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and Orientalism

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Cultural Critique

“Of Writing Words for Music Which Is Already Made”: *Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot*, and Orientalism

Ping-hui Liao

I

On July 5, 1986, musicians gathered in Central Park to join with the New York Philharmonic and its conductor Zubin Mehta in commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the Statue of Liberty. The concert, open to the general public and broadcast live, was both significant and unique, in keeping with the spirit of the Lady. The featured soloists, all from different parts of the world, were naturalized citizens of the United States. Soprano Leona Mitchell chose for the occasion the aria from Giacomo Puccini's opera *Madama Butterfly*: “Un bel di vedremo” (“One fine day, we'll see”):

One fine day, we shall see a wisp of smoke rising over the
farthest horizon of the sea, and then the ship will appear.
Then the white ship enters the harbor, thundering out its
salute—you see? He has come!

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She was in fine voice that night, and the audience responded with more than enthusiastic applause. After bowing gracefully to them, the soprano withdrew, and, after a brief pause, the cellist Yo-Yo Ma stepped forward. The mellifluous sound of the second movement of Haydn's first cello concerto immediately captured the audience's attention, and the sadness of the previous aria evaporated into the cool night air.

Several levels of irony are revealed by Mitchell's choice of "Un bel di vedremo." First, instead of selecting *Butterfly's* probably more appropriate "mio paese, gli State Uniti" ("My country, the United States"), an aria full of a hopeful longing for America, she opted for an aria in which Butterfly expresses her yearning for her American lieutenant B. F. Pinkerton, and his return to Nagasaki. Butterfly sings out of her pain as a forsaken mistress, a fact she tries to escape in her daydreams. Continuing in the "bad faith" of her self-deception, Butterfly tells Suzuki, her maid and loyal friend, how she will dally with Pinkerton when he returns. Rather than answering his call right away, she says she "will stay hidden, partly to tease him, and partly so as not to die at our first meeting."¹ But it is only Butterfly herself who does not yet know that Pinkerton will never return to make her his lawful wife and an American citizen. Her waiting "with unshakable faith" receives its climactic expression in the aria that simply renders her more touching to the audience. The aria thus reveals in a most intense and tragic manner Butterfly's own blindness to cruel reality: she will always be an alien, an unmarriageable other. By choosing this aria as her token of tribute to the Lady, Mitchell underlines, instead, the dramatic irony of Butterfly's complete self-deception and ignorance of her fate, whereas everyone else around her has no difficulty guessing at the final result of her love.

Here lies the second level of irony, namely, the ultimate futility of Butterfly's utopian—but impossible—desire to be reunited with "her husband" and to become a part of the United States. The aria emphasizes the gap between what Butterfly herself supposes the world to be and what it really is. She is, echoing

1. Mosco Carner, *Madam Butterfly: A Guide to the Opera* (London: Barrie, 1979), 92, translation slightly modified. All subsequent references are to Carner's edition and are cited as *MB*. I want to thank Robert Christensen for his helpful comments and suggestions.

Pinkerton’s earlier words, a “dear little orange blossom,” “a dear baby-wife” that will never grow up. Her unsuspecting innocence in “Un bel di vedremo” foreshadows the tragic conclusion of her “childlike” relationship with Pinkerton and thus makes obvious that the East can no more meet the West than Butterfly can marry Pinkerton. This becomes evident in the composition and ideology that underlie the opera: Japanese melodies are appropriated and integrated into a larger whole, a whole that is dominated by a motif drawn from “The Star Spangled Banner.” While Pinkerton is always fully aware that as a “vagabond Yankee” he only “drops anchor at random” to find enjoyment in every place he visits (*MB*, 92), the illusions of Butterfly, his cultural other, are “crushed” by Pinkerton only when she overhears him talking with Suzuki.

Despite all its ironies, the aria was exquisitely sung and enthusiastically received, fully in tune with the spirit of the festivity. Rather than examining the ironic subtext in the performance, members of the audience congratulated themselves and forgot the woman who never had the chance to see the Lady. They thus unconsciously reaffirmed their cultural superiority, as incarnated in the tonal system and the aria expressing the desire to be part of America. While in the real world vagabond Yankees leave their children in Vietnam unclaimed, the “affirmative culture” of the aria denies the “political unconscious” that set it in motion, thereby providing delight and pleasure freed from the pains and sufferings of concrete individuals.

At this point, we observe a third level of irony, for in the very act of celebrating the symbolic readiness of America to care for and to incorporate within itself cultural others, the music was actually asking people to turn away from and to repress the immediacy of the “real” issues to which a Butterfly might on a different occasion direct their attention. By permitting a radical look into reality, art also has the potential for veiling it. As Herbert Marcuse argues, the aesthetic object, in its purification of reality, requires an autonomous existence, “without any relation to a subject other than that of pure contemplation—pure eye, pure ear, pure mind.” Art is “in itself a ‘happy end’; despair becomes sublime; pain beautiful.”² And this aesthetic repression or aesthetic sublimation is even more operative in opera.

2. Herbert Marcuse, “Art as Form of Reality,” *New Left Review* 74 (1972): 55.

When staged, opera tends to resist its own capability to be politically revolutionary. It often becomes conservative, establishment-oriented, and spectacularly entertaining. Its lavish staging and demands on resources tend to leave it untouched by the post-modern project and the fact that ours is an era of the death of the subject or of the loss of grand narratives. As a consequence, operas by Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Puccini prove to be more popular than those of Berg, Gershwin, Britten, or Stravinsky. As Herbert Lindenberger has pointed out, throughout most of our century the opera house has become a “museum exhibiting what its audiences [have] accepted as the great monuments of the operatic past.”³ People come to the opera house to be entertained: they want to be diverted by every scene they see and hear. Attempts to break away from conventional stereotypes of past productions will almost certainly incur public disapproval. Members of the audience simply want to indulge themselves in reopening already familiar and, hence, unprovocative texts. They are more than willing to suspend their disbeliefs: the dying Violetta can sing on and on as if Death would never arrive, and adults are still hypnotized by tales of a magic flute or a crystal shoe which will not fit just anyone’s foot.

As representative of high culture, opera is able to transform a discordant reality into a harmonious and ordered realm and thereby becomes an appropriate outlet for individuals wishing to fulfill both their aesthetic desires and class aspirations. It organizes and orders sound—solos, duets, trios, quartets, quintets, sextets, and chorus. Appropriating materials from the lyric, fiction, drama, painting, architecture, sculpture, etc., it thereby becomes a mixed genre, a “multiplicity,” as Lindenberger puts it, consisting of “interacting worlds,” not merely of the musical, gestural, performative, but of the verbal, lyrical, and mimetic.⁴ A multiplicity of forces must be brought together openly: the “financial powers that provide for its lavish needs; the diverse and often warring talent, drawn from a number of arts, who are expected to work together to create and perform its texts”;⁵ the

3. Herbert Lindenberger, *Opera: The Extravagant Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 16.

4. *Ibid.*, 75-95.

5. *Ibid.*, 235.

audiences who pay to see the performance and reinforce the ideology of the “extravagant” art by their applause. From its birth, opera has depended on political authority and established culture. The ruler who observes opera from the royal box, we are told, is an expression of the monarch’s political power over the microcosm represented in the theater and of his cultivated patronage of the arts that will mitigate the brutishness inherent in his absolute power.⁶ With the rise of the middle class, opera began to attract both an aristocratic and a popular audience; with the emergence of new forms of musical technology, composition, and production, it reached far and wide to make, in Jacques Attali’s words, “harmony audible,” to make people believe by shaping what they hear, to make them believe by convincing them of the legitimacy of the existing order.⁷ Thus opera has become the all-embracing genre that harmonizes conflicts and struggles by transforming them into polyphonic and pleasurable sounds: when characters quarrel, it is a discord tamed and made harmonious.

Opera’s tendency to interrelate, to organize, and to contain multiple artistic discourses and media (words, sounds, colors, costumes, gestures, images, scenery, etc.) in such a manner that they constitute a structured whole makes it a most effective tool for the creation and consolidation of a community, of a social totality. And when the material is drawn from another culture, as in the case of *Madama Butterfly* or *Turandot*, it is integrated and ordered so that it becomes intelligible, controlled, and agreeable: it is no longer sheer “noise” but strange exotic sounds that have been gelded to make sense and to appeal to a “universal” audience. Of course, in order to be able to domesticate the foreign noise into a melody, the musician must have heard it: he must have listened to it, engaging in a “technology of listening in on, ordering, transmitting, and recording noise.”⁸ And to listen, as Attali informs us, is to memorize, to “interpret and control history, to manipulate the culture of a people, to channel its violence and hopes.”⁹ Listening is mastering the other, reorganizing the other in relation to

6. *Ibid.*, 237.

7. Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 61.

8. *Ibid.*, 7.

9. *Ibid.*

the questions of value, interest, and power that the cultural other provokes. Since the end of the ordering of “noise” is a universal intelligibility and delight, the manipulation of the melodic other through orchestration (or whatever other means are available) is not seen, or at least not consciously seen, as a violence done to the other. On the contrary, this manipulation is an act of “channeling” the other’s “violence and hopes.” Because of its satisfying, pleasurable effects, the operatic reordering and integration of the other has seldom been a serious topic for comparatists, who rarely attend to the political economy of operatic orientalism.¹⁰ But, as an instrument of understanding, of organizing the world, of constituting the audible as well as visible waveband of the vibrations and signs that constitute society, opera is very subtle, for it produces the unconscious “sound form of knowledge” that best serves the West’s cultural dominion, a domination made no less total by its process of repression, as shall be seen in a reading of two operas by Puccini.

II

Except for *Tosca*, *Sister Angelica*, and *Gianni Schicchi*, Puccini turned to foreign locales to find settings for his operas: the Latin Quarter of Paris, the gold mines of California, the treaty port of Nagasaki, the Forbidden City of Peking. His life was marked by “his relentless quest for a new subject,” which in his later years became “more complicated, more desperate, and more frantic.”¹¹ In addition to routine visits to Paris and London, he toured such places as Buenos Aires, Cairo, and New York, always seeking new

10. Catherine Clément discusses the questions of gender, race, and body in European operas in her *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988). Edward Said occasionally touches upon these questions in his music reviews for *The Nation*, especially in the essay on feminism (February 7, 1987, 158–60). Works by these two critics and books such as *Europe and Its Others: Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, July 1984*, ed. Francis Barker et al. (Colchester: University of Essex, 1985) or *Literature, Politics, and Theory: Papers from the Essex Conference, 1976–84*, ed. Francis Barker et al. (Colchester: University of Essex, 1986) indicate that the question of the other remains a serious topic for scholars.

11. Howard Greenfeld, *Puccini: A Biography* (New York: Putnam, 1980), 162.

materials for his operas. He was fascinated by the exotic, though from time to time he lost patience with it when it failed to develop fully—for example, his projected operas drawn from Maxim Gorky’s short stories and Pierre Louÿs’s *La Femme et le Pantin*.¹² But when he began with a foreign subject—the alien, the remote, the other—he strove to reconstitute it into his own object. His rewriting of the other’s culture or music in the form of reproduction, normalization, “re-membering,” functioned in fact to silence the other. It was an act that was temporal and historical because the “traveler” Puccini was fascinated by other “ages and almost invariably made use of time’s passage to distance those who were observed from the time of the observer.”¹³ It was also political, because the other was recorded, reorganized, and controlled: the other became available—accessibility replaced the difference, filling in the gaps.

Let us look at how Puccini developed his interpretation of *Madama Butterfly* (first performed at La Scala in Milan on February 17, 1904). The opera is based on the actual suicide of a geisha who had been abandoned by her American lover. The story’s exotic colors and doomed passions caught the fancy of the West, where it was retold in various versions, most notably those by Pierre Loti (*Madame Chrysanthème*, 1887) and John Luther Long (in the *Century Magazine*, in January 1898). Puccini came to the story almost by accident.¹⁴ In the summer of 1900, he went to the Duke of York Theatre for a performance of two plays by the American playwright David Belasco—a farce called *Naughty Anthony*, followed by the tragic *Madame Butterfly*, drawn from Long’s realistic story. Though he understood no English, Puccini was immediately enchanted by the latter. After the performance, he rushed to the dramatist, embraced him, and begged him for permission to make an opera of his play. “I agreed at once,” remembered Belasco later, “and told him he could do anything he liked with the play and make

12. *Ibid.*, 163–66.

13. Johannes Fabian says “The other as object of knowledge must be separate, distinct, and preferably distant from the knowers. . . . [A]nthropology has managed to maintain distant, mostly manipulating temporal coexistence through the denial of coevalness” in *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 121.

14. For more details, see Carner, *Madame Butterfly*, 22–31.

any sort of contract because it is not possible to discuss business arrangements with an impulsive Italian, who has tears in his eyes and both his arms round your neck" (*MB*, 12).

With the contract signed, Puccini's next concern was to acquire authentic Japanese sounds. In the spring of 1902, he met with the celebrated Japanese actress Sada Jacco and asked her to speak in her native tongue, "so as to obtain a first-hand impression of the timbre and range of a female Japanese voice with its, for European ears, high twitter" (*MB*, 12). About the same time, he also visited with the wife of the Japanese ambassador to Italy, who, as Puccini said in his letter to Ricordi, "told me many interesting things and sang me some native songs."¹⁵ She made some suggestions about the names of the characters in the opera, particularly "Yamadori," which sounded too "womanish" to her (and to Sada Jacco as well), but her counsel was ignored by the determined composer; the names are found in the present opera. In addition, Puccini listened to gramophone records of Japanese music and consulted books on customs, religious ceremonies, and architecture. These efforts were Puccini's attempts toward a "harmonic science" of incorporation and inclusion through which the Orient would be "constituted and then introduced into Europe."¹⁶ *Madama Butterfly* eventually turned out to be an Orientalist text whose analogue in the world of empirical politics was, as Said has told us, the "Orient's colonial accumulation and acquisition by Europe."¹⁷ One should remember both Puccini's delight when the Ethiopia-exploiting Mussolini made him a senator and his hints to Sybil Seligman that he would not be averse to honors of some kind from King George V—hints clothed in colonialist verbiage: "I see that for many years I have reigned over Covent Garden, and I am glad of it. . . . I know that, whether at the opera or at court, they wanted and they want songs from *Bohème*. But never once have

15. Richard Specht, *Giacomo Puccini: The Man, His Life, His Work*, trans. Catherine Alison Philips (New York: Knopf, 1933), 176; Guiseppe Adami, ed., *Letters of Giacomo Puccini, Mainly Connected with the Composition and Production of his Operas*, trans. Ena Makin (London: Harrap, 1931), 154.

16. Edward W. Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered," *Cultural Critique*, no. 1 (Fall 1985): 93.

17. *Ibid.*

they thought of that author who, too, has reigned for so many years in their home on the throne of music of the theatre.”¹⁸

On the surface, *Butterfly* resonates with innocence and beauty. Yet it has been affiliated with and filiated to Europe’s vested interests in the Orient and has been produced in opera house settings deeply inscribed with the politics, the considerations, the positions, and the strategies of power that constitute orientalism. *Butterfly* reflects an unconscious “other-phobia,” inscribed in a repression of the other who is represented as feminine, as a female body to be possessed and then deserted. Interestingly, seven of Puccini’s twelve operas were named after their heroines, who quite reveal the ethos of his oeuvre: they are essentially the same—mysterious, innocent, fragile, helpless, lovely, passive. Only Minnie and Turandot are exceptions. Among these victims of circumstances who live and die for love, *Butterfly* is the archetypal victim of both Eros and Thanatos, of passion and death. However, she does not die simply from love. She sacrifices herself so that she will not only be remembered as Lieutenant Pinkerton’s “wife” but also to insure that her son will be taken into the Pinkerton family, to America, a country she has longed to see. Once her existence has been self-erased, *Butterfly* is little more than a fleeting reminder of a once lustful American lieutenant who acted irresponsibly.¹⁹ Her continuing presence bodes ill for a man (and Man) who might be “bewitched,” who might be “seized by a sudden desire” for the unknown. *Butterfly* is that feared other, the scapegoat that constitutes the white male’s repressed desire and guilt for which she must suffer and then die.

Anxious to represent the other’s culture and to reproduce a genuine Japanese atmosphere, Puccini crams the opera with exotic musical motifs and scenic touches. Yet, as Carner has pointed out, for all of Puccini’s extensive use of authentic or quasi-authentic “heard,” “imagined,” or “self-made” Japanese melodies, of instrumental hues and timbres of an impressionist order and

18. Quoted in Charles Osborne, *The Complete Operas of Puccini: A Critical Guide* (London: Gollancz, 1981), 246–47.

19. Cf. Sharpless’s words, “what madness has seized you? Are you completely infatuated?” (Carner, *Madame Butterfly*, 93).

pentatonic scale, the score of *Madama Butterfly* contains “scarcely a bar that does not bear the composer’s unmistakable signature” (*MB*, 45): the Japaneseness of the opera is a Japan reflected through the prism of Puccini’s imagination. The composer did the job so deceptively well that Mary Renner Heath thinks that his use of exotic-sounding melodies “create[s] a musical link between Japanese society and the sense of honor and loyalty that is necessary” to understand the characters of both Butterfly and Suzuki.²⁰ Indeed, as Heath argues, Puccini did further the verisimilitude of his opera by carefully using these melodies to dramatically enhance the significance of certain events. However, the melodies are so well integrated that they lose their own autonomy and become part of a larger whole. In distinguishing between East and West, he makes the former subservient to the latter, as is clear in the opening strains of the opera that consist of the “normal” exposition of a four-part fugue for strings, a motif associated with the house Pinkerton has just leased for his bride:



Then we hear the motif of Nagasaki, Butterfly’s hometown, a musical figure of four chords with the stress on the third chord:

The image shows a musical score for the Nagasaki motif, consisting of four chords in a 2/4 time signature. The score is written for piano and features a forte (*f*) dynamic for the first two chords and a decrescendo (*dim.*) dynamic for the last two. The chords are marked with accents (^) and are arranged in a sequence that emphasizes the third chord.

20. Mary Renner Heath, “Exoticism in Puccini: The Japanese Melodies in *Madame Butterfly*,” *Opera Journal* 8, 4 (1980): 27.

the American way of making “business and pleasure” all over the world:

All over the world
 the vagabond Yankee
 enjoys himself and takes his profit
 ignoring all risks.
 He drops anchor at random. . . .
 He's not content with life
 unless he can find enjoyment
 in every place he visits. . .
 and wins the love of every pretty girl. . . .
 If he's beaten, he tries his luck again;
 he pleases himself
 wherever he goes.
 So I'm marrying Japanese style,
 for nine hundred
 and ninety-nine years,
 with the right every month to break it off.
 (MB, 92-93)

The Japanese life-style, summed up in the Nagasaki motif, may last for “nine hundred and ninety-nine years,” but it is subject to cancellation, which is indicated by the interjection and dominance of the Pinkerton motif. Like the Yankee “hero,” the composer also has the power to control the other and destroy her influence.

(Notice, though, Puccini has also appropriated the Yankee stereotype and “The Star Spangled Banner.” Much has been made of the Pinkerton motif, and Kobbé, in particular, remarked in 1954 that it was “disagreeable” and “should be objected to by all Americans.” However, in 1969 the Earl of Harewood revised Kobbé's criticism of Puccini: “It has never been, apparently, and seems now to cause no comment after some seventy years of repeated hearings.”²⁵ Evidently, most American listeners do not find it objectionable.)

The Pinkerton motif occurs only once more, near the end of the opera, where it plays a very poignant part. It is subtly suppressed so as to enable the motif of Butterfly's love for Pinkerton to prevail, but the repressed finally returns to destroy her passion

25. Kobbé, *New Kobbé's Complete Opera Book*, 1181.

and desire for the absent “husband.” Thus absence of the Pinkerton motif not only indicates that Pinkerton is offstage (yet always *present* for her, a dominating absence) but also serves as a premonition, a forewarning, that Butterfly’s desire is for something fleeting, non-existent, delusory, fictional. His absence literally makes her heart grow fonder, an absence whose presence underlies the core of the opera, which is centered on the anxiety and pain caused by the “unexplainable” delay in Pinkerton’s return. All this is foreshadowed in Pinkerton’s aria about his casual way of living.

Pinkerton’s phrase “to break it off” is highly suggestive of both what Puccini’s normal “Western” style of composition does to exotic tunes and what the opera is about. The arrival of the two Japanese officials for the wedding ceremony is announced by the Japanese Imperial Hymn in the strings, followed by a Relative motif indicating the gathering of Butterfly’s relatives and friends. The motif is then further developed by an animated ensemble, forming a canon between treble and lower voices; like all “Japanese” talk, it becomes unintelligible, sheer noise. These friends come to pay their respects to the couple, but instead they create a noisy cross-talk that comments on the ultimate outcome of the marriage: “there’ll be a divorce!” (*MB*, 107). On one side, Sharpless warns that Butterfly is taking the marriage very seriously, while Pinkerton continues to muse on Butterfly’s innocent beauty (Puccini here uses clarinets and flute to evoke the graceful flutter of a butterfly) and “the day when, in a real ceremony, I marry a real American bride” (*MB*, 95). On the other side, the relatives vary in their opinions, some suggesting that Pinkerton is rich and handsome, while others disagree. Then into the noise and chaos walks Uncle Bonze, who curses Butterfly for having renounced her religion and her culture. Here a discordant whole-tone motif breaks off the previous gay chorus (“O Kami! O Kami!”); thundered out by horns and trumpets, the Curse motif will henceforth symbolize the naive geisha’s ostracism by friends and family, as well as her almost complete isolation:



Butterfly's friends and relatives now turn against her, shouting both "We renounce you!" and the Japanese expletive "Hou!" in utter abhorrence. To this Japanese *noise*, affecting only Butterfly, Pinkerton responds with an angry gesture and then consoles Butterfly: "Sweet child, do not weep because of the croaking of these frogs" (*MB*, 114). His sweet words immediately soothe Butterfly. Her Japanese identity has been effaced; she calls her country "the United States" and reproaches the Japanese gods—in contrast to the American God—for being "fat and lazy" (*MB*, 122). The break with Japan climaxes in their famous love duet. Its rich melody, diverse rhythmic patterns, constant fluctuations in dynamics, and its pervasive *tempo rubato* negate the Japanese traditional tunes and their "nine hundred and ninety-nine years" of history. Though the Japanese melodies will return, they will remain secondary, fragmentary. It is the Western harmonic system that will embody Butterfly's longings and anxieties.

Puccini's "noise," a canon between the treble and lower voices in the Relative motif and a discordant whole-tone figure to accompany Uncle Bonze's furious "Cho-Cho-San! What an abomination!" exposes at once the violent split and confusion concealed within the supposedly harmonious society. The sharp aural contrasts between the noisy and disagreeable Japanese relatives and the "well-mannered" Occidentals are softened and harmonized as Puccini channels the violence of these disordered and sinister motifs into the love duet. More a pair of monologues than a duet, the lovers display their passion for each other, even as they remain blissfully ignorant of what the other is really like. While Pinkerton admires Butterfly for her "delicate movements," her "grace," "bewitching eyes," and "childlike" qualities, Butterfly sees herself as an object of desire. The music, with its regular repetitions of previous bars or motifs, reflects this retreat to an infantile "mirror phase," in which Butterfly will become ensnared by the Pygmalion image: Pinkerton's darling little wife, a "squirrel," a "lily," a "moon goddess," and a "butterfly."²⁶

26. Here Lacan's notion of the "symbolic order" is illuminating. Butterfly assumes the role of an infant who enters into the symbolic order and constitutes herself in terms of the mirror image she imagines and projects for herself. For the audience, however, there is another level of the narcissistic mode of the

Unaware that to Pinkerton she is just a “little plaything” (*giocattolo*), Butterfly echoes Pinkerton’s earlier comment to Sharpless about the crushing of a butterfly’s delicate wings:

They say that, in other lands,
if a butterfly
falls into a man’s hands,
she is transfixed with a pin
and fastened to a board!

To Butterfly’s words, so full of prophetic irony, Pinkerton responds with an image that is less than comforting:

There’s some truth in that.
And do you know why?
So that she won’t fly away.
I’ve caught you.
I press you to me as you tremble.
You are mine.

(*MB*, 118)

But Butterfly is gladly willing to accept her fate as a crushed butterfly: “Yes, for life.” She does not realize that the image of a butterfly nailed to a board will almost literally signify the state of her existence. Naively, she asks of Pinkerton, “Love me, just a little, a child-like love to suit a child like me” (*MB*, 118). Here she echoes Pinkerton’s earlier remark to Sharpless, “With those child-like ways, when she talks, I’m on fire” (*MB*, 99). When Sharpless earlier asks Pinkerton what mad desires drive him to marriage, the Lieutenant replies, we may recall:

I don’t know! I don’t know!
It depends what you mean by infatuation!
Love or fancy, I couldn’t say.
All I know is she’s
bewitched me with her ingenuous manner.

subject/object relationship at work. As Juliet MacCannell suggests, culture as code takes on the guise of the other to be experienced as an intersubjective discourse and to reinforce the ego (*Figuring Lacan: Criticism and the Cultural Unconscious* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986], 59–65).

Light and slender as a piece
of blown glass
in stature, in bearing
she's like a figure on a painted screen.
But from her glittering
background of lacquer,
with a sudden movement she frees herself,
flutters like a butterfly and comes to rest
with such silent grace
that a sudden desire seizes me
to pursue her, though I crush her wings.
(MB, 93-94)

Sharpless warns Pinkerton that "It would be a great sin to strip off those delicate wings," but Pinkerton brushes aside his advice, insisting that "No great harm is done if I'd like those wings . . . to spread themselves in a sweet flight of love" (MB, 94).

From the start, Pinkerton distinguishes between a "Japanese"-style marriage, which can be broken off easily, and the "true" American way. This distinction is also noticeable in Puccini's different composition styles, of *Japonais* versus Western, of pentatonic versus harmonic system. The sense of "distinction" followed here is that established by Pierre Bourdieu: the dominant class constitutes a relatively autonomous institutional space whose structure is defined by the distribution of economic and cultural capital among its members, with each class fraction characterized by a certain configuration of this distribution to which there corresponds a certain life-style through the mediation of the habitus.²⁷ As has been seen, "breaking it off" occurs on both verbal and instrumental levels as it reinforces the cultural differences. Even though Pinkerton reappears only at the close of act 2, the breaking-off has already been internalized by Butterfly, who tells Pinkerton that she has renounced her own religion to "bow to Mister Pinkerton's God." "And in order to please you perhaps I shall be able to forget my people," she goes on to say (MB, 109-10). Before she launches into the most familiar and famous of all Puccini arias, "Un bel di vedremo," she reproaches Suzuki for

27. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 260.

“having no faith” (*MB*, 124), in the American God, of course. And she definitively refuses to “hear” Sharpless’s hints that Pinkerton has taken an American woman as his wife. Distinguishing herself from her people, she offers Sharpless American cigarettes, and when Goro, the marriage broker, suggests that, by his desertion Pinkerton has already divorced her, she says that that is “Japanese law . . . but not of my country” (*MB*, 129). She insists on the different sociocultural habitus between the two nations on divorce: “We know that to open the door and just chase the wife out as quickly as possible is called divorce here. But in America you can’t do that.”

Butterfly’s only question before facing the traumatic realization of Pinkerton’s marriage is “When do robins make their nests in America?” (*MB*, 126), echoing Pinkerton’s promise that he will return “in that happy season when the robin builds its nest again.” Little does she realize that Pinkerton is returning only to fetch her son to fill the nest he and his wife, Kate, have been making together in America. Sharpless responds to the irony of her question by apologizing that he has never studied “ornithology,” a word which escapes Butterfly. For a single, short-lived moment, Butterfly makes fun of the intellectual gamesmanship which relies mostly on big words. She attempts to make sense of the strange word, but innocently concludes that “in other words, you [Sharpless] don’t know” (*MB*, 127). In fact, Sharpless has come to enlighten Butterfly yet finds it difficult because her life and its meaning are dependent on her self-deception. The sad news is finally revealed by Suzuki, even though Butterfly herself has finally begun to suspect the truth. Finally coming face to face with her bad faith, Butterfly decides to seek refuge in death. Taking up a dagger left by her father, she returns to her Japanese roots and seeks release in the ritual suicide of *hara-kiri*.

It is only after Butterfly’s death that Pinkerton attempts to see her. However, Pinkerton’s aversion to meeting Butterfly alive is indicative of his dread of the other. He is shocked to discover that Butterfly has taken their relationship so seriously, but, though full of remorse, he has been afraid to confront her since she represents his irresponsible, momentary passion. Knowing that he will “never find respite from this torment,” Pinkerton calls the house his “flowery refuge of happiness and love” and admits that

Butterfly's "gentle face will always haunt me, torturing me forever" (*MB*, 148). However, his recognition of guilt and responsibility ("I must fly, I am contemptible!") is heard only by Sharpless. In a "shame" culture, Butterfly cannot continue living once her bad faith has been exposed, once she has come to understand the existential implications of her situation. Pinkerton, however, can internalize his knowledge and "guilt," can evade the consequences and still live; he is the ancient mariner who has shot down an innocent albatross, whose death has enabled him to become "sadder but wiser."

The curtain falls with Pinkerton's cry of grief: "Butterfly! Butterfly! Butterfly!" cruelly recalling their earlier talk of butterflies transfixed, pinned to boards, specimens for the West's ethnographic museums. Puccini directs Pinkerton and Sharpless to rush into the room as Butterfly dies with a feeble gesture toward the child: "Pinkerton kneels, while Sharpless takes the child" (*MB*, 153). Only after the bewitching figure of "exotic fragrance" has collapsed and ceased to be the seductive other is Man able to face her with religious awe. As long as the cultural other exists, it threatens, forcing Man to commit mistakes he will later regret or for which he will be filled with guilt. For the guilt she has created, the cultural other must perish, be reduced to silence, so that Man can speak for himself, even though his speech can never move beyond his "contemptible" past.

III

Sometimes, however, the other is too mysterious or too powerful to handle, at least at first. She must be decoded, tamed, conquered, and incorporated. The struggle with the difficult other is apparent too in Puccini's *Turandot*, which premiered at La Scala in Milan on April 25, 1926. It took more than three years before Puccini began to be satisfied with the music he was writing; when he died on November 29, 1924, it was incomplete. (The concluding scene was completed by Franco Alfano, following, primarily, Puccini's musical sketches.) In March 1920, during a lunch with Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni, Puccini agreed to try his hand at Count Carlo Gozzi's play *Turandot* (1762). Yet he con-

tinually asked his friends to change the form and structure of the libretto, and he constantly complained in his letters about his pains and anxiety in composing the music. On December 11, 1922, he wrote to Adami:

I have no good news about *Turandot*. I am beginning to be worried about my laziness. Can I have had enough of China because I have composed one entire act and nearly finished a second? . . . If I had found the sort of subject I was looking for, and am still hoping to find, I should have had it staged by now. But this Chinese world! . . . I have tried again and again to write the music for the introductory scene of Act II, and cannot. I don't feel comfortable in China.²⁸

He even said that he was thinking of returning the commission to Ricordi and withdrawing from the contract. The major difficulty was, it seemed, his unfamiliarity with the Chinese world that he was trying to “appropriate”—in other words, he was attempting to make the alien his own. As Robert Weimann argues, “appropriation” should be defined as “both a text-appropriating as well as a world-appropriating activity” and constitutes a “non-judicial mode of making things one's own by which the world in the book and the book in the world are appropriated through an intellectual acquisition on the level of both writing and reading.”²⁹

Puccini appropriated on both levels, as he urged his librettists to build upon Gozzi: “Make Gozzi's *Turandot* your basis, but on that you must rear another figure; I mean—I can't explain! From our imaginations (and we shall need them) there must arise so much that is beautiful and attractive and gracious so to make our story a bouquet of success.” And in another letter to Adami: “It is just possible that by retaining them [the Gozzi characters] with discretion we should have an Italian element which, into the midst of so much Chinese mannerism—because that is what it is—would introduce a touch of our life and, above all, of sincerity.”³⁰ He even attempted to force verses from his librettists to fit his

28. Osborne, *Complete Operas of Puccini*, 245.

29. Robert Weimann, “‘Appropriation’ and Modern History in Renaissance Prose Narrative,” *New Literary History* 14 (1983): 465–66.

30. Osborne, *Complete Operas of Puccini*, 258.

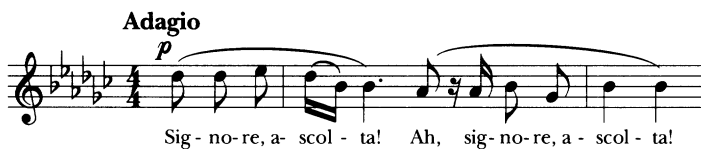
precomposed music, which he told them was “all there”: “Now that I have at last settled down to write a bar or two, I find that I have no lines for the death of Liù. The music is all there; it is *a case now of writing words for music which is already made*” (emphasis mine).³¹ The music is already made; the words give substance to the ideology that underlies the making of that music, which is to “give an interesting and varied form” to Gozzi. To produce an effect more “sincere” and true within a Chinese milieu, Puccini persuaded Adami and Simoni to reduce Gozzi’s court characters to three, to suppress their *commedia dell’arte* names (Pantalone, Tartaglia, Brighella, Truffaldino) and to rechristen them Ping, Pang, and Pong. Important changes were also made with Gozzi’s character Adelma. Gozzi’s Adelma is a former Tartar princess who becomes the favorite slave of Turandot. She loves Calaf and tries to persuade him to flee with her, instead of risking his own life to win Turandot’s hand. It is Adelma who later informs on Calaf as a means of revenge. Adami and Simoni recast the plot and transformed her into the loyal Liù, who sacrifices herself to avoid revealing Calaf’s true identity to Turandot.

The rewriting not only adds “genuine” flavors to the opera, making it sound more Chinese by using names such as Ping, Pang, Pong, and especially Liù, but it invents contrasting foci—the heartless princess Turandot and the tender Liù (who is almost another Butterfly)—and then softens that contrast as Liù transforms Turandot’s heart into that of a warm, loving woman who can no longer threaten the foreign prince Calaf. Liù is the most immediately appealing and effective character in the opera. Whereas Butterfly makes her sacrifice as an abandoned mother, Liù makes hers, William Ashbrook has suggested, “for the memory of a smile.”³² For Ashbrook, both Liù’s text and her music are “triumphs of understatement.” Yet this interpretation slights the irony implied in the “cherishable creation” of Liù. Rather than being a native Chinese, as her name would suggest, Liù is a slave serving the exiled Tartar king Timur. On the other hand, in a perhaps unconscious irony, the Chinese princess’s name, Turan-

31. *Ibid.*, 261.

32. William Ashbrook, *The Opera of Puccini* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 214.

dot, is in fact of Persian origin.³³ In an ironic reversal, the “foreigner” Liù, through revealing the magic of love, gives herself the power to face torture and death while simultaneously releasing Turandot from the evil spell of Princess Lou Ling, an ancient Chinese princess who had been tragically betrayed by a foreign conqueror “thousands and thousands of years ago.” It is as if the Chinese cannot free themselves from their evil past but must seek a solution from outside—in this case, first Liù and then Calaf. However, Liù is more than mere invention. Puccini and his librettists seem to have based her on a Chinese prototype of loyalty and friendship popular in such Chinese dramas as *The Orphan of the Chao Family*. Puccini took pains to transform Liù’s character into the idea of *yin*, the female principle, while at the same time he used her as a means to criticize the “bloodthirsty” Chinese, in order to separate her from this “irrational” race that is too easily excited to cruel deeds by their princess Turandot. He does this by giving Liù a most moving aria, “Signore, ascolta” (“Signor, listen to me”), which is in fact derived from a Chinese folk song, “Sian Chok,” but so masterfully rearranged that it becomes more Puccinian than Chinese:



Ironically enough, Puccini died with *Turandot* still incomplete; the orchestration had only been completed up to the point of Liu’s death. According to his biographer Arnaldo Fraccaroli, Puccini is reported to have said, “My opera will be staged incomplete, and then someone will have to come onto the stage and say to the public: ‘At this point the composer died!’”³⁴ (At the premiere, Arturo Toscanini did just that.) There is a certain ironic

33. The name Turandot suggests that Turandot is a daughter of China, who is sent to the conqueror as a gift. All references to the opera are to Puccini’s *Turandot: Lyric Opera in Three Acts and Five Scenes* (New York: Franco Colombo, 1967).

34. Osborne, *Complete Operas of Puccini*, 248.

parallel here: Puccini dies just when Liù, his “agent,” has sacrificed herself in order to give birth to Turandot’s feeling for others and thus prepare for her marriage with Calaf. How ironic that Puccini should die at this point and leave his work to be completed by another Italian musician—a work about the union of Turandot and Calaf, of China and its other, about the continued appropriation and incorporation of the other.

Of course, Puccini is not the first composer to base an opera on Gozzi’s play, which is actually a fable derived from either *The Arabian Nights* or *Le Cabinet des fées*, a collection of Persian tales. During the nineteenth century, at least seven composers wrote operas about Gozzi’s cruel Princess, among whom were Danzi (1817), Reissiger (1835), Vesque von Puttlingen (1838), Bassini (1867; he was also Puccini’s teacher for a period of time), and Rehbaum (1888). Quite a few composers—Weber and Lachner, for example—wrote incidental music for the production of Gozzi’s play, which was frequently staged in German-speaking countries in an adaptation by Schiller. In the twentieth century, Busoni first composed incidental music for a 1911 Berlin production of Gozzi’s play as translated and adapted by Karl Vollmoeller; he also wrote a suite based on Gozzi’s work six years later.³⁵ Though utilizing fairy tales, Gozzi’s play proved to be popular among the European audience. As James Clifford and Eric Hobsbawm have observed, works like Gozzi’s and their wide reception actually draw attention to the historical predicament of ethnography; it is always caught up in the invention, not the representation, of cultures, with the invented version having under-

35. Busoni incorporated the British folk tune “Greensleeves” into his suite *Turandot*, apparently mistaking it for a Chinese tune. See Richard Freed’s introductory notes to the suite (MCD 10019, New York: The Moss Music Group, 1984), where he writes: “Like both Weber and Puccini, Busoni did a bit of research into Eastern music in composing his *Turandot* score. ‘Most of the themes in this work,’ he wrote, ‘are taken, sometimes unaltered and sometimes adapted, from Arabian, Chinese and Indian music. The character of the pieces moves between moods that are festive and magnificent, idle and sumptuous, sinister and fantastic, and humorous and grotesque.’ There is one conspicuous tune, however, that is very definitely not of Oriental origin, though Busoni apparently thought it was when he picked it out of an old collection of lute music: in the Intermezzo *Turandots Frauengemach*, one of the two sections adapted for the piano *Elegies*, what we hear is a lovely setting of the English melody everyone knows as *Greensleeves*.” I am indebted to Professor William Fitzgerald for this reference.

gone a process of repeated formalization and ritualization (of this, opera is most capable), finally assuming the form of “factological” representation and giving the appearance of being true to historical reality.³⁶ The act of creating or writing history (and fiction) is, as Michel de Certeau has reminded us, “concerned ultimately with establishing a certain order” that will offer some sense of security against a preexisting experience of threat, some effacement, undermining, or some loss—in the encounter between self and the other, between authority and the alien.³⁷ More talented than his precursors in the activity of cultural self-fashioning, Puccini established an order through music by containing within the order itself melodies of the other, by incorporating foreign sounds into the larger whole to show that the alien has been tamed, made submissive, and often conquered, if not destroyed.

Among the Chinese folk melodies Puccini made use of, the most frequently heard is the “Moo-Lee-Wha” (“The Jasmine Flower”) tune. It is transformed in various ways throughout the opera, including the climax, when Calaf employs the motif previously associated with the awesome figure of Turandot to voice (on a high C) his victory, his power over the Princess. (In a sense, Calaf is like the composer, who appropriates the tune to claim his mastery over the other.) Just as the Japanese tune “The Cherry Blossom” is used in the love scene between Butterfly and Pinkerton to designate the child-bride, so “Moo-Lee-Wha” is utilized to mark the presence of the Chinese Princess:



36. On the historical predicament of ethnography, see James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 1–26, and Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 4.

37. See Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 199, and Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 9.

The tune first became known in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century and was quoted in an English travel book as well as in a German volume on music history.³⁸ By fully exploiting this most exotic melody, Puccini asked his European audience to repeat his act of eavesdropping, of recording the sound of the alien, and above all of manipulating the culture of a foreign people.

Puccini did not merely make use of several Chinese tunes, among them “Moo-Lee-Wha”; he also utilized Oriental musical instruments, particularly the Chinese gong and xylophone, almost always in order to portray the Chinese as a cruel and savage race. At the beginning of the play, the proclamation of the Mandarin is punctuated by the clashing of the Chinese gong and tinkling xylophone; the message is: “Turandot the chaste shall be the bride of him of royal lineage, who can solve her three enigmas. But he whose attempts are unsuccessful pays for his failure with his noble head!” (ll. 2-4). The Chinese gong is associated, almost without exception, with execution of foreign princes who serve up wrong answers; while the people of Peking sharpen the axe for the head of the Prince of Persia, who will fare no better than many others who have gone before him, Puccini specifies: “Chinese gong in orchestra” (l. 22). To make his point unmistakably clear, Puccini follows his note by directing that the twelve basses should be played “selvaggio” (savagely). When Ping, Pang, and Pong warn Calaf against competing for the hand of Turandot, they describe in detail how every kind of butchery is exercised upon the foreign bodies: “Here they’ll choke you, bleed you, torture you, flay you, slay you, skin you, slice you and disembowel you” (ll. 84-85). The triangle, celeste, glockenspiel, and xylophone are now brought to the fore to provide a sharp, metallic percussive background to their warning. Despite the warning and Liù’s plea, Calaf, the Prince of Tartary, decides to try his luck with the riddles: he strikes the gong three times and cries out, “Turandot!” as people around him shout, “’Tis death!” (l. 141). Chinese gong and xylophone project an underlying sense of dread to the already awful setting as the people affirm their loyalty to the Emperor Attoum, and when the old king’s kindly words fail to dissuade Calaf, he

38. Osborne, *Complete Operas of Puccini*, 263.

sighs, “Unto thy fate I leave thee” (l. 233), to the accompaniment of the Chinese gong.

But it is Turandot who gives chilling meaning to the sound of the gong. To win her hand or to lose one’s head, one has only to sound the gong. The cruel Princess makes her first appearance in the opera between two musical passages in which the Chinese gong plays an important role—when the executioner’s assistants are sharpening their weapons and when Calaf sounds the gong. She is first seen on the balcony of the palace as she signals that the Prince of Persia should be put to death. Throughout all of the first act, she is almost invisible; her presence can only be felt, feared, and heard. She is absent, but her “Moo-Lee-Wha” motif is the dominant theme in the opening scene, where it is associated with the execution of the foreign princes, the disruption of peace and order (which Chinese people once enjoyed, as Ping tells Calaf), and especially the noise of the ferocious mob—*la folla*, in Italian—with their bloodthirsty shouts and the sounds of the whetstone grinding. People in the crowd, in the midst of its irrational cries (“Kill him! Kill him!”), describe Turandot as cold, cruel, chaste, but radiant. She is a Moon goddess (l. 47), a Diana figure who ruthlessly punishes Actaeons, and a Medusa, who brings immediate death to all who gaze upon her (ll. 26-27). To the foreign prince Calaf, she is the threatening other, who should be cursed; however, the very sight of her, even though at a distance, at once gives rise to an almost fatal erotic desire.

As if entranced, he sings, “O divine apparition, marvel of beauty! Oh! wonder! O divine apparition of enchantment!” (ll. 73-74), completely overwhelmed by passion and thus driven to turn a deaf ear to all warnings and pleadings. As a prince in exile, he must tame the shrew in order to restore the Tartar kingdom to his father. But even more important, he must, like Prospero, gain control over Caliban, the “phantom-like” Turandot, and conquer and establish order in the uncivilized land. The deed of mastery and control is heralded musically by his appropriation of Turandot’s theme, which he rephrases to give voice to his victory over the now helpless and trembling Princess. He has acted through and within the framework set out by Turandot herself, while at the same time transgressing it. For after his success in solving the riddles, he turns the table and now poses a riddle for the cruel

Princess: "My name is unknown! Tell me my name, before the morning" (l. 276). Eventually, it is Calaf himself who reveals his identity to the Princess. Whereas he solves the three puzzles set by Turandot, she cannot answer the only question the Prince has given her: while the mysteries of the Princess of China can be decoded, even though with difficulty, the identity of the alien Prince remains unknown, until he reveals it himself. And even then, the name she discloses to the Chinese is not that of the Prince; she says, "his name is love" (ll. 381-82).

It is to avenge the ancient rape and death of the Princess Lou Ling, Turandot tells Calaf, that she has devised the trial of her riddles. And as if to threaten Calaf, when Turandot reaches the dramatic phrase "that agonizing cry! that dying cry!," a stirring theme is introduced by the orchestra and then repeated three times, with the pitch rising a major third at each repetition. The latter technique appears again as Turandot proclaims, "The enigmas are three, but death is one." Calaf replies with immense confidence: "The enigmas are three, but life is one"; he switches one word and hurls the phrase back at the Princess in a higher key. It is Calaf's gesture of appropriation, displacement, and mastery. The progression in pitch continues as Turandot and Calaf compete for a third time, their voices and their excitement soaring to a high C:



Then come the riddles, the first and the second of which Calaf solves gallantly. Finally, there is the third, in which, in a symbolic gesture, the Princess herself becomes the riddle. Seeing that Calaf seems at a loss, Turandot bends over her prey and sneers, "Now surrender! Your cheeks are white with terror! For you know it is hopeless!" (ll. 257-58). Calaf hesitates, then bounds to his feet and exclaims, "Ah! thou hast told me; my life to thee I owe! And my fire shall dissolve thee: Turandot!" (ll. 259-60). He

Solution



Love motif



Full of confidence that he alone knows the secret of his name, Calaf opens act 3 singing “Nessun dorma” (“None shall sleep tonight”)—a favorite aria of most tenors—which builds on and contains Turandot’s earlier decree that “None in Peking shall sleep tonight” (l. 287). Again, Turandot’s own words are appropriated and turned against her; she is tortured by the thought that she will not discover the Prince’s name and will be forced to submit. When Calaf does not respond to the crowd’s threats and appeals, they turn to Liù and Timur, for the two had been seen talking with Calaf. In a scene parallel in many ways to the final act of *Madama Butterfly*, Liù declares that she is the only one who knows the Prince’s name; and in order to protect his identity, she kills herself. The music for this entire scene is somber, funereal, and meditative. The people realize that they have caused the death of an innocent girl and wander off grief-stricken. Her body is carried off; Calaf and Turandot are left alone for the first time. Turandot, softened by Liù’s counsel on love, finally accepts Calaf’s awakening kiss, as Liù had predicted. From now on, Calaf’s Love motif will dominate, defeating and then replacing Turandot’s Defiance motif. It announces the total victory of Calaf’s love over Turandot, who now confesses to her father and the courtiers that the stranger’s name is love. The latter motif continues as the curtain falls and the crowd scatters flowers and sings in joy.

Calaf’s strategy of containment and of appropriation is suggestive of what Puccini does to the oriental tunes. Calaf succeeds by appropriating the words and motifs of Turandot and then turning them against her. He is capable of developing through and within the space set out by Turandot his own motifs that incorporate, transform, and, above all, subdue what was originally

hers. Since it is done in the name of love, the act of appropriation, incorporation, and domination is not seen as violence done to the other. In fact, the whole community (the chorus) celebrates it under the motif introduced by the foreign Prince: it is the alien who has restored harmony to their society. The act of subjugation is therefore not only necessary but welcomed by those who are subdued. And in these two operas, the act of subjugating other cultures is even made pleasurable by familiar harmonies that are contrasted with the dreaded “noise” associated with the other, the savage, the barbarian. Puccini subtly employs and masters foreign tunes in order to create the “noise” of the other’s community, suggesting thereby its internal splits, confusions, and disorders and thus justifying musically an imposed political economy. But, as Jean-François Lyotard has reminded us, any dispute is difficult to resolve, for each party will phrase its case in terms that the other will not or cannot accept, for the terms of each, if accepted, will validate its own claims and render those of its opponent illegitimate from the start—before the dispute can even be formulated by the other. “To name the referent,” he says, “is not the same as to show its ‘presence.’”³⁹

Three questions remain: one, if the Japanese and Chinese melodies are “phrased” by Puccini, then do they not tell us more about the Occident itself than about the Orient since the Occident has already invented, constituted, and ordered the Orient, its Orient? The second is an insidiously subversive question: how does the Orient invent, constitute, and order—containing and appropriating in its own way—the Occident? The final question returns us to the beginning of the paper: in a situation in which the Occident is supposed to incorporate the Orient or vice versa, how much has already been phrased and rephrased to make the act of incorporation self-congratulatory or, ironically, self-critical?

39. Jean-François Lyotard, “The Differend, the Referent, and the Proper Name,” *Diacritics* 14 (1984): 11. See also his *Just Gaming*, trans. Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 6–7.