

Cosmopolitismo o egemonia culturale?
La riforma “francese” del teatro italiano di
Luigi Riccoboni e Carlo Goldoni

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Abstract

Cosmopolitanism or Cultural Hegemony? The “French” reform of Italian theatre in the works of Luigi Riccoboni and Carlo Goldoni

The Age of Enlightenment is often regarded as a period of intercultural exchange in literature and culture. A period in which the emergence of the “republic of letters” begins to overcome the borders between countries. However, a quick review of Frenchlanguage publications reveals a strong skepticism towards cosmopolitanism and, conversely, a celebration of France’s political and cultural supremacy. Consequently, the scope of the concept of cosmopolitanism during the Eighteenth century should be analyzed in detail in order to understand the role international relations played in cultural life and the spread of the Enlightenment in France. Eighteenthcentury theatre is the ideal area for an exploration of cosmopolitan ideas, and in particular the stage of the ComédieItalienne in Paris. As a theatre that offered Italian actors and authors the opportunity to engage in a FrancoItalian dialogue on stage, the troupe’s leader Luigi Riccoboni and Carlo Goldoni, who arrived in Paris in 1762, sought to use it as a platform for disseminating their reforms of the commedia all’improvviso with varying results.

This article will attempt to elucidate the part played by Franco-Italian exchanges and that of the French stage in the reform of Italian theatre practices. First, we consider intercultural exchanges in the theatrical field during the Eighteenth century and highlight the hegemonic position of the French stage. Next, a reading of the theoretical texts of Riccoboni and Goldoni will show the ambiguous positions of the two authors in relation to French drama. Finally, an analysis of Riccoboni's and Goldoni's trajectories in France will show two different visions of French theatrical practice that inform the creation of the two writers in equal measure.

Keywords: cosmopolitanism; *commedia dell'Arte*; theatre reform; Goldoni; Riccoboni.