense to the *zanni* figure, or it may be delegated to qualify a particular servant, as in Zan Ganassa. The derivation of the word *zanni* has been a cause of debate, and is perhaps unresolvable based on current evidence. While Constant Mic posits that its derivation from the *sannio* of the classical mimes is totally invalid; Nicoll disagrees, making reference to the first agreement to form a *compagnia* in 1545, citing that the term "Maffeo called Zanini," "might well be the lost modern form taken from the 'oblique case' of *sannio* (*sannionem*)."⁶⁵ Mic favors the theory that holds that *zanni* derives from the corruption of Giovanni,⁶⁶ into Zoan or Zuano, a common occurrence in the dialect of the Lombard region.

Usually two *zanni* served as servants to Pantalone, although there are examples of one, in *Il Baron todesco* from the Correr collection, and even three: Stopino, Scapino, and Zanni

⁶³ Sostek, p. 60

⁶⁴ Nicoll cites a 1514 reference to *zanni* from a literary source, a 1553 account by Girolamo Rofia which verifies *zanni*'s presence in the *piazza* of Florence, which connects them with Bergamo. In 1555, Bellay saw the Zanni performing in Rome with Pantalones, and in 1559 Lusca published a song dedicated to Pantalones and *zanni*. Nicoll, p. 263. Although Nicoll does not allude to Zan Polo, we should be aware that this was a common appellation of the Venetian buffoons.

⁶⁵ Nicoll, p. 264.

⁶⁶ See Mic, pp. 209-210

from the same collection, *Li duoi Scolari*.⁶⁷ Certainly, the development of the *contadino* into a very popular figure owes a great deal to Ruzante, but both Cecchini and Perucci assert that the *commedia dell'arte* divided the plot function and character type of the *zanni* into two distinct spheres--one astute and clever, the other stupid and foolish.⁶⁸

Perruci relates that the first *zanni* must commit much of his part to memory, and not deviate far from the line of the plot. He must have quick retorts right at hand, and does not play the fool (*sciocco*) as does the second *zanni*, who is also clumsy, and oaf-like.⁶⁹

". . . di maniera che non sappia qual sia destra o la sinistra. (mannered so that he does not know his left hand from his right)"⁷⁰

The typical *zanni* costume of the early phase of the *commedia dell'arte* consists of a light-colored full-bodied shirt, with wide-legged trousers or pantaloons, supplemented with a wooden sword. Hats of various kinds are evident from a "coolie-style" favored in the Fossard engravings, to a softer style cap. Examples of a full and half-mask are available, the full mask was usually accompanied by a beard, and warts which suggests a relation to the mask used by the Atellan mimes.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Nicoll, p. 265.

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 265.

⁶⁹ Andrea Perrucci, *Dell'Arte Rappresentativa Premeditata ed all'Improvisato*, edit. by Anton G. Bragaglia (*Firenze*,: Sansoni, 1961) original publication 1699. pp. 216-217.

⁷⁰ Petraccone, pp. 137-138.

⁷¹ Nicoll observes the phenomenon of warts on the Atellan masks, which can be traced through the medieval period when they were associated with the devil masks in medieval secular drama. See Nicoll, p. 266 including figures 182 and 183.

The most popular of the *zanni* from Bergamo is no doubt Arlecchino. While the derivation of this character is a matter of much speculation, and a great deal of literature, Otto Driesen's essay *Der Ursprung des Harlekin*, has gained the most respectability among scholars.⁷² Driesen draws an etymological link to the eleventh-century French Herlequin, a figure representing the spirit of the dead.⁷³ Driesen also cites that the hell-mouth scene in medieval moralities was entitled *le chappe d'Hellequin*. Driesen concludes that Harlequin was secularized when Zan Ganassa came to Paris and transformed this diabolic character into a comic one. Apollonio agrees:

"When he returned to France in 1572 it happened that Zan Ganassa, the character of Zanni raining from his beastlike jaw, took the other name of Zanni Arlecchino; it probably also signified that he assumed the diabolical and bizzare manner from the tradition of French carnival."⁷⁴

Don Casiano Pellicer makes the first written reference to Harlequin in 1574, citing the presence of "Arlecchino, Pantalone and Dottore," before a Spanish audience at Madrid.⁷⁵ Tessari cites that for the Counter-Reformation, the black mask of Arlecchino was related to the *angelo nero*, or black angel, which strengthens Driesen's connection to this figure's diabolical history.⁷⁶

⁷² See Nicoll, p. 268.

⁷³ Nicoll, p. 268. There is also the theory that Harlequin derives from the figure of Herakles. Both wear the checked garment -- the one a spotted skin the other tattered clothing. Both carry a slapstick.

⁷⁴ Apollonio, *Storia*. . . (op. cit.) p. 80. . . *ove ritornò pur nel 1572: e qui accade che Zan Ganassa, lo Zanni diluvione dalla mascella bestiale, prendesse altro nome Zanni Arlecchino; il che probabilmente significò anche ch'egli assunse quel modo diavolesco e bizzarro della tradizione carnevalesca francese.*"

⁷⁵ Don Casiano Pellicer, *Tratado historico sobre el origen y progresos de la comedia y del histrionismo en España* (Madrid, 1804), p. 53. Refers also to troupe of Ganassa.

Harlequin is identified by the variegated patchwork of his costume, which evolved in the seventeenth century to the traditional diamond-shaped pattern. He is almost always depicted with a wooden *batte*, a typical accoutrement of most zanni. He is seen as described in *Compositions de rhétorique de M. Don Arlechin*, a bizarre work which includes a group of engravings depicting the famous Arlecchino, Tristano Martinelli (See Fig. 12). Heck notes some of the scholarly commentary on this work:

"According to the 'Martinelli, Tristano' entry in the *Enciclopedia dello spettacolo Garzanti* (1977), this book 'testifies to the bizarre and nonconformist aspects of the author's personality, in that of the 70 pages which the work comprises, 59 are in fact blank.' Vince describes the book somewhat differently: 'The pamphlet consists of seventy pages, fifty-six of which contain only a two-line rhyme -- evidently intended as the rhetorical composition. The remaining pages contain the dedication, some miscellaneous verse, and six illustrations, three of which present Arlecchino in exactly the same way as he appears in the *Recueil Fossard*.'⁷⁷

Riccoboni gives a succinct appraisal and description of Arlecchino's costume:

"Arlecchino's dress has never been of one style or of one nation. It consists of pieces of red, blue, and green cloth cut in triangles and arranged one above the other from top to bottom; a little hat which hardly covers his shaven head; small heelless shoes; and a black mask with wrinkles which has no eyes but just two holes for seeing through."⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Tessari, *La maschera*. . . (op. cit.) p. 38.

⁷⁷ Heck, p. 213, Sh-1601.

⁷⁸ Luigi Riccoboni, *Histoire du théâtre italien* (Paris, 1728), pp. 4-5. "*La forme de l'habit d'Arlechin n'a jamais été d'aucune mode, ni d'aucune nation: ce sont des morceaux de drap rouge, bleu & verd coupés en triangle, & arrangés l'un près de l'autre depuis le haut jusqu'en bas; un petit chapeau qui couvre à piene sa tête rasée; de petits Escarpins sans talons, & un Masque noir écrasé qui n'a point d'yeaz, mais seulement deuz trous fort petits pur voir.*" Translation in Nicoll, p. 273.

While this *zanni* from Bergamo is noted for his contradictory nature of mixing extreme stupidity and naiveté with wisdom and grace, sometimes as in *Il Marito* of the Scala collection, he appears as a "stupid booby."⁷⁹ Nicoll considers that most of the Harlequins were acrobats, and represented the spirit and essence of the comic *lazzi*.⁸⁰

Most famous of the early Arlecchino's is undoubtedly Tristano Martinelli. His figure is first documented with Diana's troupe at Cremona in 1595, and later in 1599 with the *Accessi*. The *Compositions de Rhetorique*, written in 1601 at Lyons, were apparently concocted by Martinelli to request a gift from King Henry IV. Martinelli enjoyed a free and irreverent relation with the most prominent figures of his time. In a letter to Cardinal Gonzaga he refers to the Queen Maria de' Medici as "that Gaulish Gossip."⁸¹ A number of these examples exist, demonstrating the popularity and power that some of the great *comici* possessed, in a period that was moving toward the austerity, seriousness, and centralization of authority that would define Absolutism.⁸² Martinelli is also indicative of the kind of flexibility the star virtuoso performer might attain in being able to move from *compagnia* to *compagnia*, while increasing his fame and wealth through solo performances and exhibitions of various types and combinations.

⁷⁹ Nicoll, p. 276.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 276. Examples of hand-walking are found in the *Recueil Fossard* engravings.

⁸¹ Nicoll, p. 279.

⁸² As represented in the writings of Pascal, and the rise of the Jansenists; the consolidation of power by Louis XIV.

From upper Bergamo came the *zanni* known as Brighella, an intriguer figure, who is familiarly depicted playing a guitar.⁸³ He is attired in a full jacket and trousers both detailed with green horizontal striping. Brighella's mask depicts a close beard and mustache, and hooked nose with licentious eyes. Although not seen in the various collection of *scenarii* until the middle of the seventeenth century, Sand has posited his presence in the sixteenth century,⁸⁴ and evidence of this is found in the Bayeaux museum painting of the *commedia* types,⁸⁵ as well as in a recent discovery of the Brighella figure in a 1580's work by Jacopo Bassano.⁸⁶ Scapino is a related figure to Brighella and is seen in two Callot prints from the *Balli di Sfessania* series, and in an early seventeenth-century French print.⁸⁷ He appears in a number of scenario from about 1611 onwards, and the most famous Scapino, Francesco Gabbrielli was noted as a great musician and maker of instruments.⁸⁸

A female counterpart to the *zanni*, were the *zagne*, later called *fantescche* (maids) or *servette* (soubrettes).⁸⁹ These figures were generally unmasked and wore bonnets, skirts

⁸³ As in the French engraving of the *comico* Carlo Cantù by Stefano dell Bella. See Nicoll, figure 200.

⁸⁴ Sand, p. 166.

⁸⁵ See Nicoll, figure 184, and Charles Sterling (op. cit.) which disputes Nicoll's claim that Pourbus was the artist responsible for the painting. Katritzky has noted a Brighella type in a carnival scene by Jacopo Bassano. See Katritzky, *Renaissance Studies* (op. cit.).

⁸⁶ See M.A. Katritzky, "Lodewyk Toeput" . . . (op. cit.), Bassini series.

⁸⁷ See Mic, p. 22.

⁸⁸ Nicoll, p. 287.

⁸⁹ Oreglia, p. 123.

and aprons in a variety of colors. "They were specialists in quick changes and disguises and often appeared in different costumes in the course of a single act."⁹⁰ Oreglia describes their essential actions:

"These actresses, whether they spoke in standard Italian or in dialect [the famous Colombine spoke French], were remarkable for their sharp and malicious wit or gossipy gaiety, and their performances for its sprightliness and rhythm. Always quick to give a helping hand to the lovers, the *servette* were capricious and coquettish with the man-servants, whom they often ended up marrying; the dialogues of the *zanni* and the *zagne* were witty parodies of courtly love. The *servette* might be called: Franceschina, Oliva, Nespola, Spinetta, Ricciolina, Corallina, Colombina, and others. . . "⁹¹

As pointed out earlier in this section on the *parti comici*, there are examples of this figure being played by a man. At times, she might represent other roles such as a courtesan, or procuress, or shopkeeper's wife. The most famous of the early *servette* is Silvia Roncagli who was referred to in more detail in the section concerning the *Gelosi compagnia*.

An important sixteenth-century stage figure of the *commedia dell'arte* is the flamboyantly dressed Spanish Capitano, a parodic representation of the hated Spanish military presence in Italy during the cinquecento. Sometimes referred to as a *bravo* type,⁹² the Braggart Captain boasts of conquests, great strength, and sexual prowess, only to display cowardice at the slightest confrontation.⁹³ Capitano can be inserted here for he stands between the truly grotesque parts (*parti comici*) of the *vecchi* and the *zanni*, and the serious figures

⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 123.

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 123.

⁹² Lea uses this term.

⁹³ Perrucci tells us that the Spanish did not enjoy the association with cowardice. "*Ma lo spagnolo riderà nell'ascoltare le bravure, ma non vuol vedere nella parte d'un soldato, codardie.*"

(*parti gravi o seri*) of the lovers. Sometimes he even appears as an *innamorato* as noted by Perrucci.⁹⁴ As we have seen earlier, this "stage figure" has a legacy throughout the cinquecento, both in the plays of Calmo and Beolco, in the popular farces⁹⁵ and in Renaissance comedy.

The Capitano's costume at times imitates the military outfits worn by the Spanish captains of the day.⁹⁶ As such, he is usually depicted without mask. However, the Callot depictions of the Capitano in the *Balli* series are far more grotesque, particularly in regard to the mask from which protrudes a phallic-like nose, extended feather adornments, and goggle-like openings for the eyes.⁹⁷ Cecchini posits that the Capitano should have a flexible body and graceful movements, and a resounding or booming voice, as well as a highly exaggerated manner of behavior.⁹⁸ Nicoll relates Michelangelo Buonarroti's description of this figure:

"Stiffly formal the Captain stands, twisting his enormous black moustache into monstrous shapes, pretending he is full of passion and cruelty. Proudly he boasts of his wonderful prowess, he who is a greater coward than a bailiff, the very type of a vainglorious poltroon."⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Petraccone, p. 13.

⁹⁵ The character of Scampano by Venturino Venturini of Pesaro, in *Farsa satyra morale* written in 1520. In Luigi Stoppato, pp. 193-217. Please refer to earlier sections on Calmo, Beolco, and *commedia erudita* for examples of the Capitano legacy.

⁹⁶ See Nicoll, figure 161 an example from the *Compositions de rhetorique*.

⁹⁷ Noted in Callot's *Spessa Monti*, *Bonbardon*, *Cocodrillo* and *Mala Gamba*.

⁹⁸ Petraccone, p. 13.

⁹⁹ Nicoll, p. 248. From *Fiera*, *Giornale* II, *Atto* II, *Sc.* II (1726).

The most famous of the early Capitani is undoubtedly Francesco Andreini who had earlier in his career played the part of the *innamorato*. In *Le Bravure del Capitan Spavento*,¹⁰⁰ Andreini gives a definitive examples of the part in a series of dialogues with the figure of Trappola, his servant. In one such example Spavento describes his birth:

"When other children are born they are immediately washed in warm water, wrapped in swaddling bands, and fed with milk and pap. I, as soon as I was born, was washed in molten lead, clad in red-hot irons, and fed with hemlock juice and deadly nightshade."¹⁰¹

Molinari points out that a major theme of these dialogues has to do with Capitan Spavento's erotic adventures:

". . . marvelous exploits of his sexual vigor, which allow him to impregnate in one night two hundred young women, while Hercules can perform with only fifty."¹⁰²

For Molinari the text of *Bravure* and the figure of Capitano represent the triumph of rhetoric: "rhetoric ascends to the absolute"¹⁰³ In these speeches we have an abundance of tropes, figures of speech, epithets, and reduncancies, in a sense anything that can be said becomes possible.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Francesco Andreini, *Le Bravure del Capitan Spavento* (Venice: Somasco, 1607).

¹⁰¹ Nicoll, pp. 249-250.

¹⁰² Molinari, *La Commedia dell'Arte* (op. cit.), p. 116. "*meravigliosi exploits della sua vigoria sessuale, che gli permette di ingravidare in in una notte duecento fanciulle, mentre Ercole se era fermato a sole cinquanta.*"

¹⁰³ Molinari, p. 117. "*la retorica assunta come assoluto.*"

¹⁰⁴ Molinari, p. 117.

Early *commedia* examples of the Capitano are evidenced in the Bavarian performance of 1568, albeit by an amateur. Fabrizio de Fornariis created the famous Capitano Coccodrillo, and between 1571 and 1574 he played in Paris. Later he performed with *Gli Uniti*.¹⁰⁵ Silvio Fiorilli, a Neapolitan whom many have attributed to be the creator of the original Pulcinella, later developed the highly popular Capitano Matamoros, which he played with a number of troupes.¹⁰⁶ The stage figure of the Spanish Capitano lost favor in the early seventeenth century as the Spanish presence waned as a political factor, and the troupes found fame and fortune outside of Italy. The characteristics of the Capitano figure, were then assimilated and adapted into the offspring *bravi*, Giangurgolo¹⁰⁷ and Scaramuccia.¹⁰⁸

The Serious Parts and Rhetorical Theory

The serious parts (*parti serie* or *parti gravi*), make up the final group of *commedia dell'arte* stage figures. As somewhat normative characters they serve as foils to the more bizarre, masked, and grotesque comic figures of the *vecchi* and *zanni*. These characters, both men and women, wore the clothes of the upper classes or aristocracy, and were usually depicted without masks. Unlike the figures of the *parti comici*, the lovers went by

¹⁰⁵ Nicoll, p. 251.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 251. Such as the *Accessi*, the *Affezionati*, and the *Risoluti*.

¹⁰⁷ A Calabrian variation on the Captain type.

¹⁰⁸ Riccoboni first interprets Scaramuccia as a Captain figure. Callot offers us the earliest depiction of this character. See Duchartre, p. 236-237.

a number of names: the men were known as Flavio, Orazio, Lelio, Fabrizio, Silvio, to name a few, while the counterpart *innamorate* were known as Silvia, Flaminia, Isabella, Flavia, Lucinda and so on.¹⁰⁹ Actually, these male and female stage figures, called *innamorato* and *innamorata*, respectively, were characterized by a highly refined and graceful presence, which required not only a measure of talent and physical attractiveness, but also a background in various literary forms and oratorical skills. Perrucci's guide to *le parti degli innamorati*, suggests that training for the *innamorati* was steeped in a rhetorical tradition:

"You must remember every rule of gesture, in voices and actions : you should speak perfect Italian with Tuscan words. . . ,by reading the best Tuscan literature, they will be able to confirm their literary prowess such as the *Onomastica* and the *Crusca* [works by the academicians]. . They must also know the figures and tropes of rhetoric, because from these they will be able to attain great respect. For example, they must deliver with moderation and not strain metaphors, metonyms, synecdoche [part is put for whole, or whole for part], *autonomasia*, *catachresis* [misuse or strained use of words], *metalepsia*, *allegory* and *irony*. They must present figures of speech such as *protasis* [conditional clause beginning with *if*], *apheresis* [the omission of a letter, phoneme, or unstressed syllable at the beginning of a word], *apenthesis*, *syncope* [the contraction of a word by omitting one or more syllables from the middle], *comparisons*. They must state figures that represent a desire or longing to be together: *repetitions*, *conversions*, *reduplication* [to form a derivative or inflected form by doubling a specified syllable or other portion of the primitive, sometimes with fixed modifications as in Greek *léloipa* "I have left;" *léipo* "I leave."] *anadiplosis* [repetition in the first part of one clause of a prominent word in the latter part of a preceding clause] . . .¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Nicoll, (op. cit.) pp. 234 and 236.

¹¹⁰ Andrea Perucci, *Dell'arte rappresentativa premeditata ed all'improvviso*. . . (1699) edited Bragaglia 1964, op. cit. p. 163. "*Si ricordino di tutte le regole del gestire, nelle voci, nelle azioni: studino di sapere la lingua perfetta italiana con i vocaboli toscani. . conferirà la lettura così de buoni libri toscani, come gli Onomastici, Crusca . . si sappiano ancora le figure e tropi della rettorica, per con questi si potran fare in grande onore, come sono delle metafore, ma che siano temperate e non stralunate, metonimia, sinecdoche, autonomasia, catacresi, metalepsi, allegoria ed ironia, delle figure: protasi, aferesi, apentesi, sincope, paragore. . delle figure per giunger vaghezza: ripetizione, conversione, complessione e reduplicazione, anadiplosi. .*" Annotations taken from *The American College Dictionary* (New York: Random House, 1968)

Although this is an abbreviated version of Perrucci's more extensive list, it demonstrates the specialized rhetorical training required of the *innamorati*. Indeed, Perrucci establishes how delivery was crucial for the lover figure:

"They should study the so-called Italian Prosody of Father Spadafuora for short and long phrasings [of vowels]. . . so they can speak quickly, easily and sweetly in order to profess the conceits of the mind."(*Prosodia italiana* is an Italian adaption of various Quintilian principles).¹¹¹

Conceits (*concetti*) here refers to its cinquecento literary application, in which a figure of speech, trope, or fancy of the mind, becomes a euphuistic point of departure.¹¹² The lovers' parts called for these extrapolations as a matter of course. Typical is this "Conceit of Rejection" (*Concetti di Scaccia*) from the Perrucci collection:

"My heart is an anvil that resists the hammer blows of your obstinancy; my breast is marble, on the contrary--it is agate stone that resists your fire; my bosom is ice but such hard ice that it is impossible to melt it with your flame. You are to me a Fury sent by the king of love to torment me."¹¹³

Perrucci gives eight more examples of the *concetti* ranging from themes of jealousy and unworthiness, to true love, all in a highly embellished and figurative style. These works

¹¹¹ Perrucci quote taken from Roberto Tessari, *Commedia dell'Arte: La Maschera* (op. cit.) p. 143. "*Studino. . . la detta Prosodia italiana del padre Spadafuora, per le brevi e per lunghe. . . così, si farà la lingua pronta, facile e docile a proferire i concetti della mente.*" For a full elaboration of theater's rhetorical methodology see, Alfred S. Golding, *Classicistic Acting: Two Centuries of a Performance Tradition at the Amsterdam Schouwburg* (University Press: Lanham MD, 1984), pp. 71-112.

¹¹² See Part I, Chapter III for a more lengthy probing of the conceit.

¹¹³ Perrucci, Bragaglia edit., p. 165. "*Il mio cuore è d'incudine per resistere al colpo di martello della vostra ostinazione, il mio petto è di marmo, anzi di pietra Agate per resistere al vostro fuoco; Il mio seno di ghiaccio ma di ghiaccio così duro, che sarà impossibile, di liquefarsi alle vostre fiamme, e per me siete una Furia del Regno amoroso, per tormentarmi.*"

make up a portion of the stock speeches, called *generici*, which were compiled into a *zibaldone*.

"the conceits, prepared for use on occasion on the stage, must be collected in a volume lettered [*zibaldoni*] 'Commonplace-Book,' or if desired, with subheadings such as 'Mutual Love,' 'Rejected Love,' 'Plaints.'"¹¹⁴

The *zibaldoni* or *cibaldoni*, what Nicoll translates as "Commonplace-Book,"¹¹⁵ contained all the stock speeches or *generici*, which were appropriate to a given figure "in a variety of situations."¹¹⁶ These were hopefully memorized by the performer, who allowed sections performed *alla premeditata* to alternate with those performed *all'improvviso*.¹¹⁷

In addition to the *concetti*, the lovers engaged in various monologues or soliloquies.¹¹⁸ While these might include narrative exposition such as the opening prologue, there were also specific soliloquy formats utilized to display various emotional states. Perrucci

¹¹⁴ Translation from Nicoll, p. 234.

¹¹⁵ p. 218.

¹¹⁶ Sostek, p. 33

¹¹⁷ Pier Maria Cecchini, *Pier Maria Cecchini: le commedie. Un commediante e li suo mestiere. Testo, introduzione e note di Cesare Molinari*, (Ferrara: I Bovolenta, 1983). Regarding the *innamorati* Cecchini's statements point to the craft of the actor, which is built upon the same principles as the education of the courtier. "They who play the difficult parts of lovers enrich their minds with a pretty lot of noble discourses suitable to the variety of matter which the stage should treat. . . (by) a frequent reading of elegant books so that there remains in the reader's memory an impression of most heightened style which when their speeches are heard produce the effect of springing from natural genius." Quote translation from Smith, pp. 87-88.

¹¹⁸ While other parts also might engage in soliloquies, as in the macaronic monologues of Dottore, or the fulminations of Capitano, the lovers are more representative of the varieties of monologic discourse that was used in the early *commedia dell'arte*.

identifies the *Disperatione* or Desperations, for example "Desperation for a Despised Lover," or "Desperation for a Deceived Lover."¹¹⁹ Perhaps the most popular were the *sproposito*, consisting of absurd or nonsensical speech, "to be used whenever the lovers are overcome by madness real or feigned."¹²⁰ The most famous of example of the *sproposito* is Isabella's "pazzia" (madness) scene from *La Pazzia di Isabella*, in the Scala collection.

One monologue type that prevailed long after the demise of the *commedia dell'arte* was the *tirata* (tirade). The *tirata*, while a staple of both the *innamorati*'s and *innamorate*'s *generici*, are also found in the *zibaldone* of Pantalone and Capitano.¹²¹ Molière, through his association with the Italian Comedians in Paris, perfected *la tirade* in his satires, adapting them from 'improvised' *tirate* of the *commedia dell'arte*. There is a contemporary connection between the *tirata* and what Franco Carmelo Greco has described as the "tourbillon" (whirlwind) in the comedy *Candelaio* by Giordano Bruno completed in 1582. Bruno, one of the most respected writers of the late cinquecento, demonstrates that the later writers of the learned comedy may have still influenced the early *commedia dell'arte* performers:

"A whirlwind of linguistic collisions of such proportions that it simply steals the body of the scene. The comedy is in reality one of the most radical dismissals of the cognitive capacities of every linguistic and standard form. .
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¹¹⁹ Sostek, p. 36.

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 36.

¹²¹ Noted in Le Lettere of Andrea Calmo, and the Bravure of Capitan Spavento.

¹²² See La Commedia dell'Arte e Il Teatro Erudito: La Scrittura e Il Gesto (Napoli : Guida Editori, 1982) p. 48. no. 105. ". . .un "tourbillon" di scontri linguistici che come tali

Among the most frequently used stock speeches are the *uscite* and *chiusette*. The *uscite* (exits) are soliloquies ending with a rhymed couplet devised to elicit a pronounced response upon an actor's exit: that is, to induce the audience into providing a round of applause. Perrucci lists a number of these *uscite* to be used in appropriate situations: "a happy lover," "a rejected lover," "a scornful lover."¹²³ The *prime uscita* was the actor's first exit speech and most important, for it established the prevailing emotional key of the character throughout the performance. The *chiusette* (closing phrases) were rhymed closures used to bring a speech to an end. Perrucci posits that many of these love-related *chiusette* were inspired by the love poetry of Petrarch and Tasso, who were widely copied at the end of the cinquecento. The original is left side-by-side with the translation to demonstrate the rhyming nature of the *chiusette*.¹²⁴

*Di Priego (Of Value)*¹²⁵

Se mi sdegni vedremo (we will see if you have contempt for me)
Chi più stabile sia (and which is more settled)
La tua fierezza, o la costanza mia. (Your pride, or my constant heart).

Before leaving the stock speeches of the lovers, we must consider that dialogue was also memorized. Domenico Bruni's *Dialoghi scenici di Domenico Bruni detto Fulvio* contains

prendono tuttavia corpo sulla scena. La commedia è in realtà, una della più radicali sconfessioni delle capacità conoscitive di tutte le forme linguistiche e communicative ufficializzate, siano scienza o poesia, filosofia o tecnica."

¹²³ Enzo Petraccone, *La commedia dell'arte : storia, tecnica, scenari*, (Napoli : Ricciardi, 1927), pp. 80-83. Also Nicoll lists on p. 219.

¹²⁴ See Perrucci, edition Bragaglia, p. 190 and 191 for examples of common *chiusette*.

¹²⁵ Ibid. p. 191. We can see that the couplet quality is lost in translation.

forty-seven dialogues for the *innamorato* and *innamorata*.¹²⁶ According to Perrucci, dialogue can be categorized into two distinct types: those that rely on *concetti*; and those based on thrust and parry ([sic.] *botta e riposta*).¹²⁷ The following "Dialogue of Mutual Love," is an example of the former type:

Man:	My eyes, dropsical from love, come to the fountain of your beauty to drink the water of charm with which I revive myself.
Woman:	My heart, fasting for so long in your absence, like a starving vulture, flies to satisfy its appetite at the table prepared by love. ¹²⁸

A typical example of the thrust and parry is represented in the "Dialogue of Mutual Disdain":

Woman:	I say I detest you.
Man:	I say I abhor you.
Woman:	I am no longer able to look at you.
Man:	I am no longer able to suffer you. ¹²⁹

Some of Bruni's dialogues target specific situations and are titled appropriately: "Rivals over a Beloved in Hated Discussion," "Too Loving a Lover," "Loving Pimp on Constant Love," "Gambling Lover," "Lover Preparing for Flight," and "Woman Disdaining her Husband."¹³⁰ At times these dialogues might be interchangeable between the lovers: as Perrucci posits, it would only be a question of changing the gender.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Domenico Bruni, *Dialoghi scenici di Domenico Bruni detto Fulvio, comico Confidente fatta di lui in diverse occasioni ad istanza delle sue comopagne Flaminia: Delia: Valeria: Lavinia: e Celia* (n.p., n.d.). See Pandolfi, Vol. II, pp. 37-47 for entries. Bruni was an *innamorato* figure who played the popular figure of Fulvio for the troupe *Confidenti* from 1594.

¹²⁷ Sostek, p. 36-37. "Parry" is Sostek's usage. "Counter-thrust" could also be used.

¹²⁸ Sostek, translation, p. 37.

¹²⁹ Sostek, translation, p. 37.

Another important collection for the lovers is a series of dialogues: Frammenti di alcune scritture della signora Isabella Andreini Comica Gelosa e Accademica Intenta (Fragments of some letters from Isabella Andreini of the *Gelosi* and the *Academy Intenti*).¹³² It should be noted that Isabella was recognized as an artist of outstanding merit by the Academy *Intenti*, one of the more celebrated literary academies that sprang forth in the late cinquecento. Louise Clubb posits:

"... the academy of the *Intenti* elected her a member and crowned her effigy with a laurel as heir of *Petrarch* and rival of Tasso himself after she came in second in a poetry contest that he won."¹³³

In this collaboration with the Academy *Intenti*, the dialogues are all variations on the theme of *Amoroso contrasto*, (love conflicts), and are quite similar to the thrust and parry type mentioned by Perrucci, actually mixing that type with the use of *concetti*. It should also be pointed out that the *contrasto* was a popular element in the rustic farces, a theatrical symbol of the *contrasto* between Carnival and Lent. These farces were most popular at Carnival time, and the symbols of Carnival and Lent were represented by the figures of *vecchio* and

¹³⁰ Vito Pandolfi, La commedia dell'arte: storia e testo, 6 Volumes (Firenze: Sansoni, 1957), II, pp. 46-47. Sostek, translation, p. 38.

¹³¹ Petraccone, p. 93. Sostek points out that "the sharing of material raises the possibility that decorum is applicable more to the prepared materials than to character; however, the materials represent only responses to situations. The characters themselves provide the decorum. Thus, the same speech of rejection carries a very different decorum when spoken by a sympathetic *innamorato* than when spoken by a braggardly captain." Sostek, n. 60, pp. 75-76.

¹³² Isabella Andreini, Frammenti di alcune scritture della signora Isabella Andreini Comica Gelosa e Accademica Intenta. Raccolti da Francesco Andreini Comico Geloso, detto il Capitano Spavento. Dati in luce da Flaminio Scala Comico (Torino: Giovanni Domenico Tarino, 1621) see Pandolfi, Vol. II, pp. 46-48.

¹³³ Clubb, p. 265. (op.cit.) Derived from information in Luigi Rasi, *I comici italiani: Biografia, bibliografia, iconografia*, v.1 (Firenze, 1897); and *Enciclopedia dello spettacolo*, ed. S. D'Amico et alii, v. 1 (Roma, 1954).

vecchia, respectively.¹³⁴ Thus, the *amoroso contrasto* may be a refinement and adaption of this popular form. Sostek gives an example from the *Amoroso contrasto sopra la dignità degli amanti* (Love conflict over the dignity of lovers).

Man:	I wish to be the ground beneath your feet.
Woman:	You would miss out on the joy of being a man and the love I bear for you. Inanimate objects can be loved, but they cannot be lovers.
Man:	I shall remain human. But I would prefer that no other eyes but mine could see your beauty.
Woman:	You are inhuman to expect that. I want all men to see me, and they should have as many eyes as Argo, and as many ears as Fame.
Man:	That would mean my death.
Woman:	On the contrary. It would mean your benefit and contentment.
Man:	Why?
Woman:	Because every time men are obliged to praise my beauty, you are justified in loving me. ¹³⁵

What all the memorized speeches of the *innamorati* demonstrate is a hyperbolic, artificial style (*di maniera, ammanierato*) that has its basis in the style of behavior favored by the courts. This style relates to Weise's behavioral model of *maniera*, which I quoted earlier in this chapter in regard to the *compagnia*.¹³⁶ Weise uses the term to denote a highly stylized, and artificial code of behavior, that was adapted from the late medieval courts and cavalier literature (*romano cavalleresco*), and became the fashion of aristocratic behavior in

¹³⁴ See Paolo Toschi, "Il 'Contrasto' fra Carnevale e Quaresima," in *Le Origini del teatro italiano* (op. cit.), pp. 153-166. This meta-theatrical theory of Toschi's is helpful in decoding Carnival iconography of the *commedia dell'arte*, in which the *vecchio* and *vecchia* appear. Toschi explains that the *vecchio* (old man) while symbolizing worldly success and food and drink, also was a death symbol. His effigy was burned at the end of carnival. *Vecchia* a symbol of privation and Lent, was often represented as a *strega* (witch).

¹³⁵ Pandolfi, Vol. II, p. 49. Sostek, p. 40.

¹³⁶ See n. 33. See also Part I, Chapter III.

the cinquecento. Weise reminds us that writers such as Castiglione,¹³⁷ saw this 'affected' or 'mannered' (*di maniera*) behavior as a positive step in distinguishing the aristocracy from the middle and lower classes. Thus, when Classicistic terms such as verisimilitude and decorum¹³⁸ are applied to the *innamorati*, they are in reference to this artificial code of behavior that was the accepted practice of the upper classes of the day.

The influence of Classical oratory on the *innamorata* of the early *commedia dell'arte* was first noted by Tommaso Garzoni in his encyclopedia of the known professions, published in 1585:

"Of the learned Vicenza I cannot speak, but by imitating the eloquent style of Cicero, she has placed the comic art in competition with oratory."¹³⁹

Garzoni, described Isabella Andreini in such glorious phrases as:

"the graceful Isabella. . . whose virtue was beauty. . . and inexpressible grace."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Author of *The Courtier*, (op. cit. See Chapter III), a code of conduct becoming to the cinquecento courtier.

¹³⁸ Verisimilitude refers to not to the possible, but to what is probable. Thus prostitutes should be shown to be evil; decorum--behavior appropriate to class, avoiding offensive subjects. See Marvin Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre*, (op. cit.) p. 27.

¹³⁹ T. Garzoni, *Piazza universale di tutte le professioni*, Venezia 1585, pp. 813-816. From Roberto Tessari, *Commedia dell'Arte: la Maschera e l'Ombra* (Mursia, 1981-1984: Milan), p. 118. "*Della dotta Vicenza, non parlo, che imitando la facondia ciceroniana, ha posto l'arte comica in concorrenza con l'oratorio. . .*"

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 118. "*la graziosa Isabella. . . di virtù che di bellezza,*" and "*la grazia indicibile.*" Recall that similar terms were used by Dolce in regard to the work of Parmigianino (Chapter III).

While a measure of the ability of the *innamorate* must be attributed to natural talents and gifts, Garzoni notes a specific correlation to oratorical principles, that were based in rhetoric and taught as part of the standard liberal arts trivium. By linking the actors' art to oratory and therefore to rhetoric, Garzoni enhanced the status of the great *innamorate*.

Almost one hundred and fifty years earlier, Alberti in *Della Pittura* (1436) had posited that the aim of the painter was to please, move and convince.¹⁴¹ Angelica Gooden affirms

Alberti's ties to the rhetorical tradition:

"In the humanist ambience of fifteenth-century Florence it was natural for theorists to turn to rhetoric in their effort to find for painting a model that would provide it with 'Classical' respectability. . . Alberti proceeded to give instructions on the use of colors in painting that were appropriate to the arousing of particular emotions in the observer. The painter, . . . organized the parts of his composition according to the same principles as those observed by the orator in constructing his speech. . . . [A]ncient rhetorical terms were used as metaphors for visual experience. The words *gracilis* and *vehemens*, which were applied to paintings, referred back to one of the orator's three *genera dicendi*, or levels of style. Alberti's discussion of *compositio*, . . . was transferred to visual art. In the former *compositio* signified the assembling of a sentence; the accepted hierarchy had it that words make up phrases, phrases clauses, and clauses sentences. [I]n painting it was argued, planes make up members, members bodies, and bodies the coherent scenes of narrative art. Furthermore, theorists stated that in the gestures and attitudes of his human figures the artist built upon what the ancient rhetorics had suggested concerning the types of movement the orator should use to express particular emotions and arouse them in his audience. . . Alberti's views accorded with the new status of the painter as a practitioner of a liberal art. . . ." ¹⁴²

While Alberti's efforts represented an innovation, they can be linked to the the legacy of

Cicero:

¹⁴¹ Angelica Goodden, *Actio and Persuasion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) p. 11. See John R. Spencer, 'Ut rhetorica pictura', *Journal of the Warburg and Courland Institutes*, 20 (1957), 26-44,

¹⁴² Goodden, pp. 11-12. Also see Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators* (Oxford, 1971) pp. 17-18; Aldo Scaglione, *The Classical Theory of Composition* (Chapel Hill, 1972).

"In *De oratore* Cicero had likened one part of the orator's (and actor's) equipment with the painter's, stating that the voice of the former functioned like the colours used by the latter in rendering nuances of emotion (II. lvii. 216-217). . . . From Cicero's brief indications Alberti constructed a science of gesture which introduced into the art of painting the notion that bodily movements reflect inward emotions."¹⁴³

Alfred S. Golding recognizes a similar argument in the work of Quintilian, whereby gesture and facial characteristics are capable of connoting varied emotional states:

"Quintilian originally had provided a practical exposition of the varieties of the facial exposition for the orator of his own day which was later employed by the Renaissance portrait painter. In his treatise Quintilian noted that the face could demonstrate relatively few signs of thought (nodding to signify agreement, shaking the head in disapproval, curling the lip in scorn were typical examples), but could demonstrate many emotional states (sadness, solemnity, depression, love, hate, and doubt--to name but a few). He also described the actions of particular features as emotional indicators."¹⁴⁴

By associating the art of painting with rhetoric, the Renaissance artist was able to elevate its status from the confines of a lower manual skill, which had hitherto been the case.¹⁴⁵ In a similar manner, for the the early professionals of the *commedia dell'arte*, the conferment of status was an important one:

"the question of the actor's position in society, . . . led writers to draw parallels between acting and the liberal art of rhetoric (commonly referred to as the fountain-head of all the arts) in an effort to prove the former's right to an elevated status in the hierarchy of arts."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Ibid. pp. 11-12

¹⁴⁴ Alfred S. Golding, Classicistic Acting: Two Centuries of a Performance Tradition at the Amsterdam Schouwburg (University Press: Lanham MD, 1984). p. 79.

¹⁴⁵ Goodden, p.12.

¹⁴⁶ Goodden, p. 10.

Thus, statements such as Garzoni's (above), and in regard to the great *innamorata* Vicenza, were most important in establishing the high status of certain early *comici* :

"Of the learned Vicenza, I am speechless, who imitating the eloquent Ciceronian style, has placed the comic craft (profession) competitive with oratory."¹⁴⁷

For Garzoni, the actor and the orator shared the common concern of "enhancing speech through bodily attitude, gesture and facial expression"¹⁴⁸:

"This part of *eloquence* was what the ancient rhetoricians had called *actio*, and according to them it was one of the most important constitutive elements of the orator's art. But, paradoxically, it was little discussed in Classical rhetorics. . . [The] habitual failure to elucidate this aspect of eloquence was often explained in terms of the difficulty of describing physical movement and attitude in words. [However], it was frequently assumed that visual impressions have a more immediate effect than impressions conveyed by the other senses, and that in view of their importance they call for some sort of verbal translation. Many regarded the human impressionability to visual signals as legitimizing the use of *actio* in oratory. . ."¹⁴⁹

Since the orator and the actor utilize the same bodily principles of *actio*, for instance, as Garzoni pointed out; it can be suggested that the analogy between acting and oratory is legitimate.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Garzoni, p. 813. Translation and full citation, see '*compagnie*' earlier in this chapter.

¹⁴⁸ Goodden, p. 10.

¹⁴⁹ Goodden, p. 10.

¹⁵⁰ Goodden, p. 11.

Before developing the notion of *actio*, it is important to discuss the five principles of rhetoric, to attain a working understanding of their role in *commedia* dramaturgy, particularly in regard to the lovers' parts.

Roland Barthes, in The Semiotic Challenge has included an essay: "Old Rhetoric: an *aide-mémoire*," which discusses at length the principles and development of rhetoric, which I have here synopsized:

"The five principles of rhetoric are: *inventio*, which is an 'extractive' notion rather than a 'creative' one. . . . (finding what to say). . . . It is defined as a progress, where one proceeds via argumentation towards two goals: to prove. . . . (through facts) and to convince. . . . (which involves the ethical stance, the ability to move an audience); *dispositio*, is the arrangement. . . . or composition and level of the discourse. . . . (ordering what is found); *elocutio*, this involves the diction, . . . enunciation, . . . and locution of the discourse. . . . (adding the ornament of words and figures); *actio*, the dramaturgy of speech (performing the discourse like an actor: gestures and diction); *memoria*, (committing to memory, either actions, words or both)."¹⁵¹

While the last two elements, *actio* and *memoria* were crucial to both the actor and the orator, they were given reduced importance as the rhetorical canon came to be associated with written arguments, particularly regarding legal matters.¹⁵² However, *memoria* was treated in a number of ancient and Renaissance treatises, that basically assert the same message.¹⁵³ In *Ad Herennium*, Cicero categorized memory into two spheres: memory of things, which includes general notions and thoughts; and memory of words, which

¹⁵¹ Roland Barthes, The Semiotic Challenge (Hill and Wang: New York, 1988), translated by Richard Howard. See Section One: "Old Rhetoric: an *aide-mémoire*." *Actio* is often interchanged with *pronuntiatio*. Both stand for what today we call "delivery," that is, physical and spoken expression.

¹⁵² Barthes states this as a reason for not investigating more fully the notion of *actio* and *memoria*. In addition, as stated above regarding *actio*, there was difficulty in describing physical movement and attitude in words.

¹⁵³ From Frances A. Yates, Renaissance and Reform (op. cit.) pp. 69-73.

entails the exact memorization of each word. The latter is based on a system whereby a symbol or image is substituted for each word, thereby serving as a mnemonic device.¹⁵⁴ However, Cicero and Renaissance theorist Ludovico da Pirano (*Ars Memorativa*), generally favored the first method for orators, which applied memory in a more generalized sense. Nevertheless, both methods employ the concepts of *multitudo* and *premeditatio*. *Multitudo*, in this sense, means that 'memory places' should be sufficient in number. In concocting his methodology, Pirano devised a scheme that established these 'memory places' as empty rooms in a castle, in which specific information was stored. By *premeditatio*, which entailed repeated concentration on the 'memory places', information could be memorized, associated and then quickly recalled.¹⁵⁵ These rooms, 'memory places', would generally proceed in ascending order, until the pinnacle tower was reached at the climax, or major point in the orator's address. Thus, not only was the material to be memorized organized on a horizontal plane, it was also structured vertically, analogously reflecting the development and 'building nature' of the orator's speech. It is significant to note that Perrucci placed great emphasis on the notion of *premeditatio*, which as he has established, made up a substantial portion of the *comici's* craft, and half the title of his book: Dell'arte rappresentativa premeditatio ed all'improvviso.¹⁵⁶

Before discussing *actio* in more detail, let us draw connections to the craft of the comedians, by briefly applying the principles of *dispositio*, *inventio*, and *elocutio*. Since

¹⁵⁴ Yates, p. 69.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 70. In another important Renaissance treatise on memory: *De memoria et reminiscentia*, by Aristotle. He discusses the laws of association which he states are based upon: similarity, dissimilarity and contiguity. Pirano's methodology is associational as well, albeit utilizing a spatial or architectural model.

¹⁵⁶ (op. cit).

the rhetorical principle of *dispositio* defines the way material is arranged or composed, it is evident that forms such as the: *concetti*, *uscite* and *chiusette*, the prologues, monologues and soliloquies, and the various dialogues, are common compositional devices that are not only used repeatedly, but also provide the performer with structures upon which to invent their own variations. Now, the manner in which the *innamorati* or other *parti* arranged their speeches was a product of *inventio*. *Inventio* may be divided into two general areas: proofs and the ability to move (*animos impellere*). Proofs (*pisteis*), can be defined as convincing reasons, ways of persuasion, establishing confidence. For example, when an *innamorata* lists a number of her lover's faults she provides an inductive exemplum,¹⁵⁷ which is specific to the given situation. The use of deductive reasoning (*enthymeme*), however, requires that the performer convince or move the spectator by testimony, oath, or axiom. In this sense the performer must elicit the desired response by winning the sympathy and trust of the audience.

The ability to move or convince spectators is made possible, in great measure, by eliciting the quality of *ethos*, and the effect of *pathos*.¹⁵⁸ Quintilian's comments on *ethos* and *pathos* were widely regarded by sixteenth-century poets and orators "for whom the discrepancy between what the speaker says and how he appears generates some of the most important meanings."¹⁵⁹ For the performer or orator "educated" in the rhetorical traditions of Cicero, Aristotle, and Quintilian, the nature and range of an emotional display

¹⁵⁷ See Barthes, p. 56.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 74.

¹⁵⁹ William J. , Rhetorical Norms in Renaissance Literature (New Haven: Yale, 1978), p. 11.

were carefully planned in the *inventio* stage.¹⁶⁰ William Kennedy synthesizes Quintilian's notion of pathos and ethos:¹⁶¹

"*Pathos* and *ethos* are sometimes of the same nature, differing only in degree (6.2, 12). *Ethos* designates calm and gentle emotions in the speaker while *pathos* arouses more violent emotions in the audience; *ethos* is generally continuous, while *pathos* is momentary (6.2,10). The former includes not only mild and ingratiating signs of good character but also the skillful exercise of feigned emotion or the employment of irony (6.2, 15) and sometimes even a feigned submission to our opponents." (6.2, 16). *Pathos* (for Quintilian) is almost entirely concerned with anger, dislike, fear, hatred and pity." (6.2, 20). To affect her (his) audience the speaker must . . . be able to present to her (his) imagination things absent with such extreme vividness that they seem actually to be before our very eyes. This all-important power of exhibiting rather than merely narrating is *évápyeia*, a term from Cicero (*Partitione oratoria*, 6.20) . . . and concerns the active display of opinion, in Homeric description it concerns the effects of "lifelike activity." *Evápyeia* is the most effective rhetorical means of evoking pathos."¹⁶²

In Kennedy's description the aspect of *inventio* which is used to persuade and move an audience, actually becomes related to the principle of *actio*. *Actio* tells us how the orator or actor conveys "*Evápyeia* " to accomplish this task.¹⁶³ [see below]

Elocutio is the principle governing ornaments and figures; examples such as: "I come to the fountain of your beauty to drink the water of charm," which was cited above, demonstrate the hyperbolic figural style of the *innamorati* speeches. This principle is

¹⁶⁰ Barthes, p. 52. "Man cannot speak without first giving birth to his speech, and for this delivery there is a special *techné*, *inventio*."

¹⁶¹ Kennedy, p. 11, utilizes H. E. Butler, translation of *Institutio oratoria* (A.D. 92-94), Loeb Classical Library, 4 Volumes (London: Heinemann, 1920-1922).

¹⁶² Kennedy, p. 10-11. Material in parentheses refers to passages in Quintilian text.

¹⁶³ Quintilian may have been contradicted by Aristotle in the *Poetics*. "Aristotle declared that well-written plays do not require performance for their vivid quality (*energeia*) to be realized. Reading aloud suffices for that, although enactment will always increase the impression a drama makes (*Poetics*, §26)." Goodden, p.16.

related to the surge in Petrarchism during the cinquecento, when figural and metaphoric imagery was the rage in the courts and academies.¹⁶⁴

Golding in his detailed study of Classicistic acting techniques emphasizes the Renaissance actor's debt to Classical rhetoric. He posits that:

"Quintilian's dictum 'We cannot even speak except in long and short [sounds] and these are the materials of metric feet,' could be taken as the Classicistic actor's prime directive."¹⁶⁵

We can recognize that this statement is quite similar to Perrucci's regarding the *innamorati*'s study of the *Prosodia Italiana*, which is mentioned above.¹⁶⁶ Apparently, the *innamorati* trained in a mode somewhat different from the *parti comici*, whose grotesque and raucous actions often violated or parodied the rhetorical and grammatical canons.¹⁶⁷ To consider the ancient rhetorical category of *actio*, as body eloquence, in a sense synchronic with both, the golden age of the *commedia dell'arte*, and the style of acting favored by the *parti serie* it is helpful to examine excerpts from the treatise: *La rappresentazione delle favole sceniche* by Angelo Ingegneri, which was published at Ferrara in 1598, and describes the acting style favored by the courts and academies of the late cinquecento.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ See Mirollo (op. cit.) for many examples of Petrarchism, and the elevated literary and poetic style of the late cinquecento.

¹⁶⁵ Golding, p. 79.

¹⁶⁶ See note 3.

¹⁶⁷ The macaronic speech of Dottore, the absurd *consiglia* (counsel) of Pantalone, and the use of dialects as a comic handicap, for example.

¹⁶⁸ Angelo Ingegneri, *La rappresentazione delle favole sceniche* (Ferrara, 1598), in *Lo spettacolo dall'Umanesimo al Manierismo*, edited by Ferruccio Marotti (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1974), p. 287. Ingegneri's life spanned the early development of the *commedia dell'arte*. Born in Venice in 1550 he was a secretary and editor to major literary figures of the time.

"Together, when the comedians partake in the action, their speeches contain good words, delivered sonorously, and with graceful *maniera*. They guide themselves clearly and concisely through the texture of entanglements and mix-ups, and then afterwards waiting for and longing for a solution, they are always gracious and popular, beholding it with taste and satisfaction."

Earlier in his discourse Ingegneri gives a number of characteristics of an acting style based on rhetorical principles. He speaks of *concetti veementi* (vehement conceits),¹⁶⁹ of *sentimento profondo* (profound sentiments), of *persuasione, ove converrà valersi d'efficaci ragioni* (persuasion, where one profits by effective reasoning), and *belli essempro e d'altri ornamenti d'orazione* ([of employing] beautiful examples and other ornamental figures of oration).¹⁷⁰

Ingegneri also posits specific statements concerning an effective method of acting that can serve parenthetically as a description of *actio* :

In 1578, he edited and published *Gerusalemme*, for his friend and associate Torquato Tasso. In 1579 he was at the court of Ferrara, and is linked to the Gonzaga family. No stranger to the stage, he directed *Oedipus Tyrannus* to inaugurate the opening of the *Teatro Olimpico*, in 1585. Part of this treatise, published thirteen years later, is a description of that performance. He was a member of the Olympic Academy at Venice, which commissioned him to write the pastoral *Danza di Venere*, seen at Parma in 1583. In 1607, he published a tragedy, *Tomiri*, at Naples. "*All'incontro, quando gl'istrioni s'adoprano nel guidar l'azione; e 'l dir loro tende cone buone parole e consono numero e con maniera graziosa, ma chiaramente e succintamente alla testura del viluppo, e poscia all'aspettate bramata soluzione, . . . gli astanti con gusto e con sodisfazione.*" p. 287.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 287. Noted above as the rhetorical *vehemens*.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 287.

The action contains two parts, the voice and the gesture; in these two parts are placed the total expression and effect of the story, since one concerns hearing and the other sight. Each one finds these things in themselves, and is affected by them, according to how he hears them or sees them. Regarding the voice two things must be considered: the quantity, that is, is it solemn, piercing, loud or soft; and the quality, is it clear, hoarse, pleasant, lasting and so on. One or the other of these two conditions has to change to conform to the subjects that are expressed. For instance, in prosperity, the voice becomes full, simple and light; in contests and disputes, it blunders; in anger, it is vehement, interrupts and is bitter; in satisfying another, peaceful and submissive; in promises and counsel, firm and smooth, in commiseration, yielding and weak; and for grand affect exaggeration and magnificence.¹⁷¹

Ingegneri's approach is scientific in its breakdown into qualitative and quantitative parts, and its division into the verbal and visual spheres, thus giving measure to the common definition of rhetoric "as the science of discourse."¹⁷² Ingegneri, however, places *inventio* with the individual performer (. . . *ciascuno prova le cose in sé, e si commove per esse, secondo ch'egli le ascolta e le rimira* [see above for translation]). Importantly, he is one of the first theorists of the theatre to consider the role of gesture:

"Gesture consists in the opportune movements of the body and its parts, and especially the hands, and the eyes. The appropriateness of the gesture is ruled by the word and the sentence, and also by the function that one has, to teach, to motivate, to reprove, and so on. . . . From the regulated voice and the good gesture is necessarily born decorum, or propriety, which is required of well-performed play."¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p. 305. *L'azione contiene due part, cioè la voce et il gesto, nelle quai due parti è riposta la totale espressione et efficacia della favola; concidè sia che l'una riguardo l'udire e l'altra il vedere. Et ciascuno prova le cose in sé, e si commove per esse, secondo ch'egli le ascolta e le rimira. Nella voce adunque si considerano due cose: la quantità, cioè ch'ella sia grave, acuta, grande, o piccola; e la qualità, cioè ch'ella sia chiara, roca, piaghevole, dura, e simili. L'una e l'altra di queste due condizioni s'ha a variare conforme a i soggetti che si esprimono: come a dire, nelle prosperità la voce devrà esser piena, semplice e lieta; nelle contese e dispute, eretta; nell'ira, atroce, et interrotta, et aspera; nel sodisfare altrui, piacevole e sommessa; nel promettere e consolare, ferma e soave; nelle commiserazione, piegata e flegibile; e ne i grandi affetti, gonfia e magnifica.*

¹⁷² Barthes, p. 19.

Ingegneri was one of the first theatre theorists to posit the importance of gesture, in an age when neo-Classical critics such as Castelvetro, Scaliger, and Minturno were considering only literary aspects of drama. Statements such as the above demonstrate the theatrical links to the rhetorical bases of both painting and oratory. In the seventeenth century, artists like Lebrun further developed the importance of gesture and *actio* in painting, as a means to display specific emotional or psychological states.

At a 1983 conference on "The Language of Gesture in the Renaissance" Golding posited the importance of rhetorical training on the youth of the Renaissance:

"there was no question but that acting was a theatrical extension of the art of rhetoric. Students learned to use tropes and figures of rhetoric as devices to persuade, inform and please. Truth and belief, . . . were not so much obtainable by the apparatus of logic as by the scheme of symbolic congruence. Fundamental was the idea that the orator could make use of 'natural' signs of expression universal in all men, the overt evidence of mental activity. When these individual signs of posture, gesture, facial feature and vocal delivery were displayed by the speaker so as to be in accord with each other and, at the same time, with an internal spiritual mechanism, a similar response was induced within the spectator/listener. Rhetoric, then, was the 'science' which furnished the student with the mental and physical means to affect public behavior."¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Ingegneri, p. 305-306. *"Il gesto consiste ne i movimenti opportuni del corpo e delle parti sue, e specialmente delle mani, e molto più del volto, e soprattutto de gli occhi. L'opportunità di esso si regge dalla qualità delle parole e delle sentenze, et anco dell'ufficio che si tratta, come insegnare, commovere, riprendere, e simili. . . Dalla voce regolata e dal buon gesto nasce necessariamente il decoro, il quale è la perfezione d'ogni ben rappresentazione favola."*

¹⁷⁴ Alfred S. Golding, 'Nature as Symbolic Behavior': Cresol's *Autumn Vacations* and Early Baroque Acting Technique," in *The Language of Gesture in the Renaissance*, edit. by Konrad Eisenbichler and Philip Sohm, in *Renaissance and Reformation*, Vol. X, No. 1., (1986), p. 148.

Golding explores the comments of the Jesuit, Louis Crésol, whose Autumn Vacations, or the Complete Action and Pronunciation for the Orator (1620) "sets out the complete canon of delivery for the orator."¹⁷⁵ Crésol's text is very specific in its detailing of bodily movements, gestures, and facial expressions. Golding synthesizes Crésol's efforts:

"The orator/actor, therefore moved his audience by the abundance and congruence of sets and figures induced through the image-making process, and by identifying intensely at particular moments as part of a role-playing procedure. Both techniques used internal means to produce external effects in bodily behavior. The first, however, produced actions which were cooler but which produced a clarity of understanding and an aesthetic enjoyment from the recognition of symbolic expression which was at its base. The second, while obscuring the rational quality of the message, created through empathic means a strong emotional reaction in the audience."¹⁷⁶

Crésol establishes a model for early Baroque performance and oratory, and his basis of signification is far more specific and symbolic than the general comments of Ingegneri. Golding gives some examples:

"Ordinarily the action of the hand and its fingers was not to be a literal duplication of the spoken work (as when indicating an object in formal pantomime), nor a word-for-word translation of the speaker's idea (as in modern sign language). Instead the sense (*sententia*) of the speaker's words was to be conveyed by a symbolic gesture. So when the idea of accusation was to be conveyed, the speaker pointed the index finger of his right hand at the object of his accusation, while touching the other fingers to the thumb (II, 10, 3). In executing this action Crésol cautioned that the arm was not to be completely extended but was to remain flexed in order to convey the idea that the speaker was a graceful, hence noble person (II, 11, 1 and 3). Merely joining the last three fingers to the thumb had significance in itself, for it denoted that the words accompanying the gesture were of great importance (II, 2, 2). Holding the middle two fingers together was a sign of hauteur, the *noli me tangere* gesture which warned inferiors away (II, 10, 1). . . On the other hand, the lack of gesticulation at all indicated a lack of animation and hence of gentility (II, 11, 2 and 3). Here again is strong evidence of the significance of

¹⁷⁵ Golding, p. 147.

¹⁷⁶ Golding, p. 155.

vitality in expression, a quality which Crésol associated with persons of breeding and culture."¹⁷⁷

While Crésol's commentary does not apply in all cases to the *commedia dell'arte* it offers certain insights on early seventeenth-century acting norms. By today's criteria these appear highly mannered and affective, even though "rhetorical acting was considered to be 'natural' using the standards of Crésol's day."¹⁷⁸ What can be determined however, is that the *innamorati* and *innamorate* of the *commedia dell'arte*, employed rhetorical principles in both the formation and execution of their art. This rhetorical basis was noticed and referred to by such commentators as Garzoni, who compared it with models from Ciceronian oratory. Earlier, oratory and the principles of rhetoric had permeated other arts such as painting, which utilized it both as a creative tool, and as a means to elevate its status from a craft, to a liberal art. The use of rhetorical methods, and the display of related skills, by the great *innamorate* and *innamorati* of the *comici* aided the comedians in their rapid attainment of status in the courts of Europe.

As secretary to the Ferraran court, Ingegneri was evidently familiar with both the rhetorical tradition and the *commedia dell'arte*.¹⁷⁹ He is one of the first writers on theatrical performance to utilize rhetorical discourse in his discussion of performance, and to realize the importance of gesture as a form of acting expression and eloquence (*actio*). Ingegneri establishes a tradition of writing which considers acting style in its relation to oratorical

¹⁷⁷ Golding, p. 152.

¹⁷⁸ Golding, p. 155.

¹⁷⁹ Certainly as a citizen of Venice, and later as a member of the Ferraran court he had ample contact with the *commedia*.

practice. This legacy continues with Crésol and becomes entrenched in French and other Classicistic writing on acting in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁸⁰

Conclusion

In conclusion, the background of the *commedia dell'arte* that has been the concern of Part II, demonstrates a need for a specific context into which this unique, albeit derivative, theatrical and cultural form can be placed. To posit it as a Renaissance form, as Nicoll and other historians suggest, is to contradict not only its mixed, non-unified, and grotesque elements, but also to ignore its historical periodization in the latter-half of the sixteenth century, almost fifty years after the end of the High Renaissance, and concomitant with the second generation of Mannerist artists.

Calmo and Ruzante represent the early part of this trend towards an anti-Classical dramaturgy. Their individualistic approaches to theatre and staging established a certain criteria that were in many cases adapted, refined and molded by the *commedia dell'arte*. Unlike these earlier models, however, the *commedia dell'arte* conventionalized and typified forms, in a similar way to the *maniera* artists of the mid-cinquecento. The aim of the *comico*, like the painter, was to achieve virtuoso effects through technique and *sprezzatura*. In Part III these comparisons and others will be established in more detail. In another sense, *commedia dell'arte* breaks with the humanist tradition: in its use of the

¹⁸⁰ See Golding and Goodden for further explanations of these phenomena. Golding uses the Dutch theatre as a focus for the development of rhetorically influenced Classicistic acting throughout Europe, while Goodden considers at length French writings in the rhetorical tradition.

mask and elements of the bizarre, in its creation of the *antimondo* (anti-world on the stage), and in its predilection for the vile, profane, and obscene.

Nor can the early *commedia dell'arte* be seen as a Baroque phenomenon. In terms of historical periodization, the inchoate *commedia* predates the early Baroque by at least forty to fifty years. The Baroque does not evolve until the beginning of the seventeenth century. Generally art historians attribute a shift towards naturalism in the works of the Caracci as evidence of the move toward the Baroque. The affected, bizarre, and parodic style of the *commedia dell'arte*, which was sprinkled with archaic elements, cannot be aesthetically linked to the Classically modelled forms, and naturalistic spatial treatment that are found in the early works of the Caracci and Caravaggio.

Therefore, in order to define the aesthetic codes and cultural phenomena of the early *commedia dell'arte*, it is necessary to establish it within its synchronic context. As we have seen in Part One, the prevailing aesthetic of the sixteenth century in the arts was Mannerism, an artistic style with specific anti-classical characteristics, that also possessed as its credo, the notion of an art liberated from scientific laws and the rules of nature. In the age of *maniera*, the artist prevailed as never before: imagination and invention superseded adherence to dogma or Classical methodology.

In Part III, this work will attempt to link artists and representations of early *commedia dell'arte* iconography to the Mannerist phenomenon, thus establishing a synchronic aesthetic context for the *commedia dell'arte*. This is important, because the *commedia dell'arte* has rarely, if ever, been approached with the aim toward establishing it within a

specific historical-aesthetic context. The aim will be to show that the characteristics of the *commedia dell'arte* were well-suited to the principles of Mannerism and *maniera*.

The results will potentially elevate the status of Mannerism to an historical period in theatre, by demonstrating it as a positive alternative to its generally negative connotation as in "mannered acting," or "mannered speech." In a larger sense this synchronic connection validates the use of an interdisciplinary study to fill an important lacuna in our understanding of theatre history.

PART III

Chapter VII

Establishing a Synchronic Link between Mannerism and the *Commedia dell'Arte*

Part III explores the links between Mannerism and the *commedia dell'arte*. This section begins with a short synopsis of Part I and Part II, and then describes the methodology of the study. Part III will explore the historical backgrounds in regard to early *commedia dell'arte* iconography. It will then proceed to define the terms of the Mannerist context, and culminate with a study of the various painters and graphic artists who link the *commedia dell'arte* to the Mannerist context.

Part One of this work presented the historical, critical, and theoretical foundations of Mannerism. The first three chapters explored, respectively: the various historiographical approaches, the characteristics of Mannerist art, and the theoretical tenets underlying the principles of *maniera*, *grazia*, *the disegno interno*, and other aspects of cinquecento art theory. Arising as an artistic style in Italy around 1520, Mannerism can be defined as a subjective art, born from the political, social and economic crises that befell cinquecento Italy. After 1527, the date of the sack of Rome, its influence spreads northward throughout continental Europe. By mid-century Mannerism has become an international style of art. Characteristics of Mannerist art include exaggeration and distortion of forms, crowding of the figure, the eroticism of the human form, bizarre and grotesque effects, dissolution of natural or mathematical space, and rhythmical or gestural movement as a

substitute for harmony, and balance. Chapter VII provides a further explanation and description of these terms related to Mannerism.

Mannerism is etymologically derived from *maniera*, a term Vasari coined to describe the necessary practices and training that would lead to artistic virtuosity. Nevertheless, *maniera* has developed a number of connotations. *Maniera* in many cases defines an art work that is envisioned and invented, that is, conceived through the process of *inventio*, from pre-existing artistic models, rather than from nature or the laws of perspective. Because *maniera* art often degenerated into second and third-rate copies of originals, it had an inclination toward decadence. This was the opinion of seventeenth-century critics, and it prevailed until the rediscovery of Mannerism in this century. The goal of the *maniera* artist was virtuosity of execution, and facility of technique, gained only after long study and practice with appropriate models. *Maniera* prevailed in the latter-half of the cinquecento, and to some extent into the early seicento.

Part of the reason for its hold in the sixteenth century had to do with the perfection and dissemination of printmaking techniques. In order to fulfill the demand of the *cognoscenti* and other patrons of the arts who desired works by the great masters, printmakers duplicated their paintings through etchings and engravings. The printmaking phenomenon began in Italy with the workshop of Marcantonio Raimondi, who, for example, duplicated the works of Raphael and Giulio Romano. It quickly became international in scope spreading to France, where Primaticcio and members of the School of Fontainebleau copied Rosso, and other Italian masters. Antwerp, under the direction of Hieronymus Cock, also was a leading center, reproducing not only Breughel's works but many Italian painters as well, thus evolving the Italianate style. Eventually, printmaking was established

in Amsterdam, and other major centers of the Netherlands, during the late cinquecento. Printmaking was an important contributor to the spread of Mannerism as an international style.

Finally, during the early years of the seventeenth century, Mannerism was eclipsed by the triumph of the Baroque, first represented in the works of the Caracci, and Caravaggio. These works demonstrated a marked tendency toward a more realistic handling of the human form in space, and a return to nature as the inspiration for art. Mannerism prevailed from about 1520-1600 although it persisted outside of Italy, for instance in Nancy, France, where the works of Bellange and Callot continued to refine this tradition during the 1620's.

Part Two examined separately the precursors of the *commedia dell'arte* in Chapter IV including Classical comedy, the Atellan mimes, the *commedia erudita*, the farces of Ruzante and the dramatic works of the Venetian, Andrea Calmo. Each one of these forms had an effect on the development of the *commedia dell'arte*, and suggested many of the later qualities that would be inherent in the *commedia* form. A number of these qualities suggested a move away from the Classicistic structure and recitative style of the early *commedia erudita*, to favor virtuoso comic displays which allowed for varying degrees of improvisation. The anti-Classicizing period of Ruzante, and Calmo coincide in a number of areas with the same tendencies in the visual arts.

Chapter V established the underlying historical and aesthetic principles of the *commedia dell'arte*. The performers of the *commedia dell'arte* constitute the first professional actors. Individual actors conjoined their talents in the formations of *compagnie* and established travel as a means to ensure both fame and economic success. These *compagnie* were in

name, enterprise, and communal spirit based after models established by the sixteenth-century literary academies. As in the academies, women were included and many went on to international stardom, or in other cases led their own companies. The typical masked stage figure, such as Pantalone, and Harlequin, would perform across a number of different *scenarii*, or plot outlines. Because their behavioral traits were fixed, these stage figures dominated or at least determined the direction of the stage action. While improvisation is an important factor in the performance of *commedia dell'arte*, the stage figures also memorized speeches and comic action (*lazzi*) which were sometimes recorded in *zibaldone*, or common-place books, appropriate to each figure. The stage presentations of the *commedia dell'arte* represented a true *mescolare* (mixture) of diverse elements: from the refined actions of the *innamorate* to the coarse, grotesque *lazzi* of the *zanni*; from moments of high eloquence to the rustic dialects and *sporchi* (profanities). They included as well moments of music, dance, and acrobatics, that were usually unrelated to the direction of the plot.¹ As in the paintings of Bronzino, *commedia dell'arte* contained within itself elements derived from both high and low culture.

Parts I and II of this dissertation establish parallel developments in art and theatre that encompass nearly 100 years (1520-1620), without prematurely linking the *commedia dell'arte* to a Mannerist context. Part III explores in particular the visual evidence of the early period, placing *commedia dell'arte* iconography within the context of the Mannerist *Zeitgeist*.

¹ This is Nicoll's view particularly in regard to musical and dancing elements, and is suggested by a number of iconographical examples which we will explore.

Methodology

The parallel lines of historical development of Mannerism in Part I, and the *commedia dell'arte* in Part II, can be linked through a synchronic method. A synchronic approach attempts to establish various conjunction points between contemporaneous phenomena. When this method is applied to the arts, it acknowledges that the end product will be different in kind and material; as painting is from a performance, for example. However, these diverse end-products may share underlying formal or structural characteristics which are not readily apparent, but become clearer upon closer observation. In order to re-examine our understanding of the *commedia dell'arte*, this study will utilize the discourse of art history, and other concomitant historical disciplines.

The synchronic method sets limits to period and locale, thus positing the potential for the intersection of artists, ideas, tastes, and values within a given field and time period. To facilitate understanding, the following historiographical examples will present indications of how other historians concerned with Mannerism have utilized the synchronic method. In each case their discourse will be applied to examples from the *commedia dell'arte*.

Chapter I surveyed a number of synchronic approaches to Mannerism in which certain historians sought to establish links across the arts. Wylie Sypher's seminal work on Mannerism, Four Stages of Renaissance Style: Transformations in Art and Literature utilized the synchronic *Zeitgeist*, and world-view approach to establish an interdisciplinary language.² Sypher sought to universalize his language in metaphorical terms such as "unresolved tensions," and "shifting planes of reality." Sypher applied these heavily coded terms to both the visual and literary realms. Thus, the "revolving view," present in

² Sypher, (op. cit.) See pp. 31-33 in Chapter I for fuller explanation.

Shakespeare's vacillating characterization of Hamlet, can be compared with the "revolving view" necessary to fully apprehend the sculpture *Mercury* by Giovanni di Bologna, or *Victory*, by Michelangelo. The image gives a fleeting, evanescent impression as the viewer moves about a piece of sculpture. There is no ideal viewing angle. Similarly Hamlet's character changes with the fleeting temporality of the play: one moment he is resolved to act; the next, overcome with doubt. His character presents no true center, no clearly motivated unity of purpose. A typical performance of the *commedia dell'arte* suggests another kind of "revolving view." Through time it moves from the refined sentimentality and learned Tuscan eloquence of the *innamorato* and *innamorata*, to the skewed dialect and ribald *lazzi* of the *zanni*, to the sexual longings of the *vecchio*, Pantalone. There is no single or unified point of focus.

The historians concerned with Mannerist music, Maria Rika Maniates and Glenn Watkins, both proffer the notion of *discordia concors* in the madrigal compositions of the day. Watkins intimates that Gesualdo preferred basing his madrigals on texts that abounded in oxymorons; his compositions reflected this disruption in the alternations of the "diatonic allegro and chromatic adagio."³ Indeed, as hitherto suggested, the character of Harlequin represents the cultivated ambiguity of character traits, juxtaposing stupidity with great wisdom, and clumsiness with agility and finesse.

The synchronic method is also quite helpful in certain complex interplays between the arts and the culture of a given period. For example, Nikolaus Pevsner demonstrates the effect of the Counter-Reformation on artists such as Vasari, Tintoretto, and Salviati whereby in their works the human form "loses its significance," or is "stretched out of its natural

³ Glenn Watkins (op. cit.), pp. 27-30 for full citations and explanation.

shape."⁴ Theatre historian, Ferdinando Taviani in *La fascinazione del teatro*⁵ cites the importance of the Counter-Reformation treatises on defining the early comedians in a kind of "*negativa poetica*." The church argued that in the *commedia dell'arte* the individual's likeness to God was obscured and made diabolic by the mask. While the manner of their involvement differs to some degree, both historians Pevsner and Taviani posit the inextricable link between the art forms of their respective disciplines and the *Zeitgeist* of the Counter-Reformation.

Some approaches, such as Theodore K. Rabb's *The Struggle for Stability in Early Modern Europe* see Mannerism as the symptom of the disquiet and continuing state of crises in the sixteenth century.⁶ Rabb posits that in contrast with the Renaissance, Mannerists "emanated discomfort, imbalance and restlessness, nothing seemed solid or dependable," and there was no "location of authority."⁷ Certainly, the improvisational, uncertain quality of a typical *commedia* performance contrasted with the carefully scripted and memorized performances of the Renaissance *commedia erudita*. However, it was this uncertain, imbalanced quality that was at the essence of the Mannerist *Zeitgeist*. Roberto Tessari has posited, as earlier stated in Chapter V, that the early professional *compagnie* arose because of the economic crises of the middle and late cinquecento, as a means of insuring economic self-determination against the vicissitudes of courtly patronage. Rabb's concern as to the "location of authority," was answered by the comedians in the concept of "*prima inter*

⁴ Pevsner (op. cit.) See, Part I, p. 20 for citation, and quote.

⁵ Taviani (op. cit.).

⁶ (op. cit.), pp. 17-19.

⁷ As cited in full in Chapter I.

pares ," or "first among equals." Thus, it was the economic realities within this age of crises that contributed to the formation and characteristics of the early *compagnie*.

While the changing nature of patronage created a degree of uncertainty for both the painter and actor of the sixteenth century it also allotted them a greater deal of independence. The artist not only assumed a greater deal of autonomy over what was created, but also was able to redefine his art and skill in terms of a commodity, one that could be sold not only locally, but nationally, even internationally. The opening of the marketplace for art and theatre in the sixteenth century created the concomitant need for travel. It was at this juncture, that the artists from the north travelled south and met the wandering troupes of the *commedia dell'arte*. This significant phenomenon will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

The International Style of Mannerism and Early Commedia dell'Arte Iconography

An important cultural phenomenon that links the development of *commedia dell'arte* with Mannerism refers to what Würtenberger calls "the travelling virtuoso as an artistic type:"¹

"The new sociological type of the *pittore vago*, wandering virtuosos, appeared everywhere. Their main goal was to visit the most important countries in order to spread their own fame. Travel was even expressly called for in the *Dialogo di Pittura* (1548) by Paolo Pino; virtuosos went from one court to another or from one artistic centre to another regardless of their regional and family origins. The artistic repertoire of forms began to become a general European cultural concern."²

The phenomenon of the "*pittore vago* " ("literally, wandering painters")³ demonstrates the importance of travel as a means of economic survival for the artist, and was a major factor in the development of Mannerism as an international style.⁴ The *pittore vago*, or "*vagabondi* " painters, travelled about Europe to seek opportunity and fame,⁵ and at times to escape war, foreign invasion, and poor economic conditions. ⁶

¹ Franzsepp Würtenberger, Mannerism: The European Style of the Sixteenth Century (op. cit.) p. 9.

² Ibid. p. 10.

³ Würtenberger, p. 9.

⁴ As we have hitherto shown, travel was necessary for the survival of the *comici*, and led to the dissemination of the *commedia dell'arte* throughout Europe.

⁵ We have listed a number of reasons for this fluctuation in Part One. Both Arnold Hauser (op. cit.), p. 54, and Theodore Rabb (op. cit.) pp. 83-100, cite the economic and

Dutch and Flemish artists came to Italy, and France, where they were influenced by Mannerist theory and practice. These *stranieri* (foreign artists) often adapted Italian names, sometimes of the city in which they worked. For instance, the famous Mannerist sculptor Jean de Boulogne, better known as Giovanni Bologna, was born in Douai and trained in Flanders but never returned from his visit to Italy in the 1550's.⁷ The Dutch artist Frederick Sustris, so called while a court painter at Munich, became Alexandro Paduano, when he studied with Vasari in Florence.⁸ Perhaps the strangest transition was the Flemish artist Lodewyk Toeput who was coined "Ludovico Pozzoserrato" ("shut well") in his adopted Treviso. The works of the northern painters are crucial to an understanding of the early *commedia* iconography. It was their paintings and prints, not those of the native Italians, which helped popularize the *commedia dell'arte* throughout Europe, while satisfying the northern demand for images of this type.

While northern artists came south, Italian artists travelled to Fontainebleau,⁹ Bavaria, and Prague, where they influenced native artists in the Italian style. This cross-pollination of

demographic crises of the sixteenth century, as well as changes in the system of patronage, for instance, and the advent of new 'bourgeois' markets. The foreign invasion of Rome in 1527 led to a mass exodus of artists, eventually Rosso went to Fontainebleau and initiated a new style of art. The artists travelling from the north came to Italy to copy ruins, classical art, and learn the latest techniques, motivated by the great demand for Italianate art in the north.

⁶ Württenberger, p. 11. Hauser, p. 57-58, notes the foreign presence in Italy, the Spanish presence is also felt in the Low Countries, particularly in Flanders and Brabant.

⁷ Alastair Smart, The Renaissance and Mannerism Outside Italy (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972) p. 139.

⁸ Hauser, p. 242.

⁹ Where they converged with French and Flemish artists.

artistic nationalities and the influences across nations has led scholars to define Mannerism as an International Style in art. That phenomenon coincides with the development of the *commedia dell'arte*. Just as Mannerism began in Italy and spread throughout Europe, so too did the *commedia dell'arte* begin in Italy and then disseminate throughout the north, gradually adapting and acculturating itself to the countries it inhabited.

The phenomenon of the *pittore vago* is especially important since there are only a handful of iconographic examples of the *commedia dell'arte* from Italian painters of the cinquecento, notably those of the Bassani family.¹⁰ One reason for the lack of Italian paintings may be that Italian painters were generally commissioned to paint frescoes of religious, mythological, or historical subjects, a process which involves a large-scale format.¹¹ In contrast, the northern painters increasingly came from a tradition of genre and landscape painting. In addition, artists from the north were not profoundly affected by the phenomenon of the Renaissance and its classical antecedents until much later. The Late Gothic period still prevailed in northern Europe at the same time that the Renaissance flourished in Italy. In the early sixteenth century religious strife made for differences in the culture of northern and southern Europe. While the arts in Italy came under the scrutiny of the Counter-Reformation, northern European artists responded to the religious fervor of the Reformation.¹² Printmaking had enjoyed a long-standing tradition in northern Europe, not

¹⁰ M. A. Katritzky, "Italian Comedians in Renaissance Prints," *Print Quarterly* Vol. IV. No. 3, (September 1987). There are representative prints by Ambrogio Brambilla and Nicolò Nelli, however. Katritzky presents examples of sixteenth century Italian engravings, some well-known from *Receuil Fossard*, and others rarely reproduced such as some Venetian engravings by Nelli, and various anonymous works, which are not strictly related to the *commedia dell'arte*.

¹¹ Portraiture is not considered here. Even Italian prints from the cinquecento were in the main involved with large scale themes. See Davis, *Mannerist Prints* (op. cit.).

only as a means of artistic expression,¹³ but for functional purposes, such as recording battles, entries, and spectacles; and for the ornamentation of books and manuscripts. In the sixteenth century Italian etchers and engravers, prompted by the growing demand for Renaissance art throughout Europe, began copying original paintings in print.¹⁴ Many of these were accomplished with *maniera*, that is, the engraver would re-interpret or modify a given work in their particular style, thereby attempting to surpass the original in either technique or *invenzione*. Prints had the added advantage of being able to be struck with captions, slogans, mottoes, poems, or allegorical and biblical passages, all of which appealed to the sixteenth-century taste for emblems of diverse type.

The phenomenon of the *pittore vago* is helpful in separating representative examples of *commedia dell'arte* iconography into various camps. The Netherlandish-Italianate influence is demonstrated in the frescoes at Trausnitz, under the direction of Frederick Sustris. In Venice and the surrounding Veneto province, Flemish painters Lodewyk Toeput, Ambrose Francken, and Joos de Momper created a number of works with *commedia* characters. At times, they painted in the same workshop.¹⁵ Franco-Flemish

¹² For example, during the Reformation, many artists fabricated paintings that derived from '*vanitas*' themes and biblical stories such as that of the Prodigal Son.

¹³ Friedlaender, (op. cit.), pp. 3-4 cites Dürer's prints as having an enormous impact on the development of Mannerism: "The new way of feeling germinating in him [Pontormo], but not in him alone, permitted the young and popular artist to cling to his own feeling and usable in his reaction against the ideal of the High Renaissance." As we will see Callot was employed by the Medici court to record in print official events.

¹⁴ Davis, *Mannerist Prints* (op. cit.) pp. 4-8. Marcantonio Raimondi began this trend when he reproduced in print form many of the works of Raphael. This trend was followed by Caraglio and the works of Rosso, and the French engravers and etchers like Boyvin at Fontainebleau who carried on this tradition.

¹⁵ M.A. Katritzky, "Lodewyk Toeput: Some Pictures related to the *commedia dell'arte*," *Renaissance Studies* (op. cit.), pp. 71-87.

and Italian influences effect the *commedia* images at Fontainebleau. Other French painters studied with Flemish masters. One in particular from Nancy named Jacques Callot apprenticed himself to the famous scene designer Giulio Parigi at the Medici court in Florence.¹⁶ In Milan, Dionisio Minaggio, published his 'Feather illustrations'. This unique *invenzione* of early *commedia* iconography was commissioned by the Spanish governor, Don Pedro de Toledo Osorio, who represented the Spanish-Hapsburg crown.

Many important examples of early iconography including the Fossard and the Corsini collections, assumed their respective names well after they were created. The illustrative material of both the Fossard and Corsini collections is for the most part, unsigned and anonymous.¹⁷ The Fossard apparently marks the continuing interest in France of prints depicting *commedia figures*., at least until 1589, the date of the death of King Henry III.¹⁸ The Corsini collection of drawings serve as frontispieces to one hundred early seventeenth-century *scenarii* housed at the *Biblioteca Corsiniana*..¹⁹ While theatre historian A. M. Nagler considers the Corsini drawings helpful for an understanding of

¹⁶ Ludovico Zorzi, "*I loughi e le forme dello spettacolo*," *Il Teatro del Cinquecento*, edited by Siro Ferrone (*Sansoni: Firenze*, 1982), p. 36. Parigi designed the amphitheatre at the Boboli Gardens, and was the major scene designer at the Medici court, after the death of Bountalenti.

¹⁷ M.A. Katritzky, "A renaissance *commedia dell'arte* performance: towards a definitive sequence of Sieur Fossard's woodcuts?," in *Nationalmuseum Bulletin* (Stockholm, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1988), p. 53. One of the prints is signed by the French artist, Pierre Brebiette.

¹⁸ Thomas F. Heck, *Commedia dell'Arte: A Guide to the Primary and Secondary Literature* (op. cit.) p. 318. Heck uses 1589 as a sigla date suggesting the popularity of *commedia dell'arte* engravings during the reign of Henry III. Katritzky has proved that prints after this date occur in the miscellany of the Fossard collection.

¹⁹ Heck, p. 15. The Corsini scenari include "mss. 45 G.5(49 scenari) and 45 G. 6 (51 scenari). The Biblioteca Corsiniana is part of the *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, director Anna Capecchi. I viewed this collection as part of my research study in early June, 1989.

commedia staging practices,²⁰ the drawings themselves are technically unsophisticated in terms of artistic execution, and will be mentioned only in regard to significant theatrical concerns.²¹ The content of the drawings, however, reflects many late cinquecento themes, such as magic, mysticism, the picaresque, adventurism; and a variety of genres: pastoral, *opera regia*, comedy, tragedy and tragicomedy.

Before discussing several examples from the above collections, it will be necessary to consider the historical context of these works, so as to provide a base from which to mount the critical analysis of a selected number of representative plates. Our analysis will proceed with the Schloss Trausnitz frescoes, the Recueil Fossard prints, the Franco-Flemish and Fontainebleau Schools, the Venetian group, and conclude with an examination of the Feather Book and the Callot etchings of the *Balli di Sfessania*. The sequence is essentially chronological, and covers the years from 1576 to 1621.

The Schloss Trausnitz frescoes

As was demonstrated in Part One, the influence of Italian artists and craftsmen permeated the major courts of Europe. Württenberger posits this influence in the minor courts as well, where the "theatricalization of art" created a sense of splendor and magnificence hitherto

²⁰ A. M. Nagler, "The *commedia* drawings of the Corsini scenari," Maske und Kothurn, Vol. 15, No. 1, (1969), pp. 6-10.

²¹ I am not here taking an elitist position in regard to the Corsini aquarelles (watercolors), for they offer historical evidence that Serlian staging was used for a number of *scenarii*. They are also helpful in identifying certain *lazzi*, and the use of props, and the apparent staging of pastoral and *opera regia*. The diluted wash tones of the sketches present muted shades, and there is no attempt at complex detail, particularly in regard to the costumes of the various stage figures. From my own training and background as a stage designer, I assess the level of draftsmanship is tantamount to a thumbnail sketch by a designer, but not at the skill-level of an accomplished artist.

unknown. Virtuoso displays of art and spectacle had the effect of enhancing the image of the ruling aristocracy while providing members of the court with diversion and delight.

Sebastiano Serlio wrote in the middle of the sixteenth century in *Architettura* ²²:

"The more things cost, the more they are esteemed, for they are things which stately and great persons doe, which are enemies to niggardlinesse. This have I seene in. . . Scenes made by Ieronimo Genga, for the pleasure of the his. . . patron Francisco Maria, Duke of Urbin : wherein I saw so great liberalitie used by the Prince, and so good a conceit in the workeman, and so good Art . . . as ever I saw in my life before. . . what magnificence was there to be seene . . . but I leave these things to the discretion of the workeman ; who shall. . . never take care what it shall cost."

The 'display' of power through lavish entertainments, artworks and spectacle spread throughout Europe in the second half of the sixteenth century. Minor courts as well shared in the "*nuovo gusto*" (new taste) for extravagant entertainments and works of art. Typical of this phenomenon, which at times put a strain on courtly budgets, are the wall paintings at Schloss Trausnitz made during the reign of Albert V of Bavaria in the late sixteenth century.²³

The frescoes of 1576 ²⁴ in the Rittersaal at Trausnitz Castle are an example of Mannerist fresco technique that affords an early depiction of Italian *commedia all'improvviso*. Franz

²² Stephen Orgel, *Illusion of Power: Political Theatre in the English Renaissance* (University of California: Berkeley, 1975), p. 7. From the first English translation of the *Architettura*, 1611.

²³ K. Lea, (op.cit.) I, p. 13. In light of the Serlian comment (above), the Duke of Bavaria was perhaps too lavish in his courtly entertainments. In 1575 he found himself with a debt of 229,373 guilders, and was forced to dismiss members of his household including the comedians, some of whom had performed in 1568 and later had served as models for the frescoes.

²⁴ Date corroborated by Gunther Schöne, "*Les Fêtes de la renaissance à la cour de Bavière*," in *Le Lieu théâtral à la renaissance*, edit. by Jean Jacquot (Paris: Editions C.N.R.S., 1964), pp. 171-182.

Rauhut alleges that the frescoes were designed and executed by the aforementioned Federico Sustris who was born in Amsterdam in 1525, and died at Florence in 1591.²⁵ Rauhut has established that the "*bozzetti*" (preliminary sketches) came from the hand of Sustris.²⁶ However, Rauhut suggests that the ceiling friezes seem to favor the style of the Italian Antonio Panzano. Excellent watercolor reproductions of the frescoes were executed by Max Hailer in 1841, and demonstrate the frescoes in a lesser state of deterioration.²⁷

Twenty-six separate actions which represent the comedians in various scenes cover the inner walls. The sixteen ceiling scenes in the room called the *Ehrenlohn-Zimmer*, were destroyed by fire in 1961, although prints of the scenes had been reproduced.²⁸ The walls of the *Scala dei Buffoni* are covered with *trompe l'oeil* frescoes that seemingly obliterate the boundary between spectator and audience. Württenberger posits:

"the Mannerists aimed at intensifying the relation between picture and spectator and wherever possible swamping the contrast between these two spheres. . . . In their gestures, in the artificiality of their movements they [the *commedia* figures] contribute in their own way to the ghostly atmosphere of the Rittersaal"²⁹

²⁵ Also known as Federigo del Padovano, Lamberto Sustris or Susterman. See Giorgio Vasari, *Lo Zibaldone di Giorgio Vasari*, edited by Alessandro del Vita (Arezzo, 1938). p. 39, 43. See Del Vita, p. 126. Became member of Florentine Academy and was noted as well for his maps. Sustris changed his name to Alexander Paduano when he studied in Italy, at Vasari's *Academy of Design*.

²⁶ Franz Rauhut, "*La commedia dell'arte italiana in Baviera: teatro, pittura, musica, scultura.*" In *Studi sul teatro veneto fra rinascimento ed età barocca*, edit. by Maria Teresa Muraro (op. cit.) pp. 241-271. However, according to Lea, p. 13, n. 3. the painter has not been clearly identified. Trautmann conjectures Alexander Sieben or Maler, because of his signature on a payment of 25 florins recorded in 1579. Rée, however, favors Alexander Paduano nee Sustris.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 261. See Figure 115 in appendix. Watercolors reprinted in Lea, I, Chapter 1.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 258.

Würtenberger suggests that the Rittersaal frescoes are not only consistent with the Mannerist aesthetic, but also reflect a trend toward large scale frescoes in the latter cinquecento. Hauser comments:

"The close connection between late international Mannerism and Italian art was established in the middle of the century mainly by Netherlandish artists who were members of the Vasari school and the *studiolo* group such as Frederick Sustris (1520[5]-1591). . .the international style. . .became the point of departure for a new trend at the courts of the Bavarian dukes. . ."30

Thus Sustris, who was the artist in charge of the Trausnitz frescoes, had hitherto "belonged to the Vasari circle."³¹ This is significant since Sustris was part of the international group that aided Vasari in the completion of the large-scale theatricalized frescoes at the Palazzo Vecchio.³² Here the frescoes are interwoven with numerous ornamental grotesques, and *trompe l'oeil* architectural effects. The Mannerist frescoes at the Palazzo Vecchio "mark the invasion of painting by the theatrical world, especially scenography."³³ Vasari, who had hitherto worked as a stage designer, demonstrated the influence of the stage on the organization of the frescoes.³⁴ Vasari not only 'staged' the blocking of his characters

²⁹ Würtenberger, p. 138,139.

³⁰ Hauser, p. 252.

³¹ Hauser, p. 212.

³² Hauser, p. 252. In addition to assisting Vasari with the many *studioli* or smaller rooms at the Palazzo Vecchio. In his *Zibaldone*, Vasari credits Sustris with the famous painting which represents the history of the Medici family. See del Vita, p.39.

³³ Ibid. p. 136. Many Mannerist artists worked also for the theatre in the area of scenography. For instance, Vasari and Salviati were celebrated *maestri scenografi*.

³⁴ Würtenberger, p. 136. Vasari's Cancellaria frescoes are mentioned as the avatar of this phenomenon.

towards theatrical ends, but also employed unreal lighting effects, and painting techniques that were derived from scenic art.

Vasari's *Zibaldone* shows that he utilized artists in much the same way that a *commedia* troupe utilized its players. Each artist performed a specific role, but the final creation was an ensemble effort., reliant on the orchestration of diverse parts and functions.³⁵ Vasari's *Zibaldone* also contains numerous descriptions of allegorical figures, poses, and various *invenzione*, that could be adapted to a given situation, in much the same way a *commedia zibaldone* contained speeches, *concetti*, and *lazzi* that could be utilized in a manner appropriate to specific situation.³⁶

Other examples of the theatricalization of the fresco include Giulio Romano's *Fall of the Giants* at the *Palazzo del Té*, a fresco that disorients the viewer from any sense of architectural form, while suggesting the "anxiety of a nightmare," with its huge looming figures rendered life-like by Romano's *trompe l'oeil* design.³⁷

Sustris' design of the Trausnitz frescoes reflects this trend. Niches and doorways actually are utilized as 'proscenium' frames for the characters. Painted stairways are a continuing

³⁵ Del Vita, (op. cit.) Vasari's layout of a fresco portrait, pp. 260-261, demonstrates a kind of scenario for the portrait of the heroes of the Medici house. Each member is listed, costume descriptions are given as well as iconographic symbols.

³⁶ Del Vita, pp. 148-149, For instance, note Vasari's *invenzione* for the months of the year, which contain iconographic symbols that are representative of June, July and September.

³⁷ Hauser, p. 163. Refer to Chapter One for further description of the phenomenon of the *Palazzo del Té*, and how it changes the focus from the object, to a psychological effect upon the spectator.

motif (*invenzione*) and serve the disorienting effect of obfuscating architectural relations while projecting the spectator into the action.³⁸ The painted walls and archways serving as background to the comic scenes are autonomous from the architectural structure. The closed sense of space gives the impression of a series of narrow stages in front of which those who view the frescoes are spectators at a theatrical performance taking place before them.

The Trausnitz frescoes project the characters and actions of the comedians within the context of a Mannerist aesthetic. The creation of these frescoes represents a link with Vasari, and the mid-cinquecento model of fresco painting practiced in Italy, a factor that has hitherto been overlooked. The frescoes demonstrate the phenomenon of the *pittore vago* in the creation of *commedia dell'arte* images, represented in the Mannerist style.

The *Recueil Fossard* Prints

Important to any study of early *commedia* iconography is an examination of the *Sieur Fossard* woodcuts. Interpretations of these images have varied greatly, and a recent investigation by M. A. Katritzky has shed some new light on the matter:

³⁸ Lea, 13, See 5th wall east. Zanni and lady.

"The best known and most reproduced series of 16th century *commedia dell'arte* images is in the collection of prints mounted onto the recto pages of a bound volume in Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, commonly but misleadingly, referred to as the *Recueil Fossard*. Several writers have suggested that it may be possible to select and arrange certain prints in the Stockholm volume into a sequence of "highlights" from a particular *commedia dell'arte* play, thus making them a uniquely complete 16th century record of this important theatre form, and greatly enhancing their value as documentary material. However, there has been no agreement concerning the exact number of prints, their sequence, or even their initial selection from the eighty-five prints in this collection."³⁹

Part of the problem of interpretation, Katritzky asserts, is the "complicated provenance of the Nationalmuseum prints."⁴⁰ The *commedia* prints are part of a much larger collection compiled by Sieur Fossard, a musician in the court of Louis XIV. After his death in 1702 part of the collection was acquired by Carl Gustav Tessin of Sweden. This section of the collection was dismembered and remounted in into a volume stamped "*Roserbergs Bibliotek*" dated 1738.⁴¹ In 1905, all the volumes, except for the *Recueil Fossard*, were taken apart and the prints were filed individually into the print collection.⁴² To this day, some of the Fossard prints remain uncatalogued entries in the printroom reserves at the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm.

Agne Beijer (1886-1975), director of the Drottningholm's Theatre Museum from 1925 to 1964, discovered the "*Recueil Fossard*" album in these same uncataloged reserves, during

³⁹ M.A. Katritzky, "A renaissance *commedia dell'arte* performance: towards a definitive sequence of Sieur Fossard's woodcuts?," [sic] in *Nationalmuseum Bulletin* (Stockholm, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1988), p.37.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 38.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 38. It later entered into the Copenhagen Royal Library in Denmark (then under Swedish sovereignty), but was eventually transferred to the Nationalmuseum of Sweden in 1904.

⁴² Ibid. p. 38.

the early 1920's.⁴³ Beijer did not consider the prints to depict a given play,⁴⁴ but suggested that they were representative of *lazzi*, or comic activity, with little indication of thematic links between images.⁴⁵ Together with theatre historian Pierre Ducharte and Van Buggenhoudt, Beijer published 44 of the 85 prints in 1928.⁴⁶ A year later some examples were included in a supplement of Ducharte's *La Comédie italienne*.⁴⁷

The Fossard prints are probably the most often reproduced images of the early *commedia dell'arte*. These images have helped scholars establish basic criteria in regard to the costumes, the gestural style, *lazzi*, and risqué nature of the early *comici*. They also demonstrate the presence of the *commedia dell'arte* in France, and the interest of foreign artists in this subject.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 39.

⁴⁴ Two other studies have suggested that the Fossard engravings illustrate a scenario. John H. McDowell, "Some pictorial aspects of early *commedia dell'arte* acting," *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 39, (1942), pp. 47-64. McDowell considers the Fossard a simple adaption of scenes from a *commedia* play. Fernando Mastropasqua, "Lo Spettacolo della collezione Fossard," in *Ruzante e Arlecchino: tre saggi sul teatro popolare del cinquecento* (Parma: Studium Parmense, 1970), pp. 91-125. Mastropasqua reorders the prints as set out in the Beijer version to suggest a three act scenario. Katritzky contests this ordering, although it has gained respectability among Italian scholars.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 39. See Agne Beijer, "XVI-XVIII century Designs at the National Museum," in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, (6e series, XXVIII, 1945) p. 221.

⁴⁶ Fossard, . . . *Recueil de plusieurs fragments des premières comédies italiennes qui ont été représentées en France sous le règne de Henry III. Recueil dit de Fossard, conservé au Musée national de Stockholm, présenté par Agne Beijer. Suivi de Compositions de rhétorique de Don Arlequin, présentées par P. L. Ducharte.* (Paris: Ducharte et Van Buggenhoudt, 1928). I have examined a complete volume of this edition in the Special Collections section of the Main Library, Ohio State University.

⁴⁷ In Pierre Louis Ducharte, *La Comédie italienne: l'improvisation, les canevas, vies, caractères, portraits, masques des illustres personnages de la commedia dell'arte*. First ed. (Paris: Librairie de France, 1924). Fossard entries in later, 1928 edition.

Franco-Flemish Painters
Second School of Fontainebleau

Part I demonstrated the importance of Rosso and Primaticcio in the development of the First School of Fontainebleau, and Fontainebleau's continued inclusion of many Italian artists, such as Benevenuto Cellini. Under the direction of Primaticcio, Italian printmaking techniques were refined and given a distinctive look that favored a "gentle, elegant, and erotic"⁴⁸ preciousness in the depiction of the nude. The influence of printmaking techniques learned at Fontainebleau was subsequently felt in Antwerp, and under the direction of Heironymous Cock a number of prints by artists such as Francken, Sadeler and Italians such as Ghisi were produced.⁴⁹ Through the marketing talents of Cock, prints enjoyed a far greater dissemination than had been the case at Fontainebleau. Cock was responding to the growing bourgeois demand for Italian, and Italianate art, whereas the market at Fontainebleau responded to the limited demands of the aristocracy.⁵⁰

However, the influence of the Flemish artists increased throughout France in the second half of the sixteenth century. Art historians, Charles Sterling and Jean Adhémar, have cited that Francis I's interest in Flemish art helped bring about the Second School of Fontainebleau.⁵¹ Sterling and Adhémar published depictions of *commedia* figures that

⁴⁸ Hauser, p. 213.

⁴⁹ Bruce Davis, *Mannerist Prints* (op.cit.), p. 17. The prints by Francken and Sadeler are of great importance to this study, for they represent depictions of *commedia dell'arte* characters. Often these prints, are *di maniera*, that is, after the paintings of other artists

⁵⁰ Davis, p. 19.

⁵¹ Charles Sterling, "Early Paintings of the *commedia dell'arte* in France," Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Vol. 2, no. 1, (1943), pp. 11-32. Also, Jean Adhémar,

were compositionally similar to French models, but remain distinctly Flemish in execution. Paintings such as *La Femme entre deux ages*," (Rennes Museum) demonstrate stylistic links to the high *maniera* style of Clouet. In this sense, the more direct and realistic Flemish style was tempered with the elegant, but coolly aristocratic eroticism typical of the *maniera* at Fontainebleau.

The Franco-Flemish painters described by Sterling and Adhémar remain anonymous, although their works offer evidence of the *commedia dell'arte* 's presence in the French court. Some paintings of *commedia* figures have come under dispute such as "A Scene from the Commedia dell'arte" at the Bayeux Museum,⁵² which Nicoll attributed to Jacques Pourbus (1572), and which he posits as representing the Ganassa presence in France.⁵³ Sterling disputes Nicoll's claim in regard to the identity of the characters represented by the painter. The major shortcoming in Nicoll's assessment of "A Scene from the Commedia dell'Arte,"⁵⁴ is his assumption that the painting is an actual representation of real-life contemporary figures. Sterling posits that the painter used only one model for a number of the women, making identification highly unlikely,⁵⁵ if not futile. An accepted practice of sixteenth-century *maniera* artists was to combine qualities

"French sixteenth-century genre paintings," Journal of the Warburg and Courtland Institutes, Vol. 8, (1945), pp. 191-195.

⁵² Sterling, p. 17, disputes claim regarding the attribution of Pourbus, citing that Pourbus was not in France at the time. However, Sterling acknowledges that a number of the Pourbus family were engaged in painting, leaving the matter in some doubt (Painting was cited and described earlier in regard to the Ganassa troupe).

⁵³ Nicoll, Masks, Mimes, and Miracles (op. cit.) p. 270. Figure 184. Ganassa was in Paris in 1572.

⁵⁴ I have included Nicoll's detailed description in Chapter V.

⁵⁵ Sterling, p. 17.

from many figures to form one ideal figure as the quintessential 'type'.⁵⁶ Again, let us refer to Vasari, as quoted by Smyth:

"In the introduction of Part III of the *Lives*, Vasari states that *maniera* had been added to painting on its way to sixteenth century perfection. "*La maniera*," he continues, "became *la più bella* from the method of copying frequently the most beautiful things, combining them to make from what was most beautiful (whether hands, heads, bodies, or legs) the best figure possible, and *putting it into use in every work for all the figures--from this it is said comes bella maniera* [*italics Smyth*]." ⁵⁷

The international flux of artists and the dissemination of *maniera*, whereby artists not only duplicated each other's compositional schemes but also borrowed forms and techniques, has made it difficult to attribute certain works to a specific artist. The problem is compounded for the theatre historian who seeks to identify *commedia dell'arte* personalities, who are obscured by a typed costume and mask. The caveat for the theatre historian of the early *commedia*, is that the historian, in most cases, cannot be certain that a given image is directly drawn from life. In fact, the artist of the late sixteenth century was most likely working from a mixture of nature, stock models, and accepted compositional arrangement. This points out the importance of understanding art historical practices for the theatre historian.

Another difficulty for the historian is that unlike familiar '*commedia*' artists of the seventeenth and eighteenth century such as Tiepolo and Watteau, the earlier painters of *commedia* figures were not often of the first rank, and are hardly well-known, even to art

⁵⁶ This is the quest for "*bella maniera*."

⁵⁷ Smyth, *Mannerism and Maniera* (op. cit.) p. 5. "...e metterla in uso in ogni opere per tutte le figure; che per questo si dice esser bella maniera."

historians. While accurate identification of the painter is of primary importance, sometimes there is actually disagreement among historians regarding the school, area, or time period in which a particular work was created.

The often disputed "The Actors," usually attributed to the School of Fontainebleau, demonstrates the kind of confusion in this case one created by the international cross-pollination of the *pittore vago*. I undertook an examination of the unpublished records pertinent to this painting at the Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota.⁵⁸ These files reveal a number of different assessments by art historians as to its creator: Otto Benesch of Vienna, Austria and Pierre Rosenberg of the Louvre in Paris assert that it was the work of the late French Mannerist Jean Bellange, under the influence of an Italian painting master; Waterhouse and Clark suggest that it may have been the Genoese painter Paggi; Walter Friedlaender asserts that it is of French origin, albeit not Fontainebleau, and conjectures that it is from the School of Bologna. Art historians such as the previously mentioned Sterling posit it to be of Flemish hand, painted in France and influenced by the Second School of Fontainebleau; Kenneth Clark asserts that "the Actors" is from the School of Fontainebleau, albeit demonstrating a rapport with the earlier tradition of Primaticcio. Indeed, the painting has been included in a catalog from a 1965 exhibition, *School of Fontainebleau*⁵⁹ published by the Fort Worth Museum. Perhaps the strongest indication of its inclusion within the School of Fontainebleau comes from the Ringling Museum.

⁵⁸ These unpublished records take the form of letters and brief notes to the museum unless otherwise noted.

⁵⁹ The School of Fontainebleau: An Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings, Etchings and Sculpture, 1530-1619, (Fort Worth Art Center: 1965), p. 71.

Printed on the back of each postcard which bears this painting are the title and attribution:

"The Actors by the School of Fontainebleau."

De Gheyn and the Veneto Group

While the work of the "*pittore vago*" aids the modern viewer in their understanding of early *commedia dell'arte*,⁶⁰ the early representations served a synchronic function of availing this visual information to northern Europe, where there was great demand for prints of the *commedia dell'arte*.⁶¹ The Flemish artist Jacques de Gheyn II's (1565-1629) portrait engraving, *Three Comedians*, is an exemplar of the artist's role in introducing the *commedia dell'arte* to northern Europe:

"Representations of the comic characters of the *Commedia dell'Arte* enjoyed in the north a popularity unknown in Italy (Ternois, *L'Art*, p. 233-234). . . . these foreign comedians often appear in the volumes depicting exotic inhabitants from around the world. The comedians of Jacques de Gheyn's series attest to the general amusement with which these clownish performers must have been regarded. The figures presented in a narrow stage space. . . are imbued with a sense of animation. Unlike the traditional stiff figures over which elaborate fashions have been superimposed, these comedians have been caught performing one of their slap-stick routines. . . . de Gheyn's prints suggest much of these comic situations."⁶²

⁶⁰ To examine later eras to assess the historical progression, see E. A. Carmean, *Picasso: The Saltimbanques*, Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1980) Carmean demonstrates the presence of *commedia* figures in the history of painting, from the eighteenth century to the twentieth.

⁶¹ See note below.

⁶² From Museum of Art, Exhibition Catalog, *Jacques Callot : 1592-1635*, Providence: Rhode Island School of Design, (March 4--April 11, 1970), Plate 117. Description of *Three Comedians* (from *The Masks*), etching, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Besides the Callot works alluded to above, *Jean-Jacques Boissard's* (1533-1598) *Habitus Variarum Orbis Gentium* is representative of the costume books of the period, however, Boissard's work theatricalizes the poses to a greater degree, and demonstrates Boissard's familiarity with the *commedia dell'arte* in its early phase, Plate 95.

De Gheyn influenced Flemish artists working in Venice and the province of Veneto. In the last quarter of the sixteenth century they produced a number of art works which feature *commedia dell'arte* figures. These works have hitherto gone unnoticed by theatre historians of the *commedia* including authorities such as Allardyce Nicoll, Cesare Molinari, and Ludovico Zorzi. However as a result of recent fluctuations on the international art market these relatively unknown works have come to light. Flemish artists such as Marten de Vos, Joos de Momper, and Lodewyk Toeput, and Ambrose Francken depicted images of *commedia* characters in non-theatrical settings or scenes of carnival.⁶³ These images demonstrate that aspects of the *commedia dell'arte* permeated sixteenth-century culture on a number of levels, and that the extant iconography was clearly influenced by the force of the Mannerist vision:

"By the early 1570's he (Toeput) was definitely established in Venice, and travelled around Italy in 1581, visiting various cities including Rome and Florence. Soon after this trip he moved permanently to Treviso, where he spent the rest of his life. In Venice, he worked in the studio of Tintoretto, where de Vos had been twenty years earlier, and [art historian Luigi] Menegazzi notes the close stylistic links with both these artist. . ."⁶⁴

Thus, we can establish a link not only between these *pittore vago* and the *commedia dell'arte*, but also between the painters Toeput and de Vos with the Venetian Mannerist

⁶³ M. A. Katritzky, "Lodewyk Toeput: Some pictures related to the *commedia dell'arte*," *Renaissance Studies*, Vol. 1. No. 1, (1987), pp. 71-125. The popularity of the *commedia dell'arte* in various representations of northern artists continued through the seventeenth century reaching its apogee in the works of Jan Steen.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 79. also see Luigi Menegazzi, "Ludovico Toeput (il Pozzoserrato)," *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte*, Vol.1 (1957), p. 169 and ff. 178, 183; and "Giunte e Ludovico Pozzoserrato," *Arte Veneta*, Vol. 15, (1961), pp. 107-118.

Tintoretto, a painter widely regarded as one of the most 'theatrical' of the great Mannerist artists.

The impact of the *pittore vago* on popularizing the *commedia dell'arte* outside of Italy was enhanced by the advances in printmaking techniques which allowed for a greater dissemination of the works. Since many copies could be made beyond the artist's proof, connoisseurs and members of the bourgeois would have found them affordable and available. These early works fascinated spectators with their energy, humor, and a bizarre, grotesque and enigmatic style.⁶⁵ Later, in the middle of the seventeenth century it was common practice for prints of the masked comedians, depicting them in excessive behavior, to be captioned with warnings against such excesses.⁶⁶

The McGill Feather Book

A significant and peculiar iconographic collection from the early seventeenth century is commonly referred to as the McGill Feather Book, owned by the Wood Library of Ornithology at McGill University in Montreal.⁶⁷ Theatre historian, Beatrice Corrigan correlates the images of comedians in the Feather Book with specific *commedia*

⁶⁵ Hitherto, northern european taste in art had a developed a fondness for the grotesque demonstrated in the popularity of Bosch and later Breughel.

⁶⁶ *Commedia dell'arte* engravings with verse and captions continued in popularity through the eighteenth century. "*Il Rapimento di Isabella*," engravings by J.B. Probst (1673-1750) was published in 1729. See Molinari, (op. cit) pp. 222-232.

⁶⁷ A number of works deal with this collection in varying degrees. Gerhard R. Lomer, "Feather Pictures of the *Commedia dell'Arte*," *Theatre Arts Monthly*, XIV (September, 1930), pp. 807-810; George Speaight, *The History of the English Puppet Theatre* (London, 1955), pp. 16-17. Also John H. McDowell, "Some Pictorial Aspects of Early *Commedia dell'Arte* Acting," *Studies in Philology*, XXXIX (January, 1942), pp. 47-64. Nicoll, *World of Harlequin*, (op. cit.) and Molinari, *La Commedia dell'Arte*, (op. cit.) both present pictorial examples.

personalities that travelled through Milan, between 1615 and 1618. The last is the date of publication.⁶⁸ The work is peculiar since the fourteen plates depicting comedians are composed entirely with feathers. Corrigan describes the book:

"The book contained 156 pictures, approximately 13 x 19 inches in size. Of these 112 represent birds, depicted with their own feathers and. . . skins, with the original beaks and claws forming part of the composition. . . .[however] . . .scholars have been attracted by a quite different series of pictures. Leaf 100 of the book depicts an elegantly dressed young man standing under a tree, which like himself is composed of feathers. Projecting from the tree and pointing at the young man is a sign reading LEANDER, and in the upper right hand corner of the picture is the inscription LICHOMEZI. . . . [T]here should be no difficulty in interpreting it as LI COMICI, for . . . it introduces a series of fourteen pictures of. . . .[comici], only two. . . .are not identified by the artist. As five of the pictures show two characters, the total number. . . amounts to nineteen."⁶⁹

Little is known of the artist, Dionisio Minaggio, although the work was executed in Milan.⁷⁰ However, the Governor of Milan and employer of Dionisio Minaggio, was not Italian but the Spaniard, Don Pedro de Toledo Osorio, who represented the Spanish crown in Milan. Thus, we can attest to the further cross-pollination of influences that had their effect on the earlier iconography. The refined and precious tastes of the Spanish court are exhibited by Don Pedro's own collection of exotic, rare birds from South America and the Arctic. Earlier as an ambassador to France for Philip III, Don Pedro had arranged to send the young Dauphin (Louis XIII) some birds from his collection. It is at this point, 1608,

⁶⁸ Beatrice Corrigan, "Commedia dell'Arte Portraits in the McGill Feather Book," *Renaissance Drama*, Vol. 2, (1969), pp. 167-188.

⁶⁹ Corrigan, p. 168. The inscriptions are printed with ink on a lozenge-shaped strip of paper which is glued to the page. The title page of the book is inscribed *Dionisio Minaggio Giardiniero di S^a. E^a. Guobernator Del Stat^o di Milano Inventor Et Feccit Lano Del 1.6.1.8.*

⁷⁰ Ibid. p.185

that Don Pedro witnessed a performance of the Accessi troupe.⁷¹ In 1617, Don Pedro granted Pier Maria Cecchini, a license to perform in Milan;⁷² and three members of that troupe are included in the Feather Book.⁷³

The Commedia Iconography of Callot

Later generations of French artists including the Mannerist master of the engraving, Jacques Callot, were influenced by the ornamental style of the Fontainebleau School:

"The most original and productive representatives of Mannerism in France, are the engraver and etcher Jacques Callot (1592-1625), and Jacques Bellange also known primarily as a graphic artist. Both tended to the bizarre, the artificial and the sophisticated, and in many ways came very close to the preciousity of international Mannerism. In the elongation and refinement of (Callot's) his figures, the nervous constitution of types, the affected attitudes, movements and gestures, and the ornamental arrangement of the pictorial elements in general, (Callot) he attains a degree of extravagance that exceeds anything of its kind ever produced in Mannerism."⁷⁴

Callot's distorted, grotesque and exaggerated depiction of the comedians in the etchings of the *Balli di Sfessania* demonstrate the synthesis of commedia dell'arte content with Mannerist formal characteristics.⁷⁵ Although the etchings were not completed until 1622 in Nancy, scholars suggest that the preliminary drawings were executed before Callot left Florence:

⁷¹ Corrigan, p. 186.

⁷² Ibid. p. 187.

⁷³ Ibid. p. 187.

⁷⁴ Hauser, p. 243-244.

⁷⁵ We will examine Callot's engravings in greater detail in Part III.

"This last series was engraved near Nancy, but Callot had finished his drawings before he left Florence."⁷⁶

In the manner of his foreign cohorts, Callot travelled and worked in Italy intermittently throughout his career. According to Sadoul, it was during Callot's travels that he encountered and sketched the troupe of Piero Maria Cecchini. Evidently, those sketches later became the basis for his engravings, *Balli di Sfessania* :

"Callot seems to have definitely represented the troupe of Fritellino, son of Fritello (Piero Maria Cecchini). His company travelled to France at the end of 1615 and perhaps in 1618. The famous leader of these comedians was protected by the Duke of Mantua. He came to be ennobled by the emperor Mathias during a tour of Germany."⁷⁷

Travel brought economic opportunity and fame for Callot and Cecchini.⁷⁸ In the sixteenth century, the *virtuosocomico* or painter was no longer relegated to journeyman status, but was able, with proper refinements and well-placed connections, to attain courtier status,

⁷⁶ Georges Sadoul, *Jacques Callot: miroir de sons temps* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969) p. 91-92. "*Cette dernière série a été gravée vers à Nancy, mais Callot avait terminé ses dessins avant de quitter Florence.*" Callot was an example of the *pittore vago*, in fact as a young man he apprenticed in Rome (see above for chapter "*Enfance et apprentissage : Nancy et Rome 1593-1611*"). .

⁷⁷ Sadoul, p. 98. "*Callot paraît y avoir surtout représenté la troupe de Fritellino fils de Fritello (Piero Cecchini). Sa compagnie séjourna à Florence fin 1615 et peut-être en 1618. Le fameux chef de ces Zanni était protégé par le duc de Mantour. Il venait d'être anobli par l'empereur Mathias au cours d'une tournée en Allemagne.*"

⁷⁸ Nicoll, *Masks, Mimes and Miracles* (op. cit.) p. 297. Here Nicoll posits that letters of nobility were granted Cecchini in Vienna, where earlier Arcimboldo had reigned as court painter. According to Hauser, the successful artists of the late sixteenth century would have risen into the bourgeoisie, a class that aspired to the aristocracy and imitated its behavior. As described earlier, this mode of behavior was described as *maniera* by Georg Weise. This type of artificial behavior and etiquette was promoted in Castiglione's *Courtier* (op. cit.); in Hauser, *Mannerism*, (op. cit.), pp. 56-61. See more on Cecchini in Chapter V and VI.

and thus the protection of the court.⁷⁹ For instance, Callot enjoyed seven years in the service of Cosimo II, in Florence from 1614-1621. It was at Florence that Callot, as one of the successors of Bontalenti, "learned all sorts of theatrical devices and developed a taste for the fantastic and a knowledge of spatial illusionism which he kept all his life."⁸⁰

Upon Callot's return to his native Nancy in 1621, he began to etch a considerable number of Italian subjects.⁸¹ While acknowledging the demand for *commedia dell'arte* prints in the north, Henri Zerner posits that the *Balli* series may have derived from nostalgic motives:

"[they] have a frenzy unprecedented in the artist's work, an extreme gaiety which has the prestige of things past."⁸²

⁷⁹ Smyth, p. 23. It is also appropriate to refer the reader to our previous discussions of *maniera* as a form of courtly behavior. Chapters 3 and 5.

⁸⁰ Henri Zerner, *Jacques Callot: 1592-1635*, Catalog of Exhibition at the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence Rhode Island (March 5-April 11, 1970). p. 31. From 1612-1615, Callot studied and worked with Parigi, one of the most famous successors to Bontalenti.

⁸¹ Zerner, p. 30. "The technical transformation of etching was Callot's most obvious accomplishment. Etching involves covering a copper plate with a varnish or ground, scratching this ground with a needle, and placing it into an acid bath which bites the uncovered parts of the copper. The plate is then cleaned and printed as in any *intaglio* process; that is, by inking the plate, wiping it and running it under the press so that the ink retained in the grooves is transferred to the paper. The process had the advantage over burin engraving in that it requires less training, at least in the simple phase described above. . . . Callot. . . replaced the soft ground of previous etchers with a harder varnish used by Florentine makers of string instruments. This allowed for more precise work, as it resisted the acid better and was less subject to accidents while the artist was working. These qualities of the ground made it possible for Callot to give a very considerable extension to the multiple biting, timidly attempted by his predecessors. Finally a new type of needle, the *échoppe*, which Callot may have introduced himself or used effectively for the first time gave a new flexibility to the medium. It is a larger needle, cut at a slant, like an oval burin, so that the artist can vary the width of the line by rotating the needle between his fingers."

⁸² Zerner, p. 31.

With due consideration to their fantastic quality, Gerald Kahan posits that the historical value of the *Balli* series may be suspect :

"Callot's works on the *commedia* are so unique and incisive that he has almost become its definitive visual interpreter. Most of Callot's theatrical prints are contemporary documents recording an actual event in the greatest detail so that they have historical as well as aesthetic value. This is not always true of the *commedia* etchings. Few, if any, deal with specific actors or companies or performances."⁸³

Following this mode of thought, George Kernodle suggests that the *Balli* are a flight of the imagination:

". . . a kind of fantasy capturing the essence of movement and appearance. Apparently the companies which we know did not do this dancing. But dance they certainly did, and perhaps the *Balli di Sfessani* is a dream of dancers based on the idea of *commedia* characters."⁸⁴

Joseph Kennard, on the other hand, looks backward toward antiquity and draws an evolutionary relationship between the *Balli* and the Atellan farces:

"in ancient times the Sfessania in Piedmont invented popular verses characterized by improvised pleasantries, postures and scenes resembling the Atellan."⁸⁵

⁸³ Gerald Kahan, *Jacques Callot: Artist of the Theatre* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1976). p. 9.

⁸⁴ Kahan, p. 9. The views of other scholars such Winifred Smith (op. cit.) and Nicoll corroborate the notion of dance. Taviani posits that the *Balli* series may place too much of an emphasis on the mask and not be an accurate depiction of the acting style. Ferdinando Taviani, "*Sulla sopravvalutazione della maschera*," in *Arte della maschera nella commedia dell'arte* (Firenze: Casa Usher, 1983) p. 110.

⁸⁵ Joseph Kennard, *Masks and Marionettes* (New York: Macmillan, 1935), p. 32. Also see Kahan, p. 10.

Donald Posner links the *Balli* to Neapolitan dancers who performed a Moorish dance called *Sfessania*, at local fairs. Posner thereby discounts the *Balli*'s association with the *commedia dell'arte*.⁸⁶ However, Posner's position must be considered in light of the fact that Callot's tenure with the Medici, in Florence, would have corresponded with the triumph of *Il Teatro Baldracca*, the theatre designed specifically for *commedia* performances at the Uffizzi Palace, also in Florence. Don Giovanni di Medici was protector of *I Confidenti*.⁸⁷ These proxemic associations suggest direct points of contact between Callot and the *commedia dell'arte*.

Whatever the actual content of the *Balli di Sfessania* may be, Callot's assortment of captioned characters offers a range of stage figures that are, in the main, familiar to the *commedia dell'arte*, and executed with greater refinement and preciousity than had hitherto been the case.

The diverse scholarly assessments of the *Balli di Sfessania* suggest that no consensus exists regarding their content. Nevertheless, as Taviani asserts, the *Balli* etchings remain at the foundation of the myth which underlies the *commedia dell'arte*.⁸⁸ Frequently reproduced as pictorial evidence of the early *commedia* acting style, the *Balli* series of etchings are firmly ensconced in both the theatre and art world as iconographical evidence

⁸⁶ Donald Posner, "Jacques Callot and the Dances called *Sfessania*," *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 59, No. 2, (June 1977), pp. 203-216. For more on *Il Teatro Baldracca*, see Chapter Five, note entry Anna Maria Evangelista (op. cit.).

⁸⁷ Zorzi, *I loughi*. . . (op. cit.) p. 36.

⁸⁸ Taviani, (op. cit.), p. 110.

of historical and aesthetic importance regarding the *commedia dell'arte*. Kahan conjectures an apt assessment:

"His etchings for the *commedia* apparently do not generally depict any specific performers or troupes, but they have so captured their style and grace that they have become, like the masks of tragedy and comedy in modern times, symbols of the theatre and are found on countless books, programs and posters."⁸⁹

Historians of both theatre and art have difficulty assessing the *Balli* series because they ignore the consideration of these works from the perspective and principles of a Mannerist aesthetic. Just as Vasari's frescoes of battle scenes at the *Palazzo Vecchio* depict the historical events relating to the siege of Florence, albeit with *maniera* (consider the bizarre blue, yellow, and pink skin tones of the warriors)⁹⁰ so too does Callot present his *commedia* scenes *a la maniera*, with exaggerations, distortions, and preciosity. Kahan describes the *Balli* collection:

⁸⁹ Kahan, p. 5.

⁹⁰ I examined the Palazzo Vecchio frescoes on May 30, 1989. The colors, strained form of the figures, excessive foreshortening, rhythmical composition, spatial crowding, and exaggerated expressions and gesture, both human and equine, create more of an *effetto meraviglioso* than an actual depiction. In Vasari's notion of *maniera* the artist *improved* on nature.

"The series consists of a frontispiece. . . . and twenty-three other etchings, each depicting a pair of performers in a stylized, characteristic pose. . . . visual rhythms are created through the use of the complete body, a turn of the head, the torso, legs and arms, and even fingers. . . .in the background, there is a center of interest in miniature between. . . . the major figures, . . . usually a group of comedians engaged in some characteristic action—acrobats jumping or tumbling, a mock combat, someone on stilts, a serenade, a beating, dancing figures, and even a play in performance. . . . Except for five young ladies all of the characters are masked and many of them are wearing a phallus . . . Swords and slapsticks abound. . . characters have musical instruments, and one is brandishing a rather terrifying syringe. Paired plumes adorn most of the caps. . . many males, . . . wear a row of pompom buttons down the center from neck to groin. . . .The *Balli* epitomizes the *commedia* — its adroitness, skill, cleverness and sense of the comic. . . ."91

Let us now turn our attention to a stylistic analysis of this iconography, with the aim of establishing these early *commedia dell'arte* images as products of the Mannerist *Zeitgeist*.

91 Kahan, p. 9.

CHAPTER IX
The Iconography of the *Commedia dell'Arte*
and its Relation to Mannerism

In sketching the layout of the aforementioned 'iconographic camps', a chronological sequence has been followed that also allows for a degree of overlapping, and for uncertainty where dates and authors cannot be ascertained.

This analysis will attempt to go beyond descriptive and non-illustrative approaches, as was emphasized particularly by McDowell; or investigative sleuthing, as currently emphasized by the remarkable Katritzky. Nor will it take the standard historical approach of Corrigan, Nicoll and a host of others who utilize *commedia* iconography as a means to conjecture the identity of certain stage figures. This in no way demeans the value of those approaches, which have generated a substantial and significant body of scholarship on *commedia dell'arte* iconography. In fact, in most cases these hitherto works provide a firm foundation for this study.

I will focus on describing the characteristics of Mannerism and *maniera*, with the aim of providing an historical and stylistic context from which the early *commedia dell'arte* can be identified. A synchronic method will be used since the Mannerist beginnings in arts during

the 1520's are reflected by anti-Classical trends in the theatre of Ruzante, the buffoons of Venice, and later in the works of Calmo. Concomitant with developments in art, this anti-Classical trend *formalized* in the mid-and-latter part of the century the time of the advent of the *commedia dell'arte*. *Maniera* flourished as an artistic concept and practice after the middle of the century. An emphasis was placed on virtuosity, *sprezzatura*, and marvelous effects, and a movement towards artificiality, typification, and conventional forms. These qualities are all reflected in the *commedia dell'arte*.

Thereafter, I will provide a critical analysis of a number of these prints, which represent the prevailing characteristics of Mannerism and *maniera*. . To facilitate the subsequent examination of the *commedia dell'arte* as it was recorded by late sixteenth-century artists, it will be initially helpful to list and define the qualities which I have hitherto suggested are observable in Mannerist art.

The Qualities of Mannerism

Exaggeration and distortion are evident in most Mannerist works, particularly in regard to the figure. Rather than explore the figure as a model from life, or from the perspective of the Classical ideal, Pontormo, Parmigianino and other Mannerist artists elongated and exaggerated the figure. Michelangelo's monumental figures in the Sistine Chapel represent the "exaggerated frenzy of the new form." In Mannerist art, gestural display is often extreme, and poses are often distorted far beyond the limits imposed by rhetorical dictums. In some cases, the exaggerated or distorted areas become *topoi*, or places of focus, such as the elongated hands and fingers in a Bronzino painting, or the excessive use of veiling in the Second School of Fontainebleau.

Sprezzatura is defined by John Greenwood as the "urge to continually outdo [one's] fellows in accomplishing difficult things gracefully."¹ While this is a quality possessed by the artist, it can also be noticed in the images of the period, where complicated poses are handled with the utmost skill. Castiglione promoted *sprezzatura* in the behavior of the courtier as a kind of desirable nonchalance.

Horror vacui is related to the crowding of space in Mannerist art. Hauser posits that *horror vacui* is associated with the practice of ". . . overfilling of the whole picture so that the effect is similar to that of a tapestry with a crowded ornamental pattern."² *Horror vacui* can also describe vacant areas of space which are juxtaposed to areas of crowded figuration.

Lack of spatial definition relates to the ambiguity of space that characterizes Mannerist art. Friedlaender asserts that unlike "the High Renaissance which favored a common harmony of figures and space, in Mannerism the volumes of bodies displace the space, that is, they create the space."³ He goes on to posit that "even where a strong effect of depth is desired or inevitable, the space is not constructed in the Renaissance sense as a necessity for the bodies but often is only an incongruous accompaniment for the bunches of figures, which one must read together "by jumps" in order to reach the depth." The latter assessment will be important in consideration of the etchings of Jacques Callot. Sometimes

¹ John Greenwood, Shifting Perspectives and the Stylish Style: Mannerism in Shakespeare and His Jacobean Contemporaries (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988) p. 186.

² Hauser, (op. cit.) p. 193.

³ Friedlaender, (op.cit.) pp. 8-9.

Mannerist artists resorted to a panoramic space in which figures were reduced in importance, in a sense swallowed up by the illusion of vast, almost incomprehensible distance. This effect is accomplished by manipulation of the vanishing point and the viewing angle of the artist.

Mescolare refers to the mixing of various or incongruous elements in Mannerist art. It can relate to stylistic elements such as the accommodation of both medieval and Renaissance elements in the painting of Pontormo. It can also suggest the mixing of sophisticated and grotesque forms in the same work. *Mescolare* implies a **lack of unity**. This lack of unity was often suggested by multiple points of focus, or by the ambiguity of any clear intent (see below).

Complexity is related to *difficoltà* in the "sense of complicated resolution."⁴ It was a quality admired for its own sake in cinquecento art, literature and music. The ideal of the virtuoso was to overcome *difficoltà* with *grazia*.

Rhythmical versus static composition signifies that rather than seek a picture of balance and harmony as was hitherto the case in Renaissance painting and sculpture, the Mannerist energized the image, by juxtaposing figural contours and poses into a network of contrasting yet visually arresting gestures. In sculpture, the move was from the assymetric balance of the *contrapposto* to the Mannerist **figura serpentina**, in which extreme shifts could be noted in a single figure. The s-shaped line of the **figura serpentina** substituted for the harmonious depictions based upon the Classical idea.

⁴ Greenwood, p. 17.

Discordia concors, which has been presented in detail in Part One, defines the juxtaposition of opposites within the same form. For instance, the utilization of profane elements in religious painting, the use of the oxymoron in Mannerist poetry, or characters such as Hamlet and Harlequin, both of whom possess conflicting character traits as hitherto discussed.

Preciosity relates to carefully affected refinement in taste, or in artistic execution. In Mannerist art it often refers to exquisitely detailed surface treatments of garments, jewelry, and inlay of various types. When applied to etchings or engravings preciousness defines the extremely skillful handling of a small area. For example, the individual etchings from Callot's *Balli di Sfessani* series contain a large amount of detail for images that measure two and three-quarters by three and five-eighths inches.

Bizarri describes the use of strange forms or materials, with unexpected results. Arcimboldo rendered plants or animal shapes into the shape of the human head. Minaggio used feathers to render *commedia* figures. **Capricci** defines a whimsical disregard for meaning or intent in an art work, or a sense of play for its own sake. Such was the case with Parmigianino's *Amor*, as defined by Freedberg earlier, in which the naked figure transmits a homosexual connotation which has nothing to do with the mythological narrative from which *Amor* is derived. In Chapter V, an example of the capricious poem recited by Pasquati (Pantalone) of the *Gelosi* was presented. This type of poem posited a play on words which supersedes any sense of meaning.

The grotesque is an important aspect of Mannerism which was suggested in Chapter II, and considered throughout our examination of the *commedia dell'arte*. While the grotesque is a phenomenon that can be considered within the context of a number of historical genres, studies by Wolfgang Kayser, Christopher Weiland, and Mikhail Bakhtin conclude that its first major impetus occurred in the sixteenth century. Unlike the Renaissance, which ascribed to humanist values, the anti-Classical aspect of Mannerism was able to accommodate the grotesque, which violated the humanist ideals of beauty, harmony and form. By the word *grottesco*⁵ the Renaissance understood a world totally different from the familiar one-- a world in which the realm of inanimate objects is no longer separate from those of plants, animals and human beings, and where the laws of symmetry and proportion are no longer valid. The grotesque is never static, it is always becoming or transforming. Such is the case with the ornamental style of the Mannerist engraver Agostino Veneziano,⁶ in which animal shapes transform into flora and human heads, connected together by the sinuous line of the *figura serpentina*. Arcimboldo's paintings which marvelously transform plants and animals into human heads offer another example of the transforming power of the grotesque.⁷ The grotesque dominates Vasari's ornamental style at the Palazzo Vecchio, in Florence. An understanding of the grotesque is fundamental to an understanding of both Mannerist art, and the *commedia dell'arte*. In 1761, to answer charges against the

⁵ Wolfgang Kayser, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, translated by Ulrich Weisstein (Peter Smith: Gloucester, Mass., 1968) p. 19. "Grotesque (both noun and adjective) derives from the Italian *grottesco* and refers to *grotta* (cave). The word grotesque was coined to designate a certain ornamental style which came to light during late fifteenth-century excavations in Italy, and which turned out to constitute a hitherto unknown ancient form of ornamental painting."

⁶ Kayser, Appendix, Plate 3.

⁷ Kayser, p. 23. Wolfgang Kayser's suggests that the mask serves to add animal qualities to the human body in the long beak like noses, which resemble phalli, sharpened chins, feathers and bat-like protuberances.

commedia by the Classicist Gottsched, Justus Moser issued a pamphlet "Harlequin and The Defense of the Grotesquely Comic,"⁸ an effort to establish the grotesque as an aesthetic category. Moser defined the world of the *commedia dell'arte* as standing outside the traditional aesthetic laws of beauty and sublimity, yet with its own perfections. Citing Callot's *Balli di Sfessania* Moser noted the contorted gestures of the figures, their exaggerated and eccentric movement, which elicited a sense of the sinister. The above characteristics were typical as well of Mannerist painting. In addition, the mask which is a common *topos* of Mannerism and the grotesque, suggests a transformational aspect of the *commedia dell'arte*, because the mask links human and bestial characteristics.⁹

Expressionistic coloration refers to unreal or bright primary colors that express a mood state or make a visual statement but are not related to the content, nor to a realistic depiction of the materials. For instance, the bright colors in Pontormo's *Deposition* belie the serious nature of the subject matter. The ongoing renovations at the Sistine Chapel¹⁰ reveal that Michelangelo used a bright, almost cartoon-like quality of color, which actually was standard for the Mannerists of the 30's. A number of Rosso's paintings depicts this expressionistic mode of color. There is usually a **flatness** in Mannerist coloration unlike the carefully graded modelling and *chiaroscuro* of the Baroque period.

⁸ Kayser, p. 37. Pamphlet titled *Harlekin oder die Verteidigung des Grotesk-Komischen*. While this pamphlet occurs much later than the period of this study it is relevant to the point that Gottsched represents a classical perspective against which the *commedia dell'arte* is positioned. The person most responsible for this classicistic emphasis in Germany was Johann Joachim Winckelmann, author of the influential, Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture, trans. by E. Heyer (Open Court: Lasalle, Ill., 1987), orig. publ. 1755.

⁹ Kayser, 38-39.

¹⁰ Viewed at the Vatican Museum, June 1, 1989,

Scorcio involves excessive foreshortening of the figure for effect. Another important Mannerist effect gives heightened importance to background figures over those in the foreground. In a number of cases minor figures are emphasized over primary characters.

Effetto meraviglioso defines the marvelous or wonderful effect, which was the goal of most Mannerist art. As we have seen in Part One the primary concern of Mannerist art was not the object of art, but the effect that the display of art had on its public. This was the case with the *commedia dell'arte* where the virtuosity of the actor superseded the sanctity of the text, and the spoken word and gesture triumphed over the written word.

The **Sprecher** (speaker) "is the figure in Mannerist paintings who arrests our glance by looking directly at us, thereby diverting our attention away from the rest of the work. We thus discover that, as we look at the painting, the painting looks back at us, allowing us to consider it in two ways. [The *Sprecher*] makes our relationship to the work more complex."¹¹ The *Sprecher* character can be seen in a number of Mannerist works, such as Parmigianino's "Madonna with the Long Neck." It differs from the normative use of a commentator, whose function is generally to supply information or move the plot along. The *Sprecher* serves a self-reflexive often satiric function that comments on the art itself.

Trompe l'oeil (fool the eye) is a device utilized in painting in which the two-dimensional figures or objects, set in relief (**rilievo**), create an almost lifelike illusion. The effect of immediacy is achieved by the lack of depth behind the figure or object and the degree of realism which the painter is technically able to achieve. Such is the case of the frescoes at

¹¹ Greenwood, p. 55-56. Greenwood draws the parallels of the *Sprecher* to figures in Jacobean drama.

the Rittersaal in Trausnitz Castle, and Romano's paintings in the *Sala di Giganti*. *Rilievo* has to do with the technique of crowding figures on the frontal plane thereby avoiding any sense of spatial depth. It was derived from the study by *maniera* painters of ancient bas-relief sculptures.

Freedberg and a number of critics of the School of Fontainebleau consider **eroticism** to be a major characteristic of Mannerist art. The female nude was celebrated as never before, and the *répoussir* paintings of the School of Fontainebleau established a precedent for the nude in French painting. The erotic element was lamented by Dolce and members of the Counter-Reformation. Treatises of the Counter-Reformation also discouraged the display of eroticism in the early *commedia dell'arte* as a corruptor of youth, and a symbol of the *disgregazione sociale*.

Gestural versus facial expression refers to a tendency in Mannerism to avoid the individuating aspects of the face, in favor of bodily expression: from the swirling dynamism of Rosso's figures, to the coolly expressive, elongated hands of Bronzino's figures, Mannerists emphasized gesture over facial expression. As we have seen, a number of critics have referred to Parmigianino's faces as mask-like.

Ornamentation or **surface** treatment was a most important quality in Mannerist painting. For example, in Bronzino's portraits, the cool, detached facial expression of the aristocratic sitter, is often offset by the marvelously detailed surface treatment of the outer garment. Bronzino is more interested in depicting the tactile, patterned surface treatment than in any probing of character. He utilizes the costume as a kind of armour, to protect his sitter from further inquiry.

This preceding list of Mannerist characteristics demonstrate a number of similarities with *commedia dell'arte* practices. Let us now consider *maniera* and related theories in this context. *Maniera* will be used in several applications. It will describe the artistic process whereby an artistic image bases itself upon a hitherto image, rather than being derived from life.¹² *Maniera* can then be applied to the individual artist's style and the degree of *licenzia*, that is, how the *maniera* image differs from the original. In other cases, *maniera* can describe an aspect common to a collective of artists: such as the *maniera* of Fontainebleau, which would refer to the "cult of the nude" or "excessive veiling," depending on the context. Finally, *maniera* can define individual style, such as the *maniera* of Bronzino would refer to his peculiar treatment of hands, or Parmigianino's *maniera* might refer to his system of proportions. The context should clarify the intent of meaning.

Bella maniera will refer to an artistic practice whereby an image, or figure within an image, is apparently derived from a number of previous images and sources. The concept of *Maniera* has seldom been utilized in relation to the theatre.¹³ From the perspectives of

¹² Although not as common for our purposes, *maniera* can be applied as well to common practices in regard to specific themes. For instance, as described by Carel Van Mander, "the 'Vasari of the North' whose *Schilder-Book* of 1604 is our principal source of general information about Netherlandish painting." Van Mander after studying in Rome as a young man returned to establish an Academy at Haarlem, with the charge of instructing Northern artists in Italian Renaissance principles. See Alastair Smart, *The Renaissance and Mannerism Outside of Italy* p. 9. Van Mander established rules for the composition of various 'typical' scenes, which were then applied repeatedly by a number of artists.

¹³ Mirollo's work (op. cit.) utilized *maniera* in relation to the poetry of the cinquecento. John Greenwood's just published study of Mannerism in Shakespeare (see above for citation) barely acknowledges the principle of *maniera*, although he borrows John's Shearman title phrase, "the Stylish Style."

Mannerism and *maniera*, we can now examine the iconography of the early *commedia dell'arte*.

The Schloss Trausnitz Frescoes

Primary to the impact of these frescoes of early *commedia dell'arte* scenes is their depiction in the stairwell, *Narrentreppen* ("Fool's staircase"), of the Trausnitz Castle. It is an example of the Mannerist principle, *effetto meraviglioso*. Molinari has given an apt description:

"Who ascends the staircase must have the sensation that the scenes of the *commedia* are unfolding under his eyes."¹⁴

The perspective of the person ascending the architectural staircase is disoriented by the view of painted figures that climb and descend illusory stairs (Fig.1).¹⁵ Sustis has created a visual pun. His *disegno* is spectator orientated. It surrounds the viewer on all sides, and gives the impression of a *commedia* performance in the round. Figures are set in *trompe l'oeil* relief usually in front of painted architectural elements. The sense of *rilievo* compresses the figure on a narrow plane against the wall and creates a sense of immediacy. The *trompe l'oeil* architectural backgrounds imitate scenic painting techniques in their handling of wall treatments such as marble and brick. This confirms Würtenberger's claim that the Mannerist frescoes were influenced by stage techniques. The exaggerated gestures and poses, in scenes such as Pantalone climbing the Courtesan's stairs of Figure1, (in

¹⁴ Molinari, (op. cit.) p. 53. "*Chi saliva la scala doveva avere la sensazione che le scen della commedia si svolgessero sotto i suoi occhi.*"

¹⁵ Lea, I, p. 8. 5th wall, South. Pantalone and a maid-servant. Zanni.

which it should be particularly noted) *zanni* 's precariously balanced stance and extreme arm extension, indicate a sense of motion in the overall design, a rhythmical sense that substitutes for any sense of harmony or balance, and imbues the viewer with the sense that he is observing a live performance.

Figural and spatial proportions are ambivalent in a number of scenes. For instance, in this scene Pantalone rides upon a mule (Fig. 2).¹⁶ He is followed by *zanni* who is performing the *lazzo* of the enema on the mule. The monumental figure of *zanni* dwarfs both Pantalone and the mule upon which he rides. The *rilievo* effect is emphasized by the rounded, rhythmical shape of Pantalone's back which overlaps the lines of the painted wall. Notable also is the bizarre effect created as the stairway proceeds in a diagonal direction, contradicting the planar shift in the panel above the head of Pantalone

Sustris juxtaposed three-dimensional and two-dimensional effects in paradoxical ways, in the same sense as Mannerist paintings like Perino del Vaga's, "St. Michael," (Fig. 3) utilized *trompe l'oeil* to almost violate the integrity of architectural forms.¹⁷ In the del Vaga fresco it is difficult to ascertain what the limits of the space are, because *trompe l'oeil* effects mimic the real space. The effect is similar in this scene (fig. 4)¹⁸ at Trausnitz, although in this case the frescoes adjoin perpendicular walls. A *ruffiana* leaning out of a *trompe l'oeil* door scolds a Pantalone who is apparently crying. The door at left is set parallel to the architectural plane. The *ruffiana* is set behind this plane except for her right

¹⁶ Lea, I, p. 4. 10th wall, South. Zanni following a mounted Pantalone. Zanni bribing the Ruffiana. Molinari, (op. cit) p. 61.

¹⁷ Württenberger, p. 17. Fresco in the Sala Paolina of Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome.

¹⁸ Molinari, p. 57. 24th wall South, Pantalone; 25th wall, East, Ruffiana.

arm which extends beyond the architectural plane. Pantalone stands in front of a painted door that is recessed behind the architectural plane. Here, Sustris is playing a Mannerist trick. While honoring the architectural plane of the left wall, he capriciously violates it by setting Pantalone in relief. This paradoxical play of opposites is enhanced by the proximity of the two figures. The physical proximity and perpendicular relationship of the painted figures not only adds to the *trompe l'oeil* effect, but it also establishes a dynamic between the illusion of three dimensional space, and the actual physical properties of the space which seem to contradict it.¹⁹ We noted a similar spatial juxtaposition in the frescoes at the *Palazzo del Té*, whereby the fresco "The Collapsing Ruins," (Fig. 5) depicted a crumbling wall and columns, seemingly contradicting the stability of the architectural structure to which it adheres. The characteristic feature of this phenomenon can be described as a *discordia concors*, the opposites consisting of the juxtaposition between reality and illusion, between the painted two-dimensional shapes and the architectural three-dimensional space.

The Mannerist context of the comedians at Trausnitz is thus established on both cultural and aesthetic levels. On the cultural level we have the international context of a native Flemish painter utilizing Italian fresco techniques learned through his apprenticeship with Vasari, and employing them in Bavaria, where the Mannerist style was favored by the court. On the aesthetic level we note the *effetto meraviglioso*, *discordia concors*, *rilievo*, and other characteristics common to Mannerist painting. Another important aspect of the Mannerist context can be noted in the ornamental grotesques at Trausnitz.

¹⁹ This can be noted as well in the real architectural staircase projecting forward of the wall of the Narrentreppen on which is painted the staircase inhabited by the figures of the *commedia*.

To heighten the Mannerist effect at Trausnitz grotesque ornamentation is used throughout in a manner similar to the Palazzo Vecchio. However, at Trausnitz, *commedia* figures are interwoven into the grotesque pattern. One notable example demonstrates a Pantalone in the center of a grotesque pattern in which his Turkish-style slippers transform into a sinuous plant-like form. An added feature of the Trausnitz frescoes is the proliferation of other stage figures in these grotesques, in a variety of poses arranged for decorative effect. The use of acrobatic poses (Fig. 6) gives the artist the opportunity to synchronize the content of the comedians with the rhythmical, sinuous, and asymmetrical forms common to grotesques. It also allows for the extreme contrast between the broadly handled figures in the major works and the diminutive preciousness of the figures in the grotesque ornamentation.

The use of *commedia* figures in grotesques was found elsewhere. Nicoll cites an example of the presence of both Pantalone and Zanni in a sixteenth-century ornamental grotesque now housed in the *Cabinet des Estampes* at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris (Fig. 7).²⁰ In the lower right hand corner, Pantalone slippers' transform into the leaf-like grotesque frame which then surrounds him. A similar depiction is evident in the Fossard collection engraving of an early Pantalone, Stephanel Bottarga,²¹ whose slippers are

²⁰ Nicoll, *Masks*, . . . (op. cit.) p. 232. Fig. 151. Neither dimensions nor place of origin are given. The centerpiece of the ornamental pattern depicts a Serlian stage. Three characters in the mid-ground are overlapped by a Pantalone apparently being chased, and given the 'horns' by his *zanno*.

²¹ Nicoll, Appendix II. p. 365. Nicoll cites that little is known of Bottarga save a homily to him by Ganassa titled; *Lamento sulla morte d'un pidocchio*. Bottarga's association with Ganassa would indicate that this particular engraving is from the sixteenth century.

attached to an s-shaped shell-like motif (Fig. 8).²² Although the Pantalones' in these two cases are depicted in profile, their extreme poses are arranged in an s-shaped or serpentine configuration which elicits a rhythmical, energized quality. In this print, Bottarga seems ready to take flight. His arms are fully extended along a foreshortened diagonal to each side, while the legs are also spread to their maximum, as they are in the grotesque of the Pantalone at the *Cabinet des Estampes*. The Pantalone in the *Estampes* grotesque has a hunchback that extends in exaggerated fashion parallel to the picture plane. Its shape seems the result of the ornamental frame that compresses the figure with a kind of gravitational force. The 'Bottarga' Pantalone, while evidently without mask, demonstrates the face in a grotesque grimace in which his teeth are exposed. The sharply pointed beard is decoratively displayed in order to project the horizontal line of the figure into the surrounding space. A curious feature of the Bottarga engraving is the treatment of the hands, in which the rules of perspective are reversed. The upstage hand of Bottarga is elongated and enlarged as in typical Mannerist fashion, while the foreshortened hand (*scorcio*) is much smaller. The placement of emphasis on background over foreground elements was a common characteristic of Mannerism.

Another example of artistic *licenzia* is evident in the cape of Bottarga which is depicted *più di maniera, che di natura*. Rather than drape naturally along the lines of the body, the cape extends rearward enhancing the effect of flight and movement. In both of these images the grotesque figures of *commedia dell'arte* exhibit a number of Mannerist characteristics.

²² *Recueil Fossard*, (op. cit.) Page XXXVI, Three engravings are apparent on this page of the Fossard, however note the far right image.

As we have previously seen, the scholarship on the *Recueil Fossard* has been concerned with ordering the visual images and captions into a coherent narrative pattern which would suggest a typical scenario.²³ In another sense, scholars have also been interested in connecting these images to the *Gelosi* troupe, which as records indicate, travelled about France during the 1570's and 1580's. However, there has been little interest in the aesthetic questions these images raise. My intent is to demonstrate how select images of the *Recueil Fossard* can be analyzed from a Mannerist perspective.

On page XXIX of the *Recueil Fossard* (Fig. 9) Harlequin appears in slippers, full-length patchwork tights typical of his early dress, and the standard black mask. In his extended hands he holds a hat in the right and a batten in the left. Upon examining the figure, one notes an apparent elongation of the torso. A measurement of the Harlequin's body reveals a six to one ratio in regard to the relation between height and width. Remarkably, this is the same proportion that Parmigianino used in constructing his male figures. Freedberg asserts:

"The male figure thus retains in a general way, the somewhat rectangular structure which it has in nature, but it is an extremely narrow elongated rectangle. The attenuation of the male figure resembles that of the female: the relation of height to breadth is usually similarly six or more to one. Within this frame Parmigianino exploits every possibility he may, short of evident incongruity, for the exercise of his rhythmic will. The irregularities of male musculature are converted into a complex of rhythmic linear conventions: some broad, some small and nervously calligraphic."²⁴

²³ These widely reproduced images constitute the majority of entries in the *Recueil Fossard*.

²⁴ Freedberg, p. 11.

This notion of a nervous calligraphy is evident in the Harlequin depicted on XVIII in a scene with Francisquina and Pantalón (Fig. 10). Here, the overall design of the Harlequin's figure appears in a serpentine shape, while the framework of the various limbs and torso are juxtaposed in an improbable pose. The rhythmical stance of Harlequin is offset by the triangular solidity of Francisquina and Pantalón's open embrace, and the diagonal positioning of their legs. Of particular interest in both of the above images of Harlequin is the proportional relation of the head to the overall body. Here, again it corresponds to Parmigianino's system of ratios:

"The relative size of the head is also less than in Renaissance models, so that it is contained in the torso three times, and in the legs four times. . . ; that is, the chief structural distortions from the High Renaissance type are in the narrowing of the torso and the diminution of the size of the head."²⁵

The application of Freedberg's analysis is important because it establishes the artist's *disegno* of Harlequin in the *Recueil Fossard* within the context of a Mannerist aesthetic. That Harlequin possesses both a narrowing of the torso and a diminution of the head, which both correspond to prescribed ratios suggests an empirical basis for this context. The way the figure is 'composed' further establishes the empirical link to the figures of Parmigianino:

"In Parmigianino's figures the bulk of the torso has been so much reduced (in its lateral even more than in its vertical proportion) that the limbs seem more prominent than the torso. Both limbs and torso are subjected to Parmigianino's rhythmic redesign, but the limbs are the more completely transposable into rhythmic terms. They thus tend to determine the compositional effect of the entire figure. Almost in inversion of the normal High Renaissance practice in construction of the body, the trunk is not its static and dominant core, but assumes the lesser role of a connective among the limbs."²⁶

²⁵ Freedberg, p. 11.

²⁶ Freedberg, p. 12.

This relation between limbs and torso is evident in print Figure 10, whereby Harlequin's legs and arms connect in a manner that seems anatomically impossible. The rhythmical effect of the limbs where the torso assumes a merely connective capacity, without creating any sense of stability or balance is noted in the scene with Harlequin and Zanni in print XXXI (Fig. 11). Note the grossly exaggerated forearm that echoes the mannered limbs of Beccafumi. Here the rhythmical sense of form is created by the curved elongation of the limbs and torso into a serpentine-like form, which exists through the vertical and lateral axes.²⁷ The elongation of Harlequin's form and its manifestation along only two-dimensions creates an illusion of weightlessness. This explains why depictions of Harlequin in the *Recueil Fossard* and elsewhere appear to give this figure an extraordinarily nimble quality. "The figure may, without discomfort either to its own organization or to the eye of the initiated spectator, occupy naturalistically impossible attitudes which may, in their functional sense, be utterly ambiguous."²⁸

Remarkably, the ratios and physical structure derived from Freedberg's analysis of Parmigianino, are also apparent in the *Arlechin* frontispiece of the *Compositions de Rhétorique*,²⁹ which was based upon and composed by the famous Arlechin, Tristano Martinelli (Fig. 12). This well-known portrait of Arlechin on a small platform

²⁷ This is to differentiate the form from the three-dimensional serpentine shapes which are apparent in Mannerist sculpture. The effect is again derivative of Parmigianino: ". . .the body in its vertical and lateral senses is not normally accompanied by a like distortion of its extension in depth. . . .this three-dimensional extension is at once deprived of a measure of its congruity by its very association with the highly conventionalized two-dimensional design of the figure." Freedberg, p. 13.

²⁸ Freedberg, p. 14.

²⁹ Please see Chapter V and VI, for a description of this work. Images are included in the *Recueil Fossard*, p. XLV and another Arlechin is depicted with these ratios on page L.

demonstrates a number of the generalized characteristics found in the Fossard Harlequin. The ratio of the body length to width is six to one, while the ratio of the head to body is three to one. The torso is set slightly left of vertical, and the relationship of the limbs provides the rhythmical sense of movement. The left (downstage) leg is rigidly vertical and full front, while the right (upstage) leg is bent at the knee and set in profile, thus establishing the figure along two planes. The right foot appears to be raised slightly off the platform giving the effect of movement and lightness. The upper torso is elongated and the shoulders are hunched. In addition, the width of the arms is exaggerated, and the length of the right is greater than the left. The arms invert inward in a strained, tense pose, culminating in a pair of inwardly clenched fingers. This results in a kind of bestial attitude, a gesture that bears witness to our earlier comments on the grotesque figure as possessing both human and bestial characteristics. In this depiction of Arlequin, as in a great deal of Mannerist posing, gesture takes on an autonomous rhythmical design, which is devoid of a Classical rhetorical basis.

The linear contours of the costume create an intermittent, jagged rhythm. The rhythmical effect is enhanced by the patterning of the patches, which also focuses the viewers' attention upon the surface treatment. As we have seen, attention to surface ornament was common to Florentine Mannerism. Here, the patches serve a conventionalizing aspect along with Arlechin's black mask. Thus, in both the *Fossard* and *Rhetorique* prints the tendency to generalize becomes apparent. These shared characteristics helped shape Harlequin as a conventionalized symbol.³⁰ As we have seen the tendency towards

³⁰ Freedberg, p. 34. Freedberg points out that Parmigianino's tendency to generalize figures moved them closer to symbolic rather than actual representations. The implications of these findings strengthen a case for establishing Harlequin as the quintessential Mannerist stage figure. Earlier we pointed out that the opposing characteristics inherent in

generalizing and conventionalizing was endemic to Mannerist art particularly in its later *maniera* phase. The idea of typification over individuation was apparent not only in allegorical³¹ and religious painting, but even in portraiture.³² It was during this *maniera* period of generalizing and conventionalizing artistic forms that the *commedia dell'arte* arose.

While the figures of Mannerism and the *commedia dell'arte* were often generalized, their depictions, governed by the notion of *licenzia*, frequently led to unique and daring compositions. The mid-cinquecento etching by Juste de Juste, "Pyramid of Six Men,"³³ (Fig. 13) can be compared with two examples from the Fossard (Fig. 14) which demonstrate acrobatic displays by comedians.³⁴ The etching by Juste and the Fossard prints demonstrate how the figure can be manipulated and proportioned to fit the needs of the overall design. For instance, note the similarity in the angle of the left leg of Pantalone and the far left figure in the "Pyramid." While both dispositions of the leg create a sense of uneasy or even ambiguous balance, the thighs provide a compositional thrust that directs

Harlequin were best described by the notion of *discordia concors*. Our historical investigation of his derivation suggested links to the literary and theatrical figure Hellequin, thereby positing a connection to the medieval. Recall that historian Weise demonstrated the link between aspects of Mannerism and the medieval. See Chapter III and V.

³¹ For example, in Vasari's, *Zibaldone*, (op. cit.) the characteristics of allegorical figures are generalized so that they can be used and recognized in a number of different situations, so too are the iconographic elements such as hand props and surrounding material elements.

³² As hitherto noted in the portraits of Bronzino, for instance.

³³ Davis, *Mannerist Prints*, (op. cit.) Plate 84, p. 194. Juste de Juste was a sculptor from Florence who worked with Rosso at Fontainebleau. This etching is apparently by Jean Viset after a *disegno* by Juste. It measures 25.5 x 20.3 cm.

³⁴ I have put two Fossard poses together to demonstrate the acrobatic aspects of the composition.

the eye upward through the composition. Both the Juste and the Fossard images are established along a narrow frontal plane giving little indication of depth. La Dona Cornelia and the horizontally etched figure in the middle of the Juste print are supported in a manner that belies a sense of actuality. La Dona in fact seems appended to the hip of Zanni. In the second example from the Fossard, Francatrippa 'supports' himself with three fingers upon the back of Capitano. In the Juste etchings, the figures on the upper plane are reduced proportionally so as to fit the limits of the pictorial field, while this compression is suggested in the Fossard by Harlequin's leaning towards La Dona Cornelia, perhaps to give her a kiss. Harlequin's stilts, which serve to extend his vertical line, are mirrored in the Juste etching by the extreme verticality of the legs in the figure at right. The extreme poses throughout both compositions represent the *sprezzatura* of the artists' in their desire to overcome *difficoltà*. In both cases, the language of gesture creates an *effetto meraviglioso*. Thus for the comedians, the simple act of planting a kiss, becomes a point of departure (*lazzo*) for the marvelous interplay of gesture. What this drawing implies for the stage, is that the creation of the *lazzi* involved taking a simple act, and through bizarre, exaggerated gestures and contortions, make it extreme, difficult, and marvelous, and ultimately without relation to narrative meaning. The *comici* approached the stage the way a Mannerist painter approached the figure.

While a kiss may seem an amorous act, the comedians went a great deal further in their promotion of the erotic. As we have earlier described, the *commedia dell'arte* was frequently the target of Counter-Reformation treatises, which attempted to censor their lewd activities, both onstage and off. We have noted the proliferation of erotic images in

Mannerist art. Examples might include Bronzino's "Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time,"³⁵ which was commissioned by Cosimo de Medici for the French King Francis I.

In this painting, "the brilliant color and incredible brushwork and modelling give it a strong tactile sense which is exciting and stimulating. . ."(Fig. 15).³⁶

Parmigianino's "Madonna and Child" depicts a Madonna "shown with breasts lightly covered by thin, clinging draperies, as she caresses a well-developed and nearly adolescent boy."³⁷ The sacred-profane image can be depicted as another type of *discordia concors*.³⁸

Male sexuality was also portrayed in Parmigianino's etching called *Witches Sabbath*, which depicts a witch riding upon a huge phallus, "surrounded by owls, devils, and other disturbing apparitions." (Fig. 16)³⁹ As the Fossard and most *commedia* iconography indicates, the oversize phallus is a *topos* for many *comici*, particularly Pantalone.

Perhaps the most notorious display of Mannerist eroticism is the series of Giulio Romano designs set to the erotic poems of Pietro Aretino.⁴⁰ These were later etched by Marcantonio Raimondi, who had worked with Raphael, and as earlier posited was responsible in part for the growth of printmaking in the sixteenth century. It is no wonder

³⁵ Peter Webb, The Erotic Arts (New York Graphic Society: Boston, 1975), pp. 123-124.

³⁶ Ibid, p.124.

³⁷ Ibid, p.125.

³⁸ Tessari, "La commedia dell'arte come forma di un'embrionale industria del divertimento," (op. cit.) p. 85. The church fathers were appalled by the fact that the *innamorate* of the *commedia dell'arte* could depict a 'virginal' bride on stage, while being seen half-dressed offstage, or in backstage amorous encounters with male actors.

³⁹ Webb, p. 121. Figure 82.

⁴⁰ While in Rome recently, I purchased a reprint of these sonnets and prints, Pietro Aretino, Sonnetti lussuriosi e Dubbi amorosi: con un saggio di Guillaume Apollinaire (Rome: Libro d'Oro, 1985, first printed in 1527).

the church fathers objected to Romano's designs (Fig. 17) which display an unbridled sexual vigor. Romano totally engages the narrow space with flailing legs and the arching of the female torso. Romano deviates from Classical proportion in the monumentality of the male's right calf, which is offset by the equally monumental upper arm of the raised woman. The focus of the male's attention is clear as is Harlequin's in the *Recueil Fossard* print (Fig. 18.)⁴¹ The presence of the open carafe, and pointed *batte* iconographically suggest the sexual act. Although the placement of Francisquina's left hand indicates a possible resistance, Harlequin proceeds with his right hand. The comedians are positioned on a narrow curtained stage with little depth. Harlequin's upstage leg seems to provide support for Francisquina, although its position is not clear, and the pose appears awkward and certainly uncomfortable. Notable in both prints is the presence of an eavesdropper, a common phenomenon in early *commedia dell'arte* iconography.⁴² The eavesdropper figure adds tension to the scene by introducing the element of dramatic irony. Unnoticed by the lovers, but not the spectator, the eavesdropper reminds us that we too are voyeurs upon the scene. In another sense he forces us to gaze through his eyes. It is through the eavesdropper that we enter the image. Thus, we have the Mannerist effect of the 'shifting levels of reality'. Through the device of dramatic irony, the eavesdropper forces the spectator to identify the process of dramatic illusion. While partaking of the illusion, the spectators are reminded of their own reality and made to confront their psychological reaction to the erotic scene.

⁴¹ Beijer, *Recueil Fossard*, p. XIII

⁴² John H. McDowell, "Some Pictorial Aspects of Early *Commedia dell'Arte* Acting," (op. cit.), p. 54. McDowell notes "in the *Recueil Fossard* Pantalone, the Dottore, and Harlequin in turn spy through curtains (XII, XIII). Pantalone in two Trausnitz frescoes spies as Zanni unites the lovers, and as a lady rewards a Zanni for delivering a letter. In a Corsini drawing, a Zanni spying over a garden wall is shot by another Zanni (frontispiece to *Il Giardino*).

The notion of eavesdropping is witnessed in another early painting: "A scene from the *commedia dell'arte* played in France (1570-1580)" (Fig. 19) which is housed at the Carnavalet Museum in Paris. Although Victor Cousin posited that this painting was inspired by a performance of the *Gelosi* when they were in Paris during 1603 and 1604,⁴³ art historian Charles Sterling attests that costume and painting technique suggest that it was painted between 1570 and 1580, by a Flemish painter influenced by "French feeling," or a "Frenchman under Flemish influence."⁴⁴ Sterling also conjectures that the troupe may be an earlier version of the *Gelosi* :

"If the *Gelosi* they must be the celebrated players that Henry III admired at Venice: Giulio Pasquati as Pantaloone, the beautiful and famous Vittoria Piisimi, called La Fioretta, as the *Innamorata*, Simone da Bologna as the Zanni, and Rinaldo as the *Innamorato* ."⁴⁵

The scene is presented on a simple trestle stage with a back curtain. The influence of Fontainebleau is evident in the stage figure of the *innamorata* who is also a "stock figure of the School of Fontainebleau."⁴⁶ As we have earlier suggested, the idealization and typification of the figure was a result of the influence of *maniera* on late sixteenth century painting. However in the figure of the *innamorata* we can note another characteristic of Mannerist painting and poetry, what Mirollo terms the *bella mano* (beautiful hand) and the *caro guanto* (treasured glove).⁴⁷ We have noted the *topos* of the elongated, elegant hands

⁴³ Victor Cousin, "Une Scène des *Gelosi*," *Bulletin des Musées de France* (March 1890), p. 67.

⁴⁴ Charles Sterling, "Early Paintings of the *Commedia dell'Arte* in France," (op. cit.) p. 21.

⁴⁵ Sterling, p. 21.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 21.

in the portraits of Bronzino, and other Mannerist painters. "Parmigianino's prominent hand in his celebrated *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (Fig. 20) can serve to suggest the emphasis placed by him and other Mannerist painters on the *belle mani* of their figures."⁴⁸ The importance of the hand and glove in sixteenth-century poetry derives in part from those poets' fascination with Petrarchan themes. Petrarch consistently used hand and glove imagery in his poems dedicated to his love interest, Laura. Mirollo posits that the *maniera* poets copied and recapitulated these motifs into varying modes of expression:

"For some, the hand of the lady, becomes a surrogate for her body in its beauty, grace, and chaste virtue. For others, it is a symbol of her death-dealing cruelty. When the glove is focused upon, the psychological implications of the motif, and especially its latent eroticism, are increasingly and blatantly exploited. In all of this, naturally, abundant *maniera*, both mannered and Mannerist, can be observed."⁴⁹

In the Carnavalet painting, the *innamorata* is apparently the love interest of the old suitor, Pantalone, and his rival the *innamorato*, who enters through the upstage curtain. The *innamorata* has bared both hands from the confines of her glove. This may be seen as an indication of her willingness to give up her chastity, particularly if her upstage hand is about to uncover her breast. However, the function of the hand at her breast is not clear, is she covering her breast modestly or about to expose it. This Mannerist sense of ambiguity is heightened by the depiction of her right hand, the forefinger and middle finger appear crossed, usually a symbol of deceit. It could be she is about to dupe Pantalone. The hunched character hidden under the cape may be whispering a message to her, or giving her instructions on how to act, while remaining hidden from Pantalone.

⁴⁷ James Mirollo, "Hand and Glove: The *Bella Mano* and the *Caro Guanto*," in *Mannerism and Renaissance Poetry* (op. cit.) pp. 125-159.

⁴⁸ Mirollo, p. 125.

⁴⁹ Mirollo, p. 130.

Other Mannerist conventions are present. There is no unity of focus. While the *innamorata* is the apparent focal point in the downstage right-center position,⁵⁰ she is literally 'upstaged' by the actors behind her and those entering through the upstage right curtain. The close proximity of the performers represents a crowding of the stage right area. Moreover, the trestle stage affords narrow spatial depth, and the dark horizontal curtain voids any sense of deep space. As there are no stage props nor scenery only figures define the space. The figural definition of space is found in a number of Mannerist paintings.

In sum, this painting demonstrates a sophistication that suggests the artist's familiarity with painterly as well as literary *maniera*. It also provides visual evidence to support the findings in Chapter V. That is, the *innamorate* were familiar with contemporary literary and rhetorical sources and utilized these sources in their performance. By recognizing and identifying *maniera* sources on the stage, the theatre historian can assist their colleagues towards a clearer and fresher understanding of sixteenth-century conventions.

Franco-Flemish Paintings and the Second School of Fontainebleau

The treatment of hands plays an important function in two *maniera* works of Franco-Flemish derivation. Both are titled by Sterling "A Troupe of Italian Comedians,"⁵¹

⁵⁰ Since the actress is on a stage, the use of stage position is appropriate. Stage positions are from the point of view of the actor, not the viewer.

⁵¹ Sterling, pp. 22-24.

although Nicoll ascribes the name "*Pantalone Cornuto* " or Pantalone the Cuckold," (Fig. 21) to a replica of the picture held in the collection of Jacques Combe, in Paris.⁵² The Combe painting is dated around 1580. The second painting is dated nearer to 1585, and is housed at the Museum at Béziers.⁵³ These are the first known portraits of the comedians as such, although the entire troupe may not be present. Sterling describes the compositions:

"In each two groups stand out. At left there is Pantaloon[ne] surrounded by his satellites and constant persecutors, the two Zanni and Franceschina, who make fun of him, holding behind his head the horned symbol of his conjugal misfortune. At the right are the lovers exchanging tender looks or letters, accompanied by Columbine or old Ruffiana."⁵⁴

The *innamorata* in the earlier 'Combe' painting (Plate 22) wears an Italian dress with a French toque. This style was in fashion during the middle of Henry III's reign, and suggests the dating of the painting around 1580.⁵⁵

"The second *zanni* (unmasked), in the puffy beret with plume and crenellated brim, has a touch of the jesters of Lucas van Leyden and bears out the Netherlandish descent of the painter."⁵⁶ The Netherlandish attention to costume detail is also noted in the brilliant finish of the *innamorato* 's coat.

⁵² Nicoll, *Masks*, . . . (op. cit.) p. 345, fig. 224. Nicoll describes this painting as one of the earliest pictorial representation, if not the earliest of the *commedia dell'arte*," Nicoll again attributes to F. Pourbus. Since Sterling's article was published during the height of World War II, it is possible the provenance of the Combe painting may have since changed.

⁵³ Sterling, p. 22. Canvas 467/8 x 67 inches (1 m. 19 cm. x 1 m. 70 cm.). "Figures are life size."

⁵⁴ Sterling, p. 21.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 21.

It was not uncommon for the *comici* to appear unmasked in France. "It is possible," Sterling asserts, "that already in the sixteenth century the Italians had limited the use of the mask to flatter French taste."⁵⁷ However, in the *Combe* panel both the *zanni* and Pantalone wear full black masks; in the *Béziers* painting the *zanni* wears the more familiar half-mask, his open mouth suggests a link to the grotesque.⁵⁸

While the *Béziers* painting is much larger than the *Combe* panel, both compositions constitute a kind of frieze.⁵⁹ However, a number of characters are different from the *Combe* panel. For instance, there is a woman partially hidden in shadow at the rear left. Her face is covered by a dark veil. Sterling suggests that "it is the costume worn by a courtesan at the end of the sixteenth century in most Italian cities." It is difficult to ascertain the function of the character in the center, who appears in profile from the neck up. However, the erotic sense is heightened by the bare-breasted courtesan and the procuress behind her right shoulder. Sterling suggests that the change in costume styles places the

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 21. Note also the jesters in the Jacques de Gheyn II, *Prodigal Son* (see below).

⁵⁷ Sterling, p. 22-23.

⁵⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (op. cit.), p. 325. "The gaping mouth [of the masked *zanno* at left in the *Béziers*] relates to the lower body stratum." The half-mask of the *zanni* allows the actor to devour food and drink, but it also transforms the head and face into a lower body image. Bakhtin regards the image of the open mouth as "a channel leading downward into the bodily underworld and connected to the image of swallowing, the most ancient symbol of death and destruction. At the same time, a series of banquet images are also linked to the mouth (to the teeth and to the gullet)." Bakhtin uses the term "material lower body stratum" as the focus for the grotesque body. The *lower body stratum* includes the reproductive, excretory and digestive organs and those bodily functions which are connected to lust, food and drink. Central to Bakhtin's thesis is that while the grotesque is seemingly negative, for instance in terms of its blatant scatological imagery, within it lies the true regenerating and renewing force in society. Bakhtin considers the grotesque as a subversion of the serious culture, represented during carnival, and in scenes of eating, drinking, merrymaking and raucous behavior.

⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 22.

date of this painting around 1585.⁶⁰ In style and technique the Béziers painting differs considerably from the earlier model.

"The texture is thin and smooth, the drawing linear and precise, the light and shade are neatly brought out and define the planes broadly, the folds of the costumes are straight and simple, all secondary details have been omitted. The result is a feeling of monumentality and strong plastic quality, although the modelling is not without delicate nuances. . . . Here we have characteristics of the French painters of the sixteenth century, in which the tradition of François Clouet, of his incisive line and solid masses, mingles with the Italian aesthetics that spread from Fontainebleau, the search for the melodious arabesque of gesture and the use of an elongated canon of the body."⁶¹

The arabesque of gesture is noted in the *maniera* convention of overlapping planes,⁶² here denoting a rounded sinuous, and graceful quality in contrast to the abrupt rhythms of its Flemish precursor. Perhaps, this validates Vasari's contention that with *grazia* and *maniera*, a painter could improve upon the cruder predecessor. The play of surface rhythms is effected by both the treatment of hands (which also serve the purpose of describing the story), as well as the interplay of light and shadow. The surface play of hands guides us through an intrigue. Zanni gives the sign of the cuckold while pulling upon the beard of Pantalone, thus pointing to the folly of the old suitor, and exposing his rotting teeth. The courtesan passes a note to her lover, possibly it was just given to her by Pantalone; if so, it will bring him further ridicule. The placement of Pantalone's left hand is significant. The *maniera* device of indicating while looking elsewhere is in this case a means of linking the two halves of the composition.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 23.

⁶¹ Sterling, p. 23.

⁶² Which we first recognized in the paintings of Rosso.

⁶³ This device is used in both paintings.

The lighting is not directed from a single source or in a natural way, but through its interplay with shadow, it heightens the effect of an intrigue, while enhancing the surface quality of the painting. The lighting is Mannerist because it illuminates minor background figures such as the head in profile and the procuress, while leaving the major figure of the Pantalone in relative darkness.

Elongation of the body is apparent particularly in the proportion of the necks which are reminiscent of Parmigianino and Primaticcio. The short hair and stark facial expression of the procuress and center figure give them a somewhat androgynous appearance, a style which was favored in the 1570's and 80's at Fontainebleau. In fact, the facial expression of the procuress is highly reminiscent of the Fontainebleau painting "*Sabina Poppea*," (fig. 23) housed at the *Musée d'Art et d'Histoire*, Geneva.⁶⁴ A close examination of this portrait suggests that the painterly treatment of the procuress is *a la maniera*, possibly based on the "*Sabina*." Whether or not that is true, it is important to recognize that the Fontainebleau paintings usually relied on idealized types, and not actual personalities.

While the baring of breasts was relatively common in *commedia dell'arte* performances,⁶⁵ it was also a popular motif of the School of Fontainebleau, the painting of "*Gabrielle d'Estrées et la Duchesse de Villars*," is perhaps the most famous example.⁶⁶ (Fig. 24) Another Fontainebleau painting entitled "Woman Choosing between Youth and Age," a

⁶⁴ See Sylvie Béguin, L'École de Fontainebleau: La Manierisme a la Cour de France (Paris: Gonthier-Seghers, 1960). p. 103.

⁶⁵ Refer the reader to Taviani's La fascinazione del teatro (op. cit.).

⁶⁶ Béguin, p. 106. (.96 m x 1.25 m) at the Louvre.

scene from the *commedia dell'arte*," depicts a woman attired only in a transparent veil (Fig. 25). She is rejecting an unmasked Pantalone figure, in favor of her handsome young lover.⁶⁷ The transparent veil serves to heighten the erotic effect. As we have mentioned in Chapter II, the veil was a common *topos* of *maneria* painting and poetry. It even came to be seen as a material equivalent to the notion of allegory. Like the allegory, the veil conceals, although both are calling attention to what is concealed. Defined another way, the veil is simultaneously concealing and revealing. As this represents the union of opposites, it is an example of the Mannerist notion of *discordia concors*.

These images, and others, suggest that semi-nudity was not uncommon on the stage of the *commedia dell'arte*.⁶⁸ In similar fashion, the legacy of painters at Fontainebleau had long developed the "cult of the nude." Thus the bare-breasted courtesan in the Béziers painting exists most likely as a convention in regard to both painting and theatre.

⁶⁷ Sterling, p. 25. This painting (1570-75) is housed at the *Rennes* Museum in France. Canvas 46 1/8 x 67 in. (1.17 x 1.70 cm). It has spawned a number of *maniera* engravings, the most famous by Perret dates around 1579. Another 16c engraving notes half-naked *innamorata* with a troupe of *commedia* players led by Zan Trippa.

⁶⁸ Ferdinando Taviani, "*Le fleur et le guerrier: les actrices de la Commedia dell'arte*," in *L'Energie de l'acteur: Anthropologie théâtrale. Bouffonneries*, No. 15/16 (Cazilhac, 1986) pp. 61-93. The historian Taviani suggest in fact that the *commedia dell'arte* may have originated with the *meretrice honestae* (a kind of Geisha) who joined the buffoons on the outdoor stages in 16c Venice. Religious authorities of the Counter-Reformation considered women--*la donna d'arte*, *l'attrice*, not the mask, nor the obscene pranks of the *zanni*--the most disruptive element of the *commedia dell'arte*, since they incurred a new fascination founded not upon literary excellence, nor upon the Horatian ideal, but rather on sexual attraction. In his seventeenth-century treatise *Della Christiana Moderazione del Teatro*, the Jesuit priest Ottonelli, utilizes the metaphor of prostitution to define the *innamorata*'s cultural-economic role in *commedia dell'arte* performances. Ottonelli argues that the *meretrice* (prostitute) and the *attrice* (actress), both sell images of sexual freedom and license to an ephemeral audience. Both are stand-ins: the *attrice* represents a fictional character upon the stage, the prostitute functions as a fantasy figure for her client.

Before concluding this analysis of the Béziers and Combe paintings, let us consider briefly a number of other Mannerist characteristics. In both paintings, full frontal and profile views intermix. While both paintings exhibit a sense of modelling, it is more in the manner of *rilievo* than in creating any sense of depth. In typical Mannerist fashion the disposition of figures makes up the space, and any sense of depth is abbreviated by the lack of background perspective and depth. In fact, the lack of depth creates the bizarre illusion that the profile of the head in the center springs from the back of the procuress.⁶⁹ The compositions are both crowded and lack a single point of focus.

Sprecher figures appear in both works. In the Béziers painting, the *zanni*, procuress, and courtesan appear to be soliciting our reaction. The index finger, over the lips of the procuress in the Combe panel, suggests that we are being told to be silent.⁷⁰ These 'Sprecher' effects serve to create an ambiguous relation between the spectators and the painting, at once involving their attention while separating them from the action depicted in the painting. In a sense, however, they serve to theatricalize art by involving the spectators' participation and reaction to the action. In a way similar to the actual performances of the *commedia dell'arte*, these paintings seem to recognize, and even solicit, spectator response.

The painting of a *commedia dell'arte* scene, "The Actors," (Fig. 25A) is exhibited at Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, Florida.⁷¹ It offers further evidence of the

⁶⁹ Just as the Francesquina appears to spring from the shoulders of Pantalone and *zanno* in the *Combe* panel.

⁷⁰ Andrea de Jorio, *La Mimica degli Antichi: nel gestire Napoletano* (Napoli: Fibreno, 1832) p. 295. Jorio attests this has been a universal gesture for silence since antiquity.

iconographical connection between the *meretrice* (courtesan) and the *commedia dell'arte* characters. While the halo-like hats of the women suggest a possible intermingling of sacred and profane themes, art historians posit that these distinctive hats, called berns, were worn by gypsies in France particularly during the years 1585 to 1590.⁷² Ostensibly, the vagabond gypsies would have had many opportunities to accost the travelling troupes of comedians. My examination of the published and unpublished findings regarding this painting leads to the following interpretation.

The masked *zanni* ⁷³ with the false beard is having his pocket picked by the gypsy who pretends to read his outstretched palm. The older woman at left, holding the child, is a procuress, marking the gypsy women as prostitutes. J. P. Cuzins explains that the mocking expression of the old procuress is in reaction to the young woman seizing the codpiece which is hidden by the *comico*'s sword.⁷⁴ There is no consensus in regard to the identity of the male character at the extreme right, although he may be an unmasked member of the troupe. The woman to *zanni*'s left pulls at his apocryphal beard, but the

⁷¹ Marian Davis, The School of Fontainebleau: An Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings. . . (op. cit.), p. 30. Oil on Canvas (483/8" x 59"). Please refer to earlier section in this chapter concerning the confusion surrounding its authorship.

⁷² Anthony F. Janson, Great Paintings From the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art (New York: Harry Abrams, 1985). *Not paginated*. I researched the file on this painting in April 1989 as well as an original set of the Callot *Balli di Sfessania* series. Many of those entries are unpublished, although the painting has toured extensively, and been reproduced in a number of catalogs.

⁷³ Art historian J.P. Cuzins has incorrectly observed that this is a Pantalone. In *La disensee de bonne aventure de Caravage, Catalogs redige par J. Pierre Cuzins* (Paris: 1977). p. 227.

⁷⁴ Cuzins, p. 227.

placement of her thumb and forefinger symbolize a gesture of affection. Since antiquity this gesture of the thumb touching the tip of the index finger has been a sign of desire.⁷⁵

This painting is similar to both the Béziers painting and the Combe panel in that all employ the Mannerist device of crowding the frontal plane, and voiding any notion of atmospheric space. However, there are significant differences. The modelling of the figures and the refined *sfumato* technique creates a sense of volume that anticipates the Baroque. In addition, the lighting is consistently directional from the left, and seemingly natural as it accents the edges of the berms and the hands of zanni. The *comico*'s left hand projects outward in a manner daring for its time. Unlike the earlier two works, in which the hands were part of the overall surface treatment, *zanni*'s hand projects almost into the spectator's space. This innovation adds a proto-Baroque sense of dimensionality to the painting.

However, the overall painting derives from a *maniera* tradition. Like the painting at Béziers it possesses remarkable *grazia* in the treatment of the hands. Cuzins posited that "the play of hands is an essential element of this form of theatre."⁷⁶ That fact is most certainly true, and leads us to conjecture that there may be a link between the stylization of hands in Mannerist works, and the *comici*'s use of hand gestures upon the stage. In this painting, the *zanni*'s hands are treated with great delicacy and refinement, which would certainly not be the case in a realistic depiction of hands belonging to a Bergomask peasant. Such *pratica* is the result of the painter's *bella maniera* and *grazia*, rather than observations derived directly from life. This refined elegance and preciousness of the *zanni*'s hands

⁷⁵ Jorio, p. 46.

⁷⁶ Cuzins, p. 228.

resemble in fact the depictions noted in the aristocratic portraiture of Bronzino, although here, because this is the lower class *zanni*, the hands evoke a bizarre, paradoxical effect. In "The Actor" the artist overlooks, class, rank, function, and behavior in the service of *maniera*. The dichotomy between *pratica* and subject matter, so much a part of the *maniera* tradition, was a problem the Baroque would attempt to resolve.

"The Actors" is also related to an earlier generation of artists at the School of Fontainebleau. The pose of the gypsy figure at right is reminiscent of a figure in a Niccolo dell'Abate print, "The Finding of Moses," after a painting by Primaticcio.⁷⁷ The veiling of the gypsy at right and its overtly defined anatomical detailing was, as we have seen, a common motif of *maniera* painting. Some art historians have suggested that the same model was used in the center, which upon examination of height, and hair color appears quite possible.⁷⁸ Art historians Waterhouse and Clark have noted that the child held by the procuress suggests the style of the Genoese painter, Paggi.⁷⁹ His impassive stare directed to the spectator marks him as the *Sprecher*, and through his gaze we enter the picture. The most famous use of the boy *Sprecher* in Mannerist painting was the small boy in the foreground of El Greco's "Burial of Count Orgaz." John Greenwood describes his function:

⁷⁷ Janson, See catalog entry pertaining to painting.

⁷⁸ Ringling Museum File Number, SN. 688, Unpublished correspondence.

⁷⁹ Ibid. Sn. 688, Waterhouse and Clark cite that Paggi may be the artist.

"The boy looks at us and points to the body of the Count as it is laid in its tomb by St. Stephen and St. Augustine. The effect of the *sprecher* is to draw our immediate attention to the mannered, perfunctory aspect of the Count's graveside mourners, which contrasts with the excited flamelike forms of the heavenly figures who transport his soul upwards to heaven. The *sprecher* in highlighting the contrast between the two realms depicted in the painting, thus accentuates our feeling of the double vision required to comprehend the composition."⁸⁰

In "The Actors" the boy holds a ring-toss in his left hand, a popular game at the time.

Through this property the painter demonstrates his degree of *invenzione*. While the boy *Sprecher* in the El Greco painting directs the viewer toward the action with his outstretched arm, the boy held by the procuress uses his stick to direct the spectator's eye away from the action. Of course, distraction is a function of the pickpocket's game. The action of the boy *Sprecher* posits the contrast between the gypsy who distracts *zanni* from his purse, and the child who distracts us from the theft, while referring us back to our own world outside of the painting.

The narrative and *sfumato* quality of this *commedia dell'arte* scene, and its romantic subject matter, influenced Caravaggio's paintings of the *Fortune Teller* and *Cardsharp*s. According to Cuzins, Caravaggio saw his card players as "*bravi*" and derived the spirit of these paintings from the *commedia dell'arte*.⁸¹ It is significant that "The Actors," a scene which depicts a character from the *commedia dell'arte*, provided an important link between late *maniera* painting and the development of the Baroque. While the *Combe* panel, the *Bézier* painting demonstrated the link between the *commedia dell'arte* and genre painting,

⁸⁰ John Greenwood (op. cit.) p. 54.

⁸¹ Cuzins, p. 228.

"The Actors" served a larger function, as a transitional influence in the historical development of painting.

De Gheyn and the Veneto Group

Netherlandish *Stranieri* and Commedia dell'Arte Iconography

To this point, we have explored the Mannerist influence on scenes of the *commedia dell'arte* in the frescoes at Trausnitz in Bavaria, the prints of the *Recueil Fossard* in Paris, and various Franco-Flemish paintings which were popular in late sixteenth-century France. While many of these works remain anonymous, we have noted the impact of Flemish artists in the creation of a number of these scenes. Now let us turn our attention to the Netherlandish *stranieri* who worked around Venice and the surrounding Veneto during the last quarter of the sixteenth century. As we have hitherto noted, some of the *pittore vago* painted in the workshop of the great Venetian Mannerist Tintoretto, while others apparently worked with Titian.⁸² Here, they were influenced by Italian techniques while continuing a sense of the northern tradition and style.

A number of Netherlandish works employ *commedia dell'arte* figures in scenes of feasting and debauchery. These paintings are based on the prodigal son tradition (Fig. 26) here

⁸² Jean Adhémar, "French Sixteenth Century Genre Paintings," *Journal of the Warburg and Courland Institutes* (Vol. 8, 1945). p. 192. "The attribution to Titian [of two engravings in the *Recueil Fossard*, Plate 43 c and d] is quite conjectural. The engravings are attributed to a Franco-Flemish hand after the original drawings of Titan, which are found in the *Cabinet des Estampes*." Titian had Flemish painters in his workshop (Lambert Sustris).

depicted by Jacques de Gheyn II in the late 1580's,⁸³ after an earlier painting by Karel van Mander:

". . . de Gheyn's "The Prodigal Son" is crowded with auxiliary and secondary spectators, with the protagonists (the prodigal and his dancing partner almost lost in the center of the crowd. This method of composition was favored by many Dutch Mannerist artists at the end of the sixteenth century following van Mander's strictures for organizing historical narratives."⁸⁴

This prodigal son type forms the compositional basis for similar scenes with *commedia dell'arte* figures. In the *commedia* depictions, the narrative or moralizing aspect of the biblical story is generally absent, while the formal aspects remain similar.⁸⁵ This aspect of *maniera*, whereby the artist draws not from life, but from erstwhile artistic sources, poses a certain caveat for the theatre historian:

"Any interpretation of [these] pictures of courtly celebrations is complicated by the fact that although they may well record specific events, even if these could be identified, compositional elements may be largely borrowed from previous works, thus reducing and obscuring their value as documentary records."⁸⁶

⁸³ Bruce Davis, *Mannerist Prints* (op. cit.), Plate 112, pp. 256-257. "The Prodigal Son," Engraving from two plates (1513/16 x 2515/16 in. [40.2 x 65.9] cm).

⁸⁴ Davis, p. 257. While the de Gheyn engraving is based on the van Mander painting it is also similar to a drawing by an Italian contemporary of van Mander's, Gregorio Pagani, entitled "A Country Dance," an early 1580's work. The semi-circular design of A Country Dance anticipates van Mander's compositional dictums. Van Mander was present in Italy around 1570 and may have "imported this style back to the Netherlands." p. 257.

⁸⁵ See Rensselaer W. Lee, *Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanist Theory of Painting* (Norton: New York, 1967). As hitherto noted there was a tradition of painting based on literary sources, that began in the Renaissance and continued through the Baroque. This tradition was subverted somewhat by the Mannerists, who saw art more as a means to express virtuosity and individual expression. The Horatian goal of instruction, or moral message was ignored or made ambivalent.

⁸⁶ M.A. Katritzky, "Lodewyk Toeput: some pictures. . ." (op. cit.), p. 85.

In de Gheyn's engraving, the main character of the prodigal is barely evident as the center of focus. This Mannerist sense of crowding and multiple focus is established by the placement of multiple groups of figures involved in separate, disparate actions. In the rear left background, a youth is being chased out of a brothel toward the ruins while he is about to be doused with excrement from above.⁸⁷ This represents the eventual fate (ruin) of the prodigal who has squandered all his money on pleasure. As we can see, the youth is literally on the road toward ruin; it can be seen in the distance.⁸⁸ On the frontal plane, jester and fool types sprawl at the lower left of the semi-circular composition. A boy server at right center assumes a mannered *contrapposto* while awaiting the wine glass of the aristocratic woman. While she consumes the last drop, a gentleman's probing hand bares her leg adding a sensual attitude to the engraving, while commenting on the perils of alcohol and the loss of self-control.

"A Feast" by Marten de Vos⁸⁹ (Fig. 27) utilizes the semicircular composition and a number of figural arrangements favored by Van Mander, and de Gheyn. However, the scene is moved indoors and compressed forward in the style more typical of the Second School of Fontainebleau.⁹⁰ De Vos was an Antwerp Mannerist⁹¹ who had been involved with the

⁸⁷ There is a similar scene at Trausnitz, where the Ruffiana empties her chamberpot on Pantalone.

⁸⁸ Space is thus used to create a temporal, narrative statement that comments on the foreground action, while presenting a sense of simultaneity.

⁸⁹ Katritzky, p. 117, Fig. 21. Oil, (103 x 150 cm.) Questionable dating late 1580's or early 90's. (Art market, London 1974, as Second School of Fontainebleau).

⁹⁰ The Second School reflects the Flemish influence in France from 1560-1600, but Adhémar (op. cit.) p. 191, also notes a Venetian influence after 1570. The First School was under the Italian influence.

Antwerp *rederijker* players. The *rederijkers* (rhetoricians) were regularly craftsmen and shopkeepers who as amateurs fostered the art of poetics and rhetoric by giving public performances often on outdoor stages as did the *commedia dell'arte*.⁹² Marten de Vos apparently accompanied Breughel on his travels through Italy.⁹³ Katritzky posits that De Vos was associated with the Second School of Fontainebleau and was a pupil of Tintoretto, and later became the teacher of Lodewyk Toeput.⁹⁴

While "The Feast" employed the semicircular arrangement of the de Gheyn engraving, de Vos substituted a *zanni*, Pantalone, and *innamorata* for the jesters in the engraving. In the lower left area, the unmasked Pantalone, guitar-playing *zanni*, and *innamorata* partake in a somewhat "out-of-sync" dance-kick lending a bizarre *sprezzatura* to the otherwise formal, artificial, and rigidly stylized quality which marks de Vos' technique. Unlike the jesters in de Gheyn's engraving who comment on the foolishness of the youth, these *comici* are an active force in liberating this scene from any moral message. The woman sprawled between the legs of the bearded man at right center is the counterpart to the lovers in the lower right section of the de Gheyn engraving. His antiquated costume demonstrates the Mannerist sense of mixing the contemporary with the out-of-date. The pillar like monumentality of the woman's leg (lower right) evokes a sense of Parmigianino's figuration of "Madonna with the Long Neck." De Vos displays inconsistency and license in *disegno* by his juxtaposition of this columnar, mannered depiction of the woman's leg

⁹¹ Hieronymous Cock, noted earlier in Part III, had sold many paintings to the French court. Adhémar cites documents (op. cit.), p. 191.

⁹² Walter S. Gibson, "Artists and *rederijkers* in the age of Breughel," *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 63, (1981), 426-441. Breughel depicted many of these scenes.

⁹³ Katritzky, p. 90.

⁹⁴ Katritzky, p. 90.

with the eccentric diminution of Pantalone's leg. His odd treatment of limbs creates a discordant effect.

"The Feast's" hard contours, flat coloration, and arbitrary gestures recall the rhythmical style of Rosso Fiorentino. The display of naked breasts conveys both a sense of lasciviousness and fecundity, but it also reflects the "cult of the nude," a period when this image was popular in Fontainebleau painting. The seminude *innamorata* is dressed in the style of the late 1580's. The ornately attired comedians, their masks replaced with feathered caps,⁹⁵ are barely distinguishable from their aristocratic guests. As we have seen in Part II, there were numerous instances when comedians performed before courtly patrons, or in aristocratic settings. They often performed *scherzi*, songs, or dances, at occasions that did not require a complete production based upon a scenario. The image depicted here indicates that there was no separation between the comedians and the seemingly disinterested spectators. This scene suggests that performances at court may have been very informal, not only in regard to the casual *sprezzatura* of the actors, but also as pertained to the behavior of the courtly spectator. This is not the rigid, ordered *fête* of Louis XIV, that would be seen a hundred years hence. Compared to the images of power that were soon forthcoming, this scene depicts only theatre's responsibility to entertain, albeit in a Dionysian setting. As Mannerist paintings often expressed multiple and conflicting viewpoints, it may follow that the *gusto* of these courtiers desired multiple and even conflicting entertainments. For instance de Vos' rendering of two guitarists, in which the players are separated and not making apparent contact, and their left hands assume different fingerings, suggests that the music may have created a cacophonous effect.

⁹⁵ Note that the faces seem slightly darkened. As the reader will recall, the comedians often went unmasked in French performances.

The Marten de Vos painting had a number of general characteristics in common with the de Gheyn portrait, particularly in regard to compositional features. The de Vos painting inspired two other *commedia* works that help solidify the argument concerning the impact of *maniera* on early *commedia dell'arte* iconography.

The first is "Outdoor Feast" (circa 1590) (Fig. 28) by Lodewyk Toeput (Ludovico Pozzoserrato), whom we have noted earlier was a Flemish *straniero*, who had spent a number of years in Tintoretto's workshop in Venice, and later had settled in Treviso in the northern Veneto. The work is much smaller than the de Vos painting,⁹⁶ yet it is typical of Pozzoserrato's style,⁹⁷ particularly his landscapes which possess a shimmering atmospheric quality and lack of distinct contours. While many images remain the same from the original, the goose to be served (right rear), the figural arrangement; the spatial and surface qualities are transformed by Pozzoserrato's *maniera*.

Pozzoserrato moves the scene outdoors although the landscape itself is *più di maniera, che di natura* ("more a matter of style or convention than a study from nature"). Here, the stage figures of Pantalone and the *zanni* adorn their typical costume and familiar half-mask.⁹⁸ Contrary to her normative appearance, the *innamorata* also wears a mask. The

⁹⁶ Katritzky, p. 116, Fig. 20. Oil on Panel, 39.4 x 54.6 cm (Art Market, London, 1968).

⁹⁷ I had the opportunity to see various Toeput's paintings at the *Museo Scarpa* in Treviso, in June 1989.

⁹⁸ See Chapter 5 regarding costume appearance. Kayser, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature* (op. cit.) Masks in the grotesque signify the assimilation of bestial characteristics, allow unrestricted entry into this scene of merry-making and bacchanal. Here food, drink and music and dance are connected to the carnival-grotesque spirit which always suspends conventional norms of morality.

handling of the forms is sketchy, and indistinct in relation to the formal crispness of de Vos. Accordingly, Pozzoserrato is a painter of the second or third rank, what Friedlaender derogatorily called "*de petite manière*."⁹⁹ However, while the de Vos painting evoked a kind of frozen stillness, Pozzoserrato's jittery brushwork and hesitant line captures a sense of mood, spirit, and energy. He is more infected with the Venetian mode of painting than de Vos.

In another version of the same scene (Fig. 29), the Flemish artist, Johannes Sadeler,¹⁰⁰ produced an engraving based upon the de Vos original. Besides some formal changes, Sadeler added the caption *Crapula* and *Lascivia*. (Debauchery and Lascivious, late 1590's).¹⁰¹ The addition of this caption transformed the picture into an emblem of admonition. This was most likely a response to the pressing demands of the Counter-Reformation against such scenes of bacchanal. By shifting the image to an emblem new iconographic codes appear. For instance, a food image like the goose on the platter (rear right) now carries the description "your goose is cooked." This marks a significant shift from the first two pictures where comedians revel in celebration of immoral bacchanal, to the condemnation of bacchanal in the Sadeler version. An unpublished engraving by Sadeler, at the *Biblioteca del Burcardo* in Rome, is captioned with the warning against "*Vinum et Mulieres*," "Wine and Weakness for Women."¹⁰² Sadeler may have been the

⁹⁹ Friedlaender, (op. cit.) p. 51.

¹⁰⁰ Marian Davis, *School of Fontainebleau* (op. cit.) p. 72. His biography reads: "Joannes Sadeler (1550-1600) : Born in Brussels and died in Venice. Active in Antwerp and Fontainebleau with trips to Germany from 1580. To Verona in 1595 and then on to Venice. Made prints after the work of others.

¹⁰¹ Katritzky, p. 118, Figure 22. *Crapula* and *Lascivia*, engraving, 21 x 17 cm., signed on plate (Hollstein, XXII, 157, no. 558, ill.).

first artist to utilize *commedia* scenes as images of admonition.¹⁰³ In *Crapula e Lascivia* it appears as though a church is being constructed in the distance, a sharp contrast to the indulgent feasting. This mixing of sacred and profane themes was an important facet of Mannerist art.

Sadeler's *maniera* demonstrates a decided Venetian influence, the engraving in fact, has a much more lively quality than the de Vos original. The use of space is Mannerist, and by architectural standards enigmatic, since the perspective hallway would have to be set farther to the right to make practical sense. The dress of the women has been updated and the bare-breasted style in the manner after Clouet, has been subdued. There is more *grazia* in the handling of the fabric, and in the rendering of the figural poses. The frozen contours of the de Vos have been softened. Pantalone appears more fierce: he has been given a larger dagger which he clutches with his right hand, his codpiece is more flagrant, and Sadeler has rejuvenated the atrophied leg and foot of the de Vos original. The feather is gone from Pantalone's fez, but his standard cape and tights remain intact. The engraving reveals what appears to be the outline of a mask on both the Pantalone and *zanni*. While the hat of the *zanni* is the same, his costume is more highly textured and the wide-length trousers are more apparent than in the de Vos picture. The guitar playing is again typical of this stage figure. Sadeler has positioned *zanni*'s left leg at a greater angle and distance, where it now

¹⁰² Burcardo Print Number 2,572. Full quote taken from Sarah: 19. Sadeler is imprinted on engraving, date given is 1582.

¹⁰³ Artists, such as Mitelli, saw the mask as an image of the devil and of destruction, and published their works in emblem books and pamphlets. For instance, for the reformers, the black mask of Harlequin, traced to the medieval Hellequin, signified the *angelo nero* (black angel). From the perspective of the Catholic Church, performances of the *comici* could be seen as a farcical anti-mass, a counter-celebration to the sacred rites of Catholicism.

rests on the pitcher of wine. This anticipates that the pitcher may be broken, a common iconographic symbol which signifies the consummation of lust. It is difficult to ascertain the role of the *innamorata* in these scenes since her position is static in relation to the *zanni* and Pantalone figures. She does not appear to be singing or interacting with the other players. Her darkened hollow of her eyes give the sinister impression of a mask.

These three scenes suggest that the iconography of the *commedia dell'arte* has greater meaning than has hitherto been acknowledged. In them performers can be seen to intermingle with aristocratic audiences, since, in fact, there is no differentiation between stage space and spectator space. Although the stage figures of the *commedia* are typed by costume, the *innamorata* shares the fashion, style, and behavior of the court. They must also be seen as iconographic symbols of bacchanal, desire, and debauchery. As a commodity they satisfied the public and aristocratic desire for the bizarre, the grotesque and the marvelous.

The stage figures each possessed distinct character traits representing appetites, desires, and consequences. These accepted protocols preceded and predetermined visual depictions of performance, and as we shall see, the performances themselves.

In Part I we noted how Mannerist artists often created a world based on free associations between the human and bestial forms, between the terrifying and the divine, and the grotesque and the beautiful.¹⁰⁴ This world in which the natural order of things was subverted, had its temporal counterpart in the phenomenon of carnival, a period which extends from Epiphany to Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Bakhtin posits that the

¹⁰⁴ For examples see Part I

carnival spirit offers the chance for a new outlook on the world, and the opportunity to enter a completely new order of things.¹⁰⁵

In our examination of the *commedia dell'arte* we noted that theatre historians have attested to the fact that the *commedia dell'arte* was an *antimondo*, or anti-world, its masked figures presenting a world parallel but not imitative of our own. We also noted that some historians place the roots of the *commedia* in the carnival tradition not only in the derivative sense, but also because *commedia* signifies the wandering nature of carnival, the improvisational nature of its entertainment, and the performance tradition of the mountebank stage. Let us now briefly examine some of these images, in which Mannerist artists depicted the *commedia dell'arte* in scenes of carnival.

"Carnival Banquet," by Leonardo Bassano (late 1580's),¹⁰⁶ (Fig. 30) is one of the few known paintings by a native Italian of the early *commedia dell'arte*. Bassano came from a family of painters, who derive from a town in the Veneto which bears the Bassano name.¹⁰⁷ Leandro Bassano is noted for his "shimmering but confident Mannerist brushwork, and solid Venetian types."¹⁰⁸ Peculiarly, Allardyce Nicoll posits the presence of the Bassani family in one of the first known *commedia* troupes, the *Soldoni*,

¹⁰⁵ Bakhtin, pp. 4-6.

¹⁰⁶ Katritzky, p. 109. Fig. 113, oil on canvas, 128 x 160 cm. There has been discrepancies regarding authorship (Art market Berlin 1930 as by Toeput, Budapest 1937, as by Leandro Bassano). Although Takács posited it was by Sebastian Vrancx, Katritzky disagrees citing that Vrancx was born in 1573.

¹⁰⁷ In June 1989 I visited the *Villa I Tatti* outside of Florence and investigated the *fototeca* of the Berenson collection, which contain a number of photographic copies of Bassano's work. However, no *commedia* scenes were included.

¹⁰⁸ Katritzky, p. 88.

which appeared in Lyon in 1572.¹⁰⁹ Whether there is any connection between the family of painters and actors is not known at this time.

"Carnival Banquet" shows a company grouped around a laden banqueting table.¹¹⁰ There are apparent *commedia* types mixed with the aristocracy, as their dress would indicate. At the extreme left Brighella can be identified by the horizontal striping of his costume. Bassano thus reveals the first known visual record of this type. Hitherto theatre historians of the *commedia* had established Brighella's presence only in the seventeenth century.

Amidst this aristocratic setting, Pantalone and Harlequin(at right) improvise a bizarre dance while the masked dwarf (left center), strums a mandolin. Found in Rabelais works, and present in substantial numbers at the Spanish court, the dwarf satisfied the sixteenth-century appetite for the bizarre, and the grotesque.¹¹¹ Harlequin's black beast-like mask presents the ambivalent character of the grotesque: part man, part beast, part demonic. The monkey, (center right) man's closest link to the animal world apes the comedians behavior suggesting a grotesque, Mannerist world where man and beast merge.

"Carnival Scene" (February) by Leandro Bassano (Fig. 31) represents a fine example of Mannerist *mescolare*.¹¹² It is stylistically linked to the last scene, for instance, Bassano

¹⁰⁹ Nicoll, Masks, Mimes and Miracles, (op. cit.) p. 179.

¹¹⁰ Katritzky, p.86.

¹¹¹ Tietze-Conrat (op. cit.), develops historically the notion of the dwarf in art.

¹¹² Katritzky, p. 111, Fig. 15, oil on canvas, 140.5 x 155 cm, late 1580's. *Potsdam-Sanssoucci, Bildergalerie*. (Replicas: *Hluboka* Castle, Czechoslovakia; *Tula* Museum, USSR).

uses a similar type for Pantalone. In this painting, Pantalone attempts to accost a masked woman, who is being serenaded, while a blind cupid crosses in front of him. According to Panofsky, this image had a number of connotations: not only "love is blind," but also related to infidelity, and sin.¹¹³ To the right of the couple there is a *zanni* type, in a grotesque *figura serpentina* pose, while at the far right meat is prepared as a youth drinks wine from a vat.

Unique to this Mannerist portrayal is the sense of double vision achieved by Bassano's use of background space. In the rear right upon a kind of platform stage, a second Pantalone, a *zanni*, and a tumbler are performing a scene to a few spectators. This juxtaposition of these two Pantalones denotes what Sypher posited as the "shifting levels of reality" in Mannerist art. On a pictorial level a strong diagonal tension is created across the surface of the painting creating a great sense of depth. More important is the shift in performance reality. Is the Pantalone in the foreground performing, or part of a real life scene, or is he working with the *zanni*, or does the presence of the blind cupid suggest a moral theme, based on the carnival genre? Since it is a carnival scene, and we know that carnival itself describes a kind of performance, does this suggest a liminal reality between true performance and real life? Ultimately, these interpretations are juxtaposed with a type of true *commedia* performance offered in the background. The meta-theatrical result is Mannerist because it creates a kind of visual pun, an *effetto meraviglioso* that forces us to shift among varying realities.

¹¹³ Erwin Panofsky, Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance (Oxford, 1933) pp. 95-127. Panovsky devotes an entire chapter to the Blind Cupid.

In the center area, the common carnival image of bull-baiting is taking place. The high vanishing point of the perspective gives the design a theatrical 'Serlian' sense. A series of steps separate the foreground area from the background, also a conventional device of scene design. The bifurcation of space and the flatness of the background forms suggests that the frontal actions are played in front of a backdrop, rather than integrated into three-dimensional scheme. Bassano succeeds in juxtaposing a grotesque world of mixed, even contradictory forms within the context of his Mannerist vision.

In this carnival banquet by Sebastian Vrancx (fig. 32) a monkey seemingly greets the viewer on the extreme frontal plane. Pantalone's entry on left flanked by his musical *zanni* is interrupted by another masked *zanni*'s acrobatics which visually inverts the images of the monkey and the dog on the steps. His mask and tail-like sash, which seems to defy gravity, identify him with the animal world, and here figuratively mark the grotesquerie of the spirit of carnival as a time of overturning, and a world turned inside out, where man, in essence, imitates beast.

Another carnival scene of bull-baiting occurs in this pen and ink drawing by Joos de Momper (c 1590) called "January"¹¹⁴ (Fig. 33). Apparently the bull has just gored and trampled one of the citizens (up center back). Representing strength, procreation, and transformational powers, the bull was an appropriate image in Mannerist art, an artistic

¹¹⁴ Katritzky, p. 106, Fig. 10. Pen, ink and wash over chalk, (19.6 v 26.5 cm). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. De Momper was another Fleming, who worked around the Veneto, and is associated with the Antwerp Mannerists.

style that delighted in physical displays of strength, and multiple levels of meaning. As such, the bull represented the transformed Zeus in a number of images (Fig. 34).¹¹⁵ Displays of violent acts, massacres, martyrdom, and fights between man and wild beast are also frequent Mannerist images as they demonstrate extreme emotional states as here depicted in Caraglio's, *Frenzy* (Fig. 35).¹¹⁶ Wounds and other penetrations of the body are associated with the grotesque and the confrontation between life and death within the body. Actually, carnival, as we have seen in Part II, represents a confrontation between the forces of life and death: symbolized by the *contrasti* between the *vecchio*, and *vecchia*.¹¹⁷ present (left) in de Momper's drawing "February."¹¹⁸ (Fig. 36)

In "January" the wealthy *vecchio* (right) signifies carnival and associates urban life and prosperity with food and drink. On the other hand the *vecchia* figure, in the drawing "February" on left, signifies Lent and is associated with the Church, fasting and poverty. The end of carnival was usually marked by the burning of an effigy of *vecchio*. This signified the death of carnival, and prefigured the Easter renewal, and the regeneration of

¹¹⁵ See Davis, *Mannerist Prints*, Fig. 70, Leon Davent, *The Abduction of Europa*, after Primaticcio's drawing, Fig. 70a. In these scenes there is the enigmatic presence of a second bull. It is notable that although this story is based on a mythological narrative, there is never mention of the second bull. The Mannerist artist, while apparently adhering to the 'ut pictura poesis,' humanist notion, is actually subverting the narrative through his *invenzione* of the second bull.

¹¹⁶ Davis, Fig. 17, *Frenzy* by Caraglio, after a *disegno* by Rosso, is an extreme example of man versus frightening bestial images.

¹¹⁷ Toschi, (op. cit.), refer to Part II in this text. The ethnographer Paolo Toschi posits that the contrast between *vecchio* and *vecchia* was the basis of the late medieval farce called *contrasti*, which was performed at carnival. The *vecchia* character was often performed by a male. It was a theatrical tradition for a witch or old woman to be enacted by a man--e.g. witches in the Dutch theatre - -even during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

¹¹⁸ Katritzky, p. 107, Fig. 11.

spring. As such these works by de Momper may identify a kind of *memento mori*, that is, a meditation on the transitory nature of life. Earlier *maniera* works, without *commedia* figures, such as Marco Dente's engraving "Skeletons," after a painting by Rosso, and Marcantonio Raimondi's *Lo Stregozzo* after Giulio Romano, demonstrate the *vecchia* as a *strega* (witch), a grotesque images of death (See Fig.16). In the seventeenth century, *commedia dell'arte* figures were published frequently by artists like Mitelli in scenes of *memento mori*.

De Momper's drawings suggest the Mannerist convention of *mescolare*, that is the mixing of diverse elements as an aesthetic characteristic. Not only are the tightly compressed interior spaces juxtaposed to more panoramic views, but there are also a number of contradictory images.

For instance, these drawings juxtapose the death symbols of the *vecchi* with the celebratory figures of the *commedia dell'arte*. In the "January" sketch, a Pantalone, in standard pose with arms behind his back, struts upon the scene from the lower right to the serenade of a *zanni*, whilst (mid-left) a troupe of mountebanks perform upon an open platform to a large crowd. Images of mountebanks have a legacy throughout *commedia* iconography and occur as well in *maniera* prints such as the "Snakeholder" by Diana Scultori (1550, Fig. 37), based on a Romano fresco in the *Sala dei Venti* at the *Palazzo del Té*.¹¹⁹ Usually these depicted *ciarlitano* (quacks) selling snake-oil cures for everything from constipation to impotence. In some cases, the charlatans joined forces with the *zanni* and *attrice* or *meretrice haeterae* (a kind of geisha), alternating comic scenes and sexual

¹¹⁹ Davis, Fig. 45 and 45a. Part of the package of the *ciarlitano* was the selling of snake oil or unguents as a remedy for myriad ailments.

innuendos, with the selling of their bogus potions. The earliest dated image, 1568, of a *commedia dell'arte* scene demonstrates performers on a mountebank or trestle stage.¹²⁰

"January" is reproduced by Sadoul and Kahan¹²¹ in their works on Callot (Fig. 38).

Callot completed his engravings of the months at Rome in 1612,¹²² and they are indicative of his early development. While there is more definition and a cleaner line in Callot's *maniera*, this clarity of line may reflect the difference in artistic medium between a pen and ink, wash drawing and an engraving. Nevertheless, the work demonstrates Callot's early interest in the *commedia dell'arte*, and the continuing practice of copying earlier existing models.

De Momper's "February" drawing depicts a group of *commedia* players leaving town, including a very early example of Harlequin [lower center] distinguished by the haphazard patching on his costume, and a bizarre pair of antennae sprouting from his head. An apparent *zanni* figure upon a mule seems to be handing Harlequin a bird, which Harlequin will place into the bag held in his left hand. In the background an apparent love scene is played on a frozen river or canal in front of a trestle bridge. Although "February" signalled the end of carnival, the acts of departure and endings are depicted with song, dance, and laughter. These are juxtaposed to the somber image of the *vecchia*, and the church, which are symbols of Lent. Thus de Momper has succeeded in representing the ambivalent spirit

¹²⁰ In *Recueil Fossard*, (op. cit.), Introductory section.

¹²¹ Sadoul (op. cit), p. 31, Fig. 14; Kahan, p. 26, Fig. 32. Kahan posits that the source for the engraving is Jean Collaert, although Sadoul agrees with Katritzky that the artist is de Momper.

¹²² Kahan, p. 25.

that marks the end of carnival.¹²³ This sense of ambivalence is consistent with the Mannerist context in which the picture is framed.

De Momper's "February" and Toeput's landscape painting "The Month of January" (Fig. 39) juxtapose sacred and profane images, expanding upon a common theme in Mannerist art. The Toeput painting of a carnival march depicts a *compagnia* in front of the distant Lima Cathedral. We can recognize a Pantalone in an s-shaped pose, followed by an *innamorata*, and a *zanni* figure wearing a coolie style hat (which we also see in the Fossard) while playing a guitar. To the extreme left is an apparent Harlequin, represented in the typical black mask. He is bent over from the waist as if to hear a secret, or perhaps to solicit the youth to join the troupe on its travels. At right, there is a crackling fire surrounded by three figures. The long stick indicates that at least one is a shepherd. To Pantalone's immediate left is the bizarre presence of Pulcinella, distinguished by his exaggerated, cone-shaped hat. His presence is unexpected for a number of reasons. First, this is the only visual record of a Pulcinella supplied by this group of Veneto artists; second, Pulcinella was neither a stage figure of Tuscan nor Veneto origin, which suggests

¹²³ Bakhtin (op. cit.) p. 248. In his chapter, "Popular-Festive Forms," Bakhtin considers the aspect of ambivalence in carnival at some length, particularly in regard to the sixteenth century *Zeitgeist*, represented by Rabelais. He also cites the writings of Goethe on carnival, in some length. "The Roman carnival ends with the Fire Festival, or *moccoli*, which in Italian means "candle stumps." . . Each participant in the parade carries a lighted candle: *Sia ammazzato chi no porto moccolo!* "Death to anyone who is not carrying a candle!" With this bloodthirsty cry, each one tries to blow out his neighbor's candle. The fire is combined with the threat of death but the louder the cry, the more does the threat lose its direct threatening meaning. The deeply ambivalent nature of the wish for death is disclosed. . . [Goethe describes the phenomenon] 'Just as in other languages curses and obscene words are often used as expressions of joy or admiration, so, on this evening, the true meaning of *sia ammazzato* is completely forgotten, and it becomes a password, a cry of joy, a refrain added to all jokes and compliments.'" From *Aschermittwochbetrachtung*, "Ash Wednesday Observations" in "The Roman Carnival."

that this may be a Neapolitan troupe; third, his black cassock may be a type of outerwear, since Pulcinella is almost always depicted in white.¹²⁴

In Toeput's painting, three levels of reality are juxtaposed in an almost Neoplatonic scheme. The wandering *compagnie* on the lower earthly stratum signify, from the standpoint of prevailing rule,¹²⁵ the subversive, disruptive, and transforming world of carnival, and represent the forces of desire and wanderlust. Harlequin appears to be soliciting a youth to join the company on their travels. The fire to the right associates with the libidinous spirit of youth, and refers to the *commedia*. In *Parenesi contro gli attori e spettatori* (Opinions against the Actors and Spectators) Francesco del Monaco compared the theatre of the comedians to a brothel, where youth is corrupted by openly-displayed lasciviousness, and the evil learned is immediately afterwards put into practice:

" At these performances they learn things that they have never known or felt, and the flame of the libido fills them most quickly."¹²⁶

The iconography of this scene now can be seen on one level to represent the conflict that existed between the Church and the comedians.

¹²⁴ Anton Bragaglia, *Pulcinella* (op. cit.). Pulcinella symbolizes the spirit and character of the Neapolitan *contadino* or peasant class. He is characterized by his strident voice. Pulcinella, is derived from *pulcino*, 'chicken', here means squeal of a chicken. His stage figure represents grotesque speech in his bizarre, disjointed comparisons, and irrational form of argument.

¹²⁵ Tessari, *Commedia dell'Arte: la maschera...* (op. cit.) Tessari posits the Catholic Church and the Humanists represented the prevailing ideology of this period.

¹²⁶ Ferdinando Taviani, *La fascinazione del teatro* (op. cit.) p. 203, Monaco was active at the beginning of the seventeenth century as a reformer.

The company is framed by trees, and similar to the Bassano paintings, the background is not harmoniously integrated. The arrangement seems staged, as if the *compagnie* were positioned in front of a ground row, while the background was not a real landscape but a painted backdrop directly behind the company. The stylized sky, birds, and trees which were common to Toeput's landscapes, usually worked together to create a sense of panoramic space which in effect diminishes his figures. Toeput demonstrates with his sketchy, uneven *maniera* the Mannerist characteristic whereby objects in the background compete or overwhelm the more important foreground.

As part of this competitive scheme, there is the middle level of the painting where the industrious and rational world are represented by the architectural stability of a city. Finally, there is the higher spiritual stratum connecting the church with the celestial world. Toeput is representing the tension between three levels of sixteenth-century culture. The comedians can be seen to signify the primitive urges, and a wandering aspect that as we have seen, permeated the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. The buildings and organization of the city signify the humanist ideal whereby man rules and controls his environment. Finally, the highest position given to the church, signifies its power over the other realms, and is descriptive of the force of the Counter-Reformation. By juxtaposing these irreconcilable levels of sixteenth-century society, Toeput utilized the Mannerist principle of *discordia concors* to create an iconographic symbol of *commedia dell'arte*'s relation to contemporary society.

The Feather Book

While a number of the previous examples from early *commedia dell'arte* iconography demonstrate the complexity of Mannerism, the Feather Book collection suggests a lighter

approach. Minaggio's figures are rendered with a sense of caprice and wit. They capture a great deal of the flavor and spirit of the *commedia* in a direct, simplified, and playful manner. However, beneath apparent simplicity there underlies a Mannerist sensibility. Mannerist characteristics such as *bizarri*, *sprezzatura*, *figura serpentina*, *Sprecher* and *effetto meraviglioso* are all present in the craft of Minaggio.

The *effetto meraviglioso* evoked from Minaggio's renderings is that his *commedia* scenes are composed entirely of feathers from exotic birds. This effect fascinates because while Minaggio is depicting a certain figure, he is also transforming one object into another. The result is a kind of artistic alchemy that was highly regarded by cinquecento art theorists such as Lomazzo.¹²⁷ A generation before Minaggio, the Milanese Arcimboldo had astonished the Spanish-Hapsburg court with his portraits of the seasons. Arcimboldo, while painting his heads in a *trompe l'oeil* style, actually utilized the techniques of assemblage (Fig. 40). The grotesque heads appeared to be constructed from flowers, or plants, or even fish. As was noted in Chapter II, the effect was bizarre, albeit marvelous.

Other sixteenth century artists employed techniques of assemblage. At the *Museo degli argenti* in Florence there is an assemblage of shells on wood and *papier mâché* entitled simply, "Little Statue"¹²⁸ (Fig. 41). The subject appears to be an African warrior in full regalia. The preciousness of detail is stunning. Shells, in a myriad of shapes, sizes, and type combine with white feathers to create a strikingly real effect, both in color and design. Moreover, how the work is created, is as intriguing as the object itself. As in other forms

¹²⁷ The transformation of matter into a higher form was of interest to the Neoplatonists. See Chapter III.

¹²⁸ See *Arcimboldo Effect* (op. cit.) p. 139. Statue height is 53 cm, artist is anonymous.

of Mannerist art, the artist is reaching for a unique statement, for an *invenzione*. This striving is part of the artist's *sprezzatura*, that is, his need to outdo his rivals.¹²⁹

In Minaggio's portraits, the content and design are strong enough to distract the viewer from the materials, particularly since reproductions from the Feather Book are usually in black and white (as in the case here). Unhappily, the tactile qualities of the feathers and the subtleties of craftsmanship and color do not transfer well to black and white prints. With these limitations in mind, we will seek to demonstrate the Mannerist traits of a few selections from the Feather Book.

The *comici*, that are present in the portraits, have been identified from corresponding records and contracts of troupes travelling through Milan from 1615-1618, a period that marks the second generation *compagnie* of the *commedia dell'arte*.¹³⁰ The early seventeenth century also marked a transitional period in the visual arts which saw the decline of Mannerism, and the rise of the Baroque. The persistence of Mannerism, however, still continued in artists like Bellange, Callot, and Minaggio.

Dotor Campanaz (Fig. 42) was the Bolognese hero of *La Campanaccia*, a scenario apparently written for Bortolomio Bongiovanni, a native of Piacenza.¹³¹ Lea's records show that he started with the *Fedeli* company, and remained during its period of reorganization with the *Accesi*, which was headed at first by the great Arlecchino,

¹²⁹ John Greenwood, (op. cit.) pp. 17-18.

¹³⁰ The feather illustrations were published in 1618. Background material was provided in the last chapter. See Chapter V for further treatment of the *compagnie*.

¹³¹ Corrigan, (op. cit.) p. 174. *Dotor Campanaz* is on p.103 of the Feather Book.

Martinelli from 1612-14, and subsequently by Cecchini.¹³² Corrigan describes Dottor's function:

"He played the part which bore the generic mask-name of Gratiano and appears in the Feather Book as the typical Doctor of Laws, his dress rich but conservative, with the Bolognese broad bonnet, a long fur-lined coat, a fluted ruff, and a pair of gloves which he holds in his right hand as he emphasizes some telling legal *conclusionone*."¹³³

Part of the Mannerist effect of Dottore derives from his antiquated dress, for as Gudlaugsson describes:

"He attracted attention by his dark and formal attire, the outrageously antiquated cut of which must have been at least several generations behind the fashions of the day. It is as though time had stood still for the doctor, since in the stage comedies he was always depicted as a man of yesterday or the day before."¹³⁴

This aspect can be seen in Campanaz's pleated ruff which was in style around 1570. By the time the feather illustrations were published, the pleated ruff had been out of fashion for almost fifty years.¹³⁵ While Dottore's anachronistic qualities are inherent in his stage figure, other Mannerist aspects can be attributed to Minaggio's treatment of the figure.

For instance, Campanaz gazes directly at us in the manner of the *Sprecher*, while his right hand blithely points to his name. This gives us a second impression of the stage figure, Dottore, as whimsical or witty, in contrast to his normal depiction as a stodgy, boorish, and loquacious gourmand. Minaggio's use of this device challenges the spectator's

¹³² Lea, II, 483. Also Corrigan, p. 175,

¹³³ Corrigan, p. 175.

¹³⁴ Gudlaugsson (op. cit.), p. 17.

¹³⁵ *ibid.* p. 15.

perceptions and expectations in regard to the Dottore type,¹³⁶ thus creating a sense of ambivalence.

The gestural attitude of the figure is off-balance, seemingly leaning into a kind of *contrapposto*.¹³⁷ The left hand is decoratively tapered to complete a serpentine shape through the entire arm. This inverted *figura serpentina* gives a contorted, mannered aspect to the figure. Reflecting the sinuous handling of the left arm is the right arm which constitutes an abbreviated s-shape.

The most pronounced and contorted *figura serpentina* in the Feather Book belongs to Chola Napolitano (Fig. 43). Corrigan posits that this was a Neapolitan actor who performed with both the *Accesi* and the *Fedeli* troupes:

"Aniello de Mauro's playing was so highly admired that in 1608 he had been sent by the Duke of Mantua to Paris as a replacement for the great Arlecchino, Tristano Martinelli. As the substitution was considered satisfactory it is probable that Chola was a Neapolitan version of the Bergamask Arlecchino, equally knavish and grotesque and equally acrobatic."¹³⁸

This portrait is a marvelous portrayal of the contorted and grotesque *figura serpentina* pose that was a favorite of Mannerist painters, and particularly sculptors (Fig. 44, Michelangelo's "Victory," is the earliest representation of the *figura serpentina*, 1506).¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Greenwood, p. 82. Greenwood posits that the Mannerist playwright attempts to challenge the audience with a kind of witty gamesmanship.

¹³⁷ We should acknowledge that the missing left foot is hardly intentional.

¹³⁸ Corrigan, p. 178. Cola was a figure that like Coviello had a number of different roles, without a fixed set of characteristics.

¹³⁹ Representative examples of the *figura serpentina* are examined in Part I.

Here, Chola's right arm is contorted in a grotesque, seemingly impossible inversion, while his right hand makes the "vulgar Neapolitan gesture against the evil eye."¹⁴⁰ The goggle-like spectacles and jutting tongue add to the grotesque and bizarre effect.

In 1621, three years after the publication of Minaggio's feather collection, another totally unique set of *commedia* images were published by Jacques Callot. In terms of depicting grotesque serpentine poses, jutting and spitting tongues, and goggle-like masks, no artist of the *commedia dell'arte* could equal the skill and intensity of Jacques Callot. In my recent correspondence with Bruce Davis,¹⁴¹ an international expert on *maniera* and Mannerist prints, Davis stated that Callot represented the persistence of Mannerism in the north, and may, in fact, be the last great innovator of that movement.

Callot's contributions and other background information have already been explored; now let us turn to the *Balli di Sfessania* series with the intent of examining select prints from a Mannerist perspective. I will attempt to limit descriptive information, that has been hitherto covered in order to focus on Callot's *maniera* in the *Balli di Sfessania*.

One important characteristic that has been overlooked by most historians studying the *Balli*, is the small size of the etchings. They measure only 23/4 x 35/8 in., or 7 x 9.2 cm. Size is crucial because it is linked to the preciousity of these etchings. Preciosity is an attribute of Mannerist art that demonstrates exquisite detail, refinement of execution, and usually implies a kind of intricate, elegant structure. It is the opposite of monumental. The impact

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 179.

¹⁴¹ Letter dated March 7, 1989 from Bruce Davis, Curator of Prints and Drawings, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

of these images is transmitted by the powerful force and energy that is captured in such a confining area. Part of Callot's *maniera* is represented in the contrast between the restricted perimeters of the actual print, and his designs which unfold a vast panoramic space.

Therein, lies the *effetto meraviglioso*.¹⁴²

The only exception to the employment of panoramic space in the *Balli di Sfessania* is evident in the "Frontispiece"¹⁴³ of the collection (Figure 45). In fact, it establishes a direct contrast with the rest of the series, for it is set upon a raised platform stage with a rear curtain. This lack of spatial depth creates a sense of *rilievo* as three figures interact on a narrow stage, while eavesdropping from behind the curtain are two characters at left and right center. The scene is apparently a frozen moment in performance, although more than likely it was concocted by the artist for maximum effect. For example, the outer figures frame the action with extreme Mannerist poses. At left, Lucia mia's weight is set upon his rear foot. For effect, Callot exaggerates the length of his left leg from the hip to the knee, while attenuating its breadth. The exaggerations are compounded by the length of the guitar neck, which extends beyond the limits of the etching, and the antenna like feathers sprouting atop Lucia mia's head. The effect is a strong diagonal line which thrusts the eye into the middle of the action. Here the tambourine-playing Bernoualla is engaged in a dance indicated by his raised left foot, and sense of movement. The torso is grossly elongated, far beyond the distorted proportions of Harlequin in the Fossard collection. Bernoualla's pose assumes an "s-shape," a line could be drawn up the left leg, through the raised right

¹⁴² This aspect of preciousity in Callot's etchings can be realized only by a direct examination of these prints, in which immediacy brings about a sense of the marvelous. My findings are based upon first hand observation of these etchings in the printroom at the Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota Florida.

¹⁴³ Ringling, Printroom catalog number, Sn. 8082.

leg and inverted arch of the back, and the inwardly set arms, that would resemble a kind of arabesque. The figure at right mirrors Lucia mia, and posits a sexual thrust. The sword positioned between his legs serves as a kind of phallus, its proximity to the open box suggests a vulgar meaning. The right hand is set in a grotesque claw-like manner lending a sinister sense to his gesture. The masks feature exaggerated nostrils which as Kayser pointed out, resemble phalli. This *invenzione* of Callot's mocks the humanist ideal which placed the sight of expression and emotion in the face. Instead, the face becomes an extension of the lower body connecting man to the bestial realm. Kayser suggests that the mask serves to add animal qualities to the human body in the long beak-like noses, which resemble phalli, sharpened chins, feathers and bat-like protuberances.¹⁴⁴

These feathers and protuberances are evident in the second plate of the series, "Cucorongna and Pernoualla"(Fig. 46)¹⁴⁵ Most noticeable are the s-shape designs of the figures, which give a strong rhythmical thrust to the composition. Notable is how the limbs of Cucorongna appear attached as a series of parts rather than integrated in a natural manner. The attention to anatomical detail is striking as is the exaggerated *maniera* of the hands. In the middle ground a clown appears to draw our attention from the frontal scene, creating a sense of multiple focus. In the far background there is the faint rendering of ruins. Rather than achieve a sense of space through perspective Callot utilizes parallel planes in which scale and value are reduced. Callot's use of space is *più di maniera, che di natura*. Because it is arbitrary and non-integrative; it serves to enhance the Mannerist effect.

¹⁴⁴ Wolfgang Kayser's Study of the Grotesque in Art and Literature (op. cit.) p. 17.

¹⁴⁵ Ringling, Sn. 8083.

In the figure of Cucorongna, Callot is emphasizing his predilection for images dealing with the buttocks.¹⁴⁶ The male buttocks were used by other Mannerist artists to create erotic and ambivalent effects. Most notable are Bronzino's "Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time (see Fig. 15)," Parmigianino's, "Amor," but most provocatively Spranger's, "Hercules and Omphale(Fig. 47)" in which the male buttocks serve as a *topos*, distracting the viewer from the mythological narrative. Callot's etching of Capitano "Spessa Monti and BaGattino (Fig. 48),"¹⁴⁷ presents the buttocks as the site of debasement, pain, and degradation. Here the grotesque is enhanced by the spitting image upon the pole, and the anticipation of a comic thrust. Although from a modern perspective such images appear frightening, Bakhtin posits that in the Rabelasian, grotesque world, laughter liberates degradation and violence from the serious and gloomy and transforms it into gay matter.¹⁴⁸ This duality which is inherent in Callot's image is consistent with the Mannerist aesthetic, whereby multiple, or contradictory meanings can be extracted from a single image.

Kayser posits that: "Callot's drawings furnish an idea of the gestic style. A completely frozen attitude in one part of the drawing may suddenly give way to the most eccentric

¹⁴⁶ Ringling, Sn. 8098. The *topos* of the buttocks takes an even more bizarre turn in the Callot etching "Capitano Babeo and Cucuba," of Harlequin using a bellows device to blow wind into the rectum of a donkey. Enema imagery, as well, is quite common in early *commedia dell'arte* iconography and found later in the *Balli* series: Sn. 8104, "Capitano Cardoni and Maramao"; it is also found in Rabelais, and even in Montaigne's journals of his travels which abound in detailed descriptions of his defecatory and excretory habits

¹⁴⁷ Ringling, Sn. 8092.

¹⁴⁸ Bakhtin, p. 335. Bakhtin explains that scatological images had a positive connotation in sixteenth-century culture. "We must not forget the urine as well as dung is gay matter, which degrades and relieves at the same time, transforming fear into laughter. If dung is a link between body and earth (the laughter that unites them), urine is a link between body and sea."

movements in another."¹⁴⁹ This is evident in the duet of "Capitano Cigangarato and Capitano Cocodrillo (Fig. 49)."¹⁵⁰ Two static figures are posed in the background with their arms drawn upward, the feet of the principal duet point to the distant duo. This creates a bizarre optical effect seemingly casting the distant twosome as miniature beings. Meanwhile, the two Capitanos are in the midst of a rhythmical and contorted dance. The elongated limbs and stretched anatomies are reminiscent of the figures of *Juste de Juste* (Fig. 13). While the scenes are posed synchronically it appears they may be demonstrating a sequential action. Spectator interest, as in most of the etchings, vacillates between the frontal and distant scene. Notice how Callot's carefully composed crowd scenes, are meant to be viewed through spread legs or under drawn swords. This framing technique is indicative of the high level of artifice and preciousity in Callot's etchings.

An examination of the background scenes in these etchings is as interesting, if not more so, than the focusing upon the frontal planes. Callot has no consistent strategy for delineating spectators, other than to use the varied groupings as stepping stones which delineate space. In a number of plates, he crowds spectators into groups of three, four and five, and places them intermittently about the middle plane. Usually three or more groups are placed in between the figures on the frontal plane, and a single group is placed on each outer flank. Thus, as in many Mannerist works, figures define the space. Occasionally, a conventionalized tree, a group of rocks, or a building frames the background scene. There is always at least one major action taking place in the background, which gathers the attention of most spectator groups. Callot utilizes figures in the peripheral groups to

¹⁴⁹ Kayser, p. 23.

¹⁵⁰ Ringling, Sn. 8096.

indicate the background action. They do so by extending their arms horizontally to the picture plane, and pointing towards the center background action. This 'indicating' serves a second purpose of pointing to the major figures on the parallel, frontal plane. Thus Callot is serving us with a visual pun. It is made possible by the very low vanishing point, and the extreme diminution of figures in the background plane.¹⁵¹

While spectators are usually depicted in profile or frontal views, in the etching "Razullo and Cucurucu,(Fig. 50)"¹⁵² the crowds gathered *en masse* are facing away from "Razullo and Cucurucu." They are watching a *commedia dell'arte* performance in an open air *piazza*. The raised stage is at least seven feet high, and contains a painted backdrop with an apparent street scene drawn in perspective. The characters are a servant, two lovers, Harlequin and a masked character who eavesdrops from the curtain. In this frequently reproduced etching the level of reality shifts between two levels of action which are juxtaposed but not integrated. The figures of Razullo and Cucurucu, isolated from the crowded mass, assume the grandeur of architecture.¹⁵³

The most significant aspect of the *Balli di Sfessania* series is the virtuosity of the artist in its depiction. In one sense he brought great technical innovation to the medium of etching, which allowed him to accomplish feats hitherto impossible. In another more profound sense, he culminated a tradition in art that was on its wane long before he began the *Balli*

¹⁵¹ At times these etchings create the impression of a Rabelasian play between giants and tiny people.

¹⁵² Ringling, Sn. 8101.

¹⁵³ Württemberg, p. 75. The same phenomenon of the large figure on the frontal plane contrasted with a crowded background is present in Hans Bock's "Allegory of Day: Zeus Fighting the Titans," 1586, Kunstmuseum, Basle.

etchings. Callot represents the victory of the artist over his subject matter. In this sense he mirrors the virtuoso *comici* of his time, both achieved the recognition of kings and nations, enjoyed financial prosperity, and an independence that was not to last into the next generation.

Callot's etchings have in fact given the *commedia dell'arte* a great deal of its identity. The prints stand out because of their excellent technique, but also because they represent a different, intriguing vision of the world. The gestures are at once ambiguous and celebrative, energetic but poised, grotesque yet amusing. This is the part of the *commedia dell'arte* that escapes the narrative of the scenario, that refuses to be understood by literal means, and eludes meaning. It is a language of gesture and attitude without a ready-made code.

PART IV

CHAPTER X

The Commedia dell'Arte as a Mannerist Phenomenon

At the beginning of Chapter IX the prime qualities of Mannerist art were described in some detail. These terms provided a stylistic base for the subsequent examination of *commedia dell'arte* iconography. Now, let us utilize these same terms in an attempt to establish the characteristics of the early *commedia dell'arte* as inclusive within this Mannerist context.

Exaggeration and distortion from the norm are evident in the practices of most stage figures of the *commedia dell'arte*. Capitano is representative. Chapter VI provided two examples, both from Francesco Andreini's Le Bravure del Capitan Spavento. In the first example Capitan Spavento declares himself to be far different from the normal baby: "I, as soon as I was born, was washed in molten lead, clad in red-hot irons, and fed with hemlock juice and deadly nightshade."¹ Capitano's exaggerations arise from an intentional distortion of rhetorical tropes and figures of speech, whereby the figure seeks to achieve a kind of monumental, larger-than-life grandeur. In other cases, these hyperbolic claims refer to his skill as a warrior or a lover. For instance Spavento declares that in one night he can "impregnate two hundred young women, while Hercules can perform with only fifty."² By outlasting the mythological Hercules, Capitano seeks to outdo the classical. Like the Mannerist artists who utilized Renaissance themes in their paintings but distorted them into

¹ Andreini, (op. cit.), see page 230 for full quote.

² Molinari, (op. cit.) see Ch. VI, p. 230.

their own subjective vision, Capitano distorts not only the goal of rhetoric (to persuade) but the means, through exaggerated comparisons, and implausible analogies. While this "rhetoricizing" creates a comic *effetto*, it also violates natural laws of proportion, normative standards of decorum, and any sense of truth or beauty in the classical sense.

Pantalone has a number of exaggerated physical characteristics. His prominently displayed codpiece signals his highly overactive sexual appetites. This is rendered more extreme when we consider that he is an aging man in his sixties.³ The hooked nose, usually the most recognizable part of his mask, is grossly oversized, and is accented by his pointed, jutting greybeard. These characteristic traits are added to his hunched posture, which gives him an angular, grotesque quality that dispels any semblance of humanistic dignity or sophistication. This is particularly evident, as Perrucci tells us, when he makes his patently giant, "stiff-legged," strides across the stage.

The mask, which must also be considered as a grotesque element, also served to distort, exaggerate, and type certain facial characteristics, while it diminished others. In general, the mask reduced the importance of the eyes and the face as the *topoi* of expression. This violated the humanist ideal which established the face and particularly the eyes as the essential characteristics of the individual. The placement of the mask upon the face voided the changeable and natural physiognomical expressions which are related to human psychology and sentiment, and replaced them with a set of fixed, exaggerated features. The parts of the mask that were exaggerated were the least important for the humanists; that is, the nasal area, plus the brow and hollow of the eyes. In fact, these are the areas that

³ Another of these extreme traits is Pantalone's miserliness.

most often link man to the bestial realm. As the face was decreased in importance, bodily and hand gestures as well as physical attitude assumed greater focus. This is very similar to what happened in Mannerist and later *maniera*⁴ painting, whereby gesture took on a far greater importance, while physiognomic features were typified, in many cases (See below). Freedberg asserted that fact about Parmigianino, declaring that in his paintings: "faces are mask-like."⁵

Because the comedians were hidden behind their fixed mask and costume, **ornamentation** and **surface** treatment became a crucial factor in *commedia dell'arte* performances. The surface treatment of costume and mask identified the stage figure, and with it a corresponding set of fixed character traits. Ornamental patterns differentiated the figures, and became universalized. A Pantalone, in his cape and red tights, or Harlequin's varigated-patchwork tights provided a universal language of identification. Since the costume not only identified the stage figure, but also his most typical traits, there was a reduced need for inner character development, other than in the most generalized sense.⁶ The emphasis was placed on the external form, or as Varchi asserted, "*il di fuori* ." ("the outside or external").⁷ Thus in *commedia dell'arte* performances, the bizarre gestural twists of the Harlequin, and the contorted movements of Pantalone served to focus the

⁴ Particularly that *maniera* painting based on the Roman sarcophagi. See Chapter III.

⁵ See Chapter III, for full quote and notation.

⁶ That is to say, the function of the stage figure would alter from scenario to scenario in which a certain emotional key would be established, typically at the first exit speech, "*prime uscite*."

⁷ Lee, p. 60. Also *Due Lezioni*, 1549, 113-114, (op. cit.). In Mendelson. Like the painter the comico focused on the outer portrayal of the figure.

viewer's eye on the play of surface gesture. The effect was phenomenological rather than rhetorical. Gesture as an ornamental and surface effect, at times, became an end in itself.

It may come as no surprise to note, that theatre historian Roberto Tessari affirms that *commedia dell'arte* gave life to eroticism on the stage,⁸ while Sidney Freedberg has suggested that Mannerist artists introduced eroticism to the world of painting.⁹ The erotic aspect of the *commedia dell'arte* has been overlooked by historians such as Lea and Nicoll, who were writing on the *commedia* in times when such probings would have seemed improper. This is an aspect of the *commedia* that has largely been ignored by theatre historians writing in English. As we have seen, a number of Counter-Reformation treatises posit that the comedians 'power to attract' was linked to sensual displays. The treatises discouraged the display of eroticism as a corruptor of youth, and a symbol of the *disgregazione sociale* (social disintegration). The baring of breasts was common in the "Pazzia" scene, but was also noted by reformers in backstage activities. This 'sexual appeal' of the early *commedia* was of course linked to the prominence that women played in the first companies, and was in part responsible for their immediate commercial success. The erotic--even obscene thrust-- of the early *commedia dell'arte* is also evident in the phallic imagery, and the use of swords and spears as extensions of this *topos*.

Sprezzatura is certainly found in the figure of the *bravi*, and the Capitano type. The Callot portrait of Capitano Spavento,¹⁰ depicts his poised albeit disdainful demeanor, and

⁸ Roberto Tessari, *La Commedia dell'Arte: La maschera* . . . (op. cit.) See Chapter One.

⁹ Freedberg, *Parmigianino*. . . (op. cit.) p. 16. Freedberg discusses the effect of sensuality in the painting of Parmigianino. See Part II, for Freedberg's discussion of the erotic effect of *Amor*.

flamboyant nonchalance. He stands in a balanced *contrapposto* his left hand held ready at his sword, while his right points to downward, thus signifying the potential fate of his unfortunate victims. His carefully trimmed mustache is arched upward in a kind of defiance, while his excessively curly hair add a sense of flamboyance.¹¹ The depiction of the Spanish Capitano in the Recueil Fossard,¹² depicts the plumed hat and pleated ruff which is more typical of the Spanish type. Here Capitano's swaggering strut and drawn sword add to the sense of *sprezzatura*, while the elongated fingers of his left hand stroke his costume in a self-admiring way.

Sprezzatura is found in the *innamorati* who attempts to outdo his rivals with extreme acts of gallantry, or 'invents' a poetic conceit to win her heart.

It is a quality underlying the *comici* as socio-cultural phenomenon, whereby individual artists attempted to outdo their rivals, as we indicated earlier in our discussion of the troupes of the Golden Age. For example in Chapter V, we noted that the rivalry between Isabella Andreini and Vittoria Pisimi reached a head at a performance for the marriage of Ferdinando de'Medici and Cristina of Lorraine, which resulted in a contest between the *innamorate*. It can also be noted in the second generation of *comici* like Pier Maria Cecchini (Fritellino), and Niccolò Barbieri (Beltrame) who attempted to overshadow their predecessors by assuming different stage names, while actually maintaining similar characteristics--both were, in fact, *zanni*.¹³ In another sense the names *Gelosi* and

¹⁰ See Sadoul, p. 65.

¹¹ The hair is depicted by Callot, *più di maniera, che di natura*.

¹² See LIX ([titled] LIVRE III. 51)

Confidenti, as we have noted, signify daring, enterprise and a spirit of adventure, qualities associated with *sprezzatura*.¹⁴

Horror vacui can be related to the crowding of space in *commedia dell'arte* performances. This is the case in numerous iconographical examples of legitimate *commedia* scenes and in scenes with mountebanks as well. This practice violates the classical notion of limiting scenes to two or three characters onstage at one time (See Fig. 51). Hauser posits that *horror vacui* is associated with the practice of ". . . overfilling of the whole picture so that the effect is similar to that of a tapestry with a crowded ornamental pattern."¹⁵ The most apt iconographical example of this is the Bayeux Museum painting of "Commedia dell'Arte Types," which is discussed in detail on page 176. Here, the stage is crowded not only with the *comici*, but apparently with members of the court as well. The "Carnavelet" painting discussed in the last chapter represents another example of this phenomenon. The frequent presence of eavesdroppers in *commedia* scenes suggests that the performers were quite concerned that they might miss their entrance cues and leave the stage empty.

Lack of spatial definition relates to the ambiguity of space that characterizes Mannerist art. Friedlaender asserts that unlike "the High Renaissance which favored a common

¹³ See Nicoll, *Masks*, (op. cit.), Appendix I. Fritellino and Gian Fritello appear in the Callot, *Balli* series.

¹⁴ Return to p. 182 for a full treatment of this matter. *Sprezzatura* also is mentioned by Castiglione as a desirable trait in *The Courtier*. Weise had linked late medieval cavalier literature to the notion of behavior as a form of *maniera*, a style of affected behavior that prevailed in the courts of the cinquecento. It is from this cavalier tradition that the sense of enterprising and spirit of adventure arise.

¹⁵ Hauser, (op. cit.) p. 193.

harmony of figures and space, in Mannerism the volumes of bodies displace the space, that is, they create the space."¹⁶ While in some cases *commedia dell'arte* performances took place in front of perspective scenery,¹⁷ often they were performed on platforms with neutral curtain backgrounds. In that sense the relation of man to the city, a characteristic of Classical comedy and of the *commedia erudita*, was lost or ignored. It was replaced by an ambiguous theatrical space lacking in depth and defined only by the relation of figures to each other.

Mescolare can refer to the mixing of various or incongruous elements in *commedia dell'arte* performances. It can relate to stylistic elements such as the mixing of the sophisticated and refined (the serious parts of the lovers) with the grotesque (the *zanni*) in the same work or scene. The use of multiple dialects also demonstrates *mescolare* on the level of diction. This may also occur within the same character as when Dottore mixes 'Latinisms' with his native Bolognese. Or it can be applied to the *tirata* of Isabella in *La Pazzia di Isabella*,¹⁸ in which she extrapolates her misery through a discord of foreign languages and dialects, changing each one at a moment's notice. *Mescolare* is also present in the diverse costumes, both on the level of color and style. The green and white striping of Brighella, contrasts with the variegated patchwork of Harlequin; the antiquated cut of Dottore's tabard, juxtaposes with Pantalone's Turkish fez and slippers and long black cape. Comic costumes then are mixed with the contemporary dress of the lovers, augmenting the sense of a bizarre theatrical universe. Another aspect of *mescolarare* has to do with the

¹⁶ Friedlaender, (op.cit.) pp. 8-9.

¹⁷ For instance, as implied by the Corsini drawings.

¹⁸ Scala collection, (op. cit), see Chapter VI.

mixing of improvised and non-improvised elements in performance, a central characteristic of *commedia dell'arte* dramaturgy.

As in a great deal of Mannerist art and music the emphasis was on parts rather than directed towards a sense of unity. For instance, in the treatment of Mannerist figures limbs often seem attached rather unified according to an actual anatomical plan. In the same way, the parts of a *commedia* performance existed as separate units: the physical *lazzo* of the *zanni* alternated with the rhetorical scenes of the lovers, and song and dance were interspersed throughout. The *lazzi* and songs usually had no relation to the construct of the plot. These self-contained parts could actually be utilized in diverse *scenarii* when the situation warranted. For instance, in the '*lazzo della farina*,' *zanni* threw flour over his enemy. This *lazzo* appears in three *scenarii*.¹⁹ While such a *lazzo* delays the plot, others interrupted the main action. For instance Locatelli describes the '*lazzo* of the smock.'

"*Zanni* wishes to elude the infuriated Capitano. *Zanni* begs to be allowed to undress before his throat is cut so that he need not soil his smock; after a prolonged struggle with a tight garment the Capitano offers to help *zanni* and *zanni* with another excuse runs off naked."²⁰

This *lazzo* is noted in two *scenarii*: *Li Dui Finti Pazzi* and *Li Dispetti*,²¹ and provides another example of how the form of the *commedia dell'arte* thrived on the use of interchangeable parts.

¹⁹ Lea I, p. 69. Also Heck notations of collections in parentheses; Listed as, *D. Perico Spagnuolo* (NAP, i, 67); *L'accordie e scordie* (NAP, i, 1); *L'Insalata* NAP, i, 54) and (PER, 4). See Heck Appendix, Index to Scenari.

²⁰ Described by Lea I, p. 69

²¹ Ibid. p. 69. Heck, (op. cit.) p. 341 cites the first scenario in collection: (CORS, ii, 91), and the second; p. 339, in both (CORS, ii, 85) and (LOC, i, 7).

Performances employed a **rhythmical** 'beat' structure whereby scenes were overlapped or juxtaposed rather than arranged dramaturgically in a sequential and proportional fashion, as was the case in the scripted Renaissance comedy. As we have seen, since Rosso, Mannerist painters had substituted overlapping planes and spatial juxtapositions for the scientific concerns of correct proportion and rules of perspective.

While the 'rhythm' of performance was a significant factor in *commedia* dramaturgy, rhythmical concerns also effected staging techniques. One of the problems of the *commedia erudita*, which was addressed earlier, had to do with the long speeches delivered "*senza profitto*" ("without profit"). A woodcut (Fig. 51) from the *commedia erudita* text of *La Prigione d'amore* by Sforza degli Oddi,²² demonstrates the static nature of learned comedy staging, versus the raucous energized image here depicted in this *commedia* scene by Ambrose Francken (Fig. 52). The *commedia dell'arte* abandoned the narrative, verbose, and static style of the *commedia erudita* by energizing the image, and juxtaposing figural contours and poses into a network of contrasting yet visually arresting gestures.

Discordia concors, which has been presented in detail in Part One, defines the juxtaposition of opposites within the same form. Harlequin, as we have seen is a stage figure who as part of his fundamental nature contains conflicting character traits. He is, at once, nimble, agile, and quick, while the next moment finds him clumsy and oafish. He can be philosophical, or downright stupid. His gestures seem to mirror this contradictory nature, as we have seen in our examination of the Fossard prints. "The figure may, without

²² Herrick, pp. 190-192. Lawrence and Lee Theatre Research Institute, Microfilm no. 2704.

discomfort either to its own organization or to the eye of the initiated spectator, occupy naturalistically impossible attitudes which may, in their functional sense, be utterly ambiguous."²³ This was the goal of the actor who attempted to play the Harlequin figure. That is, he must develop gestural attitudes that stretch far beyond the natural, the rhetorical or the quotidian; but achieve these with a profound finesse and grace. The proper effect of his gestural attitudes would be as complex and ambivalent as the paradoxical nature of his type.

Complexity is related to *difficoltà* in the "sense of complicated resolution."²⁴ It was a quality admired for its own sake in cinquecento art, literature and music. The ideal of the virtuoso was to overcome *difficoltà* with *grazia*. Isabella Andreini's famous "*Pazzia*" speech represented a virtuoso exhibition of: her fluency in a number of foreign language and dialect skills, an ability to successfully mimic all the stage figures of the Gelosi troupe, rhetorical training that effectively gave the impression of profound melancholy and madness, and her 'climax' and reversal of this tortured state and the return to a coherent state of mind at the close of the *Pazzia tirata*. A number of examples of performers' virtuosity are explored in Chapter VI.

The **grotesque** constitutes part of the anti-classical aesthetic of the *commedia dell'arte*. The *commedia* succeeds in integrating elements of the grotesque with high levels of virtuosity, or the "stylish style." It is thus inclusive of the two major facets, that make up the Mannerist style in art. The transformational aspect of the grotesque is indicated by the

²³ Freedberg, p. 14.

²⁴ Greenwood, p. 17.

mask which links human and bestial characteristics. This is significant from the standpoint of gesture, since it frees the performer from justifying a rhetorical basis for gestural expression. Gesture can, and as it often did, reflect not an imitation of man, or a rhetorical basis, but actually mimic the bestial realm.²⁵

In addition the grotesque is seen in protrusions of all types: Dottore's stomach and Pantalone's pointed greybeard and oversize codpiece, or the phallic-like nostrils in the Callot engravings are examples. These reversals of the principles of decorum and propriety had further implications. The grotesque world of the *commedia dell'arte* was in fact, free from the constraints of moral didacticism, thereby violating the Horatian principle of Classical comedy, which asserted that comedy should teach a moral lesson.²⁶

Let us now examine *commedia dell'arte* practices in light of the concept of *maniera*. As *maniera* is a theory and practice which takes hold in the second half of the cinquecento, its dissemination and impact parallels the early development of the *commedia dell'arte*. As our study of the stage figures indicated, many of them derived from hitherto models, rather than being drawn directly from life. Pantalone finds his direct prototype in the Zurlotto, and the Magnifico type derived from Andrea Calmo. Calmo, as we have seen also provided the type of the Bergomask zanni. The *comici* adapted these characters with *invenzione*, by adding the *topos* of the mask, and specific properties. Thus they utilized *maniera* to reshape the hitherto figure, and *licenzia* in freely adapting it to their own needs, or spectator interests.²⁷ The second and third generation of *commedia dell'arte* performers

²⁵ This has been noted by Kayser, p. 25.

²⁶ Kayser, p. 38.

studied and copied the practices of the previous generation and as in the world of art this led to an eventual decline in the quality of *commedia dell'arte* performances.²⁸ New characters that appear, such as Scaramuccia, were actually based on earlier models, in this case, Capitano. As the Spanish presence ceased to be a factor, the Capitano figure diminished in popularity and eventually was transformed. Other figures such as the *zanni*, Cecchini and Barbieri, invented names for their characters: Fritellino and Beltrame, respectively, in a hope to set them apart from the generic nature of their stage figure.

Maniera also defines "*più di maniera, che delle immitazione della natura*," which elevates conventions and artifice over a reliance on the imitation of nature.²⁹ The *commedia dell'arte* created a universe built upon artifice and convention. The masks, costumes, stage figures, *zibaldone*, and *scenarii* provided the essential conventions of the *commedia*. This typification of forms allowed a universal language to emerge that could be understood across national boundaries. The conventional nature of the *commedia dell'arte* allowed performers the flexibility to move from one troupe to another, or for performances to be arranged with short notice and preparation time. These factors were pivotal in the economic sense, because they permitted the troupes to perform more often, spend less time in rehearsal, and replace members quickly and efficiently. Just as Vasari had claimed that the *maniera* painter could paint many more commissions in a shorter time (and with greater skill) than his Renaissance predecessors, so too could the *comici* perform with far more

²⁷ The case could also be made for the *commedia erudita*, Pedant and the Dottore figure, or the Braggart in Beolco's plays and the Spanish Capitano, as being reshaped by *maniera*.

²⁸ Both Lea and Nicoll note this decline which takes place in the second decade of the seicento.

²⁹ Places more of an emphasis on artistic means, and the quickness and facility of execution.

frequency and skill, than had been the case with the players of the Renaissance learned comedy.³⁰

Maniera, in another sense, can refer to the individual style and virtuosity of the comedian. In the discussion of the *innamorate* in Chapter VI, we noted the comments of Tommaso Garzoni who used terms such as "*grazia indicibile*" to express the virtuoso talent of Isabella Andreini. Because functions of the stage figures were well-known to the spectator increased importance was placed upon the virtuosity of the actor. Their personal *maniera*, or style, which involved both extensive training³¹ and "gifts": *grazia*, *ingegno*, and *disegno interno*,³² provided a number of the early *comici* with stardom and the opportunity to raise their social status. Personal style achieved greater significance due to the absence of a playwright and script. Just as Mannerist painting shifted the attention from the object, or the underlying narrative,³³ to the display of virtuosity; so too did the

³⁰ As was posited earlier, Guarnini lamented that it would take three months of rehearsal time to perform *Pastor Fido*.

³¹ As related by Barbieri and Cecchini, and later, Perrucci. Similar to the notion of the "learned painter" based on the concept of the *doctus poeta*. Lee, *Ut Pictura Poesis*, p. 41, although this was not always the case in reality as Lee reminds us.

³² *Grazia*, literally grace, really refers to the actors' ability to command the diverse and unnatural aspects of their craft in a smooth, seemingly effortless way. *Ingegno* refers to the actors' talent or genius. As a result of the *Paragone* dispute (see Chapter III), the terms *disegno* and *colori* were appropriated as literary terms by some theorist. *Disegno* in literature was utilized as comparative term to plot, while *colori* described the words used. Lee, p. 60. *Disegno interno* could thus be used in the *commedia dell'arte* to describe the *comico* who is improvising a dramatic 'beat' or unit upon the stage, without recourse to a prescribed text. While the *scenarii* provide an overall sense of the plot, it by no means detailed a 'beat to beat' structure which is essential to the theatrical performance. In other words, the dramaturgy of the *commedia dell'arte* had to have been formulated to some extent on a sense of *disegno interno*.

³³ In the sense of '*ut pictura poesis*', whereby Mannerist painters often obscured the intent or meaning of mythological and religious themes, through their handling of forms.

commedia dell'arte transfer the focus from the object of the text, to the actor and his level of virtuosity.

Maniera according to Smyth, also referred to a gestural style which was extreme in its distortion and contortion of the human form.³⁴ In this schematic drawing (Fig. 53) Smyth demonstrates a range of gestural poses in *maniera* painting that are similar to those found in *commedia dell'arte* iconography. The *maniera* painter, in a sense, theatricalized the human form. Smyth notes that these poses, such as the *serpentina* actually became conventionalized, and are recognized by the unnatural depiction of limbs, particularly in regard to the extreme placement of the arms and hands. We note a number of such stock *maniera* poses in the *commedia dell'arte* : the hunched and angular Pantalone, the serpentine Harlequin, the cowering *zanni*, all of which constitute the notion of gestural *maniera*.

Bella maniera signifies the idealization of forms through the copying of the best models. The *zibaldone* offers a fine example of this practice, whereby elements were taken from a number of sources and then blended together in performance. For instance, the lover figures memorized the poetry of Petrarch and the wise sayings of the philosophers, which they could utilize in performance as if it were their own.

³⁴ Smyth, Appendix I, Fig. 10 for schematic of *maniera* poses.

In painting the search for the idealization of forms led eventually to a conventional model which, as was the case of *commedia* iconography, could then be applied to various situations. Conventional forms became a point of departure for the virtuoso expression of the actor, while they provided a common language between performer and spectator.

By exploring Mannerism's relation to the *commedia dell'arte* we have suggested parallels that are both historically and aesthetically valid. In fact, the premise itself is remarkably conservative. Both share the same time period, the same country the same predilection for travel, and so on. Ultimately, the *commedia dell'arte* and Mannerism share two crucial factors: the ascension of the artist or *comico* over nature, texts, and rules; and the development of rich language of gesture that deviated from the prescribed Classical and humanist canons.

Conclusion

The study provides a needed tool for the theatre historian who is attempting to assess the performance behavior and dramaturgy of the *commedia dell'arte* in both the formal and the cultural spheres. The formal language of *commedia dell'arte's* 'gestures', as we have seen, escapes rhetorical methods of interpretation. On the other hand, while it subverted rhetorical and Classicistic approaches, the *commedia* also contained within itself the essential formal properties of these models, albeit in a subverted, 'turned-inside-out' form. In this Mannerist sense, *commedia* re-interpreted the principles of sixteenth-century Classicistic models to suit its own ends, while not resolving itself into the formal clarity of the Baroque. From this viewpoint, the *commedia* may be seen as *sui generis* -- with its own unique theatrical language that has been difficult to penetrate up to now.

I believe that is because traditional theatre scholarship hitherto has lacked the conceptual terminology that would allow us to understand *commedia* 's complex and even contradictory form and style. While the formal language of art historiography has been somewhat helpful in this regard, we must go further -- beyond formal and structuralist approaches -- in order to render the language of the *comici dell'arte* understandable. As more recent scholarship has shown (in the methodology of such scholars as Taviani and Tessari, for example), the complex network of signs cannot be defined in a strictly semiotic sense because the *commedia*, unlike traditional theatrical forms, moves the theatrical sign into the domain of the multi-reflexive (visual), or poly-vocal (sonic). The traditional authorial center is absent ; in fact , the artistic essence of the *commedia* is built on this notion of absence. Ultimately there is no writer but the actor, and the constant shift of the indeterminate performance. The phenomenon of the *commedia dell'arte* can be described in the language of the post-structuralist : absence, the 'shifter,' non-authorial; indeterminacy; the sign in *différance*, the historical 'trace'; the presence of the 'other' as mask; the spectator as participant and creator in the finished work; the focus on the subject's response rather than the primacy of the object. While the focus of my dissertation has been largely confined to the synchronic, I am convinced that a diachronic post-structuralist approach could prove most useful in increasing our understanding of the *commedia dell'arte* and the Mannerist period in which it arose. Such a study can show convincingly (as the present dissertation has only suggested), that Mannerism itself had its own identity as an aesthetic form and historical period of expression -- over and beyond that of being a transitional phase between the High Renaissance and the High Baroque.

It is this diachronic, post-structuralist approach that I intend to pursue in my further study of this topic.

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APPENDIX

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

LA RUFFIANA INVECESSA CONTRO PANTALONE

Figure 4

Figure 5

FIGURE 6

FIGURE 7

STEPHANE
BOTTE

Figure 8

Harlequin

Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

Figure 13

Figure 14

Figure 15

Figure 16

Figure 17

Figure 18

Figure 19

Figure 20

Figure 21

Figure 22

Figure 23

Figure 24

Figure 25A

Figure 25

Figure 26

Figure 27

Figure 28

Figure 29

Figure 30

Figure 31

Figure 32

Figure 34

Figure 33

Figure 36

Figure 35

Figure 37

Figure 38

Figure 39

Giuseppe Arcimboldo
Summer, 1573

Figure 40

Figure 41

Figure 42

Figure 43

Figure 45

Figure 44

Figure 46

Figure 48

Figure 47

Figure 49

Figure 50

Scena Settima.

Lelio Giouanetto. Iacopino.

Figure 51

Figure 52

Fig. 10. A sampling of poses and gestures characteristic of *maurea* (photo: Smyth).

Figure 53