Saint-Saëns’ "Other": Orientalism in Samson et Dalila

Elizabeth Janelle Sallinger

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SAINT-SAENS’ “OTHER”: ORIENTALISM IN SAMSON ET DALILA

A Thesis
Submitted to the Mary Pappert School of Music

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Music

By

Elizabeth Sallinger

May 2010
SAINT-SAENS’ “OTHER”: ORIENTALISM IN *SAMSON ET DALILA*

By

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March 29, 2010

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ABSTRACT

SAINT-SAENS’ “OTHER”: ORIENTALISM IN *SAMSON ET DALILA*

By

Elizabeth Sallinger

May 2010

Thesis supervised by Dr. Jessica Wiskus

Subtleties in art and music have always been a factor in swaying people’s ideas and opinions. Some pieces of music make a direct attempt to communicate and influence how one should view a certain group of people or a culture, often creating a great social divide and a tense atmosphere. Ralph Locke and Edward Said explain “Orientalism” as “a corporate institution for dealing with the Orient- dealing with it by making statements about it...a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.” Though Orientalism began as working with just a Far Eastern sound, the term soon expanded to include all music that is meant to sound foreign to a particular group of listeners. This study continues to look at Saint-Saens’ *Samson et Dalila* through the eyes of Locke and further examines the composer’s use of Middle Eastern compositional techniques, including instrumentation, use of Arab modes, and use of threatening
melodies and rhythms. These techniques are examined with respect to the way that they effectively communicate and manipulate the audience’s perception of characters in the work.
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Introduction

“Throughout history, opinions about art, and especially about the art of music, have been subject to strange aberrations, to wild eccentricities. Art gives rise to a powerful suggestion, and through it the moon instantly appears as green cheese. The public in its innocence falls in with these crack-brained ideas.” –Camille Saint-Saens

Communicating a thought or concept into the minds of a viewer or listener is something that many artists and composers strive to accomplish. Yet, acting not so much as coercion as drawing from a previously formed context of division, the notion of self versus other is not always conscious, and often sways the views of people to sympathize with one group and fear or loathe another. Some such mindsets come about by combining fact and fiction, taking what is known about a people or group and pairing it with assumptions to create an entirely new way of characterizing and depicting that people or group. An example would be taking the knowledge one has gained from travel literature and combining it with an artist’s less informed rendering of a people in order to create an idea of what those people are like. Thus, the work of art may reveal more about the creator’s point of view than about the people whom he portrays. Such a complex mindset characterizes that of Orientalism, which refers to how the peoples and customs of the East are portrayed in artistic disciplines of the West.

Edward Said, the leading and most recognized scholar of Orientalism, defines the term in two ways (Kennedy, 2000). In his first book, Orientalism, he describes it as, “a manner of regularized (or Orientalized) writing, vision, and study, dominated by imperatives, perspectives, and ideological biases ostensibly suited to the Orient.” In
this interpretation of the term, the view of the other cultures is much more in reference to their styles and practices; the West attempts to emulate these ideas. Such musical pieces that suggest the East but do not also attempt to place judgment on them include the Chinese dance from Tchaikovsky’s *The Nutcracker* and “Imperatrice des Pagodas” from Ravel’s *Ma Mere l'Oye*. These pieces contain instrumentation and progressions that sound foreign to a Western ear, but also have a light quality about them that does not impress upon the audience that anything is amiss. They are also part of larger storylines that do not focus on tension between the East and West.

But in *Orientalism Reconsidered* Said goes further, highlighting the pernicious quality of Orientalism when he writes that it becomes, in a sense, “a corporate institution for dealing with the Orient - dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Kennedy, 2000). Examples of this interpretation of Orientalism include Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* and Richard Strauss’s *Salome*, where non-Western cultures are portrayed not only as incredibly different but as beneath the West.

Said’s work highlights two important terms in particular that impact our study as a whole: “biases” and “dominating.” Rather than portraying another culture through that culture’s eyes as an insider or even as a well-informed outsider, many Western scholars, artists, writers, and composers have forced the East into a Westernized mold. In the process, false biases have appeared. Music was no longer produced in a manner commensurate with local tradition, such as on Eastern instruments and using purely
Eastern scales, modes, or melodies. Art and writing produced by Western artists placed, or displaced, Easterners into situations where they normally would not have been found, such as Western-style balls, European countries, and even as intriguing guests in a New England household in a work by Louisa May Alcott.\(^1\)

This displacement of Eastern characters in Western contexts prompts a sense of uneasiness. Struggling to identify what is different and what is familiar while simultaneously trying to understand a piece or a plot causes the audience to become even more unsettled. Being able to empathize with a character or group allowed for them to be more comfortable, and thus the idea of “self” versus “other” is brought into play. What is familiar and comfortable to the audiences is grouped into “self” whereas what was foreign or unfamiliar is considered “other” (Clayton, 2007). It is this divide that is highlighted by means of the biases which constitute Orientalism.

Moreover, the more masculine view— since the bulk of writings and studies were done by men— of Eastern cultures introduces additional biases to the term when women are considered. Instead of being portrayed as they see their own society, Westerners instead saw Eastern women as less chaste and proper than their own women. This often led them to draw even more unfair conclusions about that people whom they did not necessarily understand, such as believing all Eastern women were prostitutes. What began as an attempt to study another culture and create art using Eastern themes as a model (as with Said’s first definition), evolved into a frame of mind in which the East presented a threat to the stability and character of the West.

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\(^1\) From *Eight Cousins* (1875). The novel traces the development of Rose under the tutelage of her Uncle Alec, who attempts to break her of her sheltered upbringing by introducing both Eastern items and Eastern people into her world.
Camille Saint-Saens’ opera *Samson et Dalila* shows how one is able to take Eastern elements and manipulate them within Western contexts in order to portray the idea of the threat presented by a foreign culture. Saint-Saens achieves this not only by manipulating elements of the plot and characters to sway the audiences’ sympathies toward Samson, but also by his approach to the composition of the music. Through his use of modes, instrumentation, and rhythm, he suggests to the audience both a characterization of the East and a threat of instability to the Western sound and way of life. Both of these ideas are composed in a way that also suggest that they are at the same time under the West’s more stable control.

To study the implicit biases and domination thematized within this opera, several approaches will be used. In addition to an analysis of the music itself, gender theory, plot and character analysis, and an in-depth look at the dichotomies found in Orientalism, focusing especially on the “Bacchanale” in Act III, will be investigated.
Chapter 1: The Study of Orientalism

As previously stated, Edward Said was the leading scholar of Orientalism until his death in 2003 and continues to be the most quoted and referenced authority. As a man of Middle Eastern heritage who came to live in a Westernized society, Said had an intimate knowledge of Orientalist arts and music. His background also allowed for him to understand firsthand the insider-outsider conundrum that plagues many scholars. His two definitions of the term “Orientalism,” which came from the beginning and end of his career show the evolution of the ideas that helped to form the study as well as an understanding of all possible implications that Orientalist artists can convey to their audiences.

Said’s work explores not only what comprises the term, “Oriental,” but various aspects of how the term was applied in different countries and how the mindset is still somewhat in effect in modern society. One of his most important points is that both the Orient and Occident are man-made. Said also states in his introduction that, “One ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which, were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow away. I myself believe that Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient (which is what, in its academic or scholarly form, it claims to be)” (Said, 1979). This quote puts into context the idea that the study is about power and making assumptions. Said’s work also tends to slant toward a West that disregards the problems associated with their own lower classes in favor of looking more harshly on the East.
Said also admits that, “Philosophically, then, the kind of language, thought, and vision that I have been calling Orientalism very generally is a form of radical realism; anyone employing Orientalism, which is the habit for dealing with questions, objects, qualities, and regions deemed Oriental, will designate, name, point to, fix what he is talking or thinking about with a word or phrase, which then is considered either to have acquired, or more simply to be, reality. Rhetorically speaking, Orientalism is absolutely anatomical and enumerative: to use its vocabulary is to engage in the particularizing and dividing of things Oriental into manageable parts. Psychologically, Orientalism is a form of paranoia, knowledge of another kind, say, from ordinary historical knowledge.”

Said’s quote adds several elements into the mix, including the ideas of control and paranoia. He points to “particularizing and dividing of things Oriental into manageable parts.” In essence, he suggests that Westerners and Orientalists sought to identify and break down the various characteristics that made the East what it was and Easterners who they were. Being able to control the parts after picking apart the whole allowed for the West to feel as though they had more dominance.

Said’s idea that Orientalism is a form of paranoia is apt as well. Instead of drawing from historical and travel accounts, people were attributing qualities to these countries and people. Not truly knowing what other cultures are like or are capable of, the sense that their existence poses a threat, however real or imaginary, becomes a popular frame of mind.
In the 19th century, Europe was undergoing a lot of changes, both continentally and internationally. Some countries such as Germany and Italy were dominating the arts while some others such as France struggled with identity. Some countries were seeing the role of women shift from being primarily based in the home to being contributing members of society such as in Parisian bourgeois society, and some countries were exploring new territories and ideas. Constant change breeds many things, resentment and creativity being two common results. Allowing women to achieve higher goals than previously permitted was not always a welcome change. Some looked to the ways and customs of other countries and nationalities and some projected their insecurities on them as a way to cope with the changing landscape and times.

At the start of Orientalism as Said sees it (early 1800’s), visual and performing arts as well as literature simply attempted to depict the Far East. It was at this time that various souvenirs and Eastern-inspired decorations were beginning to become fixtures in both European and American homes. Fans, rugs, and pottery that reflected another culture were intermingled with Western home furnishings (Yoshihara, 2003). Rather than accept these foreign cultures for what they truly were, Westerners began to take items that were Eastern and insert them into a Westernized frame. These products also began to be manufactured in Europe and the U.S., eliminating the need to go to the source for things that helped define the cultures.

Therefore, Said’s first description of the term, “a manner of regularized (or Orientalized) writing, vision, and study, dominated by imperatives, perspectives, and ideological biases ostensibly suited to the Orient,” reflects the first wave of
Orientalism quite well. Western artists were attempting to portray the East, and through that process, the West was beginning to formulate ideas and biases about the East, as well as fit aspects of those cultures into their own.

Yet even as they sought to experience this foreign culture within their own setting, many could not help but to recognize the vast differences between Eastern and Western ways. The ways of life of the two forces were comprised of exceedingly opposing elements, such as religious practices and government, the languages, and the overall appearances of people. These divides were discovered not through firsthand knowledge, but rather through reading Orientalist literature and looking at Orientalist art. As most people had never traveled to the Far East, they had to rely on the information with which they were presented, no matter how relevant or how accurate it was. Differences, which can often lead to a lack of understanding, can also lead to the feeling of being threatened. Westerners began to feel that the East’s way of life could somehow present a threat to the Western way. Conclusions drawn from exposure to Orientalist arts included the belief that Eastern women were prostitutes and had no shame, men had a slackened sense of masculinity, and the difference in religion suggested that they were a more barbaric people than the God-fearing people of the West (Locke, 1991).

This idea of East versus West as a struggle between two powers goes hand in hand with the idea of “self” versus “other.” The self can refer to an individual, a group, a country, or a continent. The self is recognized as what the audience or listener can identify with—what is familiar to them. The “other” in question is foreign —

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2 It also came to be that not only did Orientalism refer to the Far East, but to the Middle East as well, where non-Western cultures presented even more possibilities to discover differences.
something or someone that is usually untrustworthy or threatening. “Self” versus “other” can manifest in other forms as well, such as male versus female, a duality that existed within Western society itself.

Simone de Beauvoir looks very closely at the role of women in her work, “The Second Sex.” Curiously, to her, the idea of what is masculine and what is feminine, much like the Orient and Occident to Said, are man-made. She states, “Only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as an Other” (de Beauvoir, 1952). Her work in many ways prefigures Said’s work in that she investigates not only what biologically and socially defines a woman, but also explores various types of women and their roles in relationship to men. De Beauvoir is also remembered as being a champion of women’s rights, and an award-winning author in her own right (Bergoffen, 2004).

In Samson et Dalila, this topic is explored in the roles of Samson and the Israelites versus Delilah and the Philistines. Samson and his people represent the self to Western audiences. Not only would an audience have prior knowledge that Samson is the hero of the work thanks to their familiarity with the Biblical story, but various elements in the plot and music further suggest that their loyalties should lie with him, the Western figure. Delilah and the Philistines, conversely, represent the East; their garb is foreign, their behavior is different and fiercer, and the music that accompanies them, as will be discussed later, further emphasizes just how “other” they are.

The dichotomy of male versus female was also a large part of Orientalism. Because of the way Eastern women were depicted in art via mannerisms and clothing, Westerners assumed that their morals were less than respectable. Often women were
shown with less clothing than those of the West, and they were likewise positioned in ways that appeared more suggestive to the viewer. Groups of women were likened to harems, where a mass of women answered to one man, unlike in the West where the normative relationship was one of one woman for every man. Their supposed amoral behavior and their questionable fashion choices presented a conundrum to Western men. They were at the same time fascinated with a different breed of woman and shocked at the lack of control over them by men (Locke, 1991). Therefore, women themselves presented a threat, whether or not the assumptions were accurate. They served as a distraction to Western men through overt sexuality and a problem for Western women, who considered themselves more refined and were trying to establish themselves in the same public spheres as men.

Eastern men did not escape harsh and unfair criticism either. Their clothing choices, while still covering any parts deemed necessary, were nevertheless so drastically different than Western styles, and so much closer to what women might wear, that they were considered effeminate (Locke, 1991). Beyond that, men were, like the women, often posed in suggestive and lewd ways. Some artists even portrayed Eastern men dancing. However, instead of showing them dancing in a way that would be acceptable to a Western viewer, they were shown dancing much like how a woman might dance. In the West, a man’s style of dancing was more controlled and choreographed, and allowed for the men to lead the women. In the East, the dancing was freer and more spontaneous. This odd, slightly androgynous quality of the Orientalist view of men created a threat to the West’s clearly defined gender roles.
Image 1 shows 'Bashi-Bazouk Chieftain' by Jean-Leon Gerome, 1881.

Image 2 shows 'The Whirling Dervishes' by Jean-Leon Gerome, 1899.

The dancing styles of the East and West reflect the idea of mind versus body. In the West, dances were usually done in pairs or groups, with the man and woman strategically positioned in a way that would not promote gossip. In the East, dances could be done in a group or solo, and the movement was considered freer and more sensual. The ability to have a greater comfort level with the body was another aspect the West both envied and abhorred.

This idea, too, is very present in the opera. As the East as a whole is gendered feminine according to Orientalists and Gender Theorists, while the West is gendered male, Delilah and her people represent the feminine while Samson and his people
represent the masculine. Not only is Samson as the protagonist indisputably male, but his characterization is much more reserved and chaste than his foe. All the Israelites, though a suffering people in the story, are shown to be the better people, keeping to themselves, working toward a better life, and holding their attitudes and actions in check.

Delilah and the Philistines serve as good representations of the female aspect of Orientalism. Not only is Delilah female, but she demonstrates extreme sexuality. She has a group of Priestesses who accompany her for the first act that function like a harem. Costuming adds another element, where the Philistines are able to be clothed in an Eastern fashion, with much less on than respectable people might wish. During the Bacchanale sequence, the sexuality nearly erupts through a ballet in which men and women both dance together in a sexual and amoral way.

One other dichotomy that is prevalent in the opera and in Orientalism to some degree is that of the mind versus the body. Westerners prided themselves on their intellectual capacity and their achievements. They also identified that the East was, at least according to their vision, much more rooted in their own sexuality than the West. This difference in its own way presented another threat: people of the East would not use the mind to achieve what they wanted, which would be respectable, but rather they would use their bodies, which would be deplorable.

On this theme, Simone de Beauvoir’s work on gender and the body anticipated many of the concerns raised in Orientalist studies. In *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir addresses the idea of a woman’s body as being both man’s property and an object of desire.
“Costumes and styles are often devoted to cutting off the feminine body from any possible transcendence...The function of ornamental attire is very complex; with certain primitives it has a religious significance; but more often its purpose is to accomplish the metamorphosis of woman into idol. Ambiguous idol! Man wishes her to be carnal, her beauty like that of fruits and flowers; but he would also have her smooth, hard, changeless as a pebble” (de Beauvoir, 1952).

She suggests that men wish for women to truly be sexual objects, but also have a certain amount of dominance over them. To be overly sexual could be potentially dangerous, evoking the primitive side of humanity. Thus, men really strived to control this “natural” sexuality, and keep it on their terms and within their contexts.

Though the Eastern women, according to artists and writers, tend to flaunt more than the Western women, de Beauvoir argues that the manipulation of women’s forms in the West make them more desirable.

“In woman dressed and adorned, nature is present, but under restraint, by human will remolded nearer to man’s desire. A woman is rendered more desirable to the extent that nature is more highly developed in her and more rigorously confined: it is the “sophisticated” woman who has always been the ideal erotic object” (de Beauvoir, 1952).

The Western men who were in attendance at early showings of the opera were able to have both versions of their desire—the desire of “other,” unfamiliar types of women, and their ideal woman— the Western woman who was to meet their expectations.
Orientalism, as previously mentioned, is a study rooted in dominance and biases. The biases include the view of the East as feminine, related to the idea that the women had loose morals, and that men were effeminate. The dominance, however, comes from fitting the ideas of what is threatening about the East into a Western frame. With the Eastern décor, objects were put into a Western sphere and surrounded by Western items. They were prized as being different and new, but at the same time were placed with a dominant Western space. Orientalist art, in a similar way, exemplifies dominance of the East. Since many of the ideas came from an uneven mixture of empirical knowledge and guesswork, artists portrayed Easterners how they believed they should be shown rather than how they actually might have been. They placed the feminine within a controlling masculine frame and sexuality within a dominant intellectual structure. In both cases, the qualities associated with the East were reduced in status to that of mere objects for Western manipulation.

Said’s work suggests that textual attitude has quite a lot to do with the shaping of the “other,” and how much sway written works have over people’s impressions of the East. Texts generally refer to written texts, such as histories, travelogues, or pieces of literature. However, texts can also refer to a musical work that aids in informing the audience of the mindset. This idea of textual attitude is found in Orientalism in two ways.

“One is when a human being confronts at close quarters something relatively unknown and threatening and previously different. In such a case one has recourse not only to what in one’s previous experience the novelty resembles, but also what one has read about it....A second
situation favoring the textual attitude is the appearance of success. If one reads a book claiming that lions are fierce and then encounters a fierce lion (I simplify, of course), the chances are that one will be encouraged to read more books by that same author and believe them. But if, in addition, the lion book instructs one how to deal with a fierce lion, and the instructions work perfectly, then not only will the author be greatly believed, he will also be impelled to try his hand at other kinds of written performance.”

Said also explains the need for authority in Orientalist terms:

“There is nothing mysterious or natural about authority. It is formed, irradiated, disseminated; it is instrumental, it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value; it is virtually indistinguishable from certain ideas it dignifies as true, and from traditions, perceptions, and judgments it forms, transmits, reproduces. Above all, authority can, indeed must, be analyzed.”

He conveys here that authority, or dominance, is not necessarily a given or earned, but rather formed. It is not always based on something legitimate, and must then be looked at carefully.

Saint-Saens’ dominance of the East lies in the manipulation of parts of the story and manipulation of music in order to subliminally inform the audience of where their loyalties and hatred should lie. In the following chapter, further implications in the story as well as musical features that reflect the ideals of Orientalism will be discussed.
Chapter 2: The Story of the Opera

Saint-Saens’ opera *Samson et Dalila* is based on the Biblical account of Samson. Much like other Biblical figures, Samson was a miracle child for his parents. He was an Israelite living under harsh Philistine rule. Growing up under this extreme oppression, Samson grew strong and aggressive, killing men any who would dare to stand in his way or who could not answer riddles or questions presented to them. He even killed men for promising his intended to another man against his wishes and her will. Because of his status as an Israelite, who were considered God’s chosen people, Samson was required to maintain a certain lifestyle, which included him having to wear his hair longer than many other cultures. This physically set him apart from other cultures and elevated him to an accepted status over other groups.

Some time later, Samson fell in love with a temple prostitute named Delilah, to whom the Philistines had promised money if she could uncover the secret of Samson’s incredible strength so that they could overtake him. After confiding to Delilah that the secret to his strength lay in his hair, Samson awoke to discover his hair had been cut off. Samson then became imprisoned by the Philistines, who blinded him and forced him into laborious tasks. During a feast to their Pagan God, Dagon, the Philistines tied Samson to pillars and mocked him for being so weak as to give in to a woman. Praying to God and summoning the strength he had left, Samson pulled the pillars down on top of the revelers, killing everyone, including himself and Delilah.

For staging purposes, several pieces of the original story were amended to give the opera more of a plot and garner more sympathy toward Samson from the audience.
The opera libretto, adapted by Ferdinand Lemaire, diverges from the biblical account and instead gives Samson and Delilah a romantic history together, making the betrayal all the more heart-wrenching. It also completely eliminates his evasiveness prior to his confession about his hair, showing Delilah as someone who is able to attain or achieve anything she seeks through any means necessary. It also paints Samson as a heroic and just man who has the respect and admiration of the oppressed Israelites, rather than as a man who had a violent streak and unusual circumstances surrounding his birth\(^3\) (Cross, 1953). Based on the premise alone, the audience, most of whom would have had at least some sort of religious background, would have been aware that the Philistines were the antagonists to the Israelite protagonists. However, Saint-Saëns took an extra step in assuring that the audience was completely aware of the roles that the two cultures were to play. He did this by composing in such a way that the sound of the music added to the audience’s perceptions of the characters.

This sense of “national pride” or the nation as “self” was a concept that Saint-Saëns would have heard in the works of his contemporaries and read in the works of authors of the time, including Richard Wagner. Though nationally a French composer, Saint-Saëns went through a period in which he disregarded the idea of “French” music, claiming that anti-French sentiments from abroad challenged the nation’s identity in the arts. He blamed this mostly on a treatise by Stendhal entitled, *Vies de Haydn, Mozart, et Metastase* (1814), that explored through writings and letters French and Italian socio-cultural politics. At the time of the treatise, musicians and academics were already debating the merits of French music, deciding what decades and genres

\(^3\) Samson, like several other notable Biblical characters, was conceived by his barren mother after she was visited by an Angel of the Lord.
would best showcase the country and could set France apart, or whether French compositions served as simply an amalgamation of those of Italy and Germany (Ellis, 2005).

As a result of the ongoing debate, some musicians felt that France was losing its distinctive musical character to those of the more prominent musical countries: Germany and Italy. It was then decided by French scholars in the early 19th century that the country must once again serve as a template for other countries rather than as a follower. They strived to achieve that regard by looking both back to popular old forms and styles and ahead to the future (Ellis 2005).

That debate and the search for solutions continued for the next several decades, and Saint-Saens himself was a large part of the reason that French music began to come to the forefront once again during the Romantic Period, thanks to a bevy of very different popular works, such as Carnival of the Animals and Danse Macabre (Rees 1999). Still, no matter the accolades he received during his career, the battle to establish France as a musical powerhouse, create a specific sound, and prove the nation’s worth to the rest of the world would always be a driving factor for Saint-Saens. The chance to set such a well-known story that deals so closely with the “self” versus “other” mentality would thus have been appealing. Due to France’s identity crisis, it can be understood that a large component of portraying other cultures and peoples as untrustworthy and evil could be used to reestablish a sense of self-identity. Furthermore, the reexamination and reimagining of French culture could not permit foreign influences to threaten their progress and newly formed idea of self.
Chapter 3: Orientalism in the Opera

As stated earlier, many artists portrayed Easterners in a more lustful, often amoral vein, painting women in particular as overtly sexual and even at times prostitutes, regardless of their actual lot in life. In his work on the opera, Ralph Locke stated that women are portrayed as objects of desire, which was one aspect of the Western fantasy of the Orient. Desire was sometimes shown even to the point of admiration. This was done either through the women being shown as scantily clad or by positioning female figures in a provocative manner. In addition, women were usually shown to be subservient to men, though their power through seduction is clearly portrayed. This threat to man’s power by women was a subject Saint-Saens would have had to reconcile in his own life. In 19th century Europe, women were beginning to work and become more socialized, posing a threat to men’s societal and cultural roles. The realms of the workforce and certain social situations had been comprised of solely men for so long that the introduction of women seemed almost like an invasion.

Image 3 shows an interpretation of Samson and Delilah by Peter Paul Rubens, circa 1609-1610.
Image 4 is entitled “The Snake Charmer” by Jean-Leon Gerome, circa 1870. This image typically appears on the cover of Edward Said’s, “Orientalism.”

Image 5 shows “Salome” by Henri Regnault, 1870.

The characterization of Delilah as a very sensuous, femme-fatale character who uses her sexuality to overthrow a man supports the artistic aspect of Orientalism. Not only is she a prostitute as per the Biblical account and not only does she come from the culture that is considered “other,” but she does answer to the Philistine men, who coax her into seducing and deceiving Samson. And further keeping with this idea of subservience, she allows Samson to think he has sway over her until she finally betrays him. She adheres to the idea that women are amoral, and also to the biased Western idea that Easterners constitute a threat.
Men in Orientalist art were usually depicted as somewhat feminine. They were considered a threat to the safety of the West’s chaste, moral women and at the same time a hindrance to the West’s ideas of the strong, masculine men. Edward Said ventures to say that the idea of Orientalism itself represents a very sexist school of thought, with the East as a whole representing the feminine whilst the West represents the dominant male. The opera again matches this description. The Philistines dance together during the “Bacchanale” sequence, and in Saint-Saens’ time this dancing would have been considered provocative - a very feminine quality.

The reasoning behind this is that the “Bacchanale” is meant to be a feast in honor of the god Bacchus (or Dionysus), god of wine and frivolity. The Philistines are meant to be drunk and free of inhibitions, abominable behavior to the Western audience. Said notes in Orientalism, “In The Bacchae, perhaps the most Asiatic of all the Attic dramas, Dionysus is explicitly connected with his Asian origins and with the strangely threatening excesses of Oriental mysteries.” Said suggests here that Dionysus’s ties with a culture that is considered “other” adds to his infringement on refined society.

Samson’s representation of the Western male is fairly apt by Orientalist standards. Not only is he physically a man, but a powerfully strong and forceful man, a makeshift leader of his hardworking and oppressed people. The Western desire to be perceived as strong, masculine and able to overcome any obstacles is thus shown in his character. At the very end of the opera, it is Samson who prays to God and summons his strength to end the tyranny, proving himself to be physically the strongest, dominant male and most loved by God.
The idea of religion itself is also very important. The East’s “Other”-ness had been emphasized in part due to religious difference. However, this difference was seen, according to Said, through a Western frame.

“To the Westerner, however, the Oriental was always like some aspect of the West; to some of the German Romantics, for example, Indian religion was essentially an Oriental version of Germano-Christian pantheism. Yet the Orientalist makes it his work to be always converting the Orient from something to something else: he does this for himself, for the sake of his culture, in some cases for what he believes is the sake of the Oriental.”

In other words, Eastern religion was not viewed on its own terms, but only according to Western tradition.

Though much of what defines the “Other” in *Samson et Dalila* comes from the music itself, Saint-Saens had an added benefit. He selected a story most, if not all, of his audience members would have been familiar with before the show began. The story itself reflects many of the various elements and characteristics of what is “Other” to the West.
Chapter 1: Modes: East versus the West

The music Saint-Saens composed for Samson and the Israelites is very Western and tonal in sound, music that an audience of the time would have been familiar with and used to hearing in concert halls (Locke 1991). Examples of this are the opening lament that the Israelite men sing (which draws on European sacred music) and the later appearance of the pentatonic scale (which many European audiences would have associated aurally with European folk music).

The opening lament is spread across all four vocal parts and is written contrapuntally. The translation of the text is, “God! Father on high! Have pity on thy children. Oh heed our prayer! Save us, Father Almighty, and ease our despair! Save Israel from doom and disaster! Almighty God, grant Israel relief! Thou didst withdraw Thy mercy from Thy people. Shall we be doomed to never-ending woe?” (Schirmer 1964). The lyrics paint a dismal picture of the lives of the Israelite people, garnering the audience’s sympathy. The Western sound comes directly from the voices, which are written in a contrapuntal and tonal manner. The vocal parts are mirrored by the winds and horns, while the strings, conversely, have a series of sixteenths with ties in the middle of the bar between beats. From the very onset of the production, even the most basic Western idea is presented with some sort of unstable element.

The most apparent example of the Western sound coming to the forefront of the musical action is Samson’s last plea to God. His melody is simple and scalar, while his accompaniment consists of large brass chords. The significance of this moment in the opera is not only Samson triumphing over the Philistines via the plot, but also the
Western sense of tonality triumphing over the Eastern sound that Saint-Saens strived to create for Delilah and her people.

Example 1 shows the large chords in the low brass voices as Samson makes his final plea to God.

Music that he intended to be identified with the Philistines, particularly in the “Bacchanale,” Saint-Saens referred to the Arab Hijaz mode, one of the maqam, or melodic, modes that begins on D. In Hijaz, there is an augmented second between scale degrees 2 and 3 (e-flat and f-sharp). Unlike with Western tuning, here the second scale degree is meant to be tuned a little higher and the third degree a little lower in order to further narrow this unusual interval (Simms 2004). Saint-Saens expands this idea to include an augmented second between scale degrees 6 and 7 as well (b-flat and c-sharp) as can be seen in Example 1. This challenges the tonal system by both disrupting the expected progression of notes and preventing the audience from finding a clear tonal center.
Example 2 shows an version of the Hijaz mode, in which there is an augmented second. Taken from Rob Simm’s book *Repertoire of the Iraqi Maqam*.

Example 3 shows an excerpt from the “Bacchanale” theme in which there are augmented seconds between C-sharp and B-flat.

While the Bacchanale theme is being played before rehearsal marking C in the score, the strings have a continuous drone that grows in number of voices as the melody progresses. However, while the drone suggests some sort of A chord (the dominant of D and therefore apt), there is no third. The only C that can be found during that time is a C-sharp in the melody. The hollowness of the drone chord under
the very Eastern melody further serves to convince the audience that tonality has been made ambiguous.

Example 4 shows the melody with the drone underneath.

Those unusual intervals give the dance its Middle Eastern flavor, creating a sound that many Western listeners may have identified with snake charmers. That sound may have baffled the audience, as the basic rules of tonal music would have appeared to have been abandoned since augmented seconds are not typically heard. Not only are the intervals disturbing, but the first melody heard in the Bacchanale begins on a C-sharp, the leading tone to the key of D. Though the leading tone does reside in the realm of tonality, one was more likely to find it leading into a cadence than finding it beginning the melody.

Not only is the leading tone a great presence in the beginning of the ballet, but E-flat, the minor second of D, is also a frequently heard note in the melody. As the
melody continues, it becomes increasingly harder to attribute a definite key. Though the music continually returns to D in the bass, promising some sense of stability, many other keys are suggested just enough to shatter that stability. Disregarding tonality would have also added to the idea that Western music was being threatened by Eastern influences.

The ranges of the parts tend to stay more to the low end for much of the ballet. Even the soprano voices are not at their highest for much of what they play until the very end, where there is the immense buildup to Samson’s plea. Keeping the voices closer together rather than exploring the possibilities of their ranges condenses the overall sound. Thus, while the audience is hearing new melodic sounds, they are also less able to completely differentiate and identify the instruments they are hearing.

**Chapter 2: Rhythm: Body versus the Mind**

When the threatening presence of the Philistine people comes to the extreme front of the action in the third act, the audience is privy to their manner of celebration. This debauched fete, the “Bacchanale,” named for Bacchus and carried out by drinking, eating, and engaging in varying degrees of unsavory behavior, serves to further shake the Western audiences’ foundation. Not only, as discussed previously, did Saint-Saens manipulate the melodies, scales, and modes of his opera to create an unsettling, threatening undertone, but he also composed rhythms that opposed the typically strict and regular rhythms of the West.
Rhythm reflects back on the previously mentioned idea of the body. Rhythm, as well as tempo and meter, are musical features that require the full cooperation of all regions of the human brain. Grouping and seeking patterns are also inherent human traits. This great interaction of all regions and neurons often sparks some sort of physical reaction, such as clapping, swaying, or dancing, such as in the ballets (Levitin, 2006). The body, as discussed previously, is a very feminine idea in the context of Orientalism and therefore a threatening element. The tie into rhythm increases the threat to the stability of the West.

Though an audience member might not have been immediately aware of it, the downbeats of the phrases found in the first third of the ballet are not the downbeats of the bars. The melody is displaced over a beat. This becomes obvious as the piece continues and more voices and melodies enter, but at the onset, the bass voices have continuous downbeats and upbeats. This steady pattern allows for the audience to feel secure in the rhythms early on before the rhythms begin to become unusual. In addition, every beat is filled, making it even harder to clearly identify the macro beats. When there is a pause in the melodic line, it comes at the very end of beat 1, and is only a sixteenth or eighth in value.
Example 5 shows the filling in of beats at the beginning of the ballet with the melody in the uppermost strings and the horn and bassoon playing downbeats and upbeats.

The rhythmic instability becomes very apparent when the “Bacchanale” theme enters in measure 110. Placed over the ostinato in the bass, the conflicting rhythms signal to the audience that something is not quite right. The addition of grace notes that move down by a half-step contributes to the foreign and unusual atmosphere. The steady and rhythmically secure understanding for the piece that the audience believed that they had acquired from the ostinato at the beginning is no longer the case. In addition, the fact that many voices have ties that cross bar lines feeds further into destabilizing the overall rhythm. Heavy layering and syncopation found in the brass’s quarter and eighth notes also add to the audience’s misplaced sense of rhythm.
Example 6 shows the concurrent layering of voices and rhythms as the ballet progresses.

The repeating pattern found in the bass and timpani that is a set of sixteenths followed by several eighth notes does not help in clearly defining the bars as the sixteenths never fall on the same beat or part of the beat in successive bars. Because this line is highlighting the Bacchanale theme, which consists of eighths and quarters that fall on the same beats each time they are heard, the conflict eliminates any hope of feeling stable rhythmically. This continues from bar 110 to about bar 148, when the original theme returns.

Example 7 shows the ostinato line that falls under the melody.
In bar 180, a possible sense of security enters. Dotted eighth-sixteenth patterns in the soprano voices over steady eighthes in the bass are heard. This only lasts for about twelve bars before the Bacchanale theme reenters. Using the sixteenth from these twelve preceding bars, the Bacchanale melody is altered. Instead of using eighth notes to move to the downbeats after dotted quarter notes, now Saint-Saens uses a sixteenth note to approach the following bar. That line also hearkens back to the opening oboe melody, where sixteens that approached leaps helped to define the foreign sound the audience should expect.

Example 8 shows the layering of rhythms in the trumpet, tuba, and violins as well as the alteration of the melody in the violin.

In bar 224, all the voices begin to layer on top of one another. The bass voices continue to play what could be considered the strong beats of the bars-one and three. The alto voices have a syncopated line that consists of continuous quarter notes and eighth notes. The soprano voices have the most rhythmically interesting part, a repeating pattern of sixteenth rest, two thirty-second notes, and either two or three
sixteenth notes. The notion that not only do the rhythms conflict as the voices are moving on different parts of the beat, but also that the rhythms are made of different durations of length, really causes the audience to lose a sense of the beat.

Example 9 shows the most rhythmically complex part of the ballet, with the upper woodwinds and brasses playing fast notes, the lower voices droning, and the harp playing downbeats.

Approaching rehearsal marking “E,” the concept of East versus West returns to the audience’s focus. A very waltz-like, European melody takes over amidst the reveling. Though the score is in four, the displacement of rhythms makes the audience perceive it to be in three until previous material returns. This appearance of Western music in the big Eastern-influenced scene could suggest the introduction of a Western
frame in response to the Eastern threat. Indeed, after the “Bacchanale” theme returns and the piece comes to a close, instrumental voices and ostinato basses begin to drop out. The ballet culminates with large brass chords, leading into Samson’s prayer and eventual triumph over his Philistine captors.

Example 10 shows the waltz figure in the strings.

**Chapter 3: Instrumentation: Female versus Male**

The instrumentation that Saint-Saens implemented in the opera served two purposes. One was to indeed provide the foreign sound that was needed to sway the audience. The other was to further suggest a gendered quality to the sound. In his *Treatise on Instrumentation*, Saint-Saens’ contemporary Hector Berlioz described in depth the general role each instrument filled in Western Music, which would not be
adequate in depicting a foreign culture. Though the compilation is quite detailed and explains the role of many instruments, many that would even begin to bridge the gap between cultures are disregarded. However, Berlioz’s work did explain many technical aspects of instruments as well as preferred orchestration that could help to inform Saint-Saens in his compositional decisions. These include which instruments and instrument families to group together to achieve a certain sound, as well as various techniques that could stretch and vary the sounds (Berlioz 1844). These groupings include the emergence of the brasses at the climax of the Bacchanale, and techniques include pizzicato strings and tapping on the body of the harp.

Saint-Saens had to orchestrate in a way that provided a more Eastern edge to the sound, as most countries in the Middle East and Near Middle East do not use the same instruments as Western musicians and Western instruments are incapable of producing a genuine Eastern sound. Though many ancient and Biblical instruments evolved into modern instruments, the sounds also evolved separately in the East and West.

The Bible does mention many instruments that have evolved into common Western instruments, so Saint-Saens, a rumored atheist, had to draw upon his early religious studies to make the sound as legitimate as possible. The oboe introduction to the “Bacchanale” portion of the opera, for example, is meant to sound like a shawm, an instrument that came to Europe from the Middle East around the time of the Crusades and had been used primarily for ceremonial dances (Baines 2007).

Double reed pipes, precursors to several modern wind instruments, were also traditionally used as accompaniment for dances of a seductive or erotic nature. This is due to the reed pipe being reminiscent of an aulos, one of the symbols of
Dionysus/Bacchus, who, as previously mentioned, was the god of wine and frivolity. This instrumentation, then, was appropriate for the “Bacchanale.”

Other instruments that would have served to represent an Eastern sound would be the nay, the qunun, the riq, and the oud. The nay was a single reed pipe with one open end, much like the modern flute. The flute serves a great purpose throughout the opera, playing both more flowing melodies and shorter, lighter passages, such as in the “Bacchanale.” The qunun was a smaller stringed instrument, much like a dulcimer, that would have served to play flourishes and show off the player’s technicality and versatility. The harp fills this role more in the work, playing these flourishes as well as using other techniques to create an unusual sound, such as tapping on the body of the instrument. The riq was a round percussion instrument with stretched skin on one side and round metal discs that one would shake, akin to the modern tambourine, which makes an appearance during the “Bacchanale” sequence. The oud was a stringed instrument that was meant to be plucked, much like a lute, and this idea translates into pizzicato strings of modern times (Fairuz 1981). For example, the strings play a consistent pizzicato line under the winds during the “Bacchanale” as seen below.

Example 11 shows pizzicato in the strings, producing an oud-like effect.
Much like the music for the “Bacchanale,” the “Dance of the Priestesses” in the first act also derives its harmonies from Middle Eastern music, using a minor third, a major sixth, and a lowered seventh in the same passage, creating once again a definitively foreign sound, as Western music would either raise or lower those three scale degrees rather than mix them (Locke 1991). What is interesting about this part of the opera is that Saint-Saëns also wrote in light taps on the harp under the melody. In the Temple of Jerusalem during the period of time in which the opera takes place, it was common for a small choir of people to sing psalms and hymns with the accompaniment of a harp or lute. Harp music or even the simple sound of a harp would not have been as historically identifiable with the Philistines as it would have been with the Hebrews.

The use of drums to help define the cultures is also quite interesting. Though drums are used to convey the barbaric mood of the feast and feasters in the “Bacchanale,” there is an abundance of evidence that shows drums as a common Biblical instrument used for both sacred and secular purposes. Saint-Saëns therefore had to be careful when writing percussion parts, as both cultures would use drums, but they would still sound different. Each tribe or region in the Middle East had its own type of drum and usually their own name or label for their drum, and they were constructed in varying shapes and sizes. The harps mentioned previously also varied between regions and over time the number of strings on the frame decreased (Avenary 2007).

Though Berlioz described the general role of the instruments in the orchestra and Saint-Saëns shaped their sound to fit his needs, subsequent studies on instruments
have centered on gender. It is interesting to find that many of the instruments that are
gendered one way or the other serve to portray that gender during the course of the
opera.

Studies done at the State University of New York at Stony Brook described in an
article entitled, “Gender and Musical Instruments-Winds of Change?” have drawn
some conclusions about instruments’ gendered roles and music in general
(Zervoudakes and Tanur 1994). Though they admit that gender consideration may
change over time, “aggressive,” (loud and fast) music is most associated with men and
“passive,” (slow and soft) music is most associated with women. This research
supports the idea of Orientalism in that the masculine West is stronger and more
aggressive than the weaker and more passive, feminine East.

The SUNY students, in order to inform their own research on gender in music,
focused on studies carried out by Builone and Lipton in 1983 and later by Lipton alone
in 1987, which traced preconceived notions about the roles that entire sections of the
orchestra appear to fill (Zervoudakes and Tanur 1994). This was completed by polling
professional orchestral players as well as high school players about their perceptions
of the gender and character of all other sections save their own. The results they found
were:

Brasses: Extroverted, loud, and masculine.

Strings: Intelligent, feminine, and introverted.

Percussion: Extroverted, masculine, and loud.

Woodwinds: Quiet, feminine, introverted.
Thus, louder and more aggressive-sounding sections of the orchestra were deemed masculine. This information was used by the Stony Brook students to compile a list of instruments and their genders. Gender neutral instruments were even included as some studies could not clearly point to whether to label certain instruments as male or female.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument group</th>
<th>Gender Stereotype</th>
<th>Additional instruments included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarinet</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Alto, bass, E-flat clarinet, basset horn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Piccolo, alto flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oboe</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>English horn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viola</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cello</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baritone horn</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bassoon</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French horn</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Drums, mallets, timpani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxophone</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Alto, tenor, and baritone saxophone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trombone</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Bass trombone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Cornet, flugelhorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuba</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Sousaphone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows the gender roles of instruments based on both hypotheses and conclusions of studies done at SUNY Stony Brook in 1994.

Not only are the louder, more aggressive instruments considered male and the softer instruments considered female, but the applied genders also match the vocal ranges of the two sexes. The “female” voices are higher and lighter with a smaller sound, while the “male” voices tend to be deeper and have a rounder, rougher sound. One instrument that is missing from the chart is the harp. However, harps have been
historically gendered in the West as feminine and were for quite some time the only instrument a woman could play in professional orchestras (Osborne, 1996).

**Chapter 4: The Struggle for Power**

The “Bacchanale” has already been described as exhibiting Orientalist ideas through its depictions of the Philistines as well as through the rather erotic and vulgar nature of the feast. However, the music is, in and of itself, a prime example of the gendered aspect of Orientalism. The dynamics between male and female are present in the instrumentation and show a struggle between the two sexes.

The ballet opens with the aforementioned recitative oboe solo. The music is in the instrument’s high register and contains the augmented second that is so important in characterizing the “Other” (refer to Example 2). Keeping in mind with the idea that the foreign is untrustworthy and that women have a seductive power, this line can thus symbolize a woman enticing and luring a man into giving her attention. The fact that this opening melody is so rhythmically free and not simply scalar further displaces the sense of tonal and metric stability.

After the solo, the voices with the melody are the upper winds (first flute, oboe, and clarinet), later to be joined by the upper strings (violin and viola). The emphasis is placed on the female at this point. While the melody has a series of running notes, the brasses and the bass voices, which are symbolic of the male, have accompanying figures. The male here is secondary to the female. This threat of women taking power and importance away from men comes to the very front of the action.
Another important aspect of this music is that it is piano — soft and quiet being two attributes of feminine music and feminine voices. Not only, then, are the instruments gendered female, but so is the music itself. This trend continues for quite a while in the music, about one hundred bars; female dominance even continues into the main theme of the “Bacchanale” (refer to Example 3 for the musical theme).

Example 12 shows the opening music to the “Bacchanale” with the female voices (upper winds) dominating the melody, while the bass voices play downbeats.

Midway through the ballet, the male voices, which include the bass voices (bassoons, celli, and basses), percussion and brasses, begin to build, both dynamically and in number. During this time, the upper winds, strings, and harp begin to have either accompanying figures or double one of the male voices, slipping into subservience. Because brass and percussion tend to be louder due to their make and natural tendencies, they easily overtake and bury the upper winds and strings in dynamics. The power, which had once been in the hands of the female voices, begins to switch over to the males.
Example 13 shows the masculine voices growing in intensity under the female voices.

The ballet continues with the brasses taking over the “Bacchanale” theme at a much louder dynamic level than when the female voices originally played the melody. Meanwhile, the percussion continues to build in intensity, adding in several types of drums and battery percussion. All other voices play either some form of accompaniment found earlier in the music or scalar patterns, creating a large cacophonous sound that is
appropriate for the plot at this point in the opera. The male and female relationships seen in the choreography (as men and women are dancing simultaneously) are reflected in the music.

The piece then culminates with both masculine and feminine voices sharing the theme while male voices in the forms of low reeds, low brass, double basses and percussion play accompaniment. The only instrument excluded from this portion of the ballet is the harp, one of the feminine voices.

This musical battle shows the male and female forces contesting for dominance. The idea of a threat to power returns here, only instead of just exploring the East as a threat to the West, men and women are considered as threats to one another and power in numbers appears to be an advantage. In accordance with the chart compiled by the SUNY students, the number of male gendered instruments is far greater than that of female gendered instruments. Yet the fact that the piece begins with such an overwhelming female presence represents the concept that women in 19th century Europe were encroaching on male territory.

However, for this battle — and in a fashion that would make Westerners quite happy — the male voices finish victoriously over the females. In the following section of the score, all voices except four horns, three trombones, and a tuba (masculine and aurally more powerful instruments) drop out. It is at this point in the opera’s plot that Samson prays and brings the Philistines to their just ends. So not only does the “Bacchanale” end in triumph for the men, the West’s accepted gender, but also paves the way for Samson’s triumph, the character meant to be identified with the West.
Example 14 shows the end of the “Bacchanale” where both male and female voices interact and share the melody and the males begin to take the power.
Conclusion

Though many people can enjoy the music in *Samson et Dalila* for being well-written and interesting, the implications of Orientalism remain important. There is a very clearly defined difference in how Samson and the Israelites sound and act as opposed to how Delilah and the Philistines sound and act. Even an audience member who had less working knowledge of the basic story would be able to identify which side they would be expected to take.

Saint-Saens, with the assistance of Lemaire, twisted elements of the plot to cast aspersions on Delilah as well as garner more sympathy for Samson. He manipulated an Eastern mode to both suit his purposes and add to the general feeling of uneasiness. He wrote rhythms that would cause the audience to feel as though there was no sense of stability, highlighting the conflict between the mind and the body. He orchestrated in a way that would suggest the already apparent conflict between male and female.

Casting Delilah as the “Other” reflected the Orientalist ideal that foreign cultures were untrustworthy and that women were indeed, as Simone de Beauvoir said, the second sex. This great divide, though man-made and constructed of myths, biases, and fear, does help to drive the drama.

Saint-Saens’ work was met with mixed reviews at its premiere, but continues to be one of the most popular operatic works. Perhaps the sense of “self” versus “other” is not only frightening to the audience, but satisfying as well, giving a listener the sense that they, too, could be on the side of good. Eastern versus Western identity is a matter that to this day is a constant struggle. Putting it into musical contexts further helps to solidify what defines the Occident and what defines the Orient, our “other.”
“There is nothing more fantastical and pointless than the advice so often given to artists, to be true! Art cannot be true, although it should not be false. It should be artistically true and produce an artistic translation of nature that satisfies the sense of style I mentioned above. When it has satisfied this sense, it has attained its goal; no more can be asked of it. This is not the useless exercise of a sterile facility; it is an attempt at satisfying a legitimate need, one of the most aspirational and respectable needs of human nature: the need for art. Consequently, why should we demand of Art that it should be useful or moral? It is both of those things in awakening noble, pure feelings in the hearts of mankind.” – Camille Saint-Saens
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