Alexander the Great and the Indian Rajah Puru.
Exoticism in a Metastasio Libretto
As Set by Hasse and by Handel*

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Over the past five centuries, Western composers have evoked exotic lands and peoples in a wide range of musical genres: from folk songs to full-length operas and oratorios, from dances for lute to Broadway musicals, and from mass-media commercials to videogames.

Yet discussions of the topic "music and the exotic"—even when focusing exclusively on Western art music—have largely failed to consider the numerous seventeenth- and eighteenth-century serious operas in which leading characters are non-European.[1] In some of my recent writings, I have discussed how exotic

1. Two greatly shortened versions of the present article—without musical examples or the illustration—have appeared in translation: "Alexander der Grosse und der indische Raja Puru: Exotik in einem Libretto Metastasios und in darauf basierenden Opern von Hasse und von Händel," transl. Michelle Miles and Ingo Maerker, in Achim Aurnhammer and Barbara Korte (eds), *Fremde Helden auf europäischen Bühnen 1600-1900*, vol. 5 in the series *Helden—Heroisierungen—Heroismen* (Würzburg: Ergon), pp. 127-44; and "Alessandro Magno e il Ragià indiano Puru: Esotismo in un libretto di Metastasio nelle realizzazioni di Hasse e Handel," trans. Luana Salvarni, *Musica/Realtà*, 110 (July 2016), pp. 99-123. – Baroque-era *opera seria* and *tragédie lyrique* are largely omitted from otherwise excellent discussions of "the exotic in early music" by Thomas Betzwieser, Jean-Pierre Bartoli, Miriam Whaples, and others; see my *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 4 and 329, n. 5. Other major genres that are often omitted from consideration in discussions of "music and the exotic" include broadside ballad (e.g., Henry Howard's song about three Cherokee chiefs, *c.*1762), *ballet de cour* (e.g., *La délivrance de Renaud*, 1617), dramatic

lands and peoples are portrayed (or "represented") in the two primary genres of serious Baroque-era opera: French *tragédie-lyrique* and Italian *opera seria*.[2] I illustrated my points by referring to features from a number of specific works: e.g., Lully's *Roland* and Handel's *Tamerlano*.[3] The present article suggests a new direction for studies of the exotic in serious operas of the Baroque era by offering a more extended discussion of a single libretto and by contrasting the ways in which that libretto was treated by two acclaimed composers working in somewhat dissimilar theatrical and socio-political environments.

The libretto discussed here is Pietro Metastasio's *Alessandro nell'Indie* (*Alexander the Great in India*), an artful stage-text that focuses on Alexander the Great's interactions with the Indian rajah Puru and that was first performed in Naples in early 1730, as set to music by Leonardo Vinci. Thereafter, it was set by dozens of composers, though at times in versions with significant cuts or additions.[4] We shall look at two operas based on this Metastasio text: George Frideric Handel's *Poro re dell'Indie* and Johann Adolf Hasse's *Cleofide*. Both were first performed in 1731: Handel's at a public opera house in London that, despite its name—the King's Theatre—was open to the public and supported largely by wealthy investors; Hasse's, at the Saxon court in Dresden. Handel's libretto was mostly pure Metastasio, though greatly trimmed, possibly by the composer himself. Hasse's libretto-adapter, Michele Boccardi, had reworked some of the

oratorio (e.g., Handel's *Belshazzar*, 1745), and Lesage-era *opéra-comique* (*Arlequin sultane favorite*, 1715). The four works just mentioned in parentheses are among the case studies explored in my *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, *op. cit.*

2. Comic operas have been more extensively explored in this respect, as in Thomas Betzwieser's *Exotismus und "Türkenoper" in der französischen Musik des Ancien Régime* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1993). The single most extensively studied "exotic" comic opera is of course Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. On exoticist aspects of Mozart's *Die Entführung*, see my *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27, 37, 308-13, 322, and my *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 114-23.

3. On exotic elements in the genre of *tragédie-lyrique* (by which term I include its original, Lullyan version, *tragédie en musique*), see my *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-43, 239-47. *Tragédie-lyrique* is largely omitted from Betzwieser's otherwise wide-ranging *Exotismus*. As for *opera seria*, I discuss Handel's *Rinaldo* (with two leading Muslim characters, one male and one female), *Orlando* (with the magic-working Zoroastro, a figure based freely on the renowned Persian prophet and leader Zoroaster), *Giulio Cesare* (with Cleopatra and Tolomeo), *Serse* (the title character is a love-smitten version of Xerxes, the renowned Persian king), and *Tamerlano* (in which the two main male characters are Muslim leaders) in *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-58 and 261-66; and in "Alien Adventures: Exoticism in Italian-Language Operas of the Baroque," *Musical Times*, 150/1909 (2009), pp. 53–69. The latter article contains a fuller discussion of Handel's *Tamerlano* than appears in *Music and the Exotic*. A shorter version of "Alien Adventures," translated by Arnold Jacobshagen, appeared as "Exotismus in der Opera seria?" in Arnold Jacobshagen and Panja Mücke (eds), *Händels Opern*, vol. 2 (in two Teilbände) of *Das Händel-Handbuch* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2009), pp. 221-35.

4. *Grove Dictionary* (www.OxfordMusicOnline.com) lists seventy-one settings, between the years 1729 (Vinci, *recte* early 1730) and 1824.

recitative and had written new aria texts in place of many of Metastasio's; in addition, Hasse incorporated into the work some arias from earlier operas of his own.[5]

By comparing aspects of these two settings—as manifested in several arias, duets, and orchestral pieces from one or both works—we may gain appreciation of how two eighteenth-century composers used the resources of musical art to intensify or alter the portrayal of non-Europeans set forth in the version of the libretto that each was using. I stress that this comparison is selective: a comprehensive comparison of the two operas—scene-by-scene and aria-by-aria—would extend beyond the space I have here.[6] Nonetheless, the aspects and musical numbers I have selected do indicate characteristic ways in which non-European individuals and cultures could be represented within the *opera seria* genre. They also reflect, perhaps more surprisingly, one frequent purpose of such representations: namely as veiled commentary on political and social trends within Europe itself.

More generally, close examination of this one libretto and two of its different musical settings helps remind us of two important, and somewhat opposite, points: 1) how much a libretto about an exotic place or people provided the basic layout and dramatic materials for an *opera seria*; and 2) how much a composer—in conjunction with performers of high skill and insight—could enrich and inflect the exotic characterizations presented in that libretto.

The comparison of these two Alexander-and-the-rajah operas is made easier by the fact that both works are now available in modern critical editions and in superb CD recordings.[7]

Exoticism without Exotic Style

The genre of *opera seria*—though held in high regard by musicologists and cultural historians—has been largely excluded from discussions of "the exotic in music." The primary reason, I suspect, is that musicians, listeners, critics, and

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5. It is also possible that Giacomo Rossi was the one who adapted Metastasio's text for Handel's *Poro*: see Winton Dean, *Handel's Operas, 1726-41* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2006), p. 173. In 1736, Hasse would write a substantially new opera on Metastasio's libretto for Venice. The work bears the libretto's original title, *Alessandro nell'Indie*, and apparently makes few if any alterations or substitutions.

6. Some basic points about how each opera uses and alters Metastasio's *Alessandro nell'Indie* libretto have already been made in writings by Dean and Strohm cited here and in the critical editions of the respective operas: *Poro* in the *Hallische Händel-Ausgabe* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1955–), series 2, vol. 25 (ed. Graham Cummings); *Cleofide* in *Johann Adolf Hasse: Werke* (Stuttgart: Carus, 1999–), series 1, vol. 1 (ed. Zenon Mojzysz).

7. The 1987 CD recording of Hasse's *Cleofide* was led by William Christie (Capriccio 10 193/96) and re-released in 2011 (Capriccio 7080) with a shorter booklet. Handel's *Poro re dell'Indie*, may be heard in a CD recording of 1997, led by Fabio Biondi (Opus 111 OPS 30-113/115), currently out of print. Neither opera has been preserved in a commercial videorecording.

scholars are accustomed to thinking that a representation of an exotic place or people in a musical work requires the presence of distinctively exotic style markers in the music. When we find such signals, we feel confident that the work is indeed exotic—or one might perhaps better say "exoticist"—in intent and effect.

This habit of thought derives from the fact that—since the late eighteenth century—many musico-dramatic works have made prominent use of style markers that were widely understood by composer and audience as indicating a non-Western locale. Much-studied operatic instances include Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782)—which famously invokes the *alla turca* style—and Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1904-7)—which incorporates Japanese (and, however oddly, Chinese) tunes as well as other stylistic features rightly or wrongly associated at the time with East Asia, such as a harp to suggest a *koto*.[8]

In several of my recent writings I have called this long-established assumption the "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm of musical exoticism:

> The "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm identifies an exotic(ist) intent or message in a passage or work if (and only if) the latter makes use of stylistic materials that (1) depart from the norms that were currently prevailing in the Western genre in question when the work was composed and either (2a) derive from the musical traditions of the exotic locale being depicted or (2b) can be understood as indicating that locale some other way (e.g., through an invented style or through touches of intentional strangeness).[9]

If the "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm is enlightening with regard to the aforementioned works by Mozart and Puccini, it offers less help for works composed before the middle of the eighteenth century. For example, when an early eighteenth-century *opera seria* portrays a non-Western culture or person, it most often makes use of style elements that are not notably different from those that the composer would have used had the action of the work taken place somewhere in Europe and had all the characters been, for example, ancient Greeks or Romans.

In a work from before the mid eighteenth century, the characteristics of a given non-Western locale, ethnic group, or individual were presented, to a large degree, by non-musical means. These could include the characters' names;

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8. On Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, see R. P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-213. W. Anthony Sheppard, in 2012, established that two important motives in *Butterfly* are of Chinese origin: see http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/17/arts/music/puccini-opera-echoes-a-music-box-at-the-morris-museum.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1 (accessed 12 January 2017) and "Puccini and the Music Boxes," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 140/1 (2015), pp. 41-92.

9. R. P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-19; cf. R. P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-59. The two paradigms were first formulated in my "A Broader View of Musical Exoticism," *Journal of Musicology*, 24 (2007), pp. 477-521.

details of the plot and dramatic action (how a character acts or reacts); the specific words (declarations, self-justifications, etc.) uttered by the character; and perhaps certain features of the sets (such as a painted backdrop based on travelers' reports) or costumes (such as elaborately feathered turbans, robes tied with a sash, or stereotypically Turkish or Persian mustaches or full beards).[10]

The composer often reinforced these characteristics through music, employing not "foreign" sounding sonorities but rather devices that matched the sentiment—and any implied physical gestures, behaviors, and actions—of the sung text. A Persian or Mongol warrior, for example, might be shown as being, say, irritable and quick to anger. (Unjustified or excessive anger was one of several undesirable traits that in the early eighteenth century were often associated with non-Western males, especially rulers, warriors, and religious authorities. Others included selfishness, vengefulness, hunger for power, insensitivity to others, uncontrolled lust, excessive indulgence in the sensual, and an inclination toward cruelty or personal violence.) The composer might then convey that character's anger by energetic leaps in the vocal line or emphatic rhythmic figures in the orchestral accompaniment: in other words, by the same musical means a composer would use to reinforce the expression of anger by any operatic character, European or not, and whether or not that anger was considered morally justified.[11]

Musical devices suitable to a given emotion or state of mind—such as anger—were, of course, not intended to be "Eastern"-sounding and were not understood as such. Yet such devices would distinguish an anger-prone non-Western male from a Western male in that same opera, especially if the dramatic context showed the non-Western male's anger as inappropriate, self-serving, or excessive. The devices did their characterizing work without alluding to what was believed as constituting the musical style of the region—indeed, without introducing any stylistic oddities at all. The net result of all of this is that the "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm offers no help for most exotic characters and exotic plot-elements in operas before the advent of the *alla turca* (in the middle of the eighteenth century).

10. See Figure 1 below. For examples of characterizations and set designs (in Handel operas) that reflect reports by travelers to Eastern lands, see Ellen T. Harris, *George Frideric Handel: A Life with Friends* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014), pp. 107-13. One such traveler was Aaron Hill, who later drafted the libretto for Handel's *Rinaldo* (1711), the first Italian-language opera written specifically for performance in London; *Rinaldo* received numerous performances over the next two decades. Further on sets and costumes, see n. 76 below.

11. There was a particularly rich—sometimes envious, sometimes sharply disapproving—European literature about how males in Islamic-ruled lands behaved: see Norman Daniel's classic *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960). The Mughals (whose religion was Islam) began their control of India in 1526 and ruled, with only one brief interruption, until defeated by Britain in 1857.

I have therefore, in those same recent writings, formulated a broader paradigm for understanding musical exoticism, one that includes "exotic color" (addressed by the "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm) and that also includes further aspects of the work of art, such as the strategic use of more normal means of characterization (e.g., the inclination to inappropriate or disproportionate anger, as just discussed). I have dubbed this the "All the Music in Full Context" Paradigm. The broader paradigm takes into consideration many more factors—more evidence, one might say—and thus helps us deal with works that the "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm leaves unexplained. I summarize the broader paradigm as follows:

> The "All the Music in Full Context" Paradigm sees exotic(ist) representation in music as potentially involving any musical procedures, including ones that were stylistically normative at the time. In many vocal and dramatic works, the words and actions specify the locale (e.g., the ethnic identity of an operatic character), thereby freeing the composer to use a wide range of possible procedures to intensify the portrayal. The opening words in this paradigm's name—"All the Music"—remind us that the commentator should feel free to consider all musical elements and passages in a piece, *including any that might fit under the "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm*. The closing words—"in Full Context"—may include basic elements of genre but also non-musical concepts—such as cultural stereotypes—that were more or less taken for granted at the time: for example, widely accepted notions about Turkish sultans, Turkish harem women, American Indian (i.e., Native American) chiefs, or Chinese ministers. Thus, the "All the Music in Full Context" Paradigm often relates the music of a work to its non-musical elements (sung text, stage directions, costume designs) and also to cultural attitudes that lie beyond (or, in a sense, beneath or behind) "the work itself."[12]

The case study in the present article is undertaken in the spirit of the second, broader Paradigm. One of the most notable results of this compare-and-contrast approach is that the Self/Other dichotomy, which some critics and scholars take as axiomatic, is revealed to be, at times, fascinatingly porous. Though Metastasio's libretto and, even more so, the settings by Handel and by Hasse might give the impression of representing "what the *East* is like," a close look demonstrates that these three complex cultural products reveal at least as much

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12. R. P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21; and *Musical Exoticism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-71. Certain scholars have sensed the need for a broader approach to the question of exoticism *per musica*. Harris points out that Handel, in some West-meets-East operas, used rich and unusual sonorities to portray Eastern luxury (e.g., Cleopatra, in *Alexander Balus*) but more often assigned such forces to the Westerners (e.g., in *Riccardo Primo* and the aforementioned *Rinaldo*), thereby indicating the greater strength and virtue of the West (*George Frideric Handel*, pp. 77-85, 103-7).

about the West: its cultural values, its social structures, its anxieties (e.g., about its own current-day imperialist ventures), and its almost obsessive habit of using new subject material about distant lands—including inaccurate scraps of "information"—to create high-level entertainment for people who were financially comfortable and hence influential.

Eastern Stereotypes and the Graeco-Roman Moral Norm

The two principal male roles in Metastasio's *Alessandro nell'Indie* libretto are historical figures: Alexander the Great and Puru, who was a renowned rajah of Paurava, a region in the Punjab. (Puru is called Poros in Greek sources and Porus in Roman ones. In Metastasio's libretto, the names are Italianized to Alessandro and Poro.) The elephants of Puru's army were overwhelmed by the Greeks' horses in 326 BC on the left bank of the Hydaspes, a river—also known as the Jhelum or Jhelam—that is located in what is today Pakistan.

Metastasio's libretto borrowed elements from several previous literary versions, including Racine's *Alexandre le Grand* (1665). It gives both monarchs an army general (Timagene for Alessandro, Gandarte for Poro). It also includes a major female character—Cleofide, monarch of the Indian region just across the river from Poro's lands—over whom the two leading male figures vie.[13] Perhaps the name had a particular advantage for Metastasio's plot: it echoed a later "Cleo," namely queen Cleopatra of Egypt, the renowned prototype of an Eastern woman who is at once astoundingly beautiful and politically skilled.[14]

Thomas Betzwieser has stated that, in the many operas based on Metastasio's *Alessandro* libretto, the exoticism resides merely in matters of "topography": that is, in the Indian locale, the names of certain characters, and at most a few details of plot.[15] He thereby gives the misleading impression that the many Alessandro-and-Poro operas provided at most an unusual locale in which the usual types of *opera seria* events could unfurl.

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13. Cleophis (probably deriving from the Sanskrit name Kripa) was, according to various ancient Greek and Roman writers, the wife or mother of the war-leader of the Assacani (Ashvakas), a major horse-riding people in what is now called the Peshawar valley. Some of the ancient sources claim that she sought to appease the Greek conqueror Alexander through gifts and even love; two Roman writers (Curtius and Justin) report that she bore him a son.

14. Lucy Hughes-Hallett, *Cleopatra: Histories, Dreams and Distortions* (New York: Harper and Row, 1990). On Axiane (the figure analogous to Cleofide) in Racine's *Alexandre le Grand*, see Derval Conroy, *Ruling Women*, vol. 2: *Configuring the Female Prince in Seventeenth-Century French Drama* ([London]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 107-12.

15. Th. Betzwieser, *Exotismus*, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17, and R. P. Locke, "Alien Adventures," art. cit., p. 54; see also Th. Betzwieser's portion of the "Exotismus" entry in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd edition.

In fact, however, this Metastasio libretto evokes India in numerous potentially vivid ways, by indicating the behaviors of the four Indian characters and the feelings and reactions that those characters convey to each other and to us, in passages of recitative, aria, and duet. The Indian atmosphere is enriched if one replaces the obligatory Italian name-endings with ones that sound more like actual Indian names: for example, if one changes Gandarte to Gandharta. (Name changes of this sort were carried out in the 1959 German-language recording from the Händel-Festspiele Halle.)[16] Furthermore, the stage-sets and other visual elements—as suggested by the stage directions and certain words of the text—surely colored an audience's response to the music and the dramatic events throughout the opera.

Here, briefly, are some of the distinctly exoticizing moments and details in Metastasio's libretto, few of which have been highlighted in previous writings on the two operas:

• In the middle of Act 1, Cleofide arrives at Alessandro's camp with—as the stage direction indicates—"many Indians … bearing diverse gifts." These gifts, she explains to Alessandro, come from India's "cliffs" and "vast eastern seacoast" (Act 1 scene 13). (Unless otherwise indicated, I give the act and scene indications of Metastasio's 1730 *Alessandro* libretto even when referring to the Handel and Hasse settings; deletions and insertions made in those operas resulted in somewhat different scene numbers.)[17] The stage direction in the libretto for the elaborate Dresden premiere of Hasse's opera names Cleofide's native offerings more precisely: "tigers, lions, and baskets of gold and pearls."[18]

• In an earlier scene in Metastasio's libretto (Act 1 scene 3), two Indians capture Poro's sister Erissena and bring her in chains to the Greek commander as—they hope—a means of currying favor with him. Alessandro regards this as a heinous act. He calls the turncoats knaves ("Indegni!") and declares to Erissena that, unlike "other enemies" (by whom he presumably means Persians or Scythians), he "respects" beauty and has no wish to "violate" her ("oltraggiarti"). Alessandro sets the Indian princess free and sends the two "traitors"

16. Handel, *Poros* [*sic*], Edel CD 0093742BC (re-release 1998), conducted by Horst-Tanu Margraf.

17. The 1730 libretto is consultable at the Padua website for Metastasio libretti: www.progetto-metastasio.it (accessed 12 january 2017). In a given production or recording of an opera, the act and scene divisions may be further altered, depending on how many intermissions are taken, which numbers are cut (i.e., removed), and so on.

18. Hasse's *Cleofide*: Act 1 scene 14. The Italian libretto for this opera is reprinted in facsimile in the booklet for the first release of Capriccio recording but not in that for the 2011 re-release. It is likewise reprinted in the critical edition by Zenon Mojzysz, but not in the piano-vocal score derived from that edition. My translations are based freely on those by Liesl B. Sayre, et al., in the original Capriccio release and in the critical edition.

back in chains to Poro for punishment. The implication seems to be that the behavior of the turncoats is a manifestation of misogyny and arrant selfishness: features understood as typical of regions located far from Greece, understood as the homeland of enlightened attitudes and moral steadiness. Thus does the libretto's Western hero make explicit, for the benefit of the reading and listening audience, the real or supposed cultural traits of the males of India—and other territories lying far to the east of Europe (the hinted-at Persia or Scythia).

• A distinctively Indian cultural and religious marker is central to the final scene in Metatasio's libretto, namely the Hindu tradition of suttee (*sati*), by which a widow voluntarily underwent immolation, normally on the funeral pyre of her husband. This custom is mentioned in a wide range of writings about India by ancient Greeks as well as by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europeans, such as Montaigne.[19] Toward the end of Metastasio's *Alessandro* (Act 3 scene 12), Cleofide is in despair, having been mistakenly informed that her beloved Poro has thrown himself into the Hydaspes to avoid capture by the Greeks. Cleofide prepares to mount a funeral pyre in order to carry out what she calls the "custom" prescribed by an "age-old law." Alessandro, shocked to see Cleofide at the foot of the pyre, voices the archetypal Westerner's reaction (then and now): the requirement that a widow commit suttee is "an inhuman law that needs to be stopped, [and] that I will destroy" ("*legge inumana, che bisogno ha di freno, che distrugger saprò*"). There was no reference to suttee in Racine's play.[20] By adding suttee into the *Alessandro* libretto, Metastasio was able to heighten the contrast between Western and Eastern cultural values. The way that Metastasio and his readers imagined this scene is suggested by Figure 1[21], an illustration published in an early collected edition of his libretti (Paris: Veuve Hérissant, 1780-82).

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19. The Montaigne essay is "De la vertu" (*Essais*, bk. 2, ch. 29), as quoted in Binita Mehta, *Widows, Pariahs, and* bayadères (Lewisburg, Pa: Bucknell University Press, 2002), pp. 26-27, 55-84. (I have adapted her translation.) Further on growing European awareness of India's literature, religious traditions, and social customs, see Raymond Schwab's classic study *La renaissance orientale* (Paris: Payot, 1950); translated by Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking as *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1686-1880* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984). Miniature paintings from India of the Mughal era (1526-1857, with one interruption) also reached Europe, and gave a detailed sense, however incomplete, of life, including the making of music, in harem and court. See Bonnie C. Wade, *Imaging Sound: An Ethnomusicological Study of Music, Art, and Culture in Mughal India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

20. Franz Penzenstadler, "Metastasios Theorie und Praxis einer neuen Tragödie," *Il saggiatore musicale*, 15 (2008), pp. 199-236 (esp. p. 223, n. 66). Penzenstadler observes that Metastasio may have drawn upon the description of suttee in J.-B. Tavernier's *Les six voyages … qu'il a fait en Turquie, en Perse et aux Indes*, vol. 2 (Paris: Clouzier, 1676): bk. 2, chaps 9-10 (pp. 383-94).

21. Cleofide is standing in front of the altar in the temple dedicated to Bacchus, the Greek god who—in ancient Greek writings—was often said to have been born in North Africa or the Middle East and to have conquered India. The Indian queen (or rajini) is about to

Figure 1 • Illustration of the final scene in Metastasio's libretto *Alessandro nell'Indie*,
from volume 4 of the 1780-82 edition of his collected libretti (Paris: Veuve Hérissant).
Courtesy of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto

- Cleofide remarks that the smoke—which the audience presumably is now beginning to see wafting (as shown in Figure 1)—is perfumed with spices. This is another bit of exotic color in the text: in Handel's and Hasse's day, spices were a major mercantile import from the East.
- At the moment that Cleofide enters to commit suttee, Poro is hiding inside the nearby pagan temple, hoping to stab Alessandro and Cleofide. (He wrongly suspects Cleofide of preferring the Greek commander.) Overhearing, he recognizes his beloved's true devotion to him and steps out, saving her from the pyre. Poro's timely action has the further advantage (for the librettist and for the Western principles of tolerance and forbearance) of making it unnecessary for Alessandro to countermand a local custom, presumably by show of force.[22]
- We do not know if any lions or tigers—or dancers costumed as them—were actually used in the Dresden premiere of Hasse's *Cleofide* or whether the opera-goer had to imagine them from the stage direction in the printed libretto. But we do know that other elements in that production attempted to reflect (however inaccurately) the time frame and ethnicities in the story. According to a contemporary report, fifty-four soldiers of King August's army participated in the battle scene (Act 2 scene 5), "having spent some time training with shields in the ancient Greek and Indian art of swordplay."[23] The performances also featured three separate *balli*, one after each act of the opera.[24] The first of these *balli* featured "marinari"—perhaps the dancers or mimes who had earlier brought Cleofide and her gifts, by ship, to Alessandro. The *ballo* after the second act

mount a pyre in order to join king (or rajah) Poro in death, since he was—though erroneously—reported drowned. Alessandro stretches forth his hands as if in hopes of preventing her. The Indian men on the left wear somewhat biblical-looking robes and headdresses and have untrimmed beards. The figures on the right are more varied: a Greek soldier in a helmet, an Indian soldier in helmet and beard (perhaps Gandarte), and a beardless man in a turban and quasi-Indian robes: presumably Poro coming out of hiding and eager to show Cleofide that he is still alive and still loves her. Two priestesses of Bacchus are seen in the right foreground, with a basket of grapes and a large jug of, presumably, wine.

22. Metastasio (1730), Act 3, *scena ultima* (i.e., 13). Cleofide had, earlier in the opera, pondered throwing herself into the Hydaspes; again, this is not the kind of behavior generally shown by Western kings, queens, and army generals in operas of the same era, especially ones treated as essentially admirable. Poro and Gandarte, in Metastasio's *Alessandro* libretto, likewise threaten suicide in the course of the opera. In Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, Cornelia, the widow of the murdered Roman general Pompeo, is a notable exception; her hopelessness was perhaps acceptable or at least understandable at the time because she is accosted by Tolomeo and forced into his harem.

23. See *Curiosa Saxonica*, no. 75 (1731), p. 271, cited in Zenon Mojzysz, *Cleofide, "Dramma per musica" von Johann Adolf Hasse: Untersuchung der Entstehungsgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Carus, 2011), p. 54.

24. The music for the three *balli* is lost, as is the choreography. Still, these *balli* are prominently mentioned in the original published libretto.

featured *Indiani* (no further details are known), and the third act concluded with a dance of *baccanti* (i.e., Bacchantes or local temple women).[25]

In short, all these features confirm a brief observation made by Reinhard Strohm: Hasse's *Cleofide*, as realized on the Dresden stage in 1731, was "a relatively early example of genuine exoticism … in music theater."[26]

Metastasio's Rajah Poro
as Anti-Imperialist and as Bad Leader

The libretto's engagement with the complex relationship between (European) Self and (non-European) Other is manifest in another notable and perhaps unexpected feature: recurring denunciations of Greek imperialism. Cleofide, after presenting Alessandro with tribute, reminds him of the cities and fields he has destroyed and the "extreme misery" that this has caused. As for Poro, though he displays emotional weakness (as we shall see), he is still ruler of major lands in India. He goads the Greek conqueror with mounting anger and, in the process, moves from the third person (showing respect) to the (more accusatory) second person: "What motive leads Alexander toward the lands of the rising sun [i.e., eastwards from Europe] in order to disturb their peaceful existence? … You already receive tribute from places across the world, yet all the world is too little for your thirst" (Act 1 scene 2). Similar accusations are voiced by Poro's general Gandarte (when, disguised as Poro, he confronts Alessandro) and—in soliloquy—by Alessandro's own general Timagene.[27] These repeated attacks on Western imperialist ventures echo debates that took place in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries about the morality of imperial exploits by the Spanish and other European powers.[28] Poro's long and

25. These temple priestesses are presumably devoted to a god of love, more specifically (as their name *baccanti* suggests) Bacchus, the god of love and wine—see n. 66. (Bacchus is known as Bacco in Italian.) The opera's last scene—with the funeral pyre—occurs in front of a "temple of Bacchus." In Handel's *Poro*, the Act 3 chorus and *ballo* for the *baccanti* were cut; indeed, the opera as a whole simplified some of Metastasio's scenic effects (to judge by the stage directions in its published libretto): see W. Dean, *Handel's Operas*, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-73.

26. "Ein relativ frühes Beispiel für echte Exotik und Chinoiserie im Musiktheater"—Reinhard Strohm, "Hasses Oper 'Cleofide' und ihre Vorgeschichte," p. 13 in the booklet accompanying the first release of the CD recording cited above and p. 6 in the re-release. By "echt" Strohm presumably means "striving to be at least somewhat accurate"; also, he uses the term "Chinoiserie" in a generalized manner (to mean ersatz-Asian).

27. Gandarte: "You'd like all of us dead" (Act 2 scene 13, in Metastasio's 1730 libretto); in the libretto for the 1731 *Cleofide* (adapted by Boccardi) this continues, "It would please you if all of the Indus [river] ran with blood." Timagene declares his intention to free "the oppressed world" from the "yoke" of Alexander (Act 2 scene 11, in the Metastasio libretto).

28. See particularly William S. Maltby, *The Black Legend in England: The Development of Anti-Spanish Sentiment, 1558-1660* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1971) and other studies sum-

powerful speech (just cited, in part) was maintained almost in its entirety by Hasse's Dresden librettist.[29] Handel's librettist condensed it drastically, perhaps out of sensitivity to British military and financial ventures in India.[30] Still, some of the more literarily inclined audience members in London may have read this disturbing and not-unjustified tirade in Metastasio's libretto, published the year before.[31]

Rajah Poro may have admirable goals, but he lacks Alessandro's emotional stability and sense of priorities.[32] Again and again in the opera, Poro suspects Cleofide of infidelity.[33] In Act 1 scene 9 he learns that Cleofide is on her way to meet Alessandro. Worried that she is shifting her affections to the Western conqueror, Poro prepares to chase after her. Quickly, his general Gandarte reminds him that he should instead be leading the fight against the invading Greek army.[34] In another scene (Act 2 scene 7)—one of the few that do not focus on the rajah's jealousy—Poro manifests another problematic trait: impulsiveness. When Poro comes to Alessandro's riverside camp in disguise as a member of the Indian court (Asbite, supposedly speaking on behalf of his lord, Poro), he twice, out of pride, comes close to blurting out his real name.[35]

As a contrast to Poro's continual unsteadiness, Metastasio provided Alessandro—the best of the West in all respects—with many occasions to show clemency, self-denial, regret for the harm he has caused India, and respect for the women of any land that he has conquered. Alessandro's ability to control

marized in R.P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77, 90-91, 230-32. We partly discount Timagene's words because he is, as the libretto puts it, Alessandro's "secret enemy." (Timagene is the son of Cleitos, whom Alexander the Great killed in a drunken fight; also, Alessandro has just blocked Timagene's plan for gaining access to Poro's sister Erissena.) But we also recognize in those words a valid Western sympathy with conquered peoples.

29. It omitted some specific phrases about Africa and Asia.

30. On the motivations for and techniques of British imperial trade and settlement in India (including the expansion and fortification of Kolkata/Calcutta), see the *Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 2, ed. P. J. Marshall (London: Oxford University Press, 1998), especially pp. 487-551.

31. Reinhard Strohm, "Metastasio's *Alessandro nell'Indie* and Its Earliest Settings," in his *Essays on Handel and Italian Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 232-48 (here 239).

32. W. Dean summarizes him aptly as "unstable and frenetic, besotted with love and jealousy :" *Handel's Operas*, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

33. Cf. Alvaro in Rameau's *Les Indes galantes* (R. P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit.*, p. 236).

34. The words in Hasse's libretto (as reworked for him by Boccardi) are "to appear weak" ("debole comparir"). The words that Metastasio himself gave to Gandarte at this point seem more respectful of Poro: "to destroy your great intentions" ("scomporre i gran dissegni").

35. Opera lovers may justly wonder whether the libretto of Verdi's *Aida* was partly influenced by this Metastasian moment: in Act 1 of Verdi's opera, Aida, an Ethiopian captive, is taunted by the Egyptian princess Amneris and begins to reply: "I, too, am [a princess and your rival]" but checks herself just in time. Resemblances have long been noticed between the *Aida* libretto and Metastasio's libretto *Nitetti*.

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his desire is a trait that ancient Greek philosophers such as Aristotle (who taught the young Alexander) considered necessary to a leader—indeed, to any well-behaved citizen. This capacity for self-control is reaffirmed at the end of the opera. Although Alessandro is smitten with Cleofide, he allows her to reunite with her long-beloved Poro. He also restores them to their neighboring thrones, though in a subordinate position: as tributary monarchs to imperial Greece.

It should be added that the Alessandro figure in this opera is not the only version of Alexander the Great that appears in early eighteenth-century opera. Five years earlier, Handel had composed an opera entitled simply *Alessandro*, on a very different libretto that repeatedly showed the Greek conqueror in a less favorable light. Having conquered an Indian city (here called by the invented name of Oxidraca), the title character of *Alessandro* declares himself divine and is promptly criticized for this act of grandiosity by the upstanding general Clito.[36] Indeed, this version of Alessandro—the opera takes place earlier in the great commander's career—is drawn to not one but two eastern princesses: Rossane (whom the Greeks have brought as a captive from Persia) and Lisaura (a Scythian and thus, in Alessandro's view, a "barbarian").[37] With both of Handel's Alexander-in-India operas—*Alessandro* and *Poro*—having their own distinctive qualities, one might well wonder if some London theatergoers concluded that Alexander the Great, having learned his lessons in the 1726 opera (*Alessandro*), became, five opera seasons later (in *Poro*), more resigned to accepting his fated cultural role—in his own day and for future generations—as an admirable Aristotelian hero.[38]

Metastasio's decision, in *Alessandro nell'Indie*, to present Alexander as emotionally restrained has the advantage of leaving the role of the besotted and violent lover to another male: not a fellow Greek (or Roman, etc.) warrior—as is often the case in early eighteenth-century opera—but an Indian rajah. In assigning moral weakness to an Eastern male, the librettist was relying upon attitudes typical of educated Europeans. More generally, this match-up of foreign ethnicity and undesirable character traits was consonant with the widespread support, among early eighteenth-century Europeans, for imperialist conquest and, less directly, for trade agreements that were often militarily enforced.[39]

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36. On Clito in *Alessandro* (a character based on the historical figure Cleitos, discussed in n. 28 above), see Regina Compton, "How to Enrage Alexander, or Towards an Understanding of Handel's Recitativo semplice and Theatrical Gesture," *Händel-Jahrbuch*, 62 (2016), pp. 33-51.

37. Rossane is clearly the operatic equivalent of the historical Roxana, a prominent Bactrian woman whom Alexander married in 327. But some of her traits seem similar to those of a figure with a similar name from much more recent times (see n. 54 below).

38. On Handel's opera *Alessandro*, see W. Dean, *Handel's Operas*, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-35. On that and other Alexander operas, see Richard G. King, "'How to Be an Emperor': Acting Alexander the Great in *opera seria*," *Early Music*, 326 (2008), pp. 181-202.

39. See, again, the chapters on India in *Oxford History*, *op. cit.* On early eighteenth-century attitudes toward overseas conquest and trade arrangements—including the trade in African

I should stress that Poro is not simply a character who yields for a time to a negative urge. There are plenty of those in *opera seria*, and many are Westerners. But when a Western male is, for example, too much ruled by amorous desire—e.g., Grimoaldo, duke of Benevento, in Handel's *Rodelinda*—he is often a potentially good ruler who has been influenced by a cynical and ambitious advisor (Garibaldo). By contrast, Poro's traits and actions seem markers of inherent inferiority (whether understood as ethnic, racial, religious, or more broadly cultural): these include his recurrent possessiveness and jealousy, his lying in wait (in the final scene) to murder Cleofide and Alessandro, and the fact that he, unlike Grimoaldo (in *Rodelinda*) and Alessandro (in *Poro*), scarcely suffers from pangs of conscience.

More generally, I do not mean to suggest that such traits as amorous excess, viciousness, double-dealing, and dereliction of duty are assigned only to non-Western characters in early eighteenth-century opera, or that virtue is never assigned to non-Westerners. Quite the contrary, every new opera reconfigured a limited collection of available traits in a different way. To mention three Handel operas in particular: in his *Rinaldo*, both the Christian title character (a renowned Crusader knight) and the Syrian king Argante are deluded by desire (though Argante is, in addition, presented as a brute and a buffoon whereas Rinaldo is not). In Handel's *Orlando*, the Christian title character—another Crusader, like Rinaldo—becomes insane from love and jealousy, and only some supernatural interventions manage to cure him so that, at the opera's end, he can go fight the Muslim foe. In Handel's *Tamerlano*, the two central characters are both Muslim rulers: one is steadfast, the other, despicable.[40]

Still, when negative traits (selfishness, cruelty, weakness of will, deceptiveness in diplomacy, etc.) do coincide with Easternness, the result must have held special resonance in Handel's day. Some operagoers had surely read—in travel books, gazettes, and the like—about the customs of the Middle East and India and about Britain's growing commercial domination of those lands. Some had surely invested in stock companies that financed overseas trade to India or the Americas. (Certain transatlantic companies were deeply involved in the slave trade.) Indeed, Handel himself had invested in an overseas trade company, as had some of his friends and some individuals who helped fund his opera company.[41]

slaves—and toward the strongly expansionist Ottoman Empire, see R. P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic, op. cit.*, pp. 56-74, 75-100, 204-7, and 264-66.

40. See n. 3.

41. See Ellen T. Harris, "With Eyes on the East and Ears in the West: Handel's Orientalist Operas," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 36 (2006), pp. 419-43 (esp. 432-34), and her *George Frideric Handel, op. cit.*, pp. 76-113. Thomas McGeary has sought to disprove Harris's claims: *The Politics of Opera in Handel's Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 91-93 (and, more generally, pp. 1-11). David Hunter has made Harris's claims even more pointed (regarding the slave trade): *The Lives of George Frideric Handel* (Woodbridge: Boy-

This may seem far from *Poro* and *Cleofide* and their Metastasian source. But we must remember that writers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often drew parallels between ancient Eastern potentates—including some who appear in Baroque-era opera libretti—and recent and current leaders of expansionist Eastern empires, most prominently the Arab potentates who controlled Northern Africa and much of the Iberian Peninsula during the eighth to fifteenth centuries, and the Ottoman sultans who, having conquered Constantinople in 1453, quickly expanded into southeastern Europe, invaded southern Italy (at Otranto, in 1480-81), and twice lay siege to the Hapsburg capital, Vienna (in 1529 and 1653).

The most renowned instance of an *ancient* Eastern opponent of the West was the aforementioned Xerxes of Persia, who attempted to conquer Greece (as described in Herodotus). Another was Mithridates VI, ruler of Pontus (now northern Turkey), who fought the Romans for decades (88-63 BC); his troops were welcomed into Greece, where they successfully besieged the Romans on the strategically crucial island of Rhodes. Racine, in his 1673 tragedy *Mithridate*, has the title character declare that he knows the route across the Black Sea and up the Danube: "Doutez-vous … / que du Scythe avec moi l'alliance jurée / De l'Europe en ces lieux ne me livre l'entrée?"—"It is quite clear that … the Scythians, with whom I have allied myself, will in those lands [of the Danube] grant me entry into Europe."[42]

Thus, to return to our present case study, when Poro's army plays a trick on Alexander's troops in Act 2—attacking without warning, then destroying a bridge and escaping to safety by jumping into the river—the audience easily understood this as a conspicuously deceitful military action. (Alessandro denounces it as an ignominious *insidia*, i.e., a trap.) And they would have considered it typical of Easterners both past and present. Indeed, any European leader who tried to establish diplomatic relations with the Ottomans could be branded a traitor to the pan-European Christian cause. Louis XIV, for example, came under attack as "Le Grand-Turc de l'Ouest" (The Great "Sultan" of the West); his foreign policy was dubbed "L'Alcoran de Louis XIV" (The Koran of Louis XIV).[43]

dell, 2015), pp. 200-6. The noted composer-conductor Nicholas Routley proposes direct and sometimes persuasive parallels between one Handel opera and cultural agendas of the day (and of the century or so to come): "Handel's *Giulio Cesare* as a Manifesto of British Imperialism," in *Aflame with Music: 100 Years of Music at the University of Melbourne* (Parkville, Vic.: Centre for Studies in Australian Music, Unversity of Melbourne, 1996), pp. 31-41.

42. Racine, *Mithridate* (1673), quoted in Michèle Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 212; the translation here is mine.

43. M. Longino, *Orientalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 212; also Kathrina LaPorta, "Judging a Book by Its Cover: The Aesthetics of the Ephemeral in *L'Alcoran de Louis XIV, ou le testament politique du Cardinal Mazarin* (1695)," *French Studies Bulletin*, 36/136 (2015), pp. 49-53. The Franco-Ottoman alliance had been launched by King François I in 1536 and would last until Napoleon's

Add Music and Stir

The music for a libretto featuring people from "the East"—especially one that also includes people from "the West"—can emphasize differences between the behavior of the representatives of those regions, or it can minimize them. Previous commentators on Handel's *Poro* or Hasse's *Cleofide* have not focused on this question, preferring instead to ask other questions such as how the opera in question relates to the conventions of early-eighteenth-century *opera seria*.[44] For example, Reinhard Strohm argues that Handel's *Poro* is true to Metastasio's spirit in "transferring the struggle between personalities and nations," which was the focus in earlier tellings, such as Racine's play, "on to the spiritual plane of the individual's conscience."[45] Sven Hansell makes a related point: Metastasio's *Alessandro nell'Indie*, by drawing attention away from issues of geopolitical struggle—and, one assumes he would add, also by drawing attention away from differences of ethnic or national character—emphasizes instead the various characters' amorous entanglements and misunderstandings. And (Hansell proposes further), in Hasse's setting of the libretto (*Cleofide*), the "coquettish" tone of the music intensifies this shift.[46]

Still, as one might predict, mood and style vary widely across the musical numbers (instrumental passages, arias, and duets) in these two operas. This fact encourages us not to rest content with such generalized comments as those just cited. I will discuss two aspects of this variety of mood and style, then proceed to look at some arias and recitatives in each opera.

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conquest of Ottoman Egypt in 1798-1801. Further, see Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

44. W. Dean, *Handel's Operas*, *op. cit*., pp. 169-93; Frederick L. Millner, *The Operas of Johann Adolf Hasse* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1979), p. 103; Sven Hansell, "*Cleofide*," in *Grove Music Online*; R. Strohm, "Hasses Oper 'Cleofide'," art. cit., p. 17; Roland Dieter Schmidt-Hensel, *"La musica è del Signor Hasse detto il Sassone…": Johann Adolf Hasses 'Opere serie' der Jahre 1730 bis 1745: Quellen, Fassungen, Aufführungen*, 2 vols (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2009), vol. 1, pp. 210, 214, 216, 218, 226, 302; vol. 2, pp. 153-78. The various entanglements in the plot may or may not have been understood in Dresden as alluding to specific individuals in the court. See R. Strohm, "Hasses Oper 'Cleofide'," art. cit., p. 31, an interpretation challenged in Panja Mücke, *Johann Adolf Hasses Dresdner Opern im Kontext der Hofkultur* (Laaber: Laaber, 2003), p. 88. Strohm's view is accepted uncritically in T. C. W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe, 1660-1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 64-67. Another important theme runs through discussions of Italian opera in London: public and sometimes religious opposition to the genre on the basis of its essential foreignness, its "unnatural" castrati, its publicly self-displaying female singers, and so on: see, for example, Thomas McGeary, "Gendering Opera: Italian Opera as the Feminine Other in Britain, 1700-42," *Journal of Musicological Research*, 14 (1994), pp. 17-34.

45. R. Strohm, "Metastasio's *Alessandro nell'Indie*," art. cit., pp. 232, 236 (quotation), 241, 245.

46. S. Hansell, "*Cleofide*."

1) Handel and Hasse both provided a rather odd-sounding orchestral march for the moment in Act 1when Cleofide arrives with her cohort of gift-bearing Indians. Handel's march (Act 1 scene 9 of *Poro*—Example 1) features a repeated stolid rhythm of three long notes, perhaps reminiscent of the "exotic march" figure that—as Miriam Whaples has observed—was established in the famous Turkish scene of Molière and Lully's *Le bourgeois gentilhomme,* and echoed for more than a century in stage works by Rameau, Gluck, Dalayrac, and Mozart.[47] Handel's march also tends to sit too long on the tonic, then lurch about. Hasse's march (Act 1 scene 14 in *Cleofide*—Example 2) features a livelier, dotted but equally stubborn and graceless figure. These unexpected, even awkward stylistic touches may have made the music sound at least somewhat exotic at the time. The awkwardness may also have carried over into the ways in which the onstage "Indians" looked, marched (clompingly?), and gestured.[48] The marches are thus perhaps the only moments in the two works that lend themselves—and just barely—to the "Exotic Style" Paradigm.[49]

EXAMPLE 1 • Handel, *Poro re dell'Indie* (1731), Act 1, no. 10: Sinfonia, mm. 7-12

47. Miriam K. Whaples, "Early Exoticism Revisited," in Jonathan Bellman (ed.), *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston, Mass.: Northeastern University Press, 1998), pp. 3-25, esp. pp. 19-21; cf. R. P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit*., pp. 227-28, 313-15. In *Cleofide* and in *Poro*, the respective composer provides a more normal-sounding military *sinfonia* at or near the beginning of Act 2 to represent the settled power of Alessandro's camp and the fighting between the Greeks and Poro's Indian forces.

48. On intentionally awkward, uncoordinated, or heavy-footed movement by "Indians" of various continents in Baroque-era ballets, see R. P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit*., pp. 12-13, 83-84 (Figs. 4.5 and 4.6), 139-42, 146, 149.

49. I will mention one other arguable case below: Poro's "Generoso, risvegliati o core" in Hasse's *Cleofide*.

EXAMPLE 2 • Hasse, *Cleofide* (1731), Act 1, no. 25: Marcia degl'Indiani, mm. 1-10

2) A basic methodological point: we should take care not to assume that the characterizations in an "exotic" *opera seria* are inherently, or even purposefully, simplistic or schematic. The Hasse scholar Zenon Mojzysz proposes (in regard to *Cleofide* and, by implication, in Metastasio's original libretto) that each of the characters is "conceived in a relatively simple manner" and that "one can even attribute to each character a single dominant affect"; Cleofide's primary trait, according to Mojzysz's list, "is love."[50] To an extent, this is true, but only if one then quickly adds that Cleofide gets to demonstrate the depth of her love for Poro in sharply distinct ways and that these ways reveal other character traits that make her constantly interesting and sometimes unpredictable. The Indian queen shows keen strategy in trying to win concessions from Alessandro, manifests self-confidence and appropriate anger after Poro suspects her of shifting her affections to Alessandro, and yields to understandable despair after hearing the false rumor that Poro has died. Most striking is the scene (Act 1 scene 13) in which she nearly achieves her goal—by a variety of tactical decisions—of making Alessandro desire her. For example, when he rejects her gifts, she threatens to leave, saying that she cannot remain in a place where tribute of hers is not welcome. (This forces him to ask her to stay.) And she pretends to weep when he, trying to resist her beauty and obvious intelligence, fails to meet her glance. Cleofide also hints that she is smitten with Alessandro—she praises aloud

50.   In the preface to the piano-vocal score, pp. vii-viii (my translation).

his gentle bearing, his kindly eyes, his courteous speech—and finally declares (once her true beloved, Poro, appears, disguised as an underling, Asbite): "For Alessandro alone do I feel love. … I [now] reveal a feeling, lord, that I have thus far, at great pain, silenced." (Her use of the word "lord"—"signor"—seems to refer to Alessandro, not Asbite, whose rank would be beneath hers; this suggests that she has, in mid-sentence, turned back to Alessandro and directed the end of her pseudo-confession to him.) During the course of this lengthy, manipulative "assault" on Alessandro—the word is his own, in an aside—the Greek conqueror pauses several times to regain his composure.[51] He ends the encounter with an exit aria in which he explains—gently but firmly—that he can defend and befriend her but cannot give her his heart. In short, Cleofide's "dominant affect" in this scene has been, not simply "love" (as Mojzysz proposes), but something more complex, almost Shakespearean: the ability to feign emotions, including wounded pride, in order to advance her own interests and those of Poro, whom she somewhat incomprehensibly loves.

I hasten to add that Western female figures in some early-eighteenth-century operas likewise manifest seductive and/or duplicitous behaviors (e.g., Poppea in Handel's *Agrippina* and Antigona in his *Admeto*). But the same character trait need not mean the same thing in every opera in which it occurs; context is all-important.[52] In this "Indian" libretto, Metastasio may have felt particularly free to assign misleading words and actions to Cleofide because the character was an Eastern woman, not a European one.[53] Standing behind Cleofide—in the mind of an educated person in the early eighteenth century—were the widely circulated images of various powerful women of "the East," including not just the great Cleopatra of Egypt but also certain Muslim women of more recent centuries. Among the latter was Roxana (or Roxolana), a figure from history who, though probably born in what is now eastern Ukraine, was brought as a captive to the harem of the mid-seventeenth-century Ottoman sultan, Suleiman I. In Suleiman's palace Roxana apparently used her wiles to become his sole wife. She then arranged for the murder of the heir apparent (son of another woman) so that her own son would become Suleiman's successor.[54]

51. During this long recitative scene with Cleofide, Alessandro has whispered to himself phrases such as "Alma[,] costanza" (O, my heart, be steady!).
52. Also, differences in emphasis can occur from one production of a given opera to another, and even from one performance to another (of the same production with the same singers). On features of staging and such in eighteenth-century performances and in modern-day ones, see n. 76 below.
53. Atalanta in Handel's *Serse* shares some of these traits; she, like the other characters in that opera, is Persian.
54. See portraits and extensive information Galina I. Yermolenko (ed.), *Roxolana in European Literature, History and Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), and, more briefly, in R. P. Locke, *Music*

The Arias, and How They Characterize

Cleofide's attempt to sway Alessandro's emotions occurs entirely in recitative, and the shifting effects that I have described depended greatly on the abilities and sensitivity of the individual singer and the members of the continuo group. Some of the arias for Cleofide and Poro, too, suggest exotic traits, but in ways that are written more directly into the notes of the score and thus would make an impact if well and stylishly performed. Marita P. McClymonds has pointed out a possible early case of *buffo* Turkish style in one of Poro's arias, "Generoso risvegliati, o core" (Act 2, scene 4), an aria that Hasse took from his earlier opera *Gerone, tiranno di Siracusa* (Naples, 1727).[55] This remarkable exception could possibly—like the marches discussed above—be explored further using the "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm. For example, one could ask whether audiences as early as 1731 would have heard the admittedly unusual stylistic features in this aria as distinctively non-European. (To answer this question, one would have to explore much more carefully than has been done thus far the very earliest manifestations of *alla turca* style.)

More typically, though, Handel and Hasse, in these two operas, characterize the exotic Other *without* recourse to "foreign" (or even odd) style features. That is: the exotic effect goes unnoticed if one is working with the narrow "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm, but it is immediately revealed by the broader "All the Music in Full Context" Paradigm. The best-known aria from *Cleofide* is the title character's "Digli ch'io son fedele." (This aria has been included, with helpful commentary, in numerous editions of the *Norton Anthology of Western Music*, a book widely used in undergraduate music-history courses.) Cleofide, eager to reassure Poro one more time that she loves him and that he should restrain his impatience, here sings to

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and the Exotic, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-74. The wily and assertive Rossane in Handel's *Alessandro*—she at one point asks to be set free—echoes and extends traits that, in the early eighteenth century, were widely attributed to this historical (sixteenth-century) Roxana/Roxolana. In some light operas of the later eighteenth century about a late seventeenth-century sultan—Suleiman II—certain of Roxana's traits were applied to a female character with a similar name: Roxelane; see R. P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 295, 302.

55. Marita Petzoldt McClymonds, "Style as Sign in Some opere serie of Hasse and Jommelli," in Reinhard Wiesend (ed.), Johann *Adolf Hasse in seiner Zeit: Bericht über das Symposium vom 23. bis 26. März 1999 in Hamburg* (Stuttgart: Carus, 2006), pp. 179-92 (here p. 181). McClymonds may have sensed (though she does not mention it) a specific musical resemblance between the aria and one that would be sung by a Turkish character in an opera composed fifty years later: Osmin's "O wie will ich triumphieren," from Act 3 of Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782). The second measure of Hasse's opening ritornello hammers out five eighth notes (starting on an upbeat eighth) and then two quarters; the second occurrence of this rhythmic motive ends on degree 3. Osmin sings a very similar rhythmic motive ("wie will ich triumphieren," starting with six repeated notes), ending each time on degree 3. Both composers accompany the rhythmic motive with an octave-leap drone.

Alessandro's general Timagene, while Poro is present but disguised as Asbite, a supposed representative of Poro: "Tell [Poro] that I will be faithful … and that he should not yet despair." Metastasio's words show the Indian queen's ability to improvise a behavior that will advance her own cause without raising suspicion. (When she exits, Poro says, admiringly, "Tenerezze ingegnose!"—"What affectionate feelings, and conveyed with such ingenuity!") Meanwhile, the score, by negotiating an exquisite balance between tunefulness and ornate decorativeness, displays a parallel sort of virtuosity, reminding us—through the metaphorical language of artful composition and superb singing—why both Alessandro and Poro are attracted to this remarkable woman. (The role was created by Hasse's wife, the renowned Faustina Bordoni.)[56] Handel's setting of Cleofide's "Digli ch'io son fedele" (in G minor) is more emphatic than Hasse's gently caressing one. Perhaps Handel was attempting to reflect Cleofide's self-control in a complex situation.

An aria for Poro earlier in the opera displays even more vividly how exotic characterization can be carried out with no hint of exotic style. In Act 1 scene 9 of Metastasio's libretto, we see the difficulty that rajah Poro has in controlling his emotions. Gandarte has just urged him to stop obsessing about Cleofide's possible infidelity. Poro admits that he is derelict in his military and patriotic duty ("You speak the truth, friend; I know it") but then launches into an aria in which he attempts to excuse his cowardly behavior. The aria's text argues that nobody who has not fallen under the spell of two beautiful eyes can understand the torment that a person in love is feeling ("Se possono tanto / Due luci vezzose"). Handel emphasizes the Indian ruler's sensuous urges and self-pitying nature by giving Poro's aria a dragging, hesitant quality, deriving from what Reinhard Strohm describes as its "highly stylized minuet rhythm," a dance allusion presumably chosen to reflect Poro's high social status. The tender, unheroic, possibly effeminate quality of this music (Example 3) is supported by Handel's decision to restrict the orchestration to strings only, and is especially evident in the delicate murmuring figure for violins first heard in mm. 5-8, *senza cembalo*. Strohm, perhaps trying to find something positive to say about the mostly spineless Poro, proposes that, in Handel's setting, the Indian ruler "is pained by the fact of his being so completely mastered by jealousy."[57]

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56.   Elaborate contemporary ornaments for the vocal line of this Hasse aria are transcribed in *Das Musikwerk* 41: *Originale Gesangsimprovisationen des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Hellmuth Christian Wolff (Cologne: Arno Volk Verlag, 1972). An English translation of the *Musikwerk* series was also published, as *Anthology of Music*; volume 41 is there entitled *Original Vocal Improvisations from the 16th-18th Centuries*.

57.   R. Strohm, "Metastasio's *Alessandro nell'Indie*," art. cit., p. 241; cf. W. Dean, *Handel's Operas*, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-77.

EXAMPLE 3 • Handel, *Poro*, Act 1, no. 8: Poro's aria "Se possono tanto due luci vezzose," mm. 1-20

Hasse, in *Cleofide*, treats Poro's aria differently (Example 4). The ritornello includes wind instruments with the basic strings and continuo, for greater force. And Poro's line features what Strohm rightly calls "aggressive rhythms" and "high notes that leap out."[58] The effect—in conjunction with the words—is one of monomaniacal anger. Hasse's Poro seems perversely proud of being in the thrall of amorous jealousy, at a moment when he should be taking command of his army to fight the invading Westerners. All these verbal and musical features may have encouraged at least some operagoers of the day to see Hasse's Poro as intensely foreign and less than admirable, especially by contrast with the Greek conqueror Alessandro, whose behavior throughout the opera remains dignified, as is underlined by the smooth and contained music of his arias.[59]

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58. R. Strohm, "Hasses Oper 'Cleofide'," art. cit., p. 20. Metastasio's aria text here ("Se possono tanto") was fitted by Hasse and/or Boccardi to music from a rage aria (for a queen in what is today Turkey) drawn from an opera that Hasse had previously composed for Naples, *Attalo re di Bitinia*, 1728 (libretto by Francesco Silvani). Yet, as Strohm points out, the music suits remarkably well the successive "gestures" of Metastasio's phrases, especially the move from outward protest, then to brief expostulations of self-pity, ending with coloratura phrases that represent a kind of sobbing. (The last few paragraphs of Strohm's essay, including discussion of this aria, were unfortunately omitted in the CD booklet when the recording was re-released in 2011, as was an essay by Helga Lühning.)

59. Poro is given another intense aria—this time with revenge as the topic—near the end of *Cleofide* ("Dov'è? Si affretti per me la morte"); the orchestra is particularly agitated, with *concitato*-like quick repeated notes in the strings, a sort of music that is more rarely assigned to Alessandro Magno in the work. Hasse's opera thus illustrates McClymonds's point that eighteenth-century serious operas often give the most "high-style" (tragic, intense, angry, etc.) music to a villain (a "wrong-headed principal [character]") and more "middle-style" arias to a ruler or military leader whose actions are balanced and restrained ("Style as Sign," 184). We might note that, when, in Metastasio's libretto, Alessandro does engage in an aria of intense affect, it is in opposition to someone else's bad conduct. See, for example, Metastasio's aria-text "Vil trofeo d'un alma imbelle," ending the scene in which (as discussed earlier) the Greek commander rejects his general Timagene's urging that he make a slave of the beautiful Erissena. This recalls the basic Metastasian principle that a hero's momentary anger is set in relief by his customary self-containment: see Francesco Cotticelli and Paologiovanni Maione, "Metastasio: The Dramaturgy of Eighteenth-Century Heroic Opera," in A. R. Del-Donna and P. Polzonetti (eds), *Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 66-84 (here 73-75, 80). Handel sets "Vil trofeo" in McClymonds's "middle style," in A major, *Larghetto andante*. Perhaps the composer intended to show Alessandro's tender concern for the women of India and a leader's (appropriate) calm self-confidence. (Hasse treats the aria text similarly, in G major, *Allegro assai*.) By contrast, Handel allows Alessandro to become heated in the aria "D'un barbaro scortese," in which he upbraids Asbite (the disguised Poro) for having promoted a malicious trap (*insidia*) against the Greek occupying forces: the aria's music, *Allegro* and in F major, is full of florid stretches that feel, in the context of the berating words, severely reproachful. Hasse's aria in this spot, using a new text with roughly similar sentiments, "Se trova perdono / la barbara offese" (in G major) is similarly marked *Allegro* and is notably florid. It features repeated harsh dissonances between the top-line melody and a stepwise descending bass (mm. 9-13); these dissonances are made emphatic in the Christie recording, presumably to underline Alessandro's righteous anger.

EXAMPLE 4 • Hasse, *Cleofide*, Act 1, no. 19: Poro's aria "Se possono tanto due luci vezzose," mm. 1-18

Handel and Hasse, in their different ways, present rajah Poro as love-besot-ted and erratic: a potent symbol of India's deficient social values more gener-ally. Analogous stereotypes of the weak-willed Eastern (male) ruler can be seen in other Handel operas, such as *Tolomeo* (whose title character is based on the Egyptian ruler Ptolemy Lathyrus) and *Serse* (inspired by long-told stories about Xerxes, the great Persian conqueror).[60] A more starkly distasteful example is another Tolomeo (Ptolemy XIII Theos Philopator, brother of Cleopatra), in *Giulio Cesare*. This Tolomeo repeatedly forces his love upon the upright Roman woman Cornelia, after having had her husband Pompeo decapitated in a mis-guided attempt at pleasing Julius Caesar.[61]

The plot-premise of an Indian rajah being extremely possessive in love may have seemed plausible to members of the audience who had read 1) that Indian men could take several wives and 2) that an Indian widow would willingly commit suttee, thereby proving, to Western eyes, her lack of independent personhood. Such reports could surface in unexpected places: Gottfried Taubert's 1717 com-pendium on dance reported that women who refused suttee became prostitutes

60. This earlier Ptolemy ruled Egypt for three stretches of time during the years 116-81 BC. On *Serse*, see R. P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-53.

61. This later Ptolemy warred with Julius Caesar. Cleopatra, his sister, aligned herself with Cae-sar, and Ptolemy eventually drowned trying to flee by swimming across the Nile. Further on his portrayal in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, see R. P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-56; also my "Alien Adventures," art. cit. Pompeo is known to history as Pompeius Magnus (or, in English, Pompey).

and lascivious dancers.[62] Informational tidbits such as this were reinforced by the scenes of frank carnality that Westerners, in the 1720s and 30s, were encountering in translations and adaptations of the *Thousand and One Nights*. We need to remember that much of India was closely connected to the Arab world, being ruled by the Mughals (who were Muslims) from the mid sixteenth century to the early nineteenth, a fact that was well known to European readers. Indeed, many of the *Thousand and One Nights* tales themselves take place in India or even China.[63]

The Non-European as Comical

I should like now to focus on some moments that, surprisingly enough, bring elements of comedy into these two operas. As historians of opera rightly emphasize, Zeno and then Metastasio established the principle of keeping the tone of *opera seria* dignified and moralistic. This purification (as I like to call it) was in keeping with classicizing tendencies of the age, as exemplified in the tragedies of Corneille and Racine.

Handel's Italian-language operas, though, are often exceptions to the rule, not least because many of them contain comic characters (such as a nurse or servant). Scholars attribute the mixed tone of the Handel operas to the tastes of the socially diverse audience that Handel was addressing. (He composed most of his operas for public theaters, not for court opera houses.) Also, sometimes the librettist in question (e.g., Nicola Francesco Haym, who crafted the text for *Giulio Cesare*) was reworking a libretto that had originally been written decades earlier. Interestingly, though, the *Alessandro nell'Indie* libretto was little more than a year old, and had been written afresh, without direct borrowings, by Metastasio. Yet it, too, contains elements that surely came across as delightfully comical. Most notably, it offers what might be called a "not-love" duet for a man and a woman. In this sense, the work is typical of one aspect of Metastasio's adaptation of Zeno's reforms. The librettist brought various comic aspects back into *opera seria*—not by

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62. Gottfried Taubert, *The Compleat Dancing Master: A Translation of* Rechtschaffener Tantzmeister *(1717)*, trans. Tilden Russell, 2 vols. (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), vol. 1, pp. 79-80 (original pp. 59-60). More generally, see n. 19 above.

63. See n. 11. On the origin, compilation, and European dissemination of the massive *Nights* collection, see Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (London: Allen Lane, 1994), and various essays in Ulrich Marzolph, Richard van Leeuwen, et al., *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, Ca: ABC-CLIO, 2004). For an eighteenth-century illustration emphasizing the Islamic presence across all of Asia, see the plate entitled "Asia," by Gottfried Eichler, Jr., in a publication (loose-leaved, in 10 parts; Augsburg, 1758-60) of his illustrations for Cesare Ripa's renowned *Iconologia* (Rome, 1593, unillustrated). The "Asia" plate is reprinted and discussed in R. P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit.*, 61-62 (Fig. 3.5).

reinstating comic servants and such, but rather by lightening, at times, the tone of the interactions among a libretto's main characters.[64]

This comical scene of mutual anger—which ends Act 1—does not involve Alexander the Great but rather the work's two main Indian characters: rajah Poro and the ruler of a nearby realm, rajini Cleofide. The scene begins with an exchange in recitative, in which Poro feels betrayed because Cleofide, whom he loves and who loves him in return, is going off to meet Alessandro at the latter's military camp. Cleofide objects disdainfully to Poro's unmotivated jealousy. Her reason for meeting with Alexander is to pretend romantic interest, for tactical reasons, in the Greek leader. As she has previously explained to Poro (Act 1 scene 6): "Learning from the ruin of others [i.e., other women in love], I countered his valor with harmless flattery—that not ineffectual weapon of my sex." Despite her earlier explanations, Poro now doubts her once again.

The interchange between the two characters that leads up to the duet is unremittingly sarcastic.[65] It concludes with these withering exclamations:

CLEOFIDE   Che placido amator!
PORO   Che bella fede!

(Cleofide: "What a trusting lover!" Poro: "Such impressive loyalty!")

Poro then launches the duet by quoting from the elaborate aria that Cleofide had sung earlier in the act, in which she had tried to reassure him of her love.

PORO   "Se mai turbo il tuo riposo,
    se m'accendo ad altro lume,
    pace mai non abbia il cor."

(Poro, quoting Cleofide: "If ever I disturb your peace of mind, if I catch fire
from another sun, may my heart never find peace.")

Poro had, likewise early in Act 1, sworn before "all our gods [of India]" that he would no longer be suspicious of his beloved Cleofide, and he had then affirmed this in an aria. (Metastasio carefully created parallels between these two oath-arias, most notably in the identical opening words: "Se mai"—"If ever I … "). In the duet, Cleofide now quotes this short-lived oath.

CLEOFIDE   "Se mai più sarò geloso,
    mi punisca il sacro nume
    che dell'India è domator."

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64.   Piero Weiss, *L'opera italiana nel '700* (Rome: Astrolabio, 2013), pp. 95-134.

65.   Hasse sets Metastasio's entire recitative exchange here, with slight rewordings; Handel cuts much of it but maintains enough for the main points to come through.

> (Cleofide, quoting Poro's words: "If I am ever jealous [masculine form], may the holy god who is lord over India punish me.")[66]

They next skewer each other in a way that marriage therapists might call "dirty fighting": that is, they sling accusatory labels at each other, again with a sarcastic edge.

> Poro   Infedel, questo è l'amore?
> Cleofide   Menzogner, questa è la fede?

> (Poro: "Faithless one, is this [behavior of yours what you call] love?" Cleofide: "Liar, is this [behavior of *yours* what you had in mind when you promised] faithfulness?")

These exchanges have a low-comic tone that is far from the gravity and composure elsewhere found in Alessandro's utterances in the two operas. The verbal register of the exchanges in this Poro/Cleofide duet is similar to that of the lovers' spat between two young lower-class characters in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (1643), who are given only the names of Valletto (i.e., page) and Damigella (damsel, or lady-in-waiting). True, Poro and Cleofide are monarchs, but they are Eastern ones. Metastasio's decision to assign non-European ethnicity to the two characters may have helped an operagoer avoid viewing their sarcasm-laden duet as a disrespectful critique of any particular individual (or male-female couple) at court.[67]

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66.   The modern translator of the libretto (in the booklet of Christie's recording, when first released) took "il sacro nume che dell'India è domator" to mean Alexander the Great. I find this implausible, and assume that Poro is referring to Bacchus, who was often stated in ancient Greek writings (e.g., Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus) as having been born far from Greece (e.g., in Egypt, Libya, Anatolia, Arabia, or Ethiopia) and to have conquered India: see Figure 1. A second possibility is that "Bacchus" is here being used as a way of saying "god of love," a phrase that might be taken as alluding to a Hindu deity such as Shiva, Vishnu, or (from a more feminine angle) Shakti. Perhaps Metastasio, fearful of religious censorship, chose not to include the specific name of a non-Christian god. (Librettists in later generations certainly revealed this kind of hesitation: for example, in Verdi's *Aida* there are references—in the sung text and stage directions—to "Temple of Vulcan," even though Vulcan was the name of a Roman god, not an ancient-Egyptian one.) Various characters in Metastasio's *Alessandro* libretto—and indeed other libretti set in ancient days—cry out to "the gods"; this word may have often been chosen precisely for its vagueness.

67.   Put another way, this moment in the A section of the duet (which of course then gets repeated after the B section) seems a "low-style" moment in a duet written primarily in a "middle" style. That is, the sarcastic squabbling is direct and immediately graspable (*fasslich*) and "representative of nature in its simplest form." See Marita P. McClymonds, "Opera Seria? Opera Buffa? Genre and Style as Sign," in J. Webster and M. Hunter (eds), *Opera Buffa in Mozart's Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1997), pp. 197-231 (here 199): the descriptor "fasslich" comes from Ernst Ludwig Gerber (1799); the quoted words are McClymonds's summary of a passage by Johann Adolph Scheibe (1745).

Both Handel and Hasse set this libretto in 1731, only a year after its first setting (by Vinci). And both Handel and Hasse seem to have been intrigued by the unusual musicodramatic opportunity that Metastasio had provided in the numbers just discussed (the two "Se mai" arias and the subsequent duet quoting them). Whereas Handel's *Poro* and Hasse's *Cleofide* both make cuts and (in the case of the Hasse opera) substitutions in Metastasio's libretto, neither substantially alters this unusual and dramatically effective sequence of interlinked texts.

Indeed, each composer came up with an effective musical solution for the three numbers in question. Handel gave Poro very stolid music (Example 5) in which to make his promise never again to be jealous: the melody systematically expands from a rising fourth to a fifth, sixth, and seventh, suggesting the great effort that the rajah is making.

EXAMPLE 5 • Handel, *Poro*, Act 1, no. 6: Poro's aria "Se mai più sarò geloso," mm. 1-10

Handel then gave Cleofide comparatively gentle and florid music for her equivalent promise never again to give Poro reason to be troubled (Example 6).

EXAMPLE 6 • Handel, *Poro*, Act 1, no. 7: Cleofide's aria "Se mai turbo il tuo riposo," mm. 1-22

When the duet arrives at the end of Act 1, Poro begins by repeating Cleofide's reassuring words and music, though now with cutting irony (an effect that the singer needs to make clear). Cleofide then repeats Poro's formal, effortful oath of non-jealousy. Handel intensifies the contrast by accompanying Poro's restatement of Cleofide's oath-aria with *basso continuo* only. (When Cleofide sang it, it had strings as well.) Thus, when Cleofide enters, singing Poro's oath, so do

the strings, adding weight to her accusations. The duet continues with a quick exchange of the single verses quoted above ("What is love?" / "What is faithfulness?"—Example 7). The parallelism of the short verbal phrases is so powerful that Handel can set them to similar music and still we feel their dramatic effect: vividly argumentative and perhaps even filled with spite.[68]

EXAMPLE 7 • Handel, *Poro*, Act 1, no. 12: Poro and Cleofide's duet "Se mai turbo / Se mai più," mm. 1-27

68.   Further on Handel's duet, see the observations of Graham Cummings, summarized and amplified in W. Dean, *Handel's Operas*, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-78.

Hasse takes a different tack. He provides gentle and sincere music for Poro's oath-aria and re-uses it for Cleofide's aria promising never to give Poro cause for doubt.[69] When they meet to sing their not-love duet, Hasse has them perform essentially the same music that they sang before but of course now with each other's words (Example 8). Hasse may have been relying on the singers to make clear—through gestures, facial expressions, and pointed enunciation—that the characters are quoting each other. The masculine *geloso*—in a statement in the first person, but sung by a female character—would have been a tip-off as well, even to listeners who were not very fluent in Italian. Indeed, it is perhaps because of this powerful word that Hasse (or the libretto-adapter Boccardi) decided to let Cleofide kick off the duet, whereas Metastasio's libretto—and Handel's opera—has Poro launch it.

As for the single lines that follow in the text ("Infedel," etc.), Handel keeps them largely intact. Hasse chooses to subdivide them in a way that highlights the name-calling: "Faithless one!" "Liar!" (mm. 69-75, not included in Example 8). Indeed, even when "Infedel" and "Menzogner" are followed by the rest of that line (mm. 40-47: end of Example 8), the full orchestra (flutes, oboes, and strings) echoes the dotted rhythm of the half-line just sung, thereby reinforcing whatever accusatory word or phrase the character is hurling at the other:

> Poro   Infedel! [orchestral echo of that word] questo è l'amore? [echo]
> Cleofide   Menzogner! [echo] questa è la fede? [echo][70]

Skillful composition and skillful text-setting here serve to heighten the comedy of the interchange between these two Indian rulers.

The message, as I hope to have established, is that the men who rule Eastern lands are creatures of neither great perspicacity nor great steadiness. They are anxious to reassure themselves that they are loved by this or that woman (or this *and* that woman, as in a harem). And they are loved without having to manifest behaviors that—according to the ideals in Western philosophical treatises and literary works—properly earn a woman's love and admiration: behaviors such as generosity, bravery, steadiness of purpose, and emotional restraint.

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69.   The music is expanded into a full *da capo* aria, because Cleofide is given a full ABA text whereas Poro's preceding oath-aria consists only of a brief A section (probably because he does not leave the stage after singing it).

70.   Whether the exclamation points were added by Hasse or by the modern editor is not quite clear. The printed libretto from the Dresden premiere has a colon after "Infedel" and "Menzogner"; Metastasio's original has a comma.

EXAMPLE 8 • Hasse, *Cleofide*, Act 1, no. 29: Cleofide and Poro's duet "Se mai più / Se mai turbo," mm. 1-47

36

The vocal line text (sung syllables):

25 cen - do ad al - tro__ lu - me, pa - ce mai non ab - bia il

31 cor, pa - ce mai_____ non ab - bia il cor. se mai

36 tur - bo il tuo ri - po - so,__ pa - ce__ mai_____ non ab - bia il

40 cor." In - fe - del! que - sto è l'a - mo - re?

Tutti

44 **CLEOFIDE** Men - zo - gner! Que - sta è la fe - de?

Further Complications and Enrichments

Other scenes and musical numbers in these operas show further interesting twists on the whole problem of what an exotic character may be understood as signifying. By way of conclusion, I would like to focus on the other two Indian characters from Metastasio's libretto, Gandarte and Erissena—more specifically, their interactions in a scene in *Cleofide* whose words were heavily reworked, or even newly written, by Boccardi.

Poro's army-general Gandarte repeatedly demonstrates—in more ways than mentioned thus far—"a good vassal's courageous valor" (his own words in Act 1 scene 2 of Hasse's *Cleofide*). This Indian general thus stands in vivid contrast to his Greek counterpart, Timagene, who seeks to undermine his commander Alessandro at various points (for personal reasons that are portrayed as at once understandable—in human terms—and despicable).[71] Casting an Indian soldier as admirable can arguably be read as reflecting the view—typical of the Enlightenment attitudes of the age—that non-Europeans *can* provide models of decent and honorable behavior. For example, in Piovene's libretto *Nerone* (1721, with music by Orlandini), the young Armenian prince Tiridate attempts to help some Romans to thwart the excesses of their own emperor, Nero.[72]

But Gandarte shows a less idealistic side in his relationship with Poro's sister Erissena. After she admits that she finds Alessandro "unusually handsome" (Act 1 scene 10), Gandarte becomes annoyed. She chastises him in an aria and exits. Gandarte, alone on stage, sings a soliloquy admitting that he wishes that the woman he loves would not be so frank. He is, in effect, singing directly to the men in the audience: "You who praise the merits of an artless beauty, do not put so much trust in one who is unable to lie. … Let the woman who inflames my heart pretend; [or] let her, at the very least, flatter me" (Act 1 scene 11). This is a lighter, disgruntled variation on a recurring theme in the libretto: in India, women are expected to endear themselves to men and, more specifically, to serve and obey their husband and not to outlive him. Hasse's vigorous music (Example 9) makes Gandarte seem angry indeed.[73]

71. See n. 28.
72. For further examples of ethically admirable foreigners, see Robert C. Ketterer's insightful *Ancient Rome in Early Opera* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); also R. P. Locke, "Alien Adventures," art. cit., p. 65, n. 49.
73. Handel simply omitted Gandarte's aria, moving directly from Erissena's aria "Compagni dell'amore" to the aforementioned scene in which Cleofide and her Indians bring tribute to Alessandro.

EXAMPLE 9 • Hasse, *Cleofide*, Act 1, no. 23: Gandarte's aria "Voi, che adorate il vanto," mm. 27-38 (i.e., without its opening ritornello)

The middle of this scene between Gandarte and Erissena becomes yet more comical in the version that was reworked by Boccardi and Hasse for *Cleofide*. When Erissena chastises Gandarte's brief moment of jealousy, she is given some additional lines of recitative and a different aria text ("Vuoi saper se tu mi piaci") than the one supplied by Metastasio. The changes serve to yank the audience back to modern-day Europe. In the recitative, Metastasio had her say, "So, in order to love you truly, must I hate all the rest of the world?" Boccardi follows this with more explicit social commentary: "Such strict faithfulness is no longer in fashion [*più di stagion non è*] … [and] such possessive love [as you show] … is outmoded now [*or non è più in usanza*]."[74] And he has her conclude the recitative with a series of blunt statements and commands:

74. More precisely, Boccardi, in his new lines of recitative, used Metastasio's phrase *più di stagion non è* (from the aria text that Boccardi had removed!) and elaborated upon it.

> Voglio amar chi mi piace;
> E s'è ver che da me tu chiedi amore;
> Frena li sensi audaci;
> Amami, servi e spera:
> Non mi dar leggi, amar mi lascia, e taci.
>
> (I want to love whoever pleases me.
> And, if it is true that you are seeking love from me,
> Stop being so presumptuous;
> Love me, serve me, and hope [that I might love you back];
> Don't make rules for me; let me love [freely], and [meanwhile] keep silent.)

Erissena's confident insistence here upon her right to shift her affections freely from one man to the next makes her seem very unlike the conventional image of a submissive Indian woman and more like an onstage representative of some self-assured young female aristocratic sitting in the 1731 Dresden audience. Perhaps there is a touch here of Enlightenment-era fascination with the commonality of cultures around the world. Or perhaps, too, this moment felt, at the time, like a transparent bit of masquerade, reminding the listener that the Indian characters in this opera are, of course, European singers beneath their makeup and thus that Erissena's mask of Otherness is pure play. Boccardi's text for Erissena's aria, "Vuoi saper se tu mi piaci," has much the same message as the one originally provided by Metastasio ("Compagni dell'amore"), but it is much more emphatically domineering. One notable line—"Ama, servi, aspetta, e taci" (Love me, serve me, wait for me, and meanwhile be silent)—sums up the series of commands that Erissena has just delivered to Gandarte in the final two lines of recitative (quoted above).

Hasse's music for this punchy aria text is forthright, in a serious—or even threatening—D minor (Example 10). The opening ritornello includes a striding upward arpeggio that conveys the character's great confidence and that occurs four more times in the A section (including twice in the vocal part). As for that four-command line just mentioned, Erissena states it no fewer than four times in the A section alone (which makes eight times, counting the repeat). After each of the commands, she pauses for a measure to drive the message home: *Ama* [then a measure for orchestra alone], *servi* [ditto], *aspetta* [ditto], *e taci* [ditto]. Shifts in the harmony and in the melody's specific pitches—deriving from the modulatory plan of the A section—help each new statement of the specific command feel fresh, as do the frequent adjustments in the orchestra's replies. For example, the second statement concludes with a measure of orchestral rest instead of orchestral commentary; and the third statement is similar to the second but omits the word *aspetta* and its two measures, making a total of not eight measures but six. All these surprising touches seem perfectly suited to the peremptory willfulness that Erissena is declaring.

EXAMPLE 10 • Hasse, *Cleofide*, Act 1, no. 21: Erissena's aria "Vuoi saper se tu mi piaci," mm. 17-38 (i.e., without its opening ritornello)

Taken together, Erissena's aria and its preceding recitative must have made her seem nervy or even immoral to some observers, but to others a welcome exemplar of female self-assertiveness on the *opera seria* stage. In this whole scene, Erissena parallels, though in frank comedic manner, the alertness and agency displayed by the higher-ranking Cleofide. Even today, we might plausibly imagine

the orchestra encouraging Erissena, at two-measure intervals, with wordless cries of support. And all this is independent of any ornamentation that an imaginative soprano might—as if to emphasize her character's articulateness and self-confidence—add to her part, along with appropriate facial and hand gestures, shifting glances, and word-driven changes of vocal color.

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The preceding analysis reminds us that many operas from before 1750 involve non-European male and female characters who are heroic or villainous, direct or devious, or who combine these traits and others. (Cleofide is both heroic and devious.) Particularly notable are male characters who, like Poro, seem far from any Aristotelian behavioral ideal.[75] To the extent that operas were dramatized lessons about what kinds of behaviors were appropriate for a society's leaders and upstanding citizens, such portrayals of less-than-idealistic male leaders surely served as dramatized illustrations of what can happen when a person wanders from the path of virtue. Yet these characters who are problematic—sometimes self-centered or self-defeating, sometimes outright vicious and detestable—were, in such operas, often identified with distant lands and cultures. The decision to pair the non-virtuous with the non-European presumably reduced the likelihood that a person in authority would take the portrayal as a pointed critique of a prominent leader—or a political/religious/social trend—"here at home."

More generally, operas of all eras deserve to be taken into consideration by anyone studying how the exotic Other has been represented in Western culture. Only by looking closely at the details of these works can we understand what they meant in their own day—not least, how they interacted with prevailing knowledge, political attitudes, and ethnic and gender stereotypes.[76]

75. See, again, my discussion of other Handel operas (and oratorios) in *Musical Exoticism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-97; *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-207, 250-58 and 261-66; and "Alien Adventures," art. cit.

76. An important aspect, beyond the scope of the present article is how characterizations were carried out at the time, through gesture, movement (blocking), pointed declamation, sets, and costumes. See R. Compton, "How to Enrage Alexander," art. cit.; R. G. King, "How to Be an Emperor," art. cit.; and R. P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 69, 211-13, 215-17, 219-20, 259 (modern production photo), 307. On the problem of how to stage such works today, and how such stagings interact with audience expectations, see N. Routley, "Handel's *Giulio Cesare*," art. cit., p. 40 (on Australian audiences); R. C. Ketterer, *Ancient Rome*, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-83; R. P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 317-27; and R. P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-16, 323. For illustrations of characters costumed as non-Europeans in Baroque-era plays and operas, see R. P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 69, 211-13, 215-17, 219-20, 259 (modern production), 307.

Thinking about what a work meant "back then" may also help us reflect on what the work means, or might mean, for us today. After all, the issues that were given concrete formulation on the operatic stage in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries included the basic human tension between individual desire (pleasure) and social responsibility (duty) but also tensions between nations, regions (West and East), cultures, religions, and social classes. All of these tensions continue to have demonstrable relevance for our own lives and actions. Our world has become increasingly globalized and interconnected, with results that are in many ways productive. But globalization, extensive immigration, and shifts in world power can also prove unsettling and fear-inducing. We continue to need to think about how, and to what artistic and ideological ends, peoples from one land or region, in the past, represented peoples from other lands or regions— and about how we and our fellow citizens carry out such representations today.[77]

77. Cf. Ralph P. Locke, "Musicology and/as Social Concern: Imagining the Relevant Musicologist," in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (eds), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 499-530.

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RÉSUMÉ Les travaux relatifs à l'exotisme musical ont largement laissé de côté les nombreux opéras baroques présentant des personnages extra-européens. Cet article étudie un livret d'*opera seria* dont le sous-continent indien est le lieu de l'intrigue – *Alessandro nell'Indie* (1729), de Metastase – et deux opéras (les deux de 1731) fondés sur ce livret : *Poro re dell'Indie* (Handel) et *Cleofide* (Hasse). Il est impossible de comprendre les manifestations d'exotisme dans les opéras baroques si on n'emploie qu'une approche étroitement limitée aux questions de style (ici dénommée « Exotic Style Only »). Bien plus riche est une approche large (« All the Music in Full Context ») qui porte l'attention également sur les paroles chantées, les actions et mouvements des personnages sur scène, sans oublier les stéréotypes culturels. Ce livret metastasien est rempli d'allusions – jusqu'ici peu discutées – à l'Inde, aux mœurs indiennes et aux comportements (supposés) des Indiens et Indiennes. Haendel et Hasse ont utilisé de nombreuses ressources musicales attendues à leur époque – tels certains traits musicaux qui convenaient particulièrement, pensait-on, à tel personnage furieux ou faible – afin d'intensifier la caractérisation des divers personnages « étrangers » évoqués dans le livret. Le comique que génère la scène des deux personnages indiens principaux (Poro et Cleofide) contraste vivement avec la dignité constante accordée au traitement d'Alessandro. Une scène avec le couple indien secondaire (Erissena et Gandarte) nous montre comment des personnages d'opéra qui « habitaient » un pays lointain peuvent néanmoins offrir un commentaire sur les mœurs européennes.

ABSTRACT *Discussions of how musical genres have evoked the exotic have largely omitted the many Baroque-era serious operas that feature non-European characters. The present article studies an* opera seria *libretto whose plot occurs on the Indian Subcontinent—Metastasio's* Alessandro nell'Indie *(1730)—and two operas (both from the year 1731) that were based on that libretto: Handel's* Poro re dell'Indie *and Hasse's* Cleofide*. Understanding how exoticism is manifest in serious Baroque opera is impossible using a narrowly stylistic approach (here called the "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm). Much richer is a broader approach (the "All the Music in Full Context" Paradigm) that also considers sung text, staging, and cultural stereotypes. Metastasio's libretto contains previously undiscussed references to India, its customs, and the (supposed) tendencies and behaviors of its leaders (male and female) and common people. Handel and Hasse enlisted various normative musical means of the day—e.g., musical devices that were considered appropriate to an angry character or to a weak-willed one—to intensify the various "foreign" characterizations in the libretto. The comic element in a scene for the two main Indian characters (Poro and Cleofide) contrasts sharply with the dignified treatment that is consistently granted to Alexander the Great (Alessandro). And a scene involving the secondary Indian couple (Erissena and Gandarte) shows how characters supposedly living "over there" could be used to comment on European customs.*

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