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# The Lottery Fantasy and Social Mobility in Eighteenth-Century Venetian Literature: Carlo Goldoni, Pietro Chiari, and Giacomo Casanova

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## ABSTRACT

This article examines the lottery fantasy as a cultural figure and literary topic in the works of Carlo Goldoni, Pietro Chiari, and Giacomo Casanova. The lottery fantasy is to be understood as the dream of social ascension through sudden, life-changing wealth, which exercised a powerful allure on eighteenth-century Europe. The three authors addressed this figure in literary form, through the comedy, the novel, and the memoir, giving distinctly different representations and moral assessments of the lottery as a social and cultural practice. Despite their differences, all three works engage with the fundamental issue underlying the lottery fantasy: an increasing pressure towards social mobility in the nonmeritocratic society of the Old Regime. The article uses Roger Caillois' categorisation of play as an analytical lens for examining how the three works link the aleatory game of the lottery to cultural practices aimed at meritocratic, social mobility.

## KEYWORDS

Venetian literature; eighteenth century; lotteries; social mobility; literature and play

## Introduction

In her influential book *Classical Probability in the Enlightenment*, the historian of science Lorraine Daston connects the cultural significance of the eighteenth-century lottery to the notion of social mobility:

[S]ocial boundaries were somewhat more fluid in the eighteenth century than previously, in that money might sometimes repair the unhappy accident of birth. Thus the only hope of moving up in the world was suddenly to acquire a vast sum of money, and practically the only hope of such a wind-fall in a nonmeritocratic society was to buy a lottery ticket. Where industry and talent counted for little, buying a lottery ticket might have been the one escape from passivity.<sup>1</sup>

Accessible to all social classes and genders, the lottery incarnated a particular fantasy: the dream of social ascension through sudden, life-changing wealth.<sup>2</sup> The financial institution of the eighteenth-century lottery was, in other words, consubstantial with a powerful cultural figure, one that allowed the modest classes to imagine alternative realities beyond established social boundaries.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lorraine Daston, *Classical Probability in the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 148–49.

<sup>2</sup>I borrow the term 'lottery fantasy' from Jesse Molesworth, *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Realism, Probability, Magic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 25–26.

<sup>3</sup>On the importance of the eighteenth-century lottery as a financial institution, see Robert Kruckeberg, 'The Royal Lottery and the Old Regime: Financial Innovation and Modern Political Culture', *French Historical Studies*, 37 (2014), 25–51; Marie-Laure Legay, *Les loteries royales dans l'Europe des Lumières: 1680–1815* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2014).

It was in particular *il lotto*, the Genoese numbered lottery, that had the power to engender dreams of life-changing wealth, thanks to the potentially exuberant, although highly improbable, pay-outs for its most complex number combinations, the *terno*, the *quaterna*, and the *cinquina*. The Genoese lottery system spread throughout the entire Italian peninsula during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and had also, by the mid-eighteenth century, gained considerable success in other European countries, notably in France, where it would form the basis of the royal lottery.<sup>4</sup> The *lotto* was established in Venice in 1734,<sup>5</sup> building upon an already deep-seated gambling culture.<sup>6</sup> Together with the Carnival, gambling made eighteenth-century Venice highly attractive to foreign visitors, giving it a reputation as ‘la capitale europea del divertimento’.<sup>7</sup> The Venetian lottery was, in other words, part of a culture of games, bets, and wagers that permeated social life of the city;<sup>8</sup> but it also distinguished itself from other forms of gambling by being accessible to broader segments of the population.<sup>9</sup>

Its success as a catalyst for dreams of social and financial ascension turned the lottery into a common cultural and literary motif.<sup>10</sup> Considering the place of gambling culture in *La Serenissima*, it comes as no surprise that this would also be the case in Venetian literature. This article examines how three prominent authors of eighteenth-century Venice, Carlo Goldoni (1707–1793), Pietro Chiari (1712–1785), and Giacomo Casanova (1725–1798), engaged with the lottery and the lottery fantasy in literary form. Goldoni’s comedy *La donna di garbo* (1743), Chiari’s novel *La giuocatrice di lotto* (1757), and Casanova’s autobiographical memoirs *Histoire de ma vie* (1789–1798) all deal with the lottery as a cultural figure, responding in different ways to its powerful allure. Goldoni parodies the lottery fantasy and replaces it with a different model for social mobility. Chiari’s literary representation of the fantasy is more ambivalent: partly satirical, partly using it as a metaphor for individual drive and initiative. Casanova inverts the figure, by positioning his own social ascent as a counterpoint to the illusory dreams of the masses playing the lottery.

The success of the lottery fantasy in the eighteenth-century social imagination was attested by the frequent moral and political critique it was subject to.<sup>11</sup> The combination of chance and social mobility made the lottery a target for traditionalist and Enlightenment thinkers alike. The former perceived it as socially subversive while the latter saw it as breaking down the ‘link between industry, talent, and gain’,<sup>12</sup> in addition to being ‘economically predatory upon the credulous popular classes’.<sup>13</sup> As the very symbol of the aleatory, the lottery’s imaginative power of social transformation appeared as a threat, both to the established order and to ideas of a new order based on meritocratic principles. In Venice, as in other highly developed commercial societies such as Genoa and Antwerp, the traditionalist and religious critique of the lottery was significantly less pronounced than elsewhere in Europe, due to a longstanding culture of associating risk with

<sup>4</sup>Legay, p. 105.

<sup>5</sup>Claude Bruneel, ‘Les Loteries de l’Europe méridionale’, in *Loteries en Europe: Cinq siècles d’histoire*, ed. by Bruno Bernard and Michel Ansiaux (Brussels and Ghent: Loterie nationale / Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1994), pp. 89–135 (p. 120).

<sup>6</sup>Adrian Seville, ‘The Italian Roots of the Lottery’, *History Today*, 49 (1999), 17–20 (pp. 17–18).

<sup>7</sup>Rotraud von Kulesa, ‘Il gioco con l’illuminismo nel contesto veneziano: i romanzi di Pietro Chiari come esempio di polemica e gioco in letteratura’, in *Conflitti culturali a Venezia dalla prima età ad oggi*, ed. by Rotraud von Kulesa, Daria Perocco, and Sabine Meine (Florence: Cesati, 2014), pp. 59–74 (p. 59). See also Jonathan Walker, ‘Gambling and Venetian Noblemen c. 1500–1700’, *Past & Present*, 162 (1999), 28–69 (p. 28).

<sup>8</sup>Venetians would even bet on the outcome of elections. Walker, p. 31.

<sup>9</sup>On the sociability of gambling in Venice, see Walker. The *casini*, with their dice- and card games, were associated with the social networks of the wealthy nobility (as well as with prostitution). *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 68.

<sup>10</sup>The lottery had already become a literary motif in the seventeenth century. See Michael J. Call, ‘Fortuna Goes to the Theater: Lottery Comedies in Seventeenth-Century France’, *French Forum*, 40 (2015), 1–15. The present article is part of an on-going, collaborative research project, *The Invention of the Lottery Fantasy*, aimed at exploring the cultural impact and literary expressions of eighteenth-century European state lotteries. See the project website: Marius Warholm Haugen and others, ‘The Invention of the Lottery Fantasy – A Cultural, Transnational, and Transmedial History of European Lotteries’ <https://www.ntnu.edu/lottery> [Accessed 7 December 2021].

<sup>11</sup>Bruno Bernard, ‘Aspects moraux et sociaux des loteries’, in *Loteries en Europe*, pp. 55–87.

<sup>12</sup>Daston, pp. 149, 159.

<sup>13</sup>Robert Kruckeberg, ‘“A Nation of Gamblers”: Virtue, the Will of the Nation, and the National Lottery in the French Revolution’, *French History*, 31 (2017), 310–28 (p. 314).

commercial success.<sup>14</sup> The Enlightenment discourse opposing the lottery's aleatory nature to ideals of skill and merit was more relevant to the Venetian context, as attested by the three works examined here.

As opposed to other common eighteenth-century games, such as the *biribi* or the *faro*, which combined chance with elements of skill,<sup>15</sup> the lottery was, *de facto*, a purely chance-based game, where the play happened 'outside any reference to personal skill or fortitude'.<sup>16</sup> The cultural significance of the eighteenth-century lottery does not stop there, however, for such an ontological categorisation differs from a certain phenomenological perception, existing in a deeply rooted popular conception of the lottery, particularly prominent on the Italian peninsula, as subject to a composite set of divinatory practices, from pseudo-cabbalist numerology to oneiromancy (dream divination), aimed at predicting the winning numbers.

This belief, which continues to have a significant presence in Italy today, notably in the shape of the Neapolitan 'dream manuals', *le smorfie*, was no less important in eighteenth-century Italian lottery culture.<sup>17</sup> The Venetian book market, the most important on the peninsula,<sup>18</sup> was rich with pseudo-cabbalistic lottery manuals, such as *Il vero mezzo per vincere all'estrazioni de' lotti*, reprinted at least ten times by 1752.<sup>19</sup> The tenth edition contains lists of terms and images each related to the ninety numbers of the Genoese lottery system, of all extractions in various Italian cities between 1740 and 1751, as well as other pseudo-cabbalistic and astrological tables. The numerous reprints of *Il vero mezzo*, as well as its translation into French,<sup>20</sup> attest to the success of pseudo-scholarly and divinatory practices related to the lottery, as well as to the role of Italy and Venice as exporter of lottery culture to the rest of Europe. Divinatory practices play a major role in Goldoni's and Chiari's literary representations of the lottery, and more indirectly in Casanova's text.

From the point of view of their believers, the divinatory practices of pseudo-cabbalism and astrology were very much attached to notions of skilful competition and mastery, thus shifting the lottery from the aleatory to the agonistic. In the terms of Paola De Sanctis Ricciardone, 'i concetti di *Alea* e di regole aleatorie, legate cioè alla cieca casualità, sono concetti estranei a quel mondo popolare di giocatori del Lotto'.<sup>21</sup> Precisely the notions of the aleatory and the agonistic will serve an analytical function here. In order to examine how Goldoni, Chiari, and Casanova deal with the lottery fantasy, I will use the categorisation of play established by Roger Caillois in *Les jeux et les hommes* (1958), where the French philosopher identifies four 'modes' of play: *alea* (the 'play mode' of chance), *agôn* (the 'play mode' of skilful competition), *mimicry* (the 'play mode' of imitation, masquerades, theatre), and *ilinx* (play involving the pursuit of vertigo).<sup>22</sup> What becomes clear when looking at the three texts through this analytical lens, is that the lottery as a literary topic connects to the notion of play in numerous ways; it conceals a composite 'playfulness' drawing upon the modes

<sup>14</sup>Robert Muchembled, 'La roue de fortune. Loteries et modernité en Europe du XV<sup>e</sup> au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *Loteries en Europe*, pp. 17–53 (pp. 40–41).

<sup>15</sup>This is a combination shared by most card games. See Roger Caillois, *Les jeux et les hommes* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1967 [1958]), p. 57.

<sup>16</sup>Thomas M. Kavanagh, *Dice, Cards, Wheels: A Different History of French Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), p. 102.

<sup>17</sup>See Paolo Macry, *Giocare la vita: Storia del lotto a Napoli tra Sette e Ottocento* (Rome: Donzelli Editore, 1997), pp. 53–54. For more on the *smorfie*, see Paola De Sanctis Ricciardone, *Il tipografo celeste. Il gioco del lotto tra letteratura e demologia nell'Italia dell'Ottocento e oltre* (Bari: Edizioni Dedalo, 1987), pp. 121–25. See also Seville, pp. 19–20.

<sup>18</sup>Zambon describes Venice as 'la grande "librairie" d'Italie' [the big 'bookstore' of Italy]. Maria Rosa Zambon, *Bibliographie du roman français en Italie au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Traductions* (Florence: Publications de l'Institut français de Florence, 1962), p. VIII. All translations from French are mine, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>19</sup>The manual was supposedly the work of a 'fortunate soothsayer': Fortunato Indovino, *Il vero mezzo per vincere all'estrazioni de' lotti* (Venice: Al Ponte a Rialto, 1752).

<sup>20</sup>Fortunato Indovino, *Liste générale des rêves, avec les noms des choses rêvées & leurs numéros correspondans pour les tirages de la Loterie Royale de France* (Genoa and Paris: Chez Sorin, Libraire, 1788).

<sup>21</sup>De Sanctis Ricciardone, p. 132. Emphasis in original.

<sup>22</sup>Caillois, p. 47.

of *agôn* and *mimicry*, as well as *alea*.<sup>23</sup> In other words, the lottery as a cultural figure and literary motif goes beyond the principle of the aleatory, connecting to notions of merit and skill, to sociability and education, and to issues of class, gender, and social mobility.

### Parodying the Lottery: Goldoni's *La donna di garbo*

In the first act of *La donna di garbo*, the Bolognese *avvocato* for whom the protagonist Rosaura is in service, *il Dottore*, laments his son Ottavio's obsession with the lottery: 'Mio figlio non pensa ad altro che a giocare al lotto, e anch'egli tende alla distruzione della casa. Tutto il giorno studia le cabale, né mai è arrivato a vincere un paolo, e non bada alla moglie, come se non l'avesse'.<sup>24</sup> Ottavio's gambling poses a threat to the family, both morally and financially, as he squanders away the family fortune and neglects his wife.<sup>25</sup> As such, he is a typical gambler-character of the Goldonian comedy.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, Ottavio's gambling is only one of several vices being put to display in *La donna di garbo*, together with, for example, Beatrice's obsession with fashion or *il Dottore*'s rhetorical captiousness.<sup>27</sup> In our context, however, the comedy is particularly interesting in how it stages the popular belief in the possibility of predicting the winning lottery numbers.

Ottavio's father is concerned not only for the financial loss, but also for the time his son spends in study, drawing him away from his duties. The preoccupation with study, which here involves pseudo-scientific notions of numerological calculation, scholastic erudition, and interpretation, points to an attempt at overcoming the purely chance-based aspect of the lottery, moving the lottery from the aleatory to the agonistic. True to his motto *ridendo castigat mores*,<sup>28</sup> moral correction through laughter, Goldoni presents us with a satirical parody of these notions, creating comic effect from having Ottavio see and hear lottery numbers everywhere. When his wife Beatrice chastises him for his notorious gambling, Ottavio hears nothing but the potential lottery numbers she inadvertently gives him:

Beatrice: In sei anni ch'io sono vostra moglie, m'avete mangiato sedicimila lire; ed ora vorreste consumare questi quattro stracci? Giuro al cielo . . .

Ottavio: Zitto. Sei anni, sedicimila lire, quattro stracci. Quattro, sei e sedici: vado a giocare questo terno. (parte)<sup>29</sup>

Ottavio is inclined to venture his entire fortune, convinced of the infallibility of his pseudo-cabbalistic system: 'Potere del mondo! Parla così chiaro questa volta la cabala, che vi giocherei sopra il mio patrimonio'.<sup>30</sup> Goldoni stages the gambler's delusion, the suspension of rationality caused by the belief that the win is just around the corner and that all previous losses will be restored, bringing the gambler to make further, desperate investments. Ottavio tells himself that he plays the lottery in order to 'rimarginare le piaghe che [ha] fatte alla casa di [suo] padre, a causa del lotto', then pawns his belongings with disregard for the usury, convinced of the pending win.<sup>31</sup> The

<sup>23</sup>*Ilinx* is not deemed relevant here.

<sup>24</sup>Carlo Goldoni, *La donna di garbo* (Milan: Mondadori, 1935), p. 1029, l. 4. I am using Giuseppe Ortolani's edition of the comedy. For a critical introduction to its publication history, see Francesco Cotticelli 'Il giuoco delle parti. Su una chiosa goldoniana a proposito della *Donna di garbo*', *Studi goldoniani*, 9 (2012), 53–70.

<sup>25</sup>The father's sermon against gambling is a *topos* of the eighteenth-century comedy. See Antonella Rigamonti and Laura Favero Carraro, 'Women at Stake: The Self-Assertive Potential of Gambling in Susanna Centlivre's *The Basset Table*', *Restoration and Eighteenth Century Theatre Research*, 16 (2001), 53–62 (p. 53).

<sup>26</sup>See Eugenio in Carlo Goldoni, *La bottega del caffè* (Milan: Mondadori, 1939 [1750]) or Florindo in Carlo Goldoni, *Il giuocatore* (Milan: Mondadori, 1939 [1750]). For Maggie Günsberg, '[g]ambling is a key feature in constructions of prodigal masculinity in [Goldoni's] comedies'. *Playing with Gender: The Comedies of Goldoni* (Leeds: Northern Universities Press, 2001), p. 9.

<sup>27</sup>Goldoni, *La donna di garbo*, p. 1084, III. 7.

<sup>28</sup>Carlo Goldoni, *Mémoires de M. Goldoni pour servir à l'histoire de sa vie et à celle de son théâtre* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1988), p. 245.

<sup>29</sup>Goldoni, *La donna di garbo*, p. 1052, II. 5.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1040, l. 11.

<sup>31</sup>Goldoni, *La donna di garbo*, pp. 1040–41, l. 11.

delusion also entails the gambler telling himself that he will stop playing after the big win: ‘se io vinco, farò onore a tutta la famiglia. Se faccio una buona vincita, non gioco mai più’.<sup>32</sup> The gambler sees the lottery as the only means by which he can restore his family’s honour, wilfully ignoring that it was his gambling which threatened it to begin with. As Rigamonti and Carraro have pointed out, gambling in Goldoni’s plays always constitutes an obsession affecting the gambler’s social interaction.<sup>33</sup>

In line with his bourgeois moral foundations, Goldoni criticises the delusions and obsessions that threaten to overthrow the foundations of the family and, by extension, of the Venetian republic.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, this critique may not have been entirely without political sting against the ruling class, due to the intimate connection, financial and symbolic, between the lottery and the Venetian state.<sup>35</sup> Certainly, the comedy’s Bolognese setting removes any direct attack on the lottery of Venice;<sup>36</sup> it seems clear, nonetheless, that Goldoni’s moral critique marks a step away from the otherwise lenient position of Venetian society on gambling, pointing towards a more critical, illuminist attitude to the lottery.<sup>37</sup>

It is interesting, in that respect, to note how Ottavio also embodies the lottery fantasy in its connection to social mobility: ‘Oh bene, vado a giocarli [i numeri], se credessi restar in camicia. In meno di un anno ho speranza di cangiare stato’.<sup>38</sup> Through this ridiculous character, Goldoni satirises the lottery fantasy, dismissing the lottery as a serious means for social mobility. For despite the perceived infallibility of his pseudo-cabbalistic system, Ottavio always loses. He concludes that there is nothing to do with the system itself, but is due to his own incapacity of using it properly: ‘Oh ignoranza! Oh ignoranza! [...] L’abbiamo fatta bella sicuro. Il terno vi era nella Cabala, ed io non l’ho saputo conoscere’.<sup>39</sup> In other words, success or failure in the lottery falsely appears as a question of skill. Ottavio is a parody of the popular belief in the lottery as *agôn*, as skilful competition, where the player’s capacities for mastering the pseudo-cabbalistic system determine the outcome of the game.<sup>40</sup>

Goldoni’s literary engagement with the lottery does not end there, however, for Ottavio’s pseudo-agonistic lottery playing finds itself contrasted by the social, intellectual, and emulative game played by the protagonist Rosaura. She mimics, surpasses, and exposes Ottavio’s numerological endeavour, upon which she replaces it with a properly meritocratic model of social mobility. The eponymous *donna di garbo* is depicted as a young woman of brilliant intellect, who, from a modest upbringing in the city of Pavia, performs a social ascension from *servetta* to bourgeoisie through her marriage with Ottavio’s brother Florindo.

When the play begins, Rosaura has travelled to the brothers’ hometown of Bologna, seeking retribution after having been seduced and abandoned by Florindo. She has gone into service in the household of *il Dottore*, their father, where she weaves a plot of revenge by ingratiating herself with the various family members, through flattery and imitation of their different character traits and hobbyhorses. This is the essential element of the comedy: Rosaura’s capacity to adapt to, and play with, the obsessions and idiosyncrasies of her masters, including Ottavio and his obsession with the

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 1041, i. 12. We see the same with Florindo in *Il giuocatore*, p. 516, ii. 1.

<sup>33</sup>Rigamonti and Carraro, p. 54

<sup>34</sup>For more on Goldoni and bourgeois morality, see Günsberg, p. 17.

<sup>35</sup>Muchembled, p. 29.

<sup>36</sup>According to Giorgio Padoan, Goldoni would carefully avoid any direct attacks on the Venetian ruling class, but often found more indirect ways of doing so. Giorgio Padoan, ‘L’impegno civile di Carlo Goldoni’, in *Putte, zanni, rusteghi*, ed. by Ilaria Crotti, Gilberto Pizzamiglio, and Piermario Vescovo (Ravenna: A. Longo Editore, 2001), pp. 45–80 (p. 48).

<sup>37</sup>Goldoni’s role as an exponent of Enlightenment culture would become gradually more pronounced towards the end of the 1740s. Siro Ferrone, *La vita e il teatro di Carlo Goldoni* (Venice: Marsilio, 2011), p. 33.

<sup>38</sup>Goldoni, *La donna di garbo*, p. 1043, i. 12

<sup>39</sup>Goldoni, *La donna di garbo*, p. 1067, iii. 1.

<sup>40</sup>Goldoni would later describe the lottery as ‘le jeu le plus insipide, le plus ennuyeux qu’on ait jamais imaginé’, [the dullest and most boring game ever created] precisely because it was disconnected from any form of skill. *Mémoires de M. Goldoni*, p. 504.

lottery and pseudo-cabbalism. In the terms of Pamela D. Stewart, Rosaura's 'flattering imitations are, in fact, parodies, caricatures in the presence of the victims, who appear on stage, as it were, comically duplicated'.<sup>41</sup>

Rosaura's capacity for imitation reflects a skill set of both social and intellectual nature. Through observation of the male students at the university of Pavia, she has become a brilliant actress and an autodidact scholar, surpassing the limits of a traditional female education:

Io praticando Florindo ed alcuni altri scolari, ed esercitando la mia inclinazione per le lettere, sono arrivata a saper tanto che supera il femminile costume. Ho apprese varie scienze; ma più utilmente ancora ho appresa la facoltà di sapermi uniformare a tutti i caratteri delle persone.<sup>42</sup>

In terms of Caillois's 'play modes', Rosaura's parodical play is not only a form of *mimicry*, but also depends on intellectual capacities that bring it into the realm of *agôn*, skilful competition. In Siro Ferrone's reading of the comedy, Rosaura is able not only to analyse the characters of her interlocutors, but also to reinterpret and dominate them, which points to the agonistic aspect of her endeavour.<sup>43</sup> She will, in fact, enter into a competition with Ottavio about who best masters the erudition and numerological operations of pseudo-cabbalism. More precisely, then, we could say that Rosaura plays a double game: one properly agonistic, with Ottavio as the conscient opponent; and one imitation game, where she mimics the superstitious belief in the lottery as *agôn*, with Ottavio as an unknowing pawn.<sup>44</sup>

She begins this double game by catering to the gambler's obsession: 'Ecco il padrone che impazzisce per il lotto. Vo' secondarlo'.<sup>45</sup> Through her strategy of ingratiation and flattery, Rosaura compliments Ottavio on his skills and erudition: 'Come avete fatto, signor padrone, a farvi così esperto in questo difficilissimo giuoco?'<sup>46</sup> Then, when Ottavio makes a display of his knowledge of cabbalism by citing various mystics and scholastics, Rosaura uses her intellectual skills to rapidly disqualify this painstakingly acquired knowledge, not by arguing for its futility, but by surpassing her interlocutor in erudition:

Ottavio: '[È] inutile ch'io teco parli di tal materia, non potendo tu capirne i principi'.

Rosaura: 'Come, signore? Io non ne capisco i principi! Perdonatemi, mi fate torto. So benissimo che l'arte di Raimondo Lullo è una solenne impostura. So che il Mirandolano si è servito di ciò che solevano praticare gli antichi Ebrei, i quali pretendono anche al presente avere la scienza cabalistica in retaggio da' loro maggiori, ma che altro non hanno che alcune superstizioni, o per di meglio stregonerie, le quali, se ben mi ricordo, consistono principalmente nella Capiromanzia, che fa veder la persona nello specchio, e nella Coschinomanzia, che indovina per via d'un crivello.

Ottavio: 'Oh diacine! Che sento mai? Tu ne sei molto meglio informata di me!'<sup>47</sup>

Rosaura's 'up-to-date' account of cabbalism has the effect of being funny for the audience while being taken seriously by her interlocutor. At the same time, it underlines, for the audience and Ottavio alike, her intellectual capacities.

<sup>41</sup>Pamela D. Stewart, 'Rosaura, the Blue-Stocking Heroine of Goldoni's *Donna di garbo*', *Annali d'Italianistica*, 7 (1989), 242–52 (p. 247).

<sup>42</sup>Goldoni, *La donna di garbo*, p. 1026, l. 1.

<sup>43</sup>Ferrone, p. 59.

<sup>44</sup>In a certain sense, the game is in fact triple, through the meta-theatrical mirror effect of Rosaura's mimicry. Goldoni intended for the audience to admire the versatility of the actress playing Rosaura, similarly to how the other characters admire the protagonist's various skills. He wrote the comedy to allow for the actress Anna Baccherini to display her talents by assuming multiple characters in one. See *Mémoires de M. Goldoni*, p. 250; 'Rosaura, the Blue-Stocking Heroine', p. 244; Ferrone, pp. 55–56.

<sup>45</sup>Goldoni, *La donna di garbo*, p. 1041, l. 12.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1042, l. 12.

<sup>47</sup>Goldoni, *La donna di garbo*, p. 1043, l. 12.

Initially, then, Rosaura upholds Ottavio's illusions through a form of skill-based mimicry, providing him with what he thinks is a better foundation for the numbers he will bet on, and promising a fruitful collaboration: 'Oh, signore, fra voi ed io faremo delle belle cose'.<sup>48</sup> It is not until the conclusion of the play that Rosaura will convince the obsessive gambler of the dangers of gambling and the falsity of cabbalism, admonishing how 'il lusingarsi troppo della fortuna è una pazzia, e le cabale sono imposture e falsità'.<sup>49</sup> This lesson, of course, the audience will have understood from the beginning.

Building upon this satirical exposure of superstition and the gambler's delusions, the comedy replaces the lottery and its related cultural practices with a different kind of game, which connects to social mobility in a different way than the lottery fantasy. Unlike Ottavio, who fails in 'cangiare stato', Rosaura is able to 'move upwards', from *servetta* to bourgeoisie. But her marriage to Florindo does not come by itself; on the contrary, she has to put all her social and intellectual skills into the task, faced with a man who sternly tries to escape his promises by insisting on her status as servant.<sup>50</sup> Thanks to her skill set, Rosaura wins the approval of the rest of the family, including Ottavio, who describes her as a 'ragazza che merita',<sup>51</sup> and who supports her against the vilification of his brother by connecting status not to birth but to her intellectual capacities: 'Ella merita tutto; ha una sopraffina cognizione di lotto'.<sup>52</sup> The comedy thus draws up the contours of a meritocratic system, where Rosaura's skills are able to remedy her disadvantage of birth. Despite Ottavio's admiration for Rosaura's 'cognizione', the lottery serves as a delusion, a false promise of social mobility, which is replaced by the intellectual and social capacities of this *donna di garbo*.

It is significant, however, that it is the practice of cabbalism which Rosaura so brilliantly emulates. As opposed to other divinatory practices such as oneiromancy and the use of *smorfie* – especially popular among the non-literate – cabbalism was perceived, including in its connection to the lottery, as a highly intellectual practice, belonging to the 'strati alti della società' and gendered as male.<sup>53</sup> Rosaura's mimicry thus highlights how her intellectual capacities allow her to move above her station and to break the limits of social and educational conventions.

In the preface to the 1753 edition of the comedy, Goldoni addressed critics who had complained of a lack of verisimilitude in the portrayal of Rosaura's erudition.<sup>54</sup> This reply reveals a belief in merit being able to overcome restrictions posed by class and gender:

Ma io replicherei francamente che gl'intelletti non si misurano dalla nascita, né dal sangue, e che anche una Femmina abietta e vile, la quale abbia il comodo di studiare ed il talento disposto ad apprendere, può erudirsi, può farsi dotta, può diventare una Dottoressa.<sup>55</sup>

Rosaura's autodidactic education allows her to surpass Ottavio's (pseudo-)intellectual skill set and excel in a domain from which she was doubly excluded. Goldoni seemingly enters into an Enlightenment debate on women's education, which, in the Italian context, can be traced back to 1723 and a discussion instigated by the *Accademia dei Rivoccati* on whether women should be admitted to 'the Study of the Sciences and the Noble Arts'.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>48</sup>Goldoni, *La donna di garbo*, p. 1043, l. 12.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1084, III. 7.

<sup>50</sup>Goldoni, *La donna di garbo*, p. 1074, III. 6.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1075, III. 6.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1080, III. 7.

<sup>53</sup>De Sanctis Ricciardone, pp. 76, 80, 95–96.

<sup>54</sup>Carlo Goldoni, 'L'autore a chi legge', in *La donna di garbo*, pp. 1017–21.

<sup>55</sup>Goldoni, 'L'autore a chi legge', p. 1018.

<sup>56</sup>Rebecca Messbarger, *The Century of Women: Representations of Women in Eighteenth-Century Italian Public Discourse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), pp. 21–48. See also Maria Ines Bonatti, 'L'educazione femminile nel pensiero degli Illuministi e nei romanzi di Chiari', *Annali d'Italianistica*, 7 (1989), 226–41. In a broader European context, the question of whether or not women should be allowed a scientific education traces back to the seventeenth century, discussed notably in François Poulain de la Barre's *De l'éducation des dames* (Paris: Chez Jean du Puis, 1674), as well as ridiculed in Molière's *Les Femmes savantes* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2012). See Paul Hoffmann, *La femme dans la pensée des Lumières* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1995), pp. 303–05.



In Goldoni's native Venice, the debate on the role of women in cultural life was particularly open-minded, although this openness mainly concerned patrician and middle-class women.<sup>57</sup> The character of Rosaura therefore appears as quite radical, in the sense that her intellectual superiority illustrates the capacity of women from the modest classes to acquire scholarly learning.<sup>58</sup> What remains the essential element in our context, however, is that *La donna di garbo* dismisses, even ridicules, the lottery – one of few means for women of the modest classes to aspire to social ascension –,<sup>59</sup> only to present us with an example of social mobility based on education and merit. In the following, we will examine a different configuration of the lottery, social mobility, and female education.

### Fortune Favours the Bold: Pietro Chiari's *La giuocatrice di lotto*

Ottavio and Rosaura combined appear as precursors, and possibly even models, for the protagonist of *La giuocatrice di lotto*.<sup>60</sup> Pietro Chiari's pseudo-memoir novel is the story of Eugenia Tolot (an anagram for *lotto*), a young woman from modest origins who becomes obsessed with playing the lottery, and who, after having been introduced to the art of cabalistic numerology by a charlatan astrologer named Don Astrolabio, is convinced that her calculations will enable her to predict the winning numbers. Chiari took over for Goldoni as playwright when the latter broke with Girolamo Medebach's Teatro Sant'Angelo in 1753, and it is not unlikely that the Venice-based Brescian author, known to emulate, appropriate, and parody the plays of his illustrious rival, found inspiration for the lottery topic in *La donna di garbo*.<sup>61</sup> Unlike Goldoni's comedy, the lottery is the primary plot element of Chiari's novel. Moreover, where Goldoni's comedy dismisses the lottery fantasy, Chiari's novel seems to uphold it, but also paints a more ambiguous picture of pseudo-cabalism and oneiromancy.

At first sight, Eugenia seems more closely related to Ottavio than to Rosaura, as both are victims of the lottery craze and the belief in divinatory practices. Like Goldoni, Chiari uses this belief for comical and satirical effect.<sup>62</sup> At the same time, the two heroines embody very different conceptions of the game: where Rosaura parodies the delirious calculations of Ottavio, using the lottery as a prop to gain his trust, Eugenia takes the cabalistic approach seriously, counting on the lottery for actual enrichment. By winning the great prize, Eugenia plans to acquire a dowry that will allow her to marry her childhood friend and love of her life, Valerio, and which she believes 'non potea venir[le], che dal Lotto'.<sup>63</sup> Just as for Ottavio, the lottery appears for Eugenia as the solution to a problem it had created in the first place, since it was her late father's obsession with the lottery which sent the family into poverty.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>57</sup>Franco Fido, 'Italian Contributions to the Eighteenth-Century Debate on Women', *Annali d'Italianistica*, 7 (1989), 217–25 (p. 224). Considering Goldoni's authorship as a whole, however, he seems to have had an ambivalent, or cautious, attitude to the question of female education, which, according to Pamela D. Stewart, can be explained by the playwright's reluctance to 'impegnarsi a fondo su posizioni ideologicamente troppo spinte'. Pamela D. Stewart, 'Le "femmes savantes" nelle commedie del Goldoni', *Yearbook of Italian Studies*, 7 (1988), 19–42 (p. 22).

<sup>58</sup>For Stewart, Rosaura appears as distinct from other learned women in Goldoni's comedies, because of an almost improbably large skill-set, but also by being 'la versione più riuscita del tipo della *femme savante* nelle commedie del Goldoni'. 'Le "femmes savantes"', p. 36.

<sup>59</sup>Macy, pp. 35–36.

<sup>60</sup>For other readings of this novel, see Elvio Guagnini, "'Notomia del cuore", razionalità, imprenditorialità individuale: *La giuocatrice di lotto*', *Problemi: periodico quadrimestrale di cultura*, 76 (1986), 152–64; Carlo A. Madrignani, *All'origine del romanzo in Italia. Il 'celebre Abate Chiari'* (Naples: Liguori Editore, 2000), pp. 48–50. For an overall analysis of Chiari's novels, see also Franco Fido, 'I romanzi: temi, ideologia, scrittura', in *Pietro Chiari e il teatro europeo del settecento*, ed. by Carmelo Alberti (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 1986), pp. 281–301; Luca Clerici, *Il romanzo italiano del Settecento. Il caso Chiari* (Venice: Marsilio Editori, 1997).

<sup>61</sup>Franco Fido, *La serietà del gioco. Svaghi letterari e teatrali nel Settecento* (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 1998), pp. 92–93. See also Ferrone, p. 91.

<sup>62</sup>Pietro Chiari, *La giuocatrice di lotto o sia Memorie di Madama Tolot scritte da lei medesima colle regole con cui fece al lotto una fortuna considerabile. Pubblicate dall'abbate Pietro Chiari* (Venice: Angelo Pasinelli, 1757), p. 96.

<sup>63</sup>Chiari, p. 62.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 20.

However, Chiari's *giuocatrice* turns out to be a more complex character than the ridiculous figure of Ottavio, a complexity constructed through the retrospective and introspective narration of the pseudo-memoir.<sup>65</sup> Whereas Eugenia as main character takes the lottery seriously and is immersed in her obsession, Eugenia as retrospective narrator is able to assess, criticise, and justify her former self, through self-scrutinising passages of reflection that alternate with the narration.<sup>66</sup> Thus, Eugenia serves both to satirise the lottery craze and to analyse the social and psychological reasons behind the obsession. As a socio-political and moral topic, then, the lottery carries greater nuance in Chiari's novel compared to Goldoni's comedy.

During Eugenia's worst periods of obsession, her husband Valerio acts as a voice of reason, after having 'opened his eyes' to the gravity of their dire financial situation occasioned by his wife's gambling.<sup>67</sup> Importantly, he does not dismiss the lottery as such, but tries to calm Eugenia's obsession by advocating for the golden mean:

Giuocate pure ve lo ripeto, che il giuocare mediocrementemente è da saggio; ma il volersi rovinare giuocando è da stolto. [...] Non c'è dubbio, che non possa vincere al lotto, chi ad esso non giuoca, e giuocar bisogna per essere in istato di vincere quando lo voglia la nostra fortuna. Domandatene a chi pensa meglio degli altri sulle umane vicende, e tutti vi diranno concordemente, che fa male del pari, chi mai giuoca al lotto, e chi ci giuoca con troppa violenza.<sup>68</sup>

Here, gambling appears as a means of potential financial gain not to be neglected, a perspective which is underlined by the narrator's concluding remarks at the end of the novel:

Ho giuocato, giuoco tuttavia, e giuocarò fin, che vivo, perchè come dissi fin da principio, non dobbiamo tener serrata dal canto nostro alcuna strada per cui accostarsi a noi possa la nostra buona Fortuna. L'azardar poco per guadagnar assai, è sempre un trafficar con vantaggio. [...] Ognuno, che comincia a vincere al lotto non avrebbe mai guadagnato, se non avesse cominciato a giuocare.<sup>69</sup>

The relative caution and rational attitude expressed by Eugenia as narrator – to risk a little with the chance to win a lot – stand in contrast with Ottavio's reasoning, for whom 'bisogna giuocar molto, per guadagnar molto'.<sup>70</sup> Chiari's novel and Goldoni's comedy seem, therefore, to express different conclusions with regards to the lottery as a cultural and financial phenomenon: the latter dismisses it, while the former advocates its moderate use. Chiari's novelistic conclusion is consistent with the discussion of the lottery in his *Lettere scelte*, where he denounces practices of cabbalistic numerology and oneiromancy, but also states that 'ogni Uomo di senno giuocar [deve] al Lotto a misura delle sue forze, per tener aperta mai sempre al favor della sorte quella strada di più'.<sup>71</sup>

It is not only caution and the golden mean, but also courage and initiative that are valorised in *La giuocatrice*. Eugenia's obsession with the lottery, although being denounced as dangerous, clearly also receives a positive spin, generalised as a capacity for risk-taking which is able to serve her in other fields of life:

Basta riflettere con quanta intrepidezza azardassi al lotto dalle summe non picciole, e con quanta facilità mi lusingassi di sempre trovare a disordini miei qualche riparo; onde concluderne per conseguenza legitima fondata sulla filosofia del cor nostro, che non meno arrischiata ed intrepida io doveva essere anche nell'altre umane vicende. Nell'animo mio era troppo radicata la massima, che la fortuna suol favorire gli audaci; e se qualche cosa speravo, non lo speravo sicuramente dalla infingardagine, o dalla lentezza.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>65</sup>In this respect, my reading differs from that of Madrignani, who considers the character of Eugenia to be more inconsistent than complex (p. 49).

<sup>66</sup>This is consistent with the aesthetics of Chiari's novels, 'based on the binary structure of action and comment'. Albert N. Mancini, 'The Forms of Long Prose Fiction in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italian Literature', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Italian Novel*, ed. by Andrea Ciccarelli and Peter E. Bondanella (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 20–41 (p. 34).

<sup>67</sup>Chiari, *La giuocatrice di lotto*, p. 86.

<sup>68</sup>Chiari, *La giuocatrice di lotto*, pp. 102–03.

<sup>69</sup>Chiari, *La giuocatrice di lotto*, p. 224.

<sup>70</sup>Goldoni, *La donna di garbo*, p. 1042, l. 12.

<sup>71</sup>Pietro Chiari, *Lettere scelte di varie materie piacevoli, critiche, ed erudite, scritte ad una dama di qualità*, 3 vols (Naples: Benedetto, ed. Ignazio Gessari, 1750), II, p. 133.

<sup>72</sup>Chiari, *La giuocatrice di lotto*, pp. 130–31.

These reflections have lead Elvio Guagnini to read the lottery in Chiari's novel as a metaphor 'dell'imprenditorialità e dell'iniziativa dell'individuo, il segno della volontà di ascesa e di affermazione, sia pure temperata da principi di moderazione e di ragionevolezza'.<sup>73</sup> The search for a balance between passion and prudence also reflects what Maria Ines Bonatti has identified as Chiari's propagation of bourgeois values, linked to his role as 'portavoce della classe media veneziana'.<sup>74</sup> To play the lottery in moderation was to exploit a rare opportunity for economic improvement, which signalled a valorisation of passion, initiative, and balanced risk-taking, all put into service of personal interest.<sup>75</sup> When Eugenia finally wins a considerable sum in the Venetian lottery towards the end of the novel,<sup>76</sup> it is not because of cabbalism, but because of her courage and persistence, contained in the motto 'la fortuna suol favorire gli audaci'.<sup>77</sup>

It is through the same courage and generosity that Eugenia helps Valerio win back his inheritance from his mother, a success that is compared with the lottery and metaphorically described as 'un terno più grosso ancora degli altri già vinti al lotto di Venezia'.<sup>78</sup> In fact, there is a relation of counterpoint being developed between Eugenia and Valerio: her obsession positively translates into passion, courage, persistence, and initiative, whereas his prudence and sagacity translate unfavourably into hesitance and cowardice, notably in their conflictual relationship with his family, which it takes *her* courage to resolve.<sup>79</sup>

The representation of Eugenia's personal qualities has an important gender aspect, identifiable as a form of 'proto-feminism' that has been deemed characteristic of Chiari's novels.<sup>80</sup> Eugenia is typical of the Abbot's novelistic heroines, described by Bonatti as seeking fortune 'mediante l'intraprendenza individuale, il calcolo, l'opportunismo, la disponibilità al rischio', qualities that in turn allow them to 'abbandonare gli atteggiamenti di passività e di svolgere un ruolo attivo nella società civile'.<sup>81</sup> Like her novelistic 'sisters', Eugenia assumes an active role which, in contrast with her husband's excessive prudence, assures the financial future of their family.<sup>82</sup>

In the end, Eugenia thus appears as more akin to Rosaura than to Ottavio. As in the case of Goldoni's *donna di garbo*, the capacities displayed by Chiari's *giuocatrice* help her accomplish a social ascension, moving from poverty and servitude into a secure and moderately elevated situation. As social mobility goes, we are yet again within the realm of a moderate, bourgeois framework, with Eugenia simply restoring the socio-financial condition – 'né nobile, né plebea' –, from which her father fell due to obsessive gambling.<sup>83</sup>

If passion, courage, and initiative are instrumental in this respect, Eugenia's lottery playing also leads to the acquisition of a specific skill set, in the shape of a mathematical literacy, or numeracy, developed by means of practicing numerological and astrological calculations. This is another aspect that connects Eugenia to Rosaura, the autodidact scholar, in yet another play with the relationship between *alea* and *agôn*, the purely aleatory game and the skilful competition. Although Eugenia's practice of numerology is not, in fact, what makes her win the lottery, it can be read as an educational exercise, one that we would perhaps today refer to as a form of 'gamified learning' developing 'transferable skills': the agonistic game of numerology motivates the learning of mathematics, useful in numerous other fields. The acquisition of Astrolabio's cabbalistic system may well

<sup>73</sup>Guagnini, p. 161.

<sup>74</sup>Maria Ines Bonatti, 'I romanzi teatrali dell'abate Chiari', *Italian Culture*, 8 (1990), 293–305 (p. 296).

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Chiari, *La giuocatrice di lotto*, pp. 203–04.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>79</sup>Chiari, *La giuocatrice di lotto*, p. 131.

<sup>80</sup>Bonatti, 'I romanzi teatrali', p. 290.

<sup>81</sup>Bonatti, 'L'educazione femminile', p. 228.

<sup>82</sup>The heroine's struggle to acquire a position free from economic need is another leitmotiv in Chiari's novels. See Bonatti, 'I romanzi teatrali', pp. 296, 299, 303.

<sup>83</sup>Chiari, *La giuocatrice di lotto*, p. 18.

increase her obsession,<sup>84</sup> but it also brings her into contact with mathematical operations that traditional education had previously kept out of reach, allowing her to arrive at nothing less than arithmetic mastery:

Don Astrolabio quando ci ebbe ben insegnate le regole fondamentali delle sue cabalistiche, ed aritmetiche osservazioni, prese i denari, che se gli dovevano, e ci lasciò in una applicazione profonda per istudiarli. [...] Nel corso di vita mia non avevo mai fatto un computo di trenta lire senza farlo sulle dita all'uso del nostro sesso. Allora la prima volta cominciai a conteggiare colla penna, a metter in pratica le Operazioni aritmetiche, e a farsi [sic] sopra tale studio, che ne divenni in pochi giorni maestra.<sup>85</sup>

Even though numerology is clearly presented as a pseudo-science by Goldoni and Chiari alike, its practice does, in both cases, entail proper intellectual skills. The lottery as such may remain firmly within the realm of *alea*; but the way in which it is played constitutes a transposed form of *agôn*, where the characters playfully seek to master the arithmetic operations, in competition with themselves as well as with their male counterparts.

To represent the lottery as a means for the development of transferable skills is far from unique for Goldoni and Chiari's literary universes. In his analysis of the Brazilian 'animal lottery', the *Jogo do Bicho*, Roger Caillois notes how the complexity of the game, in calculating the relation between gains and risk, led to capacities for quite advanced arithmetic operations among people who were barely literate.<sup>86</sup> Paolo Macry builds on this observation in order to consider the numerological practices in the context of the Neapolitan lottery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, concluding that these practices formed a parallel situation to established norms of education and literacy.<sup>87</sup> For Rosaura and Eugenia alike, their practice of the lottery is revelatory of an education that includes both literacy and numeracy: Rosaura's parodic emulation of Ottavio's gambling is based on scholastic erudition and mathematical skills; Eugenia's work with pseudo-cabbalism is mathematically formative, whereas her literacy is presented performatively through her function as first-person narrator.

Female education was a recurring theme in Chiari's authorship.<sup>88</sup> Bonatti has shown how several of his novels were written into the already mentioned debate on the topic, representing heroines from modest upbringings who, faced with the 'scuola del mondo', acquire an autodidact education, thus carrying proof of women's aptitude for learning.<sup>89</sup> I would argue that, in *La giuocatrice*, the cultural practices of the lottery form the basis of Eugenia's 'scuola'. Her mathematical skills explicitly bring her beyond the established gender norms, similarly to Rosaura who, as we have seen, taught herself 'tanto che supera il femminile costume'.<sup>90</sup> If Eugenia finally resembles Rosaura more than Ottavio, it is as a female character who excels in a domain gendered as male, surpassing traditional limits of women's education.<sup>91</sup> In both texts, however, favourable marriages remain the

<sup>84</sup>Chiari, *La giuocatrice di lotto*, p. 120.

<sup>85</sup>Chiari, *La giuocatrice di lotto*, pp. 120–21.

<sup>86</sup>Caillois, p. 294.

<sup>87</sup>Macry, p. 58.

<sup>88</sup>Rotraud von Kulesha, 'Le Lettere di un solitario a sua figlia di Pietro Chiari: tra romanzo e trattato d'educazione', in *Le carte false: Epistolarità fittizia nel Settecento italiano*, ed. by Fabio Forner, Valentina Gallo, Sabine Schwarze, and Corrado Viola (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2017), pp. 175–85 (p. 175). The theme was present already in his first novel, *La filosofessa italiana* (1753), in which the heroine appropriates the male-gendered position of philosopher and develops 'une capacité de philosopher en tant que femme' [a capacity to philosophise as a woman]. Natalie Ferrand, "'C'est en habit d'homme qu'une femme peut philosopher": figures féminines du philosophe dans *Thérèse philosophe* et *La filosofessa italiana*', in *La figure du philosophe dans les lettres anglaises et françaises (XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, ed. by Alexis Tadié (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris Ouest, 2010), pp. 171–87 (p. 183).

<sup>89</sup>Bonatti, 'L'educazione femminile', p. 228.

<sup>90</sup>Goldoni, *La donna di garbo*, p. 1026.

<sup>91</sup>See also De Sanctis Ricciardone, p. 118. Fido has identified a dialogue between the two authors with regards to this debate: 'Behind Chiari's enterprising, hard-boiled adventuresses and "filosofesse," and Goldoni's argumentative, but more feminine and charming heroines, there was a subtle game of thrusts and parries between the two authors'. 'Italian Contributions', p. 224.

primary access to social mobility, thus demarcating the limits of the authors' proto-feminism,<sup>92</sup> as well as exemplifying the standard discourse of (male) proponents of female education, which, for Messbarger, simply represents 'a restatement, in Enlightenment terms, of women's essential domesticity'.<sup>93</sup>

According to Bonatti, 'una delle caratteristiche delle eroine del romanzo del Settecento è la rapidità di impossessarsi degli strumenti culturali',<sup>94</sup> which especially include the practice of writing, performatively expressed in the pseudo-memoir novel, where the heroines put their literacy into action.<sup>95</sup> In *La giuocatrice*, there is another element in play: Eugenia's arithmetic-numerological endeavour adds the lottery manual to the list of 'cultural instruments'. The novel's subtitle is significant in this respect: *Memorie di Madama Tolot scritte da lei medesima colle regole con cui fece al lotto una fortuna considerabile*. It signals the heroine's appropriation of two cultural instruments, the pseudo-memoir and the lottery manual, each symbolising a central educational element, literacy and numeracy.

The novel also imitates the lottery manual in the main text, which contains presentations and illustrations of Eugenia's system, numerological tables, and astrological figures,<sup>96</sup> similar to those we find in such manuals as the aforementioned *Vero mezzo per vincere all'estrazioni de' lotti*. Chiari's *Giuocatrice* can thus be read as a textually and paratextually constructed pastiche of the pseudo-cabbalistic lottery manuals that flourished on the Venetian book market, in what is perhaps an 'ammiccamento ad un settore femminile di appassionate'.<sup>97</sup> The novel itself becomes a form of play,<sup>98</sup> ambiguously mimicking and satirising the lottery fantasy and its related cultural practices, and even exploiting it for advertisement purposes.<sup>99</sup>

### **Kairos, Bluffs, and Social Games: The Lottery Episode in Casanova's *Histoire de ma vie***

Imitation, mathematical skills, initiative, and playfulness are also important elements in the lottery episode of Giacomo Casanova's *Histoire de ma vie* (written in French between 1789–1798), where the Venetian adventurer depicts his role in the establishment of the lottery of the *École militaire royale* in Paris in 1757 to 1758. A much-commented document in the history of eighteenth-century European lotteries,<sup>100</sup> this text also constitutes a highly interesting literary representation of the lottery, warranting a comparison with Goldoni and Chiari.<sup>101</sup>

A significant difference here resides in the fact that Casanova is seated, as it were, at the other side of the table from the two literary heroines. While Rosaura parodies the lottery and Eugenia plays it, Casanova organises the game, gaining a considerable amount at the cost of the actual lottery players. Furthermore, where both Chiari's and Goldoni's texts remain within the social boundaries of the

<sup>92</sup>For more on the relative aspect of Goldoni's and Chiari's 'feminism', see, respectively, Günsberg, p. 8; Armando Marchi, 'Il mercato dell'immaginario', in *Pietro Chiari e il teatro europeo del settecento*, ed. by Carmelo Alberti (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 1986), pp. 77–113 (pp. 98–102).

<sup>93</sup>Messbarger, p. 17.

<sup>94</sup>Bonatti, 'L'educazione femminile', p. 239.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>96</sup>Chiari, *La giuocatrice di lotto*, pp. 194–99.

<sup>97</sup>Madrignani, p. 49.

<sup>98</sup>Similarly, Rotraud von Kulesha has, using Caillou's 'play modes', read Chiari's novels as a 'gioco con l'Illuminismo'. See 'Il gioco con l'Illuminismo', pp. 68–73; 'Le Lettere di un solitario', p. 185.

<sup>99</sup>For Madrignani, the ambivalence of the novels resides precisely in an attempt at 'tenere insieme la curiosità delle fanatiche del lotto e non tradire il credo razionalistico', revelatory of a commercial motivation. Madrignani, p. 50. Chiari's commercial flair is well noted by modern scholarship: Bonatti, 'I romanzi teatrali', p. 298; Ann Hallamore Caesar, 'Theatre and the Rise of the Italian Novel: Venice 1753–84', *Italian Studies*, 67 (2012), 37–55 (p. 40, n. 9); Marius Warholm Haugen, "'Half Sign, Half Ad": Literary and Commercial Functions of Paratextual and In-Text Titles in the Novels of Pietro Chiari', *Italian Studies*, 72 (2017), 58–71.

<sup>100</sup>See Jean Leonnet, *Les loteries d'état en France aux XVIII<sup>e</sup> et XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1963), pp. 15–17; Francis Freundlich, *Le monde du jeu à Paris 1715–1800* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1995), pp. 38–39; Stephen M. Stigler, 'Casanova, "Bonaparte", and the Loterie de France', *Journal de la société française de statistique*, 144 (2003), 5–34; Bruneel, p. 105.

<sup>101</sup>The work can be placed generically somewhere between the memoir, autobiography, and the novel. Jean-Christophe Igalens, *Casanova: l'écrivain en ses fictions* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2011), pp. 397–421; Christophe Igalens, 'Casanova, écrivain', in Giacomo Casanova, *Histoire de ma vie*, 3 vols (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 2013–18), I, pp. VII–LXXXIX (pp. XL–XLV).

bourgeoisie, Casanova aspires to a self-constructed nobility, in the form of an aristocratic attitude towards risk and gambling. He thereby inverts the lottery fantasy, presenting himself as an exceptional seducer-gambler who profits from the illusory dreams of the masses.

In this episode, Casanova recounts the story of his role in the creation of the lottery of the *École militaire*, where he convinces Louis XV's councillors to accept the project developed by the two Tuscan brothers Ranieri and Giovanni Antonio Calzabigi. The episode is centrally placed in the memoirs, opening the volume, and constituting the first event of Casanova's return to Paris after his escape from Venice and the *Piombi* prison in 1756. The very first sentence of the volume is programmatic for his social and financial ambitions in Paris: 'Me voilà de nouveau dans le grand Paris, et ne pouvant plus compter sur ma patrie, en devoir d'y faire fortune' [Here I am yet again in the great city of Paris, and without being able to rely on my homeland, obligated to make my fortune].<sup>102</sup> The image created is that of the solitary adventurer faced with the great metropole, left to his own devices and intent on making his fortune. The following episode depicts how a golden opportunity arose to do precisely that.

There are several 'play modes' written into Casanova's lottery episode. The first mode is related to *alea*, or, to be more precise, to the combination of chance and skills allowing the adventurer to seize *kairos*, the opportune moment, when presented with the chance to partake in the lottery project. The second mode constitutes a form of *mimicry*, in the shape of a social game of masquerade, appearances, and self-representation, which extends to, and is doubled by, the performative mode of the text itself. For Casanova, the lottery served as a means to make his way into the influential spheres of Paris, thus also connecting to the topic of social mobility, albeit in a way distinctly different from Goldoni's and Chiari's heroines.

In 1757, Louis XV's councillors were looking for new ways to finance the *École militaire*, but seemed hesitant to opt for the Calzabigis' proposal, uncertain of the financial risks of the Genoese lottery system. In his account, Casanova is the one who tips the scales and convinces the councillors, before making a fortune by partnering with the Calzabigis and acquiring the rights to sell lottery tickets.<sup>103</sup>

Casanova's position as organiser demarcates him from the masses venturing into the lottery; it serves his self-representation as a risk-taker of aristocratic stature. According to Thomas M. Kavanagh, the Venetian considered the lottery as a 'travesty of true gambling', partly because of its purely chance-based aspect, partly because it symbolised a democratic ritual that removed the 'strict demarcation of players and spectators, of those who acted and those who watched'.<sup>104</sup> In Kavanagh's reading, Casanova's attitude towards gambling is intimately connected to a specific conception of the world as ruled by a game of appearances. An understanding of this social game could serve to surpass the simple notion of the aleatory, not only in matters of gambling, but also of birth. The aristocratic was, for the Venetian adventurer, a matter of appearance and attitude, a masquerade of representation and self-representation, as well as 'a noble indifference to risk [...] far more real than the accidents of birth'.<sup>105</sup>

The lottery, with its strictly aleatory character and popular appeal, did not fit into this conception. However, when the opportunity arose, this did not prevent him from exploiting the game for his own gain, from within the system, by mastering both the lottery itself and the social game of Paris. In his version of the events, Casanova's way into the project was based on his gambling skills, as the formidable gambler practically bluffed his way into the affair.<sup>106</sup> Invited to meet with Jean de

<sup>102</sup>Casanova, II, p. 3.

<sup>103</sup>Casanova, II, p. 21.

<sup>104</sup>Kavanagh, p. 109. Previously in his memoirs, however, Casanova recounts having played the lottery during the carnival of 1750, winning a *terno* worth three thousand ducats. Casanova, I, pp. 676–77. Casanova also shows a more pragmatic attitude to the lottery in his proposal for a new method for the Roman lottery. See Casanova, II, pp. 1369–73.

<sup>105</sup>Kavanagh, p. 109.

<sup>106</sup>See Anne Beate Maurseth, 'Le motif du jeu et la fonction du hasard: Un topos littéraire dans les mémoires de Casanova', *Revue Romane*, 42 (2007), 283–96 (p. 289).

Boullongne, Controller-General of finances, and asked to come up with a solution for increasing the royal income, Casanova goes to the meeting without ideas: ‘N’ayant aucune idée des finances, j’avais beau mettre mon esprit à la torture: toutes les idées qui me venaient ne versaient que sur des nouveaux impôts: me paraissant toutes odieuses, ou absurdes, je les rejetais’ [Having no financial knowledge, I could rack my brain as much as I pleased: all the ideas that came to my mind just ended up having to do with new taxes: since they all appeared to me as either vile or absurd, I rejected them].<sup>107</sup> At the meeting, which also includes the influential financier and first intendant of the *École militaire*, Joseph Pâris Duverney, Casanova discovers that he has gained an unwarranted reputation for financial expertise:

[Boullongne] me fit d’abord compliment sur le cas que l’abbé de Bernis faisait de moi, et sur ma capacité en matière de finances. Peu s’en fallut que je ne pouffasse. [. . .] – Communiquez-moi, me dit-il, soit de bouche, soit par écrit vos vues: vous me trouverez docile, et prêt à saisir vos idées. Voici M. Paris du Vernai qui a besoin de vingt millions pour son école militaire. Il s’agit de les trouver sans charger l’État, et sans incommoder le trésor royal.<sup>108</sup>

[(Boullongne) first congratulated me on the high opinion that the abbot of Bernis had of me, and on my capacity in financial matters. I came close to tittering. [. . .] – Communicate to me your views on the matter, he said, either orally or in writing: you will find me accommodating, and ready to seize your ideas. I present to you M. Paris du Vernai who is in need of twenty million for his military school. We need to find it without charging the state, and without bothering the royal treasury.]

Amused by this, the Venetian does not disabuse his interlocutors, but instead tells them that he has ‘en tête une opération qui produirait au roi l’intérêt de cent millions’ [in mind an operation that would produce a hundred million in interest], without substantial costs and through voluntary contribution from the nation. Casanova then refraining from explaining further, Duverney claims to know which kind of project the Venetian has in mind and invites him home to present it.<sup>109</sup> Casanova describes this incident as a ‘bizarre stroke of fortune’, an opportune moment that it is up to himself to seize. He decides to keep silent until Duverney has presented the project, before deciding whether to take ownership of it.<sup>110</sup> At Duverney’s residence, Casanova is introduced to Giovanni Antonio Calzabigi and presented with the brothers’ lottery proposal, upon which the gambler grasps the opportunity and maintains his bluff: ‘[J]e n’hésite pas un seul instant à lui dire que c’était mon projet’ [I do not hesitate for a single moment to tell him that it was my project].<sup>111</sup>

According to his account, Casanova then makes a display of his mastery of probability calculus, which, combined with his rhetorical gifts, convinces Duverney and the other councillors of the risk being worth taking,<sup>112</sup> in a performance he claims was sufficient to convince even the great mathematician Jean Le Rond d’Alembert.<sup>113</sup> The Calzabigis, in turn, impressed by their countryman’s aptitude for persuasion, invite him to put aside his own (non-existent) lottery proposal and become a partner in their project.<sup>114</sup> The episode appears as a sort of agonistic game of which Casanova is the winner and his interlocutors, the Calzabigis in particular, are the dupes. For Guy David Toubiana, the text even presents us with the adventurer’s game against the state, in which he plays at ‘tromper le trompeur’ [tricking the trickster].<sup>115</sup>

Casanova presents his approach in these situations as the result of a strategy adopted upon arrival in Paris, ‘un système de réserve tant dans ma conduite que dans mes discours qui pût me faire croire propre à des affaires de conséquence plus même de ce que j’aurais pu m’imaginer d’être’

<sup>107</sup>Casanova, II, p. 6.

<sup>108</sup>Casanova, II, p. 7.

<sup>109</sup>Casanova, II, p. 8.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., pp. 8–9.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., pp. 11–13.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., p. 20. See also Maurseth, p. 291. On the relationship between the two, see Branko Aleksić, ‘Casanova et D’Alembert’, *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l’Encyclopédie*, 42 (2007), 83–94 (pp. 3–4).

<sup>114</sup>Casanova, II, p. 15.

<sup>115</sup>Guy David Toubiana, ‘Casanova: Jeu et travail ou le trompeur trompé’, *Forum Italicum*, 31 (1997), 31–38 (p. 36).

[a system of restraint, as much in my behaviour as in my speech, which would have me appear suitable for important affairs, more, even, than I could have imagined myself to be].<sup>116</sup> If we take into consideration Casanova's *penchant* for masks and masquerades, the source of which is found in Venetian carnival culture,<sup>117</sup> this 'system of restraint' could be perceived as a metaphorical mask, one which hides his intentions, and, in the meeting with Duverney, mirrors the preoccupations of his interlocutor: the financier seemingly thinks that Casanova ponders a lottery project because he is himself already preoccupied with the Calzabigis' proposal.<sup>118</sup>

The skill set put on display by Casanova is, therefore, both intellectual and social: sufficiently informed of how the lottery functions to play out his bluff, he draws upon his conversational skills and capacity for social emulation to obtain a profitable part in the affair. In terms of Caillois' 'play modes', Casanova combines agonistic skills with *mimicry* and a particular sensitivity to the aleatory. If the lottery episode illustrates the gambler's aptitude for seizing *kairos*,<sup>119</sup> his restraint and metaphorical mask enable the emergence of this opportune moment, which his skills of emulation and rhetoric allow him to use to his advantage.

We should not, however, forget the literary character of this text, where the narrated events do not always faithfully reflect the historical reality. In David F. Bell's analysis, Casanova's encounter with Duverney was less the result of a 'bizarre stroke of fortune' than of a frenetic social activity among the Parisian elite, where the Venetian's multiplication of encounters – partly obscured in the text – was an attempt to 'plac[e] the odds on his side', turning his social game into 'a numbers game'.<sup>120</sup> In this sense, Casanova's approach resembles that of Chiari's Eugenia, with courage and initiative being instrumental to the possibilities for success, not only in the actual, but also in a social 'lottery'.

Mimicry and masks continue to play a role in Casanova's reflections on Parisian mundane life and his activity as a lottery reseller. His success appears to reside in an understanding of how the grand masquerade of Paris functions, combined with knowledge of the mechanisms of the lottery as an economic device and financial institution. Casanova enriches himself, not only at the cost of those playing the lottery, but also of other resellers, because he has understood better than any of them the social and psychological mechanisms of the game, the combination of credibility and appearances on which any form of financial speculation is based:

Dans toutes les grandes maisons où j'allais, et aux foyers des théâtres d'abord qu'on me voyait tout le monde me donnait de l'argent me priant de le jouer pour eux, comme je voulais, et de leur remettre les billets, puisqu'ils n'y comprenaient rien. Je portais dans ma poche des billets gros, et petits, que je leur laissais choisir, et je retournais à la maison avec mes poches pleines d'or. Les autres receveurs n'avaient pas ce privilège. Ce n'étaient pas des gens faits pour être faufilets. J'étais le seul qui roulait en carrosse; cela me donnait un nom, et un crédit ouvert. Paris était une ville, et l'est encore, où on juge tout par l'apparence: il n'y a point pays au monde où il soit plus facile d'en imposer.<sup>121</sup>

[In all the great houses where I went, and in the theatre foyers, immediately when they saw me everyone gave me money and begged me to wager it for them as I pleased, and to give them back the tickets, since they did not understand anything of it. I carried large and small tickets in my pocket, from which I let them choose, and I returned home with my pockets filled with gold. The other resellers did not have this privilege. They were not people made for being introduced. I was the only one riding in a coach; this gave me a name, and an open credit. Paris was, and still is, a city where everything is judged by appearances: there is no place on earth where it is easier to impress.]

<sup>116</sup>Casanova, II, p. 3.

<sup>117</sup>Michel Delon, *Casanova. Histoire de sa vie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2011), p. 13.

<sup>118</sup>In reality, Duverney had in all likelihood already decided to go through with the project and used Casanova as 'a public relations agent'. See Helmut Watzlawick, 'Casanova et les loteries', in *Être riche au siècle de Voltaire. Actes du colloque de Genève (18–19 juin 1994)*, ed. by Jacques Berchtold and Michel Porret (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1996), pp. 161–71 (p. 165).

<sup>119</sup>Maurseth, p. 292.

<sup>120</sup>David F. Bell, 'Casanova's lottery', *Stanford French Review*, 17 (1993), 77–93 (pp. 81–82).

<sup>121</sup>Casanova, II, pp. 22–23.



Casanova realises that the appearance of wealth engenders wealth and that the social masquerade can be used to obtain social and financial ascension. His aptitude for being ‘faufilé’ [introduced] into the Parisian *grand monde* gives him a further advantage on the other resellers.<sup>122</sup> In fact, the social game of Paris is so full of mirror effects that the eccentric Madame d’Urfé suspects Casanova of being a rich man hiding his wealth, instead of the opposite: ‘Madame d’Urfé me croyant riche avait imaginé que je ne m’étais placé dans la loterie de l’École militaire que pour me masquer’ [Believing me to be rich, Madame d’Urfé had imagined that I had only placed myself in the Military School lottery to conceal myself].<sup>123</sup> What better proof of the bluff’s success, in fact, than seeing people believe in an antithetical bluff?

By contrast with Goldoni and Chiari, Casanova’s lottery episode does not mention divinatory practices. However, his memoirs contain numerous examples of him playing the role of cabbalistic *adept*, pleasurably duping Venetian and Parisian aristocrats, including the aforementioned Madame d’Urfé.<sup>124</sup> The episode recounting Casanova’s pseudo-cabbalistic endeavours with the eccentric aristocrat closely follows the lottery episode. From one episode to the other, Casanova goes from highlighting the scientific nature of mathematics to putting the emphasis on its mysterious nature.<sup>125</sup> What stands out as the common denominator is the adventurer’s capacities for adaptation to the circumstances,<sup>126</sup> which in this case entails subjecting his mathematical skills to the social game.

In this sense, Casanova as ‘literary character’ also resembles Goldoni’s Rosaura, in their common capacity for emulation, self-control, and seduction, all put to use in order to gain the friendship and trust of people situated above their social rank:

Je voyais que pour parvenir à quelque chose, j’avais besoin de mettre en jeu toutes mes facultés physiques, et morales, de faire connaissance avec des grands, et des puissants, d’être le maître de mon esprit, et de prendre la couleur de tous ceux auxquels je verrais que mon intérêt exigeait que je plusse.<sup>127</sup>

[I saw that in order to achieve something, I needed to put into play all my physical and moral abilities, to make the acquaintance of the great and the powerful, to be the master of my mind, and to adopt the colour of all those whom I saw that my interest demanded that I please.]

Similar to the manner in which Rosaura ingratiates herself with *il Dottore* and his family, Casanova’s sojourn in Paris has the clear goal of moving up the most powerful and influential circles of the metropolis, by way of social (and actual) seduction. The lottery episode illustrates Casanova’s positively framed opportunism, constituting a central textual element in his self-representation as a fundamental gambler, whose powers of seduction, understanding of human psychology, probability calculus, and capacity for seizing the opportune moment, constitute the skill set allowing him to climb the social ladder of eighteenth-century Europe. By doing so, he presents an inverted, literary version of the lottery fantasy, where the dreams of the masses help fuel, as it were, the adventurer’s social ascension.

This is not, however, the full story of Casanova’s engagement with the lottery. He would go on to conceive of other lottery projects, drawing up proposals that reveal somewhat different attitudes and approaches to the lottery, notably by expressing concern for its potentially negative social effects.<sup>128</sup> One proposal is particularly interesting here, as it connects the lottery with the topic of educational development, namely his proposal for a ‘grammatical lottery’ that would draw syllables instead of numbers.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>122</sup>See the editors’ first note in Casanova, II, p. 23.

<sup>123</sup>Casanova, II, p. 109.

<sup>124</sup>Casanova, II, pp. 91–103. For his earlier practices of pseudo-cabbalism, see also Casanova, I, p. 482.

<sup>125</sup>Bell, p. 89.

<sup>126</sup>For Michel Delon, Casanova’s ‘secret’ is to be found in his ‘disponibilité’. See ‘Casanova et le possible’, *Europe*, 64 (1987), 41–50 (p. 41).

<sup>127</sup>Casanova, II, p. 3.

<sup>128</sup>Casanova, II, pp. 1349–73. The importance of devising game systems that reduce the risk of negative social consequences is also a topic for the conversation Casanova had with Catherine II of Russia in 1765. Casanova, III, p. 373.

<sup>129</sup>*Ibid.*, II, pp. 1349–67. For more on this proposal, see Watzlawick, p. 166; Maurseth, p. 294.

In this text, Casanova criticises the very system that made him a fortune in Paris, considering that the Genoese lottery is ‘ruineuse pour les pauvres gens’ [ruinous for the poor], partly because they do not have the sufficient mathematical skills to assess the odds.<sup>130</sup> His ‘grammatical lottery’, on the contrary, would not only be prized in such a way as to take care of the poor,<sup>131</sup> but would also have the advantage of promoting literacy among the public: ‘Un singulier effet d’une pareille loterie sera celui d’apprendre à tous ceux qui se feront un plaisir d’y jouer à bien lire, et à bien écrire: ce sera une véritable école, dont le public jouira gratis’ [A singular effect of such a lottery will be to teach all who take pleasure in playing it how to read and write properly: it will be a genuine school, that the public will enjoy for free].<sup>132</sup> What we saw as implicit in Chiari’s novel is explicit in Casanova’s proposal, namely a gamification of learning, the use of the lettered lottery as a way of playfully stimulating the development of literacy. Like Chiari and Goldoni, Casanova thus connects the cultural practices of this aleatory game to a framework of skills, and inscribes the lottery into an Enlightenment debate on the expansion of education, although focusing on social class more than on gender.<sup>133</sup>

## Conclusion

If the lottery is, in principle, a symbol of the purely aleatory, it is also a historically situated cultural practice and literary motif, which connect to other functions and ‘play modes’, that is to agonistic skilfulness, mimicry, and social games. Goldoni, Chiari, and Casanova put the realities and the fantasies of the eighteenth-century lottery institution into literary form. Despite their distinctly different representations and assessments of the lottery, the three works share an important feature, in putting forward the idea that intelligence, spirit, and skills can remedy disadvantages of birth, class, and social position. Thus, the lottery fantasy, with its promise of sudden, life-changing wealth, is either undermined (by Chiari and Casanova) or directly dismissed (by Goldoni). If Rosaura parodies, Eugenia plays, and Casanova organises the lottery, all three sketch the possibility for social mobility through some form of skill or merit.

Games and play remain central elements of all three texts, but they shift from *alea* to *agôn* and *mimicry*. For Casanova, the lottery became an opportunity to perform a social game, one of bluffs, seductions, and masquerades. At the same time, he would use it to develop a system of gamified learning that sought to promote literacy among the popular classes. Goldoni’s Rosaura and Chiari’s Eugenia represent, on stage and in novel form, women from modest upbringings who prove their capacity for scholarly learning. Here too, education is gamified – although less explicitly than in Casanova’s ‘grammatical lottery’ – through Rosaura’s mimicry of the lottery player and Eugenia’s practice of pseudo-cabbalism, both taking the form of agonistic games with their male counterparts.

In Rigamonti and Carraro’s reading of Susanna Centlivre’s *The Basset Table* (1705), they argue that ‘gambling [. . .] can be seen as the occasion for creating a social enclave in which ladies can venture into behaviors which are distinctively different from the dominant ones’.<sup>134</sup> We could ask if there is not something similar going on in Goldoni’s comedy and Chiari’s novel, with the lottery taking the form of an ‘enclave’ that allows the two women to play out, as it were, their intellectual skills. Thus, while the three authors dismiss and denounce the lottery’s inherent ideal of equality – ‘la création artificielle entre les joueurs des conditions d’égalité pure que la réalité refuse aux

<sup>130</sup>Casanova, II, p. 1353.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., p. 1352. In a second version of his proposal, Casanova repeats the argument, slightly rephrased (p. 1362).

<sup>133</sup>Like female education, popular education was an important topic of debate among Enlightenment thinkers, developing especially in the second half of the eighteenth century. See Harvey Chisick, *The Limits of Reform in the Enlightenment: Attitudes Towards the Education of the Lower Classes in Eighteenth-Century France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981). As Chisick notes, ‘the initiative [to the debate] seems to have come from Italy’ and an essay contest announced by the Academy of Mantua in 1775. Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>134</sup>Rigamonti and Carraro, p. 53.

hommes' [the creation for the players of conditions of pure equality denied to them in real life],<sup>135</sup> they also seem to transpose this very ideal into a different force for social change, that of female and popular education.

Finally, it could be argued that the three literary works are games in and of themselves, thus mirroring their own ludic theme. Goldoni's comedy stages a metatheatrical mimicry by having Rosaura emulate the lottery player and the other characters, and thus becoming an actress *mise en abyme*. Chiari's novel is a textual and paratextual pastiche, a play on the popular lottery manuals that flourished on the Venetian book market. Casanova's lottery episode enters into a performative project of self-representation that underpins the memoirs, through which the author constructs his own character as an adventurer, seducer, and gambler who aspires to an aristocratic stature despite his modest origins. One could ask, therefore, if the Enlightenment ideas that these texts convey are also 'gamified', in the sense of being wrapped up in a literary play that serves to conceal their radicality. In any case, their engagement with the lottery fantasy attests to its importance in the eighteenth-century imagination, as a culture figure containing the politically potent dream of social mobility.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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<sup>135</sup>Caillois, p. 60. The English translation is taken from Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, trans. by Meyer Barash (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), p. 19.