DEVELOPMENTS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LITERARY CRITICISM ON MELODRAMMA

by

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ABSTRACT

Melodramma dominates eighteenth-century Italian theatre. Not only did it attract the enthusiastic support of the theatre-going public, but also the attention and curiosity of scholars and critics. Commonly believed to be an attempt by modern man to re-create ancient Greek tragedy, melodramma became the object of heated critical discussions concerning its origins, nature and purpose. Virtually all eighteenth-century Italian literati, to a greater or lesser extent, participated in these discussions.

The present study examines the development of eighteenth-century Italian literary criticism of melodramma. A musicological approach to the problem would clearly be out of the question in a dissertation on Italian literature. However, in an eighteenth-century context, a study of melodramma from a literary point of view is fully justified, since the general critical attitude of that time conceives of melodramma primarily as a literary form. The Introduction deals with Renaissance antecedents of eighteenth-century opera criticism. Already in the late sixteenth century, melodramma is viewed as a form coming under the jurisdiction of critical principles applied to the dramatic genres, and the relationship between word and music in what is regarded as a union of the arts is a matter of particular concern.

The Introduction ends with a study of the attitude towards the "excesses" of baroque opera expressed by Crescimbeni, the direct forerunner of the critics treated in the remainder of the dissertation.

Using four main divisions, the dissertation attempts to establish the intellectual terms of reference of these critics within the framework of the neo-classical tradition in which they were formed. The first Chapter deals with pre-Metastasian critics (Muratori, Gravina, Martello, Marcello, Maffei, Zeno and Rolli). Metastasio's own contributions to the theory and criticism of melodramma are studied in Chapter II, and post-Metastasian developments (Algarotti, Calzabigi, Bettinelli) in Chapter III. Chapter IV brings the presentation to a close with an analysis of Arteaga whose work is at once a summing-up of the neo-classical tradition of literary criticism of melodramma, and a foreshadowing of the romantic emphasis on the importance of the musical element of opera.

The Conclusion seeks to provide a synthetic overview of the various facets of the development of the eighteenth-century tradition of literary criticism of opera. First of all, it is a critical tradition that reveals some of the general movements of Italian literary criticism as a whole. In Muratori and Gravina, for example, melodramma is viewed from the standpoint of the philological and erudite interests of Arcadia. The study of opera thus forms part of the plans for literary reform in eighteenth-century Italy. Elements

of the Orsi-Bouhours polemic over the relative merits of French and Italian literature are noted, as well as the impact of the querelle des anciens et des modernes. The fact that eighteenth-century neo-Classicism is enriched by Cartesian Rationalism and the English tradition of empirical philosophy is taken into consideration, and the gradual movements towards a romantic position are identified. Certain individual critics stand out: Martello, for his early perception of the inherently musical character of melodramma, and Muratori, for his emphasis on the rôle of imagination in art. Metastasio emerges as an important critic in his own right, an aspect of his personality that modern scholars have not fully appreciated. Finally, the Conclusion suggests further avenues of research that may lead to a fuller comprehension of the dominant theatrical genre and social divertissement of eighteenth-century Italy.

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PREFACE

The purpose of the present study is to examine the development of eighteenth-century Italian literary criticism of melodramma, that is, the opera seria rather than comic opera. It is important to note from the very beginning that emphasis is placed on the literary aspect of melodramma. In the first place, it is quite clear that a strictly musicological approach to the topic would be inconceivable within the framework of a doctoral dissertation in Italian literature and would, in any case, require an entirely different form of academic preparation. No claim is made, therefore, to any special expertise in musical theory, and references to developments in music during the period covered by the dissertation are introduced only by way of historical background to the literary theories under discussion. In the second place, a study of melodramma from a purely literary point of view is fully justified in an eighteenth-century context. The general critical attitude of that time conceives of melodramma primarily as a literary form: namely, as a kind of tragedy. Again, we must emphasize that the study deals with literary criticism of musical theatre, not with the development of musical theatre itself, and that while references to the history of theatre and to theatrical

practices are inevitable, the main concern is with the unfolding of a critical tradition that reveals some of the general movements of Italian literary criticism as a whole.

The introductory chapter deals with the Renaissance critical antecedents of eighteenth-century discussions of melodramma. Already in the late sixteenth century, melodramma is viewed as a form coming under the jurisdiction of critical principles applied to the dramatic genres: the unities, verisimilitude, and similar theoretical problems. During this early period, poets like Rinuccini who are involved in melodramma, as well as musicians such as Peri, Caccini, Marco da Gagliano and even the great Monteverdi, are preoccupied to a certain extent with some of the critical problems which later will be an essential part of eighteenth-century discussions of the form. The treatment of the relationship between word and music in the artistic unity of melodramma occupies a particularly important part of their attention.

Subsequent chapters examine, individually and specifically, the various eighteenth-century contributors to the theories of melodramma. This is carried out within a basic four-part structure: that is, a study of

a) Pre-Metastasian criticism (Crescimbeni, Muratori, Gravina, Martello, Marcello, Maffei, Zeno, Rolli);

b) Metastasio;

c) Post-Metastasian developments (Algarotti, Calzabigi, Bettinelli);

d) Arteaga.

Previous studies of these figures as critics of melodramma are neither numerous nor exhaustive. Histories of literature, such as the Garzanti Storia della letteratura italiana (1968), and of music, such as the Storia della musica (1964) by Andrea Della Corte and Guido Pannain, give a rapid and superficial survey of the main contributions to the literary discussions of melodramma in the eighteenth-century. Other studies limit themselves to the contributions of individual critics, Metastasio in particular, and only two works come close to providing a complete overview of the topic. Robert Freeman's unpublished dissertation, "Opera without Drama: Currents of Change in Italian Opera, 1675 to 1725, and the Roles Played Therein by Zeno, Caldara and Others" (Princeton, 1967), gives a reasonably detailed account of the contents of eighteenth-century treatises on opera. However, Freeman's interest lies within the fifty-year period announced in the title, and is centered upon the changes that took place within opera itself, rather than upon the critical tradition. His exposition of the individual writings on opera is intended to serve merely as a background to the chief object of his attention. Of more ambitious scope is the work of the Italian musicologist Remo Giazotto. His Poesia melodrammatica e pensiero critico nel Settecento (1952) is the most exhaustive study of the subject at present available. Giazotto has gathered together an impressive body of material, and scholars owe him a debt of gratitude for the patient

research that he has carried out for what, in many respects, must be regarded as a pioneering work. However, Giazotto centered his investigations on Metastasio and, to a lesser extent, on Zeno, and thus failed to give a complete view of the development of eighteenth-century opera criticism as a critical tradition in its own right. Furthermore, he did not situate the various manifestations of this criticism within the specific cultural and literary milieu from which they arose.

The present study attempts to establish the intellectual terms of reference of the critics of eighteenth-century melodramma within the framework of the cultural tradition in which they were formed. Basically, it can be described as a classical tradition, though this does not mean the classics per se, but the classics as seen and understood by Italian critics before the "baroque deviations" of the seventeenth century. The aims of many eighteenth-century critics in so far as melodramma is concerned are therefore analogous with earlier theoretical statements on song, that is, to create an artistic whole which, by its very nature, is composite or hybrid, but in which two elements--music and word--co-exist harmoniously.

It would be naive, nevertheless, to consider the Classicism of the early eighteenth century as a direct return to the positions of the late sixteenth-century. The fact that eighteenth-century Italian neo-Classicism is enriched by Cartesian Rationalism and by the assimilation of the

English tradition of empirical philosophy is taken into consideration. An examination of eighteenth-century criticism on melodramma is carried out within this neo-classical framework--a framework, nevertheless, that is broken by tendencies towards a romantic position. The entire presentation is brought to a close with an analysis of Arteaga. Although we regard Arteaga's work as a summing-up of the neo-classical tradition, and therefore, as the logical terminus ad quem of this study, his pre-romantic inclinations closely foreshadow the breaking-point in the critical and artistic tradition of melodramma, that is, the moment when the need for romantic expressiveness, in the form of irrationality and passion, takes over. In critical terms, the neo-classical insistence on the intellectual appeal of melodramma, and on the importance of the word in conveying significance, gives way to an increasing emphasis on the more a-rational and passionate component of the genre: that is, on the importance of the music.

The writing of this dissertation has imposed many demands on the time and energies of others, and it is only proper that this should be acknowledged. I would like to thank all members of my thesis committee who have read the work during the various stages of its preparation. Their advice has been consistently positive and instructive. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Danilo Aguzzi-Barbagli for his initial encouragement to explore this field, for his

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INTRODUCTION

Theatre in eighteenth-century Italy was dominated by melodramma. As a composite genre, bringing together in close collaboration two forms of artistic expression--poetry and music--as well as the decorative arts and frequently dance in order to achieve its total effect, it defied convenient classification within the framework of the theories of art and literature which post-Renaissance Europe inherited from the classical past through the intermediary of Renaissance criticism. The popularity of melodramma both as a social and literary phenomenon, together with the problems raised by its hybrid artistic nature, attracted the attention of eighteenth-century critics. Their writings on melodramma vary in tone from stern disapproval of what was regarded as a "Baroque aberration" to light-hearted satire, from attempts to reconcile it with classical tragedy to proposals for its acceptance as a new and distinct artistic genre. The common denominator of such disparate views lies in their fundamentally literary approach to the problems presented by melodramma. More and more the discussions centre upon the function of song and the relationship between word and music in a dramatic presentation. Such critical concerns did not originate in the eighteenth century, but were already widely discussed, albeit in a somewhat different context, in the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries. The material to be examined in this study thus constitutes, to a significant degree, a reprise and elaboration of an earlier critical tradition. It is quite clear, therefore, that a study of eighteenth-century theories on melodramma must take into account their classical and Renaissance antecedents whose continuing impact provides both the point of departure for eighteenth-century theorists as well as some of the fundamental elements of their cultural background.[1]

All eighteenth-century critics of melodramma are familiar, to a greater or lesser degree, with the position adopted by Plato and Aristotle on the union of word and music. Indeed, the general problem of the union of words and music in an artistic whole is one of the oldest questions to concern literary criticism in the Western world.[2] It is perhaps significant that even in classical times it was not dealt with in purely musical terms, but had already acquired literary connotations. An examination of the Republic and Laws shows that Plato's negative attitude towards art, and in particular towards poetry, involves not only poetic texts themselves, but also the types of music associated with different poetic modes, such as the songs of the rhapsodes and the accompaniment of the dithyramb.[3] Yet Plato did not condemn all music. In fact, he placed the music that imitates the original attributes of the human soul among worthy human activities.[4]

The new orientation of Aristotle's aesthetics reflects the fundamental difference between the main characteristics

of his philosophy as a whole and the basic tenets of Plato's system. Aristotle studied the artistic expression per se, as a product of human endeavour, without reference to a set of ideal archetypes, or to the demands of an ideal social or political structure, and his analysis of music was couched in terms that had considerable resonance in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries in Italy.[5] In the Politics, he justified music as a human activity because of its value as amusement and relaxion, as well as for its pedagogical and moral value.[6] In the Poetics, he linked music with tragedy:

> There are, lastly, certain other arts, which combine all the means enumerated, rhythm, melody, and verse, e.g., Dithyrambic and Nomic poetry, Tragedy and Comedy; with this difference, however, that the three kinds of means are in some of them all employed together, and in others brought in separately, one after the other.[7]

He identified the qualitative parts of tragedy as plot, characters, diction, thought, spectacle, and melody; and commenting on the last two parts, he wrote that "Melody is the greatest of the pleasurable accessories of Tragedy."[8]

Aristotle's discussion of music in the Poetics is fundamental within the framework of the present study, not only because it was one of the main points of departure for the sixteenth-century speculations that led to the birth of opera, but also because the Poetics was a basic work of reference for eighteenth-century critics of melodramma. However, Aristotle's remarks on music in the Poetics are neither numerous nor specific, and as a result they have been subject to

a variety of interpretations.

The study of Aristotle's Poetics reached its peak during the second half of the sixteenth century, producing a large body of critical literature. The more mature examples of this criticism belong to the same period as the research into ancient music that led to the experiments of the Camerata fiorentina.[9] In his analysis of the relationship between music and learning in the first part of the Italian Renaissance, Paul O. Kristeller shows that humanists and literati, almost from the very beginning, expressed an interest in the theory and practice of music, while professional musicians were frequently concerned with poetic and literary matters.[10] Though less convincing from a methodological point of view, Howard M. Brown makes a similar point in his more recent study of the origins of opera:

> The avenue of approach that proved most fruitful to composers, right from the beginning of discussions about Greek music at the end of the fifteenth century, was the exploration of means of connecting the music more closely to the text to which it was set.[11]

Danilo Aguzzi-Barbagli's recent investigations reveal that the concurrence of this research becomes even more evident in the second half of the sixteenth century with the publication between 1548 and 1581 of the great Latin translations of Aristotle's Poetics, and the commentaries by Francesco Robortello, Maggi-Lombardi and Pietro Vettori,[12] as well as the Italian translations and commentaries by Castelvetro and Alessandro Piccolomini,[13] and the treatises on music by

Nicola Vicentino, Gioseffo Zarlino and Vincenzo Galilei.[14] Aguzzi-Barbagli claims that it is significant that these critical and musicological investigations are the product of the same period and the same cultural climate, and that this cannot be regarded as mere coincidence. As Kristeller observes, the history of music, like every other branch of intellectual history, cannot simply regard the development of that discipline as an autonomous process. Rather,

> it has to consider the place which music occupies at any given time within the general framework of culture, its relation to other arts and sciences, the influences it receives from them or exercises upon them.[15]

Historians of music have noted that the members of the Camerata and their immediate successors share a 'literary concept' of music [una concezione 'letteraria' della musica], that is, they view music as an art inevitably associated with literature.[16] A fundamental link between literary critics and musicians in the formation of this approach to music was their interest in the Platonic theory of song [mélos]. In the Republic, Plato had identified the three elements of song as words, tune, and rhythm.[17] This formula led to extensive discussions, first among literary critics, then musicians, then among literary critics once again, on the relative position of words and music in song and in melodramma. Some recent studies of the origins of opera see the notion that the word should act as mistress rather than servant in the artistic unity of melodramma as an "exaggeration" of the Platonic concept of mélos, but they fail nevertheless to give

full consideration to its importance in the movement from polyphony to monodic music in the late Italian Renaissance.[18]

According to Aguzzi-Barbagli, the consideration of the stimulus provided by this Platonic principle is of basic importance for an understanding of the intellectual background responsible for the origin and the early developments of melodramma as an artistic form. In his opinion one of the popularizers of the concept of music as servant of the word among the practitioners of the new monodic music, that is, among the actual creators of melodramma, was Giovanni de'Bardi, the patron of the Camerata. As Aguzzi-Barbagli shows, the Platonic principle appears again and again in the milieu of the Camerata in the writings of those who were connected with the origins of melodramma: Bardi himself, Vincenzo Galilei, Jacopo Peri, Giulio Caccini, Marco da Gagliano and Claudio Monteverdi. The notion became commonplace in the seventeenth century and was taken up in the eighteenth as one of the major points of literary debates on melodramma.

Together with the concept of the supremacy of the word, and to a large extent as a result of it, other critical themes arose which anticipate the concerns of eighteenth-century commentators on melodramma. In view of the subsequent glorification of the Camerata's ideal musical drama, it is significant that these concerns made themselves apparent during the very first years of opera. As is well known, Peri collaborated as musician with the poet Ottavio Rinuccini in

the creation of Dafne in 1597, generally considered the first opera ever produced, and of Euridice in 1600, the first opera preserved extant in its complete form. Already in 1601, in his treatise Le nuove musiche, Caccini observed that singers rarely understood the libretto [il musico non ben possiede prima quello che egli vuol cantare]. As a result, they developed a certain technique of singing which they applied indiscriminately to every text:

> In cotali errori . . . più facilmente incorre quel tale, che formatosi una maniera di cantare, verbi grazia, tutta affettuosa con una regola generale, che nel crescere e scemare della voce, e nelle esclamazioni sia il fondamento di esso affetto, sempre se ne serve in ogni sorte di musica, non discernendo se le parole il richieggono; là dove coloro, che bene intendono i concetti e i sentimenti delle parole conoscono i nostri difetti, e sanno distinguere ove più e meno si richieggia esso affetto; a'quali si deve procurare con ogni studio di sommamente piacere, e pregiare più la lode loro che l'applauso del volgo ignorante.[19]

This passage contains clear anticipations of eighteenth-century criticism of the singers' virtuosity which rendered impossible the comprehension of the poetic text. Also foreshadowed are eighteenth-century objections to a form of theatre whose popularity was due to the vulgar pleasure provided by singers and musicians indifferent to the substance of the poetic text to which they applied their craft. The implicit emphasis on the superiority of poetry should also be noted.

In the preface to his 1607 re-setting of Rinuccini's Dafne, Marco da Gagliano accepted the principle that in melodramma poetry and music must attain a particular balance,

and that the task of the musician is to enhance the effectiveness of the poet's words without blurring the comprehension of their meaning.[20] He deplored the excessive virtuosity of the singers, yet he was willing to make some concessions for the sake of theatrical exigencies. Gagliano's chief preoccupation was the success of the spectacle as a whole, with an emphasis on entertaining the audience. There is thus an evident shift towards the new positions in which the humanistic concerns of the members of the Camerata and the rigid observance of the principle of the superiority of poetry over music are assimilated to the new Baroque taste for the grandiose and the spectacular aspects of drama. Poetry thus becomes simply one of the elements of drama, rather than the catalyst which brings about the fusion of all the other elements. Nevertheless, before opera was transformed by the impact of Baroque sensibility, the Platonic concept of mélos received new impetus from the genius of Claudio Monteverdi, whose admiration for Plato is reflected in his correspondence, in his plan for a treatise on musical theory, and possibly, in practical terms, in the composition of such melodrammi as Orfeo (1607) and L'incoronazione di Poppea (1642).[21]

The assimilation of the Platonic principle of the union of word, harmony and rhythm in mélos, and the related doctrine of the superiority of the poetic text over the musical setting, was the product of a combined effort between literary critics and students of ancient music. This is also the case in the origin of another idea widely discussed in eighteenth-

century critical circles, that is, the belief that ancient Greek tragedy was sung rather than recited on stage. Modern historians of melodramma rarely treat this discussion in any detail. Aguzzi-Barbagli, however, has shown that the discussions of the performance of Greek tragedy assumed major proportions during the period when Aristotle's Poetics was subject to intense study. The Renaissance commentators generally believed that the musical accompaniment was limited to the chorus. According to Aguzzi-Barbagli, the earliest expression of the theory that classical tragedy was sung in its entirety came neither from a philologist nor a literary critic, but in 1558 from Gioseffo Zarlino, a musician and student of musical theories.[22] Zarlino believed that not only tragedy, but also comedy was sung in ancient Greece. Galilei held the same opinion, as did Patrizi da Cherso, although, like Galilei, he believed that after the reforms introduced by Aeschylus and Sophocles the practice of performance was changed.[23]

Such poets and musicians as Rinuccini, Peri and Gagliano, who participated in the birth of melodramma at the beginning of the seventeenth century, became less and less interested in the philological accuracy of the statement, repeated as a commonplace notion, that classical tragedy was sung in its entirety.[24] Aguzzi-Barbagli's studies show that the late Italian Renaissance did not offer a unified conclusion on the manner of performing classical tragedy. In fact, these studies call into question the general opinion expressed

by modern historians of opera to the effect that the belief (supposedly current during the late Renaissance) that Greek and Roman tragedy was sung in its entirety was the only factor responsible for the birth of melodramma. Aguzzi-Barbagli claims, on the contrary, that at the time of its very first public performance, melodramma was considered in fact as a new art-form, related only tenuously to ancient tragedy. He cites the example of Rinuccini to substantiate this claim. In the preface to Euridice, rather than showing archeological interest in reproducing a facsimile of ancient drama, Rinuccini reveals a concern for the satisfaction of the artistic potentials of his age and the cultural exigencies of the public close to him. Thus, he presents his Dafne and Euridice as fundamentally hybrid creations, since they combine music and poetry; he considers them as expressions of the artistic power of the moderns, which, in his opinion, are capable of emulating the artistic achievements of the ancients.[25] In the light of these facts, Aguzzi-Barbagli argues that the references in eighteenth-century critics to the total musical accompaniment of ancient tragedy had no sound philological foundation. Rather, they were the result of the passive acceptance of an opinion that had become commonplace through repetition, and represented an incomplete grasp of the aims and activities of the Camerata. Some critics, like Muratori, showed considerable scepticism towards the concept of sung tragedy in ancient Greece. Once attempts were made to analyze melodramma in the light of

rules applicable to regular tragedy, numerous difficulties became apparent.

Using a different approach, that is, through the analysis of the evolution of musical forms, Nino Pirrotta agrees with Aguzzi-Barbagli's conclusions on the essentially unsubstantiated belief that melodramma was a re-creation of ancient tragedy. Pirrotta argues that the antecedent is to be found in the pastoral, rather than in Greek tragedy.[26] It is a fact that the earlier melodrammi availed themselves chiefly of pastoral themes, though Pirrotta advances no explanation of this phenomenon. Aguzzi-Barbagli, on the other hand, believes that this thematic preference should be considered in relation to developments in critical thought in the final decade of the sixteenth century.

The last of the sixteenth-century literary quarrels centered around Battista Guarini's Pastor fido, composed between 1580 and 1585, and published in 1590.[27] Some of the conclusions reached in the course of this controversy are important to the present study. Guarini and his defenders maintained that the poet may create new genres unknown to Aristotle. They believed that the fusion of tragedy and comedy was possible, if the two components were to coexist in a verisimilar fashion. They cited contemporary taste as a justification for the new poetic form which the fusion created, that is, tragicomedy. Eighteenth-century partisans of melodramma were aware of the Guarini controversy, and availed themselves of similar arguments in their attempts to justify opera as a new genre, subject to laws dictated by its own

particular nature.

The considerations outlined above should make it apparent that the attitude of eighteenth-century literary critics who turn their attention to melodramma is ultimately a continuation and development of positions adopted by musicologists and theorists of literature during the Renaissance. It also seems evident that by the eighteenth century the idea that words and music can be combined to produce a new artistic unity is fully accepted as legitimate, the authority of Plato being cited in its justification. Finally, it seems clear that the belief that opera was born of the desire to reproduce the manner of performing tragedy in classical times is accepted as commonplace, though it is equally clear that such a belief did not rest on any secure philological foundation.

In order to complete this rapid review of the intellectual and critical antecedents of eighteenth-century debates on melodramma, it will be useful to examine some of the developments of opera during the late seventeenth century. Angelo Solerti distinguishes three phases in the growth of opera during this period. The first (1599-1607) includes the melodramma of the Camerata and its immediate successors in Florence. The second (1607-1637) marks the success of melodramma as an aristocratic entertainment at the courts of Rome, Mantua and Turin. The third phase begins in 1637 with the opening of the S. Cassiano Theatre in Venice to the general public. Venetian opera theatres consequently

popularized the new form, making it accessible to paying audiences who, by and large, were not drawn from the educated classes, and who came to the theatre to be entertained.[28]

The evolution of seventeenth-century libretti in relation to the public for whom they were destined remains to be investigated in detail.[29] While such a study would prove both interesting and valuable, it does not lie within the scope of the present dissertation. However, in order to comprehend the criticism of melodramma made by eighteenth-century critics, and the reforms that they advocated, it will be useful to look briefly at an example of Baroque opera. An appropriate choice is the opera Giasone by Giacinto Andrea Cicognini.[30] It was first performed at the S. Cassiano in 1648 with music by Francesco Cavalli (Monteverdi's pupil, and his successor as the major composer for the Venetian theatre). This opera became, for Crescimbeni and the eighteenth-century, a symbol of all that was degenerate and corrupt in Baroque art.

Aguzzi-Barbagli, in his re-evaluation of this libretto, claims that from a modern and objective standpoint, Cicognini's Giasone reveals some genuine artistic achievements. In his perceptive analysis of the text, Aguzzi-Barbagli points out Cicognini's anti-traditional concept of the character of Medea, and his novel and parodistic approach to the theme of heroic love. According to Aristotelian precepts, the noble characters in a drama must remain at the superior level destined to them by their birth. However, the coarse passions

which motivate Cicognini's supposedly noble dramatis personae reduce them to the stature of their servants, making tragic heroes into mere comic figures, and thus no longer allowing the awesome power of tragic fortune to operate in the drama.

This deflation of traditional myths, this comic and parodistic treatment of heroic themes is matched by a disregard of traditional dramatic laws. Cicognini disdains the classical concept of decorum in his delineation of heroic and noble characters. He compresses the action of the drama into three acts instead of five, and adds strongly to the spectacular appeal of the melodramma by ignoring the unities of time and place.[31] Cicognini also makes use of a type of contaminatio already found in regular Italian comedy from the time of Della Porta.[32] That is, he models some characters on the masks of the commedia dell'arte and uses lazzi from that popular theatre in order to heighten comic effect.

In his study of the work, Aguzzi-Barbagli insists on the necessity of understanding and accepting the intellectual premises of the author for a proper appreciation of Cicognini's art in the Giasone. Cicognini does not view art as an instrument for the betterment of society. In the preface to Giasone, he declares:

> Io compongo per mero capriccio; il mio capriccio non ha altro fine che dilettare.[33]

However, as Aguzzi-Barbagli points out, the playwright's words conceal under their boastful and contentious surface an adherence to aesthetic principles which, in some aspects,

develop rather than contradict theories already advanced by Renaissance critics. Thus, Cicognini's defence of the freedom of the artist, his belief that poetic rules cannot bind poetic invention, echo the claims of Patrizi less than a century earlier for poetic freedom and the precedence of artistic creation over poetic precept. Furthermore, Cicognini's statement to the effect that providing pleasure is simply a matter of knowing the taste and mental attitude of the audience is a continuation of the theories of Castelvetro, who had insisted on the study of the psychology of the audience, concluding that the imparting of pleasure is the sole end of dramatic poetry.[34] These theories had been reiterated in the course of the controversy over Guarini's Pastor fido, but, in Aguzzi-Barbagli's view, Cicognini's almost libertine vitality in his approach to these concepts carries them to their ultimate extreme. With Cicognini, therefore, freedom tends to transform itself into irreverence, and tradition into parody and ridicule.

Giasone achieved great popular success in the seventeenth century, was staged in several different productions and went through at least ten printings. Yet, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, literary critics attacked it as corrupt drama. In the seventeenth century, Italian literary critics had generally ignored musical drama in their writings. In the artistic and intellectual life of that century, melodramma was not known chiefly for its poetic, nor even for its musical qualities, but for the décor and spec-

tacular effects.[35] By the end of the eighteenth century, however, it had occupied the attention of all the major Italian critics of the period.

In order to understand this shift in critical interest, it is necessary to examine briefly the changing intellectual climate in the late seventeenth century in Italy. The second half of the century witnessed a reaction to the excesses of baroque art, this reaction being directed in the field of poetry specifically against marinismo. By the end of the century a definite transformation in artistic taste was in progress, typified by a desire to return to the classical ideals of simplicity and decorum. In Rome the renewal of artistic taste took visible form in 1690 with the foundation of the Accademia dell'Arcadia which quickly became the most influential literary academy, acquiring "colonies" throughout Italy. The Arcadia numbered among its members the most cultured Italians of the late seventeenth century and of the eighteenth century: such men as Gian Vincenzo Gravina, Lodovico Antonio Muratori, Pier Jacopo Martello, Pietro Metastasio and Giuseppe Parini.[36] The Arcadia strove to create a new literature founded on respect for classical traditions, on moral and cultural renewal, on rationalistic principles of linguistic and stylistic clarity, of communicability, and of good taste.

The transformation in artistic taste which the Arcadia promoted was influenced by the diffusion in Italy of Cartesian philosophy and of the French ideals of art based on

reason and nature, especially as expounded by Boileau in his Art poétique. In that work, published in 1674, Boileau attempted to free French writers from the excessive influence of Italian culture. His negative criticism of Italian authors served as prime instigator of a general French reaction against Italian literature, the chief exponents being Fénelon, Fontenelle, and the Père Bouhours. Arising out of the "querelle des anciens et des modernes," a controversy which took shape in the Italian Renaissance and reached a high point in the France of the late seventeenth century, the reaction had wide ramifications in cultural circles in Italy.[37] The direct and immediate cause of polemical writing on the issue in Italy was the Cartesian work of Père Bouhours, La manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages de l'esprit,[38] which contained an extensive criticism of Italian literature from Tasso through the seventeenth century. Bouhours' attack gave rise to a heated polemic and an awakening of a form of incipient national pride among Italian men of letters as the seventeenth century drew to a close.

In the eighteenth century the controversy took on a more precise focus from the reply to Bouhours in Gian Giuseppe Orsi's Considerazioni sopra . . . "La maniera di ben pensare".[39] Other men of letters such as Lodovico Antonio Muratori, Apostolo Zeno, Anton Maria Salvini and Eustachio Manfredi were quick to intervene.[40] Criticism of Italian culture in the French Jesuit journal Mémoires de Trévoux[41]

was countered by Apostolo Zeno, Scipione Maffei and Antonio Vallisnieri (the famous doctor and biologist) with the foundation in 1710 of the prestigious Giornale de'letterati d'Italia whose aim was to acquaint Italians with what was being done in Italy in the field of higher studies. This Venetian journal enjoyed the collaboration of the most learned men of science and letters until its demise in 1740.

The criticism of Italian culture by the French brought about a re-examination of Italian literature in Italy, with the intent both to reform as well as to defend. With tragedians such as Corneille and Racine, the French vaunted their superiority over the Italians in the field of tragedy. Italian critics were forced to concur. It was in their evaluation of Italian tragedy that critics first turned their attention to melodramma, to whose popularity they attributed the dearth of spoken tragedy in Italy.

It is perhaps appropriate that the first eighteenth-century literary historian to include the melodramma in his critical writings was Giovan Mario Crescimbeni, the first custode or president of the Accademia dell'Arcadia, and the prime force behind its conception.[42] Although Crescimbeni was a poet himself, his major contribution to Italian culture may be seen in his constant efforts to encourage the renewal and growth of Italian literature. This aspect of his activities was already acknowledged by Lodovico Antonio Muratori in 1711 in a letter to Crescimbeni himself:

> È nata Vs. Ill.ma per rimettere nel suo primiero splendore la Poesia Italiana, non potendosi dire, quanto le eruditissime opere di Lei, e insieme le sue stesse Poesie, accendano la gente a coltivar le belle Lettere, e in esse a seguitare il gusto de'migliori. Me ne rallegro io con esso Lei, ma più colla Repub.ca Letteraria, e prego Dio ch'ella possa continuare con sì infaticabil zelo nel miglioramento del secolo nostro.[43]

Crescimbeni, and with him the entire Arcadia, looked back on the Renaissance as a golden age in Italian letters, as a period of artistic superiority which had been followed by an era of decadence. This decadence was represented by the Baroque which exemplified, for Crescimbeni, the extent to which art had been corrupted by unrestrained poetic liberty, uncontrolled excesses of the imagination, and hedonistic intentions. In Crescimbeni's view, this corruption had to be transcended and eradicated before Italian poetry could achieve genuine artistic merit once again and return to its pristine purity (a state which he never adequately defined, in so far as dramatic poetry was concerned). Thus, in his critical judgements on poetry, Crescimbeni showed a marked predilection for structural unity, decorum, stylistic propriety and the educative values of art. His poetics were based clearly on classical ideals of harmony and measure, and it was with these ideals in mind that he turned his attention to melodramma.

Crescimbeni's contribution to the history of opera has been studied superficially in most works on the subject. Walter Binni attributes to him a completely negative attitude towards melodramma, a conclusion which may be valid in general

terms, but which fails to take into account certain aspects of Crescimbeni's criticism. The same can be said of Remo Giazotto's perfunctory judgement. The most detailed study of Crescimbeni's ideas on melodramma can be found in Robert Schofield Freeman's doctoral thesis which contains a more balanced view of Crescimbeni's attitude towards the form.[44] Nevertheless, Freeman fails to take into consideration Crescimbeni's humanistic background which predisposed him towards classical tragedy.

Crescimbeni discussed melodramma in his literary history, L'Istoria della volgar poesia,[45] in his De'Comentarj intorno all'Istoria della volgar poesia,[46] and in the sixth dialogue of his Della bellezza della volgar poesia.[47] However, he did not examine the problem of melodramma in any depth. Crescimbeni's work is not speculative research into the very nature of poetry, but rather an historical and erudite compilation of the origins and innovations of metrical forms, of genres, literary traditions and influences, of poets and their works, put together with the purpose of informing his contemporaries on the poetic tradition in Italy, and of offering examples for the renewal of Italian poetry. For this reason, in dealing with dramatic poetry, he was obliged to confront the dramatic form that had gained so much public favour in the seventeenth century, namely, melodramma. While his discussion of opera seems rather perfunctory in comparison with later studies of the genre, he nevertheless formulates several themes which will reappear in subsequent criticism of

opera.

In 1698, on the very threshold of the eighteenth century, with the publication of his history of Italian poetry, Crescimbeni initiated the literary discussions of melodramma by acknowledging its existence as a literary form. Among the fifty living poets whom he considers to be in the vanguard of the contemporary renewal of Italian literature, he includes five who were librettists, and in fact lists the libretti of four of them as being among their meritorious productions. This was the first time that a general history of Italian literature conceded literary merit to libretti,[48] and of the five poet-librettists mentioned by Crescimbeni, three--Girolamo Gigli, Francesco De Lemene and Silvio Stampiglia--will appear with considerable regularity in subsequent eighteenth-century lists of noteworthy librettists. However, in the first edition of the history, Crescimbeni dismissed any further discussion of melodramma in these words:

> Sarebbevi, oltre a'suddetti [generi poetici], quel Componimento Scenico, il quale parimenti an [sic] recato in tavola i moderni del secolo presente intitolato Dramma; ma perciocchè egli è questa faccenda priva per lo più d'ogni regola di Poesia, e non per altro inventata, che per maggiormente lusingare il genio del Mondo amico di novità, e però sazio d'ascoltare le Tragedie, e le Commedie lavorate su il tornio Aristotelico, io stimo più sana cosa di esso tacere.[49]

Indicative of the ever-increasing importance that the musical drama was acquiring is the fact that in the 1714 edition of the history Crescimbeni altered the conclusion of the passage quoted above to a less emphatic dismissal of the form ["io

stimo più sana cosa di esso almen per ora tacere . . ."].[50]

The reason for this small yet important change is that in 1700 Crescimbeni had elaborated somewhat upon the subject of melodramma at the end of the sixth dialogue of his Della bellezza della volgar poesia. Of all his works, this volume of literary dialogues comes closest to being a programme of renewal for Arcadia, with its systematic examination of all the genres and forms in which poetic thoughts could be expressed. It is therefore significant that melodramma was not omitted. In his discussion of the genre of comedy, Crescimbeni offers a rapid review of the history of the dramma per musica whose success he considers instrumental in the extermination of both comedy and tragedy in Italy. This is a charge that will be levelled at melodramma again and again in the coming years. In fact, the passage in question can stand as an immediate introduction to the discussions of melodramma in the eighteenth century:

> Giacinto Andrea Cicognini intorno alla metà del secolo con più felice ardimento introdusse i Drammi col suo Giasone, il quale per vero dire è il primo, e il più perfetto Dramma, che si truovi, e con esso portò l'esterminio dell'Istrionica, e per conseguenza della vera, e buona Comica, e della Tragica stessa; imperciocchè per maggiormente lusingare con la novità lo svogliato gusto degli Spettatori, nauseanti egualmente la viltà delle cose Comiche, e la gravità delle Tragiche l'Inventor de'Drammi unì l'una, e l'altra in essi, mettendo pratica con mostruosità non più udita tra Re, ed Eroi, ed altri illustri Personaggi, e Buffoni, e Servi, e vilissimi Uomini. Questo guazzabuglio di Personaggi fu cagione del total guastamento delle regole Poetiche, le quali andarono in tal maniera in disuso, che ne meno si riguardò alla locuzione, la quale, costretta a servire alla musica, perdè la sua purità e se riempì d'idiotismi. Fu tralasciato il maneggio regolato delle figure, che

> nobilitano l'orazione, che si ristrinse per lo più dentro i termini del parlar proprio, e famigliare, il quale è più adattato per la musica; e finalmente il ligame di que'piccoli metri, appellati volgarmente ariette, che a larga mano si spargevano per le Scene, e la strabocchevole imporprietà di fare altrui parlar cantando, tolsero affatto da i componimenti la forza degli affetti, e l'artifizio di muovergli negli ascoltanti.[51]

The dramatist whom Crescimbeni holds responsible for the decadence of regular comedy and tragedy is Cicognini whose Giasone is singled out as a principal offender. Crescimbeni holds this "hodge-podge" of tragic and comic elements, of noble and low-born characters [guazzabuglio di Personaggi] responsible for the relaxation of poetic rules, the degeneration of language from the poetic to the familiar through its subservience to music, the proliferation of arias, and the impropriety of having actors speak in song. All these factors clearly contravene Crescimbeni's classically inspired dramatic ideals.[52] Little wonder that dramatic compositions have lost their power to stir the passions of the public and succeed only in satisfying the audiences' indolent desire for novelty.

In the first volume of De'comentarj intorno all'Istoria della volgar poesia, published in 1702 as a supplement to the original Istoria, Crescimbeni returns to the subject of melodramma. However, he no longer deals with it in the discussion of comedy, but dedicates an entire chapter to "De'Drammi musicali; e della loro origine e stato." Here he reviews the development of musical drama from the times of Peri and Rinuccini, Emilio de'Cavalieri, and the early

melodramma, which he mentions with respect. He then turns his attention to Baroque opera, and once again inveighs against Cicognini as the propagator, if not the originator, of the new and corrupt types of musical drama which came to supplant the classical forms of drama.[53]

Crescimbeni's attacks against melodramma, though they represent but a small part of his critical works, nonetheless contain not only the seeds of all later criticism of opera, but also an outline of eighteenth-century programmes for reform. While attacking Baroque opera, Crescimbeni felt that the melodrammi of his day were in the process of being regulated. He wrote in the De'comentarj:

> Ma quantunque pel corso di mezzo secolo senza altra legge, che di secondare il genio dell'udienza con istranissime novità, sieno andati lussuriando per tutti i Teatri d'Italia, nondimeno e'si pare, che a'nostri giorni abbian cominciato a ricevere qualche buona regola . . . di modoche [sic] diradatosi lo smoderato uso delle Arie, che per la loro piccola mole, quanto al canto conferivano, altrettanto nocevano all'eloquenza Poetica; e ristrettosi il tempo a giusta misura; e agevolatasi, per ciò, che è possibile, l'impropietà [sic], massimamente delle mutazioni delle scene, appariscono ora, se non perfetti, almeno soffribili.[54]

In his view, the elements of reform were the reduction of the number of arias, the return to a reasonable unity of time, the restriction of scene-changes, the resurgence of the chorus, and the survival of the five-act division instead of the more popular division of melodramma into three acts. In Della bellezza della volgar poesia, he praised Domenico David and Apostolo Zeno for having removed comic characters from heroic

opera, and for having reduced the number of arias, thus placing more importance on the recitative for the expression of passions.[55] Largely as a result of Crescimbeni's praise, it becomes a commonplace of eighteenth-century Italian criticism to regard Zeno as the first reformer of melodramma.[56]

Although in the De'Comentarj, written in 1702, Crescimbeni judged contemporary opera as a form that was becoming at least tolerable, if not actually perfected, he still concluded the passage quoted above in the following words:

> E crediamo fermamente, che alla fine vi sarà pure chi, compassionando l'infelicissimo stato della bellissima Poesia Drammatica, che ha perduto affatto la parte dell'utile, e ritien tutta corrotta, e guasta quella del diletto, la renderà al suo primiero ufizio; e noi rivedremla nella sua antica bellezza.[57]

The direction of Crescimbeni's thought on the subject of melodramma is easily discernible. His ideal of dramatic composition, as it emerges from his writings, is that of regular, classical tragedy and comedy, as the Aristotelians had conceived it. Quite clearly he felt that dramatic poetry, as exemplified by melodramma in seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century Italy, was no longer fulfilling the dual aim attributed to it by Aristotelian commentators, having abandoned any pretence of utility, and having corrupted its function of delight. Consequently, he looked to the revival of tragedy and comedy in the classical style, at which time dramatic poetry would return to its former beauty. It was thus a classical revival, rather than a reform of melodramma,

that Crescimbeni held as his goal.

As the guiding light of the Arcadia, with its ideals of a return to the classical principles of art, to simplicity, clarity and taste, Crescimbeni could not accept the melodramma made popular especially by Cicognini and Cavalli, a type of dramatic composition which quite deliberately ignored classical structure and the adherence to the unities, a form which mixed high and low-born characters, mingled tragic (or serious) and comic elements, varied poetic metres and generally pandered to public taste. Crescimbeni's outright rejection of Baroque artistic expression is indicative of the intellectual climate of the early Arcadia. As a critic of melodramma, by condemning its imperfections and excesses, and by envisaging a return to classical dramatic compositions, Crescimbeni sets the tone for the early eighteenth-century commentators on the subject. His position appears intransigent, yet this uncompromisingly neo-classical approach characterizes the spirit of the earlier discussions on melodramma in the eighteenth century in Italy.

CHAPTER I

Pre-Metastasian Criticism

Lodovico Antonio Muratori

An attitude to the melodramma similar to Crescimbeni's can be found in the works of one of the great figures of eighteenth-century culture: Lodovico Antonio Muratori.[1] An admirer of Crescimbeni, and an Arcadian, he maintained contacts with the major literary figures of the time.[2] Though primarily an historian and medievalist, Muratori's interests and research spread over a wide range of knowledge: literature, historiography, philology, archeology, music, psychology, philosophy, theology, jurisprudence, sociology, natural sciences, numismatics, ethics, medicine, liturgy.[3] In his discussions of the theatre, Muratori did not proceed only from a purely theoretical basis. His close friendship with Carlo Maria Maggi brought him into contact with the latter's attempts to reform Italian comedy, and undoubtedly afforded him the opportunity of discussing the technical aspects of theatre.[4] Muratori's early years brought him the friendship of Pietro Antonio Bernardoni (who preceded Zeno and Metastasio as court librettist at the Imperial Court of Vienna), and of Eustachio Manfredi and Pier Jacopo Martello, relationships which gave him additional contacts with the world of the theatre from different points of view. Such dramatists as Martello, Maffei and Zeno sent their works to him, anxious for his favourable judgement, and he maintained a correspondence with Luigi Riccoboni, the famed eighteenth-century actor and man of the theatre who attempted to reform the popular stage by substituting plays of literary value for the

still favoured commedia dell'arte scenarios which had been so instrumental in the success of his acting company. Riccoboni wrote to Muratori on a number of occasions, requesting aid, information and opinions of his works; Muratori replied with advice, encouragement and praise.[5] Music was also one of Muratori's interests; he provided Father Martini with bibliographical material for the compilation of his highly-regarded Storia della musica, and he planned a treatise on the suitability of music in the theatre.[6] As a young man, Muratori composed a number of drammi pastorali, and even staged dramas at the villas of the Borromeo family for the amusement of the household of these aristocrats.[7]

Muratori's stature as a scholar is undisputed. In the field of literature, his work is generally recognized as having enjoyed great influence in his time, and as having contributed to the creation of the nascent art of aesthetics.[8] His Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto was one of the works most instrumental in making the concept of "good taste" a guiding light in the poetics of the eighteenth century, as it influenced studies of Italian culture in all disciplines, even though in his own writings Muratori occasionally makes concessions to some aspects of that "bad taste" [gusto cattivo] generally attributed to the Baroque by men of letters in the latter half of the seventeenth century and in the eighteenth century.[9] The Della perfetta poesia italiana enjoyed considerable vogue, not only in Italy, but also in the rest of Europe.[10]

In the field of the melodramma, modern scholarship is

in agreement over Muratori's negative attitude towards the form, and identifies rationalism as the source of this critical attitude.[11] Yet to categorize Muratori exclusively as a rationalist is too facile. Students of Muratori's literary theories in general have recognized in his thought various tendencies that foreshadow both the Enlightenment and Romanticism.[12] With regard to the latter, scholars have considered particularly significant his concept of imagination as one of the main components of poetry. In the use he makes of this concept, they find him to be in general agreement with Vico, and regard him as anticipating the position of the Romantics.[13] It is curious, nevertheless, that in their discussions of Muratori's views of melodramma critics have not questioned why his treatment of the topic is based solely on rationalistic principles without reference to the function of imagination in dramatic poetry.

Muratori, whose critical approach was formed by years of erudite scholarly research, had as his aim an examination of the arts and sciences of his time in order to expose their weaknesses and lacunae, and to present a programme of work for his contemporaries in the hope of raising Italian culture to new heights of glory.[14] The querelle des anciens et des modernes, as it developed in eighteenth-century Italy, directly affected the realization of his plan. Muratori's preference tended towards les modernes, although at all times he retained a moderate position.[15] That is, he advocated a respect for the works of the past, and a serene judgement of

the works of the present, a judgement not based on a priori concepts, nor exclusively on ancient models. Unlike some partisans of the ancients, who believed that the perfection of art had been achieved by classical authors, who left behind only the possibility of emulation, Muratori had faith in the present and in the future, and envisaged a renaissance of culture in his own time.[16] In order to encourage men of letters to achieve this goal, he reminded them of Quintilian's dictum: nihil crescit sola imitatione,[17] and added:

> Ma si richiede coraggio in sí fatta impresa. Non molto cammino potran far coloro, che spaventati dal mirar la gloriosa carriera de'primi, sempre si faran tenere, per dir cosí, dalla balia per le maniche del saio. Bisogna scioglierе da se stesso i passi, tendere in alto, scoprir nuove strade, in guisa però, che volendo abbandonare il sentiero de gli Antenati non ci conduca la troppo ambiziosa, e mal'accorta Fantasia ad un funesto naufragio, come tante volte avviene, ed è avvenuto nel Secolo trapassato a piú d'uno.[18]

Thus he reacted to the criticism of Père Bouhours and the French, not only to their attacks on Italian literature of the past, but also to their devaluation of the culture of his own age. It should be noted that while the defence of Italian letters against Bouhours and the French was undertaken by Orsi, the project had been proposed initially by Muratori,[19] and was eventually brought to fruition in Della perfetta poesia italiana, a work at once more vast and more profound than Orsi's rebuttal of La manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages de l'esprit.

In order to bring about a renaissance of Italian

culture, Muratori envisaged the creation of a Repubblica letteraria to include the whole of Italy, at a time when the Peninsula was still far from achieving its political unity.[20] This Repubblica was intended to work for the advancement of the sciences and the liberal arts. The concept was so dear to Muratori that he propagated the idea constantly in his letters, and eventually in a work entitled Primi disegni della Repubblica letteraria d'Italia, published in 1703, the same year as Orsi's Considerazioni. It seemed that the new organization was to supersede the Accademia dell'Arcadia, which was undoubtedly included by Muratori in his plea for the reform of Italian academies in general on the grounds that they dealt only with trite subjects and frivolous affairs, instead of literary matters of real substance.[21] However, to his intense disappointment, the Repubblica letteraria never materialized.

Muratori's examination of Italian culture, and the details of his programme of work, are set out in his Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto nelle scienze e nell'arti.[22] In his treatise on good taste he hoped to promote among the younger generation the faculty of discernment and correct judgement in the sciences and arts.[23] The concept of good taste is germane to an understanding of eighteenth-century Europe, for it was considered the indispensable attribute of the man of culture.[24] Certainly the concept was not without antecedents in Muratori's time. It can be found occasionally in the sixteenth century, and in the seventeenth century it

had gained wide currency through the works of Gracián, Boileau and French classical literature. By the eighteenth century, through the work of Lord Shaftesbury, it had spread to England. In Germany, Kant became its major exponent. But, in the early eighteenth century the dissemination in European culture of "good taste" as an aesthetic and ethic ideal owed a great deal to Muratori's Riflessioni. His formulation of the concept of good taste embraces both its cultivation as a faculty of the intellect and its translation into practical terms as the agent that maintains all human faculties within just limits so that they may function with discretion. For Muratori, the application of the principle of good taste to intellectual pursuits leads to the discernment that the end or purpose of study is to attain a knowledge of Beauty and Goodness. In order to achieve this end, the mind must be freed from all external impediments so that it may apply itself to the examination of human phenomena and reach an objective, limpid and true judgement. Good taste will teach the correct way to criticize, as well as indicate the material to be criticized.[25] In dealing with the querelle des anciens et des modernes it will warn against falling into extremes, advocating the middle road. Man should indeed venerate the achievements of Aristotle, of Galen and of Ptolemy, but such veneration must not impede the freedom to search for Truth, nor must it impede the liberty of the investigator to abandon the precepts of the ancients when faced by more accurate observations and systems of thought. Good taste there-

fore, advocates freedom from prejudices and the blind acceptance of authority, but at the same time counsels against the opposite abuse of placing everything in doubt and refusing to accept anything but one's own judgement.[26] Thus, the ideal envisaged by Muratori for the rehabilitation of Italian culture was one of diligent research, examination and observation based on good taste unfettered by the shackles of prejudice and of the authority of the past. It is in this spirit, which foreshadows closely the Enlightenment, that he undertook the study of Italian poetry.

In 1706 Muratori published his treatise Della perfetta poesia italiana, which he had written in 1703[27] at the time of Orsi's rebuttal of Bouhours' criticism of Italian letters. Inspired originally by the attacks of Père Bouhours, and intended as a defence of Italian poetry, it matured into a study of poetry as an aesthetic phenomenon. Muratori's aim was to impart a better understanding of the great poetry of the past, to indicate what made it great and what was worthy of admiration and imitation. As well as examining the characteristics of poetry past and present, Muratori speculated on the nature of poetry as it should be. He considered that the art had degenerated during the seventeenth century, and he sought to establish a poetic ideal to facilitate the process of renewal and reform. Muratori's original intention had been to entitle his work La riforma della poesia italiana, but he was persuaded by friends that the title was too presumptuous.[28] The title changed, but not the intent. Muratori

wrote to instruct in the discernment of perfect poetry through a study of the poetic art, its perfections, deformities, defects and merits, in order to arrive at an understanding of the very nature of the art itself, of its intimate mechanism and its laws, so that the pathway to perfection could be clearly revealed. He was aware that he was attempting something new in the field of poetics, and that previous critics had studied poetry only superficially, or that they had judged it on the basis of preconceived merits and rules.[29]

Della perfetta poesia italiana is divided into four books. In the first two, Muratori deals with the artistic fact in itself, and in so doing attempts to correct the defects of the poet as an artist. In the third book he deals with the defects of the poet as a citizen or member of society, that is, he discusses the moral impact of artistic creation. The fourth book is composed of an anthology of poetry from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, which, on the basis of the theories elaborated in the first three books, is presented as examples of perfect Italian poetry.[30] The principle of good taste underlies the attitude of the thesis. Mario Fubini defines Muratori's concept of good taste not only as a "disposition of the intellect" towards aesthetic judgement, but also as a "moral virtue."[31] Muratori, like his contemporaries, inherits from the past the Horatian concept of the dual purpose of art--to give instruction and delight. In Muratori's conception, in so far as poetry is an

imitative art, its purpose is to delight, and in so far as it is an art subordinate to moral or political philosophy, its purpose is to give instruction.[32] But the characteristic of poetry that differentiates it from other arts such as history and philosophy is its ability to give pleasure. As a result, Muratori admits that the essential and immediate end of poetry is that of giving delight; its didactic purpose occupies a secondary position.[33] Nevertheless, as Fubini points out, Muratori recognizes a certain autonomy in art; in his critical judgements he seems at times to overlook the edifying or didactic purpose of poetry, and to admit the poetical value of a work that has as its only end the purpose of imparting pleasure.[34] While Fubini is correct in making this point, it should be added that Muratori himself was aware of this apparent contradiction, and was careful to clarify his premise in the first chapter of the third part of his treatise:

> Qualora dunque noi, men severi d'alcuni altri Autori, diciamo che talvolta basta alla Poesia il dilettar solamente, intendiamo sempre, che questo Diletto abbia da essere pudico, sano, e virtuoso, e da indirizzarsi all'onesta ricreazione dè'Cittadini; e debba lasciarsi reggere dalla diritta Ragione, dalla Filosofia Morale, e dalla Politica.[35]

However, while Muratori may accept the essentially hedonistic function of poetry in the lyric mode, as far as the theatre is concerned he insists that both ends must be fulfilled, for the justification of theatre, in his eyes, is its educational function:

> Nella Tragedia si hanno da studiare le varietà dell'umane vicende; e col terrore, e colla compassione purgar gli affetti del popolo; e spaventare i potenti dal mal fare coll'esempio de gli altri caduti in estrema miseria.[36]

Muratori's study of the melodramma is coloured by these considerations, of vital significance to his thought.[37]

Muratori's view of poetry has its roots in the interpretation of art as based on bonum, verum and pulchrum. Poetry, for him, fulfills its dual purpose by the portrayal of Truth and Beauty. The idea that truth is to be considered as the basis of poetry had already been expressed during the Counter Reformation by Castelvetro, among others, and it became one of the cornerstones of Tasso's theoretical system as is clear from the early Discorsi dell'arte poetica, and the later amplified version, the Discorsi del poema eroico. It is a concept that reappeared in Descartes, and it became the foundation upon which the entire structure of La perfetta poesia is based. In addition, Muratori also adheres to the traditionally Aristotelian concept of art as imitation of nature, and to the Horatian principle encapsuled in the formula ut pictura poesis.[38] In his search for the essence of poetry, Muratori concludes, as he does later in the Riflessioni, that the two ends pursued by human intellect and will are the knowledge of Truth and then Goodness. The only path by which man can reach these ideals is provided by Beauty. Beauty is defined as an active quality. When perceived , heard or comprehended, it delights, pleases and

ravishes us, and consequently awakens in us feelings of rapture, and love. Poetry, an art which appeals to the intellect, should capture the power of beauty to lead towards truth and goodness.[39] In other words, the human intellect must be directed towards the knowledge of these latter qualities by virtue of poetry's capacity to ravish and delight.

Having arrived at this point in his argument, Muratori proceeds to a discussion of imitation in art (which in his system tends to be reduced to a representation of beauty), and to the related problems of reality and verisimilitude. Through the study of Plato's thought, and in accordance with the tendencies to adapt it to new exigencies peculiar to the Italian neoplatonic tradition since the times of Ficino, Muratori formulates a singular concept of ideal beauty.[40] Truth must be embellished by art. Embellishment is necessary to impart a sense of novelty and wonder [novità e meraviglia] which nature, previous to its metamorphosis in artistic terms, cannot readily provide.[41] Working from Descartes' view, that true reality lies beyond the physical bounds of the senses, Muratori is able to impart a highly significant overlay of meaning to the Aristotelian concept of verisimilitude. For him, verisimilitude is not so much the representation of poetic reality or truth as perceived by the senses, but the representation of the poetic reality or truth as perceived and embellished by the imagination [fantasia].[42] For Muratori, therefore, truth in poetry is not what reflects the historical or actual reality, but what, although appearing

false to the intellect if taken only at the level of literal meaning, is rendered verisimilar by an act of the imagination. Thus Muratori justifies the use of rhetorical and poetic figures because they are a means of clothing Truth in images which can be apprehended by the senses. When the poetical images do not appear real to the intellect, but nevertheless awaken strong emotions in the imagination of the poet and the reader (or listener), then a verisimilar truth has been created.[43]

Muratori insists on three qualities necessary for the creative act of the poet: intellect [ingegno], imagination [fantasia], and discernment [giudizio], that is, good taste. Yet of these three elements, it is imagination upon which he lays especial emphasis.[44] This insistence upon the function of imagination in the creative process is, in the opinion of the majority of scholars, Muratori's greatest contribution to the developing science of aesthetics.[45] It is also seen as a definite foreshadowing of Romanticism, though for Muratori the imagination must be under the control of giudizio, a national faculty, since he regarded unbridled imagination as being responsible for such aberrations as marinismo and baroque art.[46]

The concepts of the dual ends of poetry and of imitation play a significant part in Muratori's discussion of melodramma, since they affect directly his judgement of it as an imperfect literary genre. Like his contemporaries, Muratori discusses the form from a literary point of view, and while his interest

centers on the libretto, he refers constantly to the importance of the other component elements of the musical theatre, to which he ascribes the decadence of true drama in Italy.

While Muratori corresponded with librettists and discussed the musical drama in his letters, his correspondence merely echoes the views set forth in the third book of Della perfetta poesia. In it Muratori begins his discussion of melodramma with a short history of the form. He states that it has replaced in public favour the tragedy and comedy of the spoken theatre,[47] and questions the usual critical justification of the form based on the notion that opera was an imitation of the ancients, a re-creation of the Greek manner of reciting drama in classical times:

> [I]o non saprei accordarmi con chiunque affermasse, che anticamente le Tragedie, e Commedie si cantassero con la Musica stessa, e nella stessa guisa, che oggidì far vediamo.[48]

His reason for questioning this point of view is that melodramma as it exists in his day contravenes all the rules of verisimilitude, thereby going against the classical Greek dramatists' respect for the principle of the imitation of nature:

> Come mai può dirsi, che recitandosi, e rappresentandosi in tal maniera i ragionamenti vicendevoli, e i costumi de gli uomini, s'imiti la Verità, e la Natura? E questa considerazione appunto, che caderebbe eziandio sopra i Drammi de gli antichi, qualora si fossero nella stessa guisa e al pari de'moderni anch'essi cantanti [sic], mi ha sempre fatto credere, che quegli diversamente si cantassero, sapendosi con quanta cura l'antica Tragedia imitasse, e contrafacesse la Natura.[49]

Muratori claims to have studied the problem of the method of performing ancient drama (that is, whether it was sung throughout, or only in the chorus) in a long dissertation that could not be included in the Della perfetta poesia.[50] Such a work would have undoubtedly shed considerable light on his attitude toward melodramma, but in spite of various references to it in his letters, the treatise seems never to have been completed, or if it was, it has not come down to us.

According to Muratori, the first reason for melodramma's failure to imitate nature is its union with music. The function of tragedy and comedy, in his view, is to imitate people in action and to represent as naturally as possible characters as they actually exist, function and speak in the midst of their affairs, so that the audience will think that it is watching real, not fictional, characters, and listening to an account of true, not feigned, events. But Muratori questions whether the representation of people who sing in the midst of their affairs can be considered an imitation of truth and nature; he would limit the mimetic qualities of music as an art to the lyric mode, and deny to music the ability to portray action:

> Alla Lirica, e ad altri Poemi naturalmente si congiunge la Musica, perché non s'imitano quivi gli uomini in azione, o in faccende. Ma nella Tragedia, e Commedia imitando gli Attori gente affaccendata . . .non può mai convenire una tal Musica a i regionamenti loro.[51]

Muratori considers tragedy in the Aristotelian sense as an imitation of action. Thus, the very concept of the union of

music and drama is essentially paradoxical and improbable for him. Furthermore, he reacts to the fact that in actual practice poetry in the melodramma has become subjugated to music:

> [C]iò si fa ne' tempi nostri, ch'io sto per dire, essersi la Poesia vilmente posta in catene; e laddove la Musica una volta era serva, e ministra di lei, ora la Poesia è serva della Musica.[52]

Whereas poetry should be the principal concern of drama through its depiction of an action which would move and purge the passions of the spectators, it now serves only as the means [mezzo] and instrument [strumento] through which music can display itself. Untrained in the art of declamation, the singers attempt to flaunt their vocal prowess by extending each syllable according to the number of musical notes, thereby rendering the words completely incomprehensible to the public, unless the latter consult a copy of the libretto. Furthermore, a considerable part of each musical drama is occupied by arias, that is to say, by words that are not necessary to the development of the narrative, and which in fact interrupt the action. The arias allow the composer or the singer, or both, to display to the utmost their virtuosity. Thus, the recitative in which the development of the story must be expounded has perforce to be reduced to the minimum because its musical simplicity bores the public. Since the vocal or musical accompaniment of melodramma is intended to astonish the spectator with this virtuosity, it no longer attempts to imitate or portray the sentiments

expressed in the drama. Thus, the protagonists come on stage in order to

> rappresentar gravi persone, le quali trattano materie di Stato, ordiscono tradimenti, assalti, e guerre, vanno alla morte . . . e pure nel medisimo punto cantano dolcemente, gorgheggiano, e con somma pace sciolgono un lunghissimo, e soave trillo.[53]

The singers, moreover, contribute to the overall air of unreality by their scorn of natural acting techniques, preferring instead to behave on the stage with an unrestrained liberty, performing in a frivolous fashion when the action of the drama would call for a dignified recitation.[54] Muratori also objects on the grounds of implausibility to the practice of using castrati, with their high, effeminate voices, to play the part of heroes.

Quite apart from the circumstances of its collaboration with music, the poetry of melodramma contributes in other ways to the tone of improbability. The paraphernalia of the seventeenth-century Italian theatre, such as unrealistic disguises, the recognition of long-lost relatives, extraordinary adventures, constant changes of scene, all test the credulity of the audience, as do the effeminate loves attributed to heroes and princes.[55] Thus, the ends of tragedy and of art in general cannot be served; every component of the musical drama renders this impossible. The singers, the libretto and the music detract from the power of the drama to move and purge the passions of the spectator, for if the latter cannot believe that the vicissitudes of the characters he is watching

are real, he will not be moved by them. Furthermore, the languid and effeminate musical accompaniment debases the quality traditionally ascribed to music, namely that of purging the sentiments. The modern theatre, in Muratori's view, never inspires noble sentiments in the spectators; rather, it inculcates only a feminine tenderness unworthy of virile souls and noble persons. Therefore, the musical drama cannot fulfil its moral purpose of bettering man. Neither does it fulfil the other purpose of art, that of granting pleasure. The poetry and the manner of the performance do not delight the audience with the perfection of the imitation of nature; the music is too long, and since it appeals to the ear alone, rather than to the intellect or the soul, the initial sensation of delight it may provoke soon gives way to boredom. This is proved during the actual performance, because the spectators seek other pastimes such as conversation and gambling instead of becoming involved attentively in the action of the drama.

Muratori believes that melodramma could be considered acceptable if it at least fulfilled the primary end of art, that of amusement. But since it does not, he concludes that it is in fact harmful to society, for it neither amuses nor instructs. For Muratori, therefore, melodramma does not fall within the bounds of perfect poetry. Indeed, the poetry found in the melodramma, as a result of its improbable union with music and its consequent subjugation to it, loses its ability to function as art. The librettists cannot perform

as true poets, for constrained to serve and obey Music, their creative powers are shackled. At the will or whim of the composer, the poet must write, alter or remove the arias and the recitative. Each singer takes it upon himself to demand certain verses, and to complain bitterly if his part be shorter or in any way inferior to another's. The stage-manager may insist that a certain machine be utilized, whether it be essential to the drama or not. The nature of the characters to be portrayed must be adapted to the singers available. The modern taste for sensuous, pleasing music has limited the poetic language used in melodramma to words which are sweet and sonorous, decorative and harmonious [parole dolci, e sonanti . . . belle ed armoniose]. From the composers' point of view it is even desirable that the dramas be lacking in depth or strong emotion, for the latter renders more difficult the composition of the musical accompaniment. Under all these conditions, it becomes impossible for the poet to create a perfect dramatic work.[56] Muratori adds that this point of view is perhaps held by all the best judges [intendenti] of opera, if their knowledge is matched by their sincerity, as is the case with Zeno and Crescimbeni. Muratori takes pleasure in quoting a letter from the former, written in 1701, in which his own opinions are confirmed:

> "Circa i Drammi, per dir sinceramente il mio sentimento, tuttoché ne abbia molti composti, sono il primo a darne il voto della condanna. Il lungo esercizio mi ha fatto conoscere, che dove non si dà in molti abusi, perdesi il primo fine di tali componimenti, che è il diletto. Piú che si vuol star

sulle regole, piú si dispiace; e se il Libretto ha qualche lodatore, la Scena ha poco concorso."[57]

Even granted, however, that a perfect work of art is achieved by the poet in writing the libretto, the performance of his work of art with a musical accompaniment will destroy its merit and whatever glory the poet hoped to attain. The poet, therefore, in undertaking to write melodrammi, must be prepared to compose according to the taste and demands of the music, not according to his talent and inventiveness; he must serve, not command.[58]

In examining the reasons for the popularity of melodramma, which continues unabated in spite of its defects and the boredom it occasions, Muratori concludes that it is due to the corrupt taste of the times. In his view, contemporary taste has been seduced by the sensuality of the musical accompaniment and by the virtuosity of the singers, and has been debased by the inconsequential nature of contemporary music, so that audiences become bored and impatient with any dramatic form of serious interest. Since serious tragedy, therefore, is ignored by the public, poets are willing to submit their intellect and natural talent to the low taste of the times in order to have their work appear before the public.[59] Muratori considers that the solution to the problem of the abuses of dramatic principles found in the musical drama lies in the elevation of the standards of taste among the public. It is to the furtherance of this end that he has felt it necessary to undertake his analysis

of the faults of the form, for he believes that unless the spell [magia] which music has wrought over the theatre can be broken, dramatic poetry in Italy will not regain its former and just stature.[60]

Working from his purely theoretical standpoint, Muratori thus arrived at an essentially negative attitude towards melodramma. However, Muratori was realist enough to accept the fact that in his day it was melodramma that drew the public to the theatre. He believed that the function of poetry was to teach the people, to make them comprehend either real Truth [il Vero certo] or possible truth [il vero possibile] providing them at the same time with profit and delight.[61] He also believed that poetry could achieve this end better than philosophy or other arts and sciences which benefit only a small proportion of people capable of arduous studies. Furthermore, without expending physical energy [senza spendere sudori], and what is more remarkable, without realizing that they are studying, the common people can absorb the essence of the best Philosophy which promotes the right-ordering of society, of the imagination, and of the individual.[62] It therefore follows that Muratori defends the existence of the theatre in the well-ordered society, and if melodramma is what attracts the public, he will not want to see it destroyed, nor denied to the public, but rather modified and moderated in order to leave a place for more useful theatre.[63] Practical considerations intrude; the critic realizes that one must proceed gradually to the ideal from

the real, rather than sweeping away the real in order to erect an ideal upon a sort of tabula rasa based on theoretical precept. Viewing the problem from a realistic point of view, Muratori sees that compromises must be made, and he proposes a series of suggestions of a positive nature for the practical implementations of his desire for reform. Though at first sight the proposals, as already indicated, may appear to contradict his theoretical position on melodramma, from a practical point of view they are quite significant as they anticipate to a large extent the reforms envisaged by Zeno and Metastasio. He suggests that music be made more virtuous, simpler and shorter, so that the audience might leave the theatre with a desire for more, rather than being filled to satiety. The drama should be constructed with simple and verisimilar plots, aided in its purpose of imparting pleasure by the novelty of stage machinery, dances and intermezzi which appeal to the eye, and by words which bear some relation to the music.[64] This is the compromise that Muratori, from his moderate position, makes again and again in his critical judgements. Thus, the practical reform that he advocates would satisfy the taste of the public and the exigencies of good taste necessary for the institution of the new Repubblica letteraria that he envisages. The practical proposals for a solution are of course oversimplified, being limited to a broad outline of general principles without any indication of how they should be put into practice. J. R. Robertson notes that "when [Muratori] attempted

to lay down what ought to be done in order to establish the drama on a worthy footing, he failed lamentably."[65] A similar point is made by Fubini who states that Muratori, relying on common sense, presented solutions that were not solutions, but which seemed to him sufficient for the goal he had set for himself: not so much disinterested speculation, as the reform of Italian poetry.[66] Yet, as we shall see, in spite of his neo-Classicism, Muratori proposes a solution which may have influenced Martello's conclusions, and which certainly foreshadows the romantic view of opera.

To recapitulate: for Muratori melodramma is not a perfect poetic work, nor can it ever become one.[67] He thereby questions it as a poetic genre. It is true that he begins the section of Della perfetta poesia which deals with the musical drama by apparently classifying melodramma as tragedy ["Confesso ben' anch'io, non essere i moderni Drammi per l'ordinario, se non Tragedie vestite della Musica"], but he quickly modifies this classification:

> Ma perché mi pare a dismisura mutato sotto questo abito il sembiante vero delle Tragedie, tali non oserei quasi chiamarle, non si convenendo loro, anzi abborrendosi da loro (se pure han da essere perfette) la Musica, quale a'nostri giorni s'usa.[68]

In this statement we can already detect the germ of the conclusion that Muratori will develop throughout his discussion of melodramma. We find him referring to melodrammi as illegitimate tragedies,[69] and he adds that if these self-styled [immaginarie] tragedies were compared with true

tragedies, the lack of any similarity would be obvious.[70] The musical dramas, considered within the genre of tragedy, are clearly an anomaly, or, as Muratori says, in words that will be repeated by later critics throughout the eighteenth century, they are a monstrous creation and a union of a thousand improbabilities.[71] Up to this point it would appear that Muratori is rejecting melodramma altogether because of the impossibility of finding for it a critical justification as tragedy. However, it is clear (although the critic does not elaborate the point) that melodramma considered in itself, rather than within the genre of tragedy, is a different matter. Muratori is aware that in melodramma the dominant factor in so far as its popularity is concerned is the music. Therefore, if the pleasure occasioned by music is what is sought, then reason dictates that the poet compose the drama according to the taste and the needs of music, rather than according to his own will and design. In the collaboration with the musician, he is the servant, not the master.[72] Therefore, in his vision of reformed melodramma, Muratori advocates a libretto whose words and verses are written according to the dictates of music.[73] His overall judgement of the form as it exists is negative; it needs to be reformed, so that it will no longer be harmful to society, and will at least fulfil the principal end of art which is that of amusing its audience. But since in the creation of musical dramas the poet is helpless to bring about reform on his own, without the cooperation of music, Muratori states that he will

leave the preoccupation of reforming melodramma to the musicians, for he himself must deal with the dramatic genres which are poetic, that is, tragedy and comedy:

> E ciò basti intorno a i Drammi, lasciando io piú tosto la cura di correggerli a chi è pratico della Musica, perchè debbo parlar della Poesia, non serva, ma regnante, quale è quella delle vere Tragedie, e Commedie recitate senza Musica.[74]

Thus, while Muratori, like Crescimbeni, is mainly interested in the reformation and rebirth of spoken tragedy and comedy in Italy, and while again he is not calling for the rejection of the musical drama, provided that it no longer interfere with the dramatic forms that are capable of being perfect poetry, he differs from Crescimbeni in his growing awareness that melodramma is a different form. It is a form which can perhaps become a work of art, but not in the field of literature. He thus lays the problem in the lap of the musicians, where it will also be placed by the Romantics and by modern aesthetics.

This is one of Muratori's insights that has been overlooked by historians of the opera who claim that he rejected melodramma because of his neo-classical background. Neither has it been noted by those scholars who give more weight to the existence of anticipations of Romanticism in Muratori's writings. It is curious that Muratori's sensitivity to the rôle of the imagination in art, and its function in poetry in the creation of novelty and the marvellous, does not lead him to a justification of the melodramma, which did its

utmost in actual fact to emphasize those very qualities. It is inevitable that his neo-classical rationalistic insistence on the necessity of discernment [giudizio] or good taste to control the vagaries of the imagination would have turned him away from the excesses and abuses which the imagination was allowed to perpetrate in the still baroque form of the opera in the early eighteenth century. Yet by his very insistence on the primary function of the imagination in poetic creation he paved the way for the acceptance of the melodramma as an autonomous form in the latter half of the century.

In so far as Muratori's dramatic theory is concerned, Robertson attributes to it "the revival of dramatic poetry in Italy," but only after it had been "translated into practical terms" by Scipione Maffei.[75] The latter's tragedy Merope fired the hopes for a rebirth of the tragic genre in Italy, and the introduction to his Teatro italiano reveals the inspiration he had received from Muratori.[76] Pier Jacopo Martello was also encouraged in the composition of his tragedies by Muratori. Yet Muratori's contribution to the history of opera has not been fully appreciated. Having dealt with the melodramma in far greater detail than had Crescimbeni, he provided in his prestigious treatise Della perfetta poesia the catalogue of abuses and criticism which became commonplace in the eighteenth century, and which provided the material for Benedetto Marcello's famous satire Il Teatro alla moda, published in 1720. Muratori's thought might have also influ-

enced the so-called operatic reforms which took place in the first half of the eighteenth century. Both proponents of these reforms, Zeno and Metastasio, the latter being the principal figure of eighteenth-century melodramma in Europe, attempted to regularize their operas according to the principles of good taste, and they had great interest in knowing Muratori's opinion of their libretti.[77] Zeno corresponded regularly with Muratori who referred to him as an outstanding dramatist, though without changing his reservations about melodramma in general.[78] Naturally, for simple reasons of chronology, Metastasio does not enter into the discussion of musical drama in the Della perfetta poesia, but when the famous librettist begins to bring new life to the musical theatre with the publication of Didone in 1724, Muratori is impressed.[79] According to Giazotto, this is due to the fact that Muratori is past the period of his literary theorizing: his praise of Metastasio, though not infrequent, is cursory, as he moves on to other areas of interest.[80] Finally, Muratori's pre-romantic insight into the nature of melodramma, an insight inherited by Martello, and his insistence on the importance of the imagination in artistic creation, foreshadows by three quarters of a century the development of the critical attitude that will accept opera as a distinct genre.

Gian Vincenzo Gravina

Another Arcadian who felt a deep interest in the renewal of Italian culture was Gian Vincenzo Gravina, co-founder with Crescimbeni of the Accademia dell'Arcadia, for which he acted as legislator.[1] A professor of Civil and Canon Law, and a recognized European authority on jurisprudence, Gravina also devoted himself to literary studies, acquired an intimate knowledge of classical culture, both Latin and Greek, and maintained contact with the cultural milieu of Naples and Rome. From his youth he had an interest in the theatre, a fascination that increased with time, leading him ultimately to consider tragedy as the principal literary genre. As a student he had composed two plays, Tragedia di Cristo and Sant'Atanasio. Later he took part in the discussions on the reform of Italian theatre which were an important part of the literary interchanges of the eighteenth century. He encouraged young men like Metastasio and Paolo Rolli to write tragedies, and he studied the genre in his critical writings. Moreover, he wrote and published five tragedies of his own to serve as examples in the movement to reform tragedy in Italy. The more serious intent of Gravina's programme of renewal, however, was less suited than the ideals of Crescimbeni to the spirit and the practical capabilities of the literary society of his time. Ideological as well as political differences led to a schism in Arcadia between the adherents of Crescimbeni and of Gravina.[2] The intransigence of Gravina's ideals of reform, as well as his irascible and

polemic nature, contributed to his subsequent isolation from the literary milieux of his time. But his personal defeat in Arcadia did not draw him away from literary pursuits. Modern specialists in the history of Italian literary criticism tend to regard Gravina as a man out of step with his time.[3] In his isolated position at the beginning of the eighteenth century they see a foreshadowing of the neo-Classicism best exemplified in some of Foscolo's works; similarities with Vico's philosophy have also been detected, and have contributed to the characterization of Gravina as a forerunner of the Enlightenment, pre-Romanticism and Alfieri. Gravina's major work, the Ragion poetica, is generally regarded as having contributed to the formation of the new discipline of aesthetics.[4]

Although he did not take an active part in the Orsi-Bouhours controversy, Gravina was in favour of Orsi's defence of Italian culture. He denied the superiority of the French tragic theatre, criticizing its complicated plots and the predominance of love as subject-matter.[5] In his view, Italian literature, in spite of the supposed decline it had suffered in the seventeenth century, still reigned supreme because it was closer in spirit to the classics.[6] In the querelle des anciens et des modernes, Gravina was on the side of the partisans of antiquity. According to him, the ancients had been unsurpassed masters in allowing beauty to permeate their works of art, and he believed that the secret of capturing that sublime quality could only be learned from

them. Thus he would not admit the possibility of an artistic creation that did not draw its origins from the Greeks. In his opinion, the Greeks had been the first and only philosophers to define the true essence of nature and to adapt it in just measure to art.[7] Nevertheless, Gravina did not hold that the ancients had exhausted the potentialities of art to such an extent that they left to the moderns only the possibility of a servile imitation of their works. Recasting and adapting to a new cultural environment principles already formulated by the more profound humanists of the fifteenth century such as Valla and Poliziano, Gravina considered imitation not as a slavish reproduction of the external techniques of the ancients: rather he proposed a deeper understanding of ancient drama in an attempt to capture the essence of the classical methods of creating what Binni describes as "myths impregnated with truth, works of creative and fertile imagination,"[8] or if we will, to create new and at the same time valid works of art. Gravina envisaged therefore a renaissance in contemporary literature that would produce art equal to that of the classics, thus foreshadowing a neo-classical age.

Gravina's rationalistic background must be taken into account in a discussion of his concept of imitation and of his vision of a neo-classical renewal. In his formative years Gravina had read Descartes under the tutelage of the Cartesian philosopher Gregorio Caloprese, and had become imbued with the Enlightened theories that prevailed in certain

Jansenist circles in Naples.[9] As a scholar with serious intellectual and moral aspirations, Gravina dedicated himself to a renewal of Italian culture in its various forms, social, ethical, philosophical and aesthetic. Such a renewal would be based on a profound faith in the liberating power of reason as a direct emanation of the light of God in man's moral and philosophical activities. The Cartesian insistence on the exercise of reason, and the concomitant disapproval of reliance on untested authority, can be discerned in Gravina's ideals for cultural reform expressed in the Ragion poetica.[10] His attempts to create a science of poetry do not depend therefore on the uncritical adherence to the letter of ancient authority; rather, the rules and laws of his poetics must be based on reason and logic. Gravina did not advocate the total disregard of all rules, but he certainly considered the strict adherence to precepts formulated in another age as detrimental to poetic creation.[11]

The first part of the Ragion poetica, in which Gravina studies Greek and Latin literature, had already been published as a separate work in 1696 under the title Delle antiche favole.[12] The second part deals with Italian literature. In this work the critic argues that just as architectural styles change from age to age, even though they be governed by invariable laws of geometry, so by analogy poetry must be based on an underlying cause or motive force [ragione] common to all poetic styles and adaptable to varying times and fashions.[13] It is perhaps a truism to state that all

poets and literary critics take for granted a basic ragione which informs their art; Gravina is no exception. He is not content, however, with merely accepting the existence of this poetic numen or force, or fount of inspiration; rather, he is concerned in his treatise with identifying it and with defining its true nature as an objective artistic force constant throughout the ages of man. The ancients, he believed, possessed a remarkable awareness of this basic principle of art. He believed, furthermore, that by means of a close study of their poetry, this awareness could be rekindled in the modern poet so that his works, though different perhaps in form from the poetry of the past, would capture in its essence the grandeur and excellence of the literature of classical times. Gravina's postulate of a basic ragione poetica was later extended by Du Bos from poetry to painting, by Baumgarten to all the other arts, and became a fundamental tenet of Vico's interpretation of human achievement.[14]

Gravina concludes that the basis or ragione of all poetry is the imitation of truth. For him, imitation in this sense would mean the verisimilar representation of truth in an artistic medium, rather than its exact reproduction. The poet must create a fiction which is an organic whole, by selecting those elements that will contribute to the portrayal of the truth he is attempting to convey, and by ignoring those features that would distract the mind of the reader or that would detract from the verisimilitude of the poetic fiction. The fiction must therefore cause the same

effect upon the audience as the true object of the imitation: the mind accepts the fiction as true and real and is moved by it as it would be moved by reality or truth. The task of the poet, therefore, is to create a possible reality related to actual reality to the point that an audience may accept this poetical creation without questioning it as a wondrous and magical product of the imagination.[15]

For Gravina this magical quality [incanto] is important to society. In direct contradiction of Plato he argues that poetry is beneficial to man.[16] The question of the dual purpose of art resolves itself, in Gravina, into an insistence on the preeminence of its utilitarian function, which he considers to be both cognitive and moral.[17] Poetry is the means by which philosophy and the knowledge of truth is clothed in a concrete form and thus transmitted to the uneducated mind:

> Nelle menti volgari, che sono quasi d'ogni parte involte tra le caligini della fantasia, è chiusa l'entrata agli eccitamenti del vero e delle cognizioni universali. Perché dunque possano ivi penetrare, convien disporle in sembianza proporzionata alle facoltà dell'immaginazione ed in figura atta a capire adeguatamente in quei vasi; onde bisogna vestirle d'abito materiale e convertirle in aspetto sensibile. . . . Quando le contemplazioni avranno assunto sembianza corporea, allora troveranno l'entrata nelle menti volgari, potendo incamminarsi per le vie segnate dalle cose sensibili; ed in tal modo le scienze pasceranno dei frutti loro anche i più rozzi cervelli.[18]

Poetry, therefore, fulfils an important social function, because through poetical images the laws of nature and of God are revealed to the masses, and the seeds of religion

and honest behaviour are cultivated.[19] In this way the poet assumes the vital rôle of the intellectual, the sage who acts as mediator in the dissemination of knowledge and truth to the masses.[20] Gravina makes use of Plato's satirical comparison of the poetic frenzy to the power of a magnet which transmits its force from iron ring to iron ring, but the power of poetry to influence others is taken by Gravina in a positive sense.[21] The poet, stirred by divine fervour, excites the one who learns from him; and the latter, inspired by the light and fervour that the poet has communicated to him will in turn excite his listener. The didactic purpose of art figures prominently in Gravina's concept of theatre.

Having established the function of poetic imagery in revealing universal truths or ideas to the common masses, Gravina goes on to state that fiction is a more effective source of utility and delight than is reality, a concept that would find no support in Plato. Gravina denies that natural laws can be learned as efficaciously from reality as they can from fiction. Man, he points out, overlooks the ordinary and the familiar, and is attracted by novelty. The novel causes the mind to marvel, to dwell on the image, to reflect on it and to learn its meaning. The recognition of truth in fiction, and of the similarity of fiction to reality, as well as the awakening of the same emotions that reality would stir, create an intense delight in the audience which derives gratification from its discovery. Gravina thus concludes that in art the similarity itself is the most extensive

source of delight and utility.[22]

Gravina is dealing here with the concepts of novelty and the marvellous which artists of the baroque era had emphasized.[23] But whereas the Baroque attempted to create the marvellous [meraviglia] by appealing to the senses and through them to the intellect and the emotions, Gravina would have the marvellous appeal directly to the mind. This conflicts with sensationalist doctrine, for Gravina maintains that the senses alone cannot lead to knowledge:

> I soli sensi non possono imprimerci la cognizione delle cose singolari, senza la riflessione della mente, onde è prodotto l'assenso ed è generata l'idea universale, che è poi seme della scienza.[24]

Gravina's concept of universals has a distinctly neoplatonic bias. In his view, the originator [madre] of fictions is the idea, drawn by the human mind from nature itself which contains all that the mind conceives.[25] For Gravina, the pleasure occasioned by poetry is an intellectual one; the enchantment worked by poetry acts on the mind which is gratified to recognize in art the idea of reality already existing in the mind. In this way, the pleasure which poetry creates is used to reveal knowledge or universal ideas to those who otherwise would not be aware of it. Consequently, the pleasure generated by art is subservient to its principal end, which is to instruct. Whereas for the Baroque, particularly if viewed as Marinistic poetry, the main end of art is to give pleasure, in Gravina the didactic purpose takes precedence. Furthermore, whereas Muratori regarded fantasia as

an entity separate from the intellect, but perforce subject to the control of the intellect,[26] for Gravina the imagination was a function of the mind, and therefore naturally subject to reason.

Gravina's view of the organic unity of a work of art, its fidelity to reason and verisimilitude, and the preeminence of its didactic function, influence his attitude towards the melodramma. His contribution to the history of operatic criticism has received scant attention, probably because he wrote a relatively small amount on the subject. Yet his ideas have their importance, if only for their significance as a background to the career of Gravina's protégé, Pietro Metastasio. The claim of Robert Freeman who believed that Gravina's views "failed to make an impression . . . even on the future of his adopted son . . . Metastasio" is quite erroneous; similarly, Luigi Russo's hypothesis of a dispersion by Metastasio of the intellectual inheritance left him by Gravina is imprecise in its formulation and needs to be redefined.[27]

Gravina comments briefly on musical drama in his Discorso sopra l'Endimione,[28] in his Regolamento degli studi di nobile e valorosa donna,[29] in the Tragedie cinque,[30] and in slightly greater detail in his treatise Della tragedia.[31] He does not dwell, however, on the form per se, but rather remarks upon it in passing in his consideration of tragedy. The critic does not deal with the form as a separate entity within the theatre. For him melodramma simply falls within

the dramatic mode, and he does not analyse it to determine whether it belongs to the genre of tragedy, or whether it is a legitimate or illegitimate kind of tragedy. The reason for this is two-fold. On the one hand, Gravina believed that everything in the universe, being an imprint of the divine idea, was a legitimate subject of poetry.[32] On the other hand, he denied that the ancients had drawn the boundaries of poetry in such a way as to exclude from the field of poetry whatever did not correspond to pre-ordained genres.

In fact, one of Gravina's most important contributions to the history of literary theories was his attack on the strict division of literature into well-defined genres, as practised by his predecessors and contemporaries.[33] Already in 1692, in an essay published with the first edition of L'Endimione Gravina upheld the notion of the freedom that should be granted to the poetic imagination, inveighing against rhetorical precepts ["ambiziosi ed avari precetti"]:

> [N]on può uscire alla luce opera alcuna che non sia subito avanti il tribunale de'critici chiamata all'esame ed interrogata in primo luogo del nome e dell'esser suo, sicché si vede tosto intentata l'azione che i jurisconsulti chiaman pregiudiziale, e si forma in un tratto controversia sopra lo stato di essa, se sia poema, o romanzo, o tragedia, o comedia, o d'altro genere prescritto. E se quell'opera travia in qualche modo da'precetti . . . vogliono tosto che quell'opera sia bandita ed in eterno proscritta.

Gravina then adds an important conclusion:

> E pure per quanto scuotano e dilatino i loro aforismi non potranno comprender mai tutti i vari

> generi de'componimenti che il vario e continuo moto dell'umano ingegno può produrre di nuovo. Onde non so perché non si debba torre questo indiscreto freno alla grandezza delle nostre immaginazioni, ed aprirle strada da vagare per entro quei grandissimi spazi, ne'quali è atta a penetrare.

Referring specifically to L'Endimione, a musical drama, Gravina makes the following judgement:

> Non so se ella sia o tragedia, o comedia, o tragicomedia o altro che i retori si possan sognare. Ella è una rappresentazione dell'amore di Endimione e di Diana. Se quei vocaboli si stendon tant'oltre, potranno anche accoglier questa nel loro grembo, se tanto non si dilatano, potrassene rintracciare un altro, che diamo a ciascuno la facoltà in cosa che nulla rileva; se non s'incontra vocabolo alcuno, non vogliamo noi, per mancanza di nome, privarci di cosa sì bella.[34]

Gravina then proceeds to an examination of the text, and concludes that the work is an organic whole.

The fact that L'Endimione was a musical drama does not prevent Gravina from considering it as an harmonious and unified work. Here lies the second reason for his acceptance of melodramma as a dramatic form. Unlike Muratori and Crescimbeni, Gravina does not consider the union of poetry and music in a dramatic work to be implausible. His insistence on the organic unity of a poetic work does not preclude the collaboration of music. Gravina sought his ideal of tragedy in the drama of the ancients. In the controversy over the interpretation of the rôle of music in Greek drama, he championed Patrizi's viewpoint and believed--albeit erroneously--that Castelvetro, in his reading of Aristotle's Poetics, shared the same opinion.[35] Gravina was aware that

many critics held that in Greek drama only the chorus was accompanied by music, and he felt that a wider acquaintance with Castelvetro's penetrating though difficult commentary on the Poetics would lead to a modification of that position. Claiming indebtedness to Castelvetro, Gravina espouses the view that the dramatic works of the ancient Greeks were accompanied by music in their entirety. He sets out to prove his point by employing the techniques of rationalism, supporting his position with the testimony of classical writers. He believed that the musical accompaniment of the chorus differed from the musical accompaniment allotted to the parts of the individual characters, just as in the theatre of his own day the arias differed from the recitative. The union of the two arts does not appear to him as unreasonable or inverisimilar since music is a mimetic art, as is poetry.[36]

We can say, therefore, that Gravina accepts the concept of the ideal melodramma as a dramatic work comprising the union of poetry and music. Yet the attitude he adopted towards the opera as it existed in his day is consistent with his opinion of contemporary theatre in general: drama, for Gravina, had fallen into a degenerate state in the seventeenth century, and had not yet recovered. He is profuse in his attacks on the contemporary theatre, regarding it as a monstrous creation as it does not comply with the laws of nature. Already in the Regolamento degli studi he had referred to both the spoken and the musical drama in similar terms. In the treatise Della tragedia, he characterized the

compositions for the musical theatre as ridiculous dramas, and in the prologue to his Tragedie cinque he held melodramma responsible for the degeneration of theatrical taste in general during the eighteenth century.[37]

Like his predecessors, Gravina considers melodramma from a literary point of view, that is, as drama, and he makes no differentiation between opera seria and tragedy. The reasons why Gravina would in fact find objectionable in practice an artistic form of which he would approve in theory can be gathered from the examination of his ideas on tragedy, and from his criticism of the existing melodramma.

Despite his dislike of the division of literature into genres, Gravina came to consider tragedy as the highest form of poetry.[38] This attitude was motivated by his belief in the didactic function of art. If poetry is to reveal truth to those who cannot grasp it through philosophical meditation, it follows that the most vivid art-form and one presenting fictions as actual realities taking place before the very eyes of the audience is the most suited for a clear representation of truth, and is the form liable to have the greater impact on the audience.

> Essendo dunque, come largamente nella Ragion poetica abbiam provato, la poesia un'imitazione che ammaestra il popolo, quella ha di poesia maggior grado che tutta nell'imitazion si trattiene, qual è la drammatica. E della drammatica quella merita luogo più degno, la quale è più nobile ed utile, qual è la tragedia.[39]

Given the high opinion he had of tragedy as an artistic form, as well as his desire to reform poetic art in Italy, it is

logical and inevitable that Gravina should have set himself the task of composing tragedies. His Tragedie cinque appeared in 1712.[40] Their author explicitly stated his intention of offering through them examples of tragedy composed according to the ideals of the ancients.[41] Modern critics are in agreement over the exemplary nature of the works, yet are also unanimous in commenting on the poverty of their poetic qualities.[42] Gravina's turgid style, oratorical tone and didactic intent made it certain that the tragedies would not be received with favour by his contemporaries.[43] His ideal, as it turned out, demanded of his fellow-dramatists a concession that they were not yet ready to make, as they regarded pleasure as the end of art. For this reason, as Maffei remarked, Gravina's tragedies proved to be too far removed from the current taste.

Three years later, in 1715, Gravina published his treatise Della tragedia, a work generally considered as a defence of his five tragedies.[44] Gravina presents the treatise as an endeavour to clarify the ancient ideal of tragedy, of which his five examples are the practical application, and to show that the Italian drama of his contemporaries falls far short of the ideal.[45] A consideration of melodramma forms part of his discussion.

Gravina begins with a justification of the union of poetry and music in an artistic form, citing the practice of antiquity. The critic utilizes again the old theory of the therapeutic power of music. He maintains that primitive

societies, recognizing the power of song and dance on the human spirit, as demonstrated for example in the festivals of Bacchus, clothed their teachings in song, an art invented by the common people for their own amusement. Song in public gatherings, festivals, games and, eventually, the theatre thus served this educational purpose. In this way tragedy came into being to instruct the common man in moral and civic virtues. However--and this is a central point in Gravina's thought--the effectiveness of the union of words and music in antiquity rested on the fact that both the words and the music of classical tragedy were composed by a single individual. Gravina here adheres to a notion held by other eighteenth-century critics: the classical tragedian is regarded as a sage who, in his wisdom, bears in his mind the norm of human life, and expresses its precepts in poetic form accessible to the comprehension of the ordinary man. The critic thus combines in one person the rôle of philosopher, poet and musician. The poetic work created by an individual so singularly endowed will tend in all its component parts towards the fulfilment of that single end clearly determined by its single author. Consequently, the organic, harmonious unity of the work of art, and its didactic purpose so strongly advocated by Gravina, can in this manner be firmly secured.

In the practice of the eighteenth century however, as Gravina well knew, the creator of melodramma is no longer a single person. The creative function is divided among different individuals, each of them failing to comprehend fully

the art of the other. The artistic and practical unity of the work that is the end-product of their collaboration is thus inevitably weakened. Given this situation, the critic laments the fact that what is left in contemporary theatre is "pure voice", the "voice" of the singers, that is, a voice modulated in obedience to refined artistic laws, but devoid of all "practical eloquence" and "philosophical sentiment."[46] Furthermore, the music of the contemporary theatre cannot, in Gravina's view, compare with ancient music,

> la quale animava e regolava tanto l'espressione naturale e con tanta efficacia nei cuori umani penetrava, che, per testimonianza di molti e particolarmente di Platone, eccitava e sedava le passioni, curava i morbi e cangiava i costumi.

Unfortunately, Gravina contends, the musical art of the ancients has been lost; in its stead,

> corre per li teatri a'dì nostri una musica sterile di tali effetti, e perciò da quella assai difforme, e si esalta perlopiù quell'armonia la quale quanto alletta gli animi stemperati e dissonanti, tanto lacera coloro che danno a guidare il senso alla ragione: perché in cambio di esprimere ed imitare, suol piutosto [sic] estinguere e cancellare ogni sembianza di verità: se pur non godiamo, che in cambio di esprimere sentimenti e passioni umane, ed imitar le nostre azioni e costumi, somigli ed imiti, come fa sovente, con quei trilli tanto ammirati la lecora o'l canario.[47]

Gravina thus objects to the music of contemporary theatre which, for him, has lost the original purpose of music in drama. It no longer serves, as it did (or was thought to do) in classical times, to elucidate and interpret the meaning of the poetry, and through its melodious power drive the

moral and philosophical message into the soul of the audience. Rather, it has become a mere decorative element which, by its lack of imitation of human action, may in fact serve only to obscure the meaning of the text. For this reason, Gravina concludes that modern drama has lost the harmonious unity of its component parts.

Gravina lays the blame for the degeneration of contemporary music on the corrupt nature of the poetry of the day, this view being consistent with his general distaste for the Baroque. All imitative arts, he claims, undergo the same mutations as human societies evolve through the centuries. Just as poetry in the seventeenth century came to depend heavily on elaborate stylistic devices to intensify its effects, so music relies ever more on arduous and complex modulations of the voice to enchant the public and to produce a sensual pleasure similar in nature to the spell cast by the song of the goldfinch or the nightingale. The technical development of the melody has been detrimental to the internal structure of tragedy, and it has also determined a new and deplorable content. Instead of imitating civic and moral virtues, playwrights pursue romantic adventures [*romansesche* --sic--*chimere*] far removed from reality. Moreover, their insistence upon love as subject-matter leads to the neglect of any serious investigation of other human passions and activities.[48] As a final result, both in terms of poetry and music, Gravina finds contemporary *melodramma* in violation of the laws of reason, and hence contrary to nature.

The critic states the obvious truth that musical drama appeals to the ear of the audience. In his opinion, however, art should not appeal exclusively to the senses; the artistic product must also satisfy the demands of the intellect in order to fulfil its proper aims. In melodramma, only the first of the two traditional ends of poetry is achieved: it can only provide pleasure. The melodious voices of the singers delight the audience, but the individual soul is denied any moral profit; indeed it is harmed by the false concepts which modern drama, corrupt as it is, inevitably expresses. By the logic of his argument, Gravina is bound to conclude that at the present time poetry is a harmful "minister" of an even more harmful type of music.[49]

Crescimbeni and Muratori had considered melodramma responsible for the decadence of contemporary theatre. Gravina repeats this view in the prologue to his tragedies, while in the treatise Della tragedia he attributes the decline of the Italian theatre in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the precepts of the rhetoricians and to the interpreters of Aristotle, guilty, in his opinion, of having first made barren, then of having deformed modern theatre by their vain and sterile commentaries. In his view, the licence and extravagance of the Baroque arose out of a reaction to the stultifying and limiting codification of poetry by the rhetoricians:

> Perché non potendo i poeti osservare l'indiscreti e puerili precetti ad Aristotele attribuiti, hanno anche spezzato ogni legame di natural ragione, uscendo affatto dalla verisimilitudine e decreto e

> proprietà; come spesso avviene che gli uomini, rompendo il freno di eccedente rigore, trascorrono fuori della norma comune ad una immoderata licenza, ove son portato dall'audacia che, scuotendo il più duro freno, hanno concepita.[50]

The polemic against the tyranny of poetical precepts is thus vital to Gravina in view of his rationalistic adherence to reason and nature as the only guides to poetic creation.

The treatise Della tragedia was directed against the contemporary dramatists who were producing spectacles contrary to Gravina's ideal of classical tragedy; as such, it implies a desire for reform. Yet the conclusion of the treatise seems to preclude the possibility of reform in a general or universal sense:

> Fin qui . . . parmi aver a bastanza della tragedia ragionato, non per restituirla nei teatri e nelle comuni idee, troppo o dalle follie romansesche [sic] o dalle pedantesche regole occupate, ma per isvelarla agli studiosi dell'antichità ed agli amatori del vero, li quali sofrirebbero troppo affanno ed incontrarebbero molti scogli, se la dovessero, come a noi è convenuto, rintracciare per testimonianze e memorie così rotte e sparse, e tra loro alle volte ripugnanti, e poi ridurre le cognizioni ad una comune ed intera idea ordinatamente e con l'armonia di tutte le sue parti raccolta e ricomposta.[51]

This is a direct contradiction of the hope he had expressed four years earlier to the effect that the theatre might be reformed sufficiently to allow it to open again in Rome.[52] In Della tragedia he appears to indicate that the general public and the composers of popular theatre are committed to the degenerate drama, and he therefore addresses his dissertation on tragedy to the intellectuals alone. Amedeo

Quondam views this position as one of retrenchment on Gravina's part, a retreat from the positions maintained in previous works such as the Ragion poetica and the Regolamento di studi di nobile e valerosa donna. In Della tragedia, according to Quondam, Gravina shatters the relationship between the sage and the people which underlies his theory of poetics: the sage, it would seem, can only communicate with another sage. Thus, the mediatory function of the poet as teacher of the masses seems to be negated.[53]

The poor reception given his own tragedies with their lofty didactic intentions, may offer a partial explanation of Gravina's conclusion to Della tragedia. The conclusion could also be the result of his reaction to the more hedonistic tendencies of Arcadia and contemporary writers. Certainly the treatise itself insists on the necessity of a reform of drama, and attempts a re-evaluation of the dramatic art.[54] Thus, while Gravina's direct contribution to eighteenth-century critical literature on melodramma may be slight, his ideal of tragedy contributes, especially in so far as Metastasio is concerned, to the establishment of a melodramatic form that will span the century.

Pier Jacopo Martello

In 1715, only a short while before the publication of Gravina's Della tragedia, another treatise on the same subject, entitled Della tragedia antica e moderna, made its appearance in Rome.[1] Its author was Pier Jacopo Martello,[2] an Arcadian who turned to poetry in an attempt to vindicate the honour of Italy in the field of literature. Through his poetical avocation he came into contact with the vital literary milieu of his native Bologna, and with such literati and men of theatre as Crescimbeni, Muratori, Maggi and Luigi Riccoboni. In his Vita, Martello states that it was Orsi himself who encouraged him to turn to the theatre, for it was in tragedy especially that contemporary Italy was lacking in glory.[3] To this end he was further encouraged by his friend Muratori, with whom he had been on intimate terms since before 1690. Martello resolutely set to his task by studying Greek and French theatre.[4] The conclusions he reached are summarized in his essay Del verso tragico, published as the preface to the first volume of his tragedies. In this essay he declares his belief in the excellence of the Greeks in drama, and the superiority of the French over the Italians in tragedy.[5] The latter conclusion has led critics to classify Martello as a francophile and a partisan of the moderns in the querelle des anciens et des modernes.[6] Yet a careful reading of Martello's works brings the realization that in fact, like Muratori, he held a moderate position and advocated a healthy respect for the ancients and an appreci-

ation for the works of the present.[7]

Martello's early infatuation with Marinist poetry left him with a certain appreciation for baroque literature which influenced his own style and further differentiated him from the classicists who condemned Marini's art outright.[8] In the Orsi-Bouhours polemic he upheld the defence of Italian literature launched by the Marquis Orsi against the French.[9] Yet he felt that the French ought not to be denied their just merits, among them being the superiority of their theatre, and he claimed that the Italians could learn from their neighbours.

In Del verso tragico Martello explains how he undertook a comparison of French and Italian drama. Rewriting in prose some Italian examples of the genre, and abandoning the poetical ornamentation so prevalent in the Italian tragedies of the period, he found them as powerful and vital in the expression of tragic passions as were the French. To him, the rhetorical embellishments were the elements that destroyed Italian tragedy. Its failure, he concluded, lay not in the inability of Italian dramatists to create great tragic situations, but in the lack of an appropriate vehicle of expression. Martello therefore applied himself to fashioning a suitable verse-form modelled on the French alexandrine, which came to be known as verso martelliano.[10]

In 1713 Martello spent several months in Paris, where he attended the theatre and the opera; he also cultivated the company of men of French belles-lettres and theatre such as Fontenelle, Houdart de La Motte, Crébillon and Campistron.

This experience strengthened his admiration of French theatre, despite his reservations concerning the diction and techniques of the French actors, and it bolstered as well his faith in the efficacy of the dramatic verse-form he had created. Upon his return to Italy he continued his efforts to give new life to Italian theatre.

For the theatre Martello composed several tragedies, a few comedies, and five libretti for music.[11] His main interest, however, lay in tragedy.[12] His own tragic plays met with success, especially his Ifigenia in Tauri as performed by the company of Luigi Riccoboni.[13] Although Maffei's Merope obscured the success of Martello's tragedies, in 1788 Napoli Signorelli still considered the Ifigenia as an exemplar of the genre. Modern scholars concur on the importance of Martello in the history of Italian theatre and criticism. Both A. Galletti and E. Bertana claim that eighteenth-century tragedy in Italy began with Martello.[14] Giulio Natali recognizes him as an innovator in the genre, and as a precursor of figures such as Conti, Becelli, Baretti and Metastasio.[15] Maria Carmi, as well as Galletti and Robertson see in him a preoccupation with the psychology of his characters which they claimed was still unknown in the theatre of the time, both Italian and French, and which did not come to fruition until the nineteenth century.[16] Ada Ruschioni echoes Natali's judgement of Martello as the true Arcadian of tragedy.[17] His tragedies, however, are not great works of art, and did not in fact renew Italian tragic theatre. Nevertheless, they were

an important step in the theatrical development that led to Alfieri. Contemporary critics recognize that Martello's true bent was satirical and humorous rather than tragic.[18] Binni has pointed out the literary value of his comedies, and the humorous vein of his satire on Maffei, Il Femia sentenziato, which is generally regarded as one of his better works.[19] Scholars have also come to appreciate the value of his critical writings. In 1923, Robertson noted the importance of Martello's treatise on tragedy in the critical development of drama in the eighteenth century.[20] Benedetto Croce and Walter Binni also attest to the critical acumen of Martello in his own time.[21] However, his critical works have yet to be studied in an organic and complete fashion.

Martello's contribution to the history of opera has also to be properly studied. Although his name appears in modern discussions of eighteenth-century commentators on opera, his work on the melodramma has been examined only superficially.[22] As we shall see, his position is important, if imperfectly understood by scholars who have dealt with the problem.

Martello's plan to write a treatise specifically on tragedy arose out of the vital interest expressed for the theatre both in Italy and in France, and especially out of his discussions on the subject with Antonio Conti, Fontenelle and other French and Italian literati in Paris.[23] Before Martello, in eighteenth-century Italy, tragedy had been discussed rather schematically as part of poetry in treatises by Crescimbeni, Muratori and Gravina. While that discussion

centered on the question of the validity of modern tragedy in view of the excellence of Greek drama, Martello set out to explore the problem by means of an examination of both ancient and modern Italian, French and Spanish theatre in his Della tragedia antica e moderna. Although the definitive version appeared in 1715 in Rome, it was originally published under Conti's supervision in Paris in 1714 and therefore precedes by several months Gravina's own treatise on the same subject. Though the purpose of these published dissertations on tragedy was basically the same, that is, the comparison of ancient and modern drama, Martello's differs from the previous works, as well as from Gravina's later treatise, not only in being the longest work on the subject, but in that the literary technique and the conclusions he draws are quite distinct.

Martello held a degree in philosophy from the university of Bologna, to which he returned as professor of literature in 1718. His writings reveal his familiarity with classical philosophers and poets, as well as with Italian and French authors. He thus possessed the intellectual background common to other scholars and critics who had studied tragedy. Yet his work had not the weighty, erudite presentation that one would expect from a Gravina or a Muratori. Martello approached the problem more as an essayist than as a literary critic in the traditional sense. Far from being a grave and learned exposition, his Della tragedia antica e moderna is a very readable treatise presented as a dialogue. The reasons for Martello's choice of this literary form can be seen in

the dedication of his Il vero parigino italiano to Orsi. Martello praises the dialogues of the Marquis, judging them to be more effective than long dissertations in which the reader loses the thread of the argument:

> [N]on amando voi que'lunghi periodi in mezzo a'quali chi vi si aggira si perde, in un più sicuro e più brieve giro con leggiadria maestrevole volteggiandovi, il parlar gentile col famigliare così componete che, scrivendo al pubblico, par che parliate agli amici; né la dimestichezza al decoro, né questo a quella si oppone.[24]

The simplicity, the lighter and more familiar style suitable to the dialogue attracts Martello. He introduces into his dialogue on tragedy all the charm and wit so characteristic of the Arcadian spirit. The tone of the work is mildly ironic; the points are conveyed with all the grace and urbanity of the time, and the author makes no concession to that "furor letterario, che in guerra mena", well-known as one of the attributes of critics of the period.

Like Muratori and Gravina, Martello was striving to establish critical bases for a literature that might respect the best in the classical tradition and yet be fully atuned to the needs and aspirations of his own time. The fulfilment of this aim included a rejection of strict adherence to Aristotelian principles, and Martello employs a brilliantly rococo device of using Aristotle himself to discredit the strict followers of such principles.[25] In the dialogue, therefore, Aristotle becomes the mouthpiece for Martello's opinions, and Martello plays the rôle of the antagonist.[26]

The skill with which the dialogue is handled provides good evidence of the fact that Martello was equally accomplished as an artist in prose and in verse.

The framework of the dialogue is as follows: Martello imagines that he encounters, during a sea-voyage to France, a wizened old man who claims to be the philosopher Aristotle, kept alive through the centuries by means of a secret potion, but a potion which he can no longer concoct. Though Martello considers the old man to be an impostor, their conversation nevertheless turns to the subject of tragedy, and this fictitious Aristotle agrees to discuss the nature of dramatic poetry. It is indicative of Martello's attitude towards the querrelle des anciens et des modernes that he uses the oracle of the partisans of antiquity to express his own interpretation of Aristotle's Poetics, while at the same time showing a freedom from the subservience to antiquity by the gentle caricature of Aristotle. Unlike the Vergil whom Dante encounters at the beginning of the Divina Commedia, "che per lungo silenzio parea fioco," Martello's Aristotle has kept himself alive artificially through the centuries. The magic potion with which he has accomplished this feat can be taken, therefore, to symbolize the power that he has held over literary criticism since the late Renaissance. This power, however, is waning [Aristotle has lost the formula for the potion]. The old man stammers as he speaks [the Poetics have never been easy to interpret]. This caricature is nevertheless an external device, for within the internal structure

of the dialogue, Martello's Aristotle is extremely fluent and eloquent in his attack on the excesses of his commentators and in the explanation of Martello's own interpretation of the Poetics.

The treatise is divided into six dialogues in which Martello deals respectively with the six constituents of tragedy that determine its quality according to Aristotle's Poetics: plot [favola], character [costumi], diction, thought, spectacle and song. The author's approach differs from that of some of his predecessors in yet another aspect. Since Martello was himself a playwright, his interests are mainly of a practical nature. The author takes as his point of departure the widespread concept of art as imitation. But he argues against what he understands to be the contemporary conception of imitation: the emulation of classical poets and the adherence to the precepts formulated by the commentators on Aristotle's Poetics. In opposition to this concept of mimesis, Martello urges the rationalistic principle of art as the imitation of nature, with reason as the only guide to such imitation.[27] In the dialogues, the wizened Aristotle discourses on the verisimilitude proper to tragedy, that is, the artistic reproduction of truth that perfects the said truth, and in so doing is clearly a fiction, but a fiction so "real" that an audience can accept it as such for the duration of the performance.[28] Aristotle also presents an interpretation of catharsis which, we must remember, is actually that of Martello. Aristotle admits that, at the time he

conceived his Poetics, by catharsis he had meant the purgation of passions. In other words, he had believed that by the theatrical experience the public was to be purged or cleansed of passions similar to those portrayed on the stage. However, Aristotle adds that he has now changed his interpretation due to the changes that have taken place in society. By catharsis he would now mean the moral instruction of the public.[29] Later, in the discussion of melodramma, Aristotle presents a third and even more utilitarian interpretation, namely, that of reviving the spirits of the public. In all three explanations Martello has added to the original Aristotelian concept of catharsis the Horatian idea of utility, an exegetical confusion prevalent among critics since the late Renaissance.[30] For Martello, then, as for his predecessors, the ends of art were twofold: to delight, and to instruct. In addition to his interpretation of these three vital concepts of Aristotelian critical thought (imitation, verisimilitude, and catharsis), Martello deals in greater detail with specific problems that form part of the discussions of his time on tragedy: its themes, its style, the validity of the three unities, of soliloquies, of the use of rhyme, metaphors and similes.

In the course of Martello's discussion of tragedy with Aristotle, in the fifth dialogue, attention is turned to musical drama. Martello allows Aristotle to justify the inclusion of melodramma in their dialogue on the grounds that serious musical drama is similar to tragedy, and is thought

by some critics to be a reflection of ancient Greek tragedy.[31] Aristotle begins with a negative judgement of French and Italian opera, an opinion with which Martello concurs, though he makes an exception in the case of certain libretti of Giovanni Moniglia, Francesco de Lemene, Carlo Capece, Eustachio Manfredi, Silvio Stampiglia, Domenico Bernini, Domenico de Totis, and all those of Apostolo Zeno. While he praises all of Zeno's libretti, Martello held reservations similar to those of Muratori and Crescimbeni concerning the plays of the Venetian dramatist. On the one hand he links Zeno's name indiscriminately with several very minor literary figures, apparently with the object of praising them. On the other hand, in a letter to Muratori, Martello had made the following remarks concerning Venetian musical drama in general:

> In Venezia . . . tutto il giorno anche da Giornalisti si compongono Drami pieni de'casi ch'Essi chiamano meravigliosi, e che io battezzo per inverisimili, pieni di una Locuzione lirica affatto, et adorna, che in bocca degli Attori sà tutta d'affettazione.[32]

Without a doubt, one of the giornalisti to whom Martello refers is Apostolo Zeno, for in the following paragraph and in an earlier part of the letter Martello speaks of Zeno and his Giornale de'letterati d'Italia. Of course, both Martello's letter and the treatise were written before the maturation of Zeno's so-called reform of the opera libretto. But already in this short paragraph of a letter composed about four years before his dialogue on tragedy, we see Martello's preoccupation with critical problems regarding

melodramma that he will develop later in his treatise, that is, with the question of verisimilitude and with the excessive artificiality of style.

In the fifth dialogue of the treatise, Aristotle agrees with Martello's exceptions to the general condemnation of musical drama. But the old man adds:

> [M]a ben mi spiace che cotesti per altro insigni e spiritosi poeti abbiano sì male impiegati i loro talenti in componimento che mai non vivrà né farà vivere i loro nomi.[33]

In Il vero parigino italiano Martello discusses his interpretation of the pleasure caused by poetry. It proceeds, he declares, from man's desire for immortality; poetry resuscitates the dead and renders the living immortal.[34] Therefore, at the artistic level, a work that will not last for posterity is, in his estimation, futile. In the dialogue on melodramma he admits to Aristotle that he himself has wasted his time on such compositions, and he expresses his regret for having done so:

> [E]d io, che varî ne ho posti in scena, non ho maladetti [sic] di cuore i momenti impiegati a comporre, come allora, vedendo le cose più brillanti e che più sono vezzose e delle quali più si compiace il poeta, riuscire per lo più insipide per la musica e detestabili a'nostri smaschiati cantori e alle nostre che, per vergogna del secolo, osiam chiamar virtuose. Quando, per lo contrario, li tratti più sciaurati della poesia, e ciò che letto nauserebbe, ho veduto gustarsi, gradirsi, acclamarsi non meno dall'uditorio che da'cantori.

Yet in the same paragraph, Martello admits that he has been fascinated by musical drama, in spite of its faults, when he

sees it

> spiccar di maniera sui palchi che io stesso, assidendomi ascoltatore, mi son sentito stuzzicare a compiacermene, e me ne son compiaciuto.[35]

Furthermore, he remains as fascinated by it as he is embarrassed by the fascination. Later in the dialogue he expresses the wish that the musical theatres should be closed so that he should not be ashamed of Italy's self-abandonment to opera in musica, nor be so ashamed of himself for wanting to attend continuously.[36] There can be no doubt that musical drama caught the imagination of Pier Jacopo Martello, always open to novelty, and still attracted to baroque language and spectacle.[37] The great attraction that the genre held for him is further suggested by the fact that in the fifth dialogue of Della tragedia antica e moderna he produced by far the longest and most reflective study of opera that had so far been published. The interest of Crescimbeni, Muratori and Gravina in musical drama was marginal; Martello's reflections are put down in too great detail for us to regard them as just a peripheral interest.[38] Yet Martello had written libretti only between 1697 and 1699, that is, early in his career, and these libretti were only published individually on the occasion of their performance; they were not included by the author in his editions of his Teatro italiano.[39] In fact, if we were to take literally a remark made in 1722 in the dedication of the final volume of his Teatro, it would appear that Martello

considered his career as a dramatist to have begun in 1702.[40] This would suggest that Martello was repudiating the libretti which he had written for the musical theatre.[41] A study of the fifth dialogue of his treatise on tragedy will explain this apparent ambivalence in his attitude.

In the fifth dialogue, Martello deals with musical tragedy from the point of view of a poet or dramatist. Like Muratori, --but simply as a point of departure--, he considers melodramma as an imperfect imitation of great tragedy, and refers to it in consequence as imperfect tragedy. Elsewhere he characterizes the musical dramas as bad tragedies [cattive tragedie].[42] However, one can deduce from the fifth dialogue that while Martello calls the opera seria of his time "tragedy", he does so only because no separate accepted category existed in which musical drama could be included. Previous critics had considered it as an attempt to perform tragedy according to Greek exemplars. But, as we shall see, it is quite evident that Martello views musical drama as a separate entity with its own rules and exigencies, not entirely subject to the same laws as spoken tragedy. The intuition of a difference between melodramma and tragedia was already present in Muratori. Martello clarifies this intuition and presents it in a forceful manner.

Martello states that the difference between the two forms results from drama's association with music. Like Muratori, he attributes to this union the faults that make musical drama an imperfect tragedy. Unlike Gravina, for whom

the musical accompaniment was a natural element of tragedy, Martello recognizes the alterations to the structure of tragedy that are made necessary by drama's association with music. For, contrary to Gravina's belief, Martello considered the tragedies of the Greeks to have been recited, with only the chorus being sung, and he makes Aristotle confirm this opinion.[43] Consequently, the modern theatre's musical accompaniment was not a return to Greek models which, to Gravina, were an harmonious union of words and music. In the modern musical theatre, according to Martello's Aristotle, music is pre-eminent:

> [B]isogna supporre per fondamento che in questo vago spettacolo non dee negarsi la preminenza della musica. Ella è l'anima di un tale recitamento, e ad essa debbesi il principale riguardo di chi è chiamato a parte, o per poesia o per apparato, di simil componimento.[44]

In fact, Aristotle goes so far as to claim that in order to please, melodramma has no need of words and poetry, but can rely entirely on the melodious music and voices of the singers. This is a far cry from the claims of Gravina, Muratori and Zeno to the effect that the music should serve to clarify and intensify the meaning of the words sung. Here we see not only the importance that Martello placed on music in melodramma, but also his acknowledgement that music was all that mattered to the public, and that the voice was simply another instrument used by the musician to delight the ear. The fact that the voice sang words with meaning was no more than an incidental addition to the pleasure offered by the

musical performance.[45]

According to Martello, the main purpose of musical drama is to provide delight, hence his insistence on the pre-eminence of music which he regarded as an art invented for the pleasure and diversion of the spirit.[46] But musical drama also serves a practical social purpose. According to Martello's Aristotle:

> Questo spettacolo adunque è tale che solleva gli animi da tutte le cure, e gli assorbe in una spensierata quiete che di sé contenti li rende, di maniera che ritornano dagli uditi concenti e dalle vedute apparenze così ristorati di lena, che poi si trovano più forti e più vegeti a tutte le operazioni umane, e così tanto fisica quanto moralmente è utile alla repubblica non meno della satirica, della commedia e della tragedia.[47]

Thus, in Martello's opinion, melodramma achieves both ends of art--utility and pleasure--. Martello disagrees on this point with Muratori for whom musical drama achieved neither end, and with Gravina for whom it fulfilled only the purpose of imparting pleasure. The reason for this difference of opinion lies in the individual interpretation put on the concept of the useful function of art. For Muratori it is a moral function, and for Gravina didactic and civil. As we have seen, in an earlier dialogue on tragedy, Martello agreed with his contemporaries on the moral didactic purpose of tragedy. However, in dealing with melodramma (and thereby furnishing further proof of the difference between it and tragedy), he envisages another interpretation of the useful purpose of art: that of serving as a diversion, and hence as

a restoration of the spirit and energies of the public. In his intuition of catharsis as a social rather than a moral effect, Martello anticipates the Enlightenment, and in his insistence on the effect of catharsis on the sentiments rather than on the intellect, on its acting on the irrational and through the irrational, he anticipates the romantic conception of art.

To return to the question of the pre-eminence that Martello placed on music: while others noted and deplored the same pre-eminence in the contemporary theatre, Martello, as a pragmatist, presents it not only as a reality, but as a fact that must be accepted before any further discussion of melodramma can be possible. The pre-eminent rôle of music does not invalidate the notion that the music in melodramma should be an expression of the words sung. In fact, Aristotle claims that a composer who is master of his craft will endeavour to mould and adapt his music to the meaning of the words. It is, however, the musical score rather than the poetic text which must be coherent at all cost. Therefore the poetry must be simple enough to be comprehensible to an audience that only hears it sung, and to leave the composer free to ornament his music as he wishes. In this, Martello disagrees with his contemporaries and indeed the majority of later eighteenth-century critics of melodramma. According to Martello, it is quite obvious that in the union of words and music, music is mistress and poetry is her handmaid. In a tragedy or comedy, poetry holds the principal position, in

melodramma the lowest. In spoken drama it acts as mistress, in musical drama it ministers to the needs of music.[48]

Aristotle, however, questions whether the text of musical drama can properly be called "poetry", and whether the writers of such texts can in fact be called "poets":

> Non poeti dunque, ma piuttosto verseggiatori; ma nemmeno verseggiatori, perché poi vi ha ad esser la favola, che fa essere non so che di più che verseggiatore. Non dunque meri verseggiatori, non veri poeti, ma non saprei come dirli certi che siano più degli uni, e meno degli altri s'invitino a servire al bisogno del melodramma.[49]

Therefore, in Martello's opinion, the writer of musical texts is a hybrid poet, and one subject to all manner of restrictions. He must submit his art to the whims and approval of the composer, the impresario, the singers, the stage craftsmen, and the audience.[50] It is a point on which most of the critics of the time agree. Like Muratori and Gravina, Martello thinks it better that the composer and the poet be one and the same person, but he takes this idea a step further:

> E però vorrei mediocremente poeta il compositore, e questo sarebbe il meglio per l'opera, imperocché potrebbe egli ordirsi in mente, e tesser poi sulle carte, tutta la tela musicale dal principio alla fine del dramma.[51]

The phrase "sarebbe il meglio per l'opera" should be emphasized as another indication of the direction Martello is taking. He is again viewing the new work uniting words and music as a form which must be considered on its own grounds,

not as tragedy. Therefore, while others propose for melodramma an author who is both a great musician and a great poet, so as to create tragedy that is a great work of art, Martello considers what is best for a form which is clearly not tragedy. In this case, he insists that the poet must be mediocre. For the success of the music the poet must be undistinguished, since in his view, great poetry expressing great sentiments would not permit the composer the freedom to embroider the music, nor would it be simple enough to be readily understood by the audience. Should the composer who is also a mediocre poet not exist, then it would be useful if the librettist [poetastro verseggiatore] had some knowledge of music so as to make his verses conform as closely as possible to the ideas of the composer.[52] We have here a complete reversal of the concept generally held by the majority of critics of melodramma in the eighteenth century. In either case, Martello insists that the poet must be mediocre. This notion is in marked contrast with Zeno's ideal in which, as we shall see, any reform in melodramma can only be brought about by the improvement of the quality of the poetic text.

The first part of the dialogue on melodramma deals with the form as it existed at the time. Both Martello and Aristotle agree that as an artistic form it is imperfect. However, Aristotle admits that in a few cases a liberal prince has succeeded in having acceptable melodrammi performed before the nobility. The pragmatic Martello then

asks for a body of rules to solve the problems besetting the musical theatre and to serve as a guide towards the composition of a work that would satisfy literati.[53] As a poet, Martello thus turns to the consideration of a possible improvement. He seeks a libretto that is acceptable when read as well as when performed, an ideal Zeno also sought. Aristotle agrees to attempt to put some order into a work that is disorderly precisely because it is intended to please the public [che per piacere vuol essere sregolato]. But to be able to do so, he adds, he must forget that he is a philosopher, and formulate precepts based on his own observations and experience, rather than on pure reason:

> Giacché tu vuoi ch'io ti dia qualche regola per un componimento, che per piacere vuol essere sregolato, te ne dirò qulalcheduna, piuttosto fondata sull'osservazione e sulla sperienza che sulla ragione, e mescolerò quanto posso per appagarti le incumbenze del corago, del compositore di musica, del musico e del poeta, scordandomi quasi di essere filosofo.[54]

Aristotle's most important precept is that melodramma cannot be expected to follow the rules of tragedy, for it is subject to so many external influences which make of it a different form. For the first time therefore we see postulated as a precept the division of the musical drama into three acts rather than five in order to make it quite clear that it is a melodramma and not a tragedy:

> L'uso comanda che il tuo melodramma sia diviso in tre atti, perché, se in cinque lo partirai, potresti far credere di voler esporre al popolo una tragedia, e ti faresti debitor follemente di quelle regole che in nessuna maniera potresti poi osservare.[55]

The statement that melodramma should not be dependent on the precepts of tragedy spares Martello and Aristotle the necessity of having to discuss the question of the three unities. However, earlier in their discussion of tragedy itself, Martello had already made his opinions on this issue quite clear, claiming that the only unity that is important is the unity of action, the other two having been formulated simply for the convenience of the ancient stage.[56] We may observe at this point the acuteness shown by Martello in his understanding of the text of the Poetics on the question of the unities (where in fact the only unity emphasized and required as essential is the unity of action). This untraditional interpretation, perfectly justifiable in the light of the findings of modern classical philology is, however, of primary importance in establishing Martello as one of the forerunners of pre-romantic sensitivity.[57]

Making a further distinction between tragedy and melodramma, Aristotle advises that the plots be taken from fables (that is, from literary and mythological sources) rather than from history,

> avvisandosi essere, come in fatti si è troppa crudeltà il deformare sfacciatamente la verità de'successi scritti da Livio, da Giustino, da Salustio e da qualunque più antico e venerato scrittore, lo che saria inevitabile per introdurvi le cose che vuole il compositore, che vogliono i cantori, le cantatrici, che vuole l'architetto, il macchinista, il pittore, e sin l'impresario.

He thus justifies the deformation of fables in order to suit the whims of the many collaborators in the performance of

melodramma. The librettist may even lay aside the ancient fables, for he is quite capable of inventing new situations for his public forever thirsting for novelty and greater spectacle:

> [I]n ogni caso il verseggiatore ha tutta la facoltà che avevano i nostri antenati di dar ad intendere delle frottole, e di aggiungere bugie italiane alle greche.[58]

Therefore, a melodramma should never begin simply with a dialogue. At the very least, asserts Aristotle in a humorous vein, the curtain should rise on the landing of a ship, a storm, a wrestling spectacle, so that the public will be astonished and excited, and will not regret the money spent in the purchase of a ticket for enjoyment's sake ["e benedicono quell'argento che hanno speso all porta per sollazzarsi"].[59]

The problem of spectacle brings Aristotle to a discussion of verisimilitude. While for Muratori and Zeno verisimilitude is virtually a sacrosanct precept of composition, Aristotle calmly advises that in melodramma it is of lesser importance than the marvellous. As long as the outcome is probable, then all manner of improbabilities may be used to lead up to it, and the public will marvel and be satisfied:

> [M]esso da parte il severo verisimile della greca, franzese, e, diciam anche, italiana tragedia, appligliati pur con franchezza all'intrecciamento igegnoso degli Spagnuoli. Io non dico che tu debba ommettere affatto il verisimile negli accidenti, ma questo diletto tuo verisimile non ti sia tanto caro che più non sialo il mirabile. Inverisimili ancora, se vuoi, sieno i mezzi dell'avvenimento, ma posti que'mezzi, l'avvenimento

> poi sia verisimile, e così conseguirai la maraviglia e l'applauso degli ascoltanti.[60]

Martello's attitude closely mirrors the freedom advocated at the beginning of the seventeenth century by critics like Battista Guarini, and later to be expanded during the age of Romanticism. At the same time, the passage cited above is further proof that Martello considered melodramma and tragedy as separate entities, for in dealing with tragedy he preferred the natural and realistic in language and treatment.[61] Indeed, the burden of his lengthy letter to Muratori on 9 August 1710 is a defence of his non-musical tragedies Perselide and Ifigenia in Tauri on the basis of their verisimilitude.[62]

Since Aristotle makes of the marvellous a more important element in melodramma than the verisimilar, it follows that the practice, condemned by Muratori, of basing the play on "recognition" becomes acceptable. Aristotle further suggests that the drama should be full of the complicated intrigues of the Spanish stage. He admonishes, however, that the vicissitudes [peripezie] should be performed on the stage, rather than related by one of the actors and left to the imagination of the public, because whatever strikes the senses is more pleasing to the public who attend the theatre to see rather than to think.[63] Furthermore, in order to please the audience, the ending of the musical drama should always be happy. Even though evil should be punished in order to serve the good of the republic, the punishment should never be death, since melodramma exists to divert the spectators, not to make

them sad.[64] Thus, by pointing to the social function of melodramma, Martello justifies the happy ending [lieto fine] which by 1715 was in general use, although still a point of controversy in critical discussions.

Further evidence of Martello's differentiation between melodramma and tragedy can be found in his discussion of love as a tragic theme. Martello's sensibility towards love as a topic of poetry leads him to make the following statement to Aristotle while discussing tragedy:

> Ma pure . . . non può negarsi che aride come (perdona al vero) le vostre sarebbero le nostre tragedie, senza che questa bella passione le rinverdisse.[65]

Nevertheless, Martello was quite aware of the disapproval expressed by Italian critics towards the theme of love in tragedy, and consequently his Aristotle issues a warning in the third dialogue against immoderate use of the theme in tragic works. In melodramma, however, Aristotle recommends that love be the main passion represented, as it is the one most common to all men. This could be seen as another prelude to the pre-romantic tendency towards sentimentality, as exemplified in English by Richardson's Pamela, by the French comédie larmoyante, and by some of the Italian comedies of Goldoni, such as his Buona figliuola. Aristotle goes on to justify the use of the theme in melodramma by stating that if love is portrayed with good taste, then it will serve a social purpose as well:

> [L]'amorosa passione di tutte le altre trionfi; e le

> altre non servano che a far spiccar questa, la quale, essendo la più comune a tutti gli uomini, si vede rappresentata più volentieri. Ben è però vero che per amore della repubblica ti dee piacer l'onestà: con questa l'affetto amoroso è utilissimo a'cittadini, invitandogli a'legittimi accoppiamenti, da'quali nasce il bene del crescer popolo, che è l'anima delle cittadi.[66]

While Muratori placed an Aristotelian stress on tragedy as the representation of action, Martello on the contrary looks to a portrayal of character. In the first dialogue Aristotle states:

> Dissi che senza questa agnizione può sussistere la tragedia, ma ti confido due sorti di agnizioni, senza una almen delle quali il tuo dramma non riporterà mai applauso: l'una è fisica, e quella te la perdono; l'altra è morale, e questa non è da trascurarsi per verun conto. Nasce questa dallo scoprimento d'una passione in un animo opposta a quella che dianzi appariva.[67]

Although literal "recognitions" of the kind condemned by Muratori are allowed by Martello, he claims that no drama is possible without spiritual "recognition", that is, changes of belief or character during the course of the action. This, to Martello, is the real intrigue, rather than the complicated plots that filled the drama of his day. It is an intuition of considerable importance.[68] Yet in dealing with melodramma, Martello's Aristotle speaks only of the physical intrigues, ironically condoning them all, including the deus ex machina, for their marvellous qualities.

In examining the literary style suitable for the musical drama, Aristotle suggests the moderate and graceful [il

moderato e venusto] rather than the serious and grandiloquent [il grave e magnifico] which is more suited to tragedy. This foreshadows the moderate, graceful style that Metastasio was later to bring to perfection. Aristotle also advises, somewhat ironically, that use be made of charming comparisons and similes:

> Ti raccomando nelle arie qualche comparazione di farfalletta, di augelletto o di ruscelletto; queste son tutte cose che guidano l'idea in non so che di ridente, che la ricrea, e siccome sono venusti questi obbietti così il son le parole che li rammentano e li dipingono alla fantasia; ed il compositor della musica sempre vi si spazia con avvenenza di note.[69]

It is these very comparisons and similes that Marcello and Metastasio later ridicule, though Metastasio himself makes use of them in his serious dramatic works.

Martello and Aristotle then move on to a discussion of metre. One reason for Martello's acceptance of melodramma may lie in his deep interest in the musicality of the language, as can be seen for instance in his dialogue Il vero parigino italiano.[70] Martello is the first critic of melodramma to consider the question of the metre suitable for musical drama as distinct from tragedy or comedy. His tragic verso martelliano is not mentioned even as a possibility.

Aristotle concludes his "poetics" of melodramma by asserting:

> La professione del compor melodrammi, Martello mio, è una scuola per voi di morale che più di ogni altra insegna a'poeti il vincer se stessi, rinunciando al proprio desiderio. . . . Ché se poi l'impresario, il quale dee pagarti la tua fatica (non arrossire, ché

> questa è l'unica sorta di poesia destinata a servir per mercede), vorrà che tu le carichi [le arie], e tu le carica, e dona al cielo l'esercizio della tua eroica pazienza in isconto o dell'aver violato qualche tempio o di altro errore per te commesso.[71]

Martello replies in dismay that it seems easier to write a good tragedy than the imperfect tragedy which is melodramma. Aristotle concurs, but adds that its imperfection as a literary form does not justify its suppression from the stage:

> Pare e te che con tutte le cautele che io ti ho prescritte, e che secondo la ragione melodrammatica paiono necessarie, sia mai stato fatto, o possa farsi mai melodramma? E pure si dovran per questo chiudere i teatri che a simili rappresentazioni son destinati?[72]

For melodramma fulfils a useful function: it benefits society. Thus Martello sees the purpose of opera in terms of the thought of the Enlightenment and the new sociological orientation of eighteenth-century culture. Martello's acceptance of melodramma as a theatrical form may also stem from his ingrained desire to defend the rights of the imagination against the rationality of Cartesianism. This attitude is evident in one of the witty comparisons of the rhetorics of two cultures, between French rationalism and Italian appeal to the senses, in the dialogue Il vero parigino italiano:

> Ma i vostri Franzesi, che per lo più dalla situazione gramaticale delle parole non si dipartono, sono, anzi che no, dialettici, e non hanno questa, che abbiamo noi, signoria sulle passioni degli uditori. Sono eglino perciò in necessità di convincere gl'intelletti colle ragioni; laonde per voi si mostra la nuda capezza al cavallo, che ne rifugge, o non l'accetta se non a forza di battiture e di minacce e di grida e di paura del nerbo che vede alzar dal cozzone; ma per noi gli si presenta la briglia, non

> come un freno, ma come un ornamento, di cui sendo vago quell'ambizioso animale, si rallegra della non conosciuta sua schiavitudine, e, mansueto, ubbidisce.[73]

Finally, in the fifth dialogue of Della tragedia antica e moderna, Aristotle replies to Martello's condemnation of the taste of the Italians, and of others who enjoy opera, with the counter-condemnation of all those who consider melodramma under the erroneous assumption that poetry is mistress in its association with music:

> E quando per la poesia qui servile vuoi condannare l'affascinato gusto delle nazioni, temerariamente favelli. Una cosa è da condannarsi, ed è il tuo giudicio, e di tutti quelli che intervengono al melodramma con l'erronea presunzione che la poesia faccia in esso la prima figura.[74]

The fifth dialogue reiterates Martello's important and fresh assertion of the primacy of music over poetry in melodramma. To be successful, a drama for music must have a mediocre poetic text. However, in spite of its mediocrity, the poetic text can be pleasing, if only poetry were accepted for what it is in melodramma, namely, the servant of music. Therefore, those critics are mistaken who come to the musical drama with the preconceived idea that the rôle of poetry should be either superior or equal to the rôle played by the music. Only when the subservience of poetry to the preeminence of music is accepted will the true rôle of poetry be recognized, thus allowing it to be judged in true perspective. Then, and only then, will it be appreciated for what

it accomplishes within its limited scope, just as colour is appreciated and found pleasing even though it has essence only when it is reflected from tangible objects. Thus the poetic text of a melodramma has essence only when it is presented with its musical accompaniment:

> [I]l melodramma è . . . un'imperfetta tragedia che non può vivere con applauso fuor delle note e del canto.[75]

One cannot overemphasize the significance of these words. According to Martello, melodramma is an imperfect imitation of good tragedy that cannot exist successfully outside the bounds of music and song. And since, for him, tragedy as a genre is recited without continuous musical accompaniment, melodramma cannot be perfect tragedy. While Martello may consider the musical drama from the poet's point of view, he nevertheless judges it to be inseparable from its musical score. Therefore, as his Aristotle exhorts, the libretto should not be published as a poetic text apart from its musical accompaniment:

> [M]erita, finalmente, che tu non faccia comparire nell'impressione del tuo teatro la poesia melodrammatica, perchè faresti un'ingiustizia alla musica, di cui è mera ausiliaria, con lo scompagnarla da lei, e riporteresti il gastigo dell'ingiustizia nell'esser deriso da'leggitori.[76]

This is undoubtedly the reason why Martello does not include his libretti in the editions of his theatrical works.[77] Martello reached his conclusion (which was to become a cornerstone of the romantic attitude to opera) on the indi-

visibility of libretto and score by 1715. The century had nearly ended before librettists heeded his exhortations; Zeno, Metastasio and Calzabigi all had their libretti published separately as dramatic works.

Regarding the musical theatre as he did, it is hardly surprising that Martello's career as a librettist was extremely short. Martello's aim was to make a valid contribution to the field in which contemporary Italy was so inferior to France, namely, the theatre. It was quite clear to him that the musical theatre, with its necessarily mediocre poetry, was not likely to bring to either poet or Italy much literary glory, so he turned his attention to what he considered the highest genre of dramatic art: spoken tragedy. With this end in mind he wrote several tragedies that he considered to be of high quality, certainly at least equal to those of Greece and France.[78] Finally, in keeping with the particular cultural atmosphere in which he lived, he wrote a treatise on tragedy which he hoped would be of service and value to contemporary dramatists. Intended to be a novel contribution to the field of literary criticism, it was impossible to omit from it a discussion of the musical theatre which was considered as tragedy, however imperfect, by Martello's contemporaries. Martello, having a greater interest in the theatre than his predecessors, and a greater practical knowledge of it as a result of his experience as a dramatist, produced what was the most complete dissertation of his time on melodramma. In view of this, we cannot accept

Giazotto's inclusion of Martello in his remark that Muratori, Crescimbeni, Gravina, Maffei, Martello, etc., by praising and even exalting an individual [Zeno], do not deem melodramma worthy of their critical consent.[79] However, it is true that Martello did not judge the libretto to be a literary work of art. It is also true that his advice to librettists is down-to-earth: to do the best possible under the circumstances, adjusting to their position as servants to the composer and all the participants in the performance.

Martello viewed melodramma as a hybrid art-form, an inseparable union of music and poetry which was in consequence a separate entity from the non-musical tragedy. Although he does not go so far as to classify it as a different genre, he certainly implies it, and he is the first of the eighteenth-century critics to do so.

It may be legitimate to note here that, despite the remarkable contributions provided by Hannibal S. Noce to pave the way to a sounder critical exploration of the intellectual world of Pier Jacopo Martello, the critical literature on the Bolognese writer is rather limited in quantity and rather generic in quality. The attempts made by Martello to define opera as an autonomous work of art, to be judged as a whole, regardless of the specific nature of its heterogenous components, are very important in the history of Italian literary criticism. Because of this, the specific nature of these attempts ought to be emphasized more than has been the case until now. Perhaps one of the reasons which led critics (and

among them even outstanding figures like Walter Binni) to overlook, to a certain extent, the pages of Martello's Della tragedia antica e moderna in which the author discusses problems related to opera, may be found in the persisting influence of certain principles codified in Croce's system of aesthetics. Croce was quite reluctant to consider as complete and perfect art-forms those resting, or depending, upon the harmonious combination of elements of a different nature. More specifically, Croce's reservations about the theatrical arts are clearly indicated by his negative approach to the commedia dell'arte, or even more explicitly at the metaphysical level by his notes on the compounded and contrasting attitude of poets and literati towards the theatre.[80] Martello's contributions to the definition of opera as an autonomous and independent art-form, intelligible as such without reference to tragedy, are outstanding and deserve attention. Martello tried to do for opera what Guarini did for tragicomedy at the end of the sixteenth century and at the beginning of the seventeenth. Guarini's treatises in defence of his Pastor Fido, and his central contributions to the polemic that originated from that work, are in substance a claim to be free from any rigid dependence on Aristotle's Poetics. They constitute an assertion of the right of the "moderns" to express their artistic world without any servile submissions to the "authorities", and thus they became a very important chapter of that battle between the ancients and the moderns which was fought in Italian literature before--and

for a longer time--than in any other European literature. Guarini's principles may be considered as a prelude to the freedom from the "authorities" as expressed by the "libertine" writers of the Baroque period. Perhaps it is much too bold to consider Martello's ideas on opera as a prelude to the romantic revolutions in the field of dramatic literature, especially if we take into account the predominantly classical structure of his published tragedies. Nevertheless, those ideas ought to be taken into consideration as we examine the cultural atmosphere in which the pre-romantic spirit in general has its first manifestations.

Modern scholarship has rightly recognized Martello as the first to accept the pre-eminence of music in opera, and the first to insist on the futility of considering as equal the rôles of music and poetry. It has also pointed to Martello as the first to defend melodramma against compliance with Aristotelian rules.[81] Nevertheless, these studies reveal a rather superficial reading of the fifth dialogue of Della tragedia antica e moderna that fails to show the truly advanced position adopted by Martello, his break from the conservative attitude of his contemporaries, and his realization that the seventeenth century had created a theatrical vehicle that was not in fact a re-creation of the tragedy of the ancients, but an artistic form of its own.

Freeman claims that Martello's suggestions for solving the practical problems which faced the eighteenth-century musical theatre seem to have been followed by many librettists

of the period, and that his ideas on dramaturgical development, placement of arias and their distribution among players became conventions. He further claims that Martello's list of praiseworthy librettists influenced Quadrio's list, and that the fifth dialogue provided at least part of the inspiration for Marcello's Teatro alla Moda.[82] There can be little doubt that Martello's treatise was read and commented by his contemporaries. Quadrio and Marcello were not the only writers affected by it.[83] There are echoes of the treatise in the dissertation on musical drama by the Abbé Du Bos, and in Francesco Algarotti. Martello was acquainted with many literary figures of the time; he knew Crescimbeni from his participation at the Arcadian Academy in Rome;[84] he maintained an amicable feud with Gravina over the question of the ideal of tragedy and the verso martelliano,[85] the latter causing a bitter polemic with Maffei.[86] Martello sent his works to Maffei and Zeno and was especially desirous of their favourable reviews in the prestigious Giornale de'letterati d'Italia.[87] One of his intimate friends and collaborators was Eustachio Manfredi, an admirer of French drama, whose Dafni Martello had praised, as did Quadrio. It was Manfredi, among others, to whom Napoli Signorelli had attributed the first attempts at reforming melodramma.[88] Martello's warm relationship with Muratori is well-documented by their epistolary exchanges.[89] Yet it is ironic that while the minor points of his treatise, such as the list of praiseworthy librettists and minor dramaturgical conventions, were taken

from Della tragedia antica e moderna by librettists and critics, Martello's major insights into the nature of melodramma were overlooked. While librettists in practice gave in to the subservience of poetry to music, Zeno still aspired to making of the libretto a literary work in itself, Metastasio based his entire poetics on the concept of the subservience of music to words, Benedetto Marcello wrote music according to the same principle, and such critics as Maffei, Algarotti and Bettinelli continued to lament the hybrid and unequal union of music and poetry.[90]

Benedetto Marcello

Echoes of Martello's witty dialogue on opera are heard in a more popular form in a little satirical book entitled Il Teatro alla Moda.[1] Although this work was issued anonymously, bearing no date or place of publication, scholars now consider that it was published in Venice in 1720, and the author has been positively identified as the Venetian patrician Benedetto Marcello.[2] At the end of the second decade of the eighteenth century Venice was an important centre of operatic activity. In the seventeenth century, eighteen theatres had been built in the city centre. Sixteen of them presented melodrammi, at times as many as eight running concurrently. In the first twenty-three years of the eighteenth century, about two hundred operas--the work of some seventy different librettists--were performed in Venice.[3]

Marcello possessed both a thorough training in musical composition and an excellent education.[4] He had literary aspirations and was a member of the Arcadian Academy.[5] As a young man, he had frequented the theatrical circles of Venice. Such opera composers as Hasse, Jommelli, Porpora, Traetta, and later Galuppi gathered at his home. He was responsible for the training of "La Faustina", one of the most famous sopranos of the time. Moreover, Marcello was both a librettist and composer, and was thus familiar with the practical aspects of the musical theatre, as well as its

professional rivalries and personal intrigues.[6] Il Teatro gives a comprehensive picture of the musical theatre of the day and in fact deals exclusively with melodramma. This strongly suggests that musical drama was regarded as the fashionable theatre of the day, corroborating the claims of contemporary critics that other forms of theatre, such as tragedy, had been overshadowed in public favour by dramma in musica. In 1783 Arteaga referred those readers who wished to know the state of Italian theatre to Marcello's satire.[7] This reference is cited by modern scholars as proof that Il Teatro alla Moda was not an unjust representation of reality.[8] It is not necessary, however, to search for such proof in a work written some sixty years after the publication of Il Teatro alla Moda; until now, scholars have universally overlooked the fact that in 1721 virtually the same assurance was given by Apostolo Zeno, the foremost librettist of the time, who calls Il Teatro alla Moda "a most delicate satire" [una satira gentilissima], while in the same breath attacking a critical work by Lenfant as being full of errors, an accusation that he does not level at Marcello's.[9] Il Teatro alla Moda can be taken therefore as a valuable account of the theatrical and social mores of the period, the picture which emerges being that of an essentially degenerate spectacle in which all interests are served save those of art.

Il Teatro alla Moda purports to be a manual of instructions, each section of which is addressed to the various

individuals connected with the composition, production and performance of musical drama. The instructions take the form of precepts which, if followed, would lead to the creation of the type of melodramma considered by Marcello to be the accepted vogue of the period. The work falls within the tradition of didactic literature to which belong such treatises as Il Teatro dei vari e diversi cervelli mondani of Tommaso Garzoni.[10] In Il Teatro alla Moda the precepts are given ironically "in reverse" in the form of a parody, thus standing the rule-book on its head. The technique had already been used by Martello, at a far more witty level, when in his Segretario Cliternate, he ironically offers precepts to an aspiring poet.[11] Both works rely on the presupposition that the reader is endowed with the common-sense and good taste to allow him to discern the ludicrous nature of the principles expounded. By means of ironic precepts, therefore, both Martello and Marcello ridicule respectively, the contemporary poet and the contemporary musical theatre.

In Il Teatro alla Moda Marcello comes to no specific conclusions. As a result, the question of his precise attitude towards opera has led to differences of opinion among scholars who have dealt with the problem. On the one hand are those who believe that Marcello is making an outright repudiation of the musical drama.[12] On the other are those who see in the detailed picture which Il Teatro gives an implied aesthetic and ethical justification of the existence of melodramma,[13] and an implicit demand for reform based on

the implied ideal of melodramma as being the opposite of what would result if the precepts were followed literally.[14] However, both these critical attitudes are founded on the same premise, namely that Il Teatro alla Moda operates on the principle of "precepts in reverse" [consigli a rovescio], and this principle must be kept constantly in mind during any discussion of the work. In fact, throughout the satire, Marcello implies as the ideal the very opposite of whatever his precepts states.

Marcello's precepts encompass all facets of melodramma. Muratori and Martello take into consideration influences other than literary and musical in the production and performance of the melodramma, but Marcello is the first to deal systematically with every aspect of the performance, from the poet and composer, through the impresarios, singers, patrons and mothers of the female singers, the musicians, stage-designers, prompters, copyists, etc., for each in his own way contributes, in Marcello's view, to the success or failure of a performance. More than Martello, Marcello looks at melodramma as a living entity in all its parts, rather than as an artistic form posing theoretical problems to be studied at the metaphysical level. In his good-humoured satire, Marcello even takes into consideration the ticket sellers and concessionaires (coffee vendors and the like). For the purpose of the present study, however, we shall limit our attention to Marcello's attitude towards melodramma as a literary genre, the relation between poetry and music, and the libret-

tist as a poet.

In the querelle des anciens et des modernes, Marcello was undoubtedly on the side of the ancients. His admiration for them is abundantly clear not only in the many references to classical writers in his works, but also in the unflattering remarks in Il Teatro alla Moda directed towards the modern artists ("il Maestro moderno", "il Poeta moderno", "la Virtuosa moderna") responsible for the current degeneration of the theatre. He satirizes their deliberate attempts to differ from the artists of antiquity:

> Sarà utilissima cosa al Poeta moderno di fare una Protesta a'Lettori ch'ha composta l'Opera negl'anni più giovanili, e se potesse aggiungervi d'aver ciò fatto in poche giornate (benchè gli avesse lavorato intorno più anni) ciò appunto sarebbe da buon moderno, mostrando scostarsi affatto dall'antico precetto: Nonumque prematur in annum, etc. etc.[15]

His respect for antiquity is illustrated by the Estro poetico-armonico, Marcello's most famous musical work which earned for him high praise from contemporaries such as Telemann and Johann Matheson.[16] In the Estro, Marcello set to music the Italian translation of the Psalms made by his friend Girolamo Ascanio Giustiniani. However, before embarking on the project, Marcello undertook a series of investigations among his Jewish acquaintances in order to discover the ancient intonation of the original Psalms.[17] In his preface to the work, Marcello makes frequent reference to such classical authors as Plato, Aristotle and Cicero.

Yet, while Marcello looked back to the example of the

ancients, he was aware that times and public taste had changed. The ancients should indeed be studied, but they should not be copied in a servile manner. Concessions must be made to a different age and different circumstances.[18] Because of this attitude, Marcello does not question the validity of melodramma as an artistic form, nor does he find it necessary to attempt a theoretical justification. It is true that the first set of precepts contained in his Teatro alla Moda is addressed to the Poets of the musical theatre. This would seem to be in accord with the critical attitude of the time which considered melodramma as tragedy (that is, a literary form) accompanied by music. However, contemporaries classified melodramma under the literary genre of tragedy, and insisted that it be subject to its rules and conventions. Marcello, on the other hand, studies all aspects of melodramma, regarding it as a form made up of the close interaction of various components, thereby possessing its own exigencies which make it substantially different from spoken tragedy. Furthermore, although he does not deal directly with the problem of genres, Marcello refers to melodramma not as tragedia, but simply as opera. He thereby emphasizes its separate identity.

However, Marcello differs from Martello in his concept of this separate identity. Both critics base their remarks on the classical concept of the organic unity of a work of art. But while Martello insisted on the importance of the coherence of the musical score, Marcello is closer to such

contemporary critics as Muratori and Gravina in insisting that the organic unity of the melodramma depend on the internal coherence of the libretto as a literary work, and on the intimate connection between the text and the music. As a result, among his cardinal requirements for the form, is an insistence on verisimilitude and the imitation of nature. This is made quite clear by his satirical precepts portraying the contemporary drama as a conglomeration of improbabilities that serve to destroy the integrity of the representation. Thus, he writes, the assignment of rôles is such that no attention is paid to nature, so that a "son" will be portrayed by a singer who is evidently some twenty years his "mother's" senior. Similarly, the costumes bear little relation to reality, and a supposed slave will appear in bejewelled splendour.[19] The singers do everything in their power to destroy the illusion that they should be creating on stage:

> Sino che qualche Personaggio recita seco o canta l'Arietta, saluterà la VIRTUOSA moderna (come si è detto di sopra al MUSICO) le Maschere ne'Palchetti, sorridendo col Maestro di Capella, co'Suonatori, Comparse, Suggeritori, etc., ponendosi dopo il Ventaglio al Viso, perchè si sappia dal popolo esser ella la Sign. GIANDUSSA PELATUTTI, non già l'Imperatrice FILASTROCCA che rappresenta, il di cui carattere maestoso potrà poi conservarlo fuor del Teatro.[20]

It seems therefore that all manner of improbabilities are committed to assure the public that the drama is nothing more than make-believe:

> Se si trovassero in una Prigione Marito e Moglie, e che l'uno andasse a morire, dovrà indispensabilmente restar l'altro per cantar un'Arietta, la quale dovrà essere d'allegre parole per sollevar la mestizia del Popolo, e per fargli comprendere che le Cose tutte sono da scherzo.[21]

By satirizing these improbabilities, Marcello reveals his pro-classical and anti-baroque position. He also ridicules the tendency to base a play on implausible recognition scenes, advising that the opera end

> con le solite Nozze o scoprimenti di Personaggi per mezzo di Risposte d'Oracoli, di Stelle in petto, di Bende, di Nèi sul ginocchio, sulla Lingua, Orecchie, etc. etc.[22]

He also satirizes the introduction of novelty and spectacle for their own sake.[23]

The early eighteenth-century critics who dealt with melodramma maintained that art had a dual function to fulfil, and their judgement of musical drama proceeds from this point of view. Although Marcello does not discuss the dual purpose of theatre in Il Teatro alla Moda, it is evident in the Estro poetico-armonico that he attributes to vocal music the power of fulfilling both functions, for vocal music aims to gratify the ear, move the heart, and restore the spirit of the listener. He attributes to music the ability to act as venerable and majestic guide to philosophical speculation, but he considers that contemporary music has failed to fulfil this high function. Owing to the vain and worthless poetry to which music is subject, it can only excite soft and voluptuous passions:

> Conciossiachè le per lo più vane poesie alle quali ne'tempi nostri ella [la musica] è costretta di soggiacere, in luogo di somministrarle modo di comparire venerabile e maestosa guida alle filosofiche speculazioni, la conducono ad una affatto varia comparsa, poco o nulla degna d'estimazione, (benchè certuni se ne compiacciono) ed atta piuttosto ad eccitare passioni molli, e voluttuose (e ciò almeno avvenisse nel solo teatro, non che talora nella Chiesa santa di Dio).[24]

In documenting the state of the contemporary melodramma, Marcello makes it quite clear that the ideals of collaboration between music and poetry sought after by the early eighteenth-century reformers of Italian culture had not been achieved. The poet and the composer worked at odds with one another, each interested only in personal gain, in having their particular art outshine the other. To this end, the poet visits the composer and charges him to compose only brief musical passages in the arias so that the poetry may shine.[25] And to the same end,

> avverta il Maestro moderno se dasse [sic] lezzione a qualche VIRTUOSA dell'Opera, d'incaricarla a pronunciar male, e, per tal effetto, insegnarle gran quantità di Spezzature e di Passi, perchè non s'intenda veruna parola e in tal maniera comparisca e sia meglio intesa la Musica.[26]

In the unity of the musical drama, Marcello regarded the poetic text as the dominant element. He considered that all other elements should work in close collaboration in order to make the story represented on stage comprehensible and coherent. In fact, however, the various artists connected with the performance attached little importance to the text of the work. The poet himself is not excluded from this

accusation, for he composes the libretto piecemeal, without formulating an overall plan of the action to be portrayed:

> Scriverà tutta l'Opera senza formalizarsi Azzione veruna della medesima, bensì componendola verso per verso, acciocchè non intendendosi mai l'Intreccio dal Popolo, stia questi con curiosità sino al fine.[27]

He writes the words to arias that bear no relationship whatsoever to the recitative:

> L'Ariette non dovranno aver relazione veruna al Recitativo, -ma convien fare il possibile d'introdurre nelle medesime per lo più farfalletta, mossolino, rossignuolo, quagliotto, navicella, copanetto, gelsomino, violazotta, cavo rame, pignatella, tigre, leone, balena, gambaretto, dindiotto, capon freddo, etc. etc. etc., imperciocché in tal maniera il Poeta si fa conoscere buon Filosofo distinguendo co'paragoni le proprietà degli Animali, delle Piante, de'Fiori, etc.[28]

The composer then writes music without paying the slightest attention to the specific nature of the poetical context:

> Dividerà parimenti il Maestro moderno il sentimento o significato delle parole, particolarmente nell'Arie, facendo cantare al MUSICO il primo verso (benché da sé solo nulla significhi) e poi introducendo un lungo Ritornello di Violini, Violette, etc. etc.[29]

The performers sing or act without having any comprehension of the story they are to represent. The prima donna plays her part on stage taking care not to trouble herself about the meaning of the words.[30] The musician in the orchestra never glances at his score. His reading capabilities are of no consequence, since he plays his instrument neither in accord with the notes of the score nor with the words sung by the singers.[31] His music will thus fail to convey meaning

to the audience. It is quite apparent, therefore, that without the collaboration of all concerned in the performance of the poetry and the music, it is impossible to maintain any semblance of artistic integrity within the melodramma, and the organic unity of the theatrical form is thereby destroyed.

In Il Teatro alla Moda Marcello insists constantly on the importance of this principle of association between poetry and music by satirizing the modern theatre's total disregard of it.[32] A similar insistence on this principle appears again and again in Marcello's other works, both musical and literary. In the preface to the first volume of the Estro poetico-armonico, Marcello writes obviously as a serious scholar expounding on vocal music, both as he believed it to have been practised in antiquity, and as it was performed in his own day. He asserts that the significance of the words and their sentiments is of prime importance:

> Convien però dire che i loro canti, voci, e stromenti non confondessero le parole e non contaminassero il senso. Conciossiachè se alcune volte eziándio per essi cantavasi in numeroso Coro ed in consonanza, ogni parola nello stesso punto si pronunciava, nè si udivano soverchie o confuse repliche ne'vari passaggi.[33]

The music therefore must reflect the passions and the sentiments expressed by the words.[34] This principle reappears in an interesting passage of the "Lettera famigliare d'un Accademico Filarmonico ed Arcade" generally attributed to Marcello:

> La Musica mai produrrà nell'animo nostro effetto

> veruno di passione, come anticamenti faceva, quando dal compositore di essa non saranno bene intese le proprietà dei sentimenti ed il significato delle espressioni.[35]

It is reiterated in the remarks of the author on the two madrigals on castrati (for which Marcello composed both the words and the music). Here Marcello strikes out against the male sopranos' florid manner of singing and their lack of comprehension of the text:

> Cominciano però in Tuono allegro, e tempo vivace, benchè la materia sia grave e seria, per significare che cantano ogni cosa scherzando, nè punto s'internano nel sentimento delle parole, supponendosi similmente composta a loro genio la musica del Madrigale.[36]

The sonnets Marcello wrote on Benedetto Pasqualigo's libretto Ifigenia in Tauride criticize its lack of coherence.[37] The prologue and satirical sonnet on Pasqualigo's reworking of Guarini's Pastor Fido for the operatic stage also insist on the lack of faithfulness to the text,[38] and Marcello's musical compositions such as Arianna, Gioàz, Timoteo, and Calisto in orsa exemplify, like the Estro poetico-armonico, a constant search for the closest possible rapport between music and poetry.[39]

Marcello agrees with Muratori and Martello in classifying the librettist as a hybrid poet, and one who cannot be faithful to his Muse because of the demands placed upon him by the other elements in melodramma. The solution is that found in the ideal of ancient Greek drama, namely, that the playwright be at once both poet and musician. Yet, in

the eighteenth-century musical theatre as characterized in Il Teatro alla Moda, melodramma is further fragmented by the fact that the composer is not acquainted with the poetic art:

> Passando poi a discorrere sopra il Teatro, non s'intenderà il moderno Maestro di Musica punto di Poesia; non distinguerà il senso dell'Orazione: non le Sillabe lunghe o brevi, non le Forze di Scena, etc.[40]

And the modern poet has no knowledge of music:

> Avverta il buon Poeta moderno di non intendersi punto di Musica, imperciocché tale intelligenza era propria degli Antichi Poeti secondo Strabone, Plinio, Plutarco, etc., li quali non separarono il Poeta dal Musico, né'l Musico dal Poeta, come furono Anfione, Filamone, Demodoco, Terprando, etc. etc. etc.[41]

Marcello presents no specific discussion of the quality of the poetry which is most suited to melodramma.[42]

Like many of his fellows, Marcello blamed popular taste for the inartistic qualities of melodramma. Indeed, the demands of the public had become the accepted excuse offered by librettists, including Zeno, for the imperfections of the form. In Il Teatro alla Moda Marcello places the same excuse in the mouth of the modern composer:

> Nel resto aggiongerà il Maestro di Capella moderno, ch'egli compone cose di poco studio e con moltissimi errori per soddisfare all'Udienza, condannando in tal forma il gusto dell'Uditorio.[43]

Andrea Della Corte faults Marcello for not having dedicated a chapter of his satire to the public that by its approval fostered the uncultured atmosphere of the theatre. This

neglects Marcello's conclusion of the remarks just cited:

> condannando in tal forma il gusto dell'Uditorio, che veramente si compiace di ciò che sente talvolta, benché non buono, perché non gli vien fatto gustare il migliore.[44]

In this way Marcello cleverly places the onus back on the creators of theatre as being responsible for the formation of public taste.

Marcello's precise position with regard to melodramma has been a matter for controversy. It is indeed impossible to indicate with absolute certainty to what extent the treatise Il Teatro alla Moda represents a concrete plan of reform. But from a study of Marcello's other works it is reasonable to conclude that Marcello did not intend to repudiate melodramma as an art-form in itself, but rather the degenerate form to which it had descended. If we take into consideration his consigli a rovescio, it becomes quite clear that the precepts given in Il Teatro alla Moda are an oblique reflection of an ideal in the mind of the author. Marcello's concept of the ideal melodramma is more realistic than that of Gravina or Muratori (and hence closer to Martello), since by dwelling on the many components of the opera it implicitly suggests their inescapable influence. Yet it was also a concept of an orderly, classical form based on the Arcadian ideals of reason, good taste and the imitation of nature.

It is an exaggeration to state, as does Camille Bellaigue, that Marcello "n'estimait guère la musique dramatique, il en souffrait avec répugnance les condi-

tions . . . ,"[45] for the lively style and descriptions of the satire reveal the author's evident enjoyment of the milieu he is portraying. A further proof of Marcello's acceptance of the form can be found in the fact that he did not cease to write for the stage after the appearance of Il Teatro alla Moda. He composed the music for L'Arianna seven years after the publication of the satire.[46]

Marcello's position in the history of eighteenth-century opera is important, if little studied beyond the point of recognizing Il Teatro alla Moda as the best-known of the critical works on opera of that century. Enrico Fondi, Richard G. Pauly, and Andrea D'Angeli limit themselves to documenting the influence of Il Teatro alla Moda in the composition of later satirical works on opera,[47] from the early intermezzo by Metastasio, L'Impresario delle Canarie (1724), Goldoni's comedy L'impresario delle Smirne (1760), to the farce Le convenienze teatrali by Antonio Simone Sografi (1794)[48] and the long poem by Filippo Pananti, Il poeta di teatro (1803-1808). Andrea Della Corte and Ariodante Marianni point to the validity of Marcello's observations in a sociological context.[49] Giazotto, forgetting the contribution of Martello, singles out Marcello as the first critic of the early eighteenth century to affirm the right to existence of a theatrical form that received such acclaim from the public and such vituperation from the critics.[50] Bianca M. Baroncelli Da Ros accepts the validity of Il Teatro alla Moda as a satire of theatrical mores, but questions Marcello's

theoretical acumen by claiming that his traditionalism kept him from appreciating the modern currents of reform.[51] D'Angeli, referring to the reform instigated in the melodramma by Stampiglia, Bernardoni, Pariati and Zeno, claims that Marcello's satire applies not to the contemporary musical drama, but to the recent past immediately preceding the reform.[52] Both Baroncelli Da Ros and D'Angeli seem to adhere to the conventional belief that the works of the librettists cited above actually succeeded in reforming melodramma. However, as some students of opera are aware, Zeno's dramas, as well as those of the other librettists, were isolated attempts to regularize the libretto, and did not mark a true reform that brought about a lasting change in the opera in musica. Freeman omits any discussion of Marcello's witty satire in the chapter of his doctoral dissertation dealing with the reform attributed to Zeno and Caldara.[53] Binni, with his customary precision, has indicated in a few brief paragraphs the historical perspective in which Marcello ought to be studied: his position in the polemic on the melodramma in the eighteenth century; the genesis of the work within the cultural background of its author; its literary value.[54] Binni thus paved the way for Giulio Ferroni who, in the most valuable of modern studies of Il Teatro alla Moda, analyzes the "twin tracks" [doppio binario] on which he considers the work to run: moralistic condemnation of the musical theatre on the one hand, and on the other the lively and somewhat self-indulgent description of the theatrical world which the

author supposedly condemns.[55] Ferroni regards these two aspects as being expressions of Marcello's essentially anti-baroque and Arcadian rationalistic tendencies. While Ferroni's study in general is a valid one, it places too much emphasis on the questionable concept of Marcello's "moralistic condemnation" of the musical theatre. He hence falls into the difficulty of trying to reconcile the author's "condemnation" with his obvious absorption with the theatrical world. This attempt leads him to the extreme of interpreting the author's inclusion of the pen with which he wrote Il Teatro alla Moda among the items disposed of by lottery in the home of the virtuosa as Marcello's self-punishment [autopunizione] for having expended so much effort in a detailed examination of the affairs of the musical theatre which he censures.[56] Ferroni also fails to place the author in his correct perspective in the history of the eighteenth-century opera.[57]

As far as it has been possible to determine, Marcello appears to be the first eighteenth-century musician to take interest in an area which, at the time, was primarily the domain of literary critics, and which remained so for some forty years. His interest was probably due to the fact that he was not only a musician, but a man with literary aspirations.[58] He had close ties with Bologna and was aware of the position occupied by the Marquis Orsi in Italian culture of the time.[59] Marcello put to music Antonio Conti's translation of Dryden in the cantata Timoteo. He had read Muratori's Della perfetta poesia, echoes of which are to be

heard in Il Teatro alla Moda.[60] One can also detect echoes of Martello, although the analogies themselves cannot establish a direct relationship between the two works.[61] According to Giazotto, Marcello was not unaware of Zeno's attempts to reform the libretto.[62] Although Giazotto does not document this assertion, it is a fact that Marcello knew Zeno personally.[63] It is therefore entirely possible, as Giazotto asserts, that Marcello was influenced in his concept of melodramma by the elder librettist.[64] It is perhaps significant in this context that Marcello was the composer of the musical score to Zeno's Gioàz. Though this work is classified as an oratorio, its modern editor, Giacomo Benvenuti, claims that it was conceived and composed according to the exigencies of a theatrical representation. The score, he continues, reveals Marcello's understanding of the musical intonation of a poetic text.[65] In Il Teatro alla Moda, Marcello also appears to be the first eighteenth-century critic to comment in any degree on the type of music required by melodramma.

Marcello wrote both libretti and music for opera. He had considerable personal experience of theatre, though not a professional in the field, and it was this which provided him with the material for his satire on melodramma. Marcello has been accused of dealing superficially with the problems of the opera.[66] The charge is perhaps not without justification if we compare his satire with the critical treatises of Muratori and Martello. But Marcello had not set out to

accomplish the same objective as the two literary critics; he was not concerned with producing a theoretical study of melodramma as an artistic form. In Il Teatro alla Moda, he portrays practical, rather than theoretical, defects in the performance of contemporary opera which offended the good taste acquired from his classical background. That he chose the satire rather than a more scholarly form is undoubtedly due to his natural disposition towards the satirical vein and to parody.[67]

It is the general consensus of scholars that Marcello wrote his Teatro alla Moda to satirize the operas of Antonio Vivaldi, with whom he was engaged in a personal feud.[68] However, unlike his other satirical works which were aimed at a fairly limited target, Il Teatro alla Moda, notwithstanding its original intentions, succeeded in going beyond the Venetian opera-season of 1720 to become a commentary on the general condition of early eighteenth-century opera--a condition that still prevailed in the second half of the century, if we are to believe Arteaga, Metastasio, and other observers such as Sografi, Pananti, and Lorenzo Da Ponte, Mozart's librettist.[69] One must object, therefore, to the early article by Della Corte in which he chastises Marcello for his lack of historical and critical perspective.[70] Della Corte bases this criticism on the fact that Marcello wrote about a period of the melodramma (the last years of the seventeenth century and the first twenty of the eighteenth) which, in the view of the musicologist, was a time of decadence and artistic poverty

not worthy of being taken seriously enough to be satirized. It is true that a decade later, as Della Corte states, Pergolesi brought new life to the musical theatre. But it must not be forgotten that Pergolesi revitalized comic opera, not opera seria, and it was opera seria that Marcello ridiculed. Della Corte's criticism to the effect that Marcello, by means of his satire, placed too much importance on contemporary artists of little originality and now long-forgotten, can only stand if we ignore the particular cultural moment in which Marcello was writing, if we ignore the drive for cultural renewal that motivated the educated men of his time.

Although it has not been studied in any depth, the question of the literary quality of Marcello's satire has nevertheless led to some discussion, however cursory, among modern scholars. It cannot be denied that Il Teatro alla Moda bears the appearance of having been written in haste without much care for literary style.[71] Yet this apparent carelessness is not without purpose. The unvarying technique in the presentation of the precepts as direct advice and admonitions,[72] and the constant use of italics to emphasize the theatrical conventions and jargon that are being satirized, all impart a sense of the monotony that is created by the excessive reliance on convention in the contemporary melodramma. The persistent repetition of "etc. etc. etc." contributes further to a sense of the triviality of the matter which the author has under discussion and which he cannot

bother to elucidate further. The little book gives quite deliberately the appearance of having been composed in a perfunctory manner, and of being in consequence of little importance, just as the melodramma it satirizes was not very demanding of its composer:

> Se l'Impresario poi si lamentasse della Musica, protesterà il Compositore che ciò fa a torto, avendo posto egli nell'Opera un terzo di Note più del solito e impiegatevi quasi cinquant'ore in comporla.[73]

In the dedication of Il Teatro ("L'autore del Libro al Compositore di Esso"), Marcello offers justification for his apparently unliterary style, stating that he set down such merry prose in fairly popular speech so that it may be well understood.[74] The witty and racy tone is set by the opening paragraph of the text:

> IN PRIMO LUOGO non dovrà il Poeta moderno aver letti, né legger mai gli Autori antichi Latini o Greci. Imperciocché nemmeno gli antichi Greci o Latini hanno mai letti i moderni.[75]

It is precisely this quality, along with the colour and movement of the vignettes, and of the characters who inhabit Marcello's theatrical world, that was responsible for the fame of Il Teatro alla Moda. The little book enjoyed immediate and long-lasting success, as indicated by the many editions and translations, and by the fact that it served as a source of inspiration for many later works of criticism.[76] Among these are some twenty satires, of which the most outstanding are Metastasio's intermezzo L'impresario delle

Canarie and Goldoni's comedy L'impresario delle Smirne. The influence of Marcello on the two most important librettists of each half of the eighteenth century is noteworthy. Metastasio's intermezzo written only some three years after the publication of Il Teatro alla Moda, at the very beginning of Metastasio's career as a librettist, reveals definite echoes of Marcello's precepts. Indeed, Metastasio went on to produce libretti which attempted to put into practice the rationalist ideals of a coherent, well-organized and verisimilar drama based on the principle of good taste and measure. However, Marcello's impact on Metastasio is limited. Il Teatro alla Moda would have served simply as a reinforcement of the ideals of the melodramma already awakened in Metastasio by the Arcadian and rationalistic upbringing he received from Gravina.

As a critic of opera, Marcello is not an innovator. His concept of melodramma based on a sense of measure and classical proportion was a commonplace in the scholarly circles of the time. His chief importance in the history of eighteenth-century opera lies in his rôle as a popularizer of literary ideas. The very technique of consigli a rovescio, by presenting the faults and blemishes of the musical drama as examples to be followed, imparts to them a prominence which more scholarly treatments of the subject failed to. One may also add to Marcello's credit the insistence on the principle that the organic unity of melodramma should include all facets of its composition, production and performance.

Scipione Maffei

One of the best known Italian intellectuals in eighteenth-century Europe was the Marquis Scipione Maffei.[1] A humanist and antiquarian, Maffei was also receptive to contemporary European culture, and maintained a spirited defence of Italian literature against the attacks of Bouhours and the French.[2] Giuseppe Toffanin has described this widely-travelled polygraph as being in many respects already a "pre-encyclopedist".[3]

Maffei turned his attention to the theatre as the result of a request from Luigi Riccoboni for plays of literary quality.[4] Sensing the opportunity of contributing to a reform of the theatre of his time, Maffei published a collection of Italian tragedies of the sixteenth century: Teatro italiano, ossia Scelta di tragedie per uso della scena.[5] Furthermore, he issued an appeal to Italian men of letters to cultivate the tragic form (thus encouraging Gravina to experiment with the genre). Maffei led the way himself with his tragedy Merope, first performed in 1713. This achieved great popularity in Italy and abroad, was translated into several languages, praised by men such as Oliver Goldsmith and Alexander Pope, Lessing, and Voltaire, whose own Merope, which began as an imitation of Maffei's, led to a much-publicized controversy over the relative merits of each.[6] Merope contributed immeasurably to Maffei's fame throughout Europe, and came to be considered the masterpiece

of the resurgent Italian tragic theatre of the first half of the eighteenth century.

Maffei's humanistic background led him to advocate faithfulness to the spirit of classical poetry in tragedy. He recognized the imperfections inherent in French theatre, even though many in Italy believed it to be superior to Italian drama. In contrast, in the preface to Il teatro italiano, Maffei proudly proclaimed that tragic literature in Italy during the sixteenth century was vastly superior to that produced by any other nation, and presented his own Merope an an example of what Italy could produce.[7]

Insofar as melodramma is concerned, Maffei in his youth had written a pastoral libretto, La fida ninfa, which Antonio Vivaldi set to music for the opening of the Teatro Filarmonico of Verona in 1732, when Maffei acted as impresario.[8] His critical attitude towards musical drama was in general negative, as scholars have noted.[9] Maffei dealt briefly with melodramma in the preface to Il teatro italiano, and in a later treatise De'teatri antichi e moderni. In the first, he wrote a short history of the theatre, indicating two basic reasons for the decadence of tragic theatre in Italy. First, the popularity of comedy in dialect, and the use of masks. Second, the predominance of musical drama. He did concede that contemporary melodramma had seen some reform of the excesses of the seventeenth century, and he praised Apostolo Zeno in particular for his contributions:

> Vera cosa è, che ne'prossimi tempi alcuni felici ingegni a molto onor gli condussero, nel qual ordine non può negarsi il principato al Sig. Apostolo Zeno, che oltre a sessanta n'ha composti, e cui spesso appena otto giorni è costato il comporgli, e che ha potuto meritarsi l'applauso d'un Cesare.[10]

Nevertheless, and in spite of Zeno's reforms, Maffei still believed that melodramma was not a legitimate and viable genre, since it implied the subjugation of poetry to music, as well as the actual distortion of poetry in favour of another art:

> Ma in ogni modo finchè questa maniera di musica si riterrà, non sarà mai possibile far in modo, che non siano pure sempre un [sic] arte storpiata in grazia d'un'altra, e dove il superiore miseramente serve all'inferiore, talche [sic] il Poeta quel luogo ci tenga, che tiene il violinista, ove suoni per ballo.[11]

Thus he lamented the convention of the aria, since it is conceived in such a way as to make poetry no longer recognizable. At the same time, Maffei deplored the arias from a musical point of view, for the vocal embellishments destroy the musical intent of the composer. Furthermore, he claimed, melodramma is not verisimilar, for it is impossible to represent naturally passions, mores and truth in song. Consequently, melodramma, which directs itself entirely to pleasing the ear, does not fulfil the double purpose of tragedy, that is, it fails to move the heart and feed the intellect.[12]

Thirty years after the publication of Il teatro italiano, Maffei again turned his attention to the theatre

in order to defend it from the attacks of the Dominican P. Daniele Concina. Since Concina's attacks were directed at the morality of the theatre, Maffei, in his De'teatri antichi e moderni, replied from a moral and theological standpoint. He reiterated his belief in the didactic purpose of tragedy, arguing that tragedy instils a sense of moral virtue in the public which it would neither wish nor be able to acquire from books.[13] In this essay his negative view of opera is again evident. Maffei indicated once more its departure from the probable, its distortion of one art for the benefit of another. These factors make of melodramma a spurious form that is neither tragedy nor comedy ["componimenti spurii, che nè Tragedie son, nè Comedie"]. He also rejected the possibility, upheld by Zeno, of anyone deriving pleasure from the simple reading of libretti. For Maffei, the operatic book is written to be performed to music, and its attraction for the public lies mainly in the arias.[14] While criticizing melodramma as a genre, Maffei still praised the libretti of Zeno, and now also those of Metastasio.

In his writings on the theatre Maffei deals with the practical problems of composition, recitation and staging. Robertson claims that the contents of the preface to the Teatro italiano are chiefly suggested by Muratori's Della perfetta poesia, and that the main area of originality in Maffei's works is that of translating Muratori's ideas into practical terms.[15] The first part of this claim could also apply to Maffei's remarks on melodramma,[16] but he does not

carry them any further than Muratori had done, and they remain on a very general plane. Maffei can be considered an exponent of classical theatre and a revitalizer of modern tragedy, but it is the regular spoken tragedy that he wishes to propagate.[17] His classicist rationalism does not permit him to accept as a work of art the hybrid composite form of melodramma.

Apostolo Zeno

Maffei's praise of Apostolo Zeno as the first reformer of the excesses of baroque opera is consonant with the critical thought of the period, and with subsequent operatic criticism. A renowned librettist, from 1695 Zeno wrote some fifty operas and several oratorios for the theatres of Venice and for the most prestigious operatic theatre of the time, the Court Theatre of Vienna, where he was Court poet and historiographer to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI from 1718 to 1729.[1] While recognizing his shortcomings as a poet, modern scholars, as well as eighteenth-century critics, almost unanimously credit Zeno with the composition of libretti superior to those of his contemporaries.[2]

A man of vast culture and encyclopedic learning, Zeno was far more interested in his scholarly pursuits in the fields of literature, history, archaeology, numismatics and the furtherance of Italian studies, than in his activity as a librettist.[3] As a result, he left no critical work on melodramma. Even his copious correspondence contains relatively few references to his dramatic works.[4] Thus, while the title of "reformer" is repeatedly applied to him in manuals of literary and musical history, Zeno's contributions to the critical body of literature on eighteenth-century melodramma have been little studied. Certain passages from the major letters are cited as a matter of course in the studies of Zeno's work as a librettist.[5] Antonio Zardo has

compiled pertinent quotations from Zeno's correspondence in a brief article to illustrate the librettist's attitude to his dramatic compositions.[6] Giazotto has attempted a more coherent view of that attitude, though his study lacks correct historical perspective.[7] The most important contribution is that of Freeman, though his specific aim was to examine the extent to which Zeno could be regarded as an actual reformer, rather than to provide a detailed review of his writings on melodramma.[8] Such writings are, in any case, extremely limited in scope, yet a study of the references to melodramma in Zeno's letters, as well as in the prefaces to his libretti, can furnish some indication of the attitude towards eighteenth-century musical drama held by the "first reformer" of opera.

The immediate impression given by Zeno's correspondence is of an almost total lack of critical concern with the problems of melodramma as discussed by his contemporaries. We also note an ambivalent, if not inconsistent, attitude towards the value of his own creations in that genre. This inconsistency may be aptly illustrated by a study of the letters that deal with melodramma, examined chronologically rather than from a strictly thematic point of view.

Zeno's published correspondence extends from the late seventeenth century to his death in 1750. In the early years Zeno expresses pleasure over the successes enjoyed by his musical dramas, and hopes that his new compositions will be well-received because, as in the case of Lucio Vero, he

claims to have taken great pains to provide unity of plot and eloquence of dialogue.[9] He sends copies of his libretti to such men as Muratori, whose opinions on his works he requests, as well as their suggestions for improvement:

> Io desidero di ridurla [L'Aminta] a quell'ultimo compimento che posso; ma prima mi sarebbe caro e profittevole l'averne il maturo parere di V. S. Illma, pregandola ad avvisarmi senza veruno scrupolo ciò che le sembri difettuoso e manchevole, sì nel viluppo, sì nello stile; affinchè riformando quella mia debolezza con la guida del suo purgatissimo intendimento, io possa con men di rossore farla un dì comparire. . . . con tutta libertà mi segni gli errori, che vi avrà sicuramente osservati; del che ardentemente la supplico, assicurandola che mi sarà una gran prova dell'amor suo la sincerità de'suoi sentimenti.[10]

The insistent tone of this plea indicates Zeno's interest in the improvement of his dramas, both in plot as well as in style. Between March and August of 1701, however, Zeno's optimism seems to have waned. In a well-known letter to Muratori of August, 1701, Zeno gives a summary history of melodramma from its origins, and passes on to a brief discussion of the merits of the form. He begins by agreeing with Muratori's disapproval of the performance of musical dramas:

> Che poi quest'uso de'Drammi non abbia la vostra approvazione, punto non mi maraviglio. Io stesso, a dirvene sinceramente il mio sentimento, tuttochè ne abbia molti composti, sono il primo a darvene il voto della condanna.

For such a negative judgement, Zeno gives the commonplace reasons: the poor taste of the theatre public, the incompetence of composers and singers:

> Il lungo esercizio mi ha fatto conoscere, che dove non si dà in molti abusi, si perde il primo fine di tali componimenti, ch'è il diletto. Più che si vuole star sulle regole, più si dispiace; e se'l libretto ha qualche lodatore, ha poco concorso. Di ciò ne ha gran colpa la musica, che le migliori scene per poca intelligenza de'compositori affiacchisce; e molta ne hanno i cantori, che non intendendole nemmeno sanno rappresentarle.[11]

We may also note here the dilemma that faced Zeno throughout his career as a librettist: that of reconciling his dramas to the disparate tastes of a reading public as well as a theatre audience. Though he was well aware of Muratori's less-than-enthusiastic attitude to the musical drama, in September, 1701, Zeno was still encouraging his erudite correspondent to publish his opinion of melodramma, regardless of what "some miserable poetasters" may say.[12]

Zeno's dramas, in spite of the success they might enjoy, were subject to the same fate that befell all libretti of the time. The original text was altered to suit the singers, composers, and the facilities of the particular theatre in which a new performance was to be held. In February, 1703, Zeno wrote of one such alteration of his libretto Griselda:

> Ho letta la Griselda, e mi sono infinitamente piaciuti i ridicoli, che con tanta saviezza il Sig. Gigli vi ha aggiunti. I cangiamenti che per entro vi son fatti, sono di sì piccola conseguenza, che non mi hanno dato fastidio, nè me l'han fatta parer diversa da quella, che io prima la pubblicai.[13]

Freeman notes that the eight comic scenes added to the original libretto, scenes which Zeno here claims to consider as unimportant, comprise, in Freeman's words, "just less than

20% of the length of the entire work."[14] Furthermore, in the 1755 reprint of Allacci's Drammaturgia, of which Zeno was an editor, the following words are added to the item recording the last performance of Griselda:

> Il Dottissimo Autore di questo Dramma si protestò di non riconoscere per suo se non quello del 1701, e l'altro del 1725, dicendo pure lo stesso delle Edizioni per repliche fattesi di altri suoi Drammi dopo la prima, lasciandole a carico di coloro, che non si sono fatto scrupolo alcuno di trinciarle a lor modo, e farle correre così travisate, e mal concie.[15]

Notwithstanding his obliging remarks on Gigli's reworking of Griselda, Zeno did not accept the 1703 libretto, presumably grouping it with the other rifacimenti which he considered distorted and badly repaired. Yet shortly after making his remarks on Gigli's additions to his work, he offered to make available his libretto Aminta for a performance, expressing his willingness to undertake any adjustments desired by the impresarios.[16]

In the meantime, Muratori had taken Zeno's advice, publishing his considerations on melodramma in Della perfetta poesia italiana. As corroboration of his own point of view, the critic had included an excerpt from Zeno's letter of August, 1701.[17] Having had time for only a cursory examination of the second volume of Della perfetta poesia, Zeno immediately writes to thank Muratori for citing him:

> Fra le altre cose vi ho sommamente gustata la lettura di que'quattro capitoli, ove sì leggiadramente parlate de'nostri Drammi. Mi avete toccato il cuore con inserirvi quelle parole della mia lettera scrittavi

> su questo proposito, e ve ne ringrazio non tanto per l'onore, che vi siete compiaciuto di farmi, quanto perchè un sì fatto ed onorevole testimonio, mi serve di apologia pubblica dalle censure di chi o non intende il mestiero, o crede di troppo intenderlo.[18]

While Zeno claims to appreciate the "public apologia" that Muratori published on his behalf, scholars have not paused to consider the possibility of ironic intent in Zeno's description of the censures against which he issues his apologia. The extent of Zeno's ambivalence, the fluctuation of his attitudes concerning the melodramma, are such that it is evident that he felt a certain discomfiture in having an earlier private opinion now crystallized and preserved in public in Muratori's treatise. Muratori had cited Zeno's "vote of condemnation" to support his own generally negative view of melodramma, which amounts to a censure of the genre. Yet Zeno's "vote of condemnation" was clearly of a very relative nature. As we can see from his later writings, he was not prepared to accept completely Muratori's views on the matter, and he felt that Muratori had failed to grasp all the issues involved in the practicalities of composing melodrammi. The expression of gratitude to Muratori for the opportunity of issuing a public apologia against the censures of those who either do not understand the librettist's craft, or who consider that they know it only too well can only be taken in an ironic sense, for Zeno's "apologia", cited by Muratori, is itself a censure of musical drama. Zeno's uneasiness over the reference to him in Della perfetta poesia italiana is also suggested by the fact that his letter of 29 January 1707

effectively closes his correspondence with Muratori on the subject of his libretti. It is not, however, Zeno's last word on the incident. He will return to it twenty-three years later, when he unequivocally questions Muratori's conclusions on melodramma.

In February, 1708, Zeno laments that his duties as librettist detract him from his literary pursuits.[19] Six years later he complains again of the liberties taken with his work. The libretto for Merope, which he would consider perhaps the best of his dramas, had been mutilated the previous year by the removal of entire scenes and many of the arias, and by the unauthorized addition of others in order to please the taste of the musicians. As a result, Zeno had refused to allow his name to be published with the libretto. However, he goes on to confess that the plot and development are so pleasing to him that he is considering the possibility of rewriting the work as spoken tragedy, without the interruption caused by arias.[20] He never did so.

On 17 November 1717, Zeno expresses his happiness at the honour of being called to write libretti for the Imperial Theatre in Vienna, and he pledges his loyalty to royal command, indicating that he is ready to interrupt his other occupations in order to fulfil his obligations to the court. He requests particulars of the company and the stage design of the Imperial Theatre, so that he may adapt his first drama accordingly. Yet, after having assumed his position in Vienna, he is happy to write that he has been granted the

title of Court Historian as well, a title that he considers much more honourable and decorous than that of Court Poet.[22]

From Vienna he writes of the attempts to prevent the success of his musical drama Ifigenia. He is consoled by the thought that his libretto had met with great approval when read by members of the court. He adds, therefore, that if it fails on the stage, the fault will not be his. Zeno's interest in his libretti as literary creations is clear, though he was also concerned with their public acceptance, as is shown by a series of letters expressing his pleasure at the success of his dramatic works both with theatre audiences, and with the royal family.[23]

The spectre of alterations to his work carried out by others appears again in a letter to his brother on 19 October 1720 wherein he claims not to be displeased, for if the drama fails, the failure will be attributed to the changes.[24] He insists on the fact that if the drama is to be altered, for whatever reason, then time, application and judgement are required in order to preserve the structure of the play. In 1729, in reply to a request by Michele Grimani, Zeno refuses to alter his Mitridate himself, pleading lack of time. However, he admits politely that changes are indeed required for the production in question. He makes some suggestions, but submits them to the discretion of the director of the opera. The tone of the letter, though courteous, reveals his reluctance to modify his text. He concludes with an attempt to ensure that at least the printed version of the

libretto be preserved intact:

> I versi che si leveranno al Dramma nella recita, gioverà che almeno rimangano nella stampa segnati con due virgolette; giusta l'uso: e ciò dico a V. E. non per opinione che tutti sien buoni, ma perchè li giudico per lo più necessarj.[25]

Thus, Zeno attempts to preserve the artistic integrity of his dramas for his readers, even though he abdicate it for his theatre audience.

So far we have been dealing with scattered references, frequently of a contradictory nature. On 3 November 1730, however, Zeno wrote to the Marquis Giuseppe Gravisi a letter which, together with a later epistle of 1735, is generally considered to be his poetic manifesto. In so far as melodramma is concerned, the letter to Gravisi of 1730 is of paramount importance, being the closest Zeno comes to writing a critical essay on the genre. We are therefore justified in studying the letter in some detail. In it, after the passage of a quarter of a century, Zeno returns to the incident with Muratori:

> Il libro della Perfetta Poesia del Sig. Muratori contiene veramente ottimi precetti, e sarà sempre utilissimo per chi attentamente lo legge.

But, he continues:

> Intorno ai Drammi musicali egli ha ragione di riscaldarsi, ma temo che la passione l'abbia portato a dirne troppo.

Zeno thus confirms the impression given by his letter of 1707

to Muratori, namely, that the librettist did not appreciate seeing his private remarks on melodramma in public print. Zeno indicates to Gravisi that he could say much on the subject, based on fact and experience, but that since time and space are wanting, he will simply make some general remarks:

> Le dirò solo in generale, che per quanto io condanni i Drammi musicali, come Tragedie irregolari, non posso risolvermi a dirli col Sig. Muratori mostri ed unioni di mille inverisimili: nella forma almeno considerati, con cui sono stati trattati da alcuni valentuomini in questi ultimi tempi.

He admits the irregularity of melodramma which contravenes the ancient precepts of tragedy, but he still defends the genre against the accusations concerning its monstrous lack of verisimilitude. Such an accusation he considers invalid, especially when one examines the form in which melodramma was composed in his day by "some worthy gentlemen", among whom, one suspects, he would include himself. In addition, he writes that the successes of his works cannot permit him to concur in Muratori's harsh judgement on melodramma:

> Ed io sarei troppo ingiusto, se così fieramente inveissi contra questo genere di componimento, con cui in Italia e in Germania mi sono acquistato un poco di riputazione, e molto di profitto; per lasciar da parte il gradimento con cui le cose mie sono state accolte dal maggior Monarca della terra, e dalla sua fioritissima Corte, e generalmente da tutti i Principi d'Italia.

Zeno claims that he can make these statements without fear of being considered boastful. We have here, therefore, a clear indication of Zeno's pride in his work, as well as a

statement of his realization that, while melodramma is not pure tragedy, it is a form that cannot be disregarded, because it pleases a large, and not uncultured audience. Zeno then turns to the question of whether melodramma can be reformed. He begins by lauding Muratori's desire to reform Italian poetry, but questions the critic's negative conclusions about musical drama:

> Parlando dei Drammi, egli li riguarda come una poesia incapace di alcuna riforma per la sua mostruosità: in che, torno a dire, son di parere che e's'inganni in qualche conto; e però dalla scena li vorrebbe affatto sbanditi. Sarebbe stato meglio, che egli avesse moderata una così severa sentenza.[26]

Zeno suggests that if Muratori had written of the subject at this later date, he would have shown himself a less cruel judge. For in fact, as Zeno adds with evident relish, Muratori had exhorted him recently to polish his musical dramas and oratorios, and to publish them, on the grounds that they could be of benefit to the public, and could open the way to the regularization of musical drama. It appears, therefore, if Zeno is to be believed, that Muratori himself now admitted the possibility of reform.

Zeno then embarks upon an analysis of the form and characteristics of melodramma. Since these pages form what is essentially a letter and not a treatise prepared for publication, his arguments are somewhat general and superficial, and not necessarily presented in an orderly fashion.[27] Zeno admits the validity of Muratori's censure of melodramma for its frequent lack of verisimilitude. He considers this

deficiency to be essentially of two kinds. The first is due to the nature of the composition (the union of poetry and music), and therefore cannot be remedied. The second is open to reform:

> [A]lcuni di questi [inverosimili] provengono dalla necessità e natura del componimento, come il dover cantarsi da capo a piedi le ariette musicali, le tante mutazioni di scena; ai quali, e simili inconvenienti, non è possibile che si dia riparo.

Zeno thus accepts without question the union of words and music, and the multiple scene changes which were the tradition in melodramma, although both traditions were held in question by the critics of the time. Zeno does not clarify what he means by "similar inconveniences" which he considers to be irreparable. He does move on to list those "inconveniences" that he considers capable of being remedied: namely, those characteristics of melodramma that stem not from its very nature, but from the lack of care on the part of the poet. The unity of action, for example, may be faulty, or the characters may lack conformity. The decorum appropriate to tragedy may be overlooked, as well as the proper mores intended to purge the passions, leading to compassion or terror. A musical drama may lack proper development and dénouement according to classical precepts. All these defects are capable of reform; indeed, Zeno asserts that they must be reformed, and that such an undertaking would be a praiseworthy one. Yet there is no outright condemnation of the genre because of its defects; rather, Zeno praises it:

> Se mai V. S. Illma si abbattesse a leggerne alcuno, libero in tutto, o in parte da sì fatti pregiudicj, e si senta nel leggerlo quel commovimento solito destarsi dai tragici componimenti, conservi quell'amore per esso, con cui per l'innanzi l'ha riguardato, e non lo chiami così subito un mostro odioso della poesia.[28]

Thus, if melodramma is purified from the imperfections caused by the poet's indifference, or lack of care, the composition would awaken in the reader the same emotions aroused by spoken tragedy. Zeno begs that such a composition be held in the same esteem as spoken tragedy. However, we must not overlook the fact that Zeno is referring at this juncture to the "reading" of the text, rather than to the observation of a performance in the theatre.

Zeno also turns his attention to another criticism frequently levelled at melodramma by literary critics: the abuse of the theme of love, an "effeminate passion" which contrasted with the ideal of strong, noble passions depicted on the Greek stage. While Zeno allows that the excessive reliance on this theme is indeed a fault, he quickly points out that musical drama is produced by impresarios who are concerned with adequate financial returns for the efforts. Since attendance at the musical theatre depends in the main on the "weaker sex" and the less intelligent [sic], it is clear that the theatre public will prefer the gentler passions. Zeno admits that this situation could be changed, but that it would be a difficult undertaking, and extremely perilous for the impresario. He adds that in his own time, the only tragedies to have triumphed without relying on the

theme of love were Maffei's Merope, his own Merope (written before Maffei's version), his Ifigenia, and a few others in which the theme of love is incidental.[29]

The letter ends with the remark that Zeno prefers his oratorios to his melodrammi, for in them he has been able to observe the three unities, nobility of character, and the propriety of the passions. In fact, he feels that he has been so successful in writing his oratorios according to classical precepts, that he could turn them into good tragedies, simply by lengthening the number of verses and by freeing them from their musical accompaniment. Once again we witness Zeno's preoccupation with matters of a literary nature, and his desire to have his works accepted as literary compositions.

The letter to Gravisi is of considerable interest, not only for the relatively detailed exposition of Zeno's ideas on some of the main points of critical contention in melodramma, but also because it presents, in one single document, the ambivalent attitude of the scholar-librettist to his compositions for the musical theatre. One can see clearly Zeno's annoyance at the criticism of the form in which he has become famous; his defence of melodramma is made from a purely pragmatic standpoint, which leads him to adopt an apologetic tone towards it when viewed in the light of eighteenth-century criticism, for he is aware that in the eyes of his contemporaries, the libretto does not fulfil the requirements of a work of literature. Therefore, in spite of

the defence of his libretti, he concludes with the face-saving device of claiming a personal preference for his oratorios in which he has been able to follow more closely the dramatic precepts.

The letter of 1730 to Gravisi is generally linked with a letter of dedication prefacing the 1735 edition of Zeno's Poesie sacre drammatiche.[30] These were dedicated to the Austrian monarchs, and in his foreword Zeno claims that he purified his melodrammi from the mixture of styles common to the drama of his age by removing the comic elements which ill suited the gravity and dignity of the Hapsburg court, and by dealing with heroic dramas taken from Greek, Roman and barbarian history. Zeno thus attributes to the virtues of the Hapsburg sovereigns the reform that later critics and scholars generally ascribe to him in these two specific areas.

In the same dedicatory letter, Zeno claims to have attempted to regularize the oratorio (which previous authors had considered to be outside the control of dramatic precepts, since it is a composition to be sung rather than performed), by observing the unities, and composing his oratorios so that, with minor alterations, they could be performed as musical tragedies.[31]

In 1735 Zeno wrote again to Gravisi a letter that was prompted by the recent publication of a critical essay by Francesco Rossellini entitled Considerazioni sopra il Demofoonte dell'Abate Metastasio.[32] In it, the old ambivalence towards melodramma surfaces once more. Zeno writes

disparagingly of the Considerazioni:

> A. V. S. Illma scrissi più volte, che delle mie cose Drammatiche io fo presentemente sì poco conto, che anzi che nudrirne compiacimento di averle scritte, ne ho pentimento e disprezzo: talchè a chi si ponesse a criticarle e a dirne male, io quasi ne avrei più obbligazione, che a chi ne prendesse la difesa, e ne dicesse ogni bene. Trattone alcune poche, io le considero sconciature ed aborti.

Zeno seems to have forgotten his remarks, made some five years earlier to the same correspondent, to the effect that he could not be cruel towards the creations that had brought him success. Now he refers to them as "miscarriages and abortions", works that have been badly constructed, and therefore failures. Even his Eumene, which had enjoyed great success in almost all of Italy, should be considered in the same light. Yet in the very next line of the letter, he promises to send a copy of the original libretto to the Marquis, for later editions have been mangled by the customary alterations made for particular performances. Once again the about-face: Zeno proceeds to defend himself and his dramas against the charge of dependence on French tragedians:

> Se poi sia vero, che nelle cose mie io spesso mi sia valuto degli autori Tragici Francesi, lo confesso che è verissimo; e nella prefazione di ciascuno di que'componimenti, ove ho preso ad imitare gli altrui, ne ho fatta un'aperta e sincera confessione. Posso però dire, che il maggior numero de'miei Drammi è di mia invenzione, e del tutto miei.[33]

It is clear, therefore, that Zeno may be reluctant to hold his dramas in high esteem, yet he is equally reluctant to renounce his paternity of them.

In January , 1736, after a long silence, Zeno discusses his dramas once again with Muratori. The occasion was Zeno's submission of his volume of sacred dramas to Muratori for his "wise and sincere" opinion. Zeno adds that he is far from being resolved to publish his melodrammi, although he is pressed to do so from all sides. His intention in publishing the religious dramas was to give praise to God; by publishing his profane dramas he would only satisfy the world, thereby, perhaps, bringing about cause for repentance in his last days. If the fact that his melodrammi have been altered by others disturbs him, he suffers it as the penalty for having written them. The letter continues in this uncharacteristic pious tone.

> Quando ci andiamo avvicinando al nostro ultimo fine, oh con qual occhio diverso rimiriamo gli oggetti, che prima ci lusingavano tanto, e ci dilettavano.[34]

For all that, he ends the letter with the admission that his dramas had pleased him.

In a letter to Domenico Vandelli in 1740, Zeno again expresses his resentment at the liberties taken with his libretti by composers, impresarios, singers, and others lacking either practical or theoretical knowledge of melodramma. He insists that the original version of Lucio Vero be used in a performance planned for the inauguration of a new theatre:

> [P]oichè le altre copie impresse posteriormente son tutte mutilate, interpolate, e guaste, per l'abuso universale che corre in tal genere di componimenti, a fine di accomodarsi al gusto non solo dei compositori di musica, e degl'impresarj, ma dei musici ancora, e

> d'altre persone che nulla sanno nè per pratica, nè per istudio.[35]

Zeno also reaffirms his belief that the libretti written in Vienna--the "reform libretti", as they have been termed by modern scholars--are the "more tolerable" of his total output. Yet in his next letter to Vandelli, he grants permission to the impresario and composer to make changes in his Lucio Vero in order to make the original libretto, written more than forty years earlier, more consonant with modern taste:

> Ho conosciuto, che nell'ariette ci si può far qualche mutazione, e levarne alcune in certe scene, ove più non sono alla moda: in che lascio a'Sigg. Impresarj tutto l'arbitrio, e anche al compositor della musica.[36]

The last letter that we will cite by way of illustration of Zeno's attitude to his melodrammi was sent to Gioseffantonio Pinzi in Ravenna on 27 February 1745. In this frequently quoted letter, Zeno discusses the 1744 edition of his libretti published in ten volumes under the direction of Gaspare Gozzi. Zeno seems to give extra emphasis to the attitude of disdain he occasionally reveals towards his profane dramatic works. He claims that he did not approve their publication because he was well aware of their imperfections. Such imperfections arose from the haste with which he had to compose the dramas, and from his having to elaborate them in accordance with the resources of the actors and the theatres to which each was destined. He is of the opinion that before their publication, the libretti should have been corrected

and polished. Unfortunately, his age and other obligations would not permit him to undertake so arduous a task. However, Gozzi had offered to review and correct the dramas, and finally convinced him that it was better to have them published in their original form, rather than to have the later mutilated versions edited after his death. In this way Zeno had agreed to hand over the entire care of the publication to Gozzi. Zeno claims, however, that had he been able, he would rather have made them disappear entirely. He continues:

> Dopo questa mia sincera dichiarazione, ella mi dirà un padre crudele e inumano verso questi, che finalmente sono miei parti, i quali però di presente a me pajono aborti, per non dir mostri: onde in me destano piuttosto pentimento, che affetto.[37]

Zeno thus concludes by giving his libretti "the vote of condemnation" that he had once expressed to Muratori in 1701.

Nevertheless, it may be legitimate to ask whether this letter is as sincere a declaration as Zeno would claim. It is true that in the preface to Zeno's dramatic works Gozzi gives the same explanation as Zeno for the genesis of the edition.[38] But elsewhere, in a letter to Luigi Pomo, Gozzi attributes the idea of the publication to Zeno himself who, feeling unequal to the task, has requested Gozzi to undertake it on his behalf.[39]

The ambivalence of Zeno's attitude to his libretti may perhaps be explained with reference to two considerations. First, his activity as a librettist was secondary to his main interests as a scholar and antiquarian. In fact,

after his retirement from the Viennese court, on full salary, and hence financially independent, he devoted himself entirely to his scholarly pursuits. Second, although at times condemning his libretti as "miscarriages and abortions", Zeno was never quite able to free himself from considering them as works of literature. This he was disposed to do, no doubt, by the critical opinion of his time, which regarded melodramma as a literary genre, and the opera seria specifically, as tragedy. Yet Zeno was aware that melodramma was different from spoken tragedy. He makes the distinction quite clearly in his letters. On 6 January 1720 he discusses the objections raised by his brother to Papirio, and concludes the defence of his libretto with the following words:

> In una Tragedia si possono osservar religiosamente sì fatte regole, anzi si debbono. In un Dramma bisogna dar qualche cosa all'abuso del secolo, alla decorazione, ed alla Musica.[40]

The same distinction is found again in the letter to Gravisi in 1730. The improbabilities criticized in the melodramma are due to "the nature of the composition" in which the poetry must be sung throughout.[41] At the same time, Zeno wished to have his dramas accepted as literary works, yet his objections to the Gozzi edition were caused by his doubts about the literary merits of the works. The sense of ambivalence and contradiction continues to the end, yet certain constant features in Zeno's concept of melodramma can be identified. In short, by virtue of its association with music, melodramma cannot be considered true tragedy. However, the libretto

itself can acquire such a status if it is written according to correct dramatic precepts, and if it is liberated from the abuses inherent in the musical drama. It is clear that Zeno makes a distinction between melodramma and tragedy, though he still regards the form basically as tragedy: irregular tragedy, it is true, but tragedy nevertheless, rather than the manifestation of a new and hybrid genre.

The attitude outlined above can be seen clearly if we turn to a consideration of Zeno's view of the relation between words and music in melodramma. The first point that strikes us is the dearth of documentation on this question. Zeno rarely pauses to consider the problem. There is no attempt, as there is in such critics as Gravina or Martello, to justify musical drama as an endeavour to re-create the tragedy of the ancients. It is true that in a letter to Muratori, Zeno expresses agreement with his friend on the controversial question of the musical accompaniment of classical tragedy, namely that it differed from eighteenth-century practice both in quality and quantity.[42] But the matter does not constitute a point of controversy for Zeno. He accepts without question the format of continuous musical accompaniment that was characteristic of eighteenth-century melodramma. Zeno has left no documentation of an exploration on his part of the nature of the union between the two arts. He makes no claim to musical expertise. On the contrary, it appears that his knowledge of music was limited.[43] When he writes of the musical accompaniment to his dramas, he is usually reporting

the opinion of others. For example, on 5 November 1718 he informs his brother of the forthcoming opening of Ifigenia, stating "I hear it said that the music is good."[44] Three years later he writes of the success of Ormisda and the unanimous opinion concerning the appropriateness of the music, yet he himself never attempts a critique of the musical score.[45] His letters rarely reveal any awareness of the correspondence sought by other poets and critics between words and music. Metastasio is constantly aware of the musicality of the word. In his Catone in Utica, for example, he changes the name of Cornelia (the widow of Pompey) to Emilia because he considers the former name unmusical.[46] In Papirio Zeno also changes the name of one of the characters, in this case the daughter of Marcus Fabius, because he felt that the repetition of the name Fabius for the father and son was displeasing to the musical ear: a displeasure which would have been increased, if that of Fabia were also added. He therefore changes Fabia to Rutilia. However, in Zeno the choice of the substitute name is not motivated by musicality of sound, but by historical verisimilitude.[47]

Zeno accepted passively the subjugation of poetry to music in contemporary melodramma. Thus he was indifferent to the possibility of reforming this relationship. This indifference was in part due to his lack of musical training, but mainly to his consideration of musical drama as drama, and therefore as literature. For Zeno, the music was not an integral part of the genre; rather it was the direct cause

of the improbabilities in melodramma, and stood in the way of it becoming a completely rational work of art. However, he realized that the musical accompaniment was the distinguishing mark of melodramma; its presence, and the improbabilities it created were to be accepted. Nothing could be done about them; he saw no remedy. For Zeno it seemed sufficient to raise the literary standards of the libretto in order to raise the general standards of musical drama:

> Altri [inconvenienti] poi derivano dalla poca avvertenza del poeta, che non conserva l'unità dell'azione, non la conformità dei caratteri, non il decoro della scena tragica, non il buon costume a purgazione degli affetti, non il movimento di questi a compassione, o a terrore, non le convenienze di un viluppo e di uno scioglimento alle buone regole accomodato. Questi mali si possono e si debbono levar dal teatro musicale, e a questi avevasi a proporre il rimedio per la lodevol riforma.[48]

There is, therefore, no intuition of melodramma as a new genre arising from the intimate union of drama and music.[49] It is simply a literary form, in Zeno's view.

As a literary form, therefore, the composition of melodramma should be based on literary ideals: the observance of the unities (especially that of action), the portrayal of noble characters, the well-regulated development and dénouement of the tragic plot, and the dramatic representation of ennobling actions leading to catharsis. Furthermore, the concept of verisimilitude was of paramount importance. For this reason, Zeno preferred historical themes to the fantastic and marvellous. Nevertheless, he upheld the rights of poetic invention. In a letter to Orsi, published in the

edition of the correspondence on the Orsi-Bouhours controversy, Zeno came to the defence of Tasso against French attacks:

> [I]l Poeta non è tenuto ne'suoi componimenti a seguir l'opinione più vera, nè la più certa, ma . . . può trasportarvi sicuramente tutto quello, che più gli è a grado, per adornarne il suo Poema, scelto da qualsiasi Setta, e Accademia.

Zeno suggests that the poet is free to choose his poetic material without adhering strictly to truth, provided that his invention remains verisimilar:

> [P]urchè questo o non disconvenga alla sua Religione, o non sia direttamente contrario a quelle comuni nozioni, che tutti abbiamo del vero.[50]

This principle appears in the prefaces to his dramas. In them Zeno identifies the historical sources of his plots, while at the same time justifying poetic invention; some examples:

> Ciò che ne seguisse, si raccoglie da Erodiano e da Lampidrio. Nella favola si è seguito il verosimile più che il vero.[51]

Or again:

> Io ho intrecciato in tal guisa il verosimile col vero, che a grande stento possono discernersi l'uno dall'altro.[52]

And again:

> Questa varietà d'opinioni [storiche] m'ha fatto parer verisimile, che tale insidia fossegli tesa da uno de'capi de'Tarentini, ch'io chiamo Turio.[53]

A practical example of Zeno's concern for the adherence to the verisimilar in his dramas can be found in his reply to Domenico Vandelli's suggestions for the staging of the performance of Lucio Vero in 1741:

> [C]onfesso, che la scena all'alzar della tenda offrirebbe agli spettatori un magnifico e pomposo spettacolo, ove seguisse quel tanto che voi me ne accennate: ma due cose mi si presentano alla mente, per le quali non posso interamente approvare cotesto pensamento: l'una, che non mi sembra, che L. Vero farebbe una gran finezza a Berenice col volerla presente ad un sacrificio da farsi per una vittoria, che tanto era funesta e dolorosa per lei.[54]

By insisting on the verisimilitude of an episode with reference to the action to be portrayed, Zeno objected to the still prevalent display of spectacle for spectacle's sake in melodramma.

Zeno took his plots chiefly from Greek and Roman history, or from the Bible. This was no doubt one of the results of his scholarly inclinations, and one which facilitated order and control of the libretto by presenting him with established situations which limited the extent to which imagination could be given free rein in the working-out of the plot. Zeno also attributed his preference for such subject-matter to the wider opportunities it offered for the representation of great and sublime deeds.[55] His dramatic action was mostly heroic and virtuous, and intended for the edification of the public, although he also recognized the pleasurable end of art.[56] But one looks in vain in Zeno's writings for a thorough and profound discussion of the func-

tion or purpose of art, a question that was of great import in the eighteenth century.

In composing his libretti, Zeno followed successfully the double aim of meeting with the approval of theatre audiences, as well as gaining the acceptance of his reading public, that is, the literati who were also acquainted with his scholarly pursuits, and whose favourable opinion he cherished. The first of these aims led him to make concessions to the taste of the times. The second led him to crave recognition of his libretti as literary works.

On a purely practical level, Zeno was one of the leading librettists of Italian melodramma. His numerous drammi were performed countless times, and reworked by many librettists well into the nineteenth century.[57] This popularity undoubtedly influenced other librettists of the day, such as Marcello, Goldoni and Metastasio. When asked for his opinion of his predecessor, Metastasio gave the following judgement:

> [Q]uando mancasse ancora al signor Apostolo Zeno ogni altro pregio poetico, quello di aver dimostrato con felice successo che il nostro melodramma e la ragione non sono enti incompatibili, come con toleranza [sic] anzi con applausi del pubblico parea che credessero quei poeti ch'egli trovò in possesso del teatro quando incominciò a scrivere, quello, dico di non essersi reputato esente dalle leggi del verisimile, quello di essersi difeso dalla contagione del pazzo e turgido stile allor dominante, e quello finalmente di aver liberato il coturno dalla comica scurrilità del socco, con la quale era in quel tempo miseramente confuso, sono meriti ben sufficienti per esigere la nostra gratitudine e la stima della posterità.[58]

Metastasio thus attributed to Zeno the reduction of melodramma

to the verisimilar and the rational, the purification of its style, and the removal of comic scenes from serious opera. At the same time, however, in the opening words of his remarks, Metastasio shows a less-than-total sense of admiration for Zeno's poetic gifts.

There can be no doubt that Zeno, motivated by his classical background and his emulation of the French dramatists, worked towards the rationalization of the libretto. He would also have been inclined towards that aim by the contemporary criticism of the melodramma with which he was acquainted. What must be questioned, however, is the extent to which the results of his effort did in fact constitute a reform. Zeno regarded himself as a reformer,[59] as do many others. Literary historians, as well as historians of opera, classify Zeno as the first eighteenth-century reformer of the genre, though most agree that his reform was not entirely successful. It is also stated that his concept of the form was inherited by Metastasio, who brought it to perfection with his melodrammi. This traditional critical view of Zeno has been challenged by Freeman who adduces evidence to show that, as far as the structure of Zeno's operas is concerned, his "reform" was in fact part of a process evolved by many librettists of his time, and that the ideas attributed to Zeno were already the subject of discussion and elaboration even before Zeno began his activities as a librettist.[60] Freeman's evidence is convincing, but as he admits, while Zeno may not have been the only librettist of his time to

seek the improvement of the musical drama, he was certainly "among the most skilful."[61] It was this skill that made his libretti more popular than those of his contemporaries. In this way he was more responsible than any other for the propagation of their ideals of a more literary libretto, free from the abuses and excesses of the bizarre operatic works of such librettists as Aurelio Aureli, Nicolò Minato and Carlo Maria Maggi. It is in this light that Zeno can be considered a "reformer" of the libretto. As a theorist he is neither profound nor original. Though a formidable figure in the erudite scholarly tradition of the eighteenth century, as far as the melodramma is concerned, Zeno was content to repeat the critical commonplaces of his time, and left no evidence of any attempt or desire to engage in a critical study of the essence of the melodramatic form. He met with some success in his attempts to improve the literary quality of the libretto, yet he failed to systematize in a unified critical study an original viewpoint on the relationship between words and music.

Paolo Antonio Rolli

Another attempt to raise the literary quality of the libretto took place in England through the efforts of Paolo Antonio Rolli.[1] His name is often linked with Metastasio due to their common background as pupils of Gravina, as improvisers of verse, and as writers of libretti. While Rolli never achieved the extraordinary success enjoyed by Metastasio, he was held in high regard, especially in England where he spent almost thirty years of his life: from 1715 to 1744. Through his activity as a librettist he was instrumental in establishing Italian opera in England. He was also a central figure in the cultural exchange between Italy and England in the first half of the eighteenth century. A vital member of the Italian literary milieu in London, he established relations with Antonio Conti, Scipione Maffei and Giuseppe Riva during their visits to England.[2]

As a lyric poet, Rolli's fame was considerable. Martello compared him to the seventeenth-century poet Gabriello Chiabrera, in whose works the Arcadians saw embodiment of the poetic ideals they sought to emulate.[3] Modern scholarship now recognizes Rolli's importance in the development of Arcadian poetry,[4] along with the contribution made to literary studies by his editions of classical Latin and Italian authors, and his Italian translations from Latin and English. The first complete translation into Italian of Milton's Paradise Lost stands out among them, and Rolli's annotations make it a pioneer work in Italian criticism of

Milton.[5]

The importance of Rolli in the history of melodramma lies in his contribution to the establishment of Italian opera in England. For twenty-four years in London, Rolli was engaged as librettist, first by the Royal Academy of Music, and later by the Opera of the Nobility. The Academy of Music (1720-28), under the directorship of Handel, with Rolli as the theatre poet, was responsible for the emergence of Italian opera (still sung completely, or in part, in English until only a few years earlier) as the vogue in London society.[6] Rolli collaborated with Handel in at least six musical dramas, including Handel's last opera Deidamia (1741). However, the twenty-year relationship between Handel and Rolli was not a warm one. Throughout the entire period Rolli remained very critical of Handel in his private correspondence, though he did not oppose him publicly.[7] Rolli's operatic activity included the composition of some twenty-seven libretti and several adaptations. His reputation as a librettist in London is shown by the acclaim which his operas received, by the increases in his salary, and by the recognition granted him by his contemporaries.[8] Even Alexander Pope acknowledged--albeit in oblique fashion--Rolli's position as arbiter of operatic taste in England.[9]

Although a few of the epigrams in his Marziale in Albion deal with musical life in London, Rolli did not leave any critical writing on melodramma.[10] His attitude towards the form must therefore be gleaned mainly from his correspon-

dence.[11] In his letters, especially in those to his friend Riva,[12] Rolli frequently expresses his distaste for the operatic world with its petty intrigues and quarrels. On one occasion he describes the preparations for the production of Il Dramma dell'Amore e Maestà, giving an insight into the machinations and manoeuvring behind the scenes, and the compromises which had to be made by the authors of the opera:

> I must tell you that Margherita, in conjunction with our Senesino, proposed the opera of "Amore e Maestà". Which opera cannot be performed as at Florence, because it would then have so much endless recitative and so few arias, that Senesino would have only four in all. I was therefore instructed to polish it up and in accord with them both I removed and added and changed as was necessary. The Alpine Faun [Handel], according to the ancient system which he always proposes, in order to show that what has been done is the same as it was before, proposed Polani to rearrange and direct the opera. Our Senesino, naturally enough, was furious: the opera had been proposed by him, new music was necessary for the additional part and for that he wanted it to be varied; he was opposed to making a pastiche of old arias . . . ; at his first outburst he [Handel] called him a damned Fool.[13]

In a letter to Muratori, Riva corroborated the librettist's view of English taste in Italian opera in the third decade of the eighteenth century:

> [O]peras that come from Italy cannot be of service in this theatre. It is necessary to revise or rather deform them in order to render them acceptable. Few verses of recitative and many arias is what they want over here, and that is the reason why it has never been possible to perform some of Signor Apostolo's best operas [librettos] and why Metastasio's two finest operas, that is to say his Dido and his Siroe, have met the same fate.[14]

The correspondence between Rolli and Riva offers practical

evidence of the existence in England of the same excesses Martello and Marcello condemned in eighteenth-century opera on the continent. Addison furnishes additional proof in The Spectator, when he satirizes the extravagant stage-décor and lack of verisimilitude.[15] Rolli's disillusionment with opera is expressed in other letters to Riva: "I am so disgusted by it all that I do not care to talk about it;"[16] "I perceive besides that either there will be no operas in the new season or there will be the same Company, which is most certainly going from bad to worse."[17] His cynical attitude towards the artistic value of melodramma is apparent in the remark that he would keep Riva informed of the London season of 1729-30: "I shall send you exact news without partiality. For I shall speak only of Results, that is whether the theatre was full or empty, on which all depends, be it good or bad."[18]

Rolli did not hold his own musical dramas in high regard. He referred to his libretti as "dramatic skeletons", and to himself as a "word-monger in music" [parolaio in musica].[19] Yet one cannot overlook the fact that the librettist to Handel and Porpora did not object to the publication of the first volume of his melodrammi in 1744, nor can we ignore his clear desire to make himself known as a librettist in Italy.[20] In a letter to the poet Innocenzo Frugoni, he laments that while elsewhere his ability in the musical drama is well-recognized, only Italy remains unaware of it.[21] In a later letter to the Princess Pignatelli, he offers to provide a libretto for special occasions--any special

occasion--adding:

> A chi non può disamare la sincerità non sarà disaggradevole che io sveli l'essere il fine di questa offerta quello di farmi conoscere all'Italia anche non inabile in ciò; ma vorrei se ne facesse la prima prova in occasione e in una Corte cospicua.

He is upset at being compared unfavourably with Metastasio, though he admits that the Imperial poet is considered to be the epitome of librettists:

> [E] quel che è peggio . . . , dassi ad intendere alla credula moltitudine, che nè vi sia, nè possa esservi altro abil uomo.[22]

While he does not explore the nature of melodramma to any extent, several points stand out in his letters. In 1745 he writes that he does not feel obliged to observe the unities of place and time because his composition is neither regular tragedy nor comedy, but a drama to be put to music:

> [P]erchè non avevo scritto nè tragedia nè comedia regolare, bensì un drama per musica: nuovo mostro di tante sconvenevoli sì, ma tutte dilettevolissime parti, del quale nè antica o greca o latina autorevole penna diede norma; nè moderna l'ha date ancora.[23]

Here Rolli declares independence from codified precepts, and justifies the existence of melodramma. The musical drama may not be an organic whole, but it pleases, and (in Rolli's view) pleasure is the purpose of poetry. Late in life, in the Preambulo to his Ode d'argomenti amorevoli he formulates the hedonistic ideal of his art:

> Quindi aggradevole sempre risorge
> in vaghe favole la poesia,

sollievo a porgere fra cure gravi,
e gioia all'ozio d'agiate menti.-[24]

Already in 1720, in the dedication of his libretto Astarto, he had revealed a similar ideal. With his melodrammi, he claimed that he sought

a render miti
ed a scemar con tocchi armoniosi
i turbati pensieri, ed a sgombrare
dubbi angosce timor tristezze e pene.[25]

Rolli justifies his attitude to the question of the unities by citing the Spanish and English playwrights who are aware that in order to please the spectators [dilettare al sommo], even the most intelligent of them, it is not necessary to observe the unities of time and place. In fact, Rolli states that verisimilitude is better served if the two unities are disregarded, since their observance leads to all manner of improbabilities, as Greek drama and classical French and Italian tragedy attest.

Rolli insists on the concept of verisimilitude, and on the notion that the dramatic situations should arise naturally from the plot. However, he defends the use of the marvellous as practised in French opera, because he believes that it widens the scope of the plot and the stage decorations.[26]

While recognizing that melodramma's association with music sets it apart from regular tragedy, Rolli does not concern himself with a theoretical discussion of the relation of words to music, beyond stating the commonplace notion that

the music ought to be an expression of the human passions depicted on the stage. One can conclude, therefore, that Rolli still regarded melodramma as essentially a literary form.

Thus, while Rolli accepts the concept of melodramma as a dramatic work in spite of its hybrid nature, he deplores the state of contemporary opera, both in England and in Italy, where poetry is considered to be secondary to the music. This attitude can be found in an interesting note to his translation of Sir Richard Steele's drama The Conscious Lovers. In the second scene of the second act, Rolli omits from his translation the following:

> [I]n the main, all the pleasure the best opera gives us is but mere sensation. Methinks it's pity the mind can't have a little more share in the entertainment. The music's certainly fine, but in my thoughts there's none of your composers come up to old Shakespeare and Otway.[27]

In his note, Rolli gives the rather curious explanation for the omission that he does not consider the lines to be consistent with the previous speeches in which Steele's characters praise the operas Griselda and Crispo (the libretti were by Rolli). Rolli believes that the lines were added by the actors, jealous of the popularity of opera. It cannot be denied that the omission constitutes a defence of opera, in spite of Rolli's next words in the note:

> Io però insisto d'avere a ragion criticato questo altrui disprezzo in tale occasione; ma non lo critico già, anzi lo accompagno e lo accresco . . ., e confesso che la più gran Parte anzi (eccettuandone

> forse tre in Cento) tutti i Drami Italiani sono un Continuato Nonsenso.[28]

But he adds immediately that the state of contemporary opera is due to the attitude of impresarios and opera directors who spare no expense for the music and the spectacle, but exert harsh economies on the libretto [la parte intellettuale delle Opere]. As a result of the poor remuneration offered to poets, they can only find librettists who are dolts and idiots [Idioti e Guastamestieri, inesauste fonti di Nonsenso],[29] for in the estimation of the individuals who control the opera, the intellectual part, that is the poetry, is of no import.[30] As proof of the low esteem in which librettists were held by directors of opera, Rolli cites the example of the early performances in England of Italian opera in translation:

> Quanto poi quella sola parte intellettuale delle Opere sia loro a cuore; potea pure a mio tempo vedersi dalle Traduzzioni [sic] inglesi de i Drami, alle quali era impiegato chi poco o nulla la italiana Poesia, e niente affatto la eleganza della sua propria lingua intendeva.[31]

Thus, according to Rolli, the undistinguished nature of contemporary opera is due to the inferior quality of the libretto.

In spite of the polished and melodic versification of his better dramas, Rolli's libretti are generally inferior to his lyric poetry, and lack dramatic force. Nevertheless, their influence in the establishment of Italian opera in England is undeniable. While he did not contribute by his

writings to the critical literature on melodramma, Rolli, with his respect for the classics, for their sense of decorum, equilibrium and naturalness, must be considered as a participant, along with Zeno and Metastasio, in the attempts to reform the excesses of the baroque opera in the first half of the eighteenth century.[32]

CHAPTER II

Pietro Metastasio

Pietro Metastasio

The figure of Pietro Metastasio dominated Italian melodramma in the eighteenth century. His career as a librettist spanned the greater part of his own century, and his influence remained strong well into the nineteenth, not only in Italy, but in the rest of Europe and Russia. His life and fortune have been the subject of exhaustive studies.[1] Nevertheless, certain biographical details should be emphasized as they are of significance for the purpose of the present study.

Metastasio was raised and educated by Gianvincenzo Gravina, one of the early eighteenth-century proponents of sung tragedy. Gravina gave his young protegé a thorough classical and Cartesian education, and encouraged his venture into writing tragedy. After the death of his mentor, Metastasio frequented the artistic milieu of Naples, established friendships with celebrated operatic singers of the time, and turned to writing melodramma. In view of his successes as a librettist, Apostolo Zeno had him called to Vienna to assist him as Imperial Poet to the Hapsburg Court, a position subsequently occupied by Metastasio from 1730 until his death fifty-two years later.

Although his cultural training was imbued with classicist and Cartesian thought, Metastasio was not unaware of the current of sensationalist philosophy transmitted from England through the sentimentalism of the French, stimulated by the work of the Abbé Du Bos. Metastasio's drama became

the embodiment of the perennial antithesis of reason and sentiment, developed in a manner that is classicist in its simplicity, clarity and measure.[2] Metastasio's attitude to the ancients is moderate, as can be seen in his remarks on Horace's Ars poetica:

> Quanto io disapprovo le affettate pedantesche idolatrie per gli antichi, tanto ne abborrisco il disprezzo, e parmi che, disordinati ancora come appariscono, i magistrali precetti del gran Venosino saran sempre oracoli utili e venerabili a tutta la posterità.[3]

As a result, he showed on the one hand a degree of respect towards antiquity which led him to seek numerous examples from the ancients to support his critical opinions. On the other hand, he claimed that the dicta of classical writers should be interpreted with common sense according to the different exigencies and taste of his own day. Thus, in his commentary on Chapter XIII of Aristotle's Poetics, he asserts:

> [C]onvien credere che, scrivendo oggi questo gran filosofo la sua Arte Poetica, adatterebbe il predetto suo canone a'costumi presenti e non a quelli di venti secoli indietro.[4]

This freedom of interpretation is far from revolutionary, nor are his comments on imitation of models, a practice which, in a letter to the Prince of Walachia, he claimed to have followed:

> [N]on sarà almen sfuggito a Vostra Altezza il lodevole desiderio che ho sempre nutrito di abbeverarmi alle antiche venerate sorgenti, e (per quanto permette a'dì nostri l'enorme cambiamento di gusto, di costumi e

> d'idee occorso nel lungo giro di tanti secoli) di calcar sempre le tracce de'primi insigni maestri, a'quali, senza taccia d'ingratitudine, non possiam negarci noi debitori di tutta la nostra gloria poetica.[5]

But it is to be noted that rather than the praiseworthiness of imitating models, it is the cautionary parenthesis that is repeated again and again in his writings. To Algarotti he issued a work of caution on "venerable authorities":

> [I]o vi dirò che negli scritti de'nostri divini maestri v'è numero considerabile di cose da rispettarsi sempre, e non imitarsi mai.[6]

Already at the age of eighteen, Metastasio questioned the possibility of following, in his own time, the example of antiquity with regard to the unities,[7] and he did not revise this opinion, even in his maturity. He reiterated that in his day one spoke to a different public, educated in a fashion quite distinct from that of ancient times.[8] His constant awareness of the exigencies of the living theatre affected his attitude to the classical world and his critical standpoint in general. This awareness permitted him to defend the use of literary practices or genres unknown to the ancients; in Metastasio's opinion, they did not have the last word on such matters. He cited Tacitus in support of this belief:

> Poiché (come Tacito saviamente asserisce) non tutto ciò che han fatto gli antichi è sempre il migliore; ma l'età nostra ancora molte arti e maniere d'acquistar lode ha prodotte, degni d'imitarsi dá'posteri.[9]

Consequently, Metastasio could praise Guarini's Pastor fido as a masterpiece of literature, in spite of its alleged violation of various canons of poetry.[10]

In so far as his own works were concerned, Metastasio was hurt by the frequent accusation that his dramas were imitations of French theatre transplanted to the Italian stage.[11] He admitted to having prepared himself for the dramatist's career by reading the plays of the Greeks, Italians, Spanish and French in their own languages, and the English in translation. However, he denied that his work was an imitation, claiming that his theatrical output was the result of his own travail.[12] While Metastasio admired the tragedies of Corneille and Racine, he felt that French theatre was bound too rigorously to poetic theories.[13] Metastasio always advocated that judgements about antiquity and art be founded on common sense, good taste and sensibility, criteria on which he bases the selection of material for his own dramas and their presentation.[14] It is precisely because the pre-romantic writers did not fall in with his classical ideals of harmony, clarity and measure that Metastasio expressed reservations about their writings.[15] Nor did he feel sympathy for the ideals of the Enlightenment.[16]

In any study of the critical attitudes towards opera in the eighteenth century, Metastasio stands out by virtue of his complete identification with the form. Not only did he make of melodramma his career, but also his life's work and main personal interest. Unlike Zeno who, in his extensive

correspondence, writes only sporadically of his libretti or about opera in general, Metastasio in his letters shows that melodramma was his constant concern and preoccupation. Yet he left no systematic treatise as such on his theories of musical drama.[17] It is possible, nevertheless, to reach certain conclusions concerning his ideas on melodramma from an examination of his copious correspondence,[18] the notes to his translation of Horace's Ars poetica,[19] his commentary on Aristotle's Poetics, his personal notes on ancient Greek drama,[20] and from the analysis of certain aspects of some of his libretti.

Although his remarks on the musical theatre are scattered throughout his works, and do not follow any consistent expository plan or programme, the majority of them occur in the writings of his maturity, and it is primarily from these that any theory of Metastasio's melodramma must be constructed. As such, his writings do not constitute a proposal or plan of work for his libretti; rather thay are to be taken as an explanation and justification of what he was accomplishing (or had already accomplished) during his long career as a librettist. Even the greater part of his extant letters date from the latter half of his life, by which time he had already written nineteen of his twenty-seven melodrammi.[21]

The single most important document for this study is his commentary on Aristotle's Poetics, the Estratto dell'Arte poetica d'Aristotile e considerazioni su la medesima. This was published in the twelfth volume of the Paris edition of

Metastasio's works in 1782, and was the result of many years of reworking and meditation on the part of the poet. From his letters we learn that by 1747 Metastasio had already envisaged the plan for his commentary. It was written by 1749, but still needed reworking in 1766, and was only declared complete in 1773.[22] Allied to the Estratto are the notes to his translation of Horace's Ars poetica. The textual history of Metastasio's annotated translation of Dell'Arte poetica: Epistola di Q. Orazio Flacco a'Pisoni is similar to that of the Estratto. The translation was in progress by 1746, and in the succeeding years Metastasio turned his attention to the annotations. In 1773 he wrote of the imminent completion of the notes, which in 1774 he declared to be finished.[23] From the genesis of both works to their completion, Metastasio insisted on the personal nature of these writings, and on the fact that they were not intended for publication.[24] By 1778, however, he had been persuaded to include them in his complete works.[25] One cannot underestimate the importance which Metastasio attached to these works. References to them appear repeatedly in his correspondence, and while he reiterated his refusal to publish them, he admitted that in these writings he was confuting the poetic sophisms of many very learned but inexperienced critics.[26] He admitted, furthermore, a certain reluctance to having these works consigned to oblivion.[27] In 1781 he singled out these critical works in an exhortation to his publisher:

> Quella che raccomando più d'ogn'altra cosa alla vostra gratitudine, amicizia ed intelligenza è la cura ed esattezza nella stampa dell'Estratto della Poetica d'Aristotile, e della versione di quella d'Orazio con le sue note. Il mio credito è vostra merce.[28]

The fruit of long deliberations and careful philological study, these works effectively constitute the closest Metastasio came to an exposition of his poetics.[29] While modern scholars generally recognize this fact, as well as the undisputed importance of Metastasio in the history of opera, the two works have not been studied in depth.[30] The more valuable contributions are to be found in the articles by Lucia Dondoni, who examines Metastasio's indebtedness to the poetics of Horace, but fails to recognize the full extent of the importance of the Estratto, and by Franco Gavazzeni who comes closest to a comprehension of their true significance.[31] Modern scholars also recognize the real function of Metastasio's critical writings, that is, as a justification of his own poetic works, and of melodramma as a poetic form.[32] Metastasio himself had stated as much in the preface to the Estratto:

> Il solo oggetto del mio lavoro è stato l'inquieto desiderio di giustificarmi, quanto è possible, con me medesimo, che sono naturalmente il men discreto (per mia sventura) di tutti i giudici miei: e quello di procurarmi la consolazione d'esser convinto che debbano contarsi fra le dolorose inevitabili conseguenze della comune umana debolezza tutti que'difetti, da'quali la non interrotta esperienza di cinquanta e più anni e la non mai deposta cura d'instruirmi non han bastato a difendermi.[33]

But contemporary critics have not underscored the singularity

of the Estratto as a poetics, a singularity that lies in Metastasio's use of Aristotle's Poetics, as well as the critical tradition from Castelvetro to Dacier, to defend the genre that was so dear to him.[34] It must be emphasized from the beginning that Metastasio does not attempt to give an interpretation of the Poetics that is scrupulously faithful to the Greek text. While the main thrust of Aristotle's argument in the Poetics concerns the organic unity of tragedy, Metastasio emphasizes the close relationship of word and music, a problem practically ignored by Aristotle. As a result, the Estratto becomes a profound and singularly intelligent defence of melodramma.

The passage quoted from Metastasio's preface to the the Estratto reveals the methods employed in composing both the libretti and the commentaries on Aristotle and Horace. Metastasio has relied throughout on experience and learning. In the case of the commentaries he reveals a sound knowledge of the critical tradition pertaining to Aristotle and Horace, as well as to the dramatic genre, especially of Castelvetro (and the importance of the Querelle sur Le Cid), of the controversy over Guarini's Pastor Fido, of D'Aubignac and Dacier. However, significantly, in the passage quoted above Metastasio places his fifty years of experience in the theatre above the importance of learning. The emphasis on experience, recurring frequently in his writing, is in tune with the scientific and empirical thought of the time, thus linking the classicist Metastasio with the Enlightenment that he abhorred.

Metastasio believes that all arts and sciences are the product of experience:

> Tutte le arti son figlie dell'esperienza, e tutte, molto più della madre, son sottoposte agli errori, quando da lei si scompagnano.

To support his argument he cites Aristotle's Metaphysics, Plato's Gorgias, and Sir Francis Bacon. He thus inveighs against the critics of theatre who set themselves up as legislators by simple virtue of their learning, but lacking practical experience:

> E non vi è né pur uno fra loro che, avendo tentato di mettere in pratica i canoni da lui prescritti, non gli abbia col proprio naufragio discreditati.[35]

A further manifestation of this empirical attitude is revealed by Metastasio's methodology in the Estratto with regard to the text of Aristotle. At all times he relies on the authority of the original Greek text, rather than trusting to the opinion of the exegetes. He compares his reading with that of the commentaries on the Poetics, but when confronted with doubtful passages, he reverts to theatrical experience as the ultimate arbiter.[36]

Metastasio made reason subject to experience because he believed that experience, in practice, is governed by physical reality, whereas mental processes which are not bound by constant considerations of actual reality are subject to the infinite fallacies that may lead them astray.[37] In this way, the great exponent of rationalism in eighteenth-

century Italian poetry displays the strong influence of empirical thought.

For Metastasio, then, the art of poetry proceeds from experience. Knowledge of poetic precepts is not sufficient to make a poet, if he is not endowed with the natural gift of common sense.[38] While Metastasio admits that the imagination lies at the basis of poetry, he questions the validity of the Platonic concept relating the origin of poetic frenzy to divine inspiration. He insists that the imagination of the poet must be controlled by reason tempered by experience, or the poetic frenzy will degenerate into madness. Common sense will ensure that the equilibrium of reason is maintained in the process of poetic invention.[39]

In the Estratto Metastasio examines the nature of poetry, as well as the principles of imitation and verisimilitude. Poetry, he concludes, is an imitative art, as are painting and sculpture and music. In this he is in accord with the majority of eighteenth-century critics, especially those of the first half of the century, as exemplified in Charles Batteux' Les Beaux Arts réduits à même principe (Paris, 1746). Metastasio then examines the characteristics that differentiate poetry from the other imitative arts. In his view, the most valid distinction between the imitative arts is provided by the different mediums employed in the imitation. Thus, colour is the medium of a painter, verse that of a poet, marble that of a sculptor. All that can be presented in words ordered according to the laws of metre is

the material of poetry, and in like manner, all that can be represented by paint on canvas is the material of painting. Metastasio does not believe that the subject-matter is sufficient to permit a true distinction among the imitative arts, since the subject-matter of poetry can also be that of painting, sculpture and others. The true distinctive quality of poetry, then, is

> la misurata, armoniosa favella con la quale i primi uomini inventori della poesia, inclinati per natura al canto ed alla imitazione, hanno imitato, cantando, il semplice parlar naturale.[40]

In the Poetics Aristotle defines the mediums of imitation in poetry as rhythm, language and music, but then passes on to other topics. Metastasio, on the other hand, dwells on these mediums, giving definitions of each term, and differentiating between "harmony" and "melody". He points out that all these terms refer both to music and to language, for music is the art which regulates the timing and sound (frequency and pitch) of both voices and instruments. Here is a first indication of the direction Metastasio is taking in his commentary on the Poetics.

Metastasio concludes that the medium of poetry is the word. But it is a specific language that forms the material of poetry: a poetical language, subject to rhythm and metre. As such it is different from the language of prose, which is subject only to rhythm.[41] Poetical language is subject also to harmony. Metastasio explains that by harmony he does not refer to the contemporary musical practice forming the basis

of counterpoint, but to the concept as understood by the ancients. As Padre Martini had shown, by harmony the ancients referred simply to the gradation of the single voice as it moves up and down the scale:

> [I]ntendevano unicamente la convenienza che debbono avere fra loro i gradi successivi d'una voce sola nel salir dal grave all'acuto, o nello scendere dall'acuto al grave, per non uscire senza regola dal ricevuto armonico sistema de'tuoni.[42]

The medium of poetry, then, is the word subject to the laws of metre, rhythm and harmony. The regular proportions of the language that ensues creates a form of internal song, producing a poetic language that is a "singing" language [lingua canora], which reproduces in harmonious terms the natural speech of man. Moreover, this poetic language is for Metastasio a magical language [incantatrice favella] that is quite capable of imparting pleasure by its own beauty, even though it were expressing nothing more than the imitation of natural discourse.[43] This is an interesting interpretation of a concept held by Metastasio's teacher. For Gravina, the art of poetry is the enchantress; for Metastasio it is the medium of poetry, the poetical language itself that has magical power over the souls of men. In this way, Metastasio lays the groundwork for the defence of the mediums of melodramma: music and poetry together.

By means of amplificatio on Aristotle's text Metastasio attempts to establish the natural affinity between words and music. In his commentary on Chapter IV of the Poetics,

Metastasio again directs his argument towards his view of the relationship between words and music. He laments the fact that, while Aristotle asserted that the creation of poetry was due to the natural instinct inherent in man for imitation and music, Aristotle discusses at length only the first of the two causes: man's inclination to imitation. Metastasio attempts to explain Aristotle's failure to treat music more fully by stating that the philosopher believed the second inclination of man to be already known and apparent to all, and therefore not in need of proof.[44] Metastasio, however, attempts to prove it. While in this passage Aristotle discusses only the pleasure that is occasioned by imitation, Metastasio attributes to the philosopher the statement that music too gives pleasure. He then turns to Castelvetro's commentary on the Poetics to reinforce his own position on poetry and music.[45] Recognizing the naturalistic strain in Castelvetro's philosophical system, Metastasio stresses the passage on the natural proximity of the poetic word and music, in which he sees Castelvetro going beyond the idea of man's natural inclination to music for pleasure to present an additional reason for the linking of poetry and music.[46] The association, he argues, arises out of an essential, physical, indispensable necessity. The poet always addresses a public; man speaks differently in public than he does in private conversation. In other words, Metastasio explains, a speaker cannot be comprehended by his public unless he sustains and projects the voice with greater

impetus than in normal speech. The voice thus employed becomes more rigid and less flexible and uses a system or progressions infinitely different from those of intimate speech, so different, in fact, that its tones can be musically transcribed. Intimate speech, on the other hand, is so subtle in its tonal variations that, though these are intuitively heard and understood by the human ear, they defy transcription into musical notes.

Now a voice altered to address an audience has need of regulation to keep it from uttering dissonances and improper sounds. Such regulation is provided by music, a music so necessary that nature itself suggests it. Every orator, every town-crier, every street-vendor makes use of a certain music. Even actors avail themselves of a music which they call declamation. Metastasio claims, however, that declamation is an uncertain form of music for it depends upon the dubious judgement of the actor's ear. He concludes by directing the argument to the topic that interests him most, that is, melodramma:

> Questa fisica e tanto vera quanto lucida prova, aggiunta alle infinite altre che la confermano, rende visibile l'errore di quei critici che hanno francamente deciso che degli antichi drammi non si cantavano se non se i cori.

Metastasio proceeds to refute these errors and to elaborate his own thesis that ancient tragedy was sung throughout. He does so first by reiterating his belief in the natural affinity of word and music that exists in poetry:

> [D]el canto dà manifesto indizio ogni verso col suono che naturalmente dal solo suo metro risulta.[47]

Secondly, by adducing his interpretation of passages from Aristotle's Problems and from such classical authors as Cicero, Ovid, Livy, Suetonius and Lucianus to support his position.[48] He also insists on the fact that in the Poetics Aristotle classifies music as one of the six elements that run throughout the tragedy. As further proof, he adduces his interpretation of the controversial final paragraph of Chapter VI of the Poetics. In this chapter Aristotle discusses the order of importance of the six elements and places the greatest emphasis on plot. He then speaks briefly of character, thought and diction. In the final paragraph we read: "Melody is the greatest of the pleasurable accessories of Tragedy."[49] Aristotle's argument leads immediately to a brief discussion of spectacle.

Castelvetro, in his commentary on the Poetics, refers to the opposing interpretations that had arisen over the identification of "the pleasurable accessories."[50] Metastasio interprets the passage in the following manner:

> Dice [Aristotile] in oltre che dopo l'azione, delle cinque altre parti di qualità considerate nel corso intero del dramma, la parte più soave, più dolce e più allettatrice è la musica.[51]

The exact phrasing of this quotation reveals the extent to which Metastasio imposes a meaning which goes beyond the basic text of Aristotle in order to reinforce his own belief that classical tragedy was sung in its entirety.

The librettist moves on to a clarification of the concept of imitation. Metastasio considers such a clarification necessary in order to avoid the very common danger of attributing to the imitation the characteristics of the copy. The discussion is of the utmost importance to Metastasio's poetics of melodramma.

Metastasio explains the difference between the art of the imitator and the art of the copyist in the following terms:

> L'arte del copista si propone unicamente di riprodurre con esattezza un originale.
> L'arte dell'imitatore si propone di dar solo la somiglianza possibile del suo originale ad una special materia, da quella dell'original differente, che elegge per la sua imitazione.[52]

In other words (as Metastasio proceeds to elaborate) the copy reproduces the original by avoiding all that could make the copy different, and achieves its highest excellence when it creates such an illusion that it can be taken for the original. The excellence of an imitation is not found in the exactness of its reproduction of the original, but in the similarity to a possible (and not always actual) original that it achieves without changing the nature of the medium employed in the imitative process. Thus, Metastasio cites the example of an imitator who, in making a sculpture of Hercules in marble, does not hide the nature of his medium, but allows the whiteness and texture of the marble to show the difficulty he had to overcome in creating his imitation of a human form. The imitator does not, in Metastasio's

words, attempt to make his public think that he is creating a copy by painting the marble the colour of human flesh, or by giving his sculpture eyes of glass to simulate the shine of human eyes. What the medium cannot reproduce of the original is supplied by the imagination of the beholder who appreciates the limits inherent in the medium of reproduction and does not expect to view an exact replica of the original.

As we have seen, Metastasio identifies the medium of imitation in poetry as the word, subject to certain formal restrictions of metre and rhythm. Metastasio imposes a further limitation upon this medium by insisting on a style of expression which he describes as pure and noble, clear, elegant and sublime.[53] A poetic language, therefore, should be an idealized idiom, not a reproduction, but an embellished imitation of normal discourse.[54] Due to the fact that dramatic poets should imitate natural discourse as closely as possible, the vocabulary of the dramatist could be drawn from a wider repertory than that of the lyric poet. Therefore, while Metastasio admitted to consulting the Vocabulario della Crusca, he also admitted to using words not accepted by the arbiters of the Italian language.[55] The important point was that the style not be debased. Beauty of style, he wrote to Ippolito Pindemonte, is the prime material for the poet's imitations.[56] It is this cultured, elevated language that possesses magical powers. In this way Metastasio justifies the poetic language he employed in his libretti: cultured and literary, but at the same time simple, limited and selective, chosen to appeal

to the average public, rather than to the connoisseurs of poetry.[57] The maintenance of this "elegant and elevated style", as he himself describes it, must take precedence over other considerations such as verisimilitude. According to Metastasio's concept of imitation, therefore, shepherds who speak in noble and cultured phrases are entirely plausible.[58] In this he echoes Guarini's position in the literary querelle over the Pastor fido. The poet must uphold the principle of verisimilitude only in so far as he does not destroy the medium of imitation.[59] For Metastasio, this medium is an elegant, elevated poetic language.

The discussion of verisimilitude leads Metastasio to deal with the charge of implausibility levelled at the melodramma because its heroes go to their death singing [vanno cantando a morire]. Metastasio attributes this negative judgement to an imperfect understanding on the part of the critics of the nature of imitation and verisimilitude. Once these two concepts have been properly understood, in Metastasio's terms, it becomes clear that the union of poetry and music is not only plausible, but natural and necessary. The audience, moreover, can only expect drama to imitate the actions of men in so far as the medium used is capable of doing so. For, if the verisimilar had all the qualities of the original, the audience would experience only the usual pleasure occasioned by the sight of the real object, not that caused by the appreciation of artistic imitation, of the artful representation of reality carried out through fiction.[60]

Thus, from his interpretation of the nature of poetry, imitation and verisimilitude in the Poetics of Aristotle, Metastasio draws his singular justification for the melodramma as an artistic form.

Nevertheless, Metastasio's interpretation of verisimilitude does not deny that similarity to reality is indispensable in all poetic inventions.[61] The question of verisimilitude is of great importance to Metastasio in the composition and performance of his own libretti. In his Osservazioni sul teatro greco he indicates where the ancient dramatists failed to observe this principle. In his own works he shows where he has adhered to the verisimilar, defending his works from criticism on precisely this point, and giving directions to the performers in order to ensure that the principle, as he conceived it, be maintained.[62]

The Poetics of Aristotle is above all a treatise on tragedy, yet in the Estratto, Metastasio returns again and again to melodramma. It is of value, therefore, to examine his attitude towards melodramma and tragedy. It is evident that Metastasio associated the musical drama with Greek tragedy and attempted to justify its existence on the basis of the practice of Greek tragedy as he understood it. While he was certainly aware that the identification of melodramma with a literary genre was one of the major concerns of the literary critics of his time, no discussion of this point is to be found in his writings. However, a defence of artistic forms which do not agree with classical genres, but which

experience proves to be valid, can be found in his remarks on commedie lagrimose, or popular French bourgeois comedy:

> Per altro son già diversi anni che coteste commedie lagrimose, tanto secondo il nostro filosofo alla comica natura contrarie, fanno su i teatri di Francia ed altrove grata ed applaudita comparsa; ed io credo che una costante esperienza meriti rispetto, anche a fronte d'un autorevole raziocinio, sempre assai più di quella a qualche nascosta fallacia soggetto. E, quando è giustificato dall'evento, dee sommamente commendarsi il felice ardire di chi mostra, a suo rischio, che può tal volta un vigoroso ingegno uscir lodevolmente dai troppo angusti limiti fra'quali si trova con suo svantaggio ristretto dall'autorità e dal costume; altrimenti i primi tentativi d'ogni arte sarebbero eternamente gli ultimi segni delle nostre speranze: e tutta quella immensa parte del mondo che fra le colonne d'Ercole non è racchiusa, sarebbe stata creata inutilmente per noi.[63]

These words recall the querelle over the Pastor fido and Guarini's defence of the new genre of tragicomedy, first by Metastasio's demands that the poet should not be restricted by narrow limits, and second by his insistence that the audience's acceptance of a new genre is a valid argument for its legitimization as an artistic form. Metastasio's plea for artistic freedom from established genres also recalls Gravina's defence of the musical drama L'Endimione.

Metastasio generally refers to his dramatic works as drammi, but he thought of them as tragedies, as can be seen, for example, from a letter in which he speaks of tragic and comic theatre, and states that he has attempted to the best of his ability to make the former [teatri tragici] more rational.[64] We may cite also the following paragraph:

> Quando io da bel principio intrapresi a trattarlo, il nostro dramma musicale non era ancora tragedia; appena s'incominciava a soffrire che fossero escluse dall'intreccio di quello le parti ridicole. . . . Il nostro popolo, avvezzo a rallegrarsi in teatro, esigeva qualche riguardo da' poeti che volevano accostumarlo al severo della tragedia. . . . Uscito appena dalla mia prima adolescenza, io non mi credea permesso l'ardire di urtar di fronte il gusto popolare; onde procurava di compiacere i miei giudici anche a dispetto della naturale repugnanza. L'esperienza poi mi ha convinto che il popolo è molto più docile di quello che comunemente si crede; ond'ella troverà ben pochi esempi di cotesta mia compiacenza, e questi unicamente in alcuno de'primi miei drammi.[65]

In the Estratto Metastasio refers to Greek tragedy indiscriminately by the term tragedia or dramma. Furthermore, the qualities he sought in his musical dramas were those of tragedy, while the dramatic problems with which he dealt in his critical writings and correspondence were chiefly of a literary nature. Moreover, he was proud to point out that his dramas had been performed successfully in Italy without musical accompaniment:

> I miei drammi in tutta l'Italia, per quotidiana esperienza, sono di gran lunga più sicuri del pubblico favore recitati dâ'comici che cantati da'musici.[66]

Consequently, it would be quite incorrect to consider the Estratto dell'Arte poetica as a study of tragedy, unless we see tragedy in the Metastasian sense, that is to say, a particular tragic action accompanied by music. Bearing this in mind, we can now examine the dramatic problems discussed in the Estratto in relation to the composition of tragedy, and see how Metastasio applies these to melodramma.

In order to be acceptable, drama must have an harmo-

nious and logical structure. Thus, one of the more important issues to arise from the discussion of verisimilitude in the Estratto is the question of the three dramatic unities. Metastasio notes, quite correctly, that neither Aristotle nor any other antico maestro makes any mention of the unity of place. Aristotle refers briefly to the unity of time, but unity of action is the only one of the three on which he dwells in any detail.[67] In the Osservazioni sul teatro greco, and more briefly in the Estratto, Metastasio observes that ancient dramatists did not in fact adhere to these rules, or if they did (for example, by using a scena stabile), they created all manner of improbabilities. In the case of the unity of place, the poet concludes that the Greeks did not intend to keep to a single scene throughout the play, but that, physically unable to change stage-decorations with rapidity, they intended changes of scene to take place in the imagination of the spectators. In the Estratto, therefore, Metastasio praises the scene-changes of contemporary theatre, continuing the defence of the practice already expressed in the dedicatory letter to his first tragedy, Il Giustino.[68]

In Metastasio's opinion, the unity of action was the only valid precept. He considered that the unities of time and place had been propagated through the influence of erudite critics who, without practical theatrical experience had set themselves up as teachers of the art, critics, that is, who had deduced these rules from their erroneous belief that the object of poetic imitation was that of creating a repro-

duction of reality. Metastasio attributes their wide-spread acceptance among critics to the authority of Castelvetro's "subtleties" on the Poetics (with regard to the unity of time), and to the French critics.[69] In this discussion, Metastasio reveals his awareness of the rôle of D'Aubignac and Richelieu in the important dispute that arose in France in the seventeenth century over Corneille's tragicomedy Le Cid, Corneille's defence of his work, and the importance of the querelle sur Le Cid for the propagation of the concept of the three unities in France and Italy.

However, while Metastasio questioned the validity of the unities in theory, he attempted to adhere to them in his libretti, though not rigidly. Metastasio's unwillingness to abandon the unities in practice may have been dictated in part by the desire to safeguard his artistic productions from critical attack. Thus, while he writes in the Estratto that Aristotle's teaching concerning the duration of the action represented in a play [il termine d'un giro di sole] has proved in his experience to satisfy the imagination of both audience and poet, he adds:

> Ma per evitar le contese, che invincibilmente aborrisco, ho sempre per altro con somma cura procurato che quella porzione del tempo da me ne'miei drammi supposto, la quale trascendesse per avventura quello della rappresentazione, potesse dallo spettatore figurarsi passata in quegl'intervalli ne'quali, fra l'uno e l'altro gruppo di scene annodate insieme, il teatro rimane affatto voto d'attori.[70]

However, Metastasio's practice with regard to the unities was also dictated by his conviction that the creative act

must be governed by common sense and reason, and that it must not be allowed unlimited freedom:

> Ma dunque (esclameranno qui i rigoristi) . . . voi pretendete che debba concedersi una libertà illimitata alla moltiplicità delle azioni drammatiche, ed al tempo ed al luogo nel quale debbono esse compirsi. La conclusione (con pace de'miei oppositori, se ve ne sono) non è nelle regole della dialettica. Dal non creder io né utile, né verisimile, né necessario, né possibile il ridurre le azioni teatrali alla indivisibilità d'un punto matematico, non può legittimamente dedursi che, trascorrendo alla opposta estremità, io creda permessa al dramma tutta l'indefinita vastità degli spazi immaginari.[71]

Thus Metastasio, writing as a critic who is also an artist, defends the right of the poet to violate or observe these particular precepts in order to achieve his desired poetic effect. Innate common sense will guide the poet in the act of creation. While Metastasio's position on the unities is neither revolutionary nor original, his cautious defence of the poet's freedom from such strictures can be seen as an antecedent of the romantic polemic against the unities of time and place.

In his writings, Metastasio also deals with other dramatic problems: the number of acts into which drama should be divided, the choice of subject-matter, the suitability of the marvellous and mythological, characterization, dramatic structure, and the function of the chorus.[72] Significantly, the conclusions he reaches are based on classical criteria for the composition of tragedy, and these criteria he applies to both tragedy and his own libretti without distinction. The same can be said of the 'happy ending' [lieto fine], which

could be regarded as the trademark of Metastasio's melodramma, though he was not the originator of the practice which was already in vogue in the seventeenth-century Italian musical theatre.[73] The 'happy ending', however, was not a characteristic of melodramma alone. Already in 1554, in his Discorso intorno al comporre delle comedie, e delle tragedie, G. Giraldi Cintio had advocated the 'happy ending' for tragedy.[74] As an ending to tragedy, Metastasio defends it in the dedicatory letter of Il Giustino:

> Ho voluto ancora farla di fine lieto, non temendo che perciò dovesse perdere il nome di tragedia, che non dalle morti dalle stragi e da funesti fini, ma dal corso di fatti grandi e strepitosi e dalla rappresentazione di personaggi reali discende.[75]

In the Estratto Metastasio also points out that Aristotle himself praised highly the dramatic actions of Merope and Iphigenia in Tauride, both of which have happy endings, but he also calls into question what he considers Aristotle's excessive partiality for gruesome actions.[76] In spite of Il Giustino, however, Metastasio did not set out initially to write dramas with a happy ending, but the negative reaction of the public to the endings of his otherwise successful early dramas which depicted, for example, Dido's self-immolation on a funeral pyre, and Cato's bleeding to death on stage, converted Metastasio to the use of the happy ending.[77]

This divergence of opinion on the ending suitable for tragedy stems from Metastasio's interpretation of catharsis.

He candidly admits that he wished that Aristotle had been more specific on the meaning of this concept.[78] Metastasio cannot believe that by catharsis Aristotle meant the destruction of passions in man, for in that case man himself would be destroyed.[79] If he meant the right-ordering of passions, then why did he limit the means to attain this goal only to compassion and terror? He adds:

> Tutto il rispetto giustissimo che io mi sento per questo gran filosofo non basta a farmi credere che non possa la tragedia valersi d'altri istromenti per le sue operazioni che del solo terrore e della sola pietà. Parmi . . . che l'ammirazione della virtù, rappresentata in mille diversissimi aspetti, come nell'amicizia, nella gratitudine, nell'amor della patria, nella costanza ne'disastri, nella generosità co'nemici, ed in tante altre sue commendabili modificazioni; e l'aborrimento all'incontro delle malvagie disposizioni del cuore umano, che fanno a quelle assai spesso impedimento e contrasto, parmi (dico) che siano tutti mezzi efficaci e lodevoli per dilettare non meno che per giovare; senza condannar lo spettatore a dovere inorridire eternamente, ed eternamente a compiangere.[80]

Obviously Metastasio subscribed to the eighteenth-century opinion that art had two functions: to please and to be of utility to society. The useful end of tragedy he understood as being to portray examples of virtuous and desirable forms of conduct. His melodrammi are in fact the embodiment of this ideal:

> [Q]uando veggiamo (dico) le rappresentazioni d'azioni così lodevoli e luminose, s'ingradisce l'animo nostro nella gloria della nostra specie, che ne crediamo capace: ci lusinghiamo d'esser atti ancor noi ad eseguirle: e, nutriti di così nobili idee, si può anche sperar che tal volta ci rendiamo abili ad imitarle.[81]

Yet the musical drama had been criticized for being harmful to society because of its appeal to the senses alone with weak, effeminate music. Metastasio addresses himself also to this criticism by demonstrating how the union of word and music contributes to the fulfilment of the double goal of poetry. The word, enhanced by music, delights the ear and the soul, and this attracts an audience for the virtuous examples portrayed in the drama. Metastasio acts on the rhetorical component already stressed in Castelvetro's critical system: the work of art mustqreach a public. The best way that tragedy can impress an audience occurs when the poetic word increases its magnetism with the aid of its natural ally, music. As already mentioned, in Chapter VI of the Estratto, Metastasio attributes to Aristotle the idea of the allure of music [la parte più soave, più dolce e più allettatrice è la musica]. Music thus becomes an element for increasing the rhetorical effectiveness of the drama, in so far as it may widen the scope of the captatio benevolentiae and render more intimate the process of persuasion of the audience. In this way, by deploying the weapons in the armoury of contemporary criticism--rhetoric and the appeal to classical authorities--Metastasio arrives at a position which constitutes the greatest defence and justification of melodramma (in neo-classical terms) in the eighteenth century.

The basic assumption of the Estratto, then, is that the word has a definite musical rhythm. By means of his interpretation of classical culture, Metastasio attempts to

prove that the development of the natural rhythm of the word in an artistic whole does not signify going against nature, nor the production of an artificial form. On the contrary, it signifies the creation of a legitimate work of art.

In proposing this naturalistic justification of the union of words and music, Metastasio appears to be attuned to the scientific research of his time. Whether known to him or not, in England there were a number of writers, philosophers and critics who were exploring precisely this problem. The surge of interest in the arts which arose in the mid-eighteenth century led to a renewed study of the definition of the arts, their history and their similarities and correspondences. In their investigations into the correspondences between the arts, these writers found parallels between poetry and music, especially since both these arts imitate or express passions.[822] Herbert M. Schueller divides these parallels into two categories. The first one comprises reflections upon the specific mediums or materials of the two arts; the second, upon their organization and composition.[83]

As for materials, it was found that both poetry and music used pitch, measure and time, and that the division of poetry into stanzas was similar to the division of music into "musical strains". As far as organization and composition was concerned, it was thought that the matter of poetry resembled harmony in music, that poetic style was the equivalent of musical expression, and that the subject of poetry and music were similar. While it was agreed that both music

and poetry had their origins in man's need for expression, poetry was believed to be superior in this respect to music. Poetry appealed to the rational, while music, unarticulated expression in sound, appealed to the irrational, and needed the aid of words to be intelligible. Thus, while poetry was held to be the greatest of the individual arts because it possessed both expressive and rational elements, the combination of poetry and music created a superior art form because it joined the rational element of poetry to the purely expressive element of music. This art form--song--was richer in expressive powers than either poetry or music alone. Among the exponents of these investigations were Charles Avison, Hildebrand Jacob, James Harris, the two John Browns, Daniel Webb, James Beattie, Sir William Jones, John Gunn, Archibald Alison, and Thomas Twining.[84]

Similar investigations were in progress in France, especially with reference to opera.[85] Poetry and music were seen to have a basic affinity arising out of their common origins in the history of mankind. Music was the unarticulated language and expression of passion. By appealing to the emotions directly, rather than to the intellect, music held more power over man, and was a more effective form of expression than poetry. By the same token, however, it was a more vague and indefinite means of communication than poetry. Consequently, music had need of words to clarify its meaning for the intellect. The union of music and poetry was thus the most effective and most powerful expression at

man's disposal, since it appealed both to the emotions and the intellect. Opera, in consequence, was held to be a more intense and complete form of expression than each of its component arts by themselves. Friedrich Melchior Grimm could even conclude that opera was the highest art form. As Enrico Fubini contends, opera, for the Encyclopedists, was the reflection, however pale and distorted, of the most authentic and primitive expression of man.[86] These speculations occupied the attention of such Encyclopedists as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Denis Diderot and Friedrich Melchior Grimm, as well as such French philosophers and writers as Jean-Baptiste Du Bos, François-Jean Chastellux, Laurent Garcin, and Bernard Germain Lacepède.[87]

The conclusions of these English and French investigations concurred with the naturalistic justification Metastasio proposed for the union of word and music. This brief summary may help clarify the fact that, whether he availed himself of them or not, contributions coming from the tradition of French Cartesian rationalism and English empiricism could have provided Metastasio with a critical base for the development of his theories much broader than that available to the late Renaissance commentators on music and poetry.[88]

So far we have examined Metastasio's concept of the nature of poetry and of its essential link with music, a concept which leads him to a critical justification of melodramma. While it is true that as a dramatist Metastasio was

interested chiefly in the poetry or libretto, he nevertheless held specific views on the nature of music and its function as an accompaniment to poetry.[89] His most significant comments on music are to be found in the Estratto, and in five letters: one to Johann Adolph Hasse, dated 20 October 1749, two to François Jean Chastellux, dated 15 July 1765 and 29 January 1766, and two to Saverio Mattei, dated 5 April 1770 and 9 July 1770. Scattered references can also be found in other correspondence.

In the Estratto, Metastasio reveals that like most of his contemporaries, he regarded music as an imitative art. Furthermore, he set out to prove through his interpretation of Aristotle the inherent relationship between music and poetry that made their union in the melodramma natural and necessary. In 1767 he wrote to Daniel Schiebeler that he knew of no poetry without music.[90] It is important to realize, however, that Metastasio regarded music from two different viewpoints. On the one hand, there is the natural music of the word as it is inflected in declamation. On the other, there is the musical accompaniment, played on instruments. Ideally, for Metastasio, the instrumental accompaniment should match as closely as possible the natural inflection of the declamation, an inflection which in turn is closely linked to the meaning of the word.

Although in the Estratto Metastasio limits his explanation of declamation to the mechanical or physical, it is clear that he aspired to an expressive declamation. In his

letter of 1749 to Hasse, he offers (at Hasse's request) directions on the composition of the music for Attilio Regolo. He begins by disclaiming any right to instruct the famous composer who through his music has infused life into so many compositions. High praise indeed, from a poet like Metastasio. He continues with a description of the characters in Attilio Regolo, and adds:

> Queste sono in generale le fisonomie che io mi era proposto di ritrarre. Ma voi sapete che il pennello non va sempre fedelmente su le tracce della mente. Or tocca a voi, non meno eccellente artefice che perfetto amico, l'abbigliare con tal maestria i miei personaggi che, se non da'tratti del volto, dagli ornamenti almeno e dalle vesti siano distintamente riconosciuti.

Metastasio then goes on to speak about his conception of the musical accompaniment required. He would like to have the recitatives accompanied by instruments in certain passages, where they would give warmth to an emotionally charged speech by accompanying it, by reinforcing it, or even, at times, by remaining silent, thus allowing the emotive power of the word to speak for itself. Metastasio conceives the rôle of the instruments as one of support for a character in a drama. They must anticipate, assist and complement him in his expressions of doubt, reflection and suspense. But the music must not take the upper hand; it must never cause the actor to wait in his recitation for the instruments to cease, lest the speech should lose its effectiveness and the poetry be lost in the musical setting:

> Tutto il calore dell'orazione s'intepidirebbe, e gl'istrumenti in vece [sic] di animare snerverebbero il recitativo, che diverrebbe un quadro spartito, nascosto e affogato nella cornice, onde sarebbe più vantaggioso in tal caso che non ne avesse.

The poet also recommends a small "sinfonia" to accompany the entrance of Attilio into the senate, with instrumentation interpreting the state of mind of Regolo who returns as a slave to the place where once he had sat as consul.[91] That the music should express the meaning of the words of the text was a common requirement demanded of it by previous critics of opera. Metastasio goes one step further in asking that the music express the state of mind of the speaker,

> variando per altro di movimenti e di modulazione, a seconda non già delle mere parole, come fanno, credendo di fare ottimamente, gli altri scrittori di musica, ma a seconda bensì della situazione dell'animo di chi quelle parole pronuncia.

He also requests that the chorus be made a part of the drama, so that rather than being merely superfluous, it becomes an essential element of the tragic action.[92]

From this letter one can see the emphasis Metastasio places on the rhetorical function of the musical accompaniment. The music must strive to strengthen the effectiveness of the poetry and its impact on the audience. One can also see Metastasio's obvious concern for the artistic unity of the work. All elements must work in harmony for the most effective representation of a dramatic situation. But in Metastasio's understanding, this meant an organic union which would subordinate the music and the acting to the dramatic

text.

In the first letter to Chastellux we have an explicit statement of Metastasio's attitude to the rôle of music in drama. In reply to the French critic's claims for the supremacy of music, in his Essai sur l'union de la poésie et de la musique (1765), Metastasio writes:

> Quando la musica, riveritissimo signor cavaliere, aspira nel dramma alle prime parti in concorso della poesia, distrugge questa e se stessa. È un assurdo troppo solenne, che pretendano le vesti la principal considerazione a gara della persona per cui sono fatte.

In other words, the music of the opera should be composed to fit the poetry and be subject to the poetry. The arie di bravura, the frequent use of which was condemned by Chastellux himself, are the result, in Metastasio's opinion, of music's attempting to free itself from the supremacy of poetry. Ignoring characterization, plot, passion, meaning and reason, modern music sets out to fascinate by mere technical virtuosity. And this, continues Metastasio, is the main cause of the decadence of the contemporary theatre. For it is not sufficient to please the ear of the spectator; one must also affect the mind and the heart of the spectator:

> I piaceri che non giungono a far impressione su la mente e sul cuore sono di corta durata, e gli uomini, come corporei, si lasciano, è vero, facilmente sorprendere dalle improvvise dilettevoli meccaniche sensazioni, ma non rinunzian per sempre alla qualità di ragionevoli.[93]

In a letter to Farinelli, Metastasio echoes the above words:

> Io quando sento cantare, non son contento di stupir solamente, ma voglio che il cuore entri a far parte de'profitti dell'orecchie.[94]

Furthermore, Metastasio challenges Chastellux's opinion that the music is the principal interest in the opera, asserting that his own melodrammi are more successful recited than sung. He also questions whether the best operatic music, separated from its libretto, could stand the same test. In conclusion the poet suggests that if the excesses of music currently in vogue do not diminish, then drama should separate itself once and for all from its musical accompaniment to rely solely on the internal melody of poetry to achieve its effects.

In the second letter to Chastellux, Metastasio continues his defence of poetry as the primary art in the melodramma in reply to the renewed defence of music initiated by Chastellux in response to Metastasio's letter cited above. Metastasio begins by admitting to the rhetorical powers of music [un'arte ingegnosa, mirabile, dilettevole, incantatrice, capace di produrre da sé sola portenti]. He qualifies his remarks by writing that, in union with poetry, music can not only express and imitate human sentiments, but also illuminate and enlarge all the emotions of the human heart. However, Metastasio thinks that contemporary musicians abuse the richness of music, freeing it from its relationship with the word. In this way, a passion different from that expressed by the poetry is awakened in the listener, leaving him confused and unable to appreciate more than the technical virtuosity.

Metastasio condemns this practice, because he feels that the concept of the relationship of music and the word does not limit the scope of the musician, for:

> Non essendovi passione umana che non possa essere vivamente espressa e mirabilmente adornata da sì bell'arte in cento e cento diverse maniere, perché mai dovrassi soffrire l'insulto che quasi a bello studio essi fanno senza necessità alla ragione?

Metastasio then proceeds to place the seal of authority on his opinions by referring to the practice of antiquity, known also to Chastellux, of having the music vary according to the sentiments expressed in the drama. To Chastellux's argument that there should be a republic of the arts in which each art should function amicably in perfect independence, Metastasio replies that he prefers another form of government, that of a paternal supreme authority, for he cannot fault the axiom that the simplest and least complex machinery lasts longest and is the least imperfect. However, for the sake of argument, Metastasio examines the situation to be found in a republic. He reminds Chastellux that in difficult times the Romans elected a dictator, and that when they fell into the error of dividing this absolute authority between Fabius and Minutius they ran the risk of destruction. The composition of a drama is "a very difficult undertaking", according to Metastasio, and therefore needs a dictator. He then proceeds to imagine the state of affairs with music as the "dictator":

> Ma s'incarichi ella [musica] in tal caso della scelta del soggetto, dell'economia della favola; determini i personaggi da introdursi, i caratteri e le situazioni

> loro; immagini le decorazioni, inventi poi le sue cantilene, e commetta finalmente alla poesia di scrivere i suoi versi a seconda di quella.

He concludes:

> E se ricusa di farlo perchè di tante facoltà necessarie all'esecuzione di'un dramma non possiede che la sola scienza de'suoni, lasci la dittatura a chi le ha tutte, e sulle tracce del ravveduto Minucio confessi di non saper comandare, ed ubbidisca.[95]

Metastasio gives another indication that he considered his dramas as tragedies when he questions the validity of the French classification of musical drama as tragédie lyrique. He claims that in antiquity, the fact that a tragedy was accompanied by music did not create a separate classification. In spite of the emphasis he placed on music in the Estratto in his discussion of Aristotle's qualitative parts of tragedy, in the letter to Chastellux Metastasio contends that Aristotle lists music as one of the six components of tragedy, and its presence in a drama does not lend it any special weight. Therefore:

> Se in cotesto teatro lirico si rappresenta un'azione, se vi si annoda, se vi si scioglie una favola, se vi sono personaggi e caratteri, la musica è in casa altrui, e non vi può far da padrona.[96]

In other words, Metastasio aimed at a melodramma which, rather than being a complex union of two autonomous arts, was above all a work of poetry to which certain other arts were subject in order to contribute to its embellishment and to create a unified spectacle. All that he asked of music was

that it enhance the melody already inherent in the words. But the music of the second half of the eighteenth century was moving away from Metastasio's ideal, a fact that he clearly recognized and lamented.

In the first letter to Mattei, written--it is true--with a different purpose from the letters to Chastellux, Metastasio states that music is in fact subject to taste and is, as a result, in a constant state of change. When asked to judge the relative merits of ancient and modern music he declares it difficult, because he has no certain criteria on which to base an opinion. Metastasio is dealing here with music in general, and shows a certain unwillingness to make any qualitative judgements on the respective merits of modern music and of ancient music as he conceived it. However, in so far as the progress of operatic music is concerned there is no doubt where his preferences lie, and he holds the change in theatrical music responsible for the change in music in general:

> Il teatro è il trono della musica. Ivi spiega essa tutta la pompa delle incantatrici sue facoltà, ed indi il gusto regnante si propaga nel popolo.

For, as the improved acoustics of the smaller modern theatres favoured the development of greater virtuosity in the singers, music became more contrived and decorative. Metastasio also provides an answer to the earlier critics of opera who had proposed the classical ideal of the poet-musician as creator of sung tragedy:

> [C]oncludo che la musica allora dovesse esigere molto minore studio della nostra, nella quale per divenir mediocre artista convien che altri impieghi la metà della vita, e che fosse per conseguenza più semplice.[97]

The second letter to Mattei amplifies Metastasio's thoughts on the theatre as the arbiter of the fate of music, responsible for the changes in modern music.[98] These opinions point to the fact that for Metastasio music was inseparable from the word, and that he was unable to appreciate the new symphonic music that was flourishing around him. Vienna was a centre for the new musical tendencies; Gluck had already composed his reform-operas Orfeo (1762) and Alceste (1767). Metastasio meanwhile inveighed repeatedly in his letters against symphonic music:

> I musici invece di rappresentare e parlare in musica suonano sinfonie con la voce, e le parole con questo stile sono divenute affatto indifferenti,

he writes to an unnamed poet, adding that the impresarios no longer seem to need the librettist.[99]

There are several references to Gluck and his music in Metastasio's correspondence. The first, in 1748, records that Metastasio's Semiramide enjoyed great success in spite of Gluck's insufferable and barbaric score ["a dispetto d'una musica arcivandalica insopportabile."][100] The second reference announces to Farinelli that Gluck writes music with a marvellous but insane ardour.[101] Another letter to Farinelli describes Gluck's music in unflattering terms:

> [L]a musica è del Gluck maestro di cappella boemo, a cui la vivacità, lo strepito e la stravaganza ha [sic] servito di merito in più d'un teatro d'Europa.[102]

Again with reference to Gluck, a passage from Metastasio's letter to Count Bolognini dated 7 February 1776 is of special interest for its judgement of the supposed rivalry between the two operatic factions; it also reveals Metastasio's unwillingness to become involved in polemics:

> L'Autor dell'Alceste potrebbe creder miei i pareri poco favorevoli intorno al suo dramma, e dolersene: il che sommamente mi rincrescerebbe; tanto più ch'io non credo che mi convenga quella vittoria che mi si attribuisce nella supposta emulazione: poiché l'Autore l'à visibilmente evitata adottando a bello studio nella sua Alceste il genio tragico piú funesto: carriera diametralmente opposta alla mia, e che esclude ogni comparazione.[103]

Metastasio's favourite composers, besides Hasse, were the practitioners of the Neapolitan school of opera, Leo, Vinci, and the early Jommelli, who practiced a light, melliflous style in accordance with Metastasio's ideal of music. Their strength was melody, enhancing the voice. But Metastasio's "adorabile Jomella" allowed himself to be influenced by the trends of the new German school, a change which Metastasio lamented. Thanking Jommelli for two new arias that he had sent him, Metastasio writes in 1765:

> Confesso, mio caro Jomella, che questo stile m'imprime rispetto per lo scrittore; ma voi, quando vi piace, ne avete un altro che s'impadronisce subito del mio cuore senza bisogno delle riflessioni della mente.

Metastasio begs of his friend not to abandon the old style in

which he had no rivals. He admits that in the new style Jommelli still succeeds from time to time in expressing passions, but Metastasio feels that the orchestration interrupts the voice too frequently, and thus disperses whatever emotion may have been awakened in the listener. Metastasio concludes that in this new style Jommelli neglects his talent as a prodigious magician, in favour of a reputation as a master of musical technique.[104]

It is well-known that the importance given to the aria was generally blamed for the decadence of Italian opera in the eighteenth century. Yet Metastasio hastens to defend its existence, claiming that the origin of both aria and recitative may be found in ancient Greek tragedy. In a letter to Daniel Schiebeler, who had requested from Metastasio musical dramas without arias, he wrote:

> Le dirò solo succintamente ch'io non conosco poesia senza musica; che le nostre arie non sono inventate da noi; che i Greci cambiavano anch'essi di tratto in tratto la misura de'versi . . .; che a seconda delle passioni davano occasione a quella musica periodica che distingue l'aria dal resto . . . come si distinguono ora le arie da'recitativi.[105]

Metastasio does not make the very common and over-simplified attribution of the aria and the recitative to the mode used by the chorus and by the single actors respectively in Greek tragedy. With his refined interest in the metre and rhythm of the poetic line, and his excellent knowledge of the critical tradition, he attributes to each an equivalent in Greek tragedy based on its verse form. He does not rely exclusively

on Aristotle's Poetics to support his premise concerning the Greek origin of the two forms of poetic expression in the melodramma, but utilizes also the Problems, as well as the more recent evidence from the research of the scholarly Saverio Mattei who had discovered the existence of not only arias but also duets and trios in Greek tragedy.[106]

In the letter to Schiebeler, Metastasio admits that modern composers tend to create too great a difference between arias and recitative, but he continues:

> [N]on credo che debbasi riformare la maniera di scrivere in grazia d'un abuso che a lungo andare dovrà senza fallo essere riformato dalla natura: la quale expellas furca tamen usque recurrit.[107]

In his own works, however, Metastasio attempts to make his arias flow logically from the natural consequence of the recitative, thus attempting to abolish the fault of which Marcello had so eloquently complained in the Teatro alla moda. In a recent article, Raymond Monelle offers an explanation of the manner in which Metastasio succeeded in reconciling the problem of the aria and its musical embellishments without destroying the artistic unity of his work. Using as an illustration the opera Ezio in its 1755 Dresden setting by Hasse, Monelle studies a typical group of scenes containing five exit arias, leading to a change of stage setting. In his examination of each, he draws the conclusion that the "two most dramatic arias are in the middle; they are bordered by two other arias, connected with the action but inessential; and the final aria is a superfluous adornment, a pastoral

cliché." In studying the musical accompaniment of the same five arias, Monelle observes that the most emotional dramatic text is accompanied by the least independent music (that is, most closely reflecting the meaning of the words, and allowing the poetic text to dominate), while the musical accompaniment of the two inessential arias is more independent of the text and more ornamental. The final aria, "since it has no connections with the action . . . [places] the whole emphasis . . . on the music, especially the singer's roulades." On the basis of this study, therefore, Monelle concludes that the works of Metastasio, "consistent and inevitable in themselves, were also calculated to provide composer and performers with every chance to display their wares. . . ."[108] It would be this ability to reconcile artistic principles with popular taste which accounts for the renown enjoyed by Metastasio among both public and literary critics. On the strength of what he considers Metastasio's knowledgeable handling of the melodramma and its musical accompaniment, Monelle pleads for a reappraisal of Metastasian opera on the part of musicologists to parallel the rehabilitation of Metastasio as a poet already carried out by Italian critics.[109]

That Metastasio was especially concerned with the recitativesecan be seen from the correspondence to those involved in the performance of his dramas. In a letter to Farinelli he warns that the recitatives must be well rehearsed in order for everything to go as it should.[110] From a study of his libretti, we can conclude that Metastasio did indeed succeed

in giving equal importance to the aria and the recitative, and in imparting to each its own function: to the latter, that of carrying the story forward in a clear and rational manner, preparing the dramatic tension which the arias, expressing passion and sentiments, proceed to resolve. In this way, as Luigi Ronga claims, Metastasio imparted a balanced coherence to the recitative and aria, thus harmonizing the exigencies of eighteenth-century rationalism with those of eighteenth-century sensibility.[111]

In Metastasio's view the librettist obviously qualifies as a poet and dramatist. Again and again he applies the poetic precepts established by Aristotle in the Poetics to his own melodrammi. However, his conception of the dramatic poet is at variance with Aristotle's. First of all, because Metastasio considers all aspects of the drama to fall within the purview of the poet. An examination of his writings reveals that he thought constantly of his works as creations to be performed on the stage. He thus disagrees with the sixth chapter of the Poetics in which Aristotle places the question of the stage decorations beyond the concern and jurisdiction of the poet:

> [O]ggi che, col favore de'cambiamenti di scena, possiam noi scaricar gli spettatori dal peso di figurarsi i particolari diversi luoghi necessari alle azioni subalterne, parmi obbligo indispensabile del poeta l'immaginarle ed il comunicarne le idee agli artefici destinati ad eseguirle.[112]

Trained in his youth in perspective and mechanics by Gregorio

Caloprese, Metastasio included very specific stage directions in his libretti, giving detailed descriptions of costumes and properties, and even providing sketches of the scenery. He justified these directions by claiming that they were not intended to infringe in any way upon the creativity of the stage-designers, but to make clear the needs of the play in order that it be performed to advantage, ["perché le azioni rimangano chiare, decenti e visibili."][113] Because of his interest in the staging of his dramas, his knowledge of the techniques, and his insistence that the staging be subject to the story and that it should be decided by the poet, Metastasio was clearly ahead of his time. Arteaga already recognized his contribution to the development of stage décor.[114] Metastasio also showed the same interest not only in the musical accompaniment, but also in the actor-singers who performed his works, giving directions on the nature of the characterizations and training singers himself.[115]

Critical tradition held that in classical antiquity the dramatic poet was also a musician. Ronga suggests that Metastasio wished to be able to re-create that double rôle.[116] The librettist had studied under Porpora, he had composed some music, and he was able to judge both the quality of the music set to his verses, as well as the qualifications of the musicians who wrote the accompaniments to his dramas.[117] His knowledge of music was undoubtedly of great advantage to him in the composition of his libretti. Ronga claims that Metastasio chose his words and wrote his verses with the pur-

pose of anticipating, guiding and controlling the subsequent composition of the musical accompaniment.[118] This was as close as Metastasio could come to achieving the fusion of poet and musician.

Both for practical and aesthetic reasons, then, Metastasio strove to preserve the artistic coherence of the production as a whole. Nevertheless, while he would never have considered himself a hybrid poet, he was aware of the external circumstances which could affect his works. Therefore he was prepared to adapt and modify arias and entire libretti when required, albeit reluctantly. As usual, he found justification for concessions made to external exigencies in the practice of the ancients:

> È visibile che alcuni avvertimenti d'Orazio non riguardano l'arte necessaria ad uno scrittore per rendere perfetta in se stessa la sua tragedia; ma gli raccomandono bensì la giudiziosa cura di adattarla ad alcune estrinsiche accidentali circostanze che possono tal volta decidere della sua fortuna: come all'opportunità de'luoghi, ai costumi ed alle opinioni del popolo ed al comodo degli attori, dove, innanzi a cui, e da'quali dovrà essere rappresentata.[119]

The importance placed by the poet on rhetorical components in drama shows that the audience played a large rôle in his concept of theatre. The duty of the good poet, in Metastasio's opinion, is to give pleasure. But the obligation of the poet as a good citizen, is to use his talents to the advantage of society. In other words, he adheres to the Horatian ideal of combining utility and pleasure [*insegnar dilettando*].[120] Thus Metastasio stresses the obvious fact

that drama is aimed at an audience. However, he disagrees with Dacier's claims that poets should write only for the élite. Metastasio's audience is the general public which he calls the majority of the republic, and the most needy of being taught. As a reinforcement of his own opinion, he quotes from Aristotle's Politics on the value of the general populace as judges of music and poetry. He elaborates:

> Ed in fatti, ove ben si ragioni, il voto del popolo, a riguardo della poesia, è d'un peso indubitamente molto più considerabile che altri non crede. Il popolo è per l'ordinario il men corrotto d'ogni altro giudice. Non seduce il suo giudizio rivalità d'ingegno, non ostinazione di scuola, non confusione d'inutili, di falsi, di male intesi o male applicati precetti, non voglia di far pompa d'erudizione, non malignità contro i moderni, mascherata d'idolatria per gli antichi, né alcun altro de'tanti velenosi affetti del cuore umano, fomentati, anzi bene spesso prodotti dalla dottrina, quando non giunge ad esser sapienza.

With these words Metastasio struck at the erudite critics who judged works of art on the basis of prejudiced or sterile precepts. The true judges were the common people who relied on their emotions:

> Legge ed ascolta il popolo i poeti unicamente per dilettarsi: non se ne compiace se non quando sente commoversi: e benché s'inganni il più delle volte quando pretende di spiegar le cagioni del suo compiacimento, non s'inganna perciò in lui giammai la natura, quando si risente all'efficacia de'non conosciuti impulsi che l'han commossa.[121]

The melodramma was the popular theatre of the eighteenth century. With his defence of the powers of discernment inherent in the people who made up the majority of his audi-

ences, Metastasio provided a further practical justification of melodramma against the pontifications of literary critics.

Thus, in his letters and critical writings, Metastasio presents melodramma as an artistic form based on classical ideals of organic unity, stylistic excellence, and harmony. This defence of melodramma on critical grounds constitutes Metastasio's highly original contribution to the long and complex eighteenth-century polemic against the cattivo gusto of the Baroque, with its lack of taste and its irrationality. In the process, Metastasio displays a very impressive knowledge of the critical tradition which passes from the classics through the Renaissance and the Baroque period to his contemporaries. Scholars recognize that to a large degree Metastasio owed his classical education to Gravina. They also recognize that Gravina's patronage led to results in Metastasio as a poet that were probably quite different from those anticipated by his protector. However, it has not been fully appreciated by eighteenth century scholars that Gravina's teachings also formed a Metastasio who was a critic and theorist in his own right. For Gravina, tragedy was the supreme genre, and it was natural for him to encourage the young Metastasio to perfect his poetic talents as a tragedian. As it transpired, Gravina's pupil turned to melodramma, yet he used the critical background acquired from his first teacher to defend the genre of which Gravina did not entirely approve.

It is appropriate at this point to refer briefly to Carlo Goldoni, the other great eighteenth-century dramatist.[122]

Though his contributions to the body of critical literature on melodramma are minimal, he left some personal appraisals of Metastasio's accomplishments in the genre, as well as some observations on the eighteenth-century musical theatre in general. For this reason, a succinct examination of Goldoni's attitude to melodramma is in place at the end of a chapter on Metastasio.

Goldoni's admiration for the Imperial poet was, in fact, considerable. Indeed, in his Mémoires, he recalls how as a child he had dreamt of following in Metastasio's footsteps as a pupil of Gravina:

> Ah! si je pouvois devenir l'Ecolier de Gravina, l'homme le plus instruit en belles-lettres, et le plus savant dans l'Art Dramatique . . . Dieu! s'il me prenoit en affection comme il avoit pris Métastase! n'ai-je pas aussi des dispositions, du talent, du génie?[123]

Subsequently, in the dedication of his comedy Terenzio to Metastasio, Goldoni acknowledges Metastasio's supremacy as a dramatic poet:

> Voi, che occupato avete il primo seggio della Drammatica Poesia; Voi che l'avete resa cotanto amabile, adornandola di nuove grazie, senza punto scemarle la maestà sua conveniente; Voi in somma [sic] che il primo siete di quei che furono e lo sarete per molti secoli di quei che succederanno.[124]

Goldoni goes on to acclaim Metastasio for his reform of melodramma, and for having raised this type of drama above other dramatic compositions. The praise of Metastasio is not simply that of a conventional dedication. Throughout his long and

active life as a playwright, Goldoni had held Metastasio in high esteem. The dedication to Terenzio was written in 1754. Thirty-three years later, at the age of eighty, Goldoni reiterated his opinion of Metastasio as a reformer of melodramma, commending his characterizations, and his knowledge of the human heart.[125] On a practical level, Goldoni expressed his admiration for Metastasio by attempting to emulate him. One of Goldoni's first ventures into theatre was as the director of two amateur adaptations of Metastasio's Didone and Siroe. For his first opera seria entitled Amalassunta, he drew his inspiration from Metastasio's Didone and Issipile. He subsequently wrote six other opere serie in the Metastasian mold.[126]

However, Goldoni's fortune with the Amalassunta, as well as later theatrical experiences, led him to realize that his talent lay elsewhere, and he eventually dedicated himself to the reform of Italian comedy. Nevertheless, when he first considered a career in the theatre, it was to opera that he turned. His candid admission that the choice was motivated by the knowledge that in the theatre only opera libretti would bring him adequate financial remuneration, serves to illustrate again the preeminence of opera in eighteenth-century theatre.[127] In fact, while pursuing a successful career as a writer of comedies, Goldoni maintained an involvement with melodramma. He continued to rework the texts of other librettists, and among his minor works are fifty-six books for comic operas. In 1756, with the composition of

three comic melodrammi, Goldoni participated in the attempt to revitalize opera in Parma, In 1760, Nicola Piccinni composed a new score for one of these libretti, La buona figliuola, with far-reaching results for the development of comic opera. Thus, while Goldoni's ambition in musical drama had originally tended towards opera seria and the emulation of Metastasio, it was in comic opera that he left his mark.[128]

In his writings, Goldoni displays that ambiguous attitude towards opera that was prevalent during a large part of the eighteenth century. Though he attempted to emulate Metastasio, and though he sought Zeno's suggestions and assistance in the composition of melodramma,[129] Goldoni's critical opinion of opera in general was not high. In the dedication of Terenzio, he provides a succinct history of melodramma, classifying the dramma per musica as an irregular composition unknown to Aristotle, Horace and other ancient dramatic theorists. He gives his own version of the eighteenth-century commonplace concerning the supposed origins of opera: in his view, the sung chorus of ancient Greek tragedy inspired lovers of novelty to set the entire drama to music, thus depriving it of its tragic tone. Goldoni apparently ignores the operas of the Camerata and Monteverdi's masterpieces, for he must be referring to later seventeenth-century operas when he defines the first melodrammi as works so imperfect that they would be better described by the term farces. However, he praises Zeno's libretti, and emphasizes Metastasio's

efforts to perfect the form. Goldoni is very perceptive in his attribution of Metastasio's success to the musicality of his language:

> Grande obbligazione vi hanno i Compositori di Musica, poiché le dolcissime ariette vostre, che sono altrettanti elegantissimi Madrigali, cantano, si può dire, da per se stesse, e svegliano talmente la fantasia del Maestro, ch'egli con poco studio può farsi onore grandissimo.

He also realizes that the apparent simplicity of Metastasio's style is deceptive; that it is, in fact, so finely tuned that changing a single word would destroy the effect.[130] Goldoni recognizes the literary merits of Metastasio's libretti, asserting that, although the music may not be excellent, their high intrinsic quality satisfies the audience. This statement reveals Goldoni's essentially literary concept of opera. Nowhere in his writings does he investigate the nature of the union of words and music in melodramma. However, as a playwright and librettist, he was well-versed in the practical aspects of opera production. The following revealing phrases are to be found among the praises of Metastasio's dramas in the dedication of Terenzio:

> Ma quante volte ho dovuto compiangere il destino delle opere vostre, da Attori barbari maltrattate! Qual compassione non mi faceva vedere un vecchio panciuto sostenere la soavissima parte di Alceste; un burattino sguaiato quella di Jarba, ed una preziosa indurita rappresentare Cleofide.[131]

The dedication is a curious mixture of acclaim for Metastasio as a librettist, and acknowledgement of the imperfections of

the genre. In the words quoted above, Goldoni expresses two of the most frequent criticisms levelled at opera. On the one hand, the Goldoni who strove for more realism on the stage shrank from the lack of verisimilitude in the choice of actors for opera, where the voice held sway over physical appearance. On the other hand, he also criticized the general lack of acting ability displayed by the singers. In L'impresario delle Smirne, a comedy written in 1760, whose title and theme are reminiscent of Metastasio's L'impresario delle Canarie, Goldoni presented a spirited and witty satire of the foibles of an opera company, and of the scant interest shown by the performers in their art.[132] Amusing though it is, the comedy adds nothing new to the criticism of opera.

Although he lauded the reforms that Zeno and Metastasio had wrought in their own libretti, Goldoni recognized that melodramma was far from being a perfect art form. As far as his own opere serie were concerned, he wrote that he allowed the actors to refer to them as tragedies, but he added disenchantedly that he knew otherwise:

> Io moriva di voglia di metter mano ai caratteri veri, e di tentar la riforma ch'io divisiva; ma non era ancora venuto il tempo, e ho dovuto contentarmi passabilmente negl'Intermezzi, e di fare alcune di quelle Opere sceniche, ch'io lasciava dai comici chiamar Tragedie; ma sapeva in coscienza, che non poteano passar per tali.[133]

In the Mémoires, he recounted his first experience with melodramma, and gives a description of the reading of his ill-fated Amalassunta. Some of his cultured friends had previ-

ously praised it as a good tragedy, though not as a suitable vehicle for opera. Undaunted, Goldoni had set off for Milan in the hope of having it performed in that city. By way of a preview, he read his work at a salon frequented by people from the theatrical world who soon grew restless. Taken aside by one of the theatre directors, Goldoni was instructed in the conventions of opera, his first lesson being that opera must not be written according to the precepts of tragedy. The list of rules for melodramma that follow refer mainly to the number and types of aria to be used for each act. While they are commonplace, they reveal, nevertheless, the petty interests of the opera company and the utter disregard of artistic principles. Disgusted, Goldoni fled the gathering and returned to his rooms where he angrily burnt the offending text, vowing never again to write melodrammi.[134] Circumstances in fact led him to opera again; however, when Goldoni writes of his libretti, it is generally with a degree of condescension or scorn. Invariably, if the opera was successful, he attributes the success either to the music, or the spectacle, or the singers, claiming that the libretto has little merit. In the specific case of Gustavo I re di Svezia (1740), Goldoni reports in a matter-of-fact tone that the libretto could not expect so good a reception as any of Metastasio's.[135] Goldoni's attitude is summed up in his remarks on the first performance of Gustavo I:

> [M]on Opéra fut donné; les Acteurs étoient bons, la musique excellente, les ballets forts gais; on ne

> disoit rien du Drame; je me tenois derriere le rideau; je partageois les applaudissements qui ne m'appartenoient pas; et je disois, pour me tranquilliser, ce n'est pas mon genre; j'aurai ma revanche à ma premiere Comédie.[136]

However, Goldoni was aware that melodramma was indeed Metastasio's genre. The apparent ambivalence of his attitude towards opera--high praise for Metastasio, as well as criticism of the form--can be explained by the fact that Goldoni was writing as a dramatist testing melodramma against practical theatrical experience rather than against dramatic theory. It is for this reason that his criticism deals with practical concerns, rather than with theoretical speculations on the nature of melodramma and the union of word and music. At the same time, Goldoni recognized that Metastasio's melodrammi (which were based at least in part on the results of such speculations), if presented by competent performers, made for successful theatre.

Though Goldoni accepted Metastasio as a reformer of melodramma, modern critics divide sharply on the issue.[137] The question does not admit of a clear-cut solution. Metastasio is undoubtedly a giant among librettists, dominating the European theatrical scene for nearly a century. This was clearly due to the fact that he brought to the musical theatre of the time a new element. His libretti possessed a quality lacking in those of his immediate predecessors and of his contemporaries, a quality which was the result of his constant striving for literary excellence. In spite of his

concern for the organic unity of melodramma, it is his primary interest in the literary aspect of dramatic poetry that brings about whatever degree of reform may be attributed to him, that is, the elevation in the quality of the libretto. It is perhaps significant that Metastasio's libretti survive as works of literature divorced from any musical setting. As far as the operatic genre is concerned, he furthered the process of its legitimization in the eyes of literary critics.[138] It is questionable, however, whether his successful reform of the libretto could be extended to include all aspects of the genre, or more specifically the union of word and music. Nevertheless, Metastasio's notion of the essential link between the two elements, in which the word plays the dominant rôle, shows that he is heir to the critical tradition that surrounded the Florentine camerata, with its essentially literary concept of music. Yet this was not the way that post-Metastasian opera was to develop. As far as theory is concerned, the striving for an harmonious union of word and music is a constant theme, but in practice the dominant rôle in this union is assumed by music.

CHAPTER III

Post-Metastasian Criticism

Francesco Algarotti

In 1755 there appeared the first version of an essay on the melodramma which was to have a considerable effect on the operatic milieu of Europe in the middle of the eighteenth century. The author of this Saggio sopra l'opera in musica was Francesco Algarotti, a Venetian by birth, indefatigable traveller, polymath and "first example of the type of man and writer of the Enlightenment" in Italy.[1] Algarotti possessed a sound preparation in both the arts and sciences.[2] Along with many men of his time he shared the desire to divulge --and to a certain extent to popularize-- the new ideas and knowledge of the age. His writings range over subjects as varied as the Empire of the Incas, commerce and optics (he adapted Newton's treatise on that subject for a larger public --per le dame). The Saggio sopra l'opera in musica is one of his best known works.

Modern scholars have dealt to a certain extent with Algarotti's fame during his lifetime, as well as with the posthumous fortune of his works and his position in history as a man of letters.[3] But Algarotti's place in the history of opera criticism and the reform movement has yet to be examined in depth. Apart from a number of scattered and rather categorical statements made by various critics,[4] major contributions are quite limited in number. Charles Malherbe has pointed out Gluck's dependence on Algarotti.[5] Gino Roncaglia has given an indication of the innovative nature of Algarotti's criticism and of its validity in the face of

subsequent operatic developments. Yet Roncaglia presents Algarotti's thought without reference to its critical antecedents, and thus places too much emphasis on its innovative aspect.[6] Giazotto, due to the inadequate historical perspective with which he studies eighteenth-century critical writings on opera, fails to place Algarotti in his correct context, allowing him only the merit of having reached, in his assessment of opera, a state of objectivity lacking in such contemporaries as Calzabigi and Baretti, particularly in their treatment of Metastasio.[7]

Thanks to his travels to London, Paris, Berlin, Potsdam, Dresden and St. Petersburg, Algarotti had a very cosmopolitan experience of the musical theatre of his day. At the courts of Berlin and Dresden he was directly involved with the performance of opera, from the hiring of singers to the adaptation of libretti for the court theatres. Furthermore, he was acquainted with librettists such as Voltaire, Metastasio and Carlo Innocenzo Frugoni, with whom he maintained an assiduous correspondence. He was also involved with the operatic reform attempted at Parma between the years 1755 and 1759 by Minister Du Tillot, Frugoni and the composer Traetta.[8]

Algarotti chose to use the essay for his discussions of opera in musica. He was one of the first Italian writers to make extensive use of the essay, a form characterized as the "representative genre of the Age of Enlightenment."[9] The informal and discursive tone of the essay made it an ideal

medium for the diffusion of knowledge and critical thought among the literate middle classes, an audience not normally reached by the formal and specialized scholarly treatise. Algarotti cites these factors as the reason for choosing the essay for his critical writings, adding that the original grace and spontaneity of thoughts expressed in letters or short essays were lost in the more detailed and methodical format of a book.[10]

The Saggio sopra l'opera in musica ran through several versions before its final reworking for the 1764 edition of Algarotti's works.[11] The essay is divided into ten sections: an introduction, followed by sections on the libretto, music, the method of singing and declamation, dance, stage scenery, the theatre, and a conclusion. The final section is followed by an outline for a libretto entitled Enea in Troia, and by his complete libretto Iphigénie en Aulide. The essay shows Algarotti as the first of eighteenth-century Italian critics of opera to deal with this form so systematically. It is true that Marcello had also considered several aspects of opera, and had consequently divided his Teatro alla Moda into well-defined sections. But Marcello was more intent on satirizing the personal foibles of the various individuals involved in the spectacle, rather than being concerned with the artistic nature of opera itself. Furthermore, Algarotti is the first to consider in detail the architectonic components such as scenography and the actual construction of the theatre as elements having as much bearing upon the success of the

melodramma as the singing and the music. These considerations may stem from Algarotti's interest in the two arts involved; his other two major essays are the Saggio sopra la pittura and the Saggio sopra l'architettura. However, his discussion of scenography, acoustics and the architectural elements of the theatre is also indicative of the author's attitude towards melodramma. By his concern with specific technical details of what is known today as le lieu théâtral and le space théâtral in strict relation to the performance of musical drama, Algarotti reveals that he regarded opera as an independent form, although he still refers to it as tragedy.

By the time the Saggio sopra l'opera in musica was published, the success of Metastasio's melodrammi had brought about through actual practice the legitimization of the genre as an artistically acceptable form of entertainment. Thus, the question of the legitimacy of opera (as a hybrid art form) which had occupied such a prominent place in the discussions of the musical theatre in the early eighteenth century no longer appears to be a matter of such controversy. Algarotti himself saw no difficulty in accepting the musical drama as a legitimate genre, which he regarded as being in substance nothing else but a "tragedia recitata per musica". He accepts the concept of the origins of melodramma as the attempt by the Florentine Camerata to re-create for the modern stage the tragedy of Ancient Greece. This was the form which, in the time of Sophocles and Euripides, had introduced Melpomene accompanied by music, dance and all that pomp which surrounded

her retinue. Algarotti feels that the ideal of the Camerata had quickly degenerated into pure spectacle in Italy. He asserts that even in France the same ideal of opera (transplanted from Italy by Cardinal Mazzarino in the seventeenth century) had been corrupted by the intrusion of comic characters into tragic action, though vestiges of the ideal could still be found in the format of the tragédie lyrique.[12]

Algarotti's brief survey of the history of opera shows that he regarded the opera in musica (which he comes to refer to simply as opera) as a genre which had not yet reached perfection in his time, and which was therefore in need of reform. His specific purpose in writing the Saggio sopra l'opera was thus to clarify the essential relationships among the components of this genre, and the manner in which these elements should achieve a particular internal equilibrium, in order to ensure the creation of an harmonious artistic whole.[13] According to Algarotti, the way to achieve this end would be to return to the ideals of the Camerata and their attempts to re-create ancient Greek tragedy. But unlike many of his contemporaries who favoured the servile imitation of the ancients, Algarotti would take what was good from the present as well as the past. In the contemporary controversy over the superiority of the ancients or the moderns, Algarotti espoused the moderate position of respect for the classics, while at the same time believing that the present could also produce greatness.[14] Therefore, he advocates that a poet turn not only to the operas of the Camerata

or to the ancient Greek tragedy as models, but also to the contemporary French tragédie lyrique which had retained closer ties with the Camerata and Greek tragedy than had the contemporary Italian opera. At this time nationalistic sentiment in Italy ran high, but Algarotti could state without hesitation:

> E noi singolarmente non ci dovremmo mostrar ritrosi di prendere dai Francesi con che perfezionare la nostra Opera; da quella nazione cioè che ha preso da esso noi la Opera medesima.[15]

His cosmopolitan outlook and his belief that the spread of culture should not be hindered by national boundaries also led him to encourage the use of models (at least insofar as stage scenery was concerned) not only from France and classical antiquity, but also from countries regarded as more exotic, such as China and Egypt. Algarotti's belief in the social and political relevance of the musical theatre is also evident in the parallel he draws between opera and the state in his plea for a return to original ideals:

> Infatti, chi sapesse pigliare con discrezione il buono de'soggetti favolosi dei tempi addietro, ritenendo il buono dei soggetti dei nostri tempi, si verrebbe quasi a far dell'Opera quello che è necessario fare degli stati: che, a mantenergli in vita, conviene di quando in quando ritirargli verso il loro principio.[16]

Algarotti's cosmopolitan cultural background is evident throughout his writings, both in the choice of subject-matter and in the frequent quotations from French and English writers in particular. It is well known that the interrela-

tions among Italy, France and England are of paramount importance in the history of the Enlightenment, and this is true also in the realm of opera. One particularly compelling manifestation of this merging of interests was the polemic surrounding Pergolesi's Serva padrona, a controversy that involved figures of such international stature as Gluck and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In the Saggio sopra l'opera such evidence of common interests is already present. Algarotti reveals his awareness of French and English attitudes towards opera, and what is more to the point, he utilizes these foreign critical contributions to reinforce his own arguments. Furthermore, his quotations from English and French writers outnumber by far the references to classical authorities, and no reference is made to Italian critics of melodramma. Among the English, Algarotti cites Joseph Addison (his contributions to The Spectator), Adam Fitz-Adam (The World), Dryden, Pope, Daniel Webb, Dr. Wallis, and Charles Avison. Among the French, he cites the Encyclopédie, Fontenelle, St-Evremond, D'Alembert and Voltaire.[17]

There is no doubt that a study of the direct influence of these writers upon Algarotti as a critic of opera would be extremely interesting. For the present, however, it will have to be sufficient to point out one certain source for Algarotti's critical thought, namely the Abbé Du Bos. While the influence of Du Bos on Algarotti's theories of painting is well-documented,[18] the extension of this influence to the Saggio sopra l'opera in musica has yet to be examined. There

can be no question concerning Algarotti's knowledge of Du Bos' important work Réflexions critiques sur la poësie et sur la peinture whose third volume treats the theatre of the ancient Greeks and Romans.[19] Voltaire, whom Algarotti had visited and with whom he corresponded, was an ardent admirer of Du Bos as a thinker.[20] Algarotti cites the Réflexions in his earlier essays--the Saggio sopra la rima, Saggio sopra la lingua francese--and elsewhere. No reference to Du Bos appears in the Saggio sopra l'opera, yet his influence is quite evident.

Influenced by English empiricism, and by classical rhetoric as exemplified in Castelvetro, Du Bos had turned to a study of art through its effect on the spectator or reader.[21] This was a break with the traditional critical methodology of the time which tended to study the work of art per se in order to compile precepts and rules. Du Bos, by examining artistic creation from a different perspective, reached certain conclusions about the ends and purposes of art which, while neither innovative or revolutionary in themselves, nevertheless made him instrumental in the formation of the modern science of aesthetics. Du Bos conceded that tragedy might purge the passions and incite men to virtue, but he questioned its universal efficacy:

> [J]e veux dire seulement que les Poëmes dramatiques corrigent quelquefois les hommes, et que souvent ils leur donnent l'envie d'être meilleurs. . . . . La Tragédie purge donc les passions à peu près comme les remedes guérissent, et comme les armes défensives garantissent des coups des armes offensives. La chose n'arrive pas toujours, mais elle arrive quelquefois.[22]

Du Bos defends the artistic act as being useful to society, and for him the prime function of this utility lies in the fulfilment of what he regarded as one of man's strongest needs: that of having l'esprit occupé to ward off the ennui which tends to engulf him. Since the passions occupy the spirit of man, the principal merit of the arts is to create imitations of those things that awaken passion in man, thus providing him with pleasure. Du Bos then argues that the work of art which moves its audience and gives pleasure will be appreciated more than the work which instructs.[23] In other words, the principal aim of art is to impart pleasure. With this line of argument, finely elaborated and carefully defended, Du Bos contributed in a significant way to the triumph of delectare and movere over docere in the eighteenth century.

In his study of artistic activity, Du Bos espouses the concept of the unity of the arts and the analogies that link them:

> Les premiers principes de la Musique, sont donc les mêmes que ceux de la Poësie et de la Peinture. Ainsi que la Poësie et la Peinture, la Musique est une imitation. La Musique ne sçauroit être bonne, si elle n'est pas conforme aux regles générales de ces deux arts sur le choix des sujets, sur la vraisemblance, et sur plusieurs autres points.[24]

This concept, along with his belief in the pleasurable end of art and its rhetorical function, led Du Bos to accept opera as a synthesis of all the arts, united in an artistic form intended to give pleasure:

> Enfin les sens sont si flatez par le chant des récits, par l'harmonie qui les accompagne, par les choeurs, par les symphonies et par le spectacle entier, que l'ame qui se laisse facilement séduire à leur plaisir, veut bien être enchantée par une fiction dont l'allusion est palpable, pour ainsi dire. Ex volùptate fides nascitur.[25]

Du Bos, whom Basil Munteano calls "esthéticien de la persuasion passionnelle", referred to opera in terminology that foreshadowed the language of the Romantics. Thus while classicist critics like Muratori bewailed the predominant appeal of melodramma to the senses, in Du Bos the pleasure of the senses and the pleasure of the heart are united. In opera, the appeal to the senses intensified the appeal to the heart: "C'est ainsi que le plaisir de l'oreille devient le plaisir du coeur."[26] This shift in emphasis from the rational to the emotional appeal of art is, of course, significant, for it reflects the transition from the age of reason to the age of sensibility, and paves the way for romantic theatre. Du Bos' treatise, with its constant reference to the power of art over the emotions and passions of man, was instrumental in this transition. Therefore, even with Rationalism at its height, Du Bos could adapt Horace's attribution of magical powers to the poet:

> Mais si le Poëte m'expose des avantures, s'il me fait voir des situations, des caracteres qui m'intéressent . . . sa pièce me fait pleurer, et je reconnois l'Artisan qui se jouë ainsi de mon coeur, pour un homme qui sçait faire quelque chose de divin.[27]

Here Du Bos clearly anticipates the romantic glorification of art and the artist.

Algarotti, like Du Bos, sees opera as the amalgamation of various components. He distinguished five elements: poetry (the libretto), music, acting, dance and painting. Du Bos believed that the union of the arts in opera created an illusion that enchants and ravishes the spirit. Algarotti puts forward the same opinion:

> Di tutti i modi che, per creare nelle anime gentili il diletto, furono immaginati dall'uomo, forse il più ingegnoso e compìto si è l'Opera in Musica. Niuna cosa nella formazione di essa fu lasciata indietro, niuno ingrediente, niun mezzo, onde arrivar si potesse al proposto fine. E ben si può asserire che quanto di più attrattivo ha la Poesia, quanto ha la Musica e la Mimica, l'arte del Ballo e la Pittura, tutto si collega nell'Opera felicemente insieme ad allettare i sentimenti, ad ammaliare il cuore e fare un dolce inganno alla mente.[28]

For Algarotti the component arts in opera join to charm the sentiments, to bewitch the heart, to create a sweet deception in the mind, by making use of those aspects of their individual attributes that are the most attractive, that is, the elements that appeal to the senses. The pre-romantic elements found in Du Bos are also present in Algarotti. Elsewhere in the essay he speaks of the violence of passions exalted by the recitative in opera. This is a far different interpretation of the function of this component of melodramma, traditionally considered by earlier critics like Muratori as being the vehicle for narration, while the aria was that of passions. Like Metastasio, Algarotti recommends the use of the recitativo obbligato, that is, accompanied by music, so that all possible resources may be used to assail the heart and the imagination

of the spectator:

> Qual calore e qual vita non viene a ricevere infatti un recitativo, se là dove si esalta la passione sia rinforzato dall'orchestra, se ogni sorta d'arme assalga il cuore ad un tempo e la fantasia?[29]

As Algarotti reiterates, art must be directed towards moving the soul of man: he is aware of the various ends attributed to theatrical spectacle throughout the ages, and recognizes that in ancient times it was used by the state to incite the populace to virtue, or at least to keep it amused for the peace of the state. However, the question of utility does not enter into his view of the theatre. From the opening words of the Saggio, Algarotti refers constantly to the delight which the spectacle of opera provides. The end proper to opera is to move the heart and delight the eye and ear. Nevertheless he does add a word or two of caution: opera is to give delight without going against reason.[30] In his Pensieri diversi he wrote:

> Perchè ogni composizione sia ridotta alla perfezion sua . . . ci ha da concorrere ugualmente la vivacità della fantasia e la posatezza del giudizio. . . . Senza quel felice impasto di contrarj, senza quella discordante concordia, quel contrappunto di qualità, nulla non si vede mai riuscir d'armonico o d'intero nelle buone arti.[31]

Algarotti was thus aware of the conflict between reason and the imagination which was a constant motif of eighteenth-century thought, and he tempered any pre-romantic tendencies with classicist appeals to restraint.

In his plan for the reform of opera through the dis-

cussion and analysis of the relationship of its constituent elements, Algarotti turns first of all to the libretto. In dealing with the subject-matter appropriate for the libretto, he lists the advantages and disadvantages of the mythological subjects preferred by early Italian and contemporary French operas, and of the historical topics found in the contemporary Italian musical drama. He judges both to be inappropriate for opera: the former, because he considers that the marvellous and spectacular elements that accompany it fail to allow for the proper treatment of characterization and passions;[32] the latter, because its subject-matter loses the illusion of reality when joined with music.[33] In other words, he is dealing with the perennial preoccupation with the relation between the verisimilar and the fantastic. The solution proposed by Algarotti for this dilemma is that the subject-matter of opera be taken from times and places remote from the present, so that the action being strange to the audience, it will not appear so unreal when recited to the accompaniment of music.[34] These sentiments echo in part the views of the author of the Gerusalemme liberata, one of the Italian classics that was much discussed in the eighteenth century. In his Discorsi dell'arte poetica, Tasso admitted the feasibility of taking subjects from history, but with the proviso that the period of history be sufficiently far removed from the present so that the introduction of fantastic elements would not be too implausible. Algarotti's predilection for exotic subjects reflects faithfully the taste of the

times nourished by Montesquieu's Lettres persanes. Exotic themes in general, and Oriental subjects in particular enjoyed a considerable vogue in eighteenth-century literature and art (for instance, Tiepolo's Orient-inspired frescoes and paintings). Popular fashions followed suit, and for almost a decade the collection of chinoiserie and the like was all the rage. Such themes were also explored in opera, and led to the success of Beaumarchais' reform-opera Tarare (1787). In the last years of his career as librettist, Metastasio also turned to exotic subjects in such melodrammi as L'eroe cinese (1752) and Nitteti (1756).

The problem of reconciling the musical drama with the principle of verisimilitude dates from the beginning of critical discussion of opera, and from the tradition of literary criticism inherited from the Counter-Reformation. Algarotti sought the solution in subject-matter so far removed from everyday reality that the improbable elements would be scarcely noticeable, and hence would lose their importance (this solution having been proposed already in Counter-Reformation criticism). Du Bos, who referred to the "défaut de vraisemblance" as "le défaut . . . inséparable de l'Opera," felt that the improbable element could be concealed to a large extent by the nature of the music that was united with the drama:

> Le plaisir que nous fait la musique, répare néanmoins ce défaut. Ses expressions rendent aux Scenes des Opera le pathétique que le manque de vraisemblance devroit leur ôter.[35]

However, in the third volume of the Réflexions Du Bos is intent on disproving the widely-held belief that Greek tragedy had been sung either in whole or in part, by upholding the thesis that "dans les écrits des Anciens, le terme de chanter signifie souvent déclamer, et même quelquefois parler."[36] Consequently, in dealing with opera, he writes of a form that for him is a new synthesis of all the arts, rather than the re-creation of an ancient Greek literary genre. He deals in detail with matters concerning the performance of the drama, rather than with the drama itself and its composition as a literary form: hence the emphasis in Du Bos on the musical accompaniment as the means to aid the illusion created by the performance. Algarotti, on the other hand, is still working on the principle of opera as a literary genre accompanied by music. Therefore, in his view, the drama itself (the libretto) must possess its own artistic coherence as a separate entity. In this respect, Du Bos can be said to be more modern than Algarotti.

Concerning the relationship between poetry and music in opera, Du Bos states in the first book of the Réflexions that the rôle of music is to reproduce the sentiments expressed by the words, to embellish the imitation of natural discourse and of passions. However, he tempers the pre-romantic flavour of this statement with the rationalist interjection of the now traditional remark that the musical accompaniment is but a servant in the creative act.[37] Algarotti is in agreement with this. For him, poetry comes

first. Significantly, the introduction to the Saggio is followed immediately by a consideration of the libretto as the plan of the edifice, or the canvas on which the poet has drawn the design that is to be coloured by the composer of the music. The metaphor of music as the filling in with colour of the outlines of a painting provided by the poetry is already found in Metastasio, and appears again in Gluck's preface to his reform-opera Alceste.[38] This attitude leads Algarotti to the conclusion that the poet should preside over all and take the helm. The poet is the true creator of the musical drama, the one who should conceive everything in his mind, and omit nothing of what can best embellish and render verisimilar the action that he is representing.[39] This is in accord with the position held by Metastasio. Algarotti also agrees with Metastasio in refusing to consider the librettist as an inferior poet simply because he is subject to considerations extraneous to his art. Fully aware of the external demands placed on the librettist by the whims of impresarios, singers and composers, Algarotti still limited his attempts to write for the theatre strictly to opera.

While Algarotti considered the libretto as the mainstay of the melodramma, going so far as to state that the success of the opera depended almost exclusively upon it, he nevertheless dedicates the longest section of his Saggio to a discussion of the music suitable for the musical drama, and to a consideration of the relationship between music and poetry. He attacks the contemporary trend which makes of the

composer a despot, interested only in the music and wishing to shine solely as a musician.

> Per cosa del mondo non gli può entrare in capo ch'egli ha da essere subordinato, e che il maggior effetto della musica ne viene dallo esser ministra e ausiliaria della poesia.

The function of music is to follow [secondare] and to embellish nature. In Algarotti's view, music achieves its greatest effect as the minister and helper of poetry:

> Propio suo uffizio è il dispor l'animo a ricevere le impressioni dei versi, muovere . . . affetti . . . ; dare in una parola al linguaggio delle Muse maggior vigore e maggiore energia.[40]

In this statement Algarotti reveals the rhetorical foundation of the union of the arts in opera that we already find in Du Bos. The arts unite so that the action portrayed in the drama may be represented more effectively and with greater persuasion. Du Bos had held that music imitated the natural signs of passions "avec art pour augmenter l'énergie des paroles qu'elle met en chant . . . [pour] les rendre plus capables de nous toucher. . . ." He attributes the origin of opera to the realization that "les paroles de ces chansons avoient bien une autre énergie, lorsqu'on les entendoit chanter, que lorsqu'on les entendoit déclamer. . . ."[41] Keeping in mind the rhetorical function of vocal music in opera, Algarotti continues by repeating the traditional concept that the ancient poets were also musicians. Their vocal music, therefore, was by its very nature a stronger and

more vital expression of the concepts and passions of the soul.[42]

Like Metastasio, Algarotti applies the concept of musical expression not only to the individual word, but to the significance of the whole. Music should reinforce the meaning of the drama as a whole, and not simply illuminate the meaning of each individual word in turn. To do the latter destroys the organic unity of the work. This principle is carried into his discussion of the method of musical expression in opera. Algarotti deals first with the overture [sinfonia]. He claims that in contemporary opera the overtures are all formed of the same movements, each one differing but little from the other, and lacking any connection with the action portrayed in the drama. Algarotti deplores this practice because the overture should be an integral part of the drama, and should serve as a genuine prelude, anticipating the action:

> Suo principale fine è di annunziare in certo modo l'azione, di preparar l'uditore a ricevere quelle impressioni di affetto che risultano dal totale del dramma.[43]

Thus, the overture will vary according to the subject of the drama. This concept is significant, for it foreshadows the practice of romantic opera in which the various themes treated in the course of the opera are announced in the overture.

Students of Algarotti and of the history of music

agree that he is the first critic to deal with the function of the overture in opera.[44] However, while Algarotti may indeed be the first to formulate the principle outlined above, its germ can be found in Du Bos. In the first book of the Réflexions, Du Bos devotes several pages to a discussion of the symphonies, a generic term which he applies to instrumental music in which there is nothing articulated by the human voice. Although not referring specifically to their use as overtures, Du Bos claims that when the symphonie is written as an expression of a particular sentiment, it can play a rôle in the dramatic spectacle by awakening the listener's interest in the action:

> Les symphonies convenables au sujet et bien caractérisées, contribuent donc beaucoup á nous faire prendre intérêt dans l'action des Opera, où l'on peut dire qu'elles jouent un rôle.[45]

By applying this principle specifically to the overture, Algarotti demonstrates that he is not merely copying Du Bos, but that he is meditating on the material supplied by the French writer and drawing his own conclusions. In his suggestion that the sinfonia preceding the death of Dido should differ from that which precedes the marriage of Demetrius and Cleonice, Algarotti echoes Du Bos' words:

> Enfin ces symphonies qui nous semblent si belles, quand elles sont employées comme l'imitation d'un certain bruit, nous paroîtroient insipides, elles nous paroîtroient mauvaises, si l'on les employoit comme l'imitation d'un autre bruit. La symphonie de l'Opera d'Issé . . . sembleroit ridicule, si l'on la mettoit à la place de celle du tombeau d'Amadis.[46]

However, Algarotti applies the principle to Italian opera by citing Metastasio's very successful Didone and Demetrio as his examples.

Algarotti then moves on to a discussion of the rôle of recitative, a form which he considers has been unjustly neglected by contemporary composers through their mistaken belief that it could not give pleasure. It is Algarotti's view that properly handled the recitative gave great pleasure in the opera of the seventeenth century and in fact moved the spirit more than modern arias. He therefore recommends the cultivation of the obbligato recitative, for not only does it reinforce the sentiments expressed by the poetry, but also reduces the great disparity between recitative and aria in the opera of his day:

> E già non pochi debbono essere stati più di una volta offesi a quel subito passaggio che si suol fare da un recitativo liscio et andante ad una ornatissima arietta, lavorata con tutti i raffinamenti dell'arte. Non è egli la medesima cosa che se altri in passeggiando venisse tutto ad un tratto a spiccar salti e cavriole?[47]

Algarotti expresses what had become the customary complaints concerning the excessive ornamentation of arias, their failure to represent a natural expression of the dramatic text, being simply a pretext for a show of virtuosity on the part of the singers.[48] He also makes a plea for a greater variety of orchestration in the musical accompaniment. Although he was a great admirer of Metastasio's melodrammi which he adduces as examples of the

ideal of opera, Algarotti inveighed against the da capo aria which Metastasio helped to turn into an operatic convention. However, he followed Metastasio's general preference for a simple melodic accompaniment in opera, rather than the more complicated orchestral arrangements which members of the German school, including Gluck, were propagating. Like Metastasio, he sought a music which would move the heart or kindle the imagination of the listener, rather than astonish him with its novelty and technique. And he considered the melodic accompaniment to verses most apt to enkindle passion. It is also interesting to observe that the composers whom Algarotti admired were those praised by Metastasio: Pergolesi, Vinci, Galuppi, Jomelli and Hasse.[49]

Algarotti observes, however, that the musical accompaniment in contemporary opera had in general degenerated to a point where it no longer fulfilled its proper function vis-à-vis the poetic text. In constant search for novelty for its own sake, music had become more and more lost in intricate arabesques which did nothing to reflect and express the sentiments of the poetry. In Algarotti's view, the only possible solution to this degenerate state of affairs lay in the discretion of the composer himself, who alone could bring music back to its true function by working in close collaboration with the poet and following his lead.[50]

In discussing the relationship between music and poetry, Algarotti is the first to point out that the association is more successful in the opera buffa and in the intermezzi than

in the opera seria. He attributes this to the lack of great virtuosi in the more plebeian form of the musical theatre where the music is kept more natural and simple. The success of the opera buffa, he argues, is attested to by the fact that it was Pergolesi's humble Serva padrona which revolutionized French reaction to Italian dramatic music, rather than the more grandiose and pretentious opera seria.[51]

In the section of the Saggio in which Algarotti deals with the art of singing and reciting opera we note the same complaints about the performers that Marcello had expressed thirty-five years earlier: incomprehension and incomprehensibility on the part of the singers, and poor acting ability. This suggests that, Metastasio's "reform" notwithstanding, little had changed in the operatic world since 1720. The outraged cries and lamentations of the literary critics had failed to affect theatrical practice in the most popular dramatic genre of the day. While Algarotti's Saggio had considerable critical resonance, it also failed to bring about a reform in the practices of the numerous operatic companies in the second half of the eighteenth century.

In the pages on the performance of opera, we find further proof of Algarotti's knowledge of Du Bos' Réflexions. In his treatment of what he calls the advantages enjoyed by by the opera-singer over those of the stage-actor, Algarotti echoes the section of Du Bos' treatise entitled "Réflexions sur les avantages e sur les inconvéniens qui résultoient de la déclamation composée des Anciens." Algarotti believed

that the text of ancient tragedy had been set to a form of musical notation. He summarizes briefly the advantages of this type of notated text, which prevent the performer from falling into errors of judgement in recitation. He also echoes Du Bos' arguments defending the practice against accusations that a text set to music limits originality and the personal interpretations of intelligent performers. Both critics, making pointed reference to the fabled talents of Roscius, a Roman actor of antiquity, in comparison with the abilities of modern performers, maintain that the notated text still allows the intelligent singer-actor scope for individual expression.[52] Algarotti concludes that the traditional lack of attention shown by opera audiences would disappear if the singer-actors could make their recitation and singing more comprehensible.

Algarotti then turns to the dance (or ballet) which he considers a part of opera, as he believed it to be a part of ancient Greek tragedy. He defines his ideal of the dance in opera as follows:

> La danza deve essere una imitazione che, per via de'movimenti musicali del corpo, si fa delle qualità e degli affetti dell'animo; ella ha da parlare continuamente agli occhi, ha da dipingere col gesto.[53]

The notion that dance was an imitative art derives ultimately from Aristotle. Du Bos, in his Réflexions, examined ancient writings on dance and drew the conclusion that the dance, in modern sense, had played no part in tragedy: he maintained

that the ancients had an art du geste which could represent emotions and sentiments without the aid of words by means of gesture and facial expressions.[54] Du Bos praises the ballets of Lully in the operas Psyché, Alceste and Thésée as fulfilling this ideal. Algarotti does not go so far as to recommend that modern opera make use only of gesture. But the basis of his ideal of dance in opera can be found in the Réflexions. In the third volume Du Bos wrote that "ce geste . . . parle aux yeux;" in a later passage he cites Quintilian: "Or la musique, dit Quintilien, regle les mouvements du corps, comme elle régle la progression de la voix."[55] It is clear that Algarotti makes use of the Réflexions to suit his own purposes. Du Bos praises only the sober expression through gestures of the choruses of Lully, claiming that mimetic dances as such have no place on the dramatic stage. Algarotti, on the other hand, advocates the inclusion of dramatic ballets in opera, though with the stipulation that the dance or ballet be a "pithy compendium" of the action portrayed by the opera; a ballet must also have its exposition, dramatic complication and dénouement. Algarotti deplores the contemporary tendency to introduce dances which have no connection with the subject matter of the melodramma. He recognizes that there are good ballets in Italian comedy, but in the tragic mode he acknowledges the superiority of the French, suggesting that Italy should not disdain to learn this art from her neighbour.

In the following two sections of the Saggio, Algarotti considers stage scenery and the construction of opera houses,

and their relation to the success of a performance. Although both sections shed considerable light on Algarotti's interests in painting and architecture, they are not germane to the matters under discussion here, except in one respect. Algarotti's discussion of scenography and architecture elaborates upon his conviction that both elements must be considered specifically in relation to the dramatic form they are to serve. Thus, the scenery must be constructed in such a way as to make the illusion of reality as complete as possible:

> Le scene prima di qualunque altra cosa nell'Opera attraggono imperiosamente gli occhi e determinano il luogo dell'azione, facendo gran parte di quello incantesimo per cui lo spettatore viene ad esser trasferito in Egitto o in Grecia, in Troia o nel Messico, nei Campi Elisi o su nell'Olimpo.[56]

The architecture must take into account the specific acoustic needs of musical drama. Thus, the architect must ascertain that the interior of the theatre be built of material that will allow the voices of the singers to resound not only in volume, but also in a melodious and pleasant manner.[57]

The Saggio sopra l'opera in musica is one of the more comprehensive and systematic studies of opera in the eighteenth century. From its opening paragraph it is also one of the more striking panegyrics of opera written by an eighteenth-century man of letters. However, Algarotti recognized that, while by its very nature opera should be the most delightful of all works of art, it was in reality an imperfect form. By summarizing the attempts of Zeno and Metastasio to reform

the opera (though he does not mention them by name), Algarotti implies that the two acknowledged reformers of the first half of the eighteenth century had not achieved their goal.[58] While in the Saggio and in his letters he praised specific qualities of Metastasio's melodrammi, he envisaged an ideal opera that went beyond Metastasio towards the reforms that would be carried out later by Calzabigi and Gluck. Thus, unlike earlier critics of opera such as Crescimbeni and Muratori, Algarotti actively believed in the possibility of reform. And whereas Zeno sought to reform opera through the attempt to perfect the libretto, Algarotti realized that opera could only achieve its potential when all the various aspects of melodramma were corrected:

> Laddove gran torto noi avremmo, se mai credissimo di potere con un mezzo solo ottener quello che ha da esser il risultato di molti.[59]

Since he believed, however, that the ultimate success of the opera depended upon the libretto, Algarotti appended to his Saggio two examples of operatic texts in order to give a practical demonstration of the principles he advocated for the reform of melodramma. The first is an outline for a libretto entitled Enea in Troia. The second is his complete libretto, in French, entitled Iphigénie en Aulide. The choice of subject matter in both dramas follows the author's conviction that the best themes suited to opera refer to an era far removed from the present. The stories of Aneas and Iphigenia were well known, and thus, they would not require

a lengthy exposition. Both dramas display unity of action, and are free from the subplots and intrigues which are a trademark of Metastasian melodrammi. The remoteness of the period in which they are set allows for the depiction of marvellous elements, such as the prophecy of Cassandra, and the solemnity of the consultation of the oracle of Diana. Algarotti felt that the elements of the marvellous lent themselves to the staging of choruses and dances, and his two dramas make much use of these two components. True to his critical principles, the author has made both of these stage-conventions an integral part of the action, rather than extraneous spectacle. Algarotti certainly believed that spectacle had its place in opera, provided that it was integrated into the action portrayed on the stage. Thus his two libretti are well-supplied with battle-scenes, embarcations, conflagrations, a variety of scene changes, and the use of stage machinery. The musical drama must attract the eye and enchant it, as well as the ear and heart of the spectator. Algarotti regarded the passions as the mainspring and soul of theatre. His libretti portray the anguished sentiments of a conquered city, and the conflict between heart and duty.

The sketch for Enea in Troia provides all the elements which its author believed necessary for the creation of a reformed melodramma. Iphigénie en Aulide is a libretto written with sobriety and austerity of tone, in which each character acts in a consistent fashion, and every element is kept under the control of reason and decorum. But it lacked

the lyricism that made Metastasio's melodrammi so popular. Although Algarotti wished to see his compositions presented on stage to prove the feasibility of his reform--he offered them to Frugoni on the occasion of the attempt at operatic reform in the Court of Parma--his Enea and Iphigénie remained mere intellectual exercises.[60] In the end, it was not his two dramas which were instrumental in propagating his ideals of opera, but the Saggio itself.

The Saggio sopra l'opera in musica is not an entirely original work. Echoes of Muratori, Marcello, the French and English critics of opera, can be readily detected. But while the essay is in many ways a compilation of the ideas of other thinkers of the time, it does contain some original insights and conclusions. The borrowings from Du Bos are a case in point. Algarotti ignores his arguments about the nature of ancient tragedy, and the consequent inference that opera is a modern genre. But he accepts Du Bos' favourable attitude towards opera and adapts the Abbé's examination of the nature of the arts to his own view of melodramma. The true value of the Saggio lies in the fact that it took the salient points of the criticism of opera that were current at the time and presented them in an organic and systematic manner, while at the same time offering a programme of reform. The format of the essay, with its very readable style and concise arguments, aided in the propagation of these ideas.

In fact, the Saggio achieved great popularity during Algarotti's lifetime, not only in Italy, but throughout

Europe where it was translated several times into a number of languages. The original version was published in 1755; the Mercure de France of May, 1757 carried a translation into French, an editor's note informing the reader that "cet Essai est déjà connu, mais la traduction est nouvelle."[61] An English translation appeared in London in 1767, and another in Glasgow in 1768. The following year saw the publication of R. E. Raspe's German translation. A French translation by Chastellux was published in 1773, and a Spanish version appeared in Madrid in 1787 for the instruction of those wishing to assist at the new Italian theatre established there.[62] Francesco Milizia, the art critic and precursor of the late eighteenth-century neo-classical movement in Italy, made extensive use of Algarotti's essay in his own treatise Del Teatro.[63]

Scholars generally agree that Algarotti played a significant part in the eighteenth-century operatic reform movement.[64] On the strength of his Saggio, Algarotti obtained a supervisory appointment in the reform plans carried out at Parma. Frugoni diplomatically rejected his offer of libretti, but Algarotti was nevertheless proud of the results of the reform, and claimed some credit for it.[65] To Voltaire, he described the reform opera Ippolito ed Aricia performed in Parma as being composed according to a new taste which united French spectacle and Italian music.[66] Also significant is the fact that in his preface to Ippolito ed Aricia, Frugoni echoes Algarotti's ideals when he remarks that the purpose

of opera is to enchant the senses and the spirit with the magic of pleasure and music.[67] Although there is no documentary proof of Gluck's knowledge of Algarotti's work, it is quite evident both from his papers and letters, as well as from the preface to Alceste, that Gluck, and his librettist Calžabigi, were indeed acquainted with the Saggio sopra l'opera in musica. Not only are there similar ideas in the preface concerning the reform of opera, but the actual phrases used by Gluck make his knowledge of Algarotti's work quite certain.[68] The similarities in thought have led to the conjecture that Algarotti's Saggio inspired Gluck's reform operas, as well as his reform ballet Don Juan.[69] Significantly, Gluck's reform work germinated in Vienna, under the rule of the Empress Maria Theresa and her co-regent son, the absolutist prince of the Enlightenment, Joseph II. Algarotti believed that reform could only come about in the court theatre of a strong prince-patron of the arts. Then, and only then, freed from the rapacious grasp of money-hungry impresarios, could there arise an opera destined not for a tumultuous assembly, but a solemn audience among which could sit the Addisons, the Drydens, the Daciers, the Muratoris and the Marcellos.[70]

Ranieri Calzabigi

Ranieri Calzabigi is best known for his collaboration with Gluck. He was a man of wide classical learning, an avowed francophile, translator also of English literature, an adventurer in the eighteenth-century tradition, and friend of Giacomo Casanova.[1] Calzabigi was deeply interested in the theatre, and spent some ten years in each of the theatrical capitals of Europe: Paris and Vienna. Before moving to France (the precise date is not known, but it must have been towards 1750), he had been attached to the Neapolitan court where he wrote two libretti for royal celebrations.[2] In Paris he witnessed the Querelle des Bouffons.[3] This famous polemic served as inspiration for his mock-heroic poem La Lulliade, o i buffi italiani scacciati da Parigi, in which he satirizes the musical scene of the time.[4] During his stay in Paris, Calzabigi edited the complete works of Metastasio, to which, by way of preface, he added a long dissertation on the melodrammi of the Imperial poet.

In 1761, Calzabigi found himself in Vienna, attached to the Court under the protection of Prince Kaunitz. Through Count Durazzo, the director of the Imperial Theatres, he met Gluck and began their auspicious collaboration in the field of musical drama. Calzabigi was responsible for the programme-notes to Don Juan (1761), by which, with Angiolini's choreography, Gluck contributed to the reform of eighteenth-century ballet. Calzabigi then went on to write the libretti

for Gluck's three "reform" operas: Orfeo ed Euridice (1762), Alceste (1767), and Paride ed Elena (1770).

Calzabigi was also the author of several libretti for opera buffa, including a satire of the genre entitled L'opera seria. After his return to Italy, he wrote two tragedies for music, Elfrida and Elvira, and two more libretti for Gluck, Semiramide and Le Danaidi.[6] The latter work became a source of irritation for Calzabigi, as Gluck, apparently without informing him, had the libretto translated into French and adapted to the tastes of a Parisian audience by François Louis du Roullet and Baron Ludwig Theodor von Tschudi; it was put to music by his pupil, Antonio Salieri.[7] This French version, Les Danaïdes, was first performed in Paris in 1784. In order to ensure an audience, the music was officially announced as being by Gluck and Salieri. The author of the original libretto (Calzabigi) was mentioned only briefly in the preface by du Roullet as having provided nothing more than the material for the French libretto. As a result, Calzabigi sent a letter of protest to the Mercure de France, a letter which is of considerable importance in a study of the dramatic theories of its author.[8]

There is no complete synthetic study of Calzabigi's position in the development of eighteenth-century opera. Critical attitudes towards him rely heavily upon the work of musicologists, and centre chiefly on his relationship with Gluck, and his rôle in the composition of Gluck's reform operas for the theatre in Vienna. Scholars are unanimous in

their opinion that the precise circumstances leading to the writing of the reform operas are shrouded in mystery, but they differ in a matter of degree over the extent of Calzabigi's influence on Gluck in this reform.[9] The subject has attracted much attention among musicologists because there are no independent sources of documentation, concerning the reform operas and the events leading up to them, on which scholars can base firm conclusions. Gluck's inconsistency in the matter (an inconsistency clearly revealed by the fact that he continued to write operas in the Italian manner alongside those in the reformed style) still perplexes musicologists.[10] Could he write reform operas only for Calzabigi, or for a librettist who shared the same general ideas? On the other hand, if Calzabigi's theories were so sound, why are his libretti for Gluck his only dramatic works to have achieved a certain measure of immortality? The current state of knowledge does not provide these questions with a satisfactory answer that is not simply a matter of opinion, nor is it a matter of crucial concern in the present study. Our purpose is to examine the various aspects of Calzabigi's theories on opera, as they emerge from his own writings. Unfortunately, they are neither extensive nor detailed on the subject of his collaboration with Gluck, and the genesis of their operas. Moreover, his writings often have an ulterior apologetic motive, and must be regarded with caution. Nevertheless, though they fail to satisfy scholarly curiosity about Calzabigi's relationship with Gluck, they do shed light

on him as an individual and on his ideas concerning melodramma.

Calzabigi referred to himself as an "homme de goût."[11] He had contributed to literary academies the usual type of compositions for an eighteenth-century literary amateur, a term that is a much more accurate description of him than "man of letters." His education predisposed him to follow neo-classical tendencies by advocating a return to the ancients, and in fact his reform libretti are recognized as being closer to ancient models than those of his contemporaries.[12] Among the eighteenth-century classical ideals that he considered worthy of emulation were simplicity, a natural style, the imitation of nature, and verisimilitude. He hailed the drama of antiquity, but admitted that the servile imitation of ancient models and the mere observance of rules did not produce works of art. In a letter to Alfieri, he wrote of the unsuccessful attempts of Italian dramatists to create great tragedy by following classical precepts:

> Pensano che quando hanno osservate le prescritte regole, han fatto tutto. . . . Si scordano, che tutte le tragedie da un secolo in quá fischiate vituperate, derise, son però scritte secondo le regole: quasi che bastasse l'osservar le unità per giungere alla perfezione; e che poco o nulla importasse poi la cognizione degli uomini, del loro carattere, del loro costume . . . che inutil fosse l'arte, tanto difficile, di ben formare un piano . . . e finalmente d'esser dotato della immaginazione poetica.[13]

The sterile reproduction of ancient forms was clearly not sufficient; Calzabigi envisages a more dynamic form of imitation in which there is room for the poet's individual

imagination or inspiration to assert itself, and in which the changes in society and its tastes would be taken into consideration.

In so far as his attitude towards modern theatre was concerned, Calzabigi was a partisan of French tragedy which, albeit imperfect, he considered the theatrical form closest to Greek drama.[14] Yet, in contrast to his neo-classical bent, he appreciated the plays of Shakespeare, a dramatist whom he regarded as full of imperfections, yet at the same time sublime in parts.[15] Calzabigi's pre-romantic tendencies allowed him to appreciate the poetic frenzy and strength of Shakespeare, as well as the vigour, conciseness, and boldness of Alfieri, his ideal of tragedy being expressed in terms which contain romantic overtones:

> [L]a vèra, la sublime Tragedia, la Tragedia, di cui abbiamo luminosi modelli ne'Greci, che ci rimangono, e ne'Francesi, esser deve un Vulcano in eruzione con tenebre, e lampi, e fulmini, e vampe, e diluvj di foco, e rimbombo di tuoni, e scosse di terreno, per a vicenda sorprendere, agitare, impaurire, [illegible] impietosire fino nel più profondo dell'anima l'estatico spettatore.[16]

He regarded Italian tragedy as being in tatters, and considered Alfieri as having finally created a new tragedy for Italy. Yet his neo-classical ideals denied him a full appreciation of Alfieri's theatre.[17]

Calzabigi did not leave a treatise on melodramma as an art-form. However, his dramatic theories concerning opera seria can be gleaned from a number of his writings: the

Dissertazione su le poesie drammatiche del signor abate Pietro Metastasio,[18] the prefaces produced in collaboration with Gluck to the ballet Don Juan, and to the operas Alceste and Paride ed Elena.[19] Futher evidence can be extracted from the Lettera a Vittorio Alfieri sulle quattro sue prime tragedie,[20] and from the anonymous Risposta che ritrovò casualmente nella gran città di Napoli il licenziato Don Santigliano.[21] Other valuable insights may be found in a number of his letters. Furthermore, Calzabigi painted a lively, if conventional, picture of the contemporary operatic scene, with its caprices and excesses, in the comic libretto L'opera seria, which Mario Fubini characterizes as one of the most felicitous works of its kind produced in the eighteenth century.[22]

From an examination of all the writings cited above, one can state that Calzabigi's attitude to opera as an art form is positive. There is no inherent questioning of the validity of a form that unites two arts, music and poetry. For Calzabigi, the union is entirely legitimate. It is only with regard to the manner in which the union is to be c achieved that a critical problem arises. This question is connected to Calzabigi's rôle as a critic of Metastasio, the quintessential practitioner of the form. In 1755 Calzabigi published his Dissertazione on Metastasio, ostensibly as an investigation into the reason for Metastasio's fame, and by extension, as an attempt to show others the true pathway to dramatic poetry.[23] While the dissertation presents little

that is outstanding or new in critical terms, it is the first cohesive and systematic analysis of the melodramma of Metastasio, and it bears on many themes that were taken up by later critics. Fubini records it as being considered the most important eighteenth-century essay on Metastasian drama.[24] In it, Calzabigi appears as the apologist for the Imperial poet and his dramatic system. A few years later, however, Calzabigi took an active part in the creation of an opera that was aimed at the reform of Metastasian drama. Nevertheless, twenty years later, in the Lettera a Alfieri, he still claimed that Metastasio had perfected dramma per musica.[25] This position was reversed in 1790 when Calzabigi published a virulent attack on Metastasio and his melodrammi in the Risposta di Don Santigliano.

Calzabigi's apparent about-face has led to disagreement among scholars concerning the authenticity of the change and its possible motive.[26] From a study of the documents in question, one must conclude that Calzabigi's opinions in the Dissertazione are very much in keeping with the nature of the work itself. The essay is a coherent study of Metastasian drama as drama; and while it touches upon the musical accompaniment, it does so only briefly and without delving into the problem in any depth.[27] In short, the Dissertazione is not so much an exposition of the author's thoughts on opera in general, as a defence and praise of the only dramatist of note the Italians could vaunt at the time.[28] The Dissertazione reveals no inherent dissatisfaction on the part of the author

with the concept and practice of Metastasian melodramma. Such dissatisfaction was certainly present at a later date, during the years of collaboration with Gluck, and subsequently, until the public attack in the Risposta di Don Santigliano. Calzabigi published the Risposta anonymously in reply to Stefano Arteaga's criticism of his libretti. In the Rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano, Arteaga described Calzabigi as one of the principal corruptors of the contemporary musical theatre, while praising the contributions of Metastasio above those of any other librettist. Arteaga's criticism of Calzabigi was devastating. The Spanish writer claimed that the fame of Calzabigi's Orfeo and Alceste was due more to the music than to the merits of the libretti, and to the critical disapproval of such illustrious figures as Metastasio and Rousseau. Arteaga found fault with the lack of variety in the plot and characterization, in the incongruous endings, improbable incidents, and in the subjugation of poetry to serve as an instrument to music and spectacle. Furthermore, Arteaga accused Calzabigi of contradiction between the views expressed in the Dissertazione and the ideal of opera executed in practice in his libretti.[29]

In the Risposta di Don Santigliano, Calzabigi set out to refute Arteaga's criticism. The format of the Risposta follows that of Arteaga's own reply to the attacks on the Rivoluzioni made by the musician Vincenzo Manfredini.[30] Calzabigi's mode of defence is to attempt to justify his own works according to his operatic principles, and to refute

Arteaga's judgement of him by setting out to prove that it was Metastasio, rather than himself, who was the corrupter of the musical theatre. The result is an expression of opinions that are diametrically opposed to those found in the Dissertazione. Calzabigi imputes to Metastasio the very faults Arteaga had attributed to Calzabigi. In the Risposta he criticizes the similarity of Metastasio's plots, his faulty characterization ["caratteri . . . per lo più falsi, mal disegnati, e mascherati a quella sua maniera puerile lambiccata concettosa"], improbable events, disconnected action, and anachronistic presentation of ancient customs.[31] These were the very elements that Calzabigi had praised in Metastasio thirty-five years earlier.

The incongruencies and contradictions that one notes on comparing the Dissertazione and Risposta can be explained by the different motivations that lay behind their composition. In 1755, Calzabigi, an Italian in Paris, had set out to exalt Italian drama to counteract the slights of French critics by means of a panegyric of Metastasio. In 1790, Gluck's librettist sought to exculpate himself from Arteaga's charges by showing the Imperial poet to be guilty of the same artistic imperfections. Thus, both the Dissertazione and the Risposta are far from being unbiased critiques of Metastasio. As for the charge of contradiction in Calzabigi's operatic ideals, it must be remembered that the Dissertazione was written during Calzabigi's early years in Paris, that the intervening years before his departure for Vienna coincided

with the aftermath of the Querelle des Bouffons and the dynamic discussions of opera among French intellectuals. Calzabigi's interest in opera as an artistic phenomenon would date from this period, since the collaboration with Gluck followed quickly upon his arrival in Vienna. Calzabigi's attitude towards Metastasio can thus be better comprehended if seen against the diverse motivations that led to the composition of the Dissertazione and the Risposta, and the evolution of his own theories on the composition of melodramma between the writing of the Dissertazione and the creation of the reform operas. Furthermore, the basis of his literary conception of opera can already be found in the Dissertazione.

Calzabigi's examination of Metastasio's melodramma as drama reveals this intrinsically literary concept of opera, a concept which remains constant in his writings. In the Dissertazione he dealt with the well-worn topic of the drama of antiquity and its mode of performance. He believed that it had been sung throughout: the individual parts in a simple song, much in the manner of the recitative in melodramma, and the chorus at the end of each act with vocal embellishments as if it were almost a union of many arias. He therefore concluded that the only recognizable difference between ancient and modern tragedy is the manner of presenting the charms of music to the public. That is, instead of having embellished song only at the end of each act, Metastasian melodramma uses arias at the end of each scene.[32] For Calzabigi, then, eighteenth-century opera seria was tragedy.

At the end of his study of Metastasio he claims to have proven his original thesis that Metastasio's plays are perfect tragedies, composed according to the very precepts prescribed by ancient dramatists.[33] Thus, in the Dissertazione, the problem of the melodramma as a genre does not arise. Calzabigi looked on the opera seria as the modern form of tragedy, and his main concern was that the libretto should be a true tragedy. This enabled him to state that Metastasio's dramas accompanied by music are lyric poems, but without music are examples of true and perfect tragedies, comparable with the most renowned tragic compositions of any nation.[34]

This is clearly an important point, for in it lies the nucleus of Calzabigi's dramatic theory. As his thought develops his concept of what constitutes tragedy changes, to the point where he no longer finds Metastasian melodramma acceptable. However, Calzabigi's original aim will not alter; tragedy will still remain the object of his critical attention. He laments to Alfieri over the dearth of the tragic genre in Italy, due, he claims--as does Bettinelli--to the lack of a national theatre. This has forced writers to turn to the popular theatre--the opera--with its vast number of stages.[35] Calzabigi, in a sense, does likewise, and sets out to perfect tragedy in its modern form, the opera seria.

Calzabigi refers over and over again to his serious libretti as tragedies. He demands of musical drama the same effects on the audience as those produced by tragedy: it must move the heart to pity or terror, it must delight and

instruct. In his letter to Count Greppi he describes his dramatic system as one which incorporates, with slight changes the features found in the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, that is: awe, interest, emotion, verisimilitude, and the imitation of nature.[36] To the Mercure de France he writes that in his letter to Alfieri he had given a description of the "plans tragiques" according to which he composed his libretti.[37] Yet these plans, explained in detail to Alfieri, form part of a discussion not of melodramma, but of the ideal for the composition of spoken tragedy.

In spite of this conscious identification of melodramma with tragedy, there is a curious inconsistency on this point in Calzabigi's writings. When it suits his purpose, he distinguishes between the two theatrical forms. In the letter to the Mercure de France, he defends the dénouement of Le Danaïde (in which the assassination of Danaus is not portrayed on stage) by stating that "c'est un Poëme pour le Théâtre Lyrique, et non une Tragédie proprement dite."[38] In the Risposta he also makes a distinction. For example, he considers the historical subjects preferred by Zeno and Metastasio as anathema to the lyric stage, as he finds it incongrous that such historical figures as Cato and Caesar should be represented by castrati, and should appear singing. In Calzabigi's view, opera should take its thematic material from Greek tradition, that is, the subject matter of the tragedies of Sophocles, Euripides and other Greek dramatists.[39] Yet for all that, in his later years he abandoned

Greek subjects to write two historical melodrammi.[40] In the Lettera a Alfieri he had also distinguished between spoken tragedy and melodramma, citing the usual criticisms of musical drama and its baroque excesses.[41]

Calzabigi does not present a clear definition of the differences between tragedy and melodramma. Nevertheless, in spite of his contradictory remarks on the subject, certain conclusions can be drawn. We can discern in Calzabigi's thought three contemporary forms of drama: spoken tragedy, sung tragedy (or opera seria), and melodramma. Although he does not make a strict distinction, using these three terms interchangeably, the concept of a basic tripartite division seems to be valid. Spoken tragedy was not Calzabigi's field of endeavour. Melodramma refers to musical drama in the Metastasian mold that he first regarded as acceptable, but later rejected. Opera seria would refer to the type of musical drama that Calzabigi himself wrote, and for which he held the same ideals as for spoken tragedy. In other words, it was a form he considered as tragedy, accompanied by appropriate music--the modern equivalent of Greek tragedy.

In the Lettera a Alfieri, Calzabigi formulates his plans for writing tragedy (he later claimed them to be his plans for writing his libretti) in the following manner:

> Penso, dunque, che la tragedia altro esser non deve, che una serie di quadri, i quali un soggetto tragico preso a trattare somministrar possa all'immaginazione, alla fantasia d'uno di quegli eccellenti pittori, che meriti andar distinto col nome, non troppo frequentemente concesso, di pittor-poeta.[42]

Calzabigi is referring here to Horace's famous dictum, ut pictura poesis, which expressed the essence of the belief that painting and poetry were analogous arts. During the pre-romantic period, music supplanted painting as the partner of poetry in this analogy. The principle of ut pictura poesis, however, occupied an important position in critical writings on the arts. Jean H. Hagstrum, in his study of literary pictorialism, states that the eighteenth century, like the Renaissance, "established an intimate relationship between painter and poet."[43] From antiquity, the correspondence was based upon the concept that both poetry and painting were mimetic arts representing nature in their individual mediums. To the mimetic principle, the eighteenth century added

> the doctrine of expression--the belief that painting, though confined to visibilia, yet has the power to portray psychological and moral reality. The poet had traditionally turned to the painter for guidance in undertaking to represent vividly the qualities of physical reality. It was now widely acknowledged that the painter could also penetrate into the recesses of the heart and mind.[44]

Eighteenth-century pictorial poets, continues Hagstrum, sought to emulate the economy and suggestiveness of visual detail of a painting in their verses, even attempting to create poetical histories similar in structure and illusion to pictorial histories.[45]

Calzabigi, deriving his plan for the composition of tragedy from the strain of literary pictorialism referred to above, declares that he considers Horace's dictum to possess

even greater importance than that attributed to it by others.[46] In his view, the ideal plan for the composition of tragedy can be fashioned after the technique that an artist would follow in creating a series of paintings to portray a dramatic story. Calzabigi goes on to illustrate this concept by citing the possible division into paintings of the sacrifice of Iphigenia. Each painting would depict one of the essential actions that moves the plot forward.[47] Since the painter cannot have his characters speak, he must make them act to convey their story. Thus, the drama develops in a series of scenes of action, rather than by long declamations and expositions that become tedious.[48] The poet-painter, of course, would make use of dialogue, but only that which was absolutely essential to give character to the protagonists and to lead them into the dramatic situation that is to move the spectators. In Calzabigi's opinion, this was the manner in which the ancients achieved success with their pantomime.[49]

In the Risposta, Calzabigi's remarks on the contemporary theatre are prefaced by a parenthetical reference to the uncertainty surrounding the definition of the manner of performing dialogue, that is of declamation ["se però sappiamo, che cosa sia Declamazione"].[50] By considering his libretti as tragedies, Calzabigi reveals his own belief that spoken tragedy and opera seria are two interpretations of the manner of declaiming or performing tragedy. For his part, he chose sung tragedy, and he set out to make it a form as perfect as, and as close to, its ancient models as was pos-

sible in view of changed circumstances and the progress achieved in staging techniques. Throughout his writings on theatre, Calzabigi places great importance on the fact that tragedy was written to be performed on stage. One of his objections to Arteaga's criticism of his reform operas is that Arteaga, and Italy, had not seen them performed as they were intended, and as in fact they were performed in Vienna:

> [Q]uesti Drammi non sono stati veduti in quell'aspetto che veder si devono per produrre l'effetto, che il C. si è proposto nello scriverli, essendo Drammi da Teatro, e non da Camera.[51]

In the letter to Alfieri, he discussed the implausibility of composing tragedy without knowledge of stage practice and of theatrical effects. Calzabigi believed that dramatic poetry should be written with the performance in mind. Thus, opera seria must be written with a knowledge of the stage practices particular to sung tragedy. Calzabigi's interest turned, therefore, to a consideration of the musical accompaniment, which in turn led to the formulation of his system of declamation .

In the Dissertazione on Metastasio's melodrammi, Calzabigi expresses common eighteenth-century opinions on the nature of music. He believed that the principal object of music was to paint or portray, that is, to imitate nature. He also judged music as being incapable of imitating without the aid of words, and hence did not favour purely instrumental music. Writing of an hypothetical symphony composed as an accompaniment to Tasso's description of dawn, he remarks:

> [S]iccome questi versi del Tasso non saranno poi presenti agli spettatori nell'esecuzione, così la sua sinfonia, benchè esattamente seguace delle vaghezze che que'versi ci presentano, non comparirà che un disordine e un vano accozzamento di suoni, ne'quali non troverà il nascer dell'aurora se non colui che di ritrovarvelo ha già stabilito.[52]

Consequently, in Calzabigi's view, music has need of poetry to interpret and complete its meaning. At the same time Calzabigi allows that music united with poetry leaves a more powerful impression on the audience than does poetry alone:

> [N]on può la musica muover gli affetti, e interesse negli animi nostri produrre senza l'ajuto della poesia, la quale nella confusione de'suoni di guida ci ha da servire per passo a passo condursi [sic] a quella sensibilità, che l'armonia vuol farci provare più viva e più efficace di quella che la semplice declamazione è atta a produrre.[53]

It follows, then, that since tragedy aims at affecting the emotions of the audience, its medium of expression should be an intimate connection between poetry and music:

> [A]cciocchè ajutandosi a vicenda, possano rendersi padrone degli animi degli uditori, e gli affetti volgerne a loro piacere, secondo quel che pretendono esprimere.

Thus the poet and the musician working in collaboration will produce a work that will affect the audience more than a tragedy composed of words alone:

> [Q]uegli coll'energia delle sue parole, questi colla forza dell'armonia vibrando più addentro ne'nostri cuori gli affetti, assai più della tragedia semplicemente declamata ci commuovono.[54]

Not only, then, does Calzabigi accept opera as an

interpretation of the method of performing ancient tragedy, but he also considers it the more effective form of tragedy. In the letter to the Mercure de France, written nearly twenty-five years after the beginning of his collaboration with Gluck, Calzabigi speaks of how he envisaged the union of poetry and music which created the reform-operas. It should be pointed out that Calzabigi claims that his ideas had already matured when he arrived in Vienna in 1761. He states that he had studied declamation thoroughly. According to him, it was the declamation of the actor which animated dramatic poetry. The function of the music in the operatic union is to give expression to the words of the drama, and hence to enrich the declamation:

> J'ai pensé, il y a 25 ans, que la seule musique convenable à la poésie dramatique, & sur-tout pour le dialogue & pour les airs que nous appelons d'azione, étoit celle qui approcheroit davantage de la déclamation naturelle, animée, énergique.

Declamation already seemed to him to be a kind of imperfect music:

> [L]a déclamation n'étoit elle-même qu'une musique imparfaite . . . on pourroit la noter telle qu'elle est, si nous avions trouvé des signes en assez grand nombre pour marquer tant de tons, tant d'inflexions, tants d'éclats, d'adoucissemens, de nuances variées, pour ainsi dire, à l'infini, qu'on donne à la voix en déclamant.

Musical accompaniment, then, perfects declamation, or in other words, dramatic vocal music becomes a declamation that is enriched by its musical accompaniment:

> La musique, sur des vers quelconques, n'étant donc d'après mes idées, qu'une déclamation plus savante, plus étudiée, & enrichie encore par la harmonie des accompagnemens, j'imaginai que c'étoit là tout le secret pour composer de la musique excellente pour un Drame; que plus la poésie étoit serrée, énergique, passionnée, touchante, harmonieuse, & plus la musique qui chercheroit à la bien exprimer, d'après sa véritable déclamation, seroit la musique vraie de cette poésie, la musique par excellence.[55]

From this principle, that the closer the musical accompaniment is to the natural declamation of the words, the more perfect will that music be, Calzabigi reaches a conclusion that is truly revolutionary for his time. In questioning why some arias seem to be successful in only one musical setting (such as Pergolesi's Si cerca, si dice in the Olimpiade), whereas others can be set to various accompaniments, Calzabigi concludes that in the former case, the perfect poetic expression and natural declamation of each has been found, while in the latter case their individual true "musique de déclamation" has not. Once it has been found, however, that particular accompaniment will become the only one that is acceptable. The implications of this important point are clearly elucidated in the letter to Count Greppi:

> Ma siccome unica io stimo la maniera di bene esprimere gli affetti coll'Armonia come è unica quella di declamare naturalmente un bel pezzo di tragedia, così se questa è stata preoccupata dal primo maestro, non so vedere come altri potrebbero porvi le mani, se non lavorando sul falso, o compilando una mascherata imitazione. . . . non solo alla sua inferiore, ma assolutamente ridicola.[56]

To recapitulate: in Calzabigi's view there can be only one true musical accompaniment to a drama, namely the one

which gives drama its perfect expression or declamation. From the foregoing, it appears that in Calzabigi's conception melodramma becomes the actual unified artistic whole that Gravina, Martello and Metastasio had idealized. Calzabigi's concept of music as enhanced declamation was not, of course, original to him. Already in seventeenth-century France it was a commonplace interpretation of the function of music in opera. Lully had devoted much thought to the problem of the recitative and its musical accompaniment. He found the perfunctory Italian recitativo secco to be lacking in musicality, and he evolved a more rhythmical system based on spoken declamation. Norman Demuth recounts that for this purpose Lully listened attentively to La Champmeslé, the famous actress of the Comédie Française, who was coached by Racine. Lully noted the accent, rise and fall of the voice and speed of diction. Demuth describes his method of composition as follows:

> He would first learn the text by heart, declaiming it over and over again until he had noted down the verbal climaxes and the points at which the spoken voice would rise and fall. He would then fit a musical rhythm to the words. The melodic line came next, closely following the graph of his experiments. In place of the punctuating chords of recitativo secco, Lully contrived a primitive form of recitativo stromentato espressivo in which the vocal style approximated to that of the Air; but . . . he accomplished only the first step in this direction.[57]

In his recitative, Lully limited himself to assigning one note to each syllable.[58] Rameau adopted and developed this practice, but imparted greater expression to the declamation.

Both composers sought musical parallels to the inflexions of the spoken words. Their musical notation was consequently more complicated than in Italian opera. It permitted a more precise indication of the cadences of the recitative, allowing the singer less room for improvisation and personal idiosyncrasies.[59]

Calzabigi's system of declamation reveals such close similarities to these French experiments with déclamation notée that one is tempted to conclude that it derived from his direct acquaintance with the Lulli-Quinalt method and the contemporary tragédie lyrique.[60] Unfortunately, Calzabigi acknowledges no sources or general indebtedness for his theories on declamation. However, his system is so clearly French in tone that it is at least a plausible conjecture to attribute it to his ten-year sojourn in Paris.

Metastasio had already insisted on the word having its own musicality which the score should enhance. But in his desire to preserve the literary integrity of the libretto, Metastasio went so far as to claim that his dramas could exist without music. While Calzabigi had originally echoed the same opinion of Metastasio's libretti, he later came to consider the words and music of melodramma as one and inseparable. Calzabigi's three libretti survive in the setting by Gluck, the composer for whom they were written. Metastasio's dramas survive as libretti, rather than as operas with a specific musical setting. In the eighteenth century they were put to music by many different composers.

Calzabigi actively protested against the common practice of the time in having a popular libretto reset to new music with every new production. It was precisely this practice which prompted his letter to Count Greppi of 6 April 1768.

The Count had requested Calzabigi to alter the libretto of Alceste to suit the requirements of the theatre in Milan, another procedure also quite common in the eighteenth century. Calzabigi refused to do so, explaining that he wrote to dramatic exigencies, not to please singers or other extraneous interests. His letter is an impassioned defence of artistic integrity, but it went unheeded by those who wielded power and influence in the Ducal Theatre in Milan. The task of adapting the libretto was given to the poet Parini, and Pietro Guglielmi was commissioned to replace Gluck's score with an accompaniment of his own. The new opera met with little success, thus vindicating Calzabigi's position.[61] Nevertheless, the incident is very illuminating, as it reveals Calzabigi as the first Italian librettist to work in real collaboration with the composer in creating a musical drama, and in advocating that this must be so. Before him, librettists such as Metastasio and Zeno worked as individuals, perhaps consulting with the composer on the particular occasion for which the opera was being written, but always with the knowledge that afterwards the libretto would enter the public domain to be altered and put to music by any number of composers. Calzabigi, keenly aware of this, decried it as an intolerable practice. Writing specifically

of the alteration of the libretto of Alceste, he marked it as a sign of the general decadence of Italian literature. Yet he was aware of the futility of his protest:

> La stampa avendo resa propria l'Alceste di chiunque voglia mettervi l'impegno sopra, sarebbe stravaganza la mia, in pretendere che rimanesse intatta.[62]

And, while Calzabigi firmly believed in the integrity of the musico-dramatic composition, he was unable to convince Gluck thoroughly of the inherent relationship between words and music. The famous composer did not hesitate to use in his new operas music that he had already written to other words.

Like earlier eighteenth-century critics, Calzabigi believed that poetry should be the mistress in the relationship between the component arts of opera. He was, therefore, pleased with his collaboration with Gluck, for he tells us that the composer carried out successfully the function that the librettist envisaged for music in the performance of tragedy:

> Altro egli non ha fatto che segnare una declamazione armonica alla poesia d'Alceste aiutandola coi suoni acciò più gentilmente, e più vivamente s'insinui nell'animo degli spettatori.

Gluck achieved this by leaving the poetry dominant,

> non affogando la parola coll'armonia, come fanno i nostri inetti, ignoranti, meccanici maestri di musica, ma contornandola coi vezzi armonici onde acquisti energia, e vaghezza, ma di maniera che sempre rimanga dominante.

For Calzabigi, it is, of course, perfectly logical that

poetry be dominant in the collaboration, since it is tragedy that is being represented on stage:

> [Q]ualora non si sente quel che dice l'attore, che scrisse il poeta, l'interesse è perduto, e per conseguenza il fine che ogni sensato uomo si propone di conseguire nelle rappresentazioni teatrali.

Since poetry must rule, it follows that the poet must have the upper hand in the collaboration. Calzabigi, therefore, does not regard it as presumption on the poet's part to prescribe what music is suitable to the melodramma:

> Ella non creda che sia mia temeraria presunzione il voler così dar giudizio della musica che può convenire all'Alceste: perchè s'egli è vero che niuno meglio di me possa dar norma all'attore per ben declamare la poesia d'Alceste, e vivamente, e naturalmente esprimere le passioni che vi regnano; e se la musica altro esser non deve che la declamazione abbellita dall'armonia, suppongo che non mi si contrasterà che il primo giudice della musica d'Alceste debba essere il poeta che l'Alceste ha composta.[63]

In this way Calzabigi attempted to put into effect the belief shared with earlier critics that the poet should regulate the overall composition of the melodramma. In his plan for reform, Calzabigi sees the librettist as the central figure who creates the drama in all its aspects, including its performance, with the result that its success depends not on the singer, dancer or composer, but only on the poet.[64] These are strong words indeed in an age when, despite the overwhelming success and popularity of Metastasio, the librettist (including the Imperial poet himself) had little control over the performance of his melodrammi, the integrity of his

libretti, or the use made of his verses.

In the Dissertazione, when he was defending Metastasio's melodrammi as true tragedies, Calzabigi referred to Metastasio as "poeta" and regarded him as the equal of any ancient or modern tragic poet.[65] In the Risposta, discussing the plan for the composition of the words in opera, he refers to the author of the libretto as "il Tragico Poeta."[66] From these remarks, and from what has been discussed elsewhere in this study, it is clear that in Calzabigi's view the librettist is a true poet. Or, to be more precise, the author of the type of opera that he advocates is a true poet, for he refers to the average librettists of the traditional opera as crude versifiers who, by copying, or imitating without discernment the libretti of other authors, flood the Italian theatre with monstrous creations.[67]

The dedicatory prefaces to Alceste and to Paride ed Elena are signed by Gluck, but written in collaboration with Calzabigi. They reveal ideas on the relation of music and poetry in the melodramma similar to Calzabigi's in his letter to Count Greppi written the year after the first performance of Alceste, and two years before the composition of Paride ed Elena. In the preface to the former the composer states:

> When I began to write the music for Alceste. . . . I sought to restrict the music to its true purpose of serving to give expression to the poetry and to strengthen the dramatic situations, without interrupting the action or hampering it with unnecessary and superfluous ornamentations.

Gluck then goes on to draw a parallel between music and

painting, as Calzabigi does between poetry and painting:

> I believed that it should achieve the same effect as lively colours and a well-balanced contrast of light and shade on a very correct and well-disposed painting, so animating the figures without altering their contours.[68]

In the preface to Paride we find the reiteration of the belief already found in Calzabigi's Dissertazione, that the poet is responsible for inspiring feeling in the musician, and thus the type of music he composes.[69] The idea that the music must reproduce the sentiments of the words also occurs ("I believed that . . . songs in an opera are merely another form of declamation"), and the parallel between music and painting appears once again:

> Your Highness will already have read the text of Paris and will have noted that it does not present the composer's imagination with those strong passions, those great images and those tragic situations, which move the audience in Alceste and give so much opportunity for artistic effects; for which reason one must not expect the same force and energy in the music, just as in a painting with full light one does not expect the same effects of chiaroscuro, the same sharp contrasts as the painter can employ with a subject which enables him to choose a subdued light.[70]

The preface was also an a priori apology for the opera, which did not meet with the same measure of success as Orfeo and Alceste because it did not deal (according to Calzabigi in the Risposta) with the same lofty and tragic subjects as the other two works.[71] The composer claims in the preface that in order to keep to the character of the work he was obliged from time to time to descend to the trivial:

> When one is in search of truth, one must vary one's style according to the subject in hand, and the greatest beauties of melody and harmony become defective and imperfect if they are not in their proper place.[72]

In other words, the poetry and the music must be perfectly suited to each other, and there is no justification for the embellishment of music for the sake of music alone in the union of arts which is the opera.

Calzabigi deplored the use of spectacle, which served to capture the attention of the spectator, but did not suffice to involve the audience in the drama being unfolded. Thus, he called the accoutrements of spectacle

> inezie nelle quali l'occhio si compiace un istante; ma non hanno poi il vero merito di trattenere la mente, e molto meno quello più raro di fermare il core a compiangere le disgrazie dei rappresentati eroi, unico fine che si propone la tragedia.[73]

Calzabigi does not comment in any detail on the rôle of the stage-decorator, nor even on that of the fourth element of the collaboration, the dance. In a letter to Antonio Montefani, the artistic director at Bologna, with reference to a projected performance of his Alceste ten years after the ill-fated attempt at Milan, Calzabigi discourses briefly on the dance. He speaks out against the use of long ballets since the pantomimic action of the chorus would already add variety to the action. Knowing, however, that a ballet-master was employed for the performance, Calzabigi insisted that only two ballet sequences be used, preferably the two original ones choreographed by Noverre for Gluck's music, as they were pure

dance, free of any attempt to portray meaning or plot.[74] Calzabigi disapproved of the custom of inserting ballet into opera, as he felt that the introduction of new or extraneous action in that manner destroyed the organic unity of the work.[75]

Most of Calzabigi's comments on the actual performers of opera are to be found in his satirical libretto L'Opera seria. As already mentioned, the picture he gives of an operatic performance is conventional, with the usual echoes of previous critics, especially Marcello. Apart from the satire of the singers' faults as artists, Calzabigi expressed the belief that they could be trained to execute their parts according to the overall plan of the poet, and he refused to adapt his poetry for the benefit of the singers; on the contrary, he insisted that they accommodate themselves to the service of his poetry.[76] He thereby demanded that the composer abandon the musical techniques that favoured the singers and the display of a beautiful voice at the expense of the artistic coherence and cohesion of the drama:

> Je le priai en même-temps d'en bannir i passaggi, le cadenze, i ritornelli, & tout ce qu'on a mis de gothique, de barbare, d'extravagant dans notre musique.[77]

In the preface to Alceste, Gluck gives concrete examples of his acquiescence to the above:

> So I have tried to avoid interrupting an actor in the warmth of a dialogue with a boring intermezzo or stopping him in the midst of his discourse, merely so that the flexibility of his voice might show to advan-

> tage in a long passage, or that the orchestra might give him time to collect his breath for a cadenza. I did not think I should hurry quickly through the second part of an air, which is perhaps the most passionate and most important, in order to have room to repeat the words of the first part regularly four times or to end the aria quite regardless of its meaning, in order to give the singer an opportunity of showing how he can render a passage with so-and-so variations at will; in short, I have sought to eliminate all these abuses, against which sound common sense and reason have so long protested in vain.[78]

Finally, Calzabigi decried the existing practice of forcing a libretto to suit a regular theatrical company, and demanded that a company be formed to suit each opera being performed. Because of his high ideal, he refused to allow practices that his contemporaries accepted as necessary due to the union of poetry and music:

> Non ho potuto tener conto dell'etichette de'virtuosi, non mi sono limitato nel numero de'personaggi, non mi son ristretto a far sempre uso de'soprani, non ho voluto soggettarmi a scrivere per tutti parti interessanti, nè finalmente mi sono adattato a servire colla mia poesia al commodo [sic] de'cantanti (abuso troppo ridicolo) ma ho inteso che i cantanti servissero al mio.[79]

While Metastasio adjusted his melodramma to the bel canto virtuoso, Calzabigi and Gluck did away with the embellishments of the traditional arias. Calzabigi claimed that he wrote only in accordance with dramatic exigencies.

In the letter of 6 April 1768 addressed to Greppi, Calzabigi claimed to have set out deliberately to reform Italian theatre, which elsewhere he describes as being in a virtually barbaric state.[80] The same claim reappears in the

Risposta. In the Rivoluzioni Arteaga had accused Calzabigi of being inconsistent in his dramatic theories, for he had praised Metastasio in the Dissertazione at the expense of the French tragédie lyrique, only to abandon subsequently the Metastasian form in favour of one closer to the French ideal. Answering these charges in his Risposta, Calzabigi cites a passage from his Dissertazione in which he had conjectured that Quinault's dramatic plan, were it only purified of such imperfections as its emphasis on the marvellous, would produce a successful opera. According to Calzabigi, this point proves that in 1755 he was already thinking of his reform which was intended specifically to purify the tragédie of Quinault.[81] In the letter to Count Greppi he goes so far as to claim that he had already written Orfeo eighteen years earlier, that is, in 1750. The veracity of this statement should be brought into serious question, especially since in the Risposta he says that he wrote the Orfeo in Vienna.[82] Furthermore, Calzabigi claimed that Metastasio did not reform the melodramma, but that the merit of the reform was entirely his own:

> Dissi essere io stato autore del cambiamento del piano costumato de'nostri drammi che fin dal Zeno regnava sulle nostre scene, e realmente posso intero attribuirmene il vanto.[83]

And although the preface to Alceste is practically a paraphrase of Algarotti's Saggio sopra l'opera in musica, Calzabigi claimed precedence in conceiving the form:

> [E] benchè susseguentemente l'Algarotti insinuasse coi suoi opuscoli necessario un tal cambiamento, e ne presentasse in prosa un modello, pure nè ciò fu da alcuno prima di me eseguito, nè mi prevenne l'Algarotti coll'insinuazione suddetta sua, nè il da lui pubblicato modello ha che fare col piano da me inventato, non essendo quello se non una pura imitazione delle opere francesi . . . le quali nel loro piano sono anche più stravaganti delle nostre e più insipide nel maneggio delle passioni.[84]

In view of this, we may well ask what exactly was Calzabigi's reform, and whether his plan was original. Scholars are unanimous in stating that Calzabigi and Gluck were influenced by the French in their reform.[85] Yet it was not the contemporary French tragédie lyrique that inspired Calzabigi, as some have maintained, but the Encyclopedists' attack on French opera, together with the reforming ideals of such men as Rousseau, Diderot and Friedrich Melchior Grimm.[86] However, the impetus was not solely French. Most of the tenets of Calzabigi's system can be found in earlier Italian criticism of opera, including Metastasio. Calzabigi, a cosmopolitan figure who had immersed himself in Italian, French and English culture, was able to draw from these diverse sources the various strands of his system. Starting from common neo-classical ideals of simplicity, imitation of nature in art, admiration for ancient Greece, as well as the neo-classical conception of music, he evolved a system that succeeded in doing away with the excesses of the conventional aria. Although his plan was not entirely original, its value lay in the fact that it was successful in putting into practice what had hitherto remained only theory. Through Gluck,

Calzabigi claimed in the preface to Alceste:

> I have sought to eliminate all these abuses, against which sound common sense and reason have so long portested in vain.[87]

The extermination of abuses was not, of course, completely successful. Nevertheless, Calzabigi and Gluck were the most ruthless and adamant in putting their theories into practice. Metastasio had complained of the abuses in theoretical terms, but in practice continued to cater to the accepted conventions of the time. Calzabigi and Gluck, on the other hand, courageously set out to break with the tyranny of convention, risking the incomprehension of contemporary audiences.

The efficacy of the reform has been brought into question by scholars. It is frequently pointed out that, except in Paris, Gluck's operas written in collaboration with Calzabigi were not in great demand, while Metastasio's remained popular into the nineteenth century.[88] Alceste is the real reform opera; Orfeo still has a lot of the old.[89] Yet it is Orfeo that is praised, for example, by Planelli and by Bettinelli as perfected operas, whereas Alceste is not even mentioned by them, an indication that the reform was not fully understood or appreciated by those two contemporary critics. Einstein concludes that Calzabigi and Gluck did succeed in shifting the balance between opera and drama in the direction of drama, but he adds:

> He [Gluck] wrote operas different from those of his more ingenuous Italian contemporaries; but it nevertheless remains an open question whether his are

better than theirs.[90]

Whatever the answer, Gluck and Calzabigi's reform did not create a new style or school of opera for the international stage, in spite of the fact that both of them sought imitators.[91] Musicologists point out that in effect Gluck's reform operas represent the culmination or end of an era, a summing-up of what had gone before, rather than the reform that introduces a new epoch.[92] Whatever Calzabigi's precise contribution to the collaboration with Gluck may have been, in the field of critical literature on melodramma he expounded a vision of opera rooted firmly in the neo-classical tradition with its insistence on artistic cohesion and integrity. Needless to say, Calzabigi would have deplored the dominant rôle that music was to assume in the opera of the romantic period, yet in some respects he anticipates the operatic developments of the nineteenth century in his insistence on the inseparability of word and music in melodramma. This view, and the high opinion he held for tragic opera, constitute his two most significant contributions to the history of opera criticism.

Saverio Bettinelli

At the end of the eighteenth century, melodramma also attracted the critical attention of Saverio Bettinelli, one of the most interesting figures of the Italian Enlightenment.[1] Bettinelli is noted for the complexity of his personality and of his critical works, which makes it difficult to situate him conveniently in any single literary classification. In the Preface to Franco Betti's Storia critica delle Lettere virgiliane, Gustavo Costa characterizes Bettinelli as a typical representative of Enlightenment rationalism.[2] With all due respect to this scholar, we must observe that such a statement is too unilateral and restrictive. The rationalistic strain is indeed very strong in Bettinelli's personality and critical thought. However, it is tempered to a greater or lesser extent, by such elements as classicism, empiricism and pre-Romanticism, that co-exist with it. He is also one of the principal figures in the movement towards a dynamic renewal of a literary tradition that had become stagnant.

Literary historians point out the apparent inconsistencies and contradictions in Bettinelli's writings.[3] They cite, for example, his innovative and pre-romantic concept of poetic frenzy expounded in the essay Dell'Entusiasmo delle belle arti composed in the middle years of his life, and the turn, in his later years, towards literary traditionalism and conservatism.[4] Such general inconsistencies are to be expected during the course of a long and culturally active life (which earned

for him the soubriquet of "Nestore" of Italian literature). However, they are to be found not only in different periods of his career, but also within individual works. Nevertheless, Bettinelli is in fact remarkably consistent in his attitude towards the melodramma of the eighteenth century, though it must be remembered that he dealt with the subject exclusively in the latter half of his life.

In the Preface to the first edition of his dialogues on the theatre, Bettinelli places before the reader his credentials as a critic on this topic, claiming a knowledge both of the opera of the time and of the critical literature that deals with it.[5] A glance at his writings on opera reveals his familiarity with the works of Muratori, Du Bos, Rousseau, Voltaire, D'Alembert, Eximeno, Calzabigi, Quadrio, Napoli Signorelli, Planelli, Matteo Borsa, Algarotti and Arteaga. All are referred to, and their works are quoted or paraphrased. Furthermore, Bettinelli could lay claim to practical experience with theatrical production during his seven-year term as Accademico del Collegio dei Nobili at Parma (1752-59). In this capacity, he was in charge of productions at the two theatres in the College, and his activities coincided chronologically with Du Tillot's attempts at theatrical reforms in the Court of Parma, and with Traetta's contribution to the reform of opera.[6] In his Discorso sopra il teatro italiano, Bettinelli also claimed experience in writing poetry to be set to music. He cites two specific occasions: one for the choruses of his tragedy Gionata (1747), and the other for his

Cantata in honour of Joseph II's entrance into Rome in 1769.[7] The originality of Bettinelli's remarks on melodramma is, nevertheless, somewhat limited. His thought reveals a heavy reliance on previous critics of opera, especially Muratori, Marcello, Algarotti and Arteaga. Yet his conclusions, while reflecting opinions held by previous critics, do show that he had confronted the problem of melodramma in the light of his own convictions concerning the nature of art.

Bettinelli's position on opera has not been studied in detail. Maria Giacinta Macchia Alongi deals with it in a superficial manner, merely touching upon some of Bettinelli's remarks concerning melodramma.[8] She also points out their similarity to Arteaga's criticism in the Rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano. Macchia Alongi seems unaware, however, of the vastly different spirit that informs the observations of the two critics. Giazotto regards Bettinelli chiefly as an anti-Metastasian critic, though at the same time he recognizes that Bettinelli's attack on Metastasio reflects in general upon the opera of the time that adhered largely to Metastasian models.[9] On the whole, however, Bettinelli's writings on opera have been scrutinized almost exclusively by scholars concerned with criticism of Metastasio as a poet.

This exclusiveness is understandable, for Bettinelli's criticism is clearly centered on Metastasio and the type of melodramma he engendered. The harshness of his attack contrasts vividly with the many admiring voices that sang the

praises of the Imperial poet. Sergio Romagnoli believes that Bettinelli provides one of the most acute criticisms of Metastasio's art, considered in its double aspect of poetry per se, and drama.[10] In many ways, Bettinelli is the harbinger of the negative judgement that overtakes Metastasio in the nineteenth century. However, he was not alone in this negative attitude towards Metastasio, even in the eighteenth century, just as in his Lettere virgiliane he was not unique in his severe criticism of Dante. In both cases, he became the standard-bearer for these factions through his polemical style of attack.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that Bettinelli's Lettere virgiliane attack not only Dante himself. Bettinelli inveighs against what he regarded as the stagnant culture of the eighteenth century with its deference to established authority, and its sterile propagation of Arcadian verse-forms. In his opinion, they were largely academic exercises that no longer fulfilled the needs of contemporary society.[11] He also challenges the adherence to fossilized precepts and poetics, and the servile imitation of accepted models.[12] In the same way, in his Dialogo on opera, by striking out at Metastasio, Bettinelli intends to criticize the type of opera that had arisen from the cult of Metastasian melodramma and had dominated the eighteenth-century European stage from the time of the first performance of Didone in 1724. In his discussion of opera, therefore, Bettinelli is consistent with his programme, exemplified not only in the

Lettere virgiliane, but also in his other works such as the Discorso sopra la poesia italiana, of dealing with specific authors and their works, rather than with precepts and doctrines.[13] His writings on Metastasio and the type of opera that Metastasio made popular will thus enable us to draw certain conclusions about Bettinelli's attitude towards opera in general. As a preliminary observation that we hope to demonstrate shortly, we may note that Bettinelli's specific interest centres quite definitely on regular, spoken tragedy, and touches opera only in so far as it bears a relation to tragedy. We may also observe in passing that the basic problem faced by eighteenth-century literary criticism, stemming from the diatribe on tragic forms promoted by the Orsi-Bouhours controversy, still makes its impact felt on a personality as close in time to Alfieri and the newest currents of pre-romantic culture as Bettinelli.

There are sporadic references to melodramma in several of Bettinelli's works, such as the Discorso sopra il teatro italiano, Il Risorgimento d'Italia negli studi, nelle arti e ne'costumi dopo il Mille, and the Discorso sopra la poesia italiana.[14] However, melodramma became the specific object of his concern while he was writing his Dialoghi d'Amore,[15] and it is to this work that we shall pay particular attention, referring as necessary to his other writings to illustrate and clarify his points of view. Initially, Bettinelli wrote four dialogues to be published under the title Dialoghi sopra il teatro moderno in a new edition of his own tragedies, two

of which were written during his term as Accademico at the College of Parma. Entitled Tragedia, Tragicommedia, Opera and Balli, the first four dialogues were published with his tragedies in 1788. Encouraged by his friends, Bettinelli composed several additional dialogues on literary subjects and the social mores of the time, finally publishing the entire collection of them in 1796. The dialogues attracted little attention in literary circles; the only contemporary references to them are to be found in the private correspondence of people to whom Bettinelli had sent copies. Neither have they attracted widespread attention among later critics, in spite of the fact that they offer an interesting and variegated picture of Italian society in the late eighteenth century.[16]

The participants in the four original Dialoghi d'Amore are Amore, who acts as spokesman for the author, and Melpomene, the Muse of tragedy, who represents contemporary taste in theatre.[17] Melpomene leads Amore through the behind-the-scenes world of tragedy, tragicomedy (that is, the contemporary bourgeois comédie larmoyante), opera and ballet. Dialogo XIII (in the 1796 edition), the third and most important of the dialogues on theatre, finds Amore visiting the opera house as a guest of Melpomene who proudly escorts him backstage to reveal the secrets of the performance. The resulting dialogue is a mordant satire and caricature of opera. Amore proceeds to strip aside the glittering façade of the spectacle to expose the shoddy stuff that clothes the theat-

rical illusion. The stage, as it happens, is set for a performance of Metastasio's Catone in Utica.

In Dialogo XIII, Bettinelli deals first of all with practical considerations connected with the external elements of opera, examining, for example, such matters as the construction of stage décor, as well as the attitudes and personal idiosyncrasies of the performers. He then moves on to a discussion of less concrete matters, and it is at this more theoretical level that he tackles, albeit very briefly, the problem of the relationship between music and poetry. With this procedure, Bettinelli reverses the normal practice of previous critics who generally directed their attention initially to the critical problems of the genre, relegating treatment of practical issues to a position of secondary importance. Bettinelli, however, immediately singles out those features that, in his opinion, give opera its popular appeal. Thus, Amore's diatribe begins with the elements used to create spectacle.

At his first glimpse of the interior of the opera-house, Amore, is overawed:

> Che splendor d'ornamenti! Il tempio di Giove Capitolino non può averne di più: oro, stucchi, vernici, cristalli, ogni loggia è un gabinetto; io ne son abbagliato.[18]

But as Melpomene initiates him into the mysteries of the stage-decorator's art, and that of the machine-builder, Amore's awe changes to revulsion. Bettinelli paints a picture

of squalor and miserliness, of what Amore calls a "great sordid economy" as the reality behind the eye-enthralling stage décor. The extraordinary effects that create terror in the spectator are but tricks of the simplest nature that Melpomene explains with pride at the ingenuity they display:

> [E]cco il mare agitato; non son che tele, o cartoni illuminati. . . . il fulmine è un razzo che striscia e scoppia. . . . una balena, un coccodrillo, e tigri, orsi, leoni, elefanti, ma sopratutto dragoni. . . . Un facchino v'è dentro ad animarli. . . . Tra gli urli e i pianti de'naufraghi. . . . ecco Deucalione . . . che guida per mano la moglie Pirra . . . in pianto. . . . Ciò fa un bellissimo duetto, ma più bello è un mio pensiero di far nuotar la donna comodamente: ha il guardinfante che la tien sospesa e a galla. L'avresti mai trovato?[19]

Bettinelli deals with the stage décor in far greater detail than other eighteenth-century critics. Undoubtedly, his personal experiences at Parma in the staging of theatrical productions gave him a clearer insight into the techniques involved, and enabled him to speak with authority on the subject. Consequently, he inveighs against the spectacle in which everything is false and exaggerated, in which thought is manipulated in the same way as the perspective, scenery, paintings, lights and stage machinery, not to present the truth, but only spectacle and illusion. Bettinelli acknowledges that opera is rightfully called the realm of illusion, but he is relentless in stripping away every vestige of that illusion.

Bettinelli's wrath falls with equal vehemence on the audience that does not see through the puerility of stage

effects; the audience that attends the opera to see and to be seen, to converse with friends, take refreshments, pay attention only to the arias and adore the virtuoso voice and its possessor; the audience that made of Metastasio a cult-figure, thereby ensuring the perpetuation of his specific form of melodramma. The theatre-goers are portrayed as an uncouth rabble that shouts remarks and throws food on the stage, even though the audience be composed of members of the aristocracy as well as the bourgeoisie and the artisans. Melpomene remarks that the theatre is an efficient equalizer; the upper classes:

> [d]ivengon popolo per lor bontà: lo spettacolo agguaglia tutti, purchè tutto sia maraviglia sorpresa incanto di macchine di comparse di pompe e d'ogni decorazione.[20]

Here Bettinelli notes the essentially popular nature of Italian melodramma which, in his opinion, lowers artistic standards to the level of the lowest common denominator. Such a state of affairs is, of course, diametrically opposed to the Enlightenment ideal of raising the cultural standards of society through judicious use of the theatre (among other forms of art) as a medium of instruction and edification.

Melpomene, unperturbed by Amore's outburst, announces that it is time for him to meet the virtuosi who interpret the melodramma to the audience. Through Amore's reaction to the various types to whom he is presented, Bettinelli paints another squalid vignette of the back-stage milieu, with its

vain and quarrelsome prime donne of all genders and artistic stature, their patrons, the money-hungry impresarios, and sundry camp-followers. For this portrayal of the various characters, Bettinelli draws extensively on Marcello's Il Teatro alla Moda, though he does not match Marcello's skill as a caricaturist. Amore continues to be appalled by what he observes. He is repelled by the custom of creating castrati, by the base character of the virtuosi, by their effeminate interpretation of tragic heroes, and by their singing technique that destroys the meaning of the words. He realizes, however, that both poet and musician alike must bow to their every whim, for it is the aria, and the voice that sings it, that attracts the public to the theatre.[21]

Turning away from the disgusting spectacle of the virtuosi, Amore asks Melpomene the identity of a figure whom he espies skulking in a corner. This wretched individual turns out to be the librettist, a being unworthy, in Bettinelli's view, of bearing the title of poet. Amore describes him as having the appearance of a common waiter, thin, retiring and self-effacing, though ready at any moment to fill orders from the singers to change the bill of fare as they see fit, adding, subtracting or rearranging as their fancy takes them. Melpomene views the librettist as one who earns his daily wage in the manner of other journeyman labourers: he saws, sews, cuts, nails, lengthens and shortens to order. Indeed, the librettist finds himself in the most unfortunate position of all the artisans in opera, for he is a slave to

all the other elements: the music, the whims and talents of the singers, and the tastes and caprices of the uncultured audiences.[22]

The encounter with the abject and subservient librettist leads to a brief discussion of the roles of poetry and music in melodramma. Bettinelli's attitude to the poetry of the libretto is summarized in the exchange between Amore and Melpomene:

> AMORE: Che serve dunque la poesia?
> MELPOMENE: È per l'usanza, e non ne ha che il nome.[23]

That is, use and custom demand that the libretto be written in verse. In Bettinelli's view, however, such verse cannot be dignified by the name of poetry. Moreover, in melodramma, the sound of the instruments drowns out the words, which are poorly recited in any case. Since they are unintelligible, no one pays any attention to them. The contemporary audience wants only arias, and everything is sacrificed to them, even though the arias may interrupt the action of the drama, or even have nothing at all to do with it:

> [P]urchè l'aria campeggi, tutto sta bene; arie e poi arie, sia finito il pensiero o no, la frase tronchisi non che il dialogo, rompansi versi non che recitativi che importa? Niun vi bada, neppure il maestro e il libro, la poesia e il poeta.[24]

Like Marcello's maestro in Il Teatro alla Moda, the composer lacks the culture that would allow him to correct the irregu-

larities of opera. He can read musical notes, but knows nothing of poetry or of dramatic theory. Thus, the spectacle lurches from aria to aria, striking the ear with the singers' displays of virtuoso technique, and the eye with stupendous stage décor and scenic effects. In a final act of disgust and outrage, Amore invokes his divine powers to cause the actors and their make-believe finery to disappear. The dialogue ends with Amore giving Melpomene a letter containing a criticism of Metastasio. The text of the letter is appended to Dialogo XIII, and we shall return to it shortly.

The Dialogo d'Amore on opera makes it abundantly clear that Bettinelli's attitude towards eighteenth-century melodramma is entirely negative. It is an attitude that remains consistent throughout his writings. His first commentary on the genre is found in the Discorso sopra il teatro italiano (1771). Bettinelli follows Algarotti, Arteaga and Voltaire in admitting that, in principle, if properly composed and performed, the spectacle created by the union of the arts would be the most perfect and marvellous of all theatrical spectacles. However, this remark cannot be taken out of the general context of the work. In the Discorso, Bettinelli introduces opera with the following words:

> [Q]uello spettacolo, che sarebbe il più mirabile e più perfetto, se fosse eseguito siccome conviene, voglio dir l'opera.

But this remark is immediately qualified:

> Quell'ammirabil composto della musica e della melodia, della voce e del suono, della poesia e della pittura, della danza e delle comparse, delle macchine e d'ogni decoramento, che tutto insieme farebbe la gloria e l'incanto del valore e del piacere umano, l'anima, il cuore, l'ingegno, il buon gusto e tutti i sensi dell'uomo nobilitando e comprendendo di sue delizie, non è il più delle volte fuor solamente che una confusione d'ogni assurdità, e un'adunanza romorosa di genti oziose e senza cultura.[25]

For, in the intervening years since its creation "circa il 1600,"

> il capriccio, gli abusi, il pessimo gusto l'aveano guasta. . . . Da gran temp è divenuta un traffico, un appalto, una merce venale con gran vergogna della nostra nazione.

Bettinelli then adds his hope that melodramma may be reformed by taking the best from French and Italian opera:

> I Francesi, che la presero, come il resto da noi, non l'hanno a tal perfezione, né a tanti abusi condotta, ed è a sperare ch'ella risorga alla fine, se col prendere il meglio delle due nazioni si rappresentino dagli Italiani molti drammi, come l'Orfeo e tal altro con isplendore e decenza.

Up to this point in the Discorso sopra il teatro italiano, Bettinelli has repeated the critical commonplaces found in the writings of the time--in Algarotti, in Planelli, in Arteaga, all of whom believed in the intrinsic value of melodramma as an art-form, deplored the existing decadence, and looked forward to the possibility of reform. He also repeats the notion that melodramma is in essence tragedy recited to music:

> Chi vieta al drammatico il parlar da tragico, se l'opera non è altro in sostanza che una tragedia recitata per musica com'erano appunto l'antiche tragedie secondo Algarotti?

A note to the text gives weight to this opinion:

> Vedi il Saggio sopra l'Opera di lui, che seguì altri molti in tal opinione omai certa.

Yet the very sentence that would seem to relate the melodramma of the eighteenth century to the tragedy of the ancients is in fact the beginning of Bettinelli's attack on Metastasian dramas:

> [D]itemi qual poesia vi si rimane, come tutto è snervato, triviale o gonfio quello scrivere, come que'Regoli, que'Catoni, quegli Ezi divengon millantatori e paladini vantando lor gesta, affettando sentenze, esagerando in gran parole per farsi ammirare invece di spiegar lor virtù e valore nell'azioni, dalle quali esce il vero eroismo in sobri detti, ma gravi, giusti, ben espressi.[26]

While in the Discorso sopra il teatro italiano Bettinelli seems to accept the view of melodramma as a re-creation of Greek tragedy, elsewhere he questions this opinion severely. In the Dialoghi d'Amore he makes numerous references to the "infinite difference" between opera and tragedy, a difference which, for him, is self-evident.[27] He believes that opera in musica, at its inception, was the result of a desire to re-create the drama of the Greeks. In fact, he praises the efforts of Peri and Rinuccini who, in his opinion, had tried to emulate what they understood to be the manner of declaiming drama in antiquity. However,

Bettinelli felt that melodramma, as it had evolved in the eighteenth century, showed very little resemblance to its supposed ancient model. Speaking of melodramma's development from Greek tragedy, Amore says:

> Venne forse di là, ma nel viaggio smarrì la strada. Il recitativo da principio declamato a note gravi e sostenute dagli stromenti parve la melopea degli antichi, come i cori con più d'armonia somigliavano alla strofa all'antistrofa all'epodo dei greci, oltre all'osservata unità di luogo, di tempo, di azione, e lo stil naturale insieme ed elegante, la magnificenza dello spettacolo, l'attenzion degli astanti; infine i Rinuccini e i Peri trattaronmi come i greci nobilmente. Ma oggi la mia passione più nobile che luogo avrà tra le canzonette, i mottetti, i rondò . . .?[28]

The depiction of noble and tragic passions has been supplanted by the passion of love, thereby weakening the drama through the use of effeminate and voluptuous themes. Furthermore, through its union with such elements as painting, dance and virtuosity of voice, drama has degenerated into a spectacle for the senses. To reinforce this opinion, Bettinelli cites D'Alembert's famous dictum that assigns opera to the senses, comedy to wit, and tragedy to the heart.[29] For Bettinelli, however, drama must move the heart of the spectator, not simply appeal to the senses. Thus, Amore tells Melpomene:

> [S]e l'anima non è agitata, se il cuore non è commosso, mi vien sonno. In teatro o passione o niente.[30]

Bettinelli expresses a similar idea in the Discorso sopra il teatro italiano, when he instructs a young student on the distinction between great tragedy and mediocre drama:

> Se questa per sé ti scuote tra timore a speranza, e t'agita di pietà e di terrore, se ti trasporta a sentire nell'animo i grandi infortuni, le pugne di cuore, i contrasti d'affetto, quella è la pietra del paragone.[31]

Bettinelli insists on the emotive power of drama. Nevertheless, he is equally insistent that drama fulfil a useful, ethical and educative purpose. Drama must move the heart of man in order to ennoble him in a moral sense and to improve him in a cultural sense. Melodramma, therefore, whose appeal is limited entirely to the senses, and serves only to fill the hours of boredom of the idle, cannot be regarded as acceptable theatre.[32] Certainly, it cannot be rightfully called tragedy, except by those who wish to blur the distinction of the genres in order to exalt opera.

Bettinelli's attitude towards the differences between tragedy and melodramma is aptly summarized in a page from the letter to Delia that Amore hands to Melpomene at the end of Dialogo XIII:

> Se [Metastasio] fosse stato in una Roma dopo la gioventù, e libero a seguir suo ingegno, veduto avrebbe il vero nodo, che unisce i due teatri, cioè il fondo tragico che aver deve il dramma per forti, vere, profonde passioni, coll'accessorio della musica e del resto ad esprimerle con più forza, verità, e profondità. Certamente il gran'uomo sapea che fuor di ciò son due talenti, e spettacoli diversissimi, che tutto ha nella tragedia una ragione, una misura, una solidità, mentre tutto dee trascorrersi in un dramma; che là il cuore vuol esser tocco al vivo, quì cercano i sensi il sol piacere, che l'una chiede grande sensibilità, l'altro contentasi di varia e splendida fantasia; infin che lo stile drammatico basta che sia chiaro, sonoro, armonico e dolce, come il tragico, poetico, nobile, forte, elegante. Ciò confermasi dalle stesse decorazioni dominatrici del dramma per

> abbagliare, distrar, divertire lo spettatore, e nemiche della tragedia che vuole unità, decoro, e verità, e non abbisogna di pompose vesti nè di macchine, nè di prestigj.[33]

Quite clearly, then, Bettinelli recognizes and perhaps even accepts the ideal that lay behind melodramma. Like spoken tragedy, it should represent tragic passions on stage. The accessory elements of music and spectacle should enhance the expression of those passions by making it more forceful and vigorous. Nevertheless, he believed that the two forms of theatre differed in actuality, not only in the medium of performance, but also in their essential structure and style of presentation. He characterizes spoken tragedy as a theatrical form in which the action proceeds in a decorous and rational fashion to touch the heart of the audience. Its style must be forceful, poetic and noble. Melodramma, on the other hand, requires a clear, sonorous and musical style. Moving at a swifter pace than spoken tragedy, it aims at striking the imagination of the audience, and hence makes use of spectacle to awe, distract and divert.

The criteria on which Bettinelli bases his judgement of opera are literary ones, and he shares the eighteenth-century literary concept of music. His negative attitude towards melodramma stems from his neo-classical ideals of harmony, decorum, verisimilitude and formal perfection. His conception of art as imitation is particularly important in his criticism of melodramma, as are his ideas on the imitation of models. Since he includes music among the imitative arts,

Bettinelli does not question the validity of the union of music and poetry in opera. Like Arteaga, Beattie, and the French Encyclopedists, he believed that music was most effective when accompanied by poetry.[34] He advocated the adoption in melodramma of Peri's system of studying and imitating nature to make the music correspond to the expression of passion in the human voice. He found, however, that in actual practice, music was no longer composed as the melodic expression of the words; on the contrary, the words in melodramma were written to fit the music ["Non si fa più dunque la musica alle parole, ma si fan le parole alla musica"].[35]

In the Risorgimento, Bettinelli had examined the development of music in Italy, and concluded that melodramma was responsible for the fact that Italy had produced no music of lasting value in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He felt that during that period of almost two hundred years musicians had devoted themselves to producing insignificant operatic scores. Their arias shared the universal capability of pleasing audiences of all social classes from Russia to England, but they were as easy to forget as they were to remember. Such composers as Vincenzo Galilei, Peri, Jommelli, and Galuppi had become, in his opinion, little more than well known names, their music now long-forgotten, or soon destined to be so. Even Pergolesi's La serva padrona, regarded as revolutionary in its day, retained its fame only as the cause célèbre of the musical querelles in France. Thus, Bettinelli considered the importance of music in opera to have been

detrimental to the development of music itself:

> Oserò io dire agl'italiani, come altri disse a'francesi, voi non avete musica?[36] Egl'intese troppo poca, ed io troppa intenderei dire. Tutto è pieno di canto e di suono, ma dov'è la musica? Dove quell'arte sicura, che principalmente unita alla poesia parla dipinge muove rapisce . . .? Mi guardin pur bieco dall'alto delle loro scene ed orchestre i professori e i dillettanti, tra quali non sono del bel numero uno. Io dirò loro un'altra sentenze più ardita, ed è: voi non avete orecchio, ed io l'ho, perchè ho quello della natura, voi quello della professione e del pregiudizio.[37]

The accusation Bettinelli levels at composers is that of writing music that was not a true imitation of the passions to be depicted on stage. On the contrary, they compose in order to satisfy the degenerate taste of the times with its demand for vocal embellishments and instrumental virtuosity. The importance of the aria is responsible for this state of affairs. In Bettinelli's view, the aria shattered any pretence to verisimilitude, and by its very artificiality ran directly counter to his belief in the imitation of nature as a basic function of art. Like Algarotti, he preferred the recitative as the medium for the expression of sentiments and passions. He also followed Algarotti in claiming that in Peri's works the recitative was all important, and was far more effective in moving the heart of the listener than the most elaborate of contemporary bravura arias.[38]

The librettist is also the recipient of basically the same type of accusation as the composer. He too contravenes the principle of imitation of nature by his choice of histor-

ical subject matter and his insistence on the theme of love, as well as by submitting his poetry to the demands of music. In Bettinelli's opinion, this led to the effeminate presentation of historical heroes who parade on stage in a sentimental and lovelorn manner, inconsistent with the facts of history or the common legacy of tradition. It is noteworthy that in Dialogo XIII Bettinelli uses the god of love himself to condemn the sentimentality of Metastasian dramas:

> MELPOMENE: Avanti greci e romani fatevi conoscere nel vero lume: che nomi illustri! Udisti? Achille, Ezio, Alessandro, Ciro.
> AMORE: Le figure ognor mi pajon più strane.
> MELPOMENE: Per te solo l'aria marziale è cambiata: sono ornati e galanti colle lor belle. . . Alessandro combatte il re barbaro non già per conquistare il mondo, ma il cuor d'una donna.
> AMORE: E tu dici, che mi fanno onore? . . . Tutti costoro mi pajono Don Chisciotti.[39]

And again:

> MELPOMENE: E amore condanna le vive pitture di sua passione?
> AMORE: Che passione? se non mai fa sparger lagrime vere, il cuor sempre è freddo, tutto è pei sensi? Oh la mia passione in Virgilio, Tibullo, Petrarca . . . non è qui che in maschera e in ombra. Mi par esservi proprio mutilato anch'io.[40]

The characterization is just as implausible as the plots, with their obligatory love-intrigues, their convoluted action, their unlikely recognition scenes that bring about the final dénouement, followed by one, two or three marriages to give the work the conventional happy ending.

Thus, as we have already noted, Bettinelli imputes to melodramma a lack of decorum, verisimilitude, harmony and artistic unity. He also finds it wanting in structural regularity and formal perfection. In his view, the most important element of a work of art is the style in which it is presented. He argues that every man has more or less the same ideas as his neighbour, but that it is the style in which he expresses those ideas that makes the poet stand out from other men. In the Discorso sopra la poesia, he claims that there are few men capable of expressing their poetic thoughts in a manner that strikes the imagination of others:

> Se molti ponno imaginarli, pochi sanno esprimerli in quel modo che piace, che fa colpo, che rimane impresso nella memoria e nella fantasia.[41]

Bettinelli elaborates this idea in the Discorso sopra il teatro italiano, claiming that in tragedy style is as important as the subject matter. It may be that in some rare cases the theme so catches one's interest that one can overlook the defective mode of expression, but in most instances it is the style that decides the success or failure of a drama. In his view, a simple comparison of tragedies dealing with the same subject matter is sufficient to prove the point. Bettinelli asks why one drama can bring him to tears, and another bore him so much that he cannot finish reading it. The answer, he believes, is to be found in the style, and in the quality of the verses.[42] The same point is made in the Lettere virgiliane:

> Lo stile elegante, chiaro, armonico, sostenuto, questo è ciò che ricopre ogni altra iniquitá d'un poeta, poichè lo stile è quel, poi, finalmente, che fa un poeta.[43]

This theory of style is taken a step further in the Discorso sopra il teatro italiano where Bettinelli applies it to tragedy. He believes that the essence of tragedy lies in exalted passions [grandi affetti] conveyed in a natural, elevated style. Once the poet has achieved the appropriate style for the passions he wishes to convey, all other rules for tragedy fall naturally into place:

> Al toccarsi una tal meta tutte trovansi l'altre doti: intendensi allora la necessaria unità di tempo e di luogo, perchè accresce questa d'assai l'impressione degli affetti e degli accidenti; si lasciano i superflui ornamenti di stile; si va al cuore, onde ha tutto il resto anima e vita; non vengon né vanno i personaggi senza ragione: ogni scena ha un perchè, e produce suo effetto, e va a legarsi col tutto: hassi riguardo al decoro, al costume, al verisimile: l'autor sempre mira ad impegnar il cuor dello spettatore, e questi va al teatro per esser commosso e impegnato. Ma lo stil soprattutto, lo stil vibrato, evidente e passionato, cioè naturale con nobiltà, cioè dir quello che dee dirsi in tale e tal circonstanza, e dirlo bene, tutto ciò fa il tragico veramente degno di questo nome; e per mancanza di ciò, dicea Voltaire, gli Inglesi hanno tragedie sì sregolate, i Tedeschi, Spagnuoli e Portoghesi non hanno ancora una vera tragedia.[44]

Voltaire cited the lack of this noble, natural style as the reason for the absence of tragedy in Germany, Spain and Portugal, and as the explanation of the irregular English tragedy. Bettinelli uses the same argument to explain why Italian melodramma was not a tragedia in musica in the manner of ancient Greek tragedies, as Algarotti had claimed. If

the beauty and worth of tragedy are to be found in its style, then in Bettinelli's view, the tragic style in melodramma has been miserably distorted.[45] His attitude towards the style and structure of contemporary opera is summed up sarcastically in the Discorso sopra il teatro italiano:

> Perchè sagrificar l'eleganza, la nobilità, la lingua poetica all'ignoranza del musico o del compositore? Chi vieta al drammatico il parlare da tragico, se l'opera non è altro in sostanza che una tragedia recitata per musica com'erano appunto l'antiche tragedie secondo Algarotti? Forse che meglio esprime gli affetti e colpisce l'anima quel parlar per incisi, per sentenze, per antitesi, e con rime sol destinate a coprir quel tessuto di pura prosa? Levatele e scrivete in righe seguite quei versi, e ditemi qual poesia vi rimane, come tutto è snervato, triviale o gonfio quello scrivere, come que'Regoli, que'Catoni, quegli Ezi divengon millantatori e paladini vantando lor gesta, affettando sentenze, esagerando in gran parole per farsi ammirare invece di spiegar lor virtù e valore nell'azioni, dalle quali esce il vero eroismo in sobri detti, ma gravi, giusti, ben espressi.

In these words, Bettinelli strikes out in a not very original manner against the irregular style of operatic poetry, with its interrupted verses, repetitions, antitheses and metaphors. In his view, the words of the libretto did not constitute real poetry, but only trivial prose marked by objectionable rhyme that made the lines easier for the singers to recite, and easier for the adoring public to learn by heart. Therefore, the themes of the tragedies of Corneille and Racine gave rise to nothing more than cold or puffed-up spectacles when transformed into melodrammi.[46]

Bettinelli repeats his attack on the use of rhyme in operatic libretti in the Dialoghi; Amore speaks:

> È giusto che hanche [sic] le rime seducano come ogni cosa, e che un amante che non rimi sia bandito dall'Opera. Almeno i francesi son da compatirsi avendone gran bisogno la lor lingua povera e fiacca, eppur sai come ridevane Voltaire. . . . Oh che io penso poco alla rima quando sfogo il mio cuore.[47]

However, this attack was not limited to opera, but was directed at poetry in general. In the literary controversy that raged at the time between the use of rhyme and blank verse, Bettinelli was a principal supporter of the latter. The controversy was a vital one, and brought about Bettinelli's publication of his Versi sciolti di tre eccellenti moderni autori as an example to Italian youth of the proper way to write poetry.[48] Among Bettinelli's main objections to the use of rhyme is the fact that it was not found among Greek and Latin poets, that it inhibited the free expression of the poet, and that in a dramatic work it was not verisimilar.

Bettinelli concludes his attack on melodramma in the Discorso sopra il teatro italiano with an examination of the language of the libretto:

> È [sic] la lingua, la misera nostra lingua come ci sta, poiché sempre è dessa il fondamento de'buon stili?[49]

As a major proponent of a renewal of the poetic language in Italy, Bettinelli was appalled by what he termed the mediocre and trite language of melodramma. He was also vitally aware of the need for a standard language that would be used universally throughout Italy, and not just by men of letters. He believed that poets could be instrumental in fixing and propa-

gating this modern rejuvenated language. In his Entusiasmo delle belle arti, he concluded that Metastasio, due to his widespread popularity, was the poet best suited to carry out this task.[50] In later years, however, having subjected melodramma to closer scrutiny, he came to criticize Metastasio's language for its submission to the demands of music and the resultant limitation of vocabulary, and hence of its range of expression. In the Dialoghi d'Amore he argues that Metastasio's language shows a preference for mellifluous words that can be pronounced easily, words with a high proportion of open vowels, suitable to be set to music. Yet it excluded many noble and vigorous words simply because they were less musical.[51] Clearly, Bettinelli could not accept the musicality of the word as a sufficient foundation on which to build the framework of a rejuvenated language. Indeed, in his later years, he charges Metastasio with the responsibility for having deprived Italy not only of tragedy, but also of a national language, through his dedication to melodramma.

Bettinelli's attitude towards Metastasio is closely bound up with his concept of the imitation of models. Though he attacked the servile and sterile imitation of the classics and of cult-poets, and objected strenuously to the unquestioning adherence to poetic precepts, he was not opposed to the imitation of models per se. In fact, he exhorted young and aspiring poets to study and imitate the work of the ancients:

> Così infine con esercizio continuo può svilupparsi il germe in noi dell'entusiasmo confrontando ed emulando

> gli antichi, e facendone estratti e modelli, qual buon succo a nodrirci. E ciò basti ad insinuarvi la somma utilità dello studio e della imitazione degli antichi, alla quale protesto infine dover molto io stesso, benché mediocre io mi sia.[52]

Bettinelli was far from maintaining that imitation necessarily stifled original expression. On the contrary, as he stated in his Entusiasmo delle belle arti:

> Studiando l'antichità noi pur diventiamo antichi, imitandoli imitiam la natura, e la natura imitando con loro siamo originali.[53]

However, he made a clear distinction between true imitation, which he took to mean a comprehension and emulation of the spirit of ancient art, and mere copying. In his view, the chief activity of the majority of self-styled poets from the Cinquecento to his own day consisted merely of passively reproducing the external features of classical models. The poet must imitate with discrimination and taste. He must be capable of distinguishing the good from the bad in his classical models, seeking inspiration only in those passages full of poetic beauty, and discarding those marred by imperfection. High praise indeed goes to the poet who can correct the flaws in the poem he is imitating.[54]

Bettinelli's condemnation of blind subservience to literary models applies not only to the imitation of the ancients, but also of modern writers. He approves of the proper imitation of such modern poets as Corneille and Racine, as well as the three "excellent modern authors" included in

his anthology Versi sciolti, namely, Frugoni, Algarotti, and himself. While the Versi sciolti may have been published as an example for youth to follow in creating original work, as Bettinelli's publisher suggests in the Foreword to the first edition, the fact remains that Bettinelli was not so much a partisan of the moderns in the perennial querelle, as a proponent of the imitation of good models, be they modern or ancient.

As we have stated, it is this concept of the imitation of models that motivates Bettinelli's criticism of Metastasio. His indisputably negative attitude towards the Imperial poet is generally expressed in the midst of praise for Metastasio as a master of dramatists. Bettinelli's position on Metastasio is best illustrated by the letter to Delia which Amore hands to Melpomene at the end of Dialogo XIII. The letter begins with praise:

> Niun negherà certo esser i drammi di Metastasio esemplari dell'Opere in musica, e superiori a tutte l'altre; egli scrive con mirabile facilità, grazia, chiarezza, armonia, varietà.[55]

However, Bettinelli moves immediately into a critique of Metastasio's language in the terms discussed above. He also suggests that Metastasio's contact with German during his long sojourn in Vienna is in part responsible for the flaws in his language. Bettinelli criticizes Metastasio's style as being too prosaic and familiar, rather than poetic and elevated. During the course of Dialogo XIII, in his detailed

criticism of opera in general, Bettinelli had expressed disapproval of the subject matter of Metastasio's libretti, as well as their lack of decorum and verisimilitude. By way of example, he cites not only Catone in Utica, but also such Metastasian dramas as L'Olimpiade, Demofoonte, Adriano, Semiramide and Demetrio.[56] Yet in spite of the obvious flaws, Bettinelli allows Metastasio certain merits, such as a beautiful soul, a fine intellect, and a natural aptitude for poetry. In fact, he goes so far as to suggest that Metastasio could have been the Racine of Italy, had he chosen to write tragedies. Unfortunately, in Bettinelli's view, he chose melodramma, and it is the subjugation of his poetry to music that is responsible for the flaws and imperfections of his dramatic structure, style and language.

In the postscript to the letter to Delia with which he closes Dialogo XIII, Bettinelli satirizes contributors to the two volumes of Osservazioni di varj letterati sopra i drammi di Metastasio, published in Nice in 1785.[57] Arteaga and Pindemonte were among the collaborators. Bettinelli points out the contradictions and paradoxes that arise when their individual judgements are taken together. He compares them and other idolators of Metastasio to musicians attempting to perform a Laudate, hopelessly out of harmony with one another, so that the sequence becomes an incredible confusion of different sounds. Pointing with relish to the varying and contradictory opinions concerning the best and weakest of Metastasio's operas, Bettinelli speculates on the arguments

that would have ensued if those critics had been obliged to reach a unanimous decision. He concludes that if one had wished to satirize Metastasio under the guise of a panegyric, no more malicious a way could be chosen than the two volumes published in Nice. He questions the seriousness and sincerity of these essays, suggesting that beneath their apparent praise of Metastasio, they really hold the same opinion as himself. Time alone can be the wholly dispassionate judge.[58]

In the final words of the postscript, Bettinelli characterizes Metastasio in a felicitous turn of phrase that appears to foreshadow later criticism of the Imperial Poet:

> [S]arà sempre il Metastasio a dispetto de'critici e de'panegiristi unico nel suo genere, cioè il maggior poeta de'musici, e il maggior musico de'poeti.[59]

Yet in view of his opinion of melodramma and of librettists, we must conclude that Bettinelli, while recognizing the qualities that made Metastasio's musical dramas stand out above the others, is in a sense damning him with faint praise. To hail Metastasio as the greatest representative of a type of poet one does not admire, and to laud him for the musicality of his poetry when that is not the quality one seeks in dramatic verse, can scarcely be taken as an indication of sincere acclaim.

Bettinelli's writings on opera reveal that the matter of greatest concern to him was the indiscriminate imitation of Metastasio's melodrammi that had led to the proliferation of an imperfect theatrical form to the detriment of tragedy

throughout a large part of the eighteenth century. He defends his attack on Metastasio as being not so much a direct criticism of the Imperial poet himself, as of the cult that had arisen around him and his melodrammi:

> Sì, lo stimo, e l'amo ancora, ma non amo l'idolatria, e gl'idolatri, non posso vedere con indifferenza il discapito della poesia bella, vera, elegante, come dev'esser sempre, a fronte delle adorazioni indebite degl'ignoranti verso questo poeta di teatro, e verso questa divinità moderna d'ogni culto poetico. È uomo anch'esso, ha i suoi difetti, perchè non farli osservare a chi potrebbe divenir forse miglior di lui?[60]

The motivation behind the Dialogo on opera is precisely that of pointing out Metastasio's flaws, so that others may learn from them, with the hope of bringing to an end the vogue of operas written in the Metastasian style. Because of Bettinelli's polemical intent, Dialogo XIII presents a satire that is a caricature of opera. When Melpomene criticizes Amore precisely for that reason, the author's spokesman defends his right to use such strong measures in view of the partiality of the contemporary audience for the theatrical form he is ridiculing:

> La nazione è prevenuta, nè può farlesi aprir gli occhi fuorchè con forti colori. Non giugnesi in tai casi al cervello che pel diaframma.[61]

Bettinelli's view of opera is uncompromising, and leaves no hope for reform. At the end of the Dialoghi on the theatre, Amore flees from the opera-house, and it is Melpomene who has the last word. She will continue to propagate melodramma,

not according to Amore's high poetic ideals, but in the manner demanded by popular fashion.[62] Although Bettinelli does refer to the possibility of perfecting the genre, such instances are rare and there is little conviction in his remarks. His basic attitude is that opera is a degenerate form. Its reliance on spectacle and vocal virtuosity renders it incapable of moving the audience in the manner Bettinelli envisages, that is, through the portrayal of vigorous actions and noble passions.[63] Bettinelli detects in opera a recurrence of the baroque excesses of the seventeenth century; Amore refers to Italy's dalliance with the baroque spirit:

> Credi pure, che come [Italia] vi fu vicina al secol passato, così non n'è lontana al presente; e come allora l'abbandonai fuggendo da tante mostruosità fuor d'ogni legge e misura, così oggi l'abborro specialmente ne'drammi sì disordinati.[64]

Thus, Bettinelli is not interested in the continued propagation of melodramma nor in its reform. The solution he proposes to the problem of the poor quality of contemporary theatre is to advocate a rebirth of spoken tragedy in a regular classical form. By discrediting the contemporary opera that he believes has usurped the position once held by tragedy in public favour, and that has thus contributed to its decline, he hopes to revive classical ideals of harmony in drama. Therefore, he dedicates part of his Discorso sopra il teatro italiano to the subject of melodramma in order to disabuse young authors of the practice of writing tragedies in the style of popular opera.[65] As we have seen, he also

dedicates the longest of his Dialoghi d'Amore to a satire of musical drama.

Bettinelli's writings on opera, like the best of his literary production, are polemical works aimed directly at the obstacles that stand in the way of a renewal of eighteenth-century culture on the basis of neo-classical ideals.[66] Unconcerned with the reform of melodramma that he could not reconcile with those ideals, he limits himself to pointing out the flaws and failings of opera as it existed in his day. The picture he paints is black indeed, though we may note a sense of déjà vu in his satire as a result of his heavy reliance on the work of other critics of opera. In fact, Bettinelli brings very little that is original to the eighteenth-century discussions on melodramma. What he does make abundantly clear, however, is that in spite of the reforms initiated by Metastasio and Gluck, opera and the operatic milieu had remained basically unchanged in the half-century or more that had elapsed since the publication of Marcello's satire. To a certain degree, Bettinelli's attitudes are reminiscent of the position adopted by Muratori at the beginning of the century. While both shared an interest in tragedy rather than in melodramma, there is nevertheless a basic difference between the two critics. Muratori saw melodramma as an abortive attempt to re-create the tragedy of the Greeks, and thus as failed tragedy. Bettinelli, on the other hand, had absorbed and accepted the evolution of critical thought that led to a view of melodramma as a separate theatrical form.

However, he could not accept it as valid art.

This rejection of melodramma as a valid art form differentiates Bettinelli from Stefano Arteaga, the author of a major treatise on melodramma and the last of the eighteenth-century critics to be examined in this study. The definitive version of Arteaga's Rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano was published two years before Bettinelli's Dialoghi. Though Bettinelli had read the Rivoluzioni carefully enough to send the author a list of its hispanisms, he failed (or refused) to grasp the basis of Arteaga's new concept of opera, his respect for it as a genre in its own right, and his vision of a perfected melodramma as the new artistic ideal of the future. Thus, at the end of the century, the writings of these two authors sum up the evolution of eighteenth-century attitudes to melodramma. Bettinelli represents the critical interest in tragedy, and the subsequent rejection of melodramma as a dramatic form that does not fit into preconceived ideas of harmony, decorum and formal perfection. Arteaga, on the other hand, in so far as criticism of musical theatre is concerned, is responsible for the greatest advance in the opening of the neo-classical spirit to the new currents of thought that lead to the threshold of Romanticism.

CHAPTER IV

Stefano Arteaga

Stefano Arteaga

The last eighteenth-century treatise to deal exclusively with melodramma was also the most extensive and ambitious in scope. The three volumes of Stefano (Esteban) Arteaga's Le rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano dalla sua origine fino al presente were published in the years 1783 to 1788.[1] The author was a Spaniard, exiled to Corsica along with his fellow-Jesuits.[2] At the age of twenty-two, having left the order (apparently without having been ordained), he went to Italy to study philosophy at the University of Bologna. At the time (c. 1770), Bologna was a very active cultural centre, and Arteaga became immersed in the intellectual life of the city. He turned his attention to literary and scholarly investigation, activities which were to occupy him in Bologna, Venice and Rome. In Bologna he began his relationships, both personal and through correspondence, with an impressive number of the principal exponents of contemporary culture: Saverio Bettinelli, Melchiorre Cesarotti, Vincenzo Monti, Pietro Napoli Signorelli, Ippolito Pindemonte, Ennio Quirino Visconti, Girolamo Tiraboschi, Juan Andrés, Antonio Eximeno and Padre Giambattista Martini.[3] There are many indications that Arteaga secured for himself a prominent position in the cultural milieu of the time. Pindemonte frequently discussed Arteaga in letters to acquaintances.[4] Monti included Arteaga in his list of recipients of a copy of his new play Aristodemo, the others being Tiraboschi, Cesarotti, Andrés and Vannetti.[5] Andrés requested information from him,

as well as from such noted authorities as Padre Martini and the orientalist Miguel Casiri, on the possible Arabic origins of Spanish and Portuguese music.[6] Napoli Signorelli respected Arteaga's position sufficiently to refrain from publishing his own Sistema melodrammatico in order to avoid a confrontation with Arteaga whose conclusions he questioned in that work.[7] Tiraboschi regarded Arteaga's Rivoluzioni to be of enough significance to merit discussion in his Storia della letteratura italiana. Tiraboschi's Riflessioni sull'indole della lingua italiana were included in the third volume of the Storia as a direct reply to, and rebuttal of, one of Arteaga's notes to Matteo Borsa's dissertation Del gusto presente in letteratura italiana.[8] The reactionary and conservative nature of Tiraboschi, as well as his nationalistic pride, was hurt by Arteaga's judgement of Italian language and literature.[9] On the other hand, Cesarotti, whose ideas on language coincided with those of his Spanish "friend", referred to Arteaga in his Saggio sulla filosofia delle lingue (1785) as a notable Spaniard more worthy of Italy than many Italians themselves, since instead of praising her prejudices, he honoured her with his works.[10]

In his own time, Arteaga's treatise on opera was widely read and favourably received.[11] Johann Nicolaus Forkel, regarded by some as the founder of the discipline of musicology, translated and annotated the treatise in 1789.[12] An abridged version in French was published in London in 1802,[13] yet strangely enough the work was never translated

into its author's native tongue, although Algarotti's treatise had been translated in Madrid in 1787, shortly after the publication of the Rivoluzioni.

The reactions of modern scholars to Arteaga as a critic are varied and contradictory. On the whole, he has not been exhaustively studied. Menéndez Pelayo argued his influence on Wagner and his musical drama (by way of Forkel), an opinion supported by Rafael Mitjana who saw Arteaga as a precursor of the nineteenth-century reform of that genre.[14] Riccardo Allorto recognizes the difficulties inherent in that position, although he misunderstands the aspect of Arteaga's neo-Classicism which makes that view untenable. Nevertheless, Allorto does appreciate Arteaga's merit in being the first to distinguish melodramma quite clearly from other dramatic genres.[15] Giazotto, to all intents, ignores Arteaga as a critic, and is unaware of his contributions to the discussion of the problem of melodramma in the eighteenth century.[16] Alfred Richard Oliver's brief exposition displays a lack of knowledge of what had been written previously on melodramma in Italy, citing the Encyclopédie and other French works as the sources of Arteaga's theory. Some of Oliver's opinions are clearly the result of a misreading, or sporadic reading of the Rivoluzioni.[17] While understanding his transitional position, Eva Marja Rudat has exaggerated the modernity of Arteaga's thought, but the main thrust of her argument lies in the direction of his aesthetics, rather than with his views on melodramma in particular. In general, Miguel

Batllori, and especially Fedele d'Amico in his brief analysis of the Rivoluzioni, have shown the more intelligent appreciation of Arteaga's work on opera.[19] However, their studies cannot be regarded as exhaustive.

As mentioned earlier, while in Bologna, Arteaga made the acquaintance of Padre Giambattista Martini, the renowned composer, teacher of musicians, and theoretician, a scholar now generally regarded as the first modern historian of music.[20] In the Discorso preliminare to the first edition of the Rivoluzioni, Arteaga asserted that it was at Padre Martini's suggestion that he undertook his work on melodramma. Arteaga added that Padre Martini facilitated the work by making available his vast library, and by personal discussions.[21] Little is known, however, about Arteaga's relations with Martini, beyond what Arteaga himself recorded.[22] Allorto implies, though without citing any evidence to support the assertion, that Arteaga undertook studies in musicology with Martini.[23] It is most likely that Arteaga engaged in numerous discussions with him, since it is well-known that Martini gave generously of his time, knowledge and advice to such students of music as Charles Burney and Jean-Benjamin de La Borde, drawing students from all over Europe, among them Johann Christian Bach, André Grétry, Jommelli and Mozart.[24] Furthermore, Arteaga's claims have the support of their being published in the first edition of the Rivoluzioni a year before Martini's death, and in the same city where he lived.

Martini was a true classicist in spirit whose sphere of influence extended throughout the musical world of his time from his position as undisputed arbiter on all matters concerning the art.[25] It is probable that an examination of the extent to which Arteaga's considerations on melodramma coincide with Martini's opinions would provide material for an interesting study. In his youth Martini had composed the music for five comic azioni teatrali, and the musical theatre must have still held some fascination for him as an old man if he encouraged the young Arteaga on the subject with materials and discussions.[26]

Apart from his intimate connections with Martini, and access to his library, Arteaga brought to his study of melodramma a more profound cultural preparation, especially in the realm of philosophy, than had some of his predecessors. He was well-acquainted with the principal currents of thought of eighteenth-century Europe, not only in France and Italy, but also in England and Germany.[27] He was also familiar with what had been written on melodramma before him in Italy. As a result, he had come to the conclusion that all previous studies had been either too schematic and superficial, or lacking in sound philosophical grounding, and therefore insufficient.

In the Discorso preliminare to the first edition, Arteaga writes:

> Senza far parola d'Emilio del Cavaglieri [sic], del Salvadori, di Jacopo Martelli, del Gravina, del Maffei, del Muratori, del Crescimbeni, del Calsabigi,

> del Mattei, e di tanti altri, che toccarono questo punto alla sfuggita, tre sono stati gli autori, che hanno parlato più di proposito.[28]

He then proceeds to discuss briefly the works of Quadrio, Algarotti and Planelli. He criticizes Quadrio's work on the grounds that it is merely a compilation of names and dates preceded by a definition of melodramma based only on the negative aspects of the form, by some trivial remarks and by prejudices turned into precepts interspersed with a few sensible principles.[29] Arteaga's judgement of Quadrio's treatise is substantially correct. Quadrio devotes to melodramma several chapters in the second part of the third volume of his Della storia e della ragione d'ogni poesia (1739-52). Basing his presentation on Martello's Della tragedia antica e moderna (from which he purloins several passages), as well as on the writings of such critics as Crescimbeni and Marcello, Quadrio concludes that Greek tragedy was sung in its entirety, and that in theory modern melodramma should be tragedy sung in the ancient manner. He begins his discussion with the following words:

> La Poesia, e la Musica sono due Arti gemelle, e tra loro sì analoghe, che a pensare, e favellar sanamente, non vi dovrebbe esser Poesia senza Musica, nè Musica senza Poesia.[30]

However, he continues, the abuses introduced into the musical theatre by the modern taste for spectacle, by the impresarios, singers, composers and compliant poetasters, have corrupted it to such an extent that it has become a form quite distinct

from other types of dramatic composition:

> Ma perchè la corruzione de'tempi a poco a poco lo ha difformato, noi dovendone però qui parlare, mediante quelle cose il circoscriveremo, per le quali si è reso da ogni altra drammatica composizione diverso: quelle precisamente toccando, che le sue speciali proprietà ne dimostrano.

In this statement Quadrio echoes Martello's conclusions on melodramma as a genre. However, he fails to assimilate or even comprehend the revolutionary aspect of Martello's criticism. He reiterates Martello's ideas on the primary rôle music plays in the union of the arts:

> Perciocchè bisogna tener per fermo, che in esse vuol avere la preminenza la Musica. Questa è l'anima di un tale recitamento; e ad essa debbesi il principale riguardo di chi è chiamato a parte o per poesia, o per apparato, di simil componimento.[31]

But, while Martello accepts the inevitability of the primacy of music as one of the characteristics of opera as an artistic form, Quadrio still retains the neo-classical insistence on the supremacy of poetry:

> Bisognerebbe, che l'autorità principale per la direzione dell'Opera si lasciasse a Poeti; che i Musici s'accomodassero alle intenzioni di essi; e che la Musica servisse alle parole, ad ai versi, non, come si pratica in oggi, al contrario.[32]

Quadrio's treatment of opera reveals the lack of a systematic and original consideration of the problem. He limits himself to a repetition of the critical commonplaces concerning the origins and progress of opera, suitable subject matter (Quadrio proposes heroic themes), the division

of drama into three acts, the composition of arias and recitative, and the reciprocal working relationship that should exist between poet and musician. His conclusions are also commonplace. In his view, the contemporary melodramma is capable of reform. Such librettists as Pier Jacopo Martello, Francesco de Lemene, Carlo Capece, Apostolo Zeno, Scipione Maffei, Eustachio Manfredi, Silvio Stampiglia, Domenico de Totis and Monsignor Bernini have made melodramma at least tolerable, if not perfect. With the addition of the name of Martello himself, this list reproduces substantially Martello's choice of notable librettists. It is surprising that Quadrio does not include Metastasio, who was then at the height of his fame, though he does quote passages from Metastasio's Catone and Gioas as examples of metres suitable for arias.

In view of Quadrio's superficial and unoriginal treatment of melodramma, it is curious that Arteaga chose him, rather than Martello (to whose treatise Quadrio was so indebted), as one of the three authors who had dealt with opera in such an apposite way. One possible reason could be that Arteaga appreciated Quadrio's belief that opera was capable of being perfected, whereas Martello had rejected melodramma in favour of spoken tragedy.

Arteaga praises the Saggio sopra l'opera in musica written by Algarotti, whom he calls a man of taste who writes in a witty and elegant style, and who has made some excellent reflections on melodramma. Nevertheless, Arteaga finds fault

with the fact that Algarotti limited himself to the practical aspects of opera. He suggests that Algarotti either did not wish, or was not able to go back to the first principles of opera, as he would have had to do in order to be counted among first rank critics.[33]

Arteaga then turns his attention to Antonio Planelli, whose Trattato dell'opera in musica[34] he considers more erudite, more universal, more reasoned, and consequently of more use than previous works on the subject. However, while Arteaga praises Planelli's observations on the arts in general, and on music and the direction of the theatre, he finds the section on the libretto lacking in depth and acumen, and criticizes the fact that there is no definition of the genre, no criticism of it, nor sufficient indication of its history.[35]

Although Planelli's work, published in Naples in 1772, does not occupy an important position in eighteenth-century critical literature on opera, it was known, not only in Italy but also elsewhere in Europe.[36] Forkel was familiar with Planelli's treatise, though he judged it inferior to Arteaga's study.[37] The work owes much to the contents of Algarotti's Saggio sopra l'opera in musica, a debt which Planelli openly acknowledged.[38] However, he attempted to give his work a wider scope by studying melodramma in the light of its philosophical essence. The result, nevertheless, is far more limited and superficial than Arteaga's.

In the preface to his treatise, Planelli gives a clear

picture of the popularity and importance of melodramma in European culture, and he expresses the hope that opera will receive serious critical study as a dramatic form in its own right. He suggests that critics would be well-advised to turn their attentions away from Greek drama which no longer enjoys public acclaim:

> E da che oggi in Europa, e particolarmente in Italia, l'Opera in Musica è lo Spettacolo dominante; perciò io spesso volte ò meco medesimo desiderato, che gli'Italiani Scrittori, rifinando [sic] oggimai di ripeterci quello, che tante volte, e da tanti secoli ci è stato insegnato della Tragedia antica, della Commedia, del Dramma Rusticale, e d'altrettali Drammi, che oggi l'Italia così non gusta, come altra volta facea; si dessero piuttosto a dichiararci nel modo indicato le leggi di questo dominante Spettacolo, che quasi solo occupa da lungo tempo i nostri teatri.

Planelli concludes his preface by admitting his inability to fulfil the need for a study of melodramma and the precepts which govern its composition, but he adds that he has undertaken his treatise to compensate for the lack of such studies, and he invites others to carry out the task that he proposes:

> [I]o non destino il presente Trattato che a risvegliare i sovrani ingegni d'Italia, e a indicar loro quanto degno di lor attenzione sarebbe questo suggetto da essi finor trascurato.[39]

Planelli brings little that is original to his discussion of opera. In the question of the definition of melodramma, previous writers had attempted to classify it as a re-creation of the drama of the ancient Greeks. Planelli's solution, dealing with opera seria, was to consider it as tragedy. However, he divided the genre of tragedy into

two types. The first was Tragedia antica, which included modern tragedies written according to ancient models. The second was Melodramma which, in his view, had evolved from ancient drama, changing with the customs of the time, and as a result of the progress made in certain arts. He does not yet, as Freeman claims, recognize it as "an independent genre with conventions and requirements of its own."[40] In fact, Planelli asserts that the rules that govern melodramma are the same as those of tragedy, the few exceptions being due to the differences between the two types of tragedy that he postulates in his work:

> Di qui è, che le regole, che riguardano il Patetico del Melodramma sono quelle medesime della Tragedia; nè di proprio esso ne à che pochissime, le quali formano la sua differenza dalla Tragedia antica.[41]

Planelli then discusses the qualities which, in his opinion, differentiate melodramma from ancient tragedy. The first is the necessity for scene changes in order to maintain verisimilitude, although extreme changes from one geographical location to another are not admissible. The second is the happy ending which, Planelli says, came into vogue due to the progress made by mankind from the bellicose state still existing in ancient Greece to the civilized and gentler state of modern society. The third is the change from protagonists of average character to those of truly virtuous character. The fourth is the reduction of the number of acts from five to three, a fact which Planelli attributes to custom, rather than to any intrinsic dramatic requirement. The fifth is the

variety of tragic verse-forms which abound in melodramma, a usage which creates a more natural and more interesting recitation. It is this list (which was commonplace in the eighteenth century) that Arteaga will later find superficial and incorrect. In its place he will substitute a far different definition of the intrinsic distinctions between the two forms.

As the list demonstrates, Planelli (like his predecessors) regarded the libretto as the main component of opera:

> [L]a parte predominante di questo Spettacolo è quella della Poesia. Il che è si vero, che tra tutte le altre Facultà da noi annoverate non ce ne à una, che non sia stata ammessa a solo oggetto di dar mano alla Poesia: tutte, quale più verisimiglianza, e quale più forza a quella aggiugnendo, sono destinate a soccorrerla, e sostenerla.[42]

The opera, however, should be a union of all the component arts working towards the same end, which is that of poetry, the main component. That is, it should move the spectators to compassion and terror through the subordinate end of appealing to the senses. However, Planelli places more emphasis on the useful purpose of opera, reiterating the concept of its political importance in educating the public, and its influence on the customs of nations. He concludes his treatise with the observation that were the components of the opera so regulated that they created a unified whole working towards the glorification of virtue and the discrediting of vice,

> non sarà questa [l'opera], come altri declama, uno

> Spettacolo privo di buon senso, e nocivo al costume; ma per lo contrario contribuirà moltissimo al progresso della pubblica costumatezza, ed a quello delle Belle Arti.[43]

This is a clear indication of the conservative position adopted by Planelli in the question of the ends and purpose of art, or more specifically, poetry. His modernity lies in his unequivocal acceptance and defence of the form of the melodramma as art, although like his contemporaries he is aware of the many faults in the existing format of the opera. He believes, nevertheless, in the strong possibility of reform, and it is to this end that he studies the components of musical drama in greater detail than had been done previously. He indulges in extensive comments on metrics, diction, gesture, costumes, scenery and dance, but he lacks a clear vision of the unified whole, and therefore is unable to enunciate a precise plan to improve opera. One element that he recommends, following a suggestion already found in Algarotti, is the creation of a position, similar to the choragos in ancient times, of a director who would oversee all aspects of the melodramma, and ascertain the proper subordination of each of them to the artistic and moral qualities of the whole.[44] In this way, he believed, the self-interests of the exponents of the various arts would be controlled, thus putting an end to the circumstances which were responsible for the degenerate state of melodramma.

Whether inspired by Planelli, or by Padre Martini, Estaban de Arteaga set out to make a new and systematic exam-

ination of the opera in musica. His stated purpose in writing his three volumes on the subject is to provide a philosophical basis for a study of melodramma, and to draw up a set of principles to govern the composition and performance of the genre. The evident didactic intent of the work is characteristic of the Enlightenment. In the Discorso preliminare to the first edition, he makes this intent quite clear, stating that if his treatise should not prove acceptable to the contemporary exponents of the melodrama, it might yet be of use to the young:

> Se le riflessioni in gran parte nuove, che ho procurato spargere su tali materie, come su parecchie altre contenute in questo libro, non bastassero a formar un sistema completo (lo che non è stato mai il mio oggetto) e se i maestri dell'arte non le trovassero degne di loro, potranno esse almeno divenir opportune ai giovani, pei quali furono scritte principalmente.[45]

Arteaga begins by examining the qualities required of the historian and critic of the melodramma. Dismissing the theatre-going public and the politicians as possible candidates for the rôle, he concludes that the man of taste, by his sensibility and his cultural training is best able to judge and understand melodramma with insight. Therefore:

> Se fosse quistione di scrivere per lo teatro, e non del teatro, l'uomo di gusto esser dovrebbe l'unico giudice, che se ne scegliesse, siccome quello, che avendo meglio d'ogni altro studiate le regole di piacere ad un Pubblico illuminato, meglio d'ogni altro saprebbe addittare que'mezzi, che a così fatto fine conducono.

Both pre-romantic and neo-classical ideals inform Arteaga's

definition of the man of taste who, in his opinion, must be

> dotato di cuor sensibile e d'immaginazione vivace, osservator fedele della natura e degli uomini, ammaestrato ai fonti di Boileau, di Longino, e d'Orazio, versato nella lettura de'primi modelli antichi e moderni.

He continues:

> Ei solo, penetrando più addentro nello spirito delle regole, sa fino a qual punto debbano esse incatenar il genio, e quando questo possa legittimamente spezzarne i legami.

But the historian and critic of the melodramma must be more than this; he must possess not only sensibility and imagination, but also sound critical method and clear historical perspective. He must be at once a scholar, a critic, a man of taste, and a philosopher.[46]

In his study of opera, Arteaga planned to follow the methodological approach which prevailed in the Enlightened milieu of the Encyclopedists, basing all investigations on experiment and observation, analyzing the object of study in each of its component parts and then as a whole.[47] Arteaga asserts that he will study the rhetoric (the power of music to sway the spirit) and philosophy (the general principles) of music, two aspects neglected by his contemporaries, which he, on the other hand, believes to be essential, since they teach the best ways to use the individual elements in order to achieve an harmonious artistic whole.[48] The experimental method excluded the acceptance of judgements backed solely by authority of earlier critics. Arteaga will base his investi-

gation on two principles: first, through philosophical inquiry, to seek out the poetics of the genre and to define its limits, without depending on earlier authority or previous examples; second, to study the compatibility of the Italian language with music, and to examine what can be done to perfect the relationship.[49] A clearer picture of how Arteaga intends to extract the essence of the melodramma can be found in a letter of 4 February 1786, addressed to Saverio Bettinelli, in which he explains his method of dealing with philosophy:

> Io distinguo due metodi di trattare la filosofia. Il primo (solo vero e profittevole) quello è di partire, nella ricerca del vero, dalla esperienza, dalla osservazione, dalla analogia, dal calcolo e dall'analisi, nè permettere all'intelletto altri raziocinj che gli appoggiati su cotai fondamenti. Il secondo metodo, usato per tanti secoli nelle scuole, è quello di partire da principj metafisici nell'esame degli oggetti sensibili, di smarrirsi nella importuna ricerca delle cause impossibili a risapersi e inutili dappoichè si sono sapute, di fidarsi all'imaginazione anzichè alla esperienza, è di tutto ridurre a sistemi ipotetici e convenzionali, non meno facili ad atterrarsi che a fabbricarsi.[50]

Recapitulating at the end of his work what he has tried to do in his study of melodramma, he claims that he has attempted to enter into an understanding of the nature of melodramma as it exists, of the reasons for its decadence, and to indicate the various remedies which would bring the art-form to its true fulfilment.[51] These two formulations of his purpose offer a synopsis of his methodology, which is to deal with both the theory and the practice of melodramma. While specialists have pointed out that his work lacks a sound basis in musical theory,[52] the Rivoluzioni is still the

most profound and systematic attempt in eighteenth-century Italy to subject opera to rigorous critical inquiry.

Arteaga's work begins with a chapter analyzing the nature of melodramma, and the poetics which he derives from the analysis. Chapter Two deals with the second of his basic principles: the analysis of the compatibility of the Italian language with music. Chapters III to XI deal with the history of melodramma up to his day. Obviously following Padre Martini's concept of a universal history of music which would go back to the very beginnings of the art, Arteaga sought the origins of musical drama in the theatre of classical times, a form of theatre which, in his opinion, had disappeared in the "Dark Ages." Unlike most other critics who ignore the centuries between the end of the classical world and the classical revival of the Florentine Camerata, Arteaga, again with clear pre-romantic orientation, traces the source of contemporary melodramma to the Mystery Plays of the Middle Ages.[53] Chapter XI deals with Metastasio, and earned for Arteaga the reputation and renown of being Metastasio's apologist. In fact, the chapter became so well-known that it was published as the introduction to Volume XIV of the 1785 Nice edition of Metastasio's works.

These first eleven chapters of the Rivoluzioni formed the first volume of the edition which appeared in Bologna in 1783, earning for Arteaga membership in the Accademia di Padova, and a doubling of the pension granted by the king of Spain to exiled Jesuits. His fame was sealed. For the 1785

edition,[54] Arteaga added to the original eleven chapters four on the contemporary musical theatre and the causes of its decadence, one on the analysis of the dance and its suitability for inclusion in opera, one on opera reform; an appendix replied to a review of the treatise which the composer Vincenzo Manfredini had published in the Giornale enciclopedico di Bologna in April, 1786.[55]

The second part of the Rivoluzioni was not as well received as the first volume. This was due partly to the fact that Arteaga was a polemical writer who was quite outspoken in his critical examination of the contemporary musical theatre. He was well aware that his work would evoke unfavourable reaction. In the Avvertimento al Lettore of the Venice edition, he wrote:

> Dai principj, onde parto, sono derivate naturalmente molte conseguenze, che riusceranno poco gradevoli agli interessati. Di nulla meno si tratta, che di fare man bassa, e pressochè annientare quanto forma in oggi la delizia, l'ammirazione e il trasporto del Teatro Musicale Italiano. Preveggo non per tanto gl'insulti della ignoranza e i clamori del pregiudizio. Ma, oh adorabile Verità! Se gli uomini mi negheranno il compenso del loro sterile suffraggio, io il ritroverò dentro di me medesimo nella soddisfazione di averti servito.[56]

And in a letter to Bettinelli he prophesied, evidently with a certain satisfaction:

> È per sortire il 3. ed ultimo tomo delle mie Rivoluzioni, che irriterà non poco contro di me i cantori e i ballerini moderni.[57]

Arteaga's position on opera is essentially positive.

He regards it in theory as the highest art-form, for it combines all the imitative arts in an effort to represent ideal Beauty. It is, therefore, the most brilliant spectacle created by human genius.

> [I]l quale pel complesso di tutti i piaceri dello spirito, della immaginazione, del cuore, della vista e dell'udito combinati insieme ad agitar l'animo dell'uomo e sorprenderlo, è senza dubbio il maggiore sforzo delle belle arti congiunte, e il diletto più perfezionato, che da esse attender possa la politica società.[58]

In his Discorso preliminare, Arteaga presents this opinion of melodramma as his ideal. It is not clear, however, whether this is the conclusion he has drawn from his theoretical examination of melodramma by the experimental method he professes to follow, or whether it is in fact an a priori opinion against which he measures the contemporary musical theatre. He concludes, nevertheless, that as it exists in practice, melodramma does not live up to the ideal expressed in the introduction to his treatise.

By the penultimate decade of the eighteenth century, opera seria had not yet been able to free itself completely from its identification with tragedy. Critics continued to judge it with the classical rules for the composition of tragedy as their point of departure. Arteaga is the first to issue a clear and unequivocal claim for a new classification for melodramma as a separate and distinct genre, sufficient unto itself and requiring no justification on the basis of classical definitions of tragedy and comedy.[59] The

self-sufficiency of the new genre would of necessity be limited, since Arteaga indicates that he is aware of a significant drawback. Opera, at the time he was writing, was not equipped with a set of poetics, as were the genres of tragedy and comedy. The intention of the Rivoluzioni was to furnish melodramma with its own identity and theoretical instrument. Arteaga argues that it is only by availing itself of such tools that melodramma can become an independent genre in its own right. He believes that the absence of a set of poetics for the melodramma is due to its fairly recent origins as a form, to the low state in which it lay during the seventeenth century, and to the fact that it had no great thinker to examine its nature and to set up rules and boundaries for it:

> Attalchè quelli autori, che hanno sensatamente parlato d'ogni altro genere di poesia, vanno tastoni nel ragionare del melodramma, ora rilegandolo ai mondi della favola, ora mettendolo tra le cose per sua natura difettose, ed assurde, ora sbadatamente confondendolo colla tragedia.

He goes on to say that perhaps the freedom from fixed rules may be of benefit to the genre, for it will allow it to evolve and develop, a concept certain to horrify those critics who upheld the principle that art is unchanging, and who thus judged all drama according to the principles established centuries before by the classical writers:

> Forse questa trascuratezza, e questo abbuiamento tornerà in maggior suo vantaggio, convenendo, secondo l'osservazione del gran Bacone di Verulamio, che non sì tosto s'affrettino i filosofi a fissare i confini

d'un'arte senza prima vedere le diverse forme,
ch'essa può prendere dalle diverse combinazioni
de'tempi, e delle circostanze.[60]

Nevertheless, Arteaga is also aware that in order to judge a work one must have a means of comparison, and this is one of the intentions behind his proposed analysis of melodramma.

The first characteristic of opera that Arteaga indicates is also the most obvious; that is, the participation in its composition of various arts: poetry (the libretto), music, the decorative arts (stage décor), and the dance. Poetry and music are the most important of these and their union is the principal consideration which must be taken into account in any discussion of the nature of opera. This is because the main characteristic of opera is the change necessarily caused by the introduction of music into the composition.[61] This consideration leads Arteaga into a study of the acceptability of such a union--one that had been questioned by so many critics of melodramma on the grounds that it led to all manner of improbabilities. Arteaga's reply to this criticism hinges on his discussion of the nature of art, which for him is essentially mimetic. This is, of course, the classical concept of art as imitation. However, while Arteaga employs this classical concept as the point of departure, the ramifications he develops go beyond the limits accepted by his contemporaries.

For Arteaga there are four types of imitation:

1) The imitation of nature which does not represent it exactly as it is;

2) the imitation which is an exact copy of the original;

3) the imitation that is selective, taking the characteristics of various objects in order to unite them into one;
4) the imitation that perfects its original, adding to it fictitious attributes which proceed either from tradition or from the imagination of the artist.

In her studies of Arteaga's aesthetics, Rudat claims that in the first three instances Arteaga is in accord with the neo-classicists. She points out that in adding the fourth classification, Arteaga goes further than the neo-classicists, and makes of his theory of imitation a theory of imagination. As such, it includes the concept of creativity, and thus, according to Rudat, adds dynamic elements to the classical notion of mimesis.[62]

Arteaga employs this concept to justify the union of music and poetry in melodramma for the representation of human actions on the stage. He agrees that such a union would be quite unnatural in objective reality, but it can be justified in melodramma because, as in the case of all the imitative arts, its object is not the mechanical reproduction of reality, which would make it a mere copy of nature, but a representation of reality. That is, not a copy of nature as it is, but a representation of nature perfected by the artist and raised to a more ideal plane:

> Tal cosa sarebbe certamente un assurdo, se si dovesse prender al naturale, ma così non è nel dramma musicale, il quale, siccome avviene a tutti gli altri lavori delle arti imitative, non ha tanto per oggetto il vero quanto la rappresentazione del vero, nè si vuole da esso, che esprima la natura nuda e semplice qual è, ma che l'abellisca, e la foggi al suo modo.

To illustrate his point, Arteaga cites the classic and well-worn example of the painter Zeuxis who wished to paint a portrait of Helen,

> e non trovando alcun individuo della natura, il quale adeguasse quella sublime idea della perfezione, ch'egli avea nella sua mente concetto, raccolse da molte fanciulle bellisime i tratti più perfetti, onde poi un tutto formò, che non esisteva fuorchè nella mente del pittore.[63]

Tragedy itself, therefore, is not a faithful reproduction of nature, but a stylized and perfected imitation which makes use of verse and poetic style rather than a natural and realistic one.

In a later work, entitled Investigaciones filosóficas sobre la belleza ideal considerada como objeto de todas las artes de imitación, Arteaga makes a clear distinction between copy (that is, the production of absolute similarity) and imitation:

> El imitador se propone imitar su original no con una semejanza absoluta, sino con la semejanza de que es capaz la materia o instrumento en que trabaja.[64]

Like Metastasio, Arteaga places great emphasis on the importance of the medium used in creating a work of art.[65] For him, therefore, the lack of realism in melodramma is not a problem because the object of art, as he sees it, is not to deceive the spectator into accepting the artistic work as exactly corresponding to external realities, but to create an illusion:

> Así el imitador no pretende engañar ni quiere que su retrato se equivoque con el original; antes, para evitar todo engaño, pone siempre delante de los ojos las circunstancias y señales del instrumento, a fin de que nadie le confunda con la cosa imitada.[66]

Therefore, to fault melodramma because it presents characters who sing is an invalid argument, since the "instrument" (or medium) of imitation in the melodramma is song, and music is a valid imitative art, which represents nature in sounds which are no more improbable a language than is verse in poetry or colour in painting. He concludes:

> [A]ccusar il dramma musicale perchè introduce i personaggi che cantano, è lo stesso, che condannarlo perchè si prevale nella imitazione de'mezzi suoi in vece di prevalersi degli altrui: è un non voler, che si trovino nella natura cose atte ad imitarsi col suono, e col canto: è in una parola accusar la musica perchè è musica.[67]

Arteaga, of course, is working from the neo-classical presupposition that imitation was the common principle underlying all the arts, including music. Music, however, was the first of the arts to be disqualified as mimetic in the eighteenth century when, as the guiding principle behind Charles Barreux's Les Beaux Arts réduits à un même principe,[68] it was brought into question.[69] Such critics as James Beattie, Charles Avison and Novalis raised doubts or objections concerning the capability of music to imitate nature. Arteaga, while already going beyond Batteux in so far as he recognizes and emphasizes the importance of the function of the different mediums in the arts, nevertheless still regards music as being mimetic, at least, as we shall see later,

certain kinds of music; Arteaga, always working from the importance of the instrument or medium used, does in fact conclude that some musical forms do not have the appropriate medium for imitation.

Having established to his own satisfaction the suitability of the union of poetry and music for representing the subject-matter of melodramma, Arteaga moves on to discuss the next question:

> Data la intrinseca unione della poesia colla musica, quai mutazioni debbono risultare da sì fatto accoppiamento in un tutto drammatico.[70]

This, of course, is the question fundamental to his entire investigation, and the answer is to be uncovered, he believes, by means of a close examination of the relations between poetry and music. He therefore turns his attention to an inquiry into the function and purpose of the two arts.

Already in the early part of the century, Du Bos had emphasized the appeal of art to the sentiments. By the late eighteenth century, the function of drama was interpreted as giving delight by moving the spirit of the spectator, not through a process of catharsis, but out of empathy for the plight of the characters portrayed in the drama. In his discussion of the ends of melodramma and its constituent arts, Arteaga leans heavily on the appeal to the emotions, an attitude which prefigures to a certain extent a romantic concept of the nature of art.[71] However, in fixing his attention upon the effect that the arts will have on the emotions

of the audience, rather than as an expression of the emotions of the poet, he remains firmly within the neo-classical tradition as it evolved throughout the eighteenth century. This is not to say that Arteaga neglects entirely the concept of instruction as one of the ends of art, but this aspect assumes in him significantly less importance than in many earlier writers.[72] Where it does occur in the Rivoluzioni, Arteaga's formulation of the concept seems curiously out-of-step with the main thrust of his argument.

In Arteaga's opinion, melodramma achieves its purpose by representing human passions through the mediums of poetry, music and spectacle. In this way it creates an illusion which enchants and seduces the spectator. Arteaga lays great importance on the illusion which the drama must sustain in order to bring about the emotional involvement of the spectators in the events depicted on stage. Thus, he addresses himself directly to the musical accompaniment of the drama:

> Io chieggo prima da te, che, trasportando nel Falso le sembianze del Vero, tu mi seduca e mi inganni; che porti l'inganno e la seduzione al maggior grado possibile; che mi facci pigliar un inconsistente aggregato di suoni pei veri gemiti d'un mio simile, e che mi costringa a correre, come un altro Enea, per abbracciar il fantasma di Creusa in vece del suo corpo.

This is far closer to a romantic ideal of art than to neo-classical conceptions. Here Arteaga is not dealing with catharsis, but with a delight in, and continued dalliance with, a heightened emotional involvement: pleasure for its own sake, rather than as a means for moral betterment. He

continues:

> Tu devi poscia chieder da me, che svanita che sia l'illusione, io seguiti ancora a godere della compiacenza riflessa di essere stato ingannato.[73]

In the process of examining the two main components of melodramma, Arteaga first analyzes poetry, distinguishing in it three functions: to move, to portray and to instruct [commuovere, dipingere, istruire]. He goes on to examine the means by which these ends are accomplished. The first is achieved either by poetry discovering certain aspects in nature which awaken in us a sudden response, or by appealing to our innermost sentiments through rhythm, poetic cadence, inflexion, and the natural accent of the voice. It is this latter method which makes of poetry a suitable companion of music, for these characteristics are common both to eloquence and vocal melody. Eloquence relies heavily for its desired effect on the musicality of language, on the magic of sounds combined in different periods and measures, and on pronunciation itself. Therefore, Arteaga concludes, poetry and music are already inextricably linked.

The second function of poetry [dipingere] is fulfilled by clothing abstract ideas in material images, by gathering the beautiful in nature into a single object, by transferring the properties of one being to another, by assuring that the placement, pronunciation and sound of the arbitrary symbols that are words all serve to reproduce perfectly the mental image created by the poet. Arteaga assigns to this

function another analogy with music, in that the closer the poetry approaches the object of imitation, the closer will be the imitation carried out by the music.[74]

The third function [istruire] is fulfilled when poetry leads man through the knowledge of intellectual and physical beauty to a knowledge and appreciation of moral beauty. However, Arteaga states that this third function is a distinguishing characteristic of poetry only when it is accompanied by the other two. Didactic verse which instructs without images or without appealing to the sentiments, does not come within Arteaga's concept of poetry.

Music, in Arteaga's view, has only two aims: the principal aim is to move, the secondary one is to portray. Music accomplishes the first by imitating, through vocal melody, the interjections, sighs, exclamations and inflexions of natural speech. Through this imitation, music evokes the thoughts or ideas which give rise to the passions. Music also moves the spirit by gathering into a continuous song the inflexions normally found scattered in an impassioned voice, by seeking out through harmony, rhythm and melody the physical nerve-endings which incite man to the passions of hate, love, anger, joy and sadness.[75]

Arteaga believes that music achieves its secondary aim in two ways: it either imitates the material sounds in nature which affect man, or it awakens in man the same sensations produced by those objects which, since they lack sound, do not come properly under the sphere of music. In

this case, music attempts to reproduce in sound the effect that the sight, touch, smell or taste of the original would produce. Arteaga claims that music cannot fulfil the third purpose which he applies to poetry. By its very nature, he believes, music cannot instruct, for its function is to appeal to the senses, and through the senses to the heart of the listener. Since music has no other instrument or medium save that of emotion, it cannot reach abstract reason. Sounds are only sounds: they can express sensations and images, but not ideas. As a result of these considerations, Arteaga concludes that music is poorer than poetry, for the former limits its appeal to the heart, the ear, and in some way to the imagination, whereas poetry reaches the spirit and the reason as well. On the other hand, music is more expressive than poetry,

> perchè imita i segni inarticolati, che sono il linguaggio naturale, e per conseguenza il più energico, e gli imita col mezzo de'suoni, i quali, perchè agiscono fisicamente sopra di noi, sono più atti a conseguire l'effetto loro che non sono i versi, i quali dipendendo dalla parola, che è un segno di convenzione, e parlando unicamente alle facoltà interne dell'uomo, hanno per esser gustati bisogno di più squisito, e dilicato sentimento. Quindi è, che una melodìa semplice commuove universalmente più che non faccia un bel componimento poetico.[76]

According to Meyer Howard Abrams, the concept of "expression" in music was defined in the eighteenth century in two ways. First there was the tendency to have it denote music's "power of raising affections in the listener," whereby music was defined as "a tonal medium for evoking or speci-

fying feeling in the listener." Second, there was the speculation that stemmed from Vico's observation that music and poetry were born together as the means of expressing passion in primitive man, and that therefore, even in its developed state, music was the "formalized expression of passion."[77] The latter view led to the interpretation held by the Germans, with such far-reaching ramifications, to the effect that music is the most purely expressive art because it is so intimately bound up with the nature of the feelings, without the intermediary of arbitrary sounds (words).[78] It seems that Arteaga held a synthesis of the two interpretations. For him, music was the more expressive because it imitated the inarticulate sounds which are the language of nature (the expression of the emotions of primitive man), and therefore was more vigorous than the language of words. At the same time, music imitates by means of sounds which affect us physically. Therefore, they are more apt than words to achieve their effect on the listener. The language of words, relying on arbitrary and conventional signs, appeals to the intellect and consequently requires the intermediary of an exquisite sensitivity to be fully appreciated.[79] But, while Arteaga considered music to be the most expressive art, he could never go as far as the German Frühromantiker who regarded symphonic music as the art of arts because of its indefinite, though highly suggestive quality, gained from its lack of precise reference to external phenomena. Arteaga was still held by the neo-classical principle of all art as imitation,

and for him, as for English critics like Beattie and Adam Smith, it was precisely because music was such an indeterminate and abstract mode of imitation that it required the aid of words to fix its meaning.[80] Nevertheless, the English saw the lyric mode (including elegy, song, sonnet and ode, with the latter being the highest form) as having the most expressive character of any of the arts.[81] Arteaga, on the other hand, held that, as music was richer in expression than poetry, poetry gained in expressive power through its union with music.[82]

These considerations lead him to the conclusion that the poetry for music must be characterized by qualities which suit the purpose of music, and must reject those poetic forms that do not. Bearing this conclusion in mind, Arteaga proceeds to establish the identity and poetics of melodramma through an examination of its component parts. Though he does not say so, the components he identifies correspond basically with the elements of tragedy that Aristotle enumerates in the Poetics: plot, character, thought and diction (or style), and spectacle (or stage decoration); in his discussion of the nature of music and poetry, Arteaga has already dealt with song, the sixth Aristotelian element of tragedy. According to Arteaga, the characteristics which differentiate melodramma (that is, opera seria) from tragedy will be found in these component parts.

The first distinguishing mark of opera is the subject matter, which must be suitable for musical treatment. If

music can only express passions, or that which appeals to the eyes or the ears, then it follows that in this partnership of poetry and music, poetry must also deal solely with such matter. Tragedy can appeal to the intellect with reasoned dialogue, political themes, and the like. But these would be out of place in melodramma, because music cannot express effectively subjects which appeal to reason and the intellect.[83] With this argument, Arteaga makes a significant contribution to the discussion of the choice of subject matter in melodramma. He falls clearly into the Italian tradition of choosing historical subjects, whereas the French generally preferred the marvellous. He defends historical subjects on the grounds that they provide as much variety and interest as the marvellous, if not more, dealing as they do with passions of real people rather than of gods and goddesses. Therefore, they create the illusion of reality better than the marvellous. They also offer just as much inspiration to and opportunity for the stage decorator for display.[84] French critics, such as Jean le Rond d'Alembert and Jean François Marmontel, justified the marvellous in musical drama on the grounds that the purpose of melodramma was different from tragedy.[85] Arteaga rejects these arguments, claiming that the ends of tragedy and of melodramma are one and the same, that is, to move the heart of the spectator [penetrare addentro nel cuore, e intenerirlo]. The distinguishing characteristic is the means used by each form to attain the same end; tragedy by means of greater development of characters

and passions, opera through illusion and melody.[86]

The union of poetry and music is also responsible for the second distinguishing quality of melodramma. Because of the nature of music, the pace and development of the action of melodramma should be swifter and simpler, dealing only with the essential circumstances needed to carry the story forward. The lengthy and intricate development of action and character is more properly the domain of tragedy, whose instrument, poetry, is free to work on its own. Arteaga points to an analogous situation with regard to the choice of characters portrayed in melodramma. Since song is the language of feelings and illusion, only those characters capable of lively and agitated emotions and raptures are suitable to opera. The uniform, steady tones of the passions of ambition and avarice would lead to an excessively monotonous musical accompaniment, and would not allow for impulsive bursts of heightened emotion. Cold, rational characters, or those with dark and evil passions are more suited, therefore, to tragedy.[87]

The impact of the partnership of music and poetry on style occurs because song is the natural expression of emotion. It thus presupposes some agitation of the spirit, some unusual state of mind. Consequently, the words ought not to be those of everyday ordinary speech. This agitation can be brought about either by the heart or the imagination. In the first case, the style would be impassioned and exalted; in the second, it would be imaginative or figurative, or--

in Arteaga's words--lyric. Arteaga thus believes that the lyric as well as the impassioned style is proper to melodramma, but not to tragedy. He identifies the difference in style as drammatico in tragedy, and drammatico lirico in melodramma.[88]

Moving on to a discussion of the rôle of decoration in melodramma, Arteaga believes that its chief function is to aid in the process of maintaining the illusion which melodramma sets out to create. This is effected by reducing the spectator's awareness of the objective implausibility inherent in the action of a group of characters who sing of their personal vicissitudes on stage. This is not a contradiction of his earlier defence of the singing of passions on the stage. The discussion here is merely enlarged to include the rôle of another art (painting and design of scenery) in Arteaga's concept of melodramma, wherein all the elements work towards the creation of an illusion that must be maintained during every second of the performance to avoid breaking, by the intrusion of cold reason, the audience's suspension of disbelief. The décor assists in this by dressing the stage for the action which is to be represented on it.

By the same token, and while respecting the classical unities of time and action, Arteaga upholds the abolition of the unity of place from opera. Since the sixteenth century, critics like Castelvetro had insisted on the importance of a single scene in maintaining verisimilitude, arguing that an audience could not be expected to imagine itself moving from one place to another while sitting immobile in a theatre.

Arteaga, on the contrary, does not question the capabilities of the spectators' imagination, but merely wishes to aid the imaginative process in every possible way. In his opinion, opera has even more need than tragedy for scene changes in order to create and keep alive the illusion of its representation. Most commentators on opera since the time of Martello had in fact agreed that the change-of-scene concept was necessary to make the performance credible. However, the argument was also used for tragedy, and no distinction had previously been made between the needs of tragedy and of melodramma in this respect. The argument for the change-of-scene was based on the improbable situations created by the performance of the entire action of a drama in a single room, garden or other location. However, in his claims for the necessity of the collaboration of stage decoration in the union of arts that comprise opera, Arteaga goes further than his predecessors by suggesting that the failure to change scenes to suit the action could lead to the destruction of the illusion that the musical drama sets out to create, and ultimately of the melodramma itself. In his view, the scenes created by the décor

> producono l'illusione, non solo come supplemento della musica, e della poesia, ma come un rinforzo eziandio dell'una, e dell'altra, poichè assai chiaro egli è, che nè l'azione più ben descritta dal poeta, nè la composizione più bella del musico sortiranno perfettamente il loro effetto, se il luogo della scena non è preparato qual si conviene a'personaggi che agiscono, e se il decoratore non mette tal corrispondenza fra gli occhi, e gli orecchi, che gli spettatori credano di essersi successivamente portati, e di veder in fatti que'luoghi ove sentono la melodìa.[89]

Thus, while for Aristotle the power of tragedy must be self-sufficient without the aid of the performance, for Arteaga melodramma has need of the visual element in order to create its artistic illusion.

The foregoing discussions lead Arteaga to his conclusions concerning the true nature and character of opera:

> Essa è la rappresentazione sul teatro di qualche azione diretta al gran fine di giovar dilettando: utile dulci. L'azione rappresentata può essere triviale come nella commedia, o grande come nella tragedia: quindi la distinzione dell'Opera in seria, e in buffa. Ma quello, che non ha di comune nè coll'una nè coll'altra, è il dover appagare non solo il cuore, ma anche l'orecchio, e l'immaginazione; onde non può scompagnarsi dalla poesia, dal canto, dal suono, e dalla decorazione. Da tale accoppiamento risulta un tutto drammatico, che ha le sue leggi privative, e peculiari, come le hanno la tragedia, e la commedia.

This, of course, is to claim for melodramma the status of a genre in its own right. Thus, for Arteaga, the characteristics attributed to melodramma by his predecessors as the qualities that differentiated it from tragedy (that is, the number of acts; the difference in dramatic characters depicted; the difference in emotions aroused in the spectator; the choice of marvellous or historic subject-matter; sad or happy endings) are either erroneous or, as in the case of the happy ending, are merely the result of convention.[90] They are not to be regarded, therefore, as essential reasons for considering the melodramma as being intrinsically different from other drama, or as a separate genre. The true distinguishing characteristics are those noted by Arteaga himself.

Arteaga's discussion of the relationship between music and poetry in melodramma represents a shift away from the main intellectual currents of the Italy of his day. While critics from Crescimbeni to Algarotti (as well as the "reform" librettists Zeno and Metastasio) had sought to retain the supremacy of poetry in melodramma, Arteaga (like Martello some seventy years earlier) accepted music as the more essential part. Arteaga concedes that poetry should be the ruling art in the theatre, but he makes an exception in the case of melodramma, thereby pointing to another special mark of opera. In opera, poetry must be the companion of the other arts in a partnership in which each comes to the fore as the circumstances of the individual melodrammi require.[91] It is this latter concept that Allorto fails to grasp in his criticism of the Rivoluzioni. Allorto states that Arteaga had not completely comprehended the concept of partnership, since he contradicts himself by claiming on the one hand that music and poetry should be linked in a partnership, while on the other hand interspersing among his remarks on melodramma certain observations which show the relationship in a different light.[92] However, if we examine the examples of these alleged contradictions, we find that they are in no way inconsistent with Arteaga 's understanding of the concept. Nowhere does Arteaga claim that the partnership is an equal one. In fact, on the second page of his treatise, immediately after his declaration of the existence of such a partnership, Arteaga states that one of the members stands

out above the others, namely music, since it increases the power and the beauty of the words. Yet, at the same time, Arteaga admits that there are sections within a given melodramma in which the words may take the upper hand, for not all situations are equally susceptible to passion, and hence to musical interpretation. He also envisages moments when neither will be to the fore, and in such instances the source of interest will be the stage décor.[93] The a priori and conventional statements concerning the superiority of poetry that we find in the works of most of Arteaga's predecessors are the result of their attempts to fit melodramma into the conventions of tragedy. Arteaga's conclusions on the nature of the partnership, are far from being inconsistent, and as we shall see later, are quite systematically thought out.

Earlier critics had tended to begin their investigations into the true relation of poetry and music in melodramma by citing the case of ancient Greek drama, claiming that this was what was being re-created in the musical theatre. There was also considerable discussion of the musico-dramatic systems of antiquity. Arteaga, who later was to work on two treatises on the subject, did not hold the opinion that the Greeks had sung their tragedies throughout, and claimed that the contemporary aria had no predecessor in Greek tragedy:

> Quindi è, che poco fondata mi è sembrata mai sempre la rassomiglianza, che alcuni hanno preteso di ritrovare fra il nostro sistema drammatico-lirico,

e quello degli antichi.[94]

Searching for the relationship between the arts in the nature of the arts themselves, Arteaga concluded that, because of its special characteristics, the rôle of music in melodramma was to reinforce the sentiments expressed by the words, through music's appeal to the senses. Since the latter is stronger than the appeal to the intellect wielded by poetry, it is inevitable that music should occupy the primary position in the union of the arts. Unlike most of his predecessors, Arteaga does not decry this fact, for to him music is as valid an imitative art as poetry or painting.

The corollary to this argument is that poetry, as a result of its lesser influence on the senses, occupies a lesser position in the union, albeit always an important one. The rôle of poetry is to supply a libretto which will serve as a text upon which music will provide the commentary. This was a commonplace statement in eighteenth-century criticism on melodramma. In Arteaga, however, it becomes evident that the commentary assumes a more important function, due to its greater expressive qualities, and hence its greater appeal, than the original poetic text. For, in his view, the soul of the passions resides in the manner of expressing them.[95]

It must be emphasized, however, that in Arteaga's opinion, the medium used by music to express the sentiments of the words must be melody. In this he is in perfect accord with the Encyclopedists, and with Metastasio. Although Arteaga regarded the appeal of music as being of prime impor-

tance in melodramma, he conceived music as being too generic an imitative art to be capable of expressing sentiments without the aid of words. Thus, when he speaks of music in the context of melodramma, he really means melody, which he defines as the ordered progression of a single voice.[96] For Arteaga, instrumental music had only a limited function in melodramma. Properly used, it could serve as a supplement to the human voice in expressing passionate agitation.[97] But, he claims, it is difficult for a composer to mold all the diverse parts of harmony in such a way that it expresses a single dominant motive, and, since instrumental music is deficient as a mimetic art (lacking words to specify the meaning of its imitation), it tends to compensate for this deficiency by a superabundance of harmony. While undoubtedly appealing because of the richness of sounds, harmony distracts from the simplicity which is required to express an idea:

> [L]a simplicità che richiede la musica vocale ad ottener il suo intento, viene distrutta dall'apparato armonico che esige la strumentale, la quale, essendo imperfetta nella sua imitazione, debbe ricompensare cotal mancanza coll'artifizio dando all'orecchio tutto ciò, che non può concedere al cuore.[98]

Arteaga, consequently, was not impressed by the advances made in orchestration during the eighteenth century. For him, melody was the language that spoke to the emotions, and was therefore an art, while harmony belonged more to the realm of mathematics than the arts.[99]

In discussing musical expression in melodramma, earlier critics had concentrated upon the difference between the

recitative and the aria. The first was regarded as the narrative mode, and the second, as the expression of passion. Arteaga studies the different modes with what he calls more precise and philosophical reflections, enumerating three different levels or stages of passion in melodramma. The first is a tranquil stage, in which the characters inform each other of the situation depicted by the drama, that is, the narrative stage in which passions are quiescent. Since music, for Arteaga, is the expression of passion, it has no function in this first stage beyond that of sustaining the singer's voice from time to time in order to make clear that the action is musical rather than recited. This musical declamation is the simple recitative. The second stage is reached when the spirit of a character is agitated by contrasting emotions, torn by doubt and indecision. This, consequently, is a state which can be imitated by music, and the voice is therefore accompanied by instruments: the recitativo obbligato. Like Metastasio, Arteaga believed that there was a place in the recitativo obbligato for the cooperation of instrumental music which, in the intervals when the voice is silent, would convey the emotion not expressed by the singer.[100] The third stage is reached when the spirit is overcome by one passion and gives full vent to its expression: this is the aria:

> Cotal situazione è la propria dell'aria, la quale considerata sotto questo filosofico aspetto non è altro che la conchiusione, l'epilogo, o epifonema della passione, e il compimento più perfetto della melodìa.[101]

The aria was a source of contention among eighteenth-century critics, who tended to regard it as one of the main causes of the decadence of the opera. Yet, for the spectator, the aria was the high point of Italian opera, and its most popular element. Arteaga attempts to defend this "popular" point of view by finding a "philosophical" explanation for it. In his opinion, it is in the aria that music comes into its own in melodramma. It must respect the rights of poetry and of language, and add from its own art what is necessary to embellish nature. As we have seen, Arteaga regarded the embellishment of nature as the function of the mimetic arts. Thus, in the aria, music reproduces the inflexions of the scattered utterances of persons of sensibility under the influence of strong passion or emotion, as these utterances are gathered and arranged by the composer according to the rules of modulation. Now, not only does music share the same justification for embellishment that is common to all the mimetic arts, but by its very nature, which is generic and ambiguous, and therefore deficient in imitation, it requires embellishment to compensate for its deficiencies.[102]

This, then, is Arteaga's defence of the bel canto aria, whose embellishment he finds justifiable by the very principles of art as he conceives of them. He was, of course, fully aware of the abuses of the form of the aria prevalent in the contemporary melodramma, but he considered the fault to lie not in the essence of the aria itself, but in the incorrect use made of it by composers and singers, and sanctioned

by the demands of the public, as in the case of the convention of the da capo aria.[103] In his precepts on the composition of the aria, Arteaga had marked out the limits of the embellishment suitable for it, stating that it must take from art

> quel tanto e non più che ci vuole per presentar la natura nel suo più vero e più dilettevole aspetto, in una parola devono spiccare nella esecuzione del suo canto la verità, l'esattezza, e la semplicità.[104]

Arteaga also defends the eighteenth-century spectator for his interest in and preference for the aria above all other elements of opera. Although he claims that the two different forms of the recitative serve to maintain interest in the drama, since the final end of mimetic music is the song or melody, it is natural that the spectator be impatient for the aria to arrive. For Arteaga, it was the most interesting part of the genre, the part which could be rightly called the masterpiece of the musical theatre.[105] This is, in fact, the highest praise for the aria that we can find in the critical writings on the melodramma of the time. The neo-classicists had attacked the aria because its primary appeal was not to judgement or reason, but to sensibility, but it is precisely this reason that is responsible for Arteaga's appreciation of the form. In fact, we can see in his attitude a foreshadowing of what Abrams calls the nineteenth-century concept of quintessential poetry as being only the intense and necessarily brief segment--a concept which stemmed from pseudo-Longinus' emphasis on the transport resulting from the stunning burst of passion.[106] It is for this reason that

Arteaga defends the aria against such critics as Muratori and Planelli who, in his view, wished to replace it by recitative.[107] While praising the dramatic qualities of recitative, Arteaga concludes, nevertheless, that a drama composed only of recitative would be monotonous and unbearable:

> [L]'aria, dove lentamente si sviluppa il motivo musicale, dove il tuono dominante viene condotto per più modulazioni differenti, e dove la melodia fa pompa di tutte le sue squisitezze è più atta a rallegrare colla varietà de'suoi disegni, e colla leggiadria del suo canto, che non il recitativo.

The aria, he continues, is responsible for the popularity of Italian music over that of other nations.[108]

At the end of the chapter on the analysis of the essence of melodramma, Arteaga draws up a set of succinct rules for the practitioners of the three main component arts of opera:

> Per il poeta: Primo: esaminare attentamente l'indole della musica: Secondo: conoscere le relazioni di questa colla lingua in cui scrive: Terzo: assoggettar alla musica la lingua e la poesia. Per il musico: Primo: conoscere il vero genio della lingua, o del verso. Secondo: saperne trar vantaggio dall'una e dall'altro a prò della modulazione. Per il decoratore giovar alla illusione, disponendo la prospettiva secondo il piano stabilito dagli altri due.[109]

In other words, all three elements should work in unison to create an harmonious whole.

For Arteaga, the rôle of the librettist in the creation of melodramma is similar to that of any dramatist, in that he must bear in mind the rules of good dramatic composition, such as verisimilitude and the unity of action and time.

However, unlike the traditional dramatist, he must be prepared to adapt his works to the requirements of music. Therefore, if the needs of the composer require him to break the dramatic conventions, he must still be guided by common sense in not carrying the licence or command to excess. He must be a master of his craft, but at the same time be imbued with sensibility. However, according to Arteaga, the purpose of melodramma is to represent human passions by means of melody and spectacle. The poet, therefore, must be willing to sacrifice his art to the dictates of the genre:

> Il buon gusto, e la filosofia debbono tutto sagrificare a questi due fini, e siccome gli uomini radunati in società rinunziarono alla metà de'suoi diritti per conservar illesa l'altra metà; così il poeta purchè conservi, ed accresca i dilicati piaceri del cuore, e della immaginazione, purchè dia campo alla musica d'ottener compiutamente il suo fine, non dee imbarazzarsi gran fatto dei cicalecci dei critici, che gli si oppongono. La prima legge dell'Opera superiore ad ogni critica è quella d'incantare, e di sedurre.

Since melodramma, for Arteaga, is a legitimate artistic genre, there is no question of the poet being in any way of an inferior order, so long as he fulfils the requirements of the genre. Therefore, always bearing in mind the overriding requirements of music, the rôle of the librettist as poet is to safeguard the rights of poetry and drama within this union, and to make sure that poetry becomes the companion, rather than the slave of the composer.[110]

The penultimate chapter of the treatise examines dance. Arteaga questions the inclusion of dance in the partnership, firstly because in Italian opera it does not, in his opinion,

constitute an essential part of melodramma, appearing chiefly as an intermezzo; secondly, because having analyzed the three ways in which mimetic dance [ballo pantomimico] may be used, he finds none suited to the aims of melodramma, and would therefore prefer to have dance removed from the operatic stage.[111]

We have thus far examined those aspects of Arteaga's treatise from which we can deduce his ideals of melodramma. In his own study of the melodramma of the past, Arteaga finds the closest embodiment of his ideals in the works of Metastasio, though he is quick to point out Metastasio's defects.[112] The second part of his treatise deals with contemporary opera, which he considers to be decadent. Arteaga attributes this decadence to two fundamental reasons. The first takes him back to the idea that perfection in art was to be found in ancient Greece. The effects of ancient Greek drama on the spectator were not achieved in contemporary art, and this was because of the different position held by the arts in his own time as compared to that occupied by music and poetry in antiquity, when they performed an important social, religious and political function. Modern music and poetry aim only to be a pleasurable pastime: they contribute nothing to the religious and political commonwealth of the state, and, in consequence, must be mediocre in comparison with arts in ancient Greece. The second reason for the decadence of opera also leads Arteaga back to antiquity, to the ideal that the offices of poet, musician, singer, legislator and philosopher

should all reside in one person who would control and direct all to the specific end set out for drama. But this ideal is no longer found in modern times. As a result, music and poetry are no longer in perfect accord.[113] Examining the roots of this discord, Arteaga traces them back to three main factors. On the one hand, he claims that composers are not taught the philosophy of music; this led to excesses of harmony and imperfect expression of sentiments. Secondly, through vanity and ignorance, the singers have taken the preeminent place in opera, instead of being subject to the poet and musician. Finally, Arteaga points to the present decadence of poetry in Italy, a decadence which is especially evident in melodramma.[114] He discusses for example the extravagances of the musical accompaniments to the arias, of the singing technique of the virtuosi, their lack of acting ability, the unsuitability of the castrato voice to heroic characters, the reliance of poets on conventional plots, characterizations and stock phrases, the submission to public taste, the cultural ignorance of the public. Although in general the list is not original to Arteaga, he explores the subject in greater detail than previous critics, and his chapters comprise the most extensive and thorough exposition of the abuses of eighteenth-century Italian opera.

Arteaga concludes, however, that it is not the nature of melodramma that is defective, but the manner of its execution by contemporary exponents. Melodramatic music and poetry are therefore capable of reform, and of being perfected; and

Arteaga claims to have demonstrated in his analysis of opera and its constituent arts the remedies that would lead them to the perfection of which philosophy deems them capable.[115] Arteaga is certainly not the only defendant of melodramma encountered in this study, but his defence of the genre differs in essence from those of his predecessors. Algarotti defended melodramma from the standpoint of the Arcadian concept of taste, art being that which appeals to the man of taste. Since Algarotti regarded melodramma as the most delightful of all the arts, he attempted to justify it as an art-form on that basis. Arteaga, on the other hand, made the first systematic effort to vindicate melodramma from what he called a "philosophical" standpoint, in other words, from a detailed investigation into the very essence of the form.

Previous plans for the reform of melodramma had either advocated a return to the simplicity of ancient Greek drama, or a movement towards the French tragedy or tragédie lyrique. Arteaga could not agree with this second solution. On the one hand, he regarded melodramma as a separate genre, and would not look for models in tragedy. On the other hand, he was firmly convinced of the superiority of Italian opera over the French, both in subject matter and in form. One of the reasons for this conviction was his belief that the Italian language, due to its natural melody, was the most compatible with music:

> Ogni lingua dunque, la quale sarà doviziosa di accenti, sarà ricca parimenti d'espressione, e di melodìa, come all'opposto, chi ne scarseggia avrà una melodìa

> languida, fredda, e monotona. La francese si trova forse nel secondo caso, e l'italiana nel primo.[116]

Metastasio had also made the same claim for Italian, insisting on the musicality of the Italian word. Arteaga, however, goes further. In the second chapter of the Rivoluzioni, he sets out to examine in detail the reasons for that musicality.

From an analysis of the language itself, Arteaga attempts to demonstrate that the phonetic characteristics of Italian, which derive in part from physiological causes, make it better suited to musical expression than other tongues. In his view, the predominance of pure vowel sounds, capable of being sustained by the breath, over diphthongs and consonants, render the language more able to follow musical notation. The absence of gutturals, nasals and silents, together with a limited range of consonant clusters, also makes the language more musical in essence than other tongues, particularly French. Other factors contributing to the inherent musicality of Italian are the fluidity of expression caused by the use of elision, and the measured, even stress of the words and syllables. He cites syntactical features, such as the frequent use of hyperbaton, which give Italian greater rhythmical variety. Cultural considerations also intrude: the volatile nature of the Italian people gives the language a wider range of natural inflexions. Arteaga also advances historical and phonological reasons: Italy, having suffered less than other Latin countries from the barbarian invasions, preserves a prosody which is closer to

classical Latin than any other. It has also preserved, to a far greater extent than other nations, the sounds of its ancient pre-Latin tongues. Etruscan, Sabine and the like, as well as Greek, all contribute an oriental flavour to the modern language, rendering it more mellifluous and expressive. Arteaga advances all these considerations to support his belief that Italian opera possesses both musically and poetically a more beautiful recitative and aria than the French musical theatre. The Italian language has

> un discorso, che facilmente divien poesia, ha poesia, che s'avvicina alla natura del canto, ha finalmente il recitativo, che dalla declamazione poetica non molto si scosta.[117]

Arteaga's ideal would be to have poetic declamation transformed subtly into song so that poetry would become inseparable from music.

This discussion of the qualities which make a language apt for music contains echoes of Rousseau's Lettre sur la musique française which, on its appearance in 1753, caused a violent reaction and rebuttal due to its attack on the compatibility of the French language and music.[118] There are also echoes of Italian discussions of language. Arteaga's defence of Italian against the French accusation of effeminacy, his description of nasal sounds, silent vowels and indeterminate diphthongs as unsuitable for musical accompaniment, recall the defence of Italian against French and English in Baretti's Discours sur Shakespeare et sur Monsieur de Voltaire (1777).[119] His recognition of the harmonious sound of the

language, and his ideal of the mingling of music and poetry in the ancient Greek fashion, can also be found in Bettinelli's Discorso sopra la poesia italiana (1781).[120] Investigation into the origin of language was a common feature of the day, and other themes connected with the questione della lingua run through Arteaga's treatise. He takes issue with the ideal of the Italian language as fixed by the Accademia della Crusca. Indeed, Arteaga accuses the Accademia of pedantry and blind conservatism, of wishing to stop the progress of time. Those who support the Accademia, he argues, cannot accept that man's language and knowledge should not remain forever in a barbarian infancy. In this, as well as in his belief that Italian would be enriched if dialectal forms became current in the literary language, Arteaga reiterates the position taken in the Rinunzia al Vocabolario della Crusca, published in the journal Il Caffé in 1746.[121] Arteaga's views on language were also consonant with Cesarotti's Saggio sulla filosofia delle lingue (1785).[122]

Arteaga sees another reason for the decadence of Italian melodramma in the failure of contemporary librettists to imitate Metastasio's example. They are unable to handle historical subjects in a proper fashion. Since critics impute the defects of modern libretti to melodramma itself, it has become customary to conclude that historical themes are no longer suitable for the modern theatre.[123] Consequently, librettists have turned to the French, with unfortunate results, for their models:

> Al che aggiugnendosi la vincitrice influenza del nome francese, e i brillanti sofismi di alcuni loro filosofi altrove da me confutati, gli italiani cominciano a rinunziare alle bellezze del proprio paese per adottar le foggie straniere, modellando cotesta singolar produzione del cielo italico sul gusto degli abitatori della Senna.[124]

Arteaga, then, inveighs against Calzabigi, whom he describes as one of the principle corruptors of the modern musical theatre, for having forsaken the ideals expressed in his Dissertazione on Metastasio's melodrammi in order to write libretti for Gluck according to the form of the tragédie lyrique.[125]

Allorto claims that Arteaga subscribes to the rival ideal, that is, ancient Greek tragedy. In writing the Rivoluzioni, Allorto argues, Arteaga was motivated by the neo-classical longing for the artistic perfection of the ancients which the moderns have approached but not realized. Furthermore, he adds, Arteaga was re-opening a controversy which had already been laid to rest: the question of the superiority of the ancients or the moderns. According to Allorto, Arteaga resolved it in favour of the ancients. He also states that the "equivoco della tragedia greca" (that is, the mistaken view that opera was a re-creation of ancient Greek tragedy) no longer concerned eighteenth-century critics of melodramma, whereas Arteaga returned to it, advocating that contemporary melodramma should be inspired by Greek tragedy even though it could not hope to achieve the results of ancient theatre.[126]

It is clear that Allorto's conclusions are drawn from

an imperfect understanding of Arteaga's classicism. In the first place, and notwithstanding Allorto's assertion to the contrary, the spectre of Greek tragedy had in fact overshadowed all the eighteenth-century Italian critics of opera, and in this respect Arteaga is but following the tradition. But the nostalgic desire for classical perfection is not present only in the early eighteenth century; it appears again in the last decades of the century, and in the Romantics. The difference is that the early neo-classicists sought the revival of the greatness of ancient art by means of the technical imitation of classical models, whereas the later movement was towards a sentimental revival of a simpler and more glorious age. While Gravina sought the reform of the tragedia per musica as a possible revival of ancient Greek drama, Arteaga denies that contemporary melodramma is such a revival. Although he recognizes that it has grown out of modern man's aspirations to revive Greek drama, he insists that it is a different genre, born of the exigencies of a different age and different customs. Therefore, while he does ascribe to Greek drama a higher purpose than that of the modern theatre (a view which could lead to the conclusion that it therefore surpasses modern theatre), Arteaga does not in fact disparage the contemporary melodramma because it cannot achieve the same high purpose. All he requests is that it be perfected in the form in which it actually exists:

> Se non si può legitimamente pretendere che il compositore, il musico, il poeta, ed il ballerino

> diano alle rispettive lor facoltà la forma stessa, che avevano venti secoli a dietro, si può bensì con ragione esiger da essi, che non isformino quella, di cui lo stato loro presente le rende capaci.

While Arteaga concludes that contemporary melodramma is a decadent form, laden with abuses and vices, he still believes that a perfect form can be created in the eighteenth century in accordance with the principles set up, not by ancient Greek models, but by the study of the inherent characteristics of opera as a genre. For the Greeks, in his opinion, had not exhausted all the possibilities of art:

> Alcuni compositori italiani, e non pochi ancora fra i moderni poeti hanno fatto vedere in pratica ciò, che la filosofia pronunziava da lungo tempo come certissimo, cioè che le modificazioni del Bello sono assai varie, che i fonti del diletto nelle belle lettere e nelle arti non furono dagli antichi pienamente esauriti, che la barbarie dei nostri metodi era capace di dirozzarsi fino ad un certo punto e ringentilirsi, e che da un sistema diverso da quello dei Greci potevano gli sforzi del Genio far iscaturire nuove sorgenti di vero, d'intimo, e di non mai sentito piacere.[127]

Arteaga admits, therefore, the possibility of artistic forms which are legitimate on the aesthetic level, yet not modelled on classical prototypes. He admits also their excellence in relation to the exigencies of the time, nation and customs in which they arise. His judgement of the nature of opera is that it creates the most perfect delight that is possible in art, and that it is a subject of discussion no less worthy of a philosopher's investigation than of the concern of a man of taste.[128]

Therefore, it is misleading to state, as does Allorto,

that Arteaga resolves the querelle of the ancients and the moderns in favour of the ancients. Arteaga undoubtedly felt a great attraction for the writings of the ancients, not however as models to be copied in a servile manner, but because they spoke to modern man in a timeless manner of universal matters. As Arteaga wrote in a letter to Matteo Borsa:

> La loro influenza non è convenzionale, ma intrinseca nella natura dell'uomo, perocchè l'oggetto loro è di lusingar la sensibilità e l'imaginazione, facoltà che sono di tutti i tempi.[129]

We must agree, therefore, with Batllori's characterization of Arteaga's classicism as aesthetic rather than erudite.[130] Furthermore, this appreciation of the ancients for their universal appeal rather than for their formal perfection permits Arteaga to render due appreciation to such moderns as Shakespeare, whom he admires for his characterizations which are true to nature, the Spanish playwrights, whose inventiveness and portrayal of characters he praises, and the idealism of the pseudo-Ossian.[131] Although Arteaga qualifies his admiration of these authors by noting what he considers to be defects in their writing, his recognition of their poetic qualities reveals once again his pre-romantic tendencies. In conclusion, therefore, it is clear that for Arteaga, respect for the ancients is both commendable and necessary, so long as it does not turn into fanaticism or idolatry, in order to keep man's natural desire for novelty from running to excess. But neither should the authority of the ancients serve to impede progress.[132] In the question of the ancients versus

the moderns, Arteaga held a moderate position, in which respect for the ancients and appreciation of the moderns were tempered by reason, common sense, and experimentation.

Allorto claims that Arteaga's unfavourable judgement of contemporary opera results from the nature of the Spaniard's reactionary criticism ["reazionaria, ottusa, assurda; sviluppata in stretta osservanza ai principî del Bello Ideale greco-metastasiano"]. It is therefore this same obtuse and reactionary criticism which prevents Arteaga from understanding the reform which Gluck has brought into effect in opera. Allorto continues:

> L'incomprensione è tanto più grave in quanto, allorchè egli scriveva, il belcantismo aveva ormai riconosciuto i maggiori diritti della verità drammatica, e Gluck, movendo guerra agli arbitrî cari ai virtuosi, aveva riportato, anche nel giudizio del pubblico, la palma della vittoria.[133]

Arteaga, however, while praising Gluck's work, does not characterize it as reform, but merely makes of it an extension of the Italian melodramma, grouping Gluck with the composers of the Neapolitan school: Traetta, Ciccio di Majo, Anfossi, Paisiello, Piccinni, Sacchini, Sarti, Bertoni, Caffaro, and Millico.[134] Therefore, according to Allorto, Arteaga remained anchored to the Metastasian phase of opera seria, because he showed a predilection for an operatic form which the musical theatre had already surpassed with the establishment of pre-romantic sensibility.[135]

It seems that Allorto, while undoubtedly recognizing Arteaga's important contributions to the history of melodramma,

in this respect is taking too superficial a view in his discussion of the Rivoluzioni. For one thing, the victory which Allorto attributes to Gluck is open to question.

Gluck's reform-drama had not, in fact, supplanted the Metastasian melodramatic form. As Daniel Heartz writes: "The new direction in opera did not replace the Metastasian strain so much as run together alongside of it."[136] Also, as Oliver claims,

> by the time of Arteaga's writing, 1783, the Gluck revolution had been consummated and there were already in France post-Encyclopedist critics of the stamp of La Harpe who began to object to Alceste as the ne plus ultra of operatic composition.[137]

Allorto expresses surprise at Arteaga's inclusion of Gluck in his list of operatic composers worthy of some consideration for their work, on the grounds that the others are all members of the Neapolitan school. During the third and fourth decades of the eighteenth century the Neapolitan school had developed a new and distinctive operatic style, which had enjoyed great popularity up to the middle of the century. By the time of Arteaga's writing, however, some of the composers in the list had already moved away from the Neapolitan ideal. At Stuttgart, Jommelli had revised the Metastasian aria opera by the use of dramatically intense accompanied recitatives. In the operas he composed for the theatre at Parma, Traetta replaced many conventions of the Italian melodramma with those of the French tragédie lyrique. It is generally agreed that Gluck's reform was a bringing together of the tendencies

towards renewal already circulating at the time.[138] As Allorto himself points out, Arteaga was well acquainted with all of Gluck's operatic works, including the Paris reform-operas. Yet the Spaniard makes no specific mention of Gluck's revolution. It is as if Gluck, for Arteaga, were simply another composer, worthy of consideration it is true, but certainly not as the creator of renewal in opera. Arteaga's ideal of operatic art had not been met, even by Metastasio. The latter had come closest to the ideal, but he too had failed:

> [C]he infinitamente più laude ne avrebbe acquistata il poeta cesareo, se lottando contro alle difficoltà, che opponevano una imperiosa truppa di ignoranti, e l'invecchiata usanza di quasi due secoli, osato avesse d'intraprender una totale riforma nel sistema drammatico, in vece di autorizzar maggiormente i vizj attuali coll'abbellirli.[139]

Arteaga goes on to express the hope that someone may come forward to undertake the reform that Metastasio did not have the courage to carry through, a reform that would make of melodramma an organic work of art.

Critics as early as Menéndez Pelayo saw in Arteaga a precursor of Wagner and his musical drama. Yet this position fails to take into account the fact that Arteaga's vision of melodramma is limited by his neo-classical adherence to the concept of art as imitation, and of music as an imitative art. It is this latter concept that keeps him from appreciating Gluck's reform-opera. Allorto writes that in the Rivoluzioni Arteaga cites many French writers and theorists, among whom

he prefers Grimm and Rousseau, supporters of Italian melodramma, it is true, but also fervent in their dislike of Gluck.[140] Yet Allorto overlooks the fact that the longest quotation from the French to be found in the Rivoluzioni is taken from the writings of the Abbé François Arnaud, known as "le grand pontife des gluckistes", whose most important works were his contributions to the Gluck-Piccinni polemic, always in support of the former.[141]

The final chapter of Arteaga's treatise, entitled "Tentativi di riforma nel melodramma" seems strange and hurried. Arteaga states that the only thing left for him to do is

> il parlare de'mezzi imaginati da alcuni celebri Autori per ricondurre la musica, e la poesia drammatica al grado di perfezione, del quale la filosofia le crede capaci.[142]

This remark is followed by his edition of Arnaud's letter; then, as if realizing that one author does not make "alcuni celebri Autori," Arteaga includes in a final note a short discussion of the plan of reform proposed in 1763 by Dr. John Brown in his Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions of Poetry and Music, a plan which, though it may be suited to the lyric form, does not seem to Arteaga viable for dramatic representation. On the final page of the treatise he writes that the only viable plan of reform is that expressed by Arnaud:

> Il solo che ci sembra convenire è l'indicato dall'autore nel testo, sul quale non mi trattengo, perchè a un di

> presso è il medesimo, che da me fu lungamente proposto nel primo Capitolo del primo Tomo e illustrato in sequito per tutto il corso dell'Opera.[143]

And in fact Arteaga does not dwell on Arnaud's reform plan. However, a closer study of this work shows that while it is close to Arteaga on general lines, it is more traditional and neo-classical in certain respects. One example is the case of the aria, the beauties of which the French author claims to appreciate, yet at the same time counseling composers to speed up the declamation and spend less time on the arias.[144] Furthermore, it is difficult to believe that Arteaga was not aware that this youthful piece of Arnaud's on harmony hardly presented an accurate reflection of the evolution of the thought of "le grand pontife des gluckistes" into his later impassioned defence of Gluck's orchestration.[145]

A summary treatment of Arnaud,[146] together with an inapposite quotation from Brown scarcely constitute the discussion of the opinions of "alcuni celebri Autori." One is left with the distinct impression that Arteaga, having come to the end of a long and detailed study of the nature of melodramma, wished to finish off without more ado. It seems very likely that he found Arnaud's letter in a monumental work with which he was undoubtedly acquainted (J. B. de La Borde's Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne),[147] in which the letter is published in its entirety, and decided to use it as a conclusion to his work. Arteaga, who was neither a dramatist nor a dramatic composer, would have found it an impossible task to draw up a practicable plan of reform for

melodramma. His talent lay in the systematic study of the nature of the genre, in the definition of its structure, and in the formulation of a set of ideal principles which would require the experience of a true artist in order to be put into effect.[148]

Arteaga's contribution to eighteenth-century criticism of opera was to establish the genre in its own right on critical terms. The concept of melodramma as a union of arts to form an harmonious whole was not original to him, but he formulated it in a manner that was more methodical and more cogently argued than previous expositions. Moreover, his work is not a compilation of ideas he found in the European thinkers whose writings he examined assiduously. The system of melodramma that he evolves arises from his own organic resolution of the problems faced, and is therefore his own. Undoubtedly his understanding of the genre was hampered by his narrow comprehension of the expressive powers of harmony and the new advances in orchestration. But, as a figure of transition, it was natural that Arteaga should be imbued with characteristics of both the period that was drawing to a close, typified by his neo-classical view of art, its organic harmony, its effects on the audience, and of the pre-romantic spirit which we encounter in his fascination with the lyric qualities of melodramma, his justification of the aria, his emphasis on the emotions. He best characterizes himself in his peroration to Music in the third volume of the Rivoluzioni:

Allorchè vado al teatro per tributarti un omaggio

d'adorazione, io porto meco la non ignobil superbia d'esser uom ragionevole, e di voler conservare fin nell'esercizio della mia sensibilità i privilegj della mia natura.[149]

CONCLUSION

On October 28th, 1942, amid scenes of extraordinary enthusiasm, the Munich State Opera staged the first performance of a new work entitled Capriccio. The composer, the octogenarian Richard Strauss, referred to it as "the best winding up of [his] theatrical life-work" and his "testament."[1] Drawing its inspiration in part from the Casti-Salieri opera of 1786, Prima la musica e poi le parole, Strauss' Capriccio is a musical "dramatic paraphrase"[2] of the question which had exercised his mind as much as it had those of so many eighteenth-century critics--what is the relative importance of words and music in opera? The witty libretto, whose composition Strauss supervised very carefully, is matched by a captivating musical score, and examines in dramatic form the two sides of the critical coin which the eighteenth century had placed in circulation. Significantly, and quite deliberately, the opera ends without offering any solution to the problem, because Strauss in all probability realized that no universally satisfying final statement could be made. Yet the very fact that Capriccio was written at all, together with the obvious pains that Strauss took over the composition of both the score and the libretto, serves to illustrate the importance of the relationship between word and music as a critical problem, even after the general abandonment of

eighteenth-century positions during the romantic period and later. One has only to think of the operas of Richard Wagner and Alban Berg to realize that even in the post-romantic period the question was not simply a matter of aesthetic speculation, but involved considerations of a practical nature in the composition of opera.

It is probably not too great an exaggeration to say that the relationship between poetry and music is a constant preoccupation of the Western critical tradition. If, like some modern students of the origins of European lyric poetry, we accept as valid the analogy, implicit in Sir Maurice Bowra's Primitive Song, between the poetry of palaeolithic societies that still survive in the modern world, and that of the Stone Age peoples of pre-historic Europe, we are bound to conclude that questions concerning the interrelation of poetry, music and dance in some form of dramatic or mimetic representation had already been tackled, in a practical sense at least, long before Plato and Aristotle laid the foundations of European literary criticism. The anthropological approach shows that primitive poetry is originally an element in a ritual activity in which words, music and movement present a single unity whose function is essentially dramatic, "the first, faint beginnings of the theatre," as Bowra observes.[3] Primitive man also possesses a clear perception of song as an artistic medium used to express something above the ordinary, and at times as something involving an inspiration which is often attributed to divine or supernatural intervention.[4]

This awareness of the ritual or liturgical origins of drama and song, as well as their mimetic nature, is certainly present in Aristotle,[5] and the concept of the "divine frenzy" of the song-maker or poet is perpetuated by Plato, thus becoming a legitimate part of Renaissance and Enlightenment critical terminology.

The continued critical attention paid to the relationship between poetry and music, as well as to the nature of their interaction and participation in drama, is due in part to the impact of Platonic, and in particular, of Aristotelian criticism upon the intellectual tradition of Europe. It must also be attributable to the fact that the critical problems connected with poetry, music and drama are part and parcel of a universal phenomenon experienced by all societies at certain stages of their evolution, and subsequently refined and redefined from age to age. We have deliberately avoided any reference to poetry and music in the Middle Ages because of the highly technical and controversial discussions that this would involve. It is clear, nevertheless, that many medieval treatises on "Musica" contain a considerable amount of poetic theory, and hence an implicit understanding that music is intimately connected with a poetic text.[6] As we have seen, the question assumes particular importance once again in the middle of the sixteenth century, and the Renaissance speculations on the relative position of words and music in song and drama form the critical basis for subsequent literary discussions of the problem

by eighteenth-century critics.

One may pose the very legitimate question of why the relationship between music and poetry loomed so large, and attracted the attention of so many writers and critics during the eighteenth century. On a purely practical level, the eighteenth-century fascination with the problem is due to the dynamic and dominant presence of melodramma as the principal theatrical form of the age. In critical terms, this fascination is motivated by the new modes of thought that led to the intellectual ferment of Enlightenment Europe. Certain intellectual trends may be singled out as being particularly important. The first part of the century is characterized by a reaction against the excesses of baroque expression, and by the insistence on the classical principle of imitation as the basis of all art. The adoption of the analytical methods of the rationalist school leads to the study of the arts broken down into individual genres, an examination of their history and nature, from which process the science of aesthetics develops.

The notion that all art is based on some form of mimetic function runs into serious difficulties when the study of artistic genres turns its attention to music. In fact, the principle of imitation as the ultimate foundation of all arts begins to lose its vigour and appeal precisely because of the difficulties inherent in defining the way in which music is mimetic. One solution was to characterize music as an imprecise form of imitation which required the

assistance of words--poetry--to clarify its meaning. Such a view ensured melodramma of immediate and prolonged attention, especially from a literary perspective, critics perceiving a need to define and delimit the nature and extent of this union of two arts.

The study of artistic genres in eighteenth-century Italy is closely related to the neo-Aristotelian view that tragedy is the supreme form of poetry. Such a notion was coupled with the awareness that Italy was very poor in tragedy, and attempts to explain this phenomenon cite melodramma as the culprit. This, in consequence, led to further research into the nature of melodramma and of its relation to tragedy. Whatever the outcome of such investigations, the question of the function and association of poetry and music in melodramma had to be taken into account. Thus more material was contributed to the vast body of critical writings on the subject. Indeed, it is probably true to say that virtually all eighteenth-century Italian literati touch upon the problem of melodramma to a greater or lesser extent.[7]

We have emphasized that eighteenth-century critical interest in melodramma was predominantly literary. The critics of the day regarded it essentially as a poetic mode bearing some relationship, either legitimate or spurious, to tragedy, and hence falling quite clearly within the purview of literary criticism. The different approaches to the problems of melodramma, and the solutions they propose, reflect inevitably the diverse critical trends of the eighteenth

century. In Muratori and Gravina, for example, melodramma is viewed from the standpoint of the philological and erudite interests of Arcadia, and is thus one element in the systematic reappraisal of literature carried out by the Arcadian school. It also comes under scrutiny at the beginning of the century in the polemics occasioned by the Orsi-Bouhours controversy concerning the relative merits of French and Italian literature, and forms part of the discussions deriving from the querelle des anciens et des modernes. We may summarize briefly the other critical preoccupations which are reflected in eighteenth-century studies of melodramma: the attempts to define the nature or essence of poetry, and the function of art for the individual and in society; the debates on the concepts of imitation and verisimilitude; the discussions of the rôle of imagination and intellect, of reason and emotion, in artistic creation. The study and classification of literary genres, and the concern with organic harmony in a work of art, is of particular relevance in the criticism of melodramma because of the hybrid nature of the form and the difficulty of reconciling the diverse artistic claims and functions of its component parts. The question of the imitation of ancient models, the observance of poetic precepts, such as the dramatic unities, and the principles of decorum and good taste are also important considerations in the study of an artistic form which is regarded by many critics as the monstrous offspring of aberrant baroque sensibility. The polemics on language and rhyme carried out

in the general context of eighteenth-century Italian literary criticism have a certain resonance in the specific context of melodramma, as do the discussions on the mediums of art, especially in so far as such discussions treat the relationship between music and poetry. Finally, the criticism and study of melodramma forms part of the plans and movements for literary reform in eighteenth-century Italy.

If the various preoccupations of eighteenth-century literary criticism can be identified in discussions of melodramma, so too can the shifts in literary sensibility which take place as the century progresses. The classically inspired ideals of simplicity, clarity, decorum, organic unity, and verisimilitude, championed in the early part of the century by such critics as Crescimbeni, Muratori and Maffei, led to a rejection of melodramma as a worthwhile literary pursuit, largely because of its continuing identification with baroque excesses. The gradual movement away from a strictly rationalistic approach to art, coupled with the growing emphasis on the importance of imagination and the appeal to the senses and emotions leads ultimately to an acceptance of the form and smooths the way for the development of romantic opera. However, this acceptance is tempered by the realization that melodramma is still beset by many imperfections and is in need of reform. This point of view is particularly in evidence in the work of Algarotti and Calzabigi. The changing attitude towards melodramma in the eighteenth century closely parallels the inexorable progression away from aesthetic

principles based on the classical tradition towards a pre-romantic sensibility, and leads to Arteaga's praise of the genre precisely because of its appeal to sentiment and feeling.

Arteaga's attitude towards melodramma, though still resting on a neo-classical foundation, anticipates the romantic position on opera, and is thus a significant departure in many respects from the critical standpoints adopted at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Bettinelli, on the other hand, with his rejection of melodramma, represents a return to those early positions. It would be a mistake, nevertheless, to regard Bettinelli's attitude as evidence that the critical trajectory we have plotted from the Classicism of Arcadia to the pre-Romanticism of Arteaga had in fact come full circle. Bettinelli's reactionary stance, though apparently based on a sincere belief in the neo-classical view of art, is in many ways out of step with the critical currents of the late eighteenth century in so far as musical drama is concerned. What his writings on the subject do show, nevertheless, is that in spite of the vast body of criticism accumulated during the century, on the eve of the Romantic Revolution melodramma in practice was still prey to the abuses that Muratori and Marcello decried.

Giazotto concludes that the intellectual and literary energies expended during the Age of Criticism, either towards the suppression of melodramma in favour of spoken tragedy, or towards raising the literary standards of musical drama, failed to bring about a significant and lasting reform. He

also conjectures that the failure was due to the lack of any unifying element in eighteenth-century criticism of melodramma which could have permitted the formation of a coherent plan of reconstruction. The discussions, he adds, remained at the purely polemical level.[8] They were more concerned with analyzing problems than with formulating concrete solutions. This conclusion must be challenged on a number of counts. There were, in fact, several practical attempts to reform melodramma during the course of the eighteenth century. Zeno sought to raise the quality of opera by writing libretti that were more literate than those of his contemporaries. The enterprise of Parma, under the guiding force of the minister Du Tillot, endeavoured to create a new musical drama modelled after the French tragédie lyrique. Metastasio, by perfecting his libretti, succeeded in legitimizing melodramma as an artistic form, and in dominating the eighteenth-century stage. The collaboration between Calzabigi and Gluck certainly resulted in an opera of greater dramatic intensity than those which had gone before.

All these attempts at reform, together with the eighteenth-century critical writings on melodramma, do indeed share common elements which are the literary conception of music, the neo-classical preoccupation with organic structure in art, and the ideal of a literate and unified theatre purged of the excesses of spectacle and gratuitous musical embellishment. Even Arteaga, for all his foreshadowing of romantic sensibility, sought a neo-classical measure and harmony in

the various components of opera.

We must also reject Giazotto's claim that the critical writings on melodramma were isolated, individual units. On the contrary, we have presented sufficient evidence to show that the works were studied, digested and refined by other critics, so that there was a considerable interpenetration of ideas. Gravina, with his belief in the nobility of the tragic mode, his conviction that words and music were intimately associated in ancient Greek tragedy, and his readiness to tolerate new art forms, laid the groundwork for Metastasio's attempts at reform. Algarotti assimilated Metastasian ideals into his own system of melodramma, and his Saggio sopra l'opera in musica contributed to the legitimization and general acceptance of opera as a theatrical form. In practical terms, Zeno sought to incorporate Muratori's ideals into his dramas, and Gluck's endeavours to raise the dramatic force of melodramma were based on ideals held by such men as Algarotti and Calzabigi.

Quite clearly, therefore, the reasons cited by Giazotto for his belief in the overall failure of eighteenth-century criticism to effect a definite reform of melodramma will not do. If we are to talk of failure at all, it would be more appropriate to attribute it to the fact that the aristocratic or elitist position inherent in the neo-classical view of art did not predispose the critics to an appreciation of the essentially popular nature of Italian melodramma whose main appeal was to be found in the non-literary and irrational

elements of music and spectacle. More specifically, it could be argued that the critics' insistence on the literary element of melodramma to the detriment or exclusion of the musical accompaniment prevented them from reaching a full awareness of the nature of opera--at least as the Romantics came to understand it. Martello and Arteaga certainly revealed some valuable insights in this regard, but they did not press them far enough. Arteaga, though clearly aware of the dominant rôle of music in melodramma, nevertheless underestimated the extent of its expressive powers. Recognizing melodramma as a new genre not subject to the precepts governing tragedy, he still held to an essentially literary concept of music. Though in many respects the most perceptive of the critics examined in this study, he shares with the others the reluctance to acknowledge or recognize the strength of the current that was to draw melodramma inexorably towards its musical apotheosis in the nineteenth century. Yet we cannot find fault with Arteaga and his predecessors simply because they were the products of a neo-classical and rationalist century rather than a romantic one. Their apparent lack of prescience or practical application does not diminish their importance as part of a critical tradition. As commentators on their age, they furnish invaluable perspectives on the principal theatrical form of the time, and provide an excellent illustration of the changing intellectual currents and critical movements of eighteenth-century Italy.

The exploration of eighteenth-century Italian criticism

of melodramma attempted in this dissertation represents just one of the many lines of investigation related to the opera of that period. During the course of the study, the vast ramifications of the subject became abundantly clear, and it may be appropriate in these concluding remarks to indicate further avenues of research that could be followed with profit. One of the most promising pathways leading to a fuller comprehension of the dominant theatrical genre and social divertissement of the eighteenth century would be a detailed study of the copious body of melodrammi in the light of the critical theories examined in this dissertation. The critics under discussion did not merely write about opera. Many of them confessed to attending the musical theatre assiduously, notwithstanding their intellectual reservations about its merits, and some were involved with actual performances, either as librettists or as non-professional impresarios. We must presume that the theatrical practices they observed had some effect on their intellectual perception of opera, and that they contributed in some way to the formation of their aesthetics. The interplay of the authority of literary precept and the observation of reality in the development of critical attitudes towards melodramma in the eighteenth century would furnish material for an interesting study which might shed some light on the effect that such attitudes had on the musical theatre of the day.

Students of literature have paid but scant attention to opera libretti. Yet although modern criticism

regards opera as a musical genre, a study of the eighteenth-century libretto as a literary phenomenon is fully justified by the fact that it was regarded as such by the critics of the time. This is not to deny the obvious truth that, for a full artistic appreciation, we must study operatic libretti in conjunction with their musical accompaniment. But while this remark holds true for nineteenth-century operas which survive as artistic entities in their original setting, it cannot be applied with equal validity to the melodramma of the previous era. Though the operas of Gluck and Mozart are notable exceptions, it is nevertheless a general truth that the libretti composed during the Age of Reason were regarded as dramas in their own right, and that furthermore they had no unique musical setting with which they have become inextricably linked and identified. The librettists and critics were fully aware of this fact.

An appropriate subject for further study would be the relationship between melodramma and its audience, and the extent to which the paying public was responsible for theatrical taste. Such a study might provide valuable insights into the belief expressed by Algarotti and Calzabigi that a reformed musical theatre could only develop in the court theatres of enlightened despots; that is, before an educated and sophisticated audience. The sociology of theatre is vital for a comprehension of melodramma in all its historical dimensions, and would take into consideration not only the factors mentioned above, but also the part played by the

makers of melodramma--librettists, musicians, actor-singers and impresarios--in the perpetuation of a popular theatrical form.

The field of literary criticism also suggests fruitful lines of inquiry and comparison. Criticism of opera in the eighteenth century was by no means limited to Italy, and a study of English and French writings on the subject would yield valuable contributions to our knowledge of the international exchange of ideas in Enlightenment Europe. The precise legacy of the baroque in eighteenth-century melodramma must also be studied in detail before we can determine the extent to which the "baroque excesses" were successfully extirpated, and before we can identify accurately the elements that romantic opera inherits from the eighteenth century.

There are possibilities for further research in more specific areas. A new study of Metastasio should pay closer attention to his theoretical writings, and a re-examination of his melodrammi in the light of his theories could lead to a greater appreciation of the art of the foremost Italian lyric poet of the eighteenth century. A more profound examination of the impact of French thought on Calzabigi may provide new insights into his relationship with Gluck. In similar vein, there is room for speculation and research on the possible effects of Martello's sojourn in Paris and contact with French opera on the attitude towards melodramma expressed in his Dialogo sopra la tragedia antica e moderna. One could investigate the consequences that Goldoni's engagement

at Parma may have held for his libretti, if not for his entire theatrical output. There is also the vast field of comic opera to explore, and its relationship to the development of *opera seria*.

A detailed study of the libretti of Paolo Rolli would probably yield much information concerning his exact contribution to the reformation of baroque excesses in the musical theatre. Indeed, the history of Italian opera in England should prove to be a fertile field for research, as it has been relatively unexplored. The colourful operatic world of eighteenth-century London is fascinating in itself, but to connect it more specifically with the critical themes examined in this dissertation, one could attempt to analyze the effects on Italian *melodramma* of the early bilingual performances in England, and of the later efforts by librettists and impresarios to attract and maintain the attention of an audience not versed in Italian. Such an audience must have been much more affected by the virtuosity of the principal singers than its Italian counterpart. Finally, we can suggest that in the study of eighteenth-century opera, the musicologist may find it fruitful to take into greater consideration the literary milieux of the time, for the criticism and theories of *melodramma* come from the *literati* rather than from musicians.

It is quite clear, therefore, that the *melodramma* of the eighteenth century provides a rich mine of material for scholarly research. Yet the lode has not been worked exten-

sively for the simple reason that the musicologist in general lacks the literary background that would enable him to speak with authority on the libretto. By the same token, students of literature tend to lack the musical knowledge required for a correct appraisal of the score. This dissertation has not intended to trespass on the musicologist's preserves by investigating the musical aspect of melodramma. Rather, it has endeavoured to bring the critical and theoretical writings on eighteenth century opera into the mainstream of literary investigation. It demonstrates that these writings are definitely not isolated from the broader intellectual currents of the time, and suggests that they should be taken into account in any historical perspective of Italian literary criticism. It is also the first systematic study of these theories both as individual contributions, as well as part of the critical tradition of the eighteenth century.

Wherever possible in the study of the individual critics, we have endeavoured to see their writings on melodramma in relation to their other critical or theoretical works in order to provide a sounder understanding of the intellectual bases for their views on opera. Among these critics, Martello deserves to be singled out for his perception, early in the eighteenth century, of the inherently musical character of melodramma. Muratori, too, emerges as an important figure. His catalogue of the abuses perpetrated by melodramma became a commonplace of later criticism, and his ideals may have played a part in inciting Zeno and Metastasio

to their attempts at operatic reform. Muratori's emphasis on the rôle of imagination in art undoubtedly contributed to the creation of a critical ambience favourable to an art form that, by its very improbability, made unreasonable demands on an audience's suspension of disbelief.

If we may turn our attention to Metastasio once again, it has long been recognized that he occupies a central position in the history of eighteenth-century Italian poetry. He must also be recognized as a pivotal figure in eighteenth-century criticism of opera. His theoretical writings are the justification of his own melodrammi and of the genre itself, but they also reveal another aspect of the Imperial Poet which modern scholars have not fully appreciated: his stature as a critic in his own right. Equally worthy of consideration is Stefano Arteagà's monumental Rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano. Arteaga's critical position provides not only a synthesis of the various currents of eighteenth-century thought, and in particular the neo-classical ideals of clarity, rationality, harmony and ideal beauty, but also a clear presage of the romantic fascination with music, spectacle and the overriding power of the emotions.

There are now signs that scholarship is beginning to realize the importance of opera as part of the total literary heritage of the western world. A recent collection of critical essays by Luigi Baldacci (known chiefly for his work on the Petrarchan lyric of the sixteenth century) devotes half of its contents to a study of nineteenth-century opera

libretti, and deals, among other things, with the relationship between text and musical score. In the prefatory remarks to the collection, the libretti are described as precious documents of a national and popular culture that achieved its unity and high quality during the romantic period.[9] In their own way, the libretti of the previous century also stand as documents of Italian culture. Together with the body of critical literature directed towards them by the intellectuals of the day, they are as valid and rewarding an object of study as the products of the romantic age.

NOTES

Notes to the Introduction

[1]I am indebted for much of this introductory chapter to the kindness of Dr. Danilo Aguzzi-Barbagli who has allowed me to consult the typescript of three of his forthcoming articles entitled: "Literary Components in the Cultural Background of the Camerata de'Bardi"; "Patrizi as a Musicologist"; and "Giacinto Andrea Cicognini and His Contribution to Baroque Theatre." These articles, together with material presented in seminars at the Folger Shakespeare Library and at the University of Washington, will shed much new light on the intellectual and aesthetic background to the development of Italian opera.

[2]In ancient Greece this problem was discussed by such students of musical theory as Aristoxenus in his Elements of Harmony, Aristides Quintilianus in his De musica, and even Plutarch in his more popular De musica.

[3]See, for instance, Republic 398 d ff; 399 e ff; and Ion, 530 b ff; 533 e ff.

[4]Timaeus, 28 a-b; Phaedrus, 248 d. For a discussion of the problem of music in Plato, see Evanghélos Moutsopoulos, La Musique dans l'oeuvre de Platon (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), esp. pp. 78, 306, 312.

[5]The basic aspect of Aristotle's approach to the study of music is well illustrated in the Problems, specifically in Book XIX. On the Musical Problems, see F. A. Gevaert J. C. Vollgraf, eds., Les Problèmes musicaux d'Aristote (Gand: Hoste, 1903).

[6]Politics, 1339 a-1342 b.

[7]Poetics, 1447 b, trans. Ingram Bywater, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), p. 1456. Aristotle expressed the same opinion in the Problems where he deals with nomes and dithyrambs: "The music, then, conformed to the imitation in the same way as the words and continually varied. In fact it was necessary to imitate by the tune even more than by the words" (Problems, 918 b, trans. W. B. Hett, Loeb Classical Library [London: Heinemann, 1953], I, 387).

[8]Poetics, 1450 a-b, trans. Bywater, pp. 1461-62.

[9]The Camerata fiorentina (or de'Bardi) was formed by a group of theorists, musicians and poets, among whom were Giovanni de'Bardi, Jacopo Corsi, Vincenzo Galilei, Giulio Caccini, Jacopo Peri. They met in Florence to discuss music, poetry and the theatre, and are generally regarded as the founders

of opera. See Le origini del melodramma, ed. Angelo Solerti (1903; rpt. Bologna: Forni, 1969); and Solerti, Gli albori del melodramma, 3 vols. (1904; rpt. Hildesheim: Olms, 1969); and Musica, ballo e drammatica alla Corte Medicea dal 1600 al 1637 (1905; rpt. New York: Blom, 1968); Gino Roncaglia, La rivoluzione musicale italiana (sec. XVII) (Milano: Bolla, 1928); Fabio Fano, ed., La Camerata fiorentina: Vincenzo Galilei, Istituzioni e monumenti dell'arte musicale italiana, 4 (Milano: Ricordi, 1934); Henriette Martin, "La 'Camerata' du Comte Bardi et la musique florentine du XVI^e siècle," Revue de musicologie, 13 (1932), 63-74, 153-61, 227-34; and 14 (1933), 92-100, 141-51; Nino Pirrotta, "Tragédie et comédie dans la Camerata fiorentina," in Musique et poésie au XVI^e siècle, Colloques internationaux, Sciences humaines, 5 (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1954), pp. 287-97; and "Temperaments and Tendencies in the Florentine Camerata," trans. Nigel Fortune, Musical Quarterly, 40 (1954), 169-89; Massimo Mila, "La nascita del melodramma," Rivista musicale italiana, 56 (1954), 307-25; Luigi Ronga, "La nascita del melodramma dallo spirito della poesia," in Arte e gusto nella musica (Milano: Ricciardi, 1956), pp. 53-74, also published in Teatro del Seicento, ed. Luigi Fassò (Milano: Ricciardi, 1956), pp. xxxvii-lii; Howard M. Brown, "How Opera Began: An Introduction to Jacopo Peri's Euridice," in The Late Italian Renaissance, ed. Eric Cochrane (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 401-43.

[10]"Music and Learning in the Early Italian Renaissance," Journal of Renaissance and Baroque Music, 1 (1947), 255-74.

[11]Howard M. Brown, "How Opera Began," p. 404. For a comprehensive study of research into Greek music during the Renaissance, see Edward E. Lowinsky, "Music of the Renaissance as viewed by Renaissance Musicians," in The Renaissance Image of Man and the World, ed. Bernard O'Kelly ([Columbus]: Ohio State University Press, 1966), pp. 129-77; D. P. Walker, "Musical Humanism in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries," Music Review, 2 (1941), 1-13, 111-21, 220-27, 288-308; and 3 (1942), 55-71. One of the main problems faced by early Renaissance theorists of music was their ignorance of Greek. The first musician to know Greek was the Swiss Heinrich Glareanus, whose Dodecachordon was published in 1547.

[12]Robortello, In librum Aristotelis De Arte poetica explicationes (Florentiae, 1548; rpt. München: Fink, 1968); Vincenzo Maggi and Bartolomeo Lombardi, In Aristotelis librum de poetica communes explanationes (Venetijs, 1550; rpt. München: Fink, 1969); Vettori, Commentarii in primum librum Aristotelis de Arte poetarum (Florentiae, 1560; rpt. München: Fink, 1967). For a detailed study of these commentaries, see Bernard Weinberg, A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); Baxter Hathaway, The Age of Criticism: The Late Renaissance in Italy (1962; rpt. Westport: Greenwood

Press, 1972). For a study of the Latin commentaries by Robortello, Maggi-Lombardi and Vettori as "points of departure for both the Aristotelian critical treatises, and the minor commentaries," see Danilo Aguzzi-Barbagli, "Ingegno, acutezza and meraviglia in the Sixteenth-Century Great Commentaries to Aristotle's Poetics," in Petrarch to Pirandello: Studies in Honor of B. Corrigan, ed. J. A. Molinaro (Toronto: University Press, 1973), p. 74.

[13]Lodovico Castelvetro, Poetica d'Aristotile vulgarizzata, et sposta (Vienna, 1570; rpt. München: Fink, 1968); Annotationi di M. Alessandro Piccolomini, nel libro della Poetica d'Aristotele; con la traduttione del medesimo libro, in lingua volgare (Vinegia, 1575).

[14]Vicentino, L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica (Roma, 1555; rpt. ed. Edward E. Lowinsky, Basel: Bärenreiter, 1959); Zarlino, Le istitutioni harmoniche (Venetia, 1558; rpt. New York: Broude, 1965); Vincenzo Galilei, Dialogo della musica antica et della moderna (Fiorenza, 1581; rpt. New York: Broude, 1967).

[15]Kristeller, "Music and Learning," p. 274. The validity of Kristeller's suggestions has been supported recently by Ronga: "Ecco presentarsi una situazione insolita nella creazione del fatto artistico: i musicisti che realizzano questa impresa innovatrice sono preceduti da innumerevoli discussioni tecniche e teoriche, storiche ed estetiche, che davvero sembrano togliere alla loro azione quel carattere rivoluzionario di cui tanto si gloriano e ad essa conferire piuttosto il significato di conclusione di un non breve processo storico." He mentions rapidly efforts to clarify "i rapporti, adesioni o contrasti che siano, tra il pensiero umanistico e rinascimentale e le musiche cinquecentesche," but is forced to recognize the incompleteness of these efforts: "forse è ancora maggiore il desiderio che la realtà di una più aderente e concreta visione storica" ("La nascita del melodramma dallo spirito della poesia," in Teatro del Seicento, p. xxxix).

[16]Fausto Torrefranca, "Opera," Enciclopedia dello spettacolo, VII (1960), col. 1339.

[17]Republic, 398 d.

[18]Solerti, Gli albori, I, 38; Torrefranca, "Opera," col. 1339; Lowinsky, "Music in the Culture of the Renaissance," in Renaissance Essays from the Journal of the History of Ideas (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 337-81; Egert Pöhlmann, "Antikenverständnis und Antikenmissverständnis in der Opern-theorie der Florentiner Camerata," Die Musikforschung, 22 (1969), 5-13.

[19]The quotation is from the Preface to the first edition of Le nuove musiche, published in Solerti, Le origini, pp. 61-62.

[20]Gagliano's score was printed in 1608. The preface is published in Solerti, Le origini, pp. 78-89, and in Gli albori, II, 67-73.

[21]In a letter dated 22 October 1633, Monteverdi referred to a theoretical treatise he was planning to write. The treatise was to be entitled Melodia, ovvero pratica musicale, and was to be divided into three parts. In the first, he proposed to discuss the oratione, the significance and the qualities of poetry; in the second he intended to deal with harmony, and in the third with rhythm. The work was never completed, or at least has not come down to us. The letter, to an anonymous recipient, is published in Henry Prunières, Monteverdi: His Life and Work, trans. Marie D. Mackie (London: Dent, 1926), p. 285. Prunières suggests that the recipient was Giovanni Battista Doni. On the treatise planned by Monteverdi, see Leo Schrade, Monteverdi: Creator of Modern Music (New York: Norton, 1950), p. 205 ff; Gian Francesco Malipiero, Claudio Monteverdi (Milano: Treves, 1929), p. 293.

[22]Zarlino claims that the Greeks, at the beginning of their literature, "havevano medesimamente per costume, di rappresentare le Tragedie, e le Comedie loro cantando" (Le istitutioni harmoniche, pp. 62-63).

[23]Galilei, p. 145; Patrizi, Della poetica, ed. Danilo Aguzzi-Barbagli (Firenze: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 1969), I, 328-33.

[24]In the preface to his Euridice, Rinuccini wrote: "E stata l'openione di molti, Cristianissima Regina, che gli antichi Greci e Romani cantassero su le scene le tragedie intere." In his preface to the same edition, Peri repeats Rinuccini's statement: "[S]timai che gli antichi Greci e Romani, (i quali secondo l'opinione di molti cantavano su le secene le tragedie intere) usassero una armonia" (Prefaces to Euridice, ed. Solerti, in Gli albori, II, 107 and 109). In the preface to Dafne, Gagliano mentioned in passing Rinuccini's participation in the discussions "intorno alla maniera usata dagli antichi in rappresentare le lor tragedie, come introducevano i cori, se usavano il canto e di che sorte, e cose simili" (ed. Solerti, in Gli albori, II, 68).

[25]Euridice, ed. Solerti, in Gli albori, II, 107.

[26]"Tragédie et comédie," p. 294. Analogous conclusions are reached in the article by Donella Giacotti, "Il recupero della tragedia antica a Firenze e la Camerata de'Bardi," Contributi dell'Istituto di Filologia Moderna, Pubblicazioni dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 3ª serie: Storia del Teatro, 1 (Milano: Vita e pensiero, 1968), pp. 94-132.

[27]The long polemic is described in detail in Ch. XXI of

Weinberg, History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance, II, 1074-1105.

[28]On the theatres in Venice since the Renaissance, see Nicola Mangini, I teatri di Venezia (Milano: Mursia, 1974). On the seventeenth-century opera in general, see Hugo Goldschmidt, Studien zur Geschichte der italienischen Oper im 17. Jahrhundert (1901; rpt. Hildesheim: Olms, 1967); Ulderico Rolandi, Il libretto per musica attraverso i tempi (Roma: Ateneo, 1951), pp. 50-64; Simon Towneley Worsthorne, Venetian Opera in the Seventeenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954); Hellmuth Christian Wolff, "Die Musik im alten Venedig," in Festschrift Heinrich Besseler zum sechzigsten Geburtstag (Leipzig: VEB, 1961), pp. 291-303; Andrea Della Corte and Guido Pannain, Storia della musica (Torino: U.T.E.T., 1964), I, 433-544; Donald J. Grout, A Short History of Opera (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), I, 43-100; Reinhard G. Pauly, Music and the Theatre: An Introduction to Opera (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 51-77; Studi sul teatro veneto fra Rinascimento ed età barocca, ed. Maria Teresa Muraro (Firenze: Olschki, 1971); Venezia e il melodramma nel Seicento, ed. Muraro (Firenze: Olschki, 1976).

[29]On this subject, see Anna Amalie Abert, "Schauspiel und Opernlibretto im italienischen Barock," Die Musikforschung, 2 (1949), 133-41; Worsthorne, Venetian Opera, pp. 1-17; Wolff, "Das Opernpublikum der Barockzeit," in Festschrift Hans Engel zum siebzigsten Geburtstag (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1964), pp. 442-52; Massimo Bogianckino, Aspetti del teatro musicale in Italia e in Francia nell'età barocca (Roma: De Santis, 1967); William W. Austin, ed., New Looks at Italian Opera: Essays in Honor of Donald J. Grout (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968).

[30]A complete and satisfactory evaluation of the contributions of Cicognini (1606-1660) to the evolution of seventeenth-century Italian theatre has still to be made. The bibliography on this author is limited. On Cicognini, see Francesco Saverio Quadrio, Della storia e della ragione d'ogni poesia, I (Bologna: Pisarri, 1739), part I, t. IV, 113-14; Carlo Gozzi, Ragionamento ingenuo e storia sincera dell'origine delle mie dieci fiabe teatrali (1722; rpt. in Opere: Teatro e polemiche teatrali, ed. Giuseppe Petronio [Milano: Rizzoli, 1962]), pp. 1074-75; Julius Leopold Klein, Geschichte des italienischen Drama's, Vol. V of Geschichte des Drama's (Leipzig: Weigl, 1867), pp. 666-719; Alberto Lisoni, Un famoso commediografo dimenticato: G. A. Cicognini (Parma: Ferrari e Pellegrini, 1896), G. Gendarme de Bévotte, Le Festin de pierre avant Moliere (Paris: Cornély, 1907), pp. 359-69; Ludwig Grashey, Giacinto Andrea Cicogninis Leben und Werke (Leipzig: Böhme, 1909); Rosario Verde, G. A. Cicognini, Studi sull'imitazione spagnuola nel teatro italiano del Seicento, 1 (Catania: Gianotta, 1912);

Benedetto Croce, "Intorno a Giacinto Andrea Cicognini e al 'Convitato di Pietra,'" in Aneddoti di varia letteratura, II (Bari: Laterza, 1953), 116-33; Federico Doglio, ed. Il teatro tragico italiano (1960; rpt. Parma: Guanda, 1972), pp. cv-cix (the 1960 edition contains the text of Cicognini's drama Tradimento per l'onore); Anna Maria Crinó, "Documenti inediti sulla vita e l'opera di Jacopo e di Giacinto Andrea Cicognini," Studi secenteschi, 2 (1961), 255-86; William C. Holmes, "Giacinto Andrea Cicognini's and Antonio Cesti's Orontea (1649)," in New Looks at Italian Opera, pp. 108-32. Histories of literature devote only a few brief paragraphs and textual quotations to the playwright. See, for example, Carmine Jannaco and Martino Capucci, Il Seicento (Milano: Vallardi, 1963), 33-34; Claudio Varese, "Teatro," in Il Seicento, vol. V of Storia della letteratura italiana (Milano: Garzanti, 1967), 552-54 and 559-60; Franca Angelini, "Poesia e letteratura tragica," in Il Seicento, vol. V:2 of La letteratura italiana: Storia e testi (Bari: Laterza, 1974), 213-19. For bibliographical information on the works of Cicognini, see Suzanne P. Michel and Paul-Henri Michel, Répertoire des ouvrages imprimés en langue italienne au XVII^{e} siècle conservés dans les bibliothèques de France, II (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1967), 98-104; Sandra Piantanida, Autori italiani del Seicento: Catalogo bibliografico (Milano: Libreria Vinciana, 1948-51); Louise George Clubb, Italian Plays (1500-1700) in the Folger Library (Firenze: Olschki, 1968), pp. 76-79; Holmes, "G. A. Cicognini's . . . Orontea," pp. 113-17.

[31]The deliberate violation of the unities of time and place, intended to foster the spectacular appeal of the performance, is already evident from the list of the scene (stage settings) and machine (machines) listed in the Preface of the edition of Giasone (Venezia: Giuliani, 1650) consulted by Aguzzi-Barbagli in the Folger Shakespeare Library. (It should be noted that there are several editions of this musical drama. Following the custom of the time, they contain certain textual variations which reflect the alterations made for different performances.) Aguzzi-Barbagli reproduces the list as an example of the complexity of the staging in seventeenth-century Italian opera:

Scene

Mar placido, con horrida
Florida, con palazzo
Cortile Reggio
Boscareccia con capanne su la foce dell'Iberro
Imfernale [sic]
Isola con porto di Mare e Castello incantato
Mare borrascoso [sic] e oscurita di Cielo
Nave d'Argo col vello d'oro nella foce dell'Iberro

Machine

Carro del Sole
Nettuno in mare sopra d'una Conchiglia portata da due cavalli marini
Amore con varii e diversi voli
Carro di Venere
Spirito che vola
Mostri e precipizii

Perhaps the most elaborate and spectacular presentation of an opera in the seventeenth century was the performance of Il pomo d'oro, libretto by Francesco Sbarra and music by Antonio Cesti. Il pomo d'oro was presented in an open-air theatre in Vienna before an audience estimated at 5,000 people to celebrate the marriage of the Emperor Leopold I. The production included twenty-three stage-sets, designed by the famous stage-designer Ludovico Burnacini, together with the use of an extraordinary number of stage machines, and dancers performing ballet numbers in lavish profusion. See Wolff, "Italian Opera from the Later Monteverdi to Scarlatti," in Opera and Church Music (1630-1750), vol. V of New Oxford History of Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 27.

[32]For the general problem of the influence of the commedia dell'arte in the artistic life of the seventeenth century in Italy, see: Roberto Tessari, La commedia dell'arte nel Seicento: 'Industria' e 'arte giocosa' della civiltà barocca (Firenze: Olschki, 1969). It is interesting to note that in this volume the name of Cicognini is mentioned only in passing, and without any great interest. See also the article by Nino Pirrotta, "Commedia dell'arte and Opera," Musical Quarterly, 41 (1955), 305-24. For the contribution of Della Porta to the developments of seventeenth-century comedy, see Louise George Clubb, Giambattista Della Porta Dramatist (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965); and the recent essay "Italian Renaissance Comedy," Genre, 9 (Winter, 1976/77), 469-88.

[33]Giasone, A 4. Quotations from the Giasone are as cited in Aguzzi-Barbagli's article on Cicognini.

[34]See Weinberg, History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance, I, 504-510; and "Castelvetro's Theory of Poetics," in Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern, ed. R. S. Crane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), pp. 349-71.

[35]Robert Freeman remarks that Venetian librettists by the middle of the seventeenth century were complaining in the forewords to their libretti about the bizarre nature of Venetian opera, but that the reader is left with the impression that such complaints "were more in the nature of window

dressing than of serious criticism." The very same librettists perpetuated the excesses they decried ("Opera without Drama: Currents of Change in Italian Opera, 1675 to 1725, and the Roles Played Therein by Zeno, Caldara and Others," Diss. Princeton 1967, I, 2) For the rare instances of published criticism of opera in the seventeenth century, see Freeman's dissertation, I, 2-18.

[36]The Academy did not limit its membership to Italy. Goethe, for example, was elected member in 1778. On the importance of the Academy, see Giuseppe Toffanin, L'eredità del Rinascimento in Arcadia (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1923, revised and published as L'Arcadia, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1958); Mario Fubini, "Arcadia e illuminismo" in Questioni e correnti di storia letteraria, eds. Umberto Bosco et al. (Milano: Marzorati, 1949), pp. 503-595; and Dal Muratori al Baretti, (Bari: Laterza, 1954); Giuseppe L. Moncallero, L'Arcadia (Firenze: Olschki, 1953); Walter Binni, L'Arcadia e il Metastasio (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1963); and Classicismo e neoclassicismo nella letteratura del Settecento (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1963).

[37]On the querelle, see M. Hippolyte Rigault, Histoire de la querelle des anciens et des modernes (Paris: Hachette, 1856); Paul Hazard, La crise de la conscience européenne, 3 vols. (1935; rpt. Paris: Fayard, 1961); René Bray, La formation de la doctrine classique en France (Paris: Nizet, 1951); J[ohn] G[eorge] Robertson, Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge: University Press, 1923); Toffanin, L'eredità, pp. 93-110; and L'Arcadia, p. 5 ff.; Giacinto Margiotta, Le origini italiane della "Querelle des anciens et des modernes" (Roma: Studium, 1953); Hans Baron, "The Querelle of the Ancients and the Moderns as a Problem for Renaissance Scholarship," Journal of the History of Ideas, 20 (1959), 3-22; Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics (I)," Journal of the History of Ideas, 12 (1951), 496-527.

[38][Dominique Bouhours], La manière de bien penser sur les ouvrages de l'esprit (Paris: Chez la veuve de Sebastien Mabré-Cramoisy, 1687). Many editions followed in French, and the work was quickly translated into Latin, Italian and English.

[39]Considerazioni sopra un famoso libro franzese intitolato . . . "La maniera di ben pensare nei componimenti" (Bologna: C. Pisarri, 1703).

[40]The writings of various authors on the Orsi-Bouhours controversy were published in Lettere di diversi autori in proposito delle "Considerazioni" del marchese Giovan Gioseffo Orsi sopra il famoso libro francese initolato "La manière de bien penser" (Bologna, 1707); in Giovanni Giuseppe Orsi,

Considerazioni del Marchese Giovan-Gioseffo Orsi bolognese sopra "La maniera di ben pensare ne'componimenti," 2 vols. (Modena: Soliani, 1735). On the Orsi-Bouhours controversy, see A. Galletti, Le teorie drammatiche e la tragedia in Italia nel secolo XVIII (Cremona: Fezzi, 1901); Toffanin, L'eredità: pp. 59-110; and L'Arcadia, pp. 23-48; Robertson, pp. 1-16; Aldo Andreoli, "Di alcune relazioni intelletuali del Muratori ventenne," Convivium, No. 4-5 (1950), 645-51; Moncallero, pp. 188-235; Fubini, Dal Muratori al Baretti, pp. 143 ff. et passim; and "Vico e Bouhours" in Stile e umanità di Giambattista Vico, (Milano: Ricciardi, 1965), pp. 135-146. On Bouhours, see also Victor M. Hamm, "Father Bouhours and neo-classical criticism," in Jesuit Thinkers of the Renaissance, ed. Gerard Smith (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1939), pp. 63-74.

[41]Mémoires pour l'histoire des sciences et des beaux-arts . . ., published in Trévoux, then Lyons, then Paris from 1701 to 1767, and with variations in name until 1783. On the importance of the journal, see Alfred R. Desautels, Les "Mémoires de Trévoux" et le mouvement de idées au XVIII[e] siècle (Rome: Institutum Historicum, 1956).

[42]For a general study of Crescimbeni (1663-1728), see Giulio Natali, "G. M. Crescimbeni," Atti dell'Accademia degli Arcadi, Roma, 12 (1928); Elena Sala di Felice, Petrarca in Arcadia (Palermo: Palumbo, 1959); Giovanni Getto, Storia delle storie letterarie (Firenze: Sansoni, 1969), pp. 31-42.

[43]The letter, dated 11 September 1711, is published by Luigi Fiorani in "Due lettere inedite del Muratori al Crescimbeni," Studi romani, 19 (1971), 149-50.

[44]Walter Binni, "Il Settecento letterario," in Il Settecento, Vol. VI of Storia della letteratura italiana (Milano: Garzanti, 1968), p. 456; Remo Giazotto, Poesia melodrammatica e pensiero critico nel Settecento (Milano: Bocca, 1952), pp. 17, 20, 21, 34; Freeman, "Opera without Drama," I, 18-31.

[45]L'Istoria della volgar poesia (Roma: Chracas, 1698). Crescimbeni revised this work for the second edition published in 1714. The latter edition was reprinted with annotations by Pier Caterino Zeno and A. F. Seghezzi, 6 vols. in 3 tomes (Venezia: Basegio, 1730-31).

[46]De'comentarj intorno all'Istoria della volgar poesia, 5 vols. in 6 tomes (Roma: de'Rossi, 1702-11). This work was correlated with the corresponding volumes of the 1714 edition of L'Istoria della volgar poesia to form the Venice edition of 1730-31 cited above. The Comentarj were also published in England by T. Mathias (London: Becket, 1813). Quotations in my text are taken from the first edition.

[47]Della bellezza della volgar poesia (Roma: Buagni, 1700). A second edition was published in Rome in 1712.

[48]Freeman, "Opera without Drama," I, 20.

[49]L'Istoria della volgar poesia, 1st ed. (1698), p. 71.

[50]L'Istoria della volgar poesia, 2nd ed. (1714), p. 76. The emphasis is mine.

[51]Della bellezza della volgar poesia, p. 140.

[52]The objections to the degeneration of the language, its subservience to music, and the proliferation of arias, for example, reveal that Crescimbeni held to the Renaissance interpretation of the Platonic concept of mélos. Crescimbeni's opinion of the poetic style suitable to be set to music can be found in his description of musical dramas which he considers to be "lavorati d'un carattere vano, e fanciullesco, che dicono adattato, e proprio per la Musica" (De'comentarj I, 33).

[53]A similar opinion on Cicognini was still held at the end of the century by Stefano Arteaga. In his important treatise Le rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano he wrote: "Il mentovato Cicognini verso la metà del secolo trasferendo al melodramma i difetti soliti allora a commettersi nelle altre poesie drammatiche, accoppiando in uno avvenimenti, e personaggi serj coi ridicoli, interrompendo le scene in prosa colle poetiche strofi, che arie s'appellano, e mischiando squarci di prosa alle scene in verso, confuse tutti gli ordini della poesia, e il melodramma italiano miseramente contaminò. Fù nondimeno tenuto a'suoi tempi per ristorator del teatro: i suoi drammi furono ristampati non poche volte come cose degne di tenersi in gran pregio: i letterati sel proponevano per modello d'imitazione, e le muse anche elleno, le vergini muse concorsero a gara per onorar con inni di laudi chi più d'ogni altro recava loro vergogna ed oltraggio. Tanto è vero, che il giudizio de'contemporanei è poco sicuro per gli autori" (Venezia: Palese, 1785), I, 337-38. Although Goldoni's conclusions were similar, he nevertheless recognized in Cicognini certain theatrical merits. In the first part of his Mémoires, published in 1787, the reformer of Italian theatre wrote: "Parmi les Auteurs comiques que je lisois et que je relisois très-souvent, Cicognini étoit celui que je préférois. Cet Auteur Florentin, très-peu connu dans la République des Lettres, avoit fait plusieurs Comédies d'intrigue, mêlées de pathétique larmoyant et de comique trivial; on y trouvoit cependant beaucoup d'intérêt, et il avoit l'art de ménager la suspension, et de plaire par le dénouement. Je m'y attachai infiniment: je l'étudiai beaucoup" (Mémoires de M. Goldoni, in Tutte le Opere di Carlo Goldoni, ed. Giuseppe Ortolani, I, 1935; rpt. Milano: Mondadori, 1959, p. 13).

[54]De'comentarj, I, 235.

[55]Freeman discusses this judgement of David and Zeno in some detail in his dissertation "Opera without Drama," I, 22-29. After comparing the libretti written by David and Zeno during the 1690's with those of contemporary Venetian librettists, Freeman concludes that Crescimbeni's opinion must have been based on hearsay and not on familiarity with the contemporary Venetian operatic repertory as a whole. Freeman's examination of that repertory discloses that in fact neither David nor Zeno could be distinguished from their contemporaries in either of the two characteristics mentioned by Crescimbeni.

[56]However, Giazotto has misread Crescimbeni when he concludes that as regards the writing of drammi musicali the "esempio del buono, a quei tre letterati [Muratori, Gravina, Crescimbeni], non viene per ora, che dallo Zeno" (Poesia drammatica, p. 21). In fact, Crescimbeni praises the drammi of several librettists. For example, in the Della bellezza della volgar poesia, Logisto Nemeo, one of the interlocutors who has been responsible for the discussion of melodramma and for the praise of Zeno as a reformer, refutes the accusation that he condemns all drammi musicali: "Io per me non solo non ne ò condennato [sic] alcuno; ma confesso con libertà, che non poco godo nell'ascoltargli; e spezialmente quei de'nostri Compostori [sic] Palemone, Tirinto, Nardilo, Panopo, Metisto, e Amaranto" (p. 141): i.e., Silvio Stampiglia, Giulio Bussi, Giovanni Andrea Moniglia, Giacomo Sinibaldi, Carlo Sigismondo Capece and Girolamo Gigli.

[57]De'comentarj, I, 235.

Notes to Muratori

[1]For a biography of Muratori (1672-1750), see Muratori, Scritti autobiografici, ed. Tommaso Sorbelli (Vignola: Fabbri, 1950); G. Bertoni, L. A. Muratori (Roma: Formiggini, 1926); Ferruccio De Carli, L. A. Muratori (Firenze: Macrì, 1955); Matteo Schenetti, La vita di Lodovico Antonio Muratori (Torino: Marietti, 1972).

[2]On Muratori's relationship with the Accademia dell'Arcadia, see Toffanin, L'Arcadia, pp. 89-95; Sergio Bertelli, Erudizione e storia in Ludovico Antonio Muratori (Napoli: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici, 1960), pp. 81-84, and the review of the latter by Fiorenzo Forti, Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana, 139 (1962), 283. For Muratori's contacts with literary figures of the time, see Celestino Garibotto, "Rapporti fra il Muratori e il Maffei," in Miscellanea di studi muratoriani, Atti e memorie del Convegno di Studi Storici in onore di L. A. Muratori, Modena, 1950 (Modena: Aedes muratoriana, 1951), pp. 121-24; Giovanni Forlini, "Il Muratori letterato nel suo carteggio," Convivium, No. 4-5 (1950), pp. 665-70; Aldo Andreoli, "Voci italiane nel tempo del Muratori," in Nel mondo di Lodovico Antonio Muratori (Bologna: Mulino, 1972), pp. 197-213; L. A. Muratori e la cultura comtemporanea, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Muratoriani, Modena, 1972, vol. I (Firenze: Olschki, 1975).

[3]See Ada Ruschioni, ed., Della perfetta poesia italiana, by Muratori (Milano: Marzorati, 1971), I, 5.

[4]On Maggi's influence on Muratori, see Forti, "Il Maggi e la riforma letteraria del Muratori," in L. A. Muratori e la cultura contemporanea, pp. 25-47.

[5]For Muratori's relation with Riccoboni, see Arturo Parisi, "Luigi Riccoboni (a proposito di un carteggio inedito con L. A. Muratori)," in Miscellanea di studi muratoriani, Atti e memorie della R. Deputazione di storia patria per le province modenesi, 7th ser., vol. VIII (Modena: Società Tipografica Modenese, 1933), 234-76; Xavier de Courville, Un Artisan de la Rénovation théâtrale avant Goldoni: Luigi Riccoboni dit Lélio (Paris: L'Arche, 1967), pp. 221-24 et passim.

[6]Gino Roncaglia, "L. A. Muratori, la musica e il maggior compositore bolognese del suo tempo," in Miscellanea di studi muratoriani (1933), p.279n. Muratori wrote of his plans for this treatise in his letters, for example to Anton Maria Salvini, 13 January 1705 (Epistolario di L. A. Muratori, ed. Matteo Campori, II [Modena: Società Tipografica Modenese, 1901], 740-41).

[7]Aldo Andreoli, Saggio sulla mente e la critica letteraria

di L. A. Muratori (Bologna: Tipografia Nazionale, 1921), ch. iii (pp. 5-9). On his theatrical enterprises see, for example, his letters to G. J. Tori, 19 February 1698 (Epistolario, I, 296); to Carlo Borromeo Arese, 6 July 1699 (Epistolario, II, 397-98); to G. J. Tori, 7 October 1699 (Epistolario, II, 411-12). It also appears that Muratori was involved with the theatrical productions, including melodrammi, at the Collegio dei Nobili di S. Carlo in Modena; see Simonetta Ingegno Guidi, "Per la storia del teatro francese in Italia: L. A. Muratori, G. G. Orsi e P. J. Martello," Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 78 (1974), 65-67, 91-92.

[8]Robertson, pp. 87, 90, 93; Mirco Campana, "L. A. Muratori e i movimenti estetici del tempo," in Miscellanea di studi muratoriani (1951), pp. 219, 222; Fubini, Dal Muratori al Baretti, pp. 13, 16-21; Binni, "Poetica e poesia nel Settecento italiano," in L'Arcadia e il Metastasio, pp. ix-xliii; Ruschioni, ed., Della perfetta poesia, I, 24. For the fortune of Muratori's works, see also La fortuna di L. A. Muratori, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Muratoriani, Modena, 1972, vol. III (Firenze: Olschki, 1975); Eleonore Zlabinger, Lodovico Antonio Muratori und Österreich (Innsbruck: Leitner, 1970).

[9]Robertson, pp. 89-90; Fubini, Dal Muratori al Baretti, pp. 29-30; Forti, "Il Maggi e la riforma," p. 47. See also Carmelo Samonà, "I concetti di 'gusto' e di 'no sé qué' nel Padre Feijóo e la poetica del Muratori," Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana, 141 (1964), 117-24.

[10]Andreoli, Saggio sulla mente, Ch. viii; Fubini, Dal Muratori al Baretti, p. 13. Robertson claims that the treatise "is a very wonderful achievement: it represents a greater leap forward, and contributed more to the advance of the aesthetic theory of literature than any other work of its time" (p.87). Muratori himself, however, seemed to minimize the importance of the work in comparison with the rest of his scholarly output. In later life he turned out of preference to other fields of erudition. However, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when he was still in his thirties, literary reform was certainly a matter of great concern to him as a scholar. He was anxious that copies of Della perfetta poesia circulate among men of letters. Yet, as Noce points out, he maintained a distinction between belles lettres ["lettere amene"] and works of true erudition. Counting the Della perfetta poesia among the former, he declined Crescimbeni's offer to present a copy to Clement XI, on the grounds that the work was of insufficient substance: "La ragione di ricusar ciò è stata, ch'io desidero di comparir solamente davanti a quel sublime Tribunale con altri argomenti piú gravi, cioè con Opere d'erudizione piú seria. Amo e stimo le Lettere amene, e se cosí non fosse, non avrei fatta quell'Opera; e le amo e stimo in tutti i lor Professori. Ma amo ancora di fare altra comparsa appresso altre persone"]

(Letter to Crescimbeni dated Mòdena, 9 July 1707, ed. Hannibal S. Noce, "Tre lettere inedite di L. A. Muratori," Convivium, 28 [1960], 704).

[11]Roncaglia attributes Muratori's incomprehension of melodramma as "costruzione artistica" to the critic's "preconcetto di imitazione veristica" ("L. A. Muratori," pp. 283-84). Giazotto classifies Muratori as being "guidato essenzialmente dalla erudizione umanistica e dall'enciclopedismo" (Poesia melodrammatica, p. 25). Binni writes that Muratori's pages "mettono in chiaro, con movimento gustoso di parodia indignata, l'assurdità della situazione melodrammatica dal punto di vista del razionalismo (e, se si vuole, non solo di esso)" (L'Arcadia e il Metastasio, p. 295n). Freeman classifies him, as a critic of melodramma, as conservative, commenting on the severity of his judgement of the form, though without taking into account his intellectual formation ("Opera without Drama," I, 32).

[12]On this issue, see Robertson, p. 93; Giorgio Falco, "L. A. Muratori e il preilluminismo," in La cultura illuministica in Italia, ed. Fubini (Torino: Radio Italiana, 1957), pp. 23-42; Fubini, Dal Muratori al Baretti, p. 3; and "Riflessi culturali e ideologici nella prosa del primo Settecento, (Ludovico Antonio Muratori)," in Sensibilità e razionalità nel Settecento, ed. Vittore Branca (Venezia: Sansoni, 1967), I, 278; and "Muratori e Gravina," in L. A. Muratori e la cultura contemporanea, p. 50; Renato Traspadini, "il preilluminismo letterario in L. A. Muratori," in L. A. Muratori e la cultura contemporanea, p. 153; Ruschioni, "Precorrimenti romantici nella Perfetta poesia italiana di L. A. Muratori," in L. A. Muratori e la cultura contemporanea, pp. 113, 120; and see also her introduction to Muratori, Della perfetta poesia, where she claims that, as well as Romanticism, "il Muratori critico preannuncia il Vico e la critica contemporanea" (I, 24).

[13]Fubini, Dal Muratori al Baretti, p. 16; and "Muratori e Gravina," p. 53; Ruschioni, ed., Della perfetta poesia, I, 15.

[14]For Muratori's cultural formation and critical method, see his letter of 10 November 1721 to Giovanni Artico, Count of Porcia, "Intorno al metodo seguito ne'suoi studi," ed. Sorbelli in Muratori, Scritti autobiografici, pp. 29-71; Andreoli, Saggio sulla mente, Ch. i; Roberto Cessi, "L. A. Muratori erudito e storico," in Lodovico Antonio Muratori nel secondo centenario della morte (Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1950), pp. 3-11; Bertelli, Ch. i; Ezio Raimondi, "Ragione ed erudizione nell'opera del Muratori," in Sensibilità e razionalità, pp. 319-336; and "La formazione culturale del Muratori: Il magistero del Bacchini," in L. A. Muratori e la cultura contemporanea, pp. 3-23.

[15]On Muratori's decorous and fair-minded participation in the querelle, and in the related Orsi-Bouhours controversy, see Gaetano Righi, "L'idea enciclopedica del sapere in L. A. Muratori," Miscellanea di studi muratoriani (1933), pp. 75-78; Toffanin, Arcadia, Ch. x; Vittorio Lugli, "Il Muratori e la 'Placida Battaglia' contro Bouhours," in Miscellanea di studi muratoriani (1951), pp. 135-41; Andreoli, "Di alcune relazioni," pp. 645-51; Fiorenzo Forti, L. A. Muratori fra antichi e moderni (Bologna: Zuffi, 1953).

[16]In the second part of his Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto he writes: "Vero è, ch'ella [la Poesia] nel Secol prossimo passato ha prodotto e cattivi Maestri, e peggiori esemplari. Ma da molto tempo quasi universalmente, e almeno nelle nostre Città più riguardevoli, veggiamo restituito l'ottimo Gusto nel Poetare" (1708-15; rpt. Venezia: Pezzana, 1768), Part II, p. 250.

[17]Institutiones oratoriae, X, 2, 8.

[18]Della perfetta poesia, Book III, p. 617.

[19]Andreoli, "Di alcune relazioni," p. 647. Unlike Orsi and the other Italian participants in the Orsi-Bouhours controversy, Muratori retained a moderate and courteous attitude towards the French, even praising French literature when he deemed it just in his defence of Italian literature and his study of poetry. On Muratori's attitude towards French poetry, see N. Jonard, "La poésie française dans l'esthétique de L. A. Muratori," Revue de Littérature Comparée, 35 (1961), 566-82, and the generally favourable review by Binni, Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 66 (1962), 351.

[20]On Muratori's concept of a literary republic, see Forlini, "Il Muratori letterato;" Andreoli, "L'idea della Repubblica letteraria d'Italia," in Nel mondo di L. A. Muratori, pp. 173-78. The desire for a unified literary republic will be echoed by other Italian literati throughout the century, still repeated by Saverio Bettinelli as it draws to a close.

[21]Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto, Part II, p. 251.

[22]The first volume of the Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto nelle scienze e nell'arti was published in 1708 under the pseudonym Lamindo Pritanio. The second volume, including a reprint of the first, was published in 1715. Quotations in the text are taken from the 1766 edition published in Venice by Pezzana, incorporating volumes I and II in a single tome.

[23]"Noi per buon Gusto intendiamo il conoscere ed il poter giudicare ciò, che sia difettoso, o imperfetto, o mediocre

nelle Scienze e nell'Arti, per guardarsene: e ciò che sia il meglio, e il perfetto, per seguirlo a tutto potere." (Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto, Part I, p. 113). On the Riflessioni and Muratori's concept of buon gusto, see Righi, L'idea enciclopedica;" Falco, "Il pensiero civile di Lodovico Antonio Muratori," in Lodovico Antonio Muratori nel secondo centenario della morte, pp. 12-19; Fubini, Dal Muratori al Baretti, pp. 1-30.

[24]The critical literature on the concept of buon gusto is extensive; I list here only representative examples of the more authoritative works on the subject: Benedetto Croce, Estetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale (Bari: Laterza, 1958), pp. 206-11 and 217-20; Santino Caramella, Storia del pensiero estetico e del gusto letterario in Italia (Napoli: Perella, [1924-25]); Alberto Mocchino, Il gusto letterario e le teorie estetiche in Italia (Milano: Mondadori, 1924); Ada Ruschioni, Sommario di storia della estetica letteraria (Milano: Marzorati, 1952); Vittorio Mathieu, "La sensibilità dell'universale nel Settecento (Gusto e senso morale)," in Rappresentazione artistica e rappresentazione scientifica nel Secolo dei lumi, ed. Vittore Branca (Firenze: Sansoni, 1970), pp. 61-85. For the idea of taste in France, see Wladyslaw Folkierski, Entre le classicisme et le romantisme (Paris: Champion, 1925), pp. 35-68 and 367-74; R. G. Saisselin, Taste in Eighteenth-Century France (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1965); and see also the comprehensive bibliography by Alexandre Cioranescu, Bibliographie de la littérature francaise du dix-huitième siècle (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1969) I, 119-20. For England, see Walter Jackson Bate, From Classic to Romantic: Premises of Taste in Eighteenth-Century England (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1946); Hannelore Klein, There is no Disputing about Taste: Untersuchungen zum Englischen Gesmacksbegriff im Achzehnten Jahrhundert (Münster: Aschendorff, 1967); Lia Formigari, L'estetica del gusto nel Settecento inglese (Firenze: Sansoni, 1962).

[25]Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto, Part I, pp. 127, 132, 151-54.

[26]Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto, Part I, pp. 162-63.

[27]Della perfetta poesia italiana, 2 vols. (Modena: Soliani, 1706). Quotations are taken from the 2-volume edition of 1971 prepared by Ada Ruschioni. Muratori circulated the manuscript among his friends before having the treatise published in 1706. In the published edition he incorporated only a few of the changes suggested by literary colleagues. The original version is in the Archivio Soli-Muratori at Modena. See Andreoli, Saggio sulla mente, Ch. v (pp. 3-5).

[28]Saggio sulla mente, Ch. v (p. 5); Forlini, p. 656.

[29]Della perfetta poesia, I, 49. On 15 July 1701 Muratori wrote to Zeno: "Nè ho persona fra'nostri, che m'abbia fatta la strada. L'opera del sig. Crescimbeni è diversa dalla mia; anzi io vo'supporre, e non copiare, quanto han prima di me lavorato gli altri" (Epistolario, II, 517). A few years later Muratori undertook another study of poetry, once again attempting to put into practice his ideals of literary criticism in the analysis of a single work of poetry. In 1711 he re-edited the Tassoni edition of the Rime of Petrarch, adding his own observations. The work was published as Le rime di Francesco Petrarca, riscontrate co i testi a penna dell'originale d'esse poeta. S'aggiungono le considerazioni rivedute e ampliate d'Alessandro Tassoni, le annotazioni di Girolamo Muzio, e le osservazioni di Lodovico Antonio Muratori (Modena: Soliani, 1711).

[30]The selection reveals his dislike for the excesses of marinismo, tempered by an attraction for the more moderate forms of baroque poetry.

[31]Dal Muratori al Baretti, p. 10.

[32]"[I]n quanto è Arte imitatrice, componitrice di Poemi, ha per fine il dilettare; in quanto è Arte subordinata alla Filosofia Morale, o Politica, ha per fine il giovare altrui" (Della perfetta poesia, I, 82). For a discussion of this concept in Muratori, see Fubini, Dal Muratori al Baretti, pp. 57-68; Ruschioni, "Precorrimenti romantici," pp. 116-22.

[33]"Sicché il prossimo, immediato, ed essenzial fine de'Poeti è il dilettare; il secondario è il giovane [sic] a i loro ascoltanti, e Lettori" (Della perfetta poesia, II, 547).

[34]Dal Muratori al Baretti, pp. 58-59.

[35]Della perfetta poesia, II, 547-48. According to Andreoli, Muratori seems to glimpse the intrinsic independence of the poetic value from the moral value but, unable to break away from the sterile concepts of the traditional aesthetics of his time, he returns to the concept of the dual ends of art. (Saggio sulla mente del Muratori, Ch. v, [pp. 47-48]).

[36]However, Muratori insists that the pleasure proferred, though it may not give profit, must at least not cause harm (Della perfetta poesia, II, 548).

[37]Fubini claims that Muratori gave these considerations a new emphasis and importance ("Muratori e Gravina," p. 54).

[38]Della perfetta poesia, I, 179.

[39]Della perfetta poesia, I, 96-101. In the Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto he defines Beauty as "tutto ciò, che ha ordine, e proporzione, e fa perfette le cose nel genere loro, e può indurre perfezione, e beatitudine onesta nell'Uomo" (Part II, p. 275).

[40]As Ruschioni notes, in making of poetic creation not an extraordinary and rationally unexplainable fact, but a purely natural phenomenon, Muratori departs from Platonic thought. Muratori's estro or furore poetico is not divinely inspired, but a purely human impulse awakened by human passions (see "Precorrimenti romantici," pp. 123-25). Furthermore, the creative estro must be rekindled by the poet through the study of excellent poetry (Della perfetta poesia, II, 680).

[41]"Diciamo pertanto, che il Bello preciso della Poesia consiste nella Novità, e nel Maraviglioso, che spira dalle Verità rappresentate dal Poeta" (Della perfetta poesia, I, 106).

[42]Della perfetta poesia, I, 115 and 207-8.

[43]"Né già sono altra cosa le Figure Oratorie, e Poetiche . . . ; se non il linguaggio naturale di questi affetti in noi risvegliati. Senza questa interna agitazione sarebbono inverisimili, e poco lodate le sopradette figure" (Della perfetta poesia, I, 220).

[44]Muratori devotes several chapters of the Perfetta poesia to a discussion of fantasia, and forty years later he was to compose a treatise on the subject: Della forza della fantasia umana (Venezia: Pasquali, 1740). Ruschioni suggests that Muratori must have considered this poetic faculty worthy of the greatest attention and theoretical re-evaluation if he was drawn back to it years after he had put aside literary speculation (see the Introduction to her edition of the Perfetta poesia, I, 15). For a discussion of Muratori's concept of fantasia, see Maria Bertolani del Rio, "Fantasia, delirio e pazzia nel concetto di L. A. Muratori," in Miscellanea di studi muratoriani (1951), pp. 190-92; Forti, "L. A. Muratori e la poetica della meraviglia," in L. A. Muratori fra antichi e moderni, pp. 189-225; Ruschioni, "Precorrimenti romantici," pp. 122-36.

[45]Robertson, pp. 93-94; Fubini, Dal Muratori al Baretti, p. 16; Ruschioni, "Precorrimenti romantici," p. 125. That a relation existed between poetry and imagination was a commonplace topic among the critics of the Counter-Reformation. The neo-platonist Francesco Patrizi da Cherso, for instance, stressed the relevance of the imagination as one of the basic components of poetic creation (see the Introduction by

Aguzzi-Barbagli to Patrizi's Della poetica, I, xiv-xv). The relationship was also indicated by Bacon, Hobbes and Pallavicino (Roberston, p. 94). Among Muratori's own contemporaries, Camillo Ettori had timidly proposed the creative function of the imagination in his treatise Il buon gusto ne'componimenti retorici published in 1696. In 1706, the year in which Muratori's Della perfetta poesia was published, Tommaso Ceva's study Memorie di alcune virtú del signor Conte Francesco De Lemene con alcune riflessioni sulle sue poesie also appeared. In this work Ceva presents poetic imitation as the "specchio meraviglioso della nostr'anima", and points out the function of imagination in poetic creation, a function which he sees, nevertheless, as being inferior to that of the intellect. In a phrase which became famous, Ceva states that poetry "può quasi chiamarsi sogno, che si fa in presenza della ragione" (quoted by Domenico Consoli, Realtà e fantasia nel classicismo di Gian Vincenzo Gravina [Milano: Bietti, 1970], p. 13). Both Ettori and Ceva, like Muratori, insist that the imagination must be held in check by reason (Consoli, pp. 9-13). Muratori, however, is much more assertive and less equivocal than Ettori and Ceva in his insistence on the importance of the imagination: "For the first time in European aesthetics, he [Muratori] established in unambiguous terms the imagination as the essential factor in artistic creation" (Robertson, p. 94).

[46]Binni notes that in his discussion of fantasia, Muratori takes up the same literary terms in vogue in the seventeenth century: ingegno (intellect and wit), and meraviglia (the marvellous), but adds a new dimension to the concepts ("Il Settecento," p. 354). On Muratori's anti-marinismo, see Moncallero, "Antisecentismo e classicismo nel Muratori," in L'Arcadia, pp. 147-72.

[47]Della perfetta poesia, II, 569-71. Muratori's statement is yet another indication of the popularity enjoyed by opera at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

[48]Della perfetta poesia, II, 571.

[49]Della perfetta poesia, II, 581.

[50]Della perfetta poesia, II, 573.

[51]Della perfetta poesia, II, 580-81. However Muratori would not object to the use of the chorus accompanied by music in spoken tragedy (he believed that this was the custom in ancient drama), as the function of the chorus is not to depict action: "siccome ne'tempi antichi la Tragedia non isdegnò la compagnia della Musica, cosí credo io, che oggidí pure assaissimo piacerebbe questa medesima unione, se alle Tragedie recitate senza Canto si congiungessero i Cori, che da valenti Musici fossero poi cantati" (Della perfetta poesia, II, 589).

[52]Della perfetta poesia, II, 576.

[53]Della perfetta poesia, II, 581. In this passage Muratori coins the expression "morir cantando" used throughout the eighteenth century to denote the implausibility of opera.

[54]"Almeno però usassero eglino l'Azion naturale. Ma questa ancora vien da lor dispregiata, mirandosi tante volte questi virtuosi Istrioni con isconcia libertà far mille bagattelle in palco, quando il suggetto della Favola, e il rispetto dovuto a gli uditori chiederebbe gravità (Della perfetta poesia, II, 580).

[55]"Né pur verisimile è in questi Drammi spesse volte quel non riconoscersi . . . un figliuolo, una sorella, una moglie, solamente perch'esso ha cangiato panni. . . . Credo altresí, che troppo non paia probabile . . . che tanti Principi . . . rinunzino allegramente per cagion d'Amore al Regno, o cerchino di saziar colla morte loro la crudeltà delle Donne. Io non so veramente, se ne'tempi antichi signoreggiasse un tal costume. So bene, che a'giorni nostri i Principi, e i Monarchi, anzi tutti gli Amanti con molta cura si guardano da somigliante furore, o mania. . . . Né pure è molto da commendarsi l'uso costante de'Drammi di cangiar le Scene. . . . Che se volessimo . . . potremmo considerare i moltissimi, e sconci inverisimili . . . da che vi ebbero luogo gli Equivochi de'Ritratti, delle Lettere, de gli Abiti, delle Spade, e altre sí fatte cose" (Della perfetta poesia, II, 584-85).

[56]Della perfetta poesia, II, 577-78.

[57]Della perfetta poesia, II, 586.

[58]Della perfetta poesia, II, 578-79.

[59]Della perfetta poesia, II, 571-72.

[60]Della perfetta poesia, II, 586. Thus, already in 1699 he had attempted to encourage Zeno to turn from the libretto to the writing of regular tragedy. In a letter addressed to Zeno on 20 May 1699 Muratori praised Zeno's opera Faramondo in the following terms: "Il Faramondo è un Drama squisito, e benchè sia difficile servire a'Musici, alla brevità, e a mill'altri intoppi, che non ànno i Franzesi, ell'ha saputo soddisfare alla Poesia, e al Teatro." But he then adds: "Vorrei ch'Ella prendesse a far un drama, o una tragedia senza obbligazione di Teatro, e so che farebbe pure un bel parto. Allora si potrebbero con maggior comodità aiutar gl'intreccj, che talora sono affogati dalla necessità di dover esser breve e perciò sono inverisimili in qualche parte" (Epistolario, II, 394-95).

[61]Della perfetta poesia, I, 138.

[62]Della perfetta poesia, II, 549-50.

[63]Della perfetta poesia, II, 587-88. Ruschioni argues that Muratori's proposal for bringing poetry to the people ("In fine il Poeta dee parlar col popolo, e non co' soli Peripatetici, e farsi per quanto si può intendere senza le Chiose altrui" [I, 412]) represents an attitude which in itself is already romantic rather than Enlightened ("Precorrimenti romantici," p. 122). It is certainly possible to see pre-romantic tendencies in Muratori's popular concept of poetry, but his insistence on the edifying didactic content of such poetry must be considered as more typical of the position of the Enlightenment.

[64]Della perfetta poesia, II, 588.

[65]Robertson, p. 90.

[66]Dal Muratori al Baretti, pp. 14-15.

[67]"[I] Poeti non possono comporre cosa perfetta in genere di Tragedia, tessendo sì fatti Drammi" (Della perfetta poesia, II, 578).

[68]Della perfetta poesia, II, 572.

[69]Della perfetta poesia, II, 586.

[70]"Se si misurano queste immaginarie Tragedie con le vere, non v'ha fra loro simiglianza veruna" (Della perfetta poesia, II, 578). The emphasis is mine.

[71]"[I] moderni Drammi, considerati in genere di Poesia rappresentativa, e di Tragedia, sono un mostro, e un'unione di mille inverisimili" (Della perfetta poesia, II, 585).

[72]Ma per verità io non so dar torto alla pretensione di tal gente, poiché, se ne'Drammi si studia solamente, o almeno principalmente il diletto della Musica, ragion vuole, che il Poeta prendendo a comporli, componga secondo il gusto, e il bisogno della Musica, non secondo il suo talento, ed ingegno; e chi egli serva, non comandi" (Della perfetta poesia, II, 577-78).

[73]"Sarebbe d'uopo . . . servire colle parole, e co'versi alla Musica, giacché in sì fatti componimenti essa principalmente si cerca, e s'apprezza" (Della perfetta poesia, II, 588).

[74]Della perfetta poesia, II, 588-89.

[75]Robertson, p. 90. Galletti claims that "nella critica della Perfetta poesia sono contenuti in germe i diversi

avviamenti e le correnti che si designeranno poi nella produzione tragica italiana" (p. 29).

[76]Teatro italiano o sia scelta di tragedie per uso della scena, 3 vols. (Verona: Vallarsi, 1723-25).

[77]Zeno, for example, asked Muratori for his opinion on his drama Aminta, of which he wrote to Muratori in the following terms: "Io desidero di ridurla a quell'ultimo compimento che posso; ma prima mi sarebbe caro e profittevole l'averne il maturo parere di V. S. Illma., pregandola ad avvisarmi senza veruno scrupolo ciò che le sembri difettuoso e manchevole, sì nel viluppo, sì nello stile; affinchè riformando quella mia debolezza con la guida del suo purgatissimo intendimento, io possa con men di rossore farla un dì comparire" (Letter dated 12 March 1701, Lettere di Apostolo Zeno [Venezia: Sansoni, 1785], I, 106). Gizaotto notes that Giuseppe Riva sent Muratori, at the poet's request, copies of Metastasio's libretti as they were published, "per averne un giudizio vivamente desiderato" (Poesia melodrammatica, p. 27n).

[78]Della perfetta poesia, II, 586.

[79]Muratori requested his friend Giuseppe Riva to keep him well-informed of the activities of Metastasio in Vienna. For a sample of Muratori's opinion of the Imperial poet, see his letter to Riva on the subject of La clemenza di Tito: "Per conto dell'ultima opera del signor Metastasio, al quale sempre la prego di portare i miei rispetti, le dico che v'ha delle cose mirabili e che fan conoscere un'ingegno straordinario. Quel carattere di Tito, e i suoi sentimenti rapiscono." Muratori goes on to point out what he considered to be faults in the drama, namely the use of disguises. However, he immediately tempers this negative judgement with the remark: "Ma questo non iscema la bellezza del componimento, e fa solo vedere un'ingegno inventivo. . . . In somma la conclusione si è, che io non conosco oggidì poeta, che possa pretendere uguaglianza con cotesto felicissimo ingegno." (Letter dated 27 January 1735, Epistolario, VIII, 3397-98). Muratori also expressed an interest in Metastasio's critical writings. In a letter to Domenico Brichieri Colombi in Vienna, he wrote: "Faccia animo al signor abate Metastasio perchè pubblichi la tradotta poetica d'Orazio. Dalle sue mani non può venire se non cosa perfetta" (Letter dated 9 August 1746, Epistolario, XI, 4970).

[80]Giazotto, pp. 26-27.

Notes to Gravina

[1]For a biography of Gravina (1664-1718), see Giulio Natali, "G. V. Gravina letterato," in Gravina, La ragion poetica, ed. Natali, 2nd ed. (1920; rpt. Lanciano: Carabba, 1933); Ferruccio Ulivi, "Gian Vincenzo Gravina," in Letteratura italiana: I Minori, III (Milano: Marzorati, 1961), 1827-30.

[2]For Gravina's view of the schism in Arcadia, see his anonymous letter Della division d'Arcadia: Lettera ad un amico, ed. Amedo Quondam in Scritti critici e teorici (Bari: Laterza, 1973), pp. 469-77, and his later letter to Maffei, Della division d'Arcadia (ed. Quondam, pp. 479-90). On Gravina and the schism, see also Quondam's note to this edition, pp. 598-603.

[3]On the position of Gravina as a critic, see Natali, "G. V. Gravina letterato," pp. 34-36; Moncallero, L'Arcadia, pp. 122-23, 145; Ferruccio Ulivi, "La cultura del primo Settecento e G. V. Gravina," in Settecento neoclassico (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1957), pp. 13-69; and "G. V. Gravina e l'estetica neoclassica," Almanacco calabrese, 20-21 (1970-71), 65-73; Binni, "Il Settecento," p. 369; Quondam, Cultura e ideologia di Gianvincenzo Gravina (Milano: Mursia, 1968); p. 364; and see the review by Lucio Felici, Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 74 (1970), 196-98; Giuseppina Romagnoli-Robuschi, "Il Gravina tra Tito Livio e Vittorio Alfieri," Aevum, 44 (1970), 116-51; and see the review by Quondam in Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 74 (1970), 510-11; Domenico Consoli, Realtà e fantasia nel classicismo di Gian Vincenzo Gravina, p. 34; and see the review by Quondam, Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 74 (1970), 508-10; Antonio Testa, "L'estetica cartesiana di Gravina e la teologia platonica di Vico," Sigma, No. 28 (Sept. 1971), 37-66; Salvatore Battaglia, "La critica classicista di Vincenzo Gravina," Filologia e letteratura, 17 (1971), 445-47.

[4]Benedetto Croce, "L'estetica del Gravina," in Problemi d'estetica, 6th ed. (1910; rpt. Bari: Laterza, 1966), p. 363; Santino Caramella, "L'estetica italiana dall'Arcadia all'Illuminismo," in Momenti e problemi di storia dell'estetica, II (Milano: Marzorati, 1959), 878; Battaglia, "La critica classicista di V. Gravina," p. 437; Mario Fubini, "Genesi e storia dei generi letterari," in Critica e poesia, 3rd ed. (1956; rpt. Roma: Bonacci, 1973), pp. 157, 159.

[5]Della tragedia, in Gravina, Scritti critici e teorici, ed. Quondam, pp. 581-88.

[6]Regolamento degli studi di nobile e valerosa donna, in Scritti critici e teorici, pp. 180-81.

[7]Gravina rejected the idea "che possa crearsi nell'arti liberali cosa di buono che non tiri la sua origine dai Greci, che sono stati soli e primi a definire il vero punto del naturale ed a contemperarlo in giusta misura coll'arte, dal qual punto per necessità si dilunga chiunque dall'esempio loro si diparte" (Regolamento degli studi, p. 181).

[8]Binni, "Il Settecento," p. 368.

[9]On Gravina's tendencies toward the Enlightenment see Benedetto Croce, "G. V. Gravina 'l'illuminante'," in Nuovi saggi sulla letteratura italiana del Seicento, 2nd ed. (1910; rpt. Bari: Laterza, 1949), pp. 352-57; Nicola Badaloni, Introduzione a G. B. Vico (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1961), pp. 235-265; Quondam, Cultura e ideologia; and "Addenda graviniana: I Prologhi inediti alle Tragedie con alcune osservasioni sulla 'visione tragica' delle stesse," Filologia e Letteratura, 16 (1970), 226-320; and Filosofia della luce e luminosi nelle egloghe del Gravina (Napoli: Guida, 1970).

[10]Quotations are taken from the edition in Scritti critici e teorici, ed. Quondam, pp. 195-327.

[11]Della ragion poetica, pp. 199-200.

[12]The Della ragion poetica was published in Rome in 1708. The first book comprises the earlier work Delle antiche favole without substantial modification, apart from the addition of ch. xxxi-xliv on the Italian poets writing in Latin in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (see Quondam, ed., Scritti critici, pp. 631-32n, and 646-58n).

[13]Della ragion poetica, p. 199.

[14]See Fubini, Critica e poesia, pp. 263 ff.

[15]Della ragion poetica, pp. 199-203. Gravina states: "Perciò il poeta conseguisce tutto il suo fine per opera del verisimile e della naturale e minuta espressione: perché la mente, astraendosi dal vero, s'immerge nel finto e s'ordisce un mirabile incanto di fantasia" (p. 202).

[16]"Ma per ridurci al nostro principio, è la poesia una maga, ma salutare, ed un delirio che sgombra le pazzie" (Della ragion poetica, p. 208).

[17]Thus, in his discussion of tragedy, Gravina presents a considerably novel interpretation of the Aristotelian concept of catharsis. According to Gravina, the body imbibing poison gradually overcomes the harmful effects of the poison by becoming accustomed to it; in the same way the spirit, frequently moved without personal danger by the fictional representations on the stage, becomes so accustomed to pity and

horror that gradually their effect on the spirit is weakened. Thus, when the spirit encounters real pitiful and fearful cases, it is prepared by its fictional experiences to tolerate the truth (Della tragedia, p. 511).

[18]Della ragion poetica, p. 208.

[19]Della ragion poetica, p. 215.

[20]On Gravina's concept of the sage, see Quondam, "Addenda graviniana."

[21][S]ì anche il poeta, di calor divino agitato, agita chi da lui apprende; e questi, col lume e col fervore che ha dal poeta appreso, come con lingua di fuoco riscalda l'ascoltante" (Della ragion poetica, p. 327). Cf. Plato, Ion, 533 d to 536 d.

[22]Della ragion poetica, pp. 215-18.

[23]For an understanding of these concepts in the Baroque, and of their evolution, see Danilo Aguzzi-Barbagli, "Ingegno, acutezza, and meraviglia," pp. 73-93.

[24]Della ragion poetica, p. 215.

[25]Della ragion poetica, p. 200.

[26]Muratori, Della perfetta poesia, I, 166-67.

[27]Freeman, "Opera without Dramma," I, 47; Russo, Metastasio, 3rd ed. (1915; rpt., Bari: Laterza, 1945), p. 21. Gravina's influence on the famous librettist will be discussed in the chapter on Metastasio.

[28]Gravina wrote this short essay to be published with Alessandro Guidi's pastoral drama in 1692. Quotations are taken from Quondam's edition of Gravina, Scritti critici e teorici, pp. 49-73.

[29]This short treatise was written for the personal use of the Marchioness Isabella Vecchiarelli Santacroce, and published posthumously, thereby causing difficulties in establishing the precise date of its composition. Quondam dates it between 1694 and 1699 (Scritti critici, pp. 637-38). Quotations are taken from Quondam's edition, pp. 175-94.

[30]Gravina, Tragedie cinque (Napoli: Mosca, 1712). Quotations are taken from this edition.

[31]Della tragedia (Napoli: Naso, 1715). Quotations are taken from Quondam's edition, pp. 503-589.

[32]Discorso sopra l'Endimione, p. 54.

[33]See Fubini, Critica e poesia, pp. 156-61. Here Gravina is going back to principles already advocated by Francesco Patrizi da Cherso. As Aguzzi-Barbagli points out in his introduction to the Della poetica, in Patrizi's view poetry is not, as it was for the Aristotelians, a fixed form to be analyzed in order to discover the relation of the parts to the whole, and thus to allow a rigid classification in genres. On the contrary, Patrizi's editor continues, "sarà piuttosto un dato che ripugna le categorizzazioni, una manifestazione libera come libero è l'uomo che la crea" (Della poetica, I, xi). We may note in passing that Gravina appears to have a remarkably precise idea of the rôle played by Patrizi in the development of Italian culture during the late sixteenth century towards the scientific positions best illustrated by Galileo. In the pamphlet De conversione doctrinarum (ed. Quondam in Scritti critici e teorici, p. 149), Gravina appears to know quite clearly the terms of the controversy between Patrizi and Francesco Muti, and, even more important, to know the relations between the neo-platonic philosopher and Bernardino Telesio, the 'philosopher of nature', as Kristeller so aptly describes him. This point is emphasized by Gravina in the oration entitled In auspicatione studiorum oratio de sapientia universa (ed. Quondam, p. 381). Here the critic clearly stresses the meaning of Patrizi's reaction against the philosophy of the Aristotelians. Gravina describes Patrizi as a liberator of philosophical thought ["At philosophia ex aristotelica servitute manumissa"], an initiator of the new science together with Telesio ["scientiam initio per Telesium potissimum et Patricium et Ficinum in Platone, aliisque graecis philosophis venabatur"] and therefore a forerunner of figures as notable as Sir Francis Bacon, P. Gassendi, Galileo and Descartes.

[34]Discorso sopra l'Endimione, pp. 61-62.

[35]Castelvetro was not really concerned with exploring the manner in which ancient tragedy was performed. The general tenor of his remarks on song is that it is not an essential part of tragedy: "Rimane l'ultimo luogo alla melodia, nel far della quale, e in ordinarla il poeta non ha difficulta niuna essendo sotto lei contenute l'arti del ballo, del canto, e del suono arti del tutto separate dalla tragedia . . ., le quali non concorrono ne a constituire la tragedia ne a rappresentarla" (Poetica d'Aristotele, fol. 85[r]). Gravina imposes his own interpretation upon Castelvetro's commentary in so far as this question is concerned. For example, in his commentary on Poetics, 1447 b, dealing with rhythm, tune and metre (the three mediums of poetic representation), Castelvetro writes: "[L]a tragedia e la comedia anchora che gli richieggano tutti e tre, non gli usano percio in un tempo medesimo, conciosia cosa che quando usano il verso cessi il

ballo e l'harmonia, e quando cessa il verso usino il ballo e l'harmonia" (Poetica d'Aristotele, fol. 18^{v}). Gravina regards this passage as the source of the critical commonplace that ancient tragedy was sung only in the chorus which alternated with verse spoken or declaimed by the individual actors. He questions Castelvetro's philological accuracy in the interpretation of the terms mélos and metron (song and poetry), claiming that a closer examination of the various usages of the words would not have led Castelvetro to such a conclusion (Della tragedia, p. 563). On the contrary, while Gravina asserts that mélos was indeed the music of the chorus (the ancient equivalent of the type of music associated with the modern aria), he regards metron not as spoken verse, but as a simpler form of song, a type of musical declamation used by the individual actors, and hence the ancient counterpart of modern recitative. Looked at in this light, the performance of ancient tragedy is no longer an alternation of song and spoken verse, but of two different types of song. Castelvetro had also maintained that poetry cannot exist without music: "Et sappiasi che il verso ha della musica e dell'harmonia altramente non sarebbe verso" (Poetica d'Aristotele, fol. 35^{r}). Here he is talking about the essential, internal music of verse which helps create its poetic effect, rather than the external music to which poetry may be sung. It is entirely possible that a misinterpretation of this kind of observation also led Gravina to cite Castelvetro's authority for the opinion that ancient tragedy was sung throughout.

[36]"[E] la melodia è imitazione, di cui è fabra la musica" (Della tragedia, p. 555).

[37]Tragedie cinque, sig. b1^{r}. In Della ragion poetica, Gravina wrote: "[I]l nostro teatro è divenuto campo di mostruosità: nel quale non han luogo altre produzione dell'arte, se non quelle ove meno si riconosce la natura" (p. 317). In the Regolamento degli studi, he stated: "[S]e, dico, al presente nostro teatro ci rivolgiamo, lo scorgeremo tutto pieno e turbato di mostri e di sconcie figure, quali sono le comedie ed opere che oggi o recitate o in musica si rappresentano" (p. 193). And in Della tragedia he classified melodrammi as "ridicoli drami del presente infame teatro" (p. 560).

[38]This attitude becomes evident in Della tragedia. In the Ragion poetica Gravina had granted primacy to the epic. Quondam suggests that behind this change of attitude may lie not only Gravina's ever-increasing interest in tragedy as a poetic form, but also an inclination on Gravina's part which would seem to "obbedire a una necessità poco critica e tutta personale, quasi volesse innalzare al primo posto della gerarchia poetica le sue Tragedie (Cultura e ideologia, p. 369).

[39]Della tragedia, pp. 508-09.

[40]Their author claimed that the tragedies were the result of three months' work, without affecting his performance as a teacher ["Senza alcun pregiudizio della Cattedra"] (Tragedie cinque, sig. b4[v]). In a letter to Muratori, Scipione Maffei claimed that Gravina had composed his five tragedies in response to the Marquis' appeal to Italian men of letters to devote themselves to the regeneration of tragedy in Italy (Letter dated 23 August 1710, quoted by Quondam, Cultura e ideologia, pp. 311-12).

[41]"[H]o voluto . . . conferire l'idea antica della tragedia, di cui con le cinque mie ho rinovato gli esempi" (Della tragedia, p. 507).

[42]Giulio Natali, Il Settecento, 4th ed. (1929; rpt. Milano: Vallardi, 1955), II, 946-47; Consoli, Realtà e fantasia, p. 52. Badaloni (Introduzione a G. B. Vico, pp. 235-65), and Binni ("Il Settecento," pp. 421-23) have indicated that the value of the tragedies lay in their ideological formulation rather than in their poetic merit, and this view has been developed by Quondam, (Cultura e ideologia, pp. 311-77; and "Addenda graviniana," pp. 266-320).

[43]Even Maffei, while apparently attributing to himself the merit of encouraging Gravina to compose tragedies, adds, in the letter of 23 August 1710 cited above, the significant phrase: "Così non fossero troppo belle e troppo lontane dal genio corrente." Pier Jacopo Martello satirized them in his treatise Della tragedia antica e moderna (1715; rpt. in Martello, Scritti critici e satirici, ed. Hannibal S. Noce [Bari: Laterza, 1963], pp. 200-04), and in his Femia sentenziato (1724; rpt. Bologna: Forni, 1968) pp. 59-135. Yet in the penultimate decade of the eighteenth century, at the end of a successful career as a dramatist and reformer of Italian theatre, Goldoni wrote that in his youth he had dreamt of escaping from his studies to go to Rome to join Gravina, the most learned man in matters of theatre: "Ah! si je pouvois devenir l'Ecolier de Gravina, l'homme . . . le plus savant dans l'Art Dramatique . . . Dieu! s'il me prenoit en affection comme il avoit pris Métastase! N'ai-je pas aussi des dispositions, du talent, du génie?" (Mémoires, 1787; rpt. in Tutte le opere di Carlo Goldoni, ed. Giuseppe Ortolani, I [Milano: Mondadori, 1935], p. 60). The fact that Gravina had already died in 1718, when Goldoni was only eleven years of age, and that therefore the aforementioned dream is a memory superimposed on reality by the elderly Goldoni, does not detract from the esteem in which the famous dramatist must have held Gravina.

[44]Natali, Il Settecento, II, 947; Robertson, p. 33; Quondam, Cultura e ideologia, pp. 368-69.

[45]The treatise is organized in such a manner so that the study

of each problem is followed by a chapter entitled "Contro i moderni tragici."

[46]Della tragedia, pp. 507-08.

[47]Della tragedia, pp. 555-56.

[48]Della tragedia, pp. 508-31.

[49]"Sicché la poesia . . . è al presente dannosa ministra di più dannosa musica" (Della tragedia, p. 508).

[50]Della tragedia, p. 519.

[51]Della tragedia, pp. 588-89.

[52]Della division d'Arcadia: Lettera ad un amico, p. 471.

[53]Quondam, Cultura e ideologia, pp. 375-77.

[54]Quondam classifies the Della tragedia as "l'opera . . . piú direttamente ed esplicitamente impegnata a risolvere una certa situazione ritenuta insostenibile e a proporre una concreta riforma, anzi ad elaborare in sede teorica la riforma già posta in atto con le cinque Tragedie" (Cultura e ideologia, p. 366).

Notes to Martello

[1]Originally published in Paris in 1714 with the title L'impostore: Dialogo di Pier Jacopo Martello sopra la tragedia antica e moderna, it was revised and substantially enlarged by Martello for the second and definitive edition printed by Gonzaga in Rome in 1715. For the particulars of the publication, see the notes to Martello, Scritti critici e satirici, ed. Hannibal S. Noce (Bari: Laterza, 1963), pp. 520-24. The philological precision of this edition of Martello's critical and satirical writings make it a basic text for students of the period. See the favourable reviews by Binni, Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 67 (1963), 359-60; Lucia Dainesi, Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana, 140 (1963), 281-83; Antonio Franceschetti, Lettere italiane, 16 (April-June, 1964), 221-23; Nicolas J. Perella, Romanic Review, 55 (October, 1964), 213-14. Quotations will be taken from the Noce edition.

[2]For the biography of Martello (1665-1727), see his Vita di Pier Jacopo Martello scritta da lui stesso sino all'anno 1718 and the anonymous continuation in Martello, Il Femia sentenziato: con postille e lettera apologetica inedite e la vita scritta da lui stesso (1869; rpt. Bologna: Forni, 1968); Maria Carmi, Pier Jacopo Martelli: Studi (Firenze: Seeber, 1906), appendix III; and Noce's note in his edition of Martello, Scritti critici e satirici, pp. 497-98.

[3]Vita, p. 10.

[4]Greek theatre he read in translation. In his Esamina dell'Euripide lacerato (Opere, VII, 1729, p. 250) Martello admitted to his ignorance of Greek: "Io non vanto di possedere la Greca lingua, siccome giurerei quasi, che molti di coloro, che se ne vantano, non la possegono" (quoted by Robertson, p. 122n). For his light-hearted opinion of the importance of knowing Greek, see his letter to Muratori dated 12 October 1695: "M'insinuate lo studio della Lingua Greca . . . e già l'intrapresi . . . tanto, che conosco essere questa Lingua di raro Ornamento, mà di poc'utile. . . . In sostanza, se noi studiamo gli Autori Greci per compor Greco è pazzia; se li studiamo per portarli in nostra favella sempre patiranno il medesimo pregiudicio che patiscono da i lor Traduttori. Se siamo invaghiti della sonorità della lingua, basta leggere ancor senza intendere, perchè l'orecchio habbia questa ricreazione. Se ci piace la combinazione delle parole questa non è riducibile in nostra Lingua con grazia, anzi è ridicola. . . . Se parliamo dei Prosatori . . . per scifrare qualche passo fin ora oscuro agl'Interpreti, questo adiviene si rare volte che io non li hò punto d'Invidia, e in questo caso goderò della fatica degli Altri, et havro tanto di Greco, quanto basta per chiarirmi il Vero" (Lettere di Pier Jacopo

Martello a Lodovico Antonio Muratori, ed. Hannibal S. Noce [Modena: Aedes Muratoriana, 1955], pp. 17-18).

[5]Teatro di Pier Jacopo Martello (Roma: Gonzaga, 1709). All quotations are taken from Noce's edition of Il verso tragico in Scritti critici e satirici, pp. 149-86. See especially pp. 174 and 151.

[6]Galletti, p. 87; E. Bertana, "Il teatro tragico italiano del secolo XVIII prima dell'Alfieri," Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana, 4th supplement (1901), 42; Toffanin, Rinascimento in Arcadia, p. 258. Franceschetti, review cited above, p. 221; Freeman, "Opera without drama" I, 51; Courville, Un artisan . . . Lélio, p. 182.

[7]This position is now accepted by the major modern students of Martello (Noce, Carmi, F. Croce, Fubini, Binni).

[8]For Martello's defence of Marini (while fully conscious of the limitations of the sixteenth-century poet's art), and for the baroque elements in Martello's style, see Benedetto Croce, "Le prose di Pier Iacopo Martelli," in La letteratura italiana del Settecento (Bari: Laterza, 1949), pp. 78-81; Moncallero, L'Arcadia, pp. 205-09; Franco Croce, "Pier Jacopo Martello," Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 57 (1953), 137-47; Maria Teresa Partengo, "La costruzione della frase, nel pensiero e nella lingua di P. I. Martello," Lingua nostra, 31 (1970), 12-19.

[9]"La nazione franzese, la quale ne'manuali lavori e nell'arte ancor militare si è raffinata non so se al pari o più d'ogni altra nazione, pretende ancora il primato sopra quante provincie ha l'Europa nella profession delle lettere. . . . Quindi è che i suoi popoli, già nostre conquiste ed ora nostri emuli, non conoscono maggior diletto di quello dell'insultarci nelle materie letterarie, e nominatamente nelle poetiche. E . . . ostenta la Francia, ne'suoi scrittori sì poco rispettosi all'Italia, non esserle debitrice di quelle doti che la fan grande e che dai nostri maggiori, mentr'ella era barbara, apprese" (Del verso tragico, p. 151). Martello, while expressing nationalistic feelings, reveals already the cosmopolitan attitude to European literature that becomes an element of the thought of the Enlightenment. In the passage quoted above he refers to the national literatures as provincie of the larger entity, Europe, as well as to the close relationship that exists between the literatures of France and Italy. His defence of Italian literature against the attacks of Bouhours can also be found in his dialogue Il vero parigino italiano (ed. Noce in Scritti critici e satirici), pp. 319, 377 and 381. Already on 4 October 1694 Martello had exhorted Muratori to answer Bouhours' attack: "Per Dio habbiate, Voi che il potete, un poco di compassione all'onore delle Muse Italiane,

e intraprendete una volta il rispondere all'Arte di ben pensare" (Lettere di Martello, p. 13).

[10]Del verso tragico, pp. 152-64, 182-85. For a discussion of the verso martelliano and of its originality and fortune, see Galletti, pp. 65-75 and 127-32; Carmi, pp. viii ff.; F. Croce, "Martello," pp. 143-44.

[11]Il Perseo (1697); La Tisbe (1697); La ninfa costante (1697); L'Apollo geloso (1698); Gli amici (1699). Martello attempted to give examples of all forms of theatre. In the dedication of the final volume of his dramas, he stated that the collection "tutte le sorte antiche, e moderne dei Drammi in qualunque modo atti a rappresentarsi, contiene, e che però Teatro appelliamo." As we shall see, he goes on to give his reasons for excluding his libretti from such a collection (Seguito del teatro italiano di Pier Jacopo Martello: Parte ultima, Vol. V of Opere [Bologna: Dalla Volpe, 1723], p. iii).

[12]In a letter to Muratori (25 October 1710), Martello speaks of his tragedies "nelle quali hò fatto lo studio maggiore," and writes: "le Tragedia [sic] sono da me predilette con tal passione, che se le vedrò toccate in quel che non meritano, non v'assicuro di tutta la mia connaturale per altro moderazione; e per dirla, non vorrei guerre civili fra noi altri Italiani" (Lettere di Martello, p. 57).

[13]See Courville, Un artisan . . . Lélio, pp. 184-88. See also Toffanin, Rinascimento in Arcadia, p. 248; Natali, Il Settecento, II, 945. In June, 1718, the Journal de Trévoux called Martello "un maître de l'art [of tragedy]" whom "peu de nos Pöetes tragiques égalent" (cited by Noce, ed., Lettere di Martello, p. 83n).

[14]Bertana, p. 20; Galletti, p. 62.

[15]Il Settencento, II, 944. Galletti had already expressed the same opinion (p. 100).

[16]Carmi, p. vii; Galletti, pp. 89 ff.; Robertson, p. 130.

[17]Natali, Il Settecento, II, 945; Ruschioni, ed., Della perfetta poesia by Muratori, I, 531n.

[18]Courville observes that Martello "savait le prix du rire" (Un artisan . . . Lélio, p. 195). The truth of this statement can be seen not only in his comedies and satires, but also in his personal letters.

[19]Binni, "Il Settecento," pp. 429-32; and "P. J. Martello e le sue commedie per letterati," in L'Arcadia e il Metastasio, pp. 154-68. On Il Femia, see Galletti, pp. 132-33; Toffanin,

Rinascimento in Arcadia, p. 262; Courville, Un artisan . . . Lélio, p. 195. The influence of Martello's style (as seen in Il Femia) on Parini in his masterpiece Il Giorno has been noted; see Toffanin, Rinascimento in Arcadia, pp. 262-63; Binni, "Il Settecento," p. 431.

[20]"Eighteenth-century tragedy in Italy, says Bertana, begins with Martello; he might with equal right have added eighteenth-century theory of tragedy" (Robertson, p. 137).

[21]Croce, Letteratura italiana del Settecento, p. 76; Binni, "Interpretazioni dell'Arcadia," in L'Arcadia e il Metastasio, p. 431; and his review of Noce's edition of Martello, p. 360; Perella, review cited, p. 213; Franceschetti, p. 223.

[22]I understand that Professor Noce is preparing a critical edition of Martello's theatre. It would be interesting and valuable to have his opinion on Martello and melodramma, since, for example, Martello is mentioned only briefly by a critic of the stature of Andrea Della Corte (Storia della musica, II, 82), and is omitted entirely from the group of eighteenth-century commentators regarded as fundamental by Gino Roncaglia, Il melodioso Settecento italiano (Milano: Hoepli, 1935), p. 25.

[23]Cf. Martello's letter to Antonio Conti published in the 1726 edition of Conti's tragedy Il Cesare (rpt. in Le quattro tragedie [Firenze: Bonducci, 1751], pp. 35-36).

[24]Il vero parigino italiano, p. 320. Quotations are taken from Noce's edition of Martello, Scritti critici e satirici, pp. 317-88.

[25]However, in the preface to the treatise, Martello is careful to protect himself from possible criticism by stating unequivocally his respect for the philosopher Aristotle: "Intende qui solamente di toccare alcune differenze fra l'antica e moderna tragedia, donde ei deriva curiosa occasione di altercar ragionando. Al qual effetto introduce un impostore, in cui figura uno di quei ciarlatani che tutto dì udiamo spacciarsi per chimici e posseditori del decantato segreto dell'universale rimedio, chiamato per essi elissire; colla quale invenzione costui si finge Aristotile, e reca in campo varie apparenti ragioni, a cui non ben quietandosi il nostro autore, venera nondimeno gl'insegnamenti del vero Aristotile in bocca sua. E così dileggia l'impostore, ma riverisce e rispetta il filosofo" (Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 189).

[26]In the remainder of this study of Della tragedia antica e moderna the name Aristotle will refer to Martello's creation, unless otherwise indicated.

[27]"Io pretendo che il mio esemplare infallibile siano, non già i Greci soli, ma la natura, e che siano il mio fondamento non già i soli tuoi scritti [i.e., those of Aristotle], né quelli de'tuoi comentatori, ma la ragione" (Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 198).

[28]Della tragedia antica e moderna, pp. 256-58.

[29]Della tragedia antica e moderna, pp. 237-40.

[30]On the merging of Aristotelian and Horatian ideas in the criticism of the Renaissance, see Bernard Weinberg, "From Aristotle to Pseudo-Aristotle," Comparative Literature, 5 (1953), 97-104.

[31]"[L]à parleremo con libertà dell'opera in musica, che ha qualche rassomiglianza con la tragedia, e che secondo l'opinion di coloro che pensano tutto essersi cantato nelle greche tragedie, viene considerata come un'idea dell'antica tragedia. E però non è fuor di proposito il favellarne, poiché nulla tu vuoi trascurare di ciò che differenzia l'antica dalla moderna tragedia" (Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 245).

[32]Letter dated 25 October, 1710 (Lettere di Martello, p. 57).

[33]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 274.

[34]Il vero parigino italiano, pp. 369-72.

[35]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 274.

[36]"[N]é mi vergognerei tanto di me medesimo che bramo dal capo al piè dell'anno ascoltarne" (Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 293).

[37]In his letter to Muratori (31 May 1710), Martello states: "[L]a prima cosa che io soglio cercare nelle Opere mie, è la Novità" (Lettere di Martello, p. 47).

[38]Unfortunately, the significance of this point has been overlooked by other commentators on Martello and his contributions to the study of the eighteenth-century libretto. In fact, in quoting the passage from the 5th dialogue in which Martello states his reasons for regretting the time spent in composing libretti, Giazotto omits the words in which Martello indicates his enjoyment of contemporary melodramma (Poesia melodrammatica, p. 29).

[39]This in spite of the fact that in a letter to Muratori (5 February 1716) he communicates his intention of publishing in the third part of his Teatro italiano "tutte le altre Azioni

Drammatiche non tragiche rappresentate, e rappresentabili in Scena, e conseguentemente ancora la Comedia" (Lettere di Martello, pp. 62-63). The resultant Seguito del teatro italiano does in fact contain comedies, satiriche and a burattinata, but no libretti.

[40]"Ho deliberato, o Eccelsi Riformatori dello Stato di Libertà della Comune Patria, questo, secondo le forze mie, perfezionato Teatro a voi dedicare! Cosa che per la maggior parte degli Scrittori sul bel principio dell'Opere loro suol farsi, e che noi, finita già questa nostra, sudor di venti Anni, non senza maturo consiglio ed esempio eseguiamo" (Seguito del teatro italiano: Parte ultima, pp. i-ii).

[41]Even during the years when he wrote for the musical drama, Martello seems to have been apologetic about the quality of his libretti. See for example his letter of 10 July 1697, written shortly after the composition of Il Perseo, to his friend Muratori: "Vi siete posto nel grande imbarazzo impegnandovi a rispondere ad una gran Critica, che sò prepararsi a questo misero Perseo. Ciò sarà un evvidente esperimento del vostro valore, toccandovi la diffesa di un debolissimo drama censurato con salde ragioni" (Lettere di Martello, p. 19).

[42]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 280. On pp. 291-92 he writes: "[I]l melodramma è un'imperfetta imitazion de'migliori [sic] [tragedie], e, in conseguenza, un'imperfetta tragedia."

[43]The pseudo-Aristotle claims that melodramma differs "dell'antica tragedia, perché in essa parte solamente cantavasi, in questa tutto si canta" (Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 273).

[44]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 275.

[45]"Ricercherò dunque, se al melodramma sia necessario, per dilettare, l'aiuto delle parole e della poesia, e sostengo sinceramente che no. . . . E perché tanto più alletta quell'augelletto che canta quanto è più leggiadro . . . così ci lusingherà maggiormente la voce canora se . . . sarà secondata da un viso di bei colori. . . . Tanto più poi goderemo che cotesto bel corpo sorga di vesti ricche, vaghe, bizzarre in scena abbigliato. . . . Eccoti dunque il nostro spettacolo già dilettevole per se stesso, esser molto più per gli aiuti della scena, dell'avvenenza, e de'vestimenti.

Ma incontentabili che noi siamo, massime quando ci diamo a nuotar nel piacere! Sapendo noi come gli uccelli fischiano, e come suonano gli strumenti, e come gli uomini soli ragionano, desideriamo altresì che alla dolcezza del canto umano si aggiunga quella delle parole atte ad esprimerci i sentimenti dell'animo" (Della tragedia antica e moderna, pp. 276-77).

[46]Della tragedia antica e moderna, pp. 284-89.

[47]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 275.

[48]"In quelle [tragedia e commedia] tiene il posto principale, nel melodramma tiene l'infimo; là comanda come padrona, qui serve come ministra. (Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 277). In the closing pages of the fifth dialogue, Aristotle claims that it is right and fitting that poetry serve music, for music, "una delle arti più maravigliose e perfette dell'universo," is the only art which can lead man to the possession of moral and intellectual beatitude (pp. 295-96). Yet in an earlier letter to Muratori (12 October 1695), Martello had stated: "Così io mi diletto di Poesia, estimo che l'utile derivante da questa agli Animi, quando non fosse, che il sollievo, sia più permanente di quello che vien dalla Musica" (Lettere di Martello, pp. 16-17).

[49]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 277.

[50]Della tragedia antica e moderna, pp. 281-84, 291.

[51]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 278.

[52]Della tragedia antica e moderna, pp. 274-79. On p. 279, Aristotle states: "Ma perché purtroppo avviene che pochi maestri di cappella sappiano intendere i versi, non che formarli, non sarà difficile almeno che il poetastro verseggiatore s'intenda alquanto di note e di musica, per conformare, il più che potrà, la sua invenzione e i suoi versi all'idea del compositore."

[53]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 281. Here we see Martello's realization that there were two publics for the theatre. His pragmatism did not permit him to share the idealizations of Muratori, nor the dreams of his friend about a cultured theatre accessible also to an uncultured public. Even though in the first dialogue Martello's Aristotle repeats the principle that the only public which does not err as judge in the theatre is that composed of a mixture of cultured and uncultured of all ages, of both sexes, and of all social positions and professions (p. 203). When Martello wrote his comedies, he opted to write only for literati, resigned to the fact that his comic dramas would be read but not performed. See Martello's letter to G. B. Recanati published as preface to his comedy Che bei pazzi (in Seguito del teatro italiano: Parte prima, Vol. IV of Opere [Bologna: Dalla Volpe, 1723], pp. 156-63). He adopted this attitude in spite of the Aristotelian remarks in his dialogue to the effect that the ends of drama are not achieved unless it is performed on the stage. (Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 253; On p. 203 Aristotle claims: "[Q]uando dissi rappresentarle, intesi cosa assai differente dal leggerle in una stanza, ove non appariscono che per metà").

[54]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 281.

[55]Della tragedia antica e moderna, pp. 282-83. "The division into five acts, which so reminded Zeno's generation of Greek tragedy, was used in some of Zeno's Venetian and in some of his Viennese libretti . . ., and by other librettists active early in the eighteenth century. But the five-act division was generally thought to make an opera too long, and it seems to have died out altogether after 1730. The full-length libretti of Metastasio are all in three acts" (Robert Freeman, "Apostolo Zeno's Reform of the libretto," Journal of the American Musicological Society, 21 [1968], 328n).

[56]Della tragedia antica e moderna, pp. 210-13.

[57]Robertson claims that on the question of the unities, Martello "deserves the credit for having brought the whole controversy to a clearer focus than any of his predecessors. This was his undeniable merit. The liberating tendency of his views is at once noticeable, not merely in Italian tragedy, but also in Italian theories of tragedy; and, a little later, they were to have . . . an interesting reverberation in France" (p. 133). Nevertheless, Apostolo Zeno, writing to Gravisi on 30 November 1730--that is, fifteen years after the appearance of Martello's treatise--, while concurring in the view that the unity of action is the important one, would still prefer to see all three unities observed, as he is proud to state that he has done in his oratorios.

[58]Della tragedia antica e moderna, pp. 279-80.

[59]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 283.

[60]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 283.

[61]In his treatise Del verso tragico (pp. 177-80), Martello advocates the use of a language that is simple, natural, and similar to the spoken language. In this respect, Galletti states that "il Martello ha dunque intorno alla naturalezza, al realismo del verso drammatico le opinioni di un romantico" (p. 70).

[62]Lettere di Martello, pp. 50-56.

[63]"[C]iò che percuote i sensi, più piace al popolo, assiso più per vedere che per pensare" (Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 284). A few years later, Houdart de La Motte was to attack French tragedy for its long dialogues and narrative which excluded all action that was truly dramatic as not being fit for the sensitive eyes of the public. La Motte demanded that all the action be played out before the audience: "Toute la tragédie doit etre action, et, s'il se peut, la première scène aussi bien que les autres" (Discussions sur la tragédie, in Oeuvres complètes, IV [Paris, 1754].

156). For Martello's influence on La Motte, see Robertson, pp. 211-14.

[64]"[C]he mai non arrivi alla morte, non volendosi le morti in questi spettacoli creati per rallegrare, non per contristar gli ascoltanti" (Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 284).

[65]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 235.

[66]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 283.

[67]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 206-07. Cf. his tragedies. Of his dramas, Arteaga was to state: "Lo stile dei drammi di Jacopo Martello è vago, ricercato, e fiorito, ma l'autore disegna bastevolmente i caratteri, e lavora qualche aria di buon gusto" (Le rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano, II, 68-69).

[68]Robertson states: "And here Martello lights on a thought which has been rightly claimed as throwing its shadow very far into the future. . . . This may only be a deduction from the art of Racine; but it is the first clear expression of such a deduction; it contains the germ of that psychological drama which was not to arrive at maturity until the middle of the nineteenth century" (p. 130).

[69]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 289-90.

[70]In Il vero parigino italiano (pp. 351-52), Martello asserts that excellent as it may be, French literature is not read with as much pleasure as, for example, the Golden Ass of Apuleius and the Decameron of Boccaccio, "non per altra ragione se non perché nei Franzeso manca quel giro musico di periodo e quel color d'eloquenza che negli scrittori greci, latini e italiani lusinga, per la via degli orecchi, lo spirito." On Martello's concept of the musicality of the language, see Partengo, pp. 12-19.

[71]Della tragedia antica e moderna, pp. 290-91.

[72]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 293.

[73]Il vero parigino italiano, p. 348.

[74]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 294.

[75]Della tragedia antica e moderna, pp. 291-92.

[76]Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 296.

[77]Yet in the introduction to the final volume of his theatre Martello states that he has published all of his dramatic works, and adds: "Fra queste però il Dramma per Musica non è ammesso, siccome quello, che non a talento degli Scrittori,

ma de'Cantanti è composto, e non vuol briglia, nè di ragion, nè di esempio; il che ne'nostri Dialoghi della Tragedia Antica, e moderna estesamente abbiam divisato: (Seguito del teatro: Parte ultima, p iii). It could be perhaps that the situation Martello expresses through his fictional Aristotle was so revolutionary at the time that Martello had not assimilated it completely.

[78]On May 31, 1710 he wrote to Muratori: "Hò misurato lo stile della mia tragedia con quello de'Greci, e con quello di Racine fra tutti i Franzesi, e certo è che, o in ciò affatto m'inganno, o i Caratteri de'miei Personaggi non sono meno meravigliosi, o diversi, e le Passioni men vive, o men forti di quelle che pongono in scena i Franzesi" (Lettere di Martello, p. 48).

[79]"Muratori, Crescimbeni, Gravina, Maffei, Martelli, etc., con l'elogiare, e sinanco esaltare un singolo, non degnano del loro consenso critico il melodramma, il genere, cioè, nel quale proprio quel singolo, si è procacciato fama" (Giazotto, Poesia melodrammatica, p. 34).

[80]Filosofia, poesia, storia (Milano: Ricciardi, 1951), p. 263.

[81]Max Fehr, Apostolo Zeno (1668-1750) und seine Reform des Operntextes (Zurich: Tschopp, 1912), pp. 18-19; Caramella, "L'estetica," in Momenti e problemi, II, 893; Binni, L'Arcadia e il Metastasio, p. 294; Giazotto, Poesia melodrammatica, pp. 28-30. Giazotto recognizes Martello's conclusion that "per tale preminenza musicale, è assurdo parlare di tragedia" (p. 29). Yet he fails to pursue the implications that this statement holds for Martello and for the history of critical thought on opera.

[82]Freeman, "Opera without Drama," I, 69-72.

[83]References to Martello's treatise appear, for instance, in a lecture given in Venice on October 28, 1744 by Gian Rinaldo Carli (1720-1795), Carli well-versed in the Greek language, had enjoyed considerable success with the performance of his tragedy Ifigenia in Tauri in 1744. His lecture, entitled Dell'indole dal [sic] teatro tragico: Discorso accademico deals with the history of tragedy in Italy. It was later published in the Raccolta d'opuscoli scientifici e filologici, ed. D. Angelo Calogerà XXXV (Venezia: Occhi, 1746), 147-220. The Discorso is of interest because of its attack on the authority of Aristotle, its lively defence of the rights of the moderns, and for its emphasis on sentimentalism as opposed to intellectualism on the stage.

Carli's attitude to Aristotle is reminiscent of Martello's qualified respect. According to Carli, the precepts of the Greek philosopher and his commentators are by no means superfluous, and in certain aspect are even praiseworthy. However, he admonishes: "Bisogna avvertire, però

che Aristotile . . . generali regole ha date, e regole tutte da'tragici Greci stessi cavate; le quali regole per questa ragione altro scopo non hanno, che di mostrare la via, onde un antico Greco divenir possa un perfetto tragico" (P. 161). These precepts, therefore, must be analyzed and modified according to the individual case to which they are applied. For as social customs change, so should art, if it is to affect its audience: "Chi non vede ora che tutte quelle azioni, le quali non incontrano la disposizione dell'animo nostro, cioè il nostro costume, e le circonstanze de'nostri tempi, e sono tanto lontane da noi, quanto il secolo de'Greci Tragici; non possano ottener sulle nostre scene un esito fortunato?" (p. 182).

In his justification of the art of the moderns, Carli attacks the insistence on the observance of the unities of time and place. While discussing the feasibility of changes of scene, he declares himself to be in agreement with Martello's treatment of the subject, adding however: "io come voi ben sapete, avea detto appresso poco le stesse cose, prima ancora di leggerlo" (p. 211).

A particularly interesting aspect of Carli's paper is the emphasis he places on sentimentality as an indispensable quality of contemporay theatre. Tragedy must appeal to the heart. If it is directed towards the intellect, it will fail, as Gravina's tragedies failed. The death of tragedy in the sixteenth century was due to the fact that Italian poets thought only of composing sonorous verses, and neglected to touch the heart. However, according to Carli: "così siccome il popolo non è prevenuto, e lascia fare alla natura, e al cuore, ciò che egli vuole; quell'azione farà in lui sempre più commozione, che si consiglierà più con la natura medesima. Perchè le passioni alla vista di teatrale rappresentazione prendino in noi qualche direzione, non è bisogno nè di . . scienze, nè di filosofie: basta esser uomini" (p. 160). Carli's words frequently convey a suggestion of romantic sensibility: "Una ben apparecchiata situazione impegna tutti gli affetti; e tutta l'attenzione riscuote. . . . Il Poeta deve allora particolarmente esser attore; e deve piangere, ed adirarsi come se fosse sul fatto. L'espressioni devono cader dalla penna, e'l solo urto della passione convien che sia l'Aristotile dell'azione. . . . Lunge adunque lo sforzo di mente, quando la passione è in atto" (p. 188).

The pragmatism of Martello is evident in Carli's acceptance of the character [indole] of contemporary theatre public: "Non serve il dire che il gusto è corrotto; che gli uomini si sono cangiati. Il Teatro ch'è luogo di spettacolo, è stabilito appunto per gl'ignoranti. . . . Lo stridere contra i drammi, e contra alcune tragedie Francesi, e Italiane, perchè non vi si trova la perfezione dell'immaginaria (per ora mi si permetta questa espressione) arte tragica, non serve a nulla; perchè al popolo basta un sol tratto perchè si commuova: e molti soffriranno un'opera intera per gustar solamente una scena" (pp. 159-60). Carli's reply to the

proposition that public taste ought to be changed is: "Ma chi è capace di tanto? Erit mihi magnus Apollo" (p. 218).

Although he does not dwell to any extent on the question of melodramma, Carli's conclusions concerning the character of eighteenth-century Italian theatre and its public justify the taste for musical drama, with its appeal to the sentiments. Furthermore, he cites examples from ancient authorities to strengthen his claim that Greek drama was sung throughout, as he states Francesco Patrizi had already concluded. While repeating the commonplace on the responsibility of the musical drama for the decline of Italian tragedy in the seventeenth century, Carli expresses the curious opinion that Zeno was responsible for the rebirth of tragedy in the eighteenth century. According to Carli, it was Zeno who first banished improbable situations from the stage, replacing them with decorous, heroic and instructive actions. Thus Carli calls Zeno's dramas "piccole Tragedie", and laments the fact that the Venetian librettist did not apply himself to the composition of "intere Tragedie". His example, however, led others to undertake the task, with the resultant resurgence of Italian tragedy (pp. 155-57).

Although in Carli's discussion of Zeno's dramatic works we catch a glimpse of Martello's distinction between musical and spoken tragedy, Carli has not fully digested the concept. He still regards melodramma as a type of tragedy, and as such, it forms part of a general discussion of the tragic genre, without requiring separate treatment. However, he saw musical drama as an acceptable form, once it freed itself from its baroque excesses, because it appealed to the sentiments, and hence to the public. Carli's Discorso has received little attention; see Giuseppe Ortolani, La riforma del teatro nel Settecento e altri scritti, ed. Gino Damerino (Venezia: Istituto per la collaborazione culturale, 1962), pp. 33-37; Natali, Il Settecento, I, 472.

[84]Martello participated in the Roman Academy from 1708 to 1718. Crescimbeni included Martello's poetry in the second volume of his nine-volume edition of Rime degli Arcadi, and he gave Martello an important part in the dialogues of his La bellezza della volgar poesia (1700).

[85]Martello gently satirizes Gravina's tragedies in his dialogue with Aristotle (Della tragedia antica e moderna, pp. 200-03, 262-67). On p. 202 Martello writes that Gravina "invece d'elevare il proprio spirito a ritrarci il carattere degli eroi per esso imitati, ha fatto descendere gli eroi medesimi a ritrarci il di lui solo carattere, dimodoché invece di veder quelli della tragedia ci vedi unicamente l'autore, ed in ciò forse il popolo non travede." Thus, Martello had already seen the autobiographical element in Gravina's tragedies that Binni pointed out to modern scholars, and which has been developed in critical studies by Quondam.

[86]Martello doubtless felt a certain jealousy towards Maffei, whose single tragedy Merope enjoyed such immense success that it over-shadowed Martello's own works, and seemed to accomplish the theatrical reform sought after so diligently by Martello himself. Cf. the letter in Il Cesare, pp. 38-39. In his Femia sentenziato Martello wrote a witty satire of Maffei and his tragedy, which infuriated the author of Merope. Martello's eventual attempt to rectify the damage is described in the 1869 edition of Il Femia sentenziato (rpt. 1968). On the Martello-Maffei polemic, see Robertson, pp. 124-26; Moncallero, L'Arcadia, p. 216.

[87]See his letter to Muratori of 25 October 1710: "Già mandai l'opere mie in dono al Signor Apostolo Zeno per mezzo del Signor Marchese Maffei. . . . Io mò, che vorrei da Voi? Vorrei che siccome colà avvisaste le quattro prime [tragedie], così avvisaste le ultime due, e con questa occasione mandando colà un piccolo esame di tutte sei, come se appunto non le avessero vedute Essi, li metteste in qualche soggezione di non dir baie, perchè se ne diranno sopra gli Occhi, sopra i Dialoghi . . . non replicherò certamente; ma le Tragedia [sic] sono da me predilette con tal passione, che se le vedrò toccate in quel che non meritano, non v'assicuro di tutta la mia connaturale per altro moderazione; e per dirla, non vorrei guerre civili fra noi altri Italiani "(Lettere di Martello, p. 57). See the article on Martello, "Elogio di Pier-Jacopo Martello," Giornale de'letterati d'Italia, 38:2 (1733), 149-99.

[88]Storia critica de'teatri antichi e moderni, VI (Napoli, 1790), 260. Manfredi collaborated in the composition of, among others, Martello's La ninfa costante (1697), Dell'arte di amar Dio (1698), and Il Paradiso (1698).

[89]Muratori gave his opinion on Martello's works in a letter to Zeno dated 6 November 1710: "Spero, che in questo mentre voi riferite gli Occhi di Gesù, l'Arte poetica, e le Tragedie mandatevi; e ciò facendo, vorrei ben pregarvi d'usare tutta la possibile bontà verso di un valentuomo di questa fatta, senza però mancare alla verità. Pochissimi, e dirò anche niuno di simili poeti ha presentemente l'Italia, e però merita che ne diciate assai bene; perchè quantunque io non osassi sostenere, che alcuna delle sue fatiche nel tutto fosse perfetta e superiore alla censura, nulladimeno ha delle virtù e delle parti incomparabili. E dissi poeti simili, intendendo nella vaghezza delle invenzioni, che si leggono nel suo poema, nell'incredibile facilità di disporre e dipingere in versi cose difficilissime, possedendo egli veramente quella rara virtù, ch'io chamai energia ed evidenza nel mio Trattato. Di questi mirabili pezzi voi ne troverete parecchi in esso poema. A lui però sopra d'ogni altra cosa io so che son care le Tragedie. La maniera de'versi a tutta prima può essere che non soddisfaccia; ma credetemi che,

avvezzato che vi si è l'orecchio, riesce benissimo, e fa un ottimo effetto, benchè io tema che pochi abbiano da imitarla, costando essa probabilmente molta fatica. Si può lasciare ai lettori e al tempo la cura di giudicare accertatamente del valore e del merito d'esse Tragedie, ma intanto si può dire, senza pericolo d'errare, ch'elle contengono delle rare virtù, avendo il sig. Martelli, veramente schivato lo stile lirico, e alzato lo stile a tutto quel magnifico, che si conviene alla Tragedia con tali risalti d'ingegno bene spesso, che i lettori non possono non ammirare l'intelletto suo vivacissimo, e il suo felice talento, e non risentire gran diletto da una sì fatta lettura" (Epistolario di Muratori, III, 1210-11).

[90]Maffei, Teatro italiano (1723); Algarotti, Saggio sopra l'opera in musica (1762); Bettinelli, Dialoghi d'Amore (1796).

Notes to Marcello

[1]Published with the following title page: "IL TEATRO ALLA MODA, o sia Metodo sicuro, e facile per ben comporre, & eseguire l'OPERE Italiane in Musica all'uso moderno, Nel quale si danno Avvertimenti utili, e necessarj à Poeti, Compositori di Musica, Musici dell'uno, e dell'altro sesso, Impresarj, Suonatori, Ingegneri, e Pittori di Scene, Parti buffe, Sarti, Paggi, Comparse, Suggeritori, Copisti, Prottetori, e MADRI di Virtuose, & altre Persone appartenenti al Teatro. DEDICATO DALL'AUTORE DEL LIBRO AL COMPOSITORE DI ESSO. Stampato ne'BORGHI di BELISANIA per ALDIVIVA LICANTE, all'Insegna dell'Orso in PEATA. Si vende nella STRADA del CORALLO alla PORTA del PALAZZO d'ORLANDO. E si ristamperà ogn'anno con nuova aggiunta." For an explanation of the enigmatic lines that follow the dedicatory sentence, see Gian Francesco Malipiero, "Un frontespizio enigmatica," Bollettino bibliografico musicale, 5 (1930), 16-19; Reinhard G. Pauly, "Benedetto Marcello's Satire on Early Eighteenth-Century Opera," Musical Quarterly, 34 (1948), 230; Andrea Della Corte, Satire e grotteschi di musiche e di musicisti d'ogni tempo (Torino: U.T.E.T., 1946), pp. 284-87; Bianca M. Baroncelli Da Ros, "Sul 'Teatro alla Moda' di Benedetto Marcello," Humanitas (Brescia), 8 (1953), 298-301; Ariodante Marianni's introduction to his edition of Il Teatro alla Moda (Milano: Talla, 1959), p. 9. For a list of editions and translations, see Pauly, "Marcello's Satire," pp. 228-29. To this list should be added the following more recent editions: Andrea D'Angeli's well-annotated text (Milano: Ricordi, 1959); see Binni's review, Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 61 (1957), 301-03; Marianni's edition of 1959 (cited above); Giacomo Alessandro Caula's unannotated edition (Torino: Caula, 1965). The satire was translated into English and annotated by Pauly; it appeared in two parts in Musical Quarterly, 34 (1948), 371-403 and 35 (1949), 85-105. There are two early undated editions of Il Teatro extant, and it has proved difficult to ascertain which of the two is the original. Both texts are virtually identical in their content, though the pagination is different (64 pages and 72 pages). A. Tessier, in his edition of Il Teatro (Venezia, 1887), chose the shorter text as the princeps, claiming that the extra eight pages of the longer version were simply the publisher's way of justifying the unfulfilled promise announced in the first edition, namely that it was to be reprinted annually with up-to-date additions. Enrico Fondi also chose the shorter version as the basis for his edition of Il Teatro (Lanciano: Carabba, 1913). Alfred Einstein, on the other hand, in his German translation Das Theater nach der Mode (Munich, 1917), claimed that some of the misprints of the 72-page edition were corrected in the later edition of 64 pages. D'Angeli edited the 72-page version, as did Marianni. The latter justifies his decision chiefly by the

fact that the few variants in the 64-page edition have modernized the orthography of the 72-page version (pp. 15n-16n). For further evidence in support of the 72-page version, see Baroncelli Da Ros, p. 301. Quotations from Il Teatro alla Moda are taken from Marianni's edition which is the most faithful to the 72-page version.

[2]See Fondi's introduction to his edition of Il Teatro, p. 9; Pauly, "Marcello's Satire," p. 228; Marianni, ed., p. 8. Instrumental in the identification of this work was the letter written by Apostolo Zeno from Vienna to Antonio Francesco Marmi in Florence (2 April 1721), in which he alludes to the authorship as though it were an accepted fact: "Quel Teatro alla moda del Sig. Benedetto Marcello, che è fratello del Sig. Alessandro, è una satira gentilissima" (Lettere di Apostolo Zeno, III, 257). The noted eighteenth-century historian of music, Padre Giambattista Martini, fixed the date of publication at 1720 (as reported by Ernest David in his translation Le Théâtre à la mode au XVIII.e siècle [Paris: Fischbacher, 1890], p. 5). See also "Il 'Teatro alla Moda' di B. Marcello," Ateneo veneto, 2 (1935), 156.

[3]Andrea Della Corte, "Il 'Teatro alla Moda' ossia La morale di una satira," Il pianoforte, 2 (1921), 200. On operatic activity in Venice in the eighteenth century, see Taddeo Wiel, I teatri musicali veneziani del Settecento: Catalogo delle opere in musica rappresentate nel secolo XVIII in Venezia (1701-1800) (Venezia: Visentini, 1897); Antonio Zardo, Teatro veneziano del Settecento (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1925); Vittorio Malamani, "Il teatro lirico a Venezia nel secolo XVIII," Archivio veneto, 5th Ser., 1 (1927), 192-220; Ludovico Zorzi et al., I teatri pubblici di Venezia (secoli XVII-XVIII): Mostra documentaria e catalogo (Venezia: Nuova Editoriale, 1971).

[4]Benedetto Marcello (1686-1739) was born into an illustrious Venetian family, patrons of music and the arts. Although as a patrician he was deeply involved in the politics of the Republic, he had from an early age received an excellent musical education, and in later life became well-known and respected throughout Europe as a composer. His most important composition is the Estro poetico-armonico of 1724-26, about which Grove wrote: "[I]t is hardly too much to say that as a whole they constitute one of the finest productions of musical literature" (Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. Eric Blom, 5th ed. [1954]). On Marcello's education, see Andrea D'Angeli, Benedetto Marcello: Vita e opere (Milano: Bocca, 1940), pp. 7, 9n, 86-87; also Enrico Fondi, La vita e l'opera letteraria del musicista Benedetto Marcello (Roma: Modes, 1909), p. 1.

[5]On Marcello's literary works, see D'Angeli, Marcello: Vita e opere; Giulio Ferroni, "L'opera letteraria di Benedetto

Marcello e l'inedita 'Fantasia ditirambica eroicomica,'" Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 74 (1970), 333-93.

[6]Several musical dramatic works have been attributed to Marcello. See F. J. Fétis, "Marcello, Benoît," Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique, V (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1867), 440-44; Robert Eitner, "Benedetto Marcello," Monatshefte für Musikgeschichte, 23 (1891), 187. There is, however, some disagreement among scholars as to which of the works attributed to Marcello were actually written or composed by him. See Pauly, "Marcello's Satire," pp. 226-27; D'Angeli, Marcello: Vita e opere, pp. 271-74. Among those works that are undoubtedly his are: i) L'Arianna, intreccio musicale, libretto by Vincenzo Cassani; ii) La Psiche, intreccio musicale, libretto by Vincenzo Cassani; iii) two intermezzi and choruses for his own tragedy Lucio Commodo; iv) Giuditta, oratorio, libretto and music by Marcello; v) Gioàz, oratorio, libretto by Zeno; vi) Timoteo, cantata, libretto by Antonio Conti.

[7]Stefano Arteaga, Le rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano, I (Bologna: Trenti, 1783), 311-12.

[8]Baroncelli Da Ros, p. 305; Fondi, ed., Teatro alla Moda, p. 9.

[9]"Quel Teatro alla moda . . . è una satira gentilissima: ma altrettanto è insulsa e piena di errori quella Poggiana di M. l'Enfant, il quale con essa si è screditato molto" (Lettere di Apostolo Zeno, III, 257-58). Zeno is referring here to the work on Poggio Bracciolini by Jacques Lenfant entitled Poggiana, ou La Vie, le caractère, les sentences et les bons mots de Pogge florentin, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 1720).

[10]Originally published in 1583, the work can be found in Paoli Cherchi's edition of T. Garzoni, Opere (Napoli: Rossi, 1972), pp. 39-235.

[11]Il Segretario Cliternate al Baron di Corvara di Satire Libro (1717), in Noce's edition of Martello, Scritti critici e satirici, pp. 71-110. Martello's satire had also appeared anonymously.

[12]E.g., Camille Bellaigue, "Trois maîtres d'Italie: II. Marcello," Revue des Deux Mondes, 1 April, 1895, p. 641; Fehr, Zeno und seine Reform, p. 20.

[13]E.g., Giazotto, Poesia melodrammatica, p. 34.

[14]Ferroni, pp. 335, 340-41; Binni, "Il Settecento," p. 457; Mario Apollonio, Storia del teatro italiano (Firenze: Sansoni, 1954), II, 180.

[15]Teatro alla Moda, p. 23.

[16]Estro poetico-armonico: Parafrasi sopra li primi [secondi] venticinque salmi, 8 vols. (Venezia, 1724-28; rpt. in 4 vols., Farnborough, Hants.: Gregg, 1967). Quotations in this study are taken from the 1967 edition. Telemann's letter (6 October 1726) is reproduced in the preface to Vol. VIII, pp. iii-iv. Matheson's letter of 6 October 1725 can be found in the preface to Vol. VI, pp. 2-3.

[17]See Francesco Caffi, Storia della musica sacra nella già Cappella Ducale di San Marco in Venezia dal 1318 al 1797 (1854-55; rpt. Milano: Bollettino bibliografico musicale, 1931), II, 192.

[18]Preface to Vol. I of Estro poetico-armonico, p. 2.

[19]Teatro alla Moda, pp. 41-59.

[20]Teatro alla Moda, p. 51.

[21]Teatro alla Moda, p. 27.

[22]Teatro alla Moda, p. 58.

[23]Teatro alla Moda, p. 24.

[24]Estro poetico-armonico, I, 4-5.

[25]The poet will visit the composer, "e gl'incaricherà poi nell'Arie brevissimi Ritornelli e Passaggi (ma piuttosto molte repliche intere delle parole), perché meglio si goda la Poesia" (Teatro alla Moda, p. 29).

[26]Teatro alla Moda, pp. 34-35.

[27]Teatro alla Moda, p. 22. D'Angeli cites the example of the melodramma Veremonda, performed in 1652 in Venice to the music of Cavalli. The librettist, Count Maiolini Bisanioni, had the outline of the drama (which usually appeared at the beginning of the text) printed at the end of his libretto bearing the indication: "Argomento dell'opera per coloro che in udirla o leggerla non l'avessero bene intesa" (Teatro alla Moda, ed. D'Angeli, p. 93n).

[28]Teatro alla Moda, p. 26. Here Marcello is ridiculing the "comparison aria," a convention that was very popular at the time of Zeno and throughout the century. Martello's Aristotle suggests the use of such charming comparisons and similes (Della tragedia antica e moderna, pp. 289-90), and Metastasio also ridicules them in his intermezzo L'impresario delle Canarie (in Tutte le opere di Pietro Metastasio, ed. Bruno Brunelli, I [Milano: Mondadori, 1953], 55-56.

[29]Teatro alla Moda, p. 34.

[30]"[A]vvertendo sopra ogni cosa di non intender punto il sentimento delle parole, nè cercare tampoco che glielo spieghi" (Teatro alla Moda, p. 45).

[31]"Non alzerà mai l'occhio alla Parte, saprà poco leggere, non dovendosi punto regolare né alle Note né alle Parole del Musico (Teatro alla Moda, p. 63).

[32]The modern poet will always have at hand "qualche centinaio d'ariette per poter cambiare, aggiungere, etc., non trascurando di riempire il Libro de'soliti Versi oziosi segnati con virgolette" (Teatro alla Moda, p. 27).

[33]Estro poetico-armonico, I, 4.

[34]Estro poetico-armonico, I, 2.

[35]Cited in D'Angeli, Marcello: Vita e opere, p. 59. Among those who attribute the letter to Marcello, see Della Corte, "Il 'Teatro alla Moda,'" p. 199; Baroncelli Da Ros, p. 304. For the disputed attribution to Marcello, see Caffi, II, 212-14; D'Angeli, Marcello: Vita e opere, pp. 49-62. Although, for various reasons, both doubt Marcello's authorship, it is nevertheless true that the passage quoted expresses Marcello's views to the letter.

[36]Cited in Della Corte, Satire e grotteschi, p. 331.

[37]Cited in Della Corte, Satire e grotteschi, p. 330.

[38]The prologue and sonnet are published in an appendix to Fondi's edition of Il Teatro alla Moda, pp. 101-09.

[39]L'Arianna (1727), ed. Oscar Chilesotti (1885; rpt. Bologna: Forni, 1969); Gioàz (1726), ed. Giacomo Benvenuti (Milano: Classici musicali italiani, 1942); Timoteo, ossia Gli effetti della musica. In this cantata, according to D'Angeli, Marcello sets out to show the power of music which could push man to the excesses of two opposed passions, e.g., from hate to love, from anger to pity (D'Angeli, ed., Teatro alla Moda, p. x). Although the attribution of the musical pastoral Calisto in Orsa to Marcello has been disputed (see Caffi, II, 189; Fondi, La vita e l'opera, p. 93; D'Angeli, Marcello: Vita e opere, p. 272), the work is an attempt, Caffi states, to "renderci sensibile e poco men che visibile il tramutamento di donna in belva"(Caffi, II, 189). A further instance of Marcello's preoccupation with the potential of music and poetry can be seen in his unpublished oratorio Il trionfo della Poesia e della Musica nel celebrarsi la morte, la esaltazione e la incoronazione di Maria Sempre Vergine Assunta in Cielo. On this oratorio, see D'Angeli,

Marcello: Vita e opere, pp. 149 ff.; Della Corte, Satire e grotteschi, pp. 332 ff.

[40]Teatro alla Moda, p. 31.

[41]Teatro alla Moda, pp. 25-26.

[42]A study of the libretti he set to music might shed some light on his preferences in so far as dramatic poetry was concerned.

[43]Teatro alla Moda, p. 33.

[44]Teatro alla Moda, p. 33. Della Corte writes: "Ma tutti, Marcello ed i suoi plagiari, ebbero il torto di non considerare che all'indegnità dei presunti artisti, alla loro mancanza di coscienza, al mercantilismo trionfante alla ribalta, facevano riscontro altrettanti vizi e dificienze in coloro che con indulgenze, favori, applausi e ducati, alimentavano, incoraggiavano, lusingavano il mondo crollante dell'opera secentesca e contribuivano alla miseria culturale del tempo" ("Il 'Teatro alla Moda,' ossia La morale d'una satira," p. 204).

[45]Bellaigue, "Trois maîtres," p. 641.

[46]Although L'Arianna was not performed on stage during Marcello's lifetime (see Alfred Loewenberg, Annals of Opera 1597-1940 [Geneva: Societas Bibliographica, 1955], I, cols. 1322-23), it has been considered "come una tappa nel cammino melodrammatico da Monteverdi, a Pergolesi, a Gluck" (D'Angeli, Marcello: Vita e opere, p. 121). On L'Arianna, see also Baroncelli Da Ros, pp. 318-19.

[47]Fondi, La vita e l'opera, and the introduction to his edition of Il Teatro alla Moda; Pauly, "Marcello's Satire;" D'Angeli, ed., Teatro alla Moda (see also Binni's review of the edition and study).

[48]One of the characters in the farce describes the convenienze in the following words: "Le convenienze teatrali sono i dritti [sic] presunti, o veri, che ciaschedun personaggio pretende di sostenere rigorosamente in teatro, per i quali bene spesso non piacciono le opere o i balli, s'irrita il pubblico, vanno in rovina gl'impresari, e si rendono ridicoli i virtuosi" (Convenienze, scene 21, in Le convenienze e Le inconvenienze teatrali, ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero [Firenze: Le Monnier, 1972], p. 84). Well into the nineteenth century and the Romantic opera, Donizetti composed both libretto and score for the opera buffa, Le convenienze ed inconvenienze teatrali, based on Sografi's play Le convenienze teatrali (1794) and its sequel Le inconvenienze teatrali (1800). Originally composed in 1827, Donizetti's opera buffa was revised and performed in 1831

with great success. Near the end of his career, Donizetti thought of revising it again, but his health gave out. See William Ashbrook, Donizetti (London: Cassell, 1965), pp. 95-96.

[49]Della Corte, "Il 'Teatro alla Moda' ossia La morale di una satira;" Marianni, introductory study to his edition of Il Teatro alla Moda, pp. 13-15.

[50]Poesia melodrammatica, pp. 32-35.

[51]"Sul 'Teatro alla Moda' di Benedetto Marcello," p. 306.

[52]D'Angeli, ed., Teatro alla Moda, pp. xviii-xix.

[53]See Freeman, "Opera without Drama," I, 1-79.

[54]See his review of D'Angeli's edition of Il Teatro alla Moda, pp. 302-03.

[55]"L'opera letteraria di Marcello," pp. 333-44.

[56]Ferroni, p. 344. The reference to the lottery is in Teatro alla Moda, p. 86.

[57]Ferroni limits himself to Marcello's influence on later critics and reformers of the melodramma (pp. 335n and 341).

[58]Besides the works already mentioned, Marcello also published volumes of verse: Sonetti di Benedetto Marcello nobile veneziano tra gli arcadi Driante Sacreo (Venezia: Hertz, 1718), a volume of sonnets A Dio (1731), reissued in an enlarged edition in 1732, and the Fantasia ditirambica eroicomica published for the first time by Ferroni, "L'opera letteraria di Marcello," pp. 363-93.

[59]Marcello was made a member of the Accademia Filarmonica di Bologna in 1711. For his relations with Bologna, see Alfonso Morselli, "Una fonte d'ispirazione per il 'Teatro alla Moda' di Benedetto Marcello," in Atti e memorie dell'Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti in Modena, 14 (1956), 151. The text of the satirical letter to Vittoria Tesi, attributed to Marcello, refers to the Marquis Orsi: "Mi sono state raccomandate da gran signori tutte le Cantatrici che dovranno recitare questo carnavale qui in Bologna. . . . In sino la Bombasara è arrivata da Modena con lettere della Corte del Marchese Orsi, acciò io l'assista, e per Dio (ter) gli ho saputo rispondere (bis) un bellissimo no." (Text published by D'Angeli in appendix to his edition of Il Teatro alla Moda, p. 81).

[60]See Marcello's letter to Muratori (20 September 1730), ed. Alberto Vecchi: "Intorno ad alcune lettere inedite di

Benedetto Marcello," Rivista musicale italiana, 52 (1950), 343-44. Echoes of Della perfetta poesia can be found in the Teatro alla Moda, for example on pp. 22 and 25.

[61]Teatro alla Moda, pp. 22 and 26. Furthermore, Marcello was was undoubtedly aware of Martello's use of the technique of satirical precepts in Il Segretario Cliternate.

[62]Poesia melodrammatica, pp. 32-33.

[63]D'Angeli, Benedetto Marcello: Vita e opere, p. 22.

[64]Giazotto, Vivaldi (Milano: Nuova Accademia Editrice, 1965), p. 115.

[65]Benvenuti, ed., Gioàz, p. 245.

[66]Grout, Short History of Opera, I, 192.

[67]For Martello's disposition to satire and parody, see Binni, review of D'Angeli's edition, pp. 301-02; Caroline Sites, "More on Marcello's Satire," Journal of the American Musicological Society, 11 (1958), 141-48.

[68]Marc Pincherle, Antonio Vivaldi et la musique instrumentale (Paris: Floury, 1948), p. 21; Giazotto, Vivaldi, pp. 117-20, 161-174 et passim; Walter Kolneder, Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741): Leben und Werke (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Hartel, 1965), pp. 199-202.

[69]Lorenzo Da Ponte, Memorie e altri scritti, ed. Cesare Pagnini (Milano: Longanesi, 1971), pp. 146-56 et passim.

[70]Della Corte, "Il 'Teatro alla Moda' ossia La morale d'una satira," pp. 201, 270. In his edition of Il Teatro alla Moda, D'Angeli claims that Marcello's observation of contemporary melodramma took place between 1706 and 1720 (p. xviii).

[71]On Marcello's style in Il Teatro alla Moda, see Binni, review of D'Angeli's edition, pp. 302-03; Ferroni, "L'opera letteraria di Marcello," pp. 338 and 537 et passim.

[72]"Non dovrà il moderno Compositore di Musica possedere notizia . . .," "saprà poco leggere . . ."; "ordinerè . . ."; "dividerà . . .", etc.

[73]Teatro alla Moda, p. 36

[74]"Sì giocosa Prosa in assai volgar Frase (perchè ben s'intenda) io dettai" (Teatro alla Moda, p. 19).

[75]Teatro alla Moda, p. 21.

[76]Carducci had already noted in Marcello a precedent to the descriptive irony found in Parini's Il Giorno.

Notes to Maffei

[1]For a biography of Maffei (1675-1755), see Giuseppe Silvestri, Un europeo del Settecento: Scipione Maffei (Treviso: Canova, 1954).

[2]On Maffei's humanism and antiquarian scholarship, see Toffanin, L'eredità, pp. 159-68; Attilio Momigliano, "Gli studi classici di Scipione Maffei," Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana, 133 (1956), 363-83; Celestino Garibotto, "L'umanesimo di Scipione Maffei," Atti e memorie della Deputazione di Storia Patria per le antiche province modenesi, 8:8 (1956), 245-59.

[3]Toffanin, L'eredità, p. 155. In his "Eloge de M. le Marquis Scipion Maffei," Charles Le Beau characterizes the Italian in the following manner: "Poëte, Critique, Antiquaire, Historien, Physicien, Casuiste meme & Théologien, autant qu'on peut l'être quand on est tant d'autres choses" (L'Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, XXVII [Paris, 1761], 229).

[4]On the relations between Maffei and Riccoboni, see Robertson, pp. 155-61; Courville, Riccoboni pp. 145-78, 197-234 et passim.

[5]Teatro italiano, ossia Scelta di tragedie per uso della scena, 3 vols. (Verona: Vallarsi, 1723-25). All quotations are taken from this edition.

[6]Goldsmith, An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe (1759; rpt. in the 1854 edition of his Works, II, 20n, and III, 270). Silvestri records Maffei's claim that when visiting Pope, he found the English poet working on a translation of Merope (p. 165). Voltaire praised Maffei's tragedy in the dedication of his own Mérope (Oeuvres complètes [Paris: Garnier, 1877], IV, 185-89). Lessing preferred Maffei's tragedy to Voltaire's. See his critique in issues no. 36 to 50 (1 September to 20 October 1767) of his Hamburgische Dramaturgie (in Werke, ed. Walter Hoyer [Leipzig: VEB, 1956], II, 341-98). On the controversy, see Max Gubler, Merope: Maffei, Voltaire, Lessing (Zürich: Juris, 1955); V. Placella, "La polemica settecentesca della Merope," Filologia e letteratura, 13 (1967), 309-36 and 394-447.

[7]Teatro italiano, I, v. The tragedy remained faithful to classical tradition, yet at the same time corresponded to the exigencies and taste of his own era (see Galletti, p. 192; Binni, "Il Settecento," pp. 424-25).

[8]On Maffei's brief career as impresario, see Silvestri, pp. 225-28 and 98-99. La fida ninfa is reprinted in Scipione

Maffei, Opere drammatiche e poesie varie, ed. Antonio Arena (Bari: Laterza, 1928), pp. 226-68.

[9]Galletti, p. 198; Giazotto, pp. 30, 34; Freeman, "Opera without Drama," I, 74-78; Claudio Varese, "Appunti sul linguaggio teatrale del Settecento," Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 57 (1953), 133.

[10]Teatro italiano, I, vii.

[11]Teatro italiano, I, viii.

[12]Teatro italiano, I, xxxvii.

[13]De'teatri antichi e moderni (Verona: Carattoni, 1753), p. 57.

[14]"Quando ci s'è presenti, l'incanto della Musica fa soffrir tutto. . . . Ma leggendo, come si può mai gustare chi è costretto a parlar per concisi, e con sensi rotti, con che nè imitar si può il vero, nè rappresentar la natura; e dove il pregio sta nelle ariette, che son parole non necessarie, ma quasi appiccate, e posticcie, onde nel forte del negozio, o della passione vien fuori la nuvoletta, o la tortorella" (De'teatri, pp. 9-10).

[15]Robertson, pp. 90 and 158.

[16]With the possible exception of Maffei's realization that the arias destroyed not only the integrity of poetry, but also that of music (Teatro italiano, I, xxxvii). In a note following the dedication of the second volume of his Teatro italiano, Maffei reveals that he planned a dissertation on ancient drama, apparently never written: "Altra se ne darà forse ancora per discutere l'oscuro punto, se si cantassero, o no gli Antichi Drammi" (II, 7).

[17]A study of ancient tragedy and its validity in modern times was undertaken by Giulio Cesare Becelli in his treatise Della novella poesia cioè del vero genere e particolari bellezze della poesia italiana (Verona: Romanzini, 1732). A friend and collaborator of Maffei, and a fervent partisan of the modernes, Becelli claimed for Italian poetry (la novella poesia) equality with Greek and Latin literature. On the basis of his belief (already found in the writings of Du Bos) that poetry is nurtured by the particular climate and customs of a particular people, Becelli questioned the emulation of Greek and Latin poets, the submission to precepts and the strict adherence to traditional genres. He proposed a new theatre unfettered by classical models, but wrought from contemporary themes and techniques of staging. In the discussion on tragedy in Della novella poesia he expressed his belief that ancient drama was sung in its entirety (p. 384).

However, he admitted that contemporary scholars lacked an exact comprehension of the music of the ancients. All that remained of ancient tragedy was the poetic text. Becelli made use of this argument to oppose such proponents of tragedy in prose as the controversial Houdart de La Motte. Following a classicist tradition, Becelli turned to such critics as Minturno, Vettori and Patrizi to support his position in favour of tragedy in verse. He concluded that tragedy in verse corresponded to the sung tragedy of the ancient Greeks, for verse and song are similar. "[I]l verso è armonia, come il canto è armonia," Becelli wrote, and again, "il solo verso contiene suono e armonia" (p. 386). We note here the affinity with the motive concept of Metastasio's melic art. However, Becelli does not discuss the musical drama as a separate form. Since he asserts the relationship between music and poetry ("la musica . . . è della poesia membro, o con la poesia analoga qualità" [p. 311]), in theory melodramma is simply drama. Becelli makes no attempt to study musical theatre in depth, neither considering it a distorted or illegitimate literary form, nor sensing its emergence as a new artistic creation. Therefore, while he himself does not dwell on melodramma, Becelli represents an intellectual ambience favourable to Metastasio's theories. On Becelli, see Robertson, pp. 161-63; Toffanin, L'eredità, pp. 267-80; Fubini, Dal Muratori al Baretti, pp. 169-82; M. Vitale, "Conservatorismo classicistico e tensione innovatrice in un Letterato veronese del primo Settecento: G. C. Becelli," Filologia e letteratura, 15 (1969), 1-48.

Notes to Zeno

[1]For a biography of Zeno (1668-1750) see F. Negri, La vita di Apostolo Zeno (Venice, 1816); Luigi Pistorelli, I melodrammi di Apostolo Zeno (Padova: Salmin, 1894).

[2]Binni, "Il Settecento," pp. 458-59; Mario Fubini, "Zeno," Enciclopedia italiana Treccani (1949); Giazotto, La poesia melodrammatica, pp. 30-31; Benedetto Croce, I teatri di Napoli (Bari: Laterza, 1916); Della Corte and Pannain, Storia della Musica, II, 100; Franco Abbiati, Il Seicento e il Settecento, Vol. II of Storia della musica (Milano: Garzanti, 1967), pp. 326-27. For the eighteenth century, see Jean Jacques Rousseau, "Opera," in Dictionnaire de musique (Paris: Duchesne, 1768), p. 350; Charles Burney, A General History of Music, ed. F. Mercer (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1935), II, 546; Arteaga, Le rivoluzioni del teatro musicale (1785), II, 69-76; Ranieri de'Calzabigi Risposta di Don Santigliano Venezia: Curti, 1790).

[3]A member of Arcadia, Zeno was co-founder with Scipione Maffei and Antonio Vallisnieri of the prestigious Giornale de'letterati d'Italia, and for some years carried the responsibility for its publication. The dual aim of the journal was to "promovere i buoni studj in Italia, e ad animare i migliori ingegni alla pubblicazione delle loro fatiche" (Letter to Pietro Cannetti, 25 December 1710, in Lettere di Apostolo Zeno, II, 103-04). Zeno hoped that the journal would become "un'opera, che col tempo avvenire potrebbe esser riguardata senza disprezzo anco di là da'monti, e far colà concepire un'idea più vantaggiosa del buon gusto, che per altro comunemente corre in Italia" (letter to Antonfrancesco Marmi, 29 March 1710, in Lettere di Apostolo Zeno, II, 47). On Zeno's activities as a journalist, see Marino Berengo's introduction to his Giornali veneziani del Settecento (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1962). In the preface to his edition of G. Fontanini, Biblioteca dell'eloquenze italiana, Zeno states his scholarly credo: "Io solo intesi d'affaticarmi in onore della nazione italiana, e a benefizio comune degli studiosi, al qual fine ho indirizzato tutta la mia vita, tutte le mie fatiche" (quoted in Andreoli, Nel mondo di L. A. Muratori, p. 215n). Zeno was assiduous in maintaining relations with the major scholars of his time, such as Muratori, Crescimbeni, Antonio Conti, Maffei and Antonio Vallisnieri.

[4]The first edition of Zeno's letters appeared in 3 volumes two years after his death (Venice, 1752). A second edition, corrected and enlarged by Jacopo Morelli was published by Sansoni of Venice in 6 volumes in 1785. All quotations are taken from the 1785 edition, and will be cited as Zeno, Lettere.

[5]On Zeno's libretti, see Pistorelli, I melodrammi di Zeno; Fehr, Zeno und seine Reform; A. Vullo, Confronto fra i melodrammi di Zeno e di Metastasio (Agrigento: Dima, 1935), G. L. Luzzato, "Apostolo Zeno e la sua 'Ifigenia in Aulide,'" Dionisio, 22 (1959), 235-46; Freeman, "Opera without Drama;" Donald J. Grout, "La 'Griselda' di Zeno e il libretto dell'opera di Scarlatti," trans. Luigi Bellingardi, Nuova rivista musicale italiana, 2 (1968), 207-25; Beatrice Corrigan, "Reform and Innovation: The Libretti of Apostolo Zeno," Italica, 54 (1977), 3-11.

[6]Antonio Zardi, "Apostolo Zeno e le sue Poesie drammatiche," Nuova Antologia, 16 April 1927, pp. 459-67.

[7]Giazotto, Poesia melodrammatica, pp. 13-25.

[8]Freeman, "Opera without Drama," I, 23-46 et passim; and his article "Apostolo Zeno's Reform of the Libretto."

[9]Letter to Fontanini, 8 August 1699 (Zeno, Lettere, I, 88).

[10]Letter to Muratori, 12 March 1701 (Zeno, Lettere, I, 106-07).

[11]Zeno, Lettere, I, 121.

[12]Letter to Muratori, 30 September 1701 (Zeno, Lettere, I, 126).

[13]Letter to Marmi, 24 February 1702, M. V. (Zeno, Lettere, I, 143). Morelli places this letter among Zeno's 1703 correspondence. Several letters apparently bear the incorrect year and I follow Morelli's practice in identifying them with the notation M. V. In all such cases the letters should be dated a year later than indicated.

[14]Freeman, "Zeno's Reform," p. 327.

[15]Drammaturgia di Lione Allacci accresciuta e continuata fino all'anno MDCCLV (1755; rpt. Torino: Erasmo, 1961), col. 428.

[16]"Spererei che [Aminta] fosse adattato al gusto di cotesta nobile Città . . . Se la riuscita le paresse facile, potrebbe a'Sigg. Impressarj proporla, al cui gusto lo aggiusterei occorrendo" (Letter to Marmi, 14 April, 1703 [Zeno, Lettere, I, 148]).

[17]Della perfetta poesia, II, 586.

[18]Letter dated 29 January 1706, M. V. (Zeno, Lettere, I, 413).

[19]Letter to Uberto Benvoglienti, 23 February 1707, M. V. (Zeno, Lettere, I, 440). Zeno repeats this sentiment in other letters, for example, to Marmi, 30 March 1709 Zeno, Lettere, II, 12-14.

[20]Letter to Salvino Salvini, 11 March 1713 (Zeno, Lettere, II, 213).

[21]Letter to the Count of Savallà, 17 November 1717 (Zeno, Lettere, II, 391-92).

[22]Letter to the Marquis Giovanni Poleni, 15 October 1718 (Zeno, Lettere, II, 441). Yet Zeno desired the position of Court Poet to Charles VI. In a letter to Muratori dated 10 April 1705, thirteen years before his appointment, Zeno expressed his displeasure that, in spite of the support of the incumbent Bernardoni, he was passed over for the position in favour of Stampiglia (Zeno, Lettere, I, 316-17).

[23]Zeno, Lettere, II, 443-46.

[24]Letter to his brother, Pier Caterino (Zeno, Lettere, III, 198).

[25]Letter dated 17 September 1729 (Zeno, Lettere, IV, 265). Here Zeno is referring to the eighteenth-century practice of placing within quotation marks in the printed text all lines of the libretto which were omitted from a particular production.

[26]Zeno, Lettere, IV, 276-77.

[27]Zeno concludes the letter as follows: "Ma egli è ormai tempo che io chiuda questa diceria, più lunga di quello che da principio io m'era proposto. L'ho scritta con poca riflessione, e in un sol tratto di penna; onde V. S. Illma ne compatisca la rozzezza" (Zeno, Lettere, IV, 277).

[28]Zeno, Lettere, IV, 278.

[29]Near to the end of his career as librettist, Zeno prefaces his drama Cajo Fabbrizio (1729) with the following attempt at justification: "Il personaggio di . . . Sestina, figliuola di Fabbrizio . . . è introdotto per dar qualche motivo d'intreccio agli amori, senza i quali pare oggidì che un Dramma non sarebbe plausibile" (Drammi per musica dal Rinuccini allo Zeno, ed. Andrea Della Corte, [Torino: U. T. E. T., 1958], II, 626).

[30]The letter of dedication is included in an appendix in Max Fehr's edition of Zeno, Drammi scelti (Bari: Laterza, 1929), pp. 278-81.

[31]On Zeno's oratorios, see Armando Michieli, "Le poesie sacre drammatiche di Apostolo Zeno," Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana, 95 (1930), 1-33.

[32]The Considerazioni were published in Venice in 1735 under the pseudonym of Evandro Edesimo. For an interpretation of this pamphlet and the reactions of Zeno and Metastasio, see Giazotto, Poesia melodrammatica, pp. 49-59. For Zeno's and Metastasio's attitude toward each other, see Giazotto, Poesia melodrammatica, pp. 36-46.

[33]Letter dated 27 September 1735 (Zeno, Lettere, V, 152-53).

[34]Letter dated 14 January 1735, M. V. (Zeno, Lettere, V, 191).

[35]Letter dated 30 December 1740 (Zeno, Lettere, VI, 94).

[36]Letter dated 13 January 1740, M. V. (Zeno, Lettere, VI, 100).

[37]Zeno, Lettere, VI, 288. The letter is dated 27 February 1744, M. V.

[38]Gasparo Gozzi, ed., Poesie drammatiche di Apostolo Zeno, IV (Venezia: Pasquali, 1744), xi-xiii. The preface was to appear in the first volume, but Zeno had opposed its inclusion in the edition. In the preface Gozzi gives a short history of opera in Italy, blaming the decay of melodramma on the excesses of the seventeenth century which relied on music and spectacle to attract audiences. Like Zeno, Gozzi does not question the feasibility of the union of music and poetry in melodramma. In fact, he poses the rhetorical question: "Chi potrebbe negare, che la musica, la quale è la maggior gentilezza del mondo, se fosse stata adoperata, quando si cominciò in Italia a rappresentare opere sceniche cantando, in componimenti ben ordinati, essa non avesse accresciuto l'onore di quelli, e il piacere di coloro, che ascoltavano?" But he claims that instead music was used only with the aim of pleasure, so transporting the audience that few paid attention to the poetry. Thus the poetic text was relegated to an inferior position, and the poet likewise became subjugated to the other artists and artisans of the theatre. Gozzi adds that the situation had not changed in his day, and would not change until the poet again became the master in the association of diverse arts (pp. iv-v). Gozzi then pauses to praise Zeno's reforms which, in his opinion, consisted of Zeno's "adherence to the rules" as far as possible in such a form of theatrical performance, the elimination of improbable incidents, the appropriateness of characterization, the use of historical themes, and the elimination of comic characters. Furthermore, Gozzi attributed to Zeno the observance of the principle of utile-dulci. This principle is of the utmost

importance for Gozzi, who insists on the educational function of the theatre on the uncultured public. In his opinion, Zeno is unsurpassed in his respect: "nè forse è luogo ne'presenti drammi, ove sì giudizioso avvedimento non si ritrovi; e non si scopra la buona volontà di pascere gli animi di ciò che apporti loro sanità, e robustezza, come de'cibi, che pascono il corpo." Gozzi states that most librettists before Zeno ignored this principle, yet it is not incompatible with melodramma. On the contrary, "la poesia ajutata, e rinvigorita dal soccorso della sua dolcissima Sorella [Musica], può tanto bene ad utilità degli uomini adoprarsi" (pp. viii-ix). While Zeno does not discuss the ends of art to any extent, one can deduce (as Gozzi does) his concern for its educational function from the dedication of his Poesie sacre in which he sets down his reasons for choosing magnanimous heroes from history.

Gozzi's history of the melodramma, as well as the background to the genesis of the edition, reveals the influence of Zeno. It is thus a difficult task to ascertain the exact measure of Gozzi's own ideas on opera. His brother Carlo lampooned the musical drama in the preface to his Eco e Narciso, "favola pastorale serio-faceta per musica." After commiserating with the unfortunate fate of librettists, who are the last persons to be praised when the work is a success, and the repository of all blame when the production fails, Carlo goes on to satirize the use of the dance in opera. While he considers fabulous themes to be more appropriate to opera than others, he questions the capability of the union of words and music to reproduce dramatic action that will affect an audience: "Aggiungo, ch'io non ebbi giammai inclinazione a cotesta Poesia Drammatica per la musica, sembrandomi tanto ristretta, e scorticata, da non poter mai con questa ben apparecchiare un'azione scenica, che impegni, e da non poter mai sviluppare come si vorrebbe, un sentimento" (ed. Malipiero, in I profeti di Babilonia [Milano: Bottega di Poesia, 1924], pp. 53-56).

[39]Cited in Zardo, "Zeno e le sue Poesie drammatiche," p. 460. Freeman observes that it was characteristic of the early eighteenth century literary-minded librettists to have their libretti published in complete editions. After Metastasio, claims Freeman, librettists realized that their works should not be considered apart from the music, and there are no more publications of collected libretti ("Opera without Drama," I, 34). Freeman appears to have overlooked Martello who, a decade before Metastasio began his career, and some forty years before Calzabigi's edition of Metastasio's libretti, had already reached the realization of the inseparability of music and poetry in melodramma.

[40]Letter to Pier Caterino Zeno (Zeno, Lettere, III, 92).

[41]Letter dated 3 November 1730 (Zeno, Lettere, IV, 278).

[42]Letter dated 30 September 1701 (Zeno, Lettere, I, 126).

[43]Patrick J. Smith calls Zeno "perhaps the most admittedly nonmusical of the major librettists" (The Tenth Muse, New York: Knopf, 1970, p. 68).

[44]Zeno, Lettere, II, 443.

[45]Letter to Andrea Cornaro, 8 November 1721 (Zeno, Lettere, III, 293).

[46]Catone in Utica, in Tutte le Opere di Pietro Metastasio, I, 128. Metastasio was acutely conscious of the sound of names. On 10 June 1751 he wrote to Tommaso Filipponi: "La mia nuova opera ha per titolo il Re pastore. . . . Costui avea un nome ipocondriaco, che mi avrebbe sporcato il frontespizio. Chi avrebbe potuto soffrire un'opera intitolata l'Abdolonimo? Ho procurato di nominarlo il meno che m'è stato possibile, perché fra tanti non avesse il mio lavoro ancor questo difetto" (Opere, III, 646). Arteaga, also sensitive to the musicality of words, wrote of Zeno: "Non era nemmeno dotato d'orecchio bastevolmente dilicato. . . . Anche nella scelta de'nomi fu poco avveduto . . .[i nomi] sono più acconci a mettersi in una dichiarazione di guerra Vandalica, che in un melodramma" (Rivoluzioni del teatro musicale (1785), II, 74-76).

[47]Zeno adds: "Ho preso il nome di Rutilia non affatto straniero nella gente Fabia, stante il cognome Rutiliano che aveva il fratello per le cagioni, che voi sapete" (letter to Pier Caterino Zeno, 6 January 1720 [Lettere, III, 91]).

[48]Letter to Gravisi, 3 November 1730 (Zeno, Lettere, IV, 278).

[49]It is therefore only with considerable reservation that one can accept statements such as that made by Antonio Cassi Ramelli to the effect that Zeno was "cosciente d'aver tra le mani una forma d'arte nuova che non era più la tragedia antica" (Libretti e librettisti [Milano: Ceschina, 1973], p. 72).

[50]Letter dated 29 October 1706 (Zeno, Lettere, I, 396).

[51]Alessandro Severo (1716), in Zeno, Drammi scelti, ed. Fehr, p. 113.

[52]Andromaca (1724), in Zeno, Drammi scelti, p. 193.

[53]Cajo Fabbrizio, in Drammi per musica, ed. Della Corte, p. 626.

[54]Letter dated January 1740, M. V. (Zeno, Lettere, VI, 100-101).

[55]In a letter to Luisa Bergalli, 9 October 1723, Zeno compliments her on her drama Agide, and adds: "Lodovi poi sommamente, che lasciati i soggetti favolosi e comuni, vi siate appigliata agli eroici, i quali più degli altri portano la fantasia a dir cose grandi e subblimi, e dove meglio s'intreccia col nobile l'amoroso" (Zeno, Lettere, III, 389-90).

[56]In the famous letter of August 1701, to Muratori, Zeno claims the first end of the musical drama to be pleasure: "dove non si dà in molti abusi, si perde il primo fine di tali componimenti, ch'è il diletto" (Zeno, Lettere, I, 121).

[57]See Rolandi, Il libretto per musica, p. 77.

[58]Letter to Angelo Fabroni, dated 7 December 1767 (Metastasio, Opere, IV, 585).

[59]In his letter of 3 November 1730 to Gravisi, he is pleased to report Muratori's suggestion that Zeno publish his dramas "che potrebbono essere utili in qualche conto al pubblico, e aprir qualche strada al regolamento dei Drammi musicali" (Zeno, Lettere, IV, 278).

[60]The conclusions drawn by David Burrows in an essay on stylistic consensus in culture, support Freeman's thesis. Burrows' study shows that the history of the libretto from Zeno's predecessors through to Metastasio is part of a single long-range trend, begun in the seventeenth century, towards "simplifying, sharpening distinctions, and standardizing" ("Style in Culture: Vivaldi, Zeno and Ricci," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 4 [1973], 19).

[61]Freeman, "Zeno's Reform," p. 335. In his dissertation, "Opera without Drama," Freeman offers as explanation for Zeno's reputation among contemporary critics and his popularity with opera audiences "his ability to fabricate plots that satisfied both the evolving requirements of the operatic stage and the rationalistic wishes of patriotic litterateurs" (I, 167).

Notes to Rolli

[1]For a biography of Rolli (1687-1765), see Fabio Russo, La figura e l'opera di Paolo Rolli (Udine: Del Bianco, 1967); George E. Dorris, Paolo Rolli and the Italian Circle in London 1715-1744 (Paris: Mouton, 1967), pp. 124-61; see also Hannibal S. Noce's review of Dorris' book in Modern Philology, 67 (1969-70), 92-94.

[2]On Rolli's sojourn in England, see Tarquinio Vallese, Paolo Rolli in Inghilterra (Milano: Albrighi Segati, 1938); Dorris, pp. 132-203.

[3]Martello wrote: "ingegnuo, franco e penetrante è Rolli, / che del Chiabrera appena invidia il vanto" (Il Segretario Cliternate, ed. Noce, p. 88).

[4]For Rolli's poetry, see Carlo Calcaterra's edition of Rolli, Liriche: con un saggio su la melica italiana della seconda metà del Cinquecento al Rolli e al Metastasio (Torino: U. T. E. T., 1926). Calcaterra's essay was later reprinted in his volume Poesia e canto (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1951), pp. 99-189. See also Binni's essay "Paolo Rolli e lo sviluppo del classicismo arcadico-rococò," in Classicismo e neoclassicismo, pp. 35-50.

[5]Dorris, pp. 149-51. Rolli's translation soon gained European recognition. Muratori, whose knowledge of English was extremely slight, was particularly anxious to receive a copy (letter dated 5 December 1726 in Epistolario, VI, 2599). Metastasio also expressed the same eagerness (letter to Riva, 26 June 1735 in Opere di Pietro Metastasio, ed. Brunelli, III, 129).

[6]The first opera sung completely in Italian was performed in 1710. See The Spectator, 21 March 1711. The Royal Academy of Music and the Opera of the Nobility were societies established for the specific purpose of producing Italian opera in London in the second and third decades of the eighteenth century. On early eighteenth-century Italian opera in England, see Charles Burney, A General History of Music, II, 651-850; Sesto Fassini, Il melodramma italiano a Londra nella prima metà del Settecento (Torino: Bocca, 1914); R. A. Streatfield, "Handel, Rolli, and Italian Opera in London in the Eighteenth Century," Musical Quarterly, 3 (1917), 428-45; Allardyce Nicoll, A History of Early Eighteenth Century Drama: 1700-1750 (Cambridge: University Press, 1929), pp. 225-37 and 387-400; Eric Walter White, The Rise of English Opera, (London: Lehmann, 1951), pp. 47-63, Dennis Arundel, The Critic at the Opera (London: Benn, 1957), pp. 157-252: Harold Rosenthal, Two Centuries of Opera at Covent Garden (London: Putnam, 1958); Phillip Lord, "The

English-Italian Opera Companies 1732-3," Music and Letters, 45 (1964), 239-51; Dorris, pp. 37-123; Roger Fiske, English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 31-66.

[7]See Otto Erich Deutsch, Handel: A Documentary Biography (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1955), p. 313n.

[8]Dorris, p. 167. Riva, for example, wrote to Muratori lamenting that the operas in England "are so much hackwork as regards the verses." Yet he goes on to comment on Rolli in these terms: "Our friend Rolli, who was commissioned to compose them when the Royal Academy was first formed, wrote really good operas" (letter dated Hanover, 7 September 1725, trans. Leonardo Pettoello in Deutsch, Handel, pp. 185-86).

[9]In the Dunciad Pope includes Rolli among the poet "dedicators". According to him, the pattern of English taste in opera is set through Rolli's successful flattery of his patrons: "Rolli the feather to his [patron's] ear conveys, / Then his nice taste directs our Operas" (The Dunciad, In Four Books [1743], Book II, ll. 203-04). Pope appended the following note to line 203: "Paolo Antonio Rolli, an Italian Poet, and writer of many Operas in that language, which, partly by the help of his genius, prevail'd in England near twenty years. He taught Italian to some fine Gentlemen who affected to direct the Opera's." The quotations are taken from the Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, vol. V, ed. James Sutherland, 3rd ed. (1934; rpt. London: Methuen, 1965), pp. 305 and 124n.

[10]Rolli, Marziale in Albion, published posthumously (Firenze, 1776). The epigrams on music deal mainly with the mores of performers, composers and librettists. On Rolli's epigrams on musical life in London, see Della Corte, Satire e grotteschi, pp. 340 ff.

[11]There is no complete edition of Rolli's correspondence, and unfortunately I have been unable to consult the manuscript letters preserved in the Archives of the Biblioteca Estense in Modena, nor the Dodici lettere inedite di Paolo Rolli, ed. Sesto Fassini (Torino, 1911). However, those letters reproduced in Fassini, Melodramma italiano, in Giuseppe Zucchetti, "Paolo Rolli e la sua attività letteraria negli ultimi venti anni di vita," Convivium, 2 (1930), 519-604, and translated by Leonardo Pettoello in Deutsch, Handel, serve to illustrate Rolli's attitude towards opera.

[12]Giuseppe Riva (1685?-1737?), diplomatic agent for the court at Modena, is best known for his correspondence with several well-known figures of the eighteenth century, including Muratori and Metastasio. In his letters to Riva, the former often expressed a desire for news of the "valoroso sig. Rolli" who, according to Muratori, "fa onore alla nostra

lingua" (letter dated 24 October 1726, in Muratori, Epistolario, VI, 2585).

[13]Letter dated 18 October 1720, trans. in Deutsch, p. 114. Margherita Durastanti and Senesino (Francesco Bernardi) were singers in Handel's company. The libretto of Amore e Maestà was by Antonio Salvi, and had been originally performed in Florence in 1715 with the music of Giuseppe Maria Orlandini. Rolli adapted it (with the title Arsace) for the 1721 performance at the Haymarket, with additional music by Filippo Amadei.

[14]Letter dated 3 October 1726, trans. in Deutsch, p. 197.

[15]The Spectator, 6 March 1711 (ed. and rpt. Gregory Smith [London: Dent, 1958], I, 17-19). The same sentiments are also expressed by Sir Richard Steele (The Spectator, 16 March 1711 [ed. Smith, I, 45-46]).

[16]Letter dated 9 November 1734, trans. in Deutsch, p. 374.

[17]Letter dated 12 June 1730, trans. in Deutsch, p. 255.

[18]Letter dated 6 November 1729, trans. in Deutsch, p. 246.

[19]Binni, Classicismo e neoclassicismo, p. 36; Carlo Calcaterra, "Paolo Rolli," Enciclopedia italiana Treccani (1949). In a letter to Princess Pignatelli, Rolli states: "diedi alla scena più che 24 dramatici scheletri: scheletri dico, perchè la necessitata brevità di quel tutto, e la non voluta in verun conto lunghezza, benchè discreta, de'recitativi, me gli [sic] fa nominare così, e pur anche asserirli difficili assai" (letter dated 9 May 1750, published in Fassini, Melodramma italiano, p. 179).

[20]Twelve libretti were published in Verona in the first volume of his Componimenti poetici in vario genere. Another twelve libretti were to appear in the second volume, which was never published. See Fassini, Melodramma italiano, p. 44.

[21]Letter dated 11 October 1749, published in Fassini, Melodramma italiano, pp. 175-76.

[22]Letter dated 9 May 1750, in Fassini, Melodramma italiano, pp. 178-80. See also Rolli's defence of his dramatic style against comparison to Metastasio, in his reply to a letter of Frugoni (30 September 1749). Frugoni had reported that a prospective client for a libretto by Rolli wished to know whether the drama would contain "la dolcezza e la lusinga de'recitativi di Metastasio e l'anacreontica vaghezza delle

sue ammirabili ariette." Besides satirizing the excesses of anachreontic verse, Rolli defends what Frugoni calls his robust style: "In fatto melodramatico io son di parere che il sostenere ben spesso la versificazione energica sia necessario, sì perchè la Musica allungatrice dell'espressioni non la snervi, e sì perchè la dolcezza di teneri affetti consecutiva alla precedente forza, sia più commovente: il che i Francesi dicono touchant" (Frugoni's letter and Rolli's reply of 11 October 1749 are published in Fassini, Melodramma italiano, pp. 173 and 175 respectively). On November 9, 1734, in a letter to Riva, Rolli had already compared himself as a poet to Metastasio: "He [Farinelli] has made me a present which I much desired and which will help me pass many pleasant hours, directing my thoughts to our country's and our common master's fame [Gravina], which perhaps we two alone have further increased in poetical honour." The present referred to was a copy of the Works of Metastasio (letter translated in Deutsch, p. 374).

[23]Undated letter tentatively ascribed to the year 1745 by Fassini and published in his Melodramma italiano, p. 170.

[24]Rolli added the Preambulo to the Odi d'argomenti amorevoli in the 1753 edition. The quotation is taken from Calcaterra's edition of Rolli, Liriche, p. 65.

[25]Cited by Calcaterra in his edition of Rolli, Liriche, p. 62. Both Calcaterra and Binni, who also quotes the lines in his article (in Classicismo e neoclassicismo, p. 35), have failed to note a point that had not escaped Burney (A General History of Music, II, 707), namely, that the lines are Rolli's translation of Milton, Paradise Lost, Book I, ll. 556-68, in which the English poet speaks of the power of music "to mitigate and swage / With solemn touches, troubled thoughts, and chase / Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain / From mortal or immortal minds." (I quote from the edition by Scott Elledge [New York: Norton, 1975], p. 22).

[26]Letter dated 9 May 1750. The editor's note to the 1744 edition of Rolli's libretti states: "Non si limitò egli [Rolli] a'soli Soggetti istorici, come troppo, a suo parere, ne'è invalso il costume in Italia, ma scorse ancora ne'favolosi e in quelli stessi Argomenti, su i quali perchè un ingegno di qualche eccellenza scrisse per il Teatro musicale in Francia, fece che quella Nazione . . . abbia disprezzato la nostra su questo particolare ancora" (cited by Fassini, Melodramma italiano, p. 44).

[27]Steele, The Conscious Lovers (1722). The quotation is taken from the edition by Shirley Strum Kenny (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1968), II. ii. 119-203. Steele had already expressed the same opinion of opera in 1709 in an article in The Tatler in which after recording that the

twenty-third performance of the bilingual opera Pyrrhus had been greeted with great applause, he then made the following comment: "This intelligence is not very acceptable to us Friends of the Theatre; for the Stage being an Entertainment of the Reason and all our Faculties, this Way of being pleased with the Suspence [sic] of them for three Hours together, and being given up to the shallow Satisfaction of the Eyes and Ears only, seems to arise rather from the Degeneracy of our Understanding, than an Improvement of our Diversions." The writer did not doubt that understanding could have no part in the pleasure afforded by opera, for "a great Part of the Performance was done in Italian" (The Tatler, 18 April 1709 [rpt. in The Lucubrations of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., London, 1723, I, 21-22]). Like many of his contemporaries, Steele objected to the performance of opera in a foreign tongue, incomprehensible to its audience. In The Spectator, he satirically compared a performance of Handel's first opera for London (Rinaldo) with Martin Powell's puppet show Whittington and his Cat, and concluded: "as the Wit in both Pieces is equal, I must prefer the Performance of Mr. Powell, because it is in our own Language" (The Spectator, 16 March 1711 [ed. Smith, I, 45-46]).

[28]The Conscious Lovers. Gli amanti interni: commedia inglese del Cav. Riccardo Steele, trans. Paolo Rolli (London, n.p. 1724), pp. 162-63. In the short-lived journal The Theatre, Steele had attacked the recently formed Royal Academy of Music for reviving the performances of opera in Italian in which "the Delight of Sound has prevail'd over the Pain of Sense." He rails against the "no-sense or Nonsense of Reason" and the "No-sense or Nonsense of Conscience" in the undertaking, raising the accusation that there is only one form of sense left, "the Sense of Profit." Thus the opera company has "a Stock laid in to impose upon the Stupidity of their Admirers; and it is expected that there will be a nightly Succession of Bubbles in Numbers large enough, who will part with their Cash, as well as their Understanding, to support a mechanick and mean Profit rais'd by Gentlemen of Honour and Quality, upon ingenuous Arts." (The Theatre, 1 March 1720 [ed. and rpt. John Loftis, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962, pp. 79-82]). As we shall see, some years earlier Addison had also applied the term "Nonsense" to opera (The Spectator, 21 March 1711 [ed. Smith, I, 56]).

[29]Dorris' interpretation of Rolli's note on opera is faulty, and reveals a lack of comprehension of Rolli's language and ironic tone. In the note Rolli defends melodramma by stating that the contemporary operas are "un continuato nonsenso" due to what he ironically considers "la somma Generosità e Giustezza di Mente di quelli che anno la Direzzione [sic] delle Opere, e particolarmente allor quando pochi fra loro possono per un solo voto di più vincer partito e prevalere sopra la giusta ed onorevole volontà d'altri pochi, e sopra l'indolente Negligenza del maggior Numero

assente." In order to economize, he continues, the directors "sono forzati dalla sola meccanica necessità a farsi servire da Idioti e Guastamestieri, inesauste fonti di Nonsenso" (Gli amanti interni, pp. 163-64). According to Dorris, in the passage cited above Rolli "answers the implied insult [found in The Conscious Lovers]; he defends the long and honorable tradition of the Italian dramma in musica--which, he adds, owes so much to the 'generosity and intellectual delicacy' of the directors of the London opera--against the old and familiar charge of being 'an inexhaustible font of Nonsense'" (Dorris, p. 180).

[30]In an epigram against Angelo Cori, rival librettist and teacher of Italian, Rolli places the following ironical claims in Cori's mouth: "Pel teatro signorile / vecchi drammi a tenue patto / racconciai con nuovo stile / . . . Se perdero i direttori / nell'impresa allor risorta, / fu il difetto ne'cantori, / perchè il libro non importa." Marziale in Albion, ed. Carlo Calcaterra in Rolli, Liriche, p. 255.

[31]Gli amanti interni, p. 164. Support for Rolli's claim concerning translators of libretti is provided by a perceptive article in The Spectator of March 21, 1711. In this issue, Addison sets out an account of Italian opera on the English stage, since, as he wittily comments on a phenomenon which was still new, "there is no question but our great Grandchildren will be very curious to know the Reason why their Forefathers used to sit together like an Audience of Foreigners in their own Country, and to hear whole Plays acted before them in a Tongue which they did not understand." Addison begins by criticizing the early practice of presenting Italian opera in translation. He feels the results were either not faithful to the original in their meaning in order to fit the English words to the music, or the faithful rendition of the text into English led to the transposition of words which destroyed the natural relationship between words and music. Neither did Addison approve of the next stage in the establishment of Italian opera in England, namely, the bilingual performance, for it presented the improbable spectacle of two or more characters conversing with one another in different languages. Addison turns his attention to the next stage with the following facetious remark: "At length the Audience grew tired of understanding Half the Opera, and therefore to ease themselves intirely of the Fatigue of Thinking, have so ordered it at present, that the whole Opera is performed in an unknown Tongue." While Addison allows that music is "a very agreeable Entertainment," he insists that if it "would take the entire Possession of our Ears, if it would make us incapable of hearing Sense," then he would banish it from the Commonwealth as Plato had done. For he asserts that the established rule of opera is that "nothing is capable of being well set to Musick, that is not Nonsense" (The Spectator, ed. Smith, I, 55-58). In the article mentioned

above, Addison promised to set forth his ideas on music, a promise he kept in The Spectator of April 3, 1711. In this second article, Addison defends the format of Italian opera, namely the use of arias and recitative, which he finds better suited than the alternation of song and spoken word, as was the practice of early English opera (the work of Purcell being a good example). However, he objects to the performance of Italian music accompanied by English words, on the grounds that vocal music should reflect the tone or accent of the language in which the text is written. For different nations do not express the same passions by the same sounds. We are dealing here with the perennial problem of music as expression of the word, and the rising eighteenth-century consciousness of the different genius of different nations and periods. Thus, according to Addison, a "Composer should fit his Music to the Genius of the People;" music, as well as poetry and the other arts "are to deduce their Laws and Rules from the general Sense and Taste of Mankind, and not from the Principles of those Arts themselves; or in other Words, the Taste is not to conform to the Art, but the Art to the Taste" (The Spectator, ed. Smith, I, 86-89). In 1707 Addison had already attempted to put his ideas into practice by writing the libretto for an English opera conceived in conformity with English taste. The opera, Rosamond, met with no success, nor did it bring about a revival of English opera, although twenty-six years later, with a new musical setting, it was much more favourably received (see Lord, "The English-Italian Opera Companies," p. 247). Addison would agree with Steele's character Indiana on the pleasure granted by opera: "its only Design is to gratify the Senses, and keep up an indolent Attention in the Audience" (The Spectator, 6 March 1711 [ed. Smith, I, 17]).

[32]On Rolli's libretti, see Fassini, Melodramma italiano, pp. 43-81, 95-100, 107-12, 145-61; Vallese, pp. 23-194; Dorris, pp. 129, 142-43, and 166-68.

Notes to Metastasio

[1]For the life and fortune of Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782), see Natali, Il Settecento, II, 782-825; Luigi Russo, Metastasio; Claudio Varese, Saggio sul Metastasio (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1950), reviewed by M. Manciotti in La Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 58 (1954), 264-67. For Metastasio's fortune outside Italy, see V. Cian, L'Italia e Spagna nel secolo XVIII (Torino, 1895); David J. Walsh, "Metastasio's Reception in 18. Century Poland and Russia," Italica, 46 (1964), 41-46; N. Jonard, "La fortune de Métastase en France au XVIII.e siècle," in Revue de Littérature Comparée, 40 (1966), 552-66; Hans Kramer, "Pietro Metastasio in Wien," Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, 52 (1970), 49-64. For the history of criticism on Metastasio, see Sergio Romagnoli, "Pietro Metastasio," in I classici italiani nella storia della critica, ed. Walter Binni (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1964), II, 45-88; Giazotto, Poesia melodrammatica. For additional bibliography on Metastasio, see Guido Nicastro, Metastasio e il teatro del primo Settecento (Bari: Laterza, 1973).

[2]See Ezio Raimondi, "Ragione e sensibilità nel teatro del Metastasio," in Sensibilità e razionalità, ed. Branca, I, 249-67.

[3]Letter to Clemente Sibiliato, 19 December 1776, in Tutte le opere di Pietro Metastasio, ed. Bruno Brunelli, V (Milano: Mondadori, 1954), 427. The correspondence of Metastasio is quoted here from vol. III (1951), vols. IV and V (1954) of the above edition, unless otherwise stated.

[4]Estratto dell'Arte poetica d'Aristotile e considerazioni su la medesima, in Tutte le opere, ed. Brunelli, II (1947), 1072. All quotations from this work, hereafter cited as Estratto, are taken from this edition.

[5]Letter to Alessandro Ypsilanti, Prince of Walachia, 28 March 1777, Opere, V, 447.

[6]Letter to Francesco Algarotti, 1 December 1746, Opere, III, 282.

[7]Dedicatory letter to Aurelia Gambacorta d'Este, 1 August 1716, Opere, III, 14. He speaks of his tragedy Il Giustino: "in cui non mi sono curato di recedere dal comune uso delle mutazioni di scene per serbar l'unità di luogo, parendomi in cio impossibile l'imitazione degli antichi a chi voglia comporre per il teatro presente e non per la sola sua gloria."

[8]Letter to Stelio Mastraca, 28 February 1739, Opere, III, 181.

[9]Estratto, p. 1062.

[10]Speaking of the Pastor Fido, Metastasio states that Guarini "ha saputo formarne un magico composto, che, a dispetto di tanti canoni poetici da lui arditamente violati, ha rapiti i voti tutti de'più colti popoli dell'Europa, non che quelli della sua nazione, ed è giunto a sedurre assai spesso il rigore di quegl'istessi giudici inesorabili che lo esaminavano per condannarlo" (Letter to Giovanni Claudio Pasquini, 27 January 1748, Opere, III, 334). Naturally, Metastasio's defence of Guarini's appeal for freedom from a strict observance of the rules is not new. Renaissance critics such as Paolo Beni (Risposta alle Considerationi del Malacreta, 1600) and Orlando Pescetti (Difesa del Pastor Fido, 1601), had maintained that invention and novelty were the prerogative of the poet. However, these critics, like Metastasio and Guarini himself, did not dismiss all classical rules out of hand; rather they upheld only those they regarded as consonant with the laws of nature and verisimilitude. See Weinberg, A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance, II, 1074-1105; Nicolas J. Perella, The Critical Fortune of Battista Guarini's "Il Pastor Fido" (Firenze: Olschki, 1973), pp. 9-79.

[11]In a letter to his brother Leopoldo, 5 March 1735 (Opere, III, 126), Metastasio denied having imitated Racine's Athalia in the composition of his Gioas re di Giuda: "Il mio maggior impegno è stato di non incontrarmi in cosa alcuna con lui: questo mi è riuscito." Similar sentiments can be found in his letter to A. P. L. d'Ormont Buyrette de Belloy, 30 April 1761 (Opere, IV, 196): "[I]o non merito l'altra lode che cortesemente mi date d'aver saputo con destro e mirabile artifizio rapire al vostro e adattare al teatro italiano le tragedie francesi: almeno io posso asserirvi candidamente che non me lo sono mai proposto."

[12]It is interesting to read Metastasio's own words on this point: "Ora a seconda della più recente lettura può ben darsi che talvolta si riconosca in alcuna delle mie opere il cibo di cui attualmente mi nutriva; ma è grande ingiustizia il non riconoscervi se non se il cibo francese, e chiamar furto quella riproduzione che si forma nel mio terreno, de'semi co'quali ho creduto lodevole e necessaria cura il fecondarlo. Hanno bisogno di questa coltura non meno il grasso che l'arido terreno: in questo secondo si conserva lungo tempo senza cambiar forma il seme che vi si nasconde ma non produce; nel primo all'incontro si corrompe, cambia figura e fermenta, ma rende alla sua stagione ventiquattro per uno. In queste differenze è facile il riconoscere quella che si trova fra il copista e l'autore" (Letter to Ranieri Calzabigi, 16 February 1754, Opere, III, 899).

[13]Letter to Calzabigi, 15 October 1754, Opere, III, 956-57. For Metastasio's opinion of Corneille and Racine, see his

letter to Giuseppe Aurelio Morano, 11 January 1770, Opere, IV, 790, and the Estratto, passim. See also Aurora Trigiani, Il teatro raciniano e i melodrammi di Pietro Metastasio (Torino: Universita di Torino, 1951).

[14]See his commentary on verses 31 and 309 of L'Arte poetica d'Orazio, in Opere, ed. Brunelli, II, 1257 and 1273.

[15]Speaking of Edward Young, Metastasio states: "Quanto sia grande il merito di questo eccellente scrittore si prova coi suoi difetti medesime, poichè, malgrado l'ordine negletto, le frequenti ripetizioni, l'ostinato costume di mostrarci sempre gli oggetti dal lato lor più funesto e di non volerci condurre mai alla virtù per altra via che per quella disperazione, malgrado, dico, tutte coteste così rincrescevoli circostanze, ei sa rendersi assolutamente padrone del suo lettore e trasportarlo seco dove gli aggrada" (Letter to Giuseppe Bottoni, 23 May 1771, Opere, V, 85). Brunelli notes that Metastasio's letter was used as a preface to Bottoni's translation of Young's The Night Thoughts, published as Le Notti in 1797 (Opere, V, 767). Further remarks made by Metastasio on these "nuvolosi scrittori" can be found in the letter to Aurelio de Giorgi Bertola, the eighteenth-century poet and critic, and admirer of Metastasio. Bertola published a critical study of Metastasio and his melodrammi entitled Osservazioni sopra Metastasio (Bassano: Remondini, 1784). The letter to Bertola is dated 18 March 1776 (Opere, V, 379).

[16]For Metastasio's thoughts on the Enlightenment, see his letters to his brother Leopoldo (7 July 1766 and 14 July 1766, Opere, IV, 477-79); to Sigismondo Chigi (27 June 1768, Opere, IV, 632); and again to Leopoldo (16 April 1770, Opere, IV, 825-26).

[17]Metastasio had contemplated writing a treatise on the Italian theatre (letter to the publisher Giuseppe Bettinelli, 14 June 1732, Opere, III, 67). On 26 February 1735 he wrote of his desire to write such a treatise "perchè mi pare che si sia fin ora sempre scorso il segno nel pronunciar giudizio in questa materia" (Letter to Mattia Damiani, Opere, III, 123). Four years later he wrote of the general lines his treatise would follow: "Non pretendo io già di fondar regole su le opere mie, ma avvertir gli altri di una quantità di scogli che, scrivendo quelle o vedendole rappresentare, ho dovuto per necessità conoscere; osservare se gli antichi vi abbiano inciampato mai e veder se Aristotile gli abbia tutti notati nella sua carta nautica. S'io debbo comunicar le mie osservazioni, convien, dico, le scriva, e, scritte che sono, è fatto il trattato" (Letter to Mastraca, 28 February 1739, Opere, III, 182). The treatise was never written. Metastasio wrote instead the Osservazioni sul teatro greco and the commentaries on the Poetics of Aristotle and Horace.

[18]Two thousand six hundred and fifty-four letters were published by Brunelli in vols. III, IV and V of his edition of the complete works. Joseph G. Fucilla published another fifteen in his article "Nuove lettere inedite del Metastasio," Convivium, 26 (1958), 586-93 (and see the favourable review by Antonio di Pretа in La Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 62 [1958], 450-51). A further ten letters were published by Mate Zorić, "Dieci lettere inedite di Pietro Metastasio," Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagrabiensia, 21-22 (1966), 321-36.

[19]Metastasio, trans., Dell'Arte poetica: Epistola di Q. Orazio Flacco a'Pisoni. Quotations are taken from the Brunelli edition of Metastasio's works, II, 1229-78, and cited hereafter as Orazio.

[20]The Osservazioni sul teatro greco were written for the poet's own use, and published posthumously in the d'Ayala edition of Metastasio's works (1785). References in this study are made to Brunelli's edition of Tutte le opere, II, 1118-61.

[21]Only 164 of the 2654 letters published by Brunelli pre-date 1740, the middle year of Metastasio's life.

[22]See Metastasio's letters to Algarotti, 16 September 1747 (Opere, III, 322); to F-J. Chastellux, 29 January 1766 (Opere, IV, 439); and to Saverio Mattei, 11 March 1773 (Opere, V, 219). In the Preface to the Estratto, he writes: "Gl'indispensabili doveri dell'impiego al quale mi ritrovo da tanti anni fortunatamente destinato non mi avean mai lasciato fin ora tutto l'ozio che bisogna alla compiuta esecuzione [dell'Estratto] . . . ma non ho mai perciò trascurato frattanto di meditarlo, ed in tutti i quantunque brevi intervalli che si sono di tratto in tratto frapposti alle altre mie necessarie occupazioni, di andar sempre e raccogliendo e notando tutto ciò che potesse servire un giorno di materiale all'ideato edificio" (p. 959).

[23]See his letters to Algarotti, 7 May 1746 (Opere, III, 270); to Damiani, 10 May 1773 (Opere, V, 234); and to Morano, 28 February 1774 (Opere, V, 284).

[24]On August 14, 1773 he wrote to Damiani that the two works "han servito per impiegar non represensibilmente l'ozio mio, ma non le ho, scrivendo, destinate alla pubblica luce" (Opere, V, 250). While Metastasio's avowed reluctance to publish these critical works is generally emphasized by modern scholars, it should be noted that already at the genetical stage of the commentary on Horace, Metastasio was considering a possible public. On 16 September 1747 he wrote to Algarotti: "l'occasione di tradurre la lettera Ad Pisones mi fece già sovvenire alcune mie riflessioni non del tutto le più comuni, che la lunga pratica del poetico mestiere mi ha di quando in quando

suggerite. Ho incominciato a scriverle come non affatto inutili a'candidati di Parnaso" (Opere, III, 322).

[25]Letter to Diodati, 30 July 1778, Opere, V, 520. Fubini is therefore inaccurate in his opinion that Metastasio "non si decise mai a render pubbliche" his observations on the Poetics (see Fubini's Introduction to his edition of Metastasio, Opere [Milano: Ricciardi, 1968], pp. 17 and 23).

[26]"[I]n questi due libretti io combatto i sofismi poetici che molti dottissimi ma inesperti critici hanno fatto passare nello scorso secolo per canoni indispensabili del coturno, che o non han mai o sfortunatamente calzato" (Letter to Damiani, 3 January 1774, Opere, V, 275-76).

[27]"[E] questi due ultimi lavori mi spiacerebbe solo che rimanessero oscuri" (Letter to Damiani, 1 May 1775, Opere, V, 337).

[28]Letter to Giuseppe Pezzana, 10 November 1781, Opere, V, 693.

[29]In the Preface to the Estratto he wrote: "Il Ciel mi guardi dall'ardita pretensione d'aver formata in questo Estratto una specie di nuova Poetica: la seduttrice graduazione di maestro ne ha tante fin ora prodotte, che il numero di queste ha già di gran lungo superato quello de'bisognosi d'erudirsi; e ve n'ha pur troppo più di quello che basta per confondere, disanimare, e rendere aridi affatto ed infecondi i più felici, i più coraggiosi ed i più fertili ingegni che sappia la benefica natura produrre" (pp. 959-60).

[30]The early study by Paolo Arcari, L'arte poetica di Pietro Metastasio (Milano: Libreria Editrice Nazionale, 1902) is lacking in critical conclusions. More superficial is the article by Baldo Peroni, "I melodrammi e le teorie drammatiche di Pietro Metastasio," Rivista teatrale italiana, 4 (1902), 305-19. More intelligent conclusions were drawn by L. Russo in his monograph, Metastasio, pp. 216-34, and by Varese, Saggio sul Metastasio, pp. 30-37. Of too limited scope are the studies by Ulrico Pannuti, "Il Metastasio e le tre unità," Giornale italiano di filologia, 9 (1956), 356-60, and Ermanno Scuderi, "Metastasio teorico di poesia," Ausonia, 12 (1957), 45-48 (see the respective reviews by Binni in Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 61 [1957], 142-43; and 301). Fubini's rapid glance in the Introduction to his edition of the Opere is necessarily limited by the nature of the work (pp. 17-19). Recognizing their importance for an understanding of the poet-librettist, Binni makes some use of the two critical works in his re-evaluation of the figure of Metastasio and his dramas ("Il Metastasio," in L'Arcadia e il Metastasio, pp. 283-300).

[31]Dondoni, "Della fortuna d'Orazio: L'Arte poetica tradotta e commentata dal Metastasio: I. - Principi critici," Istituto Lombardo: Rendiconti letterari, 95 (1961), 453-80, and "II. - Principi strutturali," ibid., 96 (1962), 293-309, reviewed in Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 67 (1963), 360; Gavazzeni, "Metastasio, lingua poetica e imitazione," in his Studi metastasiani (Padova: Liviana, 1964), pp. 143-179. See also the Introduction to Gavazzeni's edition of Metastasio, Opere scelte (1968; rpt. Torino: U.T.E.T., 1971).

[32]Russo, Metastasio, p. 221; Mario Apollonio, Metastasio (Brescia: La Scuola, 1950), p. 142; Varese, Saggio sul Metastasio, pp. 15 and 33; Gavazzeni, Studi metastasiani, p. 162; Binni, L'Arcadia e il Metastasio, p. 292; Fubini, ed., Opere di Metastasio, p. 18.

[33]Estratto, p. 960.

[34]It is interesting to read Metastasio's words on his intention to translate the Poetics with "chiarezza" and "fedeltà", and so that "né su le orme dell'erudito Dacier si fosse costretto Aristotile a dire ciò che a noi fosse paruto bene ch'ei dicesse: né su quelle per l'opposto del dottissimo Castelvetro si fosse presentata al pubblico una esposizione più tenebrosa del testo" (Letter to Algarotti, 16 September 1747, in Opere, III, 322). While much has been made by modern critics about Metastasio's reluctance to involve himself in polemics (Russo, Metastasio, pp. 73-74; Fubini, Introduction to Metastasio, Opere, pp. 17 and 230), one cannot overlook the fact that in the Estratto, Metastasio's tone is quite polemical and deliberately so.

[35]Estratto, p. 1022.

[36]Discussing a diverse interpretation of Corneille and Dacier on a passage of Aristotle, Metastasio concludes: "Ma finalmente, fra dispareri così autorevoli e contradittorii, io non veggo a chi più sicuramente ricorrere che alle decisioni della esperienza" (Estratto, p. 1072).

[37]"Tutte le arti son figlie dell'esperienza, e tutte, molto più della madre, son sottoposte agli errori, quando da lei si scompagnano; poiché l'esperienza, operando, urta necessariamente negl'inconvenienti: e non potendo proceder oltre col suo lavoro, si trova costretta a correggersi. Ma le arti che, nulla operando, al solo raziocinio si fidano, sono esposte a traviar dal buon cammino, dietro la scorta degl'infiniti paralogismi a'quali il raziocinio e soggetto: e non han mai chi le avverta" (Estratto, pp. 1022-23).

[38]Orazio, p. 1257 (l. 31).

[39]*Orazio*, pp. 1275-77 (l. 408).

[40]*Estratto*, p. 967.

[41]Therefore Metastasio condemns the attempts (such as Houdart de La Motte's) to make prose an acceptable medium of poetry (*Estratto*, p. 1046).

[42]*Estratto*, p. 963.

[43]*Estratto*, p. 970.

[44]*Estratto*, p. 976.

[45]Metastasio would have found a precedent in Gravina (e.g., *Della tragedia*, pp. 543-44, 557 ff.) for citing Castelvetro to reinforce his own position on poetry and music, but he goes beyond Gravina in assimilating Castelvetro into his own system.

[46]Castelvetro, *Poetica d'Aristotile*, p. 35a. On Castelvetro's naturalism, see Bernard Weinberg, "Castelvetro's Theory of Poetics," pp. 349-71; and *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, I, 502-13; G. Morpugo Tagliabue, "La retorica aristotelica e il barocco," *Retorica e barocco*, Atti del III Congresso Internazionale di Studi Umanistici, ed. E. Castelli (Roma, 1955), pp. 119-95; Franco Croce, "Le poetiche del barocco in Italia," *Momenti e problemi di storia dell'estetica*, I (1959), 547-75; Pietro Mazzamuto, "Lodovico Castelvetro," in *Letteratura italiana: I Minori*, II (1961), 1221-35; Aguzzi-Barbagli, "*Ingegno*, *acutezza* and *meraviglia*," pp. 83-87; Riccardo Scrivano, "Il razionalismo critico di Ludovico Castelvetro," in *Cultura e letteratura nel Cinquecento* (Roma: Ateneo, 1966), pp. 169-78.

[47]*Estratto*, p. 977.

[48]Metastasio also interprets l. 277 of Horace's *Arte poetica* "per mostrare ad evidenza che i drammi greci e latini si cantavano intieramente" (*Orazio*, p. 1273).

[49]Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1450 b, trans. Bywater, p. 1462.

[50]Castelvetro, *Poetica d'Aristotele*, pp. 83a-85a.

[51]*Estratto*, p. 1029. The underlining reproduces the italics in the text.

[52]*Estratto*, p. 983.

[53]Estratto, p. 970.

[54]Part of this embellishment, according to Metastasio, is the use of rhyme which, in his view, added to the attraction and musicality of the language. Metastasio defended the use of rhyme against the proponents of blank verse (Estratto, p. 1109). In one of his last letters addressed to Carlo Castone della Torre di Rezzonico, he wrote: "Io sono così persuaso della necessità della rima per render più fisicamente allettatrice la nostra poesia, che non credo praticabile il verso sciolto. . . . Assuefatto nella mia lunga vita a conoscermi debitore alla rima d'una gran parte della tolleranza che le mie fanfaluche canore hanno esatta dal pubblico, non potrei aver l'ingratitudine di perseguitarla" (Letter of 18 February 1782, Opere, V, 709). The compatibility of blank verse and poetry (already attempted by Gian Giorgio Trissino in his tragedy Sofonisba, written in 1515) aroused much debate in the eighteenth century, culminating in such blank verse compositions as Parini's Il Giorno, Cesarotti's translation of Ossian, and Foscolo's Sepolcri.

[55]Letter to Giuseppe Riva, 20 September 1732, Opere, III, 76. Reasons of an artistic, rather than purely theoretical nature, guide him again when, fourteen years later, he cautions Algarotti on the use of words which, while acceptable in prose, were not part of the poetic language. For Metastasio, their unaccustomed use in poetry would create a dissonance that would impair the poetic impact on the reader (Letter of 27 October 1746, Opere, III, 279). Metastasio held moderate views on the Questione della lingua. In the Estratto he advises discretion on the use of foreign words (pp. 1102-03). In his notes on Horace he advocates delay in the use of neologisms in poetry until their use has been sanctioned by cultured persons (Orazio, p. 1261, l. 58). Yet he does not exclude the validity of words not found in Italian classics. Furthermore, he claims in a letter to Algarotti that he sympathizes with the younger writer's desire to modernize the language, even suggesting that he would gladly assist him, were it not for his dislike of literary polemics: "[M]a così in questa come nella maggior parte delle costumanze civili io credo impresa meno difficile l'accomodar me alla moltitudine che quella di disingannarla" (Letter of 27 October 1746, Opere, III, 279-80). Nevertheless, Melchiorre Cesarotti, one of the most important figures in the eighteenth-century debate on the language, attributed to Metastasio a positive and progressive function in propagating the Italian language throughout Europe: "[Metastasio e Goldoni] resero la nostra lingua alquanto piú nota e cara all'Europa, di quel che facessero i Villani ed i Passavanti" (Saggio sulla filosofia delle lingue, ed. Mario Puppo [Milano: Marzorati, 1969], pp. 64-65). For information on the age-old "question of the language," see Maurizio Vitale, La questione della lingua (Palermo: Palumbo, 1967); Francesco Barberini, Problemi di

linguistica italiana (Lanciano: Itinerari, 1970), pp. 91-102; Gianfranco Folena, "Le origini e il significato del rinnovamento linguistico nel Settecento italiano," in Problemi di lingua e letteratura italiana del Settecento (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1965), pp. 392-427.

[56]Letter of 13 July 1780, Opere, V, 628.

[57]On Metastasio's poetic language, see Binni, L'Arcadia e il Metastasio, p. 300-07; Gavazzeni, Studi metastasiani, pp. 162-79.

[58]See the defence of Guarini's Pastor Fido in his letter to Pasquini, 27 January 1748 (Opere, III, 334).

[59]"[I]n quei casi, ne'quali non può assolutamente accordarsi con la materia il verisimile, è in obbligo l'imitatore d'abbandonar il verisimile, e non la materia; sicuro che il discreto spettatore non pretende da lui l'impossibile" (Estratto, p. 987).

[60]Estratto, p. 994.

[61]See also the note to l. 12 of Orazio, p. 1256.

[62]For example, his letter to Riva, 20 September 1732, Opere, III, 72-76; letter to Johann Adolph Hasse, 21 February 1748, Opere, III, 345-46.

[63]Estratto, p. 992.

[64]Letter to Leopoldo Camillo Volta, 9 August 1779, Opere, V, 578.

[65]Letter to Phillip Hallam, 16 December 1765, Opere, IV, 431-32.

[66]Letter to François Jean Chastellux, 15 July 1765, Opere, IV, 398. On the non-musical performance of Metastasio's works, Luigi Ronga makes the following comment: "La scarsezza estrema di notizie sulla rappresentazione senza musica dei drammi metastasiani indurebbe a credere che si trattasse di caso assai infrequente" ("L'opera metastasiana," in Opere di Pietro Metastasio, ed. Fubini, p. xiv). Giambattista Mancini, in his Pensieri e riflessioni pratiche sopra il canto figurato (1774), reports on the recited performance of Artaserse in Venice and its success with the public, due to the fact that "the actors had characterized so well with their gestures, and well-spoken

recitatives, the personages which they represented" (Practical Reflections on Figured Singing, trans. Edward Foreman [Champaign, Ill.: Pro Musica Press, 1967], p. 71).

[67]Metastasio questions the rigorous interpretation of Aristotle's Poetics which makes critics insist that only a single action can be represented in a tragedy. Metastasio's concept of unity of action is closer to the unité d'interêt advocated in France by Houdart de La Motte in his Discours préliminaires sur la tragédie (1730). That is, several actions (or subplots) are acceptable in a drama, provided that they revolve around, and are thematically connected to one central issue. This would justify the structure of Metastasio's own melodrammi. However, this concept of unity of interest was not original to La Motte, having already been discussed by Counter-Reformation Italian critics. To a considerable extent the relations between Italian writings of that period and French thought of the eighteenth-century remain to be examined, and are outside the scope of this thesis.

[68]Estratto, pp. 1003-06. Metastasio qualifies the art of changing scenes in the following words: "la moderna incantatrice invenzione degl'instantanei cambiamenti delle apparenze teatrali, che scaricano la fantasia degli spettatori dal peso di figurarseli, che rendono più verisimili le azioni che vi succedono, e che aggiungono allo spettacolo un così generalmente gradito ed ingegnoso ornamento" (pp. 1004-05).

[69]Estratto, pp. 1006-07.

[70]Estratto, p. 1015.

[71]Estratto, p. 1007.

[72]Estratto, pp. 1058-66 and Orazio, pp. 1268-69 (l. 189), and passim. Metastasio defends love as subject matter (and thus as the principle theme of his own melodrammi) in the following passage of the Estratto: "Né so capire perchè della passione amorosa, tanto meno evitabile, tanto più comune e tanto più d'ogni altra bisognosa di freno, non abbiano a prodursi su la scena i teneri insieme ed ammirabili esempi che c'instruiscano a quai sacri doveri sia necessario e glorioso il sacrificarla: e perchè non abbiano a reputarsi degne del coturno tante vincitrici di se stesse innamorate eroine; e ne debbano esser credute all'incontro degnissime le Fedre incestuose e le adultere Clitennestre" (p. 1033).

[73]See Beatrice Corrigan, "All Happy Endings: Libretti of the Late Seicento," Forum Italicum, 7 (1973), 250-67.

[74]See Weinberg, History of Literary Criticism in the Italian

Renaissance, I, 441.

[75]Letter to Aurelia Gambacorta d'Este, 1 August 1716, Opere, III, 15.

[76]Estratto, p. 1078.

[77]Varese, Saggio sul Metastasio, p. 9; Pistorelli, I melodrammi di Zeno, p. 9. In spite of Dido's self-immolation, the opera was among the most popular of Metastasio's melodrammi, and enjoyed numerous performances and revivals set to music by over sixty different composers from 1724 to 1823. Public disapproval of the tragic ending in Catone was stronger. Metastasio consequently modified the third act to replace Cato's death-scene with a description of Cato's final agony recited by his daughter. The new Catone enjoyed considerable success throughout the eighteenth century. However, while bowing to public pressure, Metastasio remained personally convinced that the original form of what was one of his favourite dramas was the most suitable. In 1733 he requested his publisher, Giuseppe Bettinelli, to print both versions. Even in the late edition of 1780, Metastasio felt obliged to justify the second version of Catone by attributing the alteration to the sensibilities of the audience. See Brunelli's note to his edition of the play (Opere, I, 1399n).

[78]Estratto, pp. 1030-31.

[79]In the 'azione musicale' Il Parnaso accusato e difeso (1738), Metastasio entrusts the defence of his poetics to Apollo, who thus justifies the attempt of the Muses to awaken the passions of men: "Studiansi, è ver, le umane / Passioni a destar; ma chi volesse / Estinguere nell'uomo, un tronco, un sasso / Del l'uom faria. Non si corregge il mondo / Si distrugge così" (in Opere, II, 253).

[80]Estratto, pp. 1074-75. In the Parnaso accusato e difeso, Apollo states: "Che nuoce altrui, se l'ingegnosa scena / Finge un guerriero, un cittadino, un padre / Purché ritrovi in esso / Lo spettator se stesso, e ch'indi impari / Qual è il dover primiero / D'un cittadin, d'un padre e d'un guerriero?" (Opere, II, 255). On Metastasio's characters as exemplars, see Paul Renucci, "Irradiazione eroica e impostazione psicologica nei drammi del Metastasio," in Problemi di lingua e letteratura, pp. 56-70, and cf. Binni's remarks on this paper, Problemi, pp. 86-89.

[81]Estratto, p. 1032.

[82]For a discussion of the concepts of imitation in eighteenth-

century England, see Herbert M. Schueller, "Literature and Music as Sister Arts: An Aspect of Aesthetic Theory in Eighteenth-Century Britain," Philological Quarterly, 26 (1947), 198-202; and "'Imitation' and 'Expression' in British Music Criticism in the 18th Century," Musical Quarterly, 34 (1948), 544-66; Lawrence Lipking, The Ordering of the Arts in Eighteenth-Century England (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 218-23. For the investigations into the correspondences between the arts, see also James S. Malek, The Arts Compared: An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics (Detriot: Wayne State University Press, 1974).

[83]For an exposition of the main lines of this type of research in England, see Schueller, "Correspondences between Music and the Sister Arts according to 18th Century Aesthetic Theory," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 11 (1953), 334-59, on which the following remarks are based.

[84]Avison, An Essay on Musical Expression (1753); Jacob, Of the Sister Arts: An Essay (1734); Harris, A Discourse on Music, Poetry and Painting (1744); Dr. John Brown, Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions of Poetry and Music (1763), translated into Italian by Pietro Crocchi in 1772; John Brown, Letters upon the Poetry and Music of the Italian Opera (1789); Webb, Observations on the Correspondence between Poetry and Music (1769); Beattie, On Poetry and Music as They Affect the Mind, in Essays (1776); Jones, Essay on the Arts Commonly called Imitative, in Works of Sir William Jones, vol. IV (1799); Gunn, The Art of Playing the German Flute (1793); Alison, Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste (1790); Twining, Aristotle's Treatise on Poetry Translated, and Two Dissertations, on Poetical and Musical Imitation (1789).

[85]For a discussion of the main lines of French speculations, see Enrico Fubini, Gli enciclopedisti e la musica (Torino: Einaudi, 1971), from which the following conclusions are drawn.

[86]Gli enciclopedisti e la musica, p. 199.

[87]Rousseau, Lettre sur la musique française (1752); and Essai sur l'origine des langues (published posthumously in 1781); Diderot, Le Neveu de Rameau (published posthumously in 1812); and Lettre sur les sourds et muets (1751); and Leçons de clavecin et principes d'harmonie (1771); and Lettre au sujet des observations du chevalier de Chastellux (1771); Grimm, "Poème lyrique," Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers (1765); Du Bos, Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et la peinture (1733); Chastellux, Essai sur l'union de la poésie et de la musique (1765); Garcin, Traité du mélodrame ou Réflexions sur la musique dramatique

(1772); Lacepède, La poétique de la musique (1785).

[88]The coincidence in the general lines of critical approach between English studies dealing with the relationship of poetry and music, and certain aspects of Metastasio's endeavours is very suggestive. As far as I am aware, no study exists of the possibility of a direct influence of English criticism on Metastasio's theories of melodramma, and on those of subsequent Italian critics. Such an investigation, though of direct relevance to this thesis, must be pursued elsewhere.

[89]On Metastasio and music, see Andrea Della Corte, "L'estetica musicale di P. Metastasio," in Settecento italiano: Paisiello (Torino: Bocca, 1922), pp. 263-335; also Ronga, "L'opera metastasiana," pp. vii-xxxiii.

[90]Letter of 7 May 1767, in Opere, IV, 538.

[91]Letter of 20 October 1749, in Opere, III, 434. In his commentary on the letter, Della Corte conjectures that by sinfonia Metastasio may have meant a musical accompaniment played on a larger number of instruments than usual. However, he questions Metastasio's ability to have envisaged the new concept, brought to maturity in the nineteenth century, of symphony as the instrumental expression of man's inner being. See his L'estetica musicale di Metastasio, pp. 272-73.

[92]Opere, III, 430-35. In this ideal, Metastasio seems to anticipate Gluck whose style in general he disliked.

[93]Letter to Chastellux, 15 July 1765, in Opere, IV, 398-99.

[94]Letter to Carlo Broschi, 8 December 1756, in Opere, III, 1153. For the relations between Metastasio and the great castrato singer (known professionally as Farinelli or Farinello), see Lodovico Frati, "Metastasio e Farinelli," Rivista musicale italiana, 20 (1913), 1-32.

[95]Letter to Chastellux, 29 January 1766, Opere, IV, 436-38.

[96]Opere, IV, 439.

[97]Letter to Mattei, 5 April 1770, Opere, IV, 816-17. Mattei was an ardent admirer of Metastasio. A professor of oriental languages, he published biographies of Metastasio and Jommelli (Memorie per servire alla vita del Metastasio, and Elogio del Jomelli o sia il progresso della poesia e musica teatrale, in Metastasio e Jommelli (Roma: Martini, 1785). According to Mattei, Gluck and Calzabigi were mistaken in their attempts

to reform opera. Neither poetry nor music needed reform; Metastasio and Jommelli had brought them to the peak of perfection. It was the singers and audience who were in need of correction (Elogio del Jommelli, p. 112). Mattei recognized the musicality of Metastasio's language, asserting that in his dramas "la melodia delle parole era maggiore di quella delle note" (p. 71). Mattei also wrote a short essay which was published in the third volume of the 1785 edition of Metastasio's works. The essay does not bring any significant contribution to the eighteenth-century discussion of opera, but reiterates the praises of Metastasio ("La filosofia della musica o sia la riforma del teatro," in Opere del Metastasio [Nice, 1785], III, iii-xliii).

[98]Letter to Mattei, 9 July 1770, Opere, V, 28.

[99]Letter "All'abate N. N.," 15 March 1756, Opere, III, 1102.

[100]Letter to Pasquini, 29 June 1748, Opere, III, 353.

[101]Letter of 6 November 1751, Opere, III, 682.

[102]Letter of 8 December 1756, Opere, III, 1152-53.

[103]Letter published by Fucilla, "Nuove lettere inedite," p. 588.

[104]Letter of 6 April 1765, Opere, IV, 383-84.

[105]Letter of 7 May 1767, Opere, IV, 538. See also the Estratto, pp. 970 and 1107.

[106]Estratto, p. 1068.

[107]Letter of 7 May 1767, Opere, IV, 538-39.

[108]Raymond Monelle, "The Rehabilitation of Metastasio," Music and Letters, 57 (1976), 286-90.

[109]In his article "Metastasio e la musica," G. L. Luzzato undertakes an examination of two of Metastasio's libretti in conjunction with their musical settings: Betulia liberata set to music by Mozart, and Ipermestra with the music of Francesco di Majo (Cenobio, 17 [1968], 102-08).

[110]Letter of 17 March 1753, Opere, III, 801.

[111]Ronga, "L'opera metastasiana," p. xx.

[112]*Estratto*, pp. 1029-30.

[113]"Istruito fin da giovinetto dal Caloprese nella prospettiva e nella meccanica, il Trapassi conosceva a fondo quella ch'ei chiamava 'moderna incantatrice invenzione degl'istantanei cambiamenti delle apparenze teatrali'" (Angelo Scuppa, *Pietro Metastasio e il melodramma italiano* [Modena: Società Tipografica Modenese, 1932], p. 88). However, the scenery was sketched for him by the theatre architect. See, for example, his letter to Farinelli, 4 February 1754, in *Opere*, III, 894, from which the quotation in the text is taken.

[114]"Nè di meno gli è debitrice l'arte della decorazion teatrale. Questo pregio inosservato finora da quasi tutti coloro, che leggono Metastasio, meriterebbe un ragionamento a parte per far vedere con quanta destrezza abbia egli meneggiato [sic] un ramo così interessante del melodramma. . . . Il decoratore . . . troverebbe nel piano di ciascuno de'suoi componimenti il segreto, ma costante rapporto, che dee metter l'arte fra la musica e la prospettiva, o ciò ch'e lo stesso, fra l'occhio e l'orecchio ne vedrebbe quante fatiche gliene abbia risparmiato il poeta, qual folla di mezzi indicati a fine di preparare, mantenere, ed accrescere l'illusione . . . che scorgonsi ad ogni tratto ne'suoi componimenti" (Arteaga, *Rivoluzioni del teatro musicale*, II, 97-98, incorrectly numbered--should be pp. 107-08).

[115]In a letter of 10 March 1736, for example, Metastasio informed his brother Leopoldo about his drama *Achille*: "La parte è fatta per lui [the singer Felice Salimbeni]; io l'ho per mio interesse istruito con molta fatica; ed egli è riuscito a segno, che son persuaso che in nessun luogo, dove egli non sia, questo dramma farà lo strepito che dovrebbe fare" (*Opere*, III, 136). Giambattista Mancini, in his treatise on singing, commended Metastasio as an instructor in acting (*Practical Reflections on Figured Singing*, p. 76).

[116]Ronga, "L'opera metastasiana," p. xix.

[117]See for example the letter to Anna Francesca Pignatelli di Belmonte, 16 December 1754, *Opere*, III, 967, and the letter to Farinelli, 6 November 1751, *Opere*, III, 682. On Metastasio as a musician, see Amaldo Bonaventura, "Pietro Metastasio musicista," *Musica d'oggi*, 14 (1932), 8-12.

[118]"Il Metastasio curava che nei suoi drammi il valore o più semplicemente la funzione emotiva dei suoni fosse vigilata da un senso innato o da una volontà acquisita di ridurli ad un'armonia di sillabe disposta nel limite stretto della strofe in modo da anticipare, per contenerla e guidarla, ogni aggiunta

musicale successiva . . . poiché a lui premeva che la musica non recasse un turbamento capace di alterare l'ordine, la chiarezza di espressioni purificate dalla ragione ("L'opera metastasiana," p. xvi).

[119]Estratto, p. 1066. Metastasio's comic intermezzo L'impresario delle Canarie (1724), as well as many references in his letters, amply reveal the poet's awareness of theatrical moeurs which affected the outcome of the musical theatre of the time.

[120]Estratto, p. 1089. See also Il Parnaso accusato e difeso: "Sul faticoso ed erto / Giogo della Virtù l'alme ritrose / Sempre guidar per vie fiorite, e sempre / Insegnar dilettando, è delle Muse / Cura e pensiero" (Opere, II, 255).

[121]Estratto, p. 1091.

[122]For a bibliography on Goldoni (1707-1793), see Guido Nicastro, Goldoni e il teatro del secondo Settecento (Bari: Laterza, 1974), pp. 79-83.

[123]Mémoires de M. Goldoni (1787), in Tutte le opere di Carlo Goldoni, ed. Giuseppe Ortolani, I (Milano: Mondadori, 1935), 60.

[124]Dedication to Terenzio, in Tutte le opere, V (1941), 685.

[125]Mémoires, pp. 187-88.

[126]Goldoni admits his indebtedness to Didone and Issipile in the Prefazione to the 1761-78 Pasquali edition of his works (rpt. in Tutte le opere, I, 675). Ortolani, in his notes to Goldoni's La generosità politica (1736), claims that Goldoni was moved again to try his hand at opera seria by the success of Metastasio's drama La clemenza di Tito in 1735 (see Tutte le opere, XII [1952], 1165). Goldoni's libretti for opera seria show his dependence on Zeno, and especially Metastasio, both in style and form. They reveal a lack of the poetic qualities that give his comedies their universal appeal. His characters remain lifeless, almost a parody of the tragic figures they purport to portray.

[127]Mémoires, p. 112.

[128]Since this study is concerned with critical attitudes to opera seria, Goldoni's comic operas will not be taken into consideration. For his importance in the development of Italian comic opera, see Andrea Della Corte, L'opera comica italiana nel Settecento (Bari: Laterza, 1923), and "Il libretto e

l'influenza di Goldoni," in Studi goldoniani, ed. Vittore Branca and Nicola Mangini (Venezia: Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1960), pp. 567-70; see also Domenico de'Paoli, "Il librettista Carlo Goldoni e l'opera comica veneziana," Studi goldoniani, pp. 571-91.

[129]In his Mémoires, Goldoni recounts his visit to Zeno, to whom he read his Gustavo I re di Svezia. Goldoni records Zeno's reaction in the following words: "C'est bon, me dit-il en me prenant par le main, c'est bon pour la foire de l'Ascension." This reference to the occasion for which the opera was intended (that is, not the main opera season) made Goldoni painfully aware of the mediocrity of his work. However, while Zeno did not criticize specific passages in the opera, Goldoni was able to recognize the good and bad points of his text from Zeno's reactions to his reading, and he corrected the libretto accordingly (Mémoires, pp. 187-88). Set to music by Baldassare Galuppi, the opera met with moderate success.

[130]"Pare facile, a chi non sa quanto costi, quell'apparente facilità che innamora. Che vuol dire, che volendo sostituire a un vostro epiteto, a un vostro aggiunto qualche altro termine equivalente, perderà sempre quel pregio che si ravvisa nel vostro? Vuol dire, che Voi studiate i termini, ma sapete sì dolcemente unirli, che sembrano necessariamente caduti" (from the Dedication to Terenzio, pp. 686-87).

[131]Dedication to Terenzio, p. 686.

[132]In the author's Preface, Goldoni writes that all impresarios agree on one point: "tutti accordano, e provano, e si lamentano, che un'impresa d'Opera in musica è il più grande, il più fastidioso e il più pericoloso degl'imbarazzi" (L'impresario delle Smirne, in Tutte le opere, VII [1946], 483). Goldoni's play reveals its author's familiarity with Metastasio's L'impresario delle Canarie, not only in title and theme, but also in certain details, such as the choice of the name Nibbio for the theatre director in the original version of the play (Metastasio's impresario bore that name), and the excuses the aspiring prima donna offers for her reluctance to perform in her rooms. However, Goldoni's play goes beyond Metastasio's short intermezzo to present a broader picture of operatic life.

[133]Prefazioni, p. 717.

[134]Mémoires, pp. 127-31. The episode is also recorded in Prefazioni, pp. 687-90.

[135]"L'Opera piacque mediocremente. Il libro non poteva aver gran fortuna a fronte di quelli di Metastasio" (Prefazioni,

p. 738).

[136]Mémoires, p. 188.

[137]Among those who attribute the title of reformer to Metastasio are Romain Rolland, "Metastasio: Forerunner of Gluck," in A Musical Tour Through the Land of the Past (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1922), pp. 145-62; Bruno Brunelli, "Grandezza e decadenza della riforma metastasiana," Rivista italiana del dramma, 4 (1940), 30-54; Apollonio, Metastasio, p. 40; Raimondi, "Ragione e sensibilità," p. 263. However, most scholars limit to a greater or lesser degree the extent of the reform of melodramma that Metastasio is supposed to have accomplished. See Della Corte, L'estetica musicale di Metastasio, pp. 118 and 333; Russo, Metastasio, pp. 185-86; Natali, Il Settecento, II, 810; Calcaterra, Poesia e canto, p. 245; Binni, L'Arcadia e il Metastasio, pp. 251 and 423; Gavazzeni, in his Introduction to Metastasio, Opere scelte, p. 43; Ronga, "L'opera metastasiana," p. xxxi; Fubini, in the Introduction to his edition of Metastasio, Opere, p. 9; Grout, A Short History of Opera, I, 186.

[138]One example is Muratori, who generally expressed a favourable opinion of Metastasio's works. See, for instance, Muratori's letter to Giuseppe Riva, 27 January 1735, in Epistolario, VIII, 3397-98. Another of Metastasio's admirers was Giuseppe Baretti (1719-1789). Giazotto refers to him as "la colonna centrale del metastasismo settecentesco . . . di quel metastasismo elogiativo ed apologetico" which Giazotto calls "un attegiamento affatto esaltato" (Poesia melodrammatica, p. 150). In fact, Baretti's praise of Metastasio as a poet and dramatist appears throughout his writings, culminating in the laudatory essay published in his journal La frusta letteraria on 1 Nov. 1763 (see the edition of this journal by Luigi Piccioni [Bari: Laterza, 1932], I, 60-67). However, in the glorification of Metastasio as "poeta de'più grandi che s'abbia il mondo" one senses an ironic undertone. For example, among the other praiseworthy qualities of Metastasio (poetic invention, clear and natural speech, the portrayal of virtuous actions, knowledge of human nature, ability to move the spectator), Baretti lists the librettist's creativity within the severe restrictions imposed by the very essence of melodramma: "Mi dicano ora i . . . sonettisti . . . canzonisti e . . . capitolisti d'Italia, se le loro tanto vantate intellettuali fatiche sono da paragonarsi a un millesimo con la fatica intellettuale d'un poeta di drammi musicali; voglio dire se e'possono in buona coscienza continuare a paragonarsi . . . con uno, che non solamente ha fatto tante quasi perfettissime tragedie sottomettendosi a quelle tante leggi; ma che fu anzi l'autore di quelle molteplici e rigidissime leggi, essendosi per tempo avveduto che senz'esse non vi sarebbe stato mai modo di rendere universale il diletto d'un dramma musicale?" (pp. 65-66). Baretti concludes his

panegyric of Metastasio on a somewhat ambiguous note: "Pietro Metastasio è veramente un poeta degno d'imperadori e d'imperadrici" (p. 67). Whatever motive lay behind this excessive praise, Baretti's writings leave no doubt that Metastasio's dramas pleased him. On the other hand, while accepting it as a theatrical form, his opinion of melodramma in general was not high. Though Baretti did not write a treatise on opera, several points can be gleaned from his works. While he enjoyed Metastasio's dramas, Baretti did not share his conception of the musical theatre. According to Baretti, the function of poetry in opera is to serve music: "Il buon effetto d'un dramma si sa che dipende in gran parte della musica, al servizio della quale essendo principalmente ogni dramma destinato" (p. 64). Thus, in Baretti's view, the poet must subject his art to the exigencies of music. These exigencies have led to the creation of a set of strange rules [regole strane] for melodramma (three acts, exit aria, brief recitatives, obligatory love-duets) which, Baretti argues, "appaiono ridicole alla ragion comune d'ogni poesia." Yet, in order to ensure the success of a melodramma, the poet must respect these rules more than the intrinsic qualities of poetry (p. 65). Like other critics before him, Baretti struggled with the classification of opera as a genre. In his article in La frusta letteraria, and elsewhere, he referred to Metastasio's dramas as tragedies. He makes the same statement in the preface to the second volume of his translation of Corneille's tragedies (1747-48), where he presented Metastasio's dramas as proof that Italy was not deficient in tragedy. However, in this preface he immediately qualifies his statement: "per mio avviso il Metastasio, quantunque rigorosamente parlando non si possa chiamar poeta di tragedie, è il solo poeta di teatro che io arderei quasi di porre a fronte di Pier Cornelio" ("Prefazione alle tragedie di Pier Cornelio tradotte in versi italiani," in Opere scelte di Giuseppe Baretti, ed. Bruno Maier [Torino: U.T.E.T., 1972], II, 26. The emphasis is mine). Also in the same Preface, Baretti proposes a rather startling and pragmatic measure of an artist's greatness: "Metastasio letto piace, piace cantato e piace recitato; ma quella de'ducati guadagnati dagli stampatori è la prova più grande, per mio avviso, del gran merito d'un autore, che aver si possa" (p. 27). Aware of the abuses perpetrated in opera, he spoke of it and its performers with sarcasm in An Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy, a work written originally in English and later translated into Italian as Gl'italiani o sia relazione degli usi e costumi d'Italia (I have consulted the Italian text in the edition by Gian Francesco Malipiero in I profeti di Babilonia, pp. 401-403).

Notes to Algarotti

[1]For the biography of Algarotti (1712-1764), see Ida Frances Treat, Un Cosmopolite italien du XVIII[e] siècle, Diss. Paris 1913 (Trévoux: Jeannin, 1913); Aldo Scaglione, "Francesco Algarotti," in Letteratura italiana: I Minori, III, 1959-71. The quotation in the text is from Mario Fubini, "Dall'Arcadia all'Illuminismo: Francesco Algarotti," in La cultura illuministica in Italia, ed. Fubini (Torino: E.R.I., 1957), pp. 78-86. For a discussion of Algarotti's position in the Enlightenment, see also Fubini, "Commemorazione di Francesco Algarotti nel II centenario della morte," Atti dell'Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 123 (1964), 41-49; Giovanni Bruno, "Mente dell'Algarotti," Convivium, No. 4 (1948), 536-43; Bruno Talluri, "I riflessi della cultura europea del XVIII secolo nei saggi filosofici di F. Algarotti," in Miscellanea di studi in onore del Prof. Eugenio Di Carlo (Trapani: Vento, 1959), I, 341-60, and see also the review by Binni, Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 66 (1962), 353; Aurelio Lepre, "Federico il Grande e l'Algarotti," Belfagor, 16 (1961), 284-87; Aldo Scaglione, "L'Algarotti e la crisi letteraria del Settecento," Convivium, No. 24 (1956), 176-96; Ettore Bonora, Aspetti della cultura dall'Arcadia all'Illuminismo: F. Algarotti e S. Bettinelli (Torino: Gheroni, 1962), p. 15 ff.

[2]In his Pensieri diversi (1764-65), Algarotti wrote of his hopes for a stronger alliance between scientists and men of letters to facilitate the progress of learning and human knowledge (Opere, VII [Venezia: Palese, 1792], 17-19).

[3]Paul Bédarida, "Stato presente degli studi su Francesco Algarotti," in Problemi di lingua e letteratura, pp. 273-80; Binni, "Il Settecento," pp. 513-20; Ettore Bonora, ed., Opere di Francesco Algarotti e di Saverio Bettinelli, Vol. II of Illuministi italiani (Milano: Ricciardi, 1969), p. xxiv; Scaglione, "Algarotti," in I minori, pp. 1966-69; Giovanni Da Pozzo, "La coscienza letteraria dell'Algarotti," Ateneo veneto, 2 (1964), 98; Fubini, "Dall'Arcadia all'Illuminismo," pp. 80-81.

[4]Da Pozzo, "La coscienza letteraria," p. 90; Scaglione, "Algarotti," in I minori, p. 1969; Bonora, ed., Opere di Algarotti, pp. xxvii-xxviii. Alfred Einstein states that the Saggio sopra l'opera in musica, "thanks to the clarity and sensibleness of the ideas it contained and thanks to its author's unassailable position, became a kind of aesthetic bible" (Gluck, p. 103).

[5]"Un précurseur de Gluck: Le Comte Algarotti," La Revue Musicale, 2 (1902; rpt. Scarsdale, N.Y., 1968), 369-74, 415-23.

[6]Even though Roncaglia makes the rather cursory cautionary remark that "forse queste idee erano già nell'aria" ("Il conte Francesco Algarotti e il rinnovamento del melodramma," Chigiana, 21 [1964], 71).

[7]Poesia melodrammatica, p. 103.

[8]Treat, pp. 129-72, et passim; Daniel Heartz, "Operatic Reform at Parma: Ippolito ed Aricia," Atti del Convegno sul Settecento parmense, 10-12 May 1968 (Parma: Deputazione di storia patria per le province parmensi, 1969), p. 280.

[9]K. G. Just, "Essay," Cassell's Encyclopaedia of World Literature, 1973 ed., I, 219. On the history of the essay form, see K. G. Just, "Essay," in Deutsche Philologie im Aufriss, II (Berlin: Schmidt, 1960), cols. 1910-22. For Algarotti and the essay, see Natali, Il Settecento, II, 1144; Scaglione, "Algarotti," in I minori, p. 1968.

[10]Algarotti, Lettera di Polianzio ad Ermogene, in Opere, VII, 388.

[11]Saggio sopra l'opera in musica, in Saggi, ed. Giovanni Da Pozzo (Bari: Laterza, 1963), pp. 145-223. See also the review by Bonora in Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana, 141 (1964), 607-10. For the textual tradition of the Saggio, see Da Pozzo's Nota filologica, pp. 546-614. Quotations from the Saggio sopra l'opera in musica, hereafter cited as Saggio, are taken from Da Pozzo's edition.

[12]Saggio, pp. 152-54.

[13]Saggio, p. 190. Elsewhere in the Saggio he will state that the opera is "una composizione, la cui bellezza dovea risultare da un giusto temperamento di tutte, l'una insieme con l'altra" (p. 183).

[14]In the contemporary controversy over the superiority of the ancients or the moderns, Algarotti took the moderate position of respect for the classics, while at the same time believing that the present could also produce greatness. See, for example, his Epistola to Metastasio: "Nuovo non è che la volgare schiera / Solo da gli anni la virtude estimi, / E più la ruggin che il metallo apprezzi. / Forse la vena del Castalio fonte / Secca è a'dì nostri, e di Parnaso in cima / Forse soli poggiar Petrarca e Dante? / Molto si può de l'Ippocrenio umore / Bere di Sorga al cristallino fiume, / E vincon le Dantesche oscure bolge / Molti raggi Febei, molte faville. / Nè de la culta Italica favella / Ai padri sia che troppo onor tu paghi" (Epistole in

versi del Sig. Conte Francesco Algarotti, in Versi sciolti di tre eccellenti moderni autori [Bassano: Remondini, 1795], p. 195). On the Querelle, see also his Pensieri diversi, pp. 215-23.

[15]Saggio, p. 175. Algarotti has often been accused of being a francophile, yet for all his cosmopolitan outlook, he retained a love for his fatherland which he demonstrates here by tempering his remarks with the reminder that Italy has also known greatness.

[16]Saggio, p. 156.

[17]On Algarotti and England, see Francesco Viglione, "L'Algarotti e l'Inghilterra," Studi di letteratura italiana, 13 (1922), 57-190. Viglione claims that Algarotti had a better and wider knowledge of English literature than any other Italian of the eighteenth century, including Baretti (p. 189). On Algarotti and France, see Pietro Toldo, "L'Algarotti oltr'Alpe," Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana, 71 (1918), 1-48.

[18]A. Lombardi, L'Abbé Du Bos: Un initiateur de la pensée moderne (Paris: Hachette, 1913), pp. 348-50; Annamaria Gabbrielli, "L'Algarotti e la critica d'arte in Italia nel Settecento," Critica d'arte, 3 (1938), 166 et passim.

[19]The Réflexions critiques sur la poësie et sur la peinture were originally published in two volumes in 1719. Sections of the two volumes were eventually elaborated to form the third, which first appeared in 1733. Quotations from this work are taken from the Paris edition of 1751, published in 3 volumes by Pissot. The work is cited as Réflexions.

[20]In a letter from Potsdam, dated 27 [c. June 1751], Voltaire wrote to Algarotti: "Ecco il vostro Dubos. . . . Le gros abbé du Bos e [sic] un buon autore e degno d'esser letto attentamentè [sic]. Non diro [sic] di lui: 'Molto egli oprò col senno e collo stile.' Il senno e [sic] grande, lo stile cattivo. Bisogna legger lo [sic]; ma lo rilegere [sic] sarebbe tedioso" (Voltaire's Correspondence, ed. Theodore Besterman, XIX [Genève: Institut et Musée Voltaire Les Delices, 1956], 174-75. Algarotti went to live with Voltaire at Cirey in 1735-36, and they met again in Berlin. For Algarotti's relations with Voltaire and the latter's influence on Algarotti, see Scaglione, "Algarotti," in I minori, pp. 1960-61; Lepre, "Nota sul l'Algarotti," Società, 15 (1959), 80-99; Malherbe, "Un précurseur de Gluck," pp. 273-80. For Du Bos' influence on Voltaire, see Enzo Caramaschi, "Du Bos and Voltaire," Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, 10 (1959), 113-236.

[21]On the Abbé Du Bos, see Basil Munteano, "L'Abbé Du Bos esthéticien de la persuasion passionnelle," Revue de Littérature Comparée, 30 (1956), 318-50; and "Les prémises rhétoriques du système de l'abbé Du Bos," Rivista di letterature moderne e comparate, 10 (1957), 5-30; Enzo Caramaschi, "Arte e critica nella concezione dell'abate Du Bos," Rivista di letterature moderne e comparate, 12 (1959), 101-18 and 13 (1960), 248-70; and "L'estetica dell'abate Du Bos: Impressionismo o tradizionalismo?" in Rappresentazione artistica, pp. 211-40; N. Jonard, "L'Abbé Du Bos et l'Italie," Revue de Littérature Comparée, 37 (1963), 177-201; Enrico Fubini, Empirismo e classicismo: Saggio sul Du Bos (Torino: Giappichelli, 1965).

[22]Réflexions, I, 430-31.

[23]"L'esprit ne sçauroit joüir deux fois du plaisir d'apprendre la même chose; mais le coeur peut joüir deux fois du plaisir de sentir la même émotion" (Réflexions, I, 64).

[24]Réflexions, I, 451-52.

[25]Réflexions, I, 467.

[26]Réflexions, I, 438.

[27]Réflexions, II, 3. Cf. Horace, Epistles, II.i.210-13.

[28]Saggio, p. 149. In a note to the revised version of the essay, Algarotti quotes Voltaire's verses on opera: "Il faut se rendre à ce palais magique, / Où les beaux vers, la danse, la musique, / L'art de tromper les yeux par les couleurs, / L'art plus heureux de séduire les coeurs / De cent plaisirs font un plaisir unique" (Le Mondain, ll. 94-98).

[29]Saggio, p. 160.

[30]Saggio, pp. 151-55.

[31]Pensieri diversi, p. 194.

[32]"I soggetti cavati dalla Mitologia, atteso il gran numero di macchine e di apparimenti che richiedono, metter sogliono il poeta a troppo ristretti termini, perché egli possa in un determinato tempo tessere e sviluppare una favola come si conviene, perché egli abbia campo di far giocare i caratteri e le passioni di ciascun personaggio; che è pur necessario nel

l'Opera, la quale non è altro in sostanza che una tragedia recitata per musica. Da ciò deriva che buona parte delle opere francesi, per non parlare delle prime nostre, danno quasi soltanto pascolo agli occhi, ed hanno piuttosto sembianza di mascherata, che di dramma. L'azion principale vi è come affogata dentro dagli accessorî; e la parte poetica di esse ne rimane così debole e meschina, che con qualche color di ragione furono chiamate altrettante infilzature di madrigali" (Saggio, p. 154).

[33]"All'incontro, i soggetti cavati dalla storia non così bene si confanno con la musica, che in essi ha meno del verisimile. Siccome può osservarsi tutto giorno tra noi, dove non pare che i trilli di un'arietta stiano così bene in bocca di Giulio Cesare o di Catone, che in bocca si starebbono di Apollo o di Venere. Non forniscono tanta varietà quanto i soggetti favolosi; sogliono peccare di severità e di monotonia" (Saggio, pp. 154-55).

[34]Saggio, p. 155. Du Bos frowned on the use of historical subject matter taken from the two previous centuries. He also maintained that distance facilitated the illusion that drama attempts to work on the spectator (Réflexions, I, 238-39).

[35]Réflexions, I, 466-68.

[36]Réflexions, III, 102.

[37]Réflexions, I, 453-54. "Tout est perdu," Du Bos goes on to say, "si l'esclave se rende la maîtresse de la maison, & s'il lui est permis de l'arranger à son grè, comme un bâtiment qui ne seroit fait que pour elle." Similar sentiments are expressed by Metastasio in the Estratto.

[38]See Metastasio's letter to Hasse, 20 October 1749 (Opere, III, 430-31); and the Preface to Alceste (in The Collected Papers of Christoph Willibald Gluck, ed. Hedwig and E. H. Mueller von Asow, trans. Stewart Thomson [London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1962], p. 22.

[39]Saggio, pp. 151-52, 176.

[40]Saggio, p. 158. In the original edition of the Saggio (1755), Algarotti had made the following statement which was deleted from later editions: "In somma quello che il maestro deve aver sempre innanzi è che la musica vocale tanto nelle arie, quanto ne'cori e nei recitativi, non ha da esser altro che la recitazione medesima rinforzata" (quoted by Della Corte, Gluck e i suoi tempi [Firenze: Sansoni, 1948], p. 85).

[41]Réflexions, I, 438.

[42]Saggio, p. 158.

[43]Saggio, p. 159.

[44]See, for example, Roncaglia, "Il Conte Francesco Algarotti," p. 70.

[45]Réflexions, I, 445.

[46]Réflexions, I, 451.

[47]Saggio, p. 161. In the original edition of the Saggio, Algarotti had stated: "Il recitativo è il fondamento primo della musica vocale; e le arie stesse abbisognano di esser ben recitate" (quoted by Della Corte, Gluck, p. 85).

[48]Saggio, pp. 161-64. In the Pensieri diversi, Algarotti wrote: "Quanti uomini non si hanno in pregio, quante donne non si dicon belle, per quello che non è loro? Togli via gli accompagnamenti dalle ariette di musica; e vedrai quello che sono" (pp. 27-28).

[49]Saggio, pp. 163-66.

[50]Saggio, pp. 158-59. Algarotti considered the music of the seventeenth century to be simple and sincere (Saggio, pp. 164-65). In the original edition, advocating this simplicity in musical composition, he expressed the hope that in future years one would be able to exclaim: "È tornato il secolo del secento per la musica!" (quoted by Della Corte, Gluck, p. 85). Della Corte adds that these words were left out of subsequent editions because "parvero [questi pensieri] allo stesso Algarotti troppo rigorosi, forse."

[51]Saggio, p. 165.

[52]Saggio, p. 169; Réflexions, III, 309. To give but two examples of the similarities in argument between the two works, cf. Du Bos, p. 310: "Enfin une Tragédie dont la déclamation seroit écrite en notes, auroit le même mérite qu'un Opéra. Des Acteurs médiocres . . . ne pourroient plus faire la dixiéme partie des fautes qu'ils font, soit en manquant les tons, & par conséquent l'action propre aux vers qu'ils récitent, soit en mettant du pathétique dans plusieurs endroits qui n'en sont pas susceptibles;" and Algarotti, Saggio, p. 168: "Un grande vantaggio sopra il comico ha senza dubbio l'attore nell'Opera in Musica,

dove la recitazione è legata e ristretta sotto le note, come nelle antiche tragedie. Egli ha segnate con ciò le vie tutte che ha da tenere; non può metter piede in fallo quanto alle differenti inflessioni e durate delle voci sopra le parole della parte sua; ché a lui esattamente le prescrive il compositore." Cf. also Du Bos, III, 315-16: "La seconde objection, est que l'assujétissement à suivre une déclamation composée, devoit . . . mettre de niveau l'Acteur qui a du génie, & celui qui n'en a point. Je réponds a cette objection, qu'il en étoit de cette déclamation notée comme de la musique de nos Opéra. Le compositeur de déclamation le plus exact & le plus intelligent laissoit encore lieu aux bons Acteurs de mettre leurs talens en évidence, & de faire sentir, non-seulement dans le geste, mais encore dans la prononciation, leur supériorité sur les Acteurs médiocres. Il est impossible de noter tous les accens, les soupirs, les adoucissemens, les inflexions, les ports & les éclats de voix;" and Algarotti, Saggio, p. 168, continuing from the passage quoted above: "Ma non resta, per tutto questo, che molto ancora egli non ci abbia a metter del suo. . . . Oltre il gesto, che è tutto proprio dell'attore, certe sospensioni, certe piccole pause, il calcar più in un luogo che in un altro già non si possono scrivere; dipendono in tutto anch'esse dalla intelligenza sua propria."

[53]Saggio, pp. 174-75.

[54]Réflexions, III, 242-44.

[55]Réflexions, III, 221, 238.

[56]Saggio, p. 176.

[57]Saggio, p. 184.

[58]"Alla tanta pompa e varietà delle decorazioni, a cui erano avvezzi gli spettatori, si credette supplire con una regolarità maggiore nel dramma, cogli artifizî della poesia, co'vezzi di una più raffinata musica. E tal credenza radicò più che mai, quando l'una di queste arti tornata alla imitazione degli antichi nostri autori ed arrichitasi l'altra di nuovi ornamenti, condotte si stimarono assai vicine alla perfezione" (Saggio, p. 154).

[59]Saggio, p. 154.

[60]In a letter to Carlo Frugoni, 1 February 1759, Algarotti wrote: "Ben vi dirò quello che mi rimane a desiderare: E ciò sarebbe di vedere sul Teatro o il mio Enea in Troja, o la mia Ifigenia in Aulide, che sono alla fine del mio Saggio come il paragone de'miei pensamenti" (Quoted by Heartz, "Operatic

Reform," p. 281).

[61]"Essai sur l'Opera," Le Mercure de France (May, 1757), 40-62; the editor's note is found on p. 40.

[62]Ensayo sobre la opera en musica (Madrid: Escribano, 1787).

[63]Del teatro (Venezia: Pasquali, 1773). The original edition of 1771 is extremely rare, as it was censored and taken off the market in Rome almost as soon as it was published. The 1773 version is a revised edition. Significantly, its Venetian publisher, Giambattista Pasquali, dedicated the book to the Count Bonomo Algarotti, who had inherited his brother's title after Francesco's death. Del teatro enjoyed a certain amount of popularity and was translated into Spanish in 1789. For the section on opera, Milizia depends strongly on the Saggio sopra l'opera in musica, often simply paraphrasing or even reproducing Algarotti's words (cf. for example Saggio, p. 155, and Del teatro, p. 36). Milizia's treatise did not offer any insights nor add anything of import to the eighteenth-century discussions on melodramma. See Paolo Marolda, "La discussione del melodramma nel Trattato del teatro di F. Milizia," Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana, 80 (1976), 103-19.

[64]Da Pozzo, "La coscienza letteraria," p. 90; Scaglione, "Algarotti," in I minori, p. 1969; Malherbe, "Un précurseur de Gluck;" Einstein, Gluck, p. 103.

[65]In a letter to Voltaire (14 November 1759), Algarotti wrote of the success of Ippolito ed Aricia, and went on to say: "Mi piacque senza fine il vedere, che le mie idee sopra l'opera in musica non furono aere, e che la mia voce fu vox clamantis in deserto." On December 10 of the same year, Voltaire acknowledged Algarotti's contribution: "Il vostro saggio sopra l'opera in musica fu il fondamento della riforma del regno de'castrati. Il legame delle feste, e dell'azione a noi francese [sic] si caro, sarà forse un giorno l'inviolabil legge dell'opera italiana." The Minister Du Tillot also acknowledged indebtedness to Algarotti in a letter to him on 8 May 1759: "[E]nfin, Monsieur, nous triumphons: et je me souviens que je vous dois une partie de mon courage" (quoted by Heartz, "Operatic Reform," pp. 295-97).

[66]Quoted in Heartz, "Operatic Reform," p. 271. And cf. Voltaire's letter of 25 December 1735 to his friend Thieriot concerning the libretto Samson which he was composing: "Je veux que le Samson soit dans un goust nouvau," that is, a mélange of Italian opera and French tragédie lyrique (Voltaire's Correspondence, IV, 230). Heartz claims that Voltaire's idea of opera influenced Algarotti ("Operatic Reform," p. 280).

[67]Frugoni's Preface to Ippolito ed Aricia, ed. Daniel Heartz, in "Operatic Reform," Appendix I, p. 298.

[68]In his article "Un précurseur de Gluck," Malherbe presents a comprehensive and convincing comparison of the Saggio and Gluck's preface.

[69]René Guiet, L'Evolution d'un genre: Le livret d'opéra en France de Gluck a la Révolution (1774-1793), Smith College Studies in Modern Languages, 18 (Northampton, Mass.: Smith College, 1936), p. 9; Malherbe, "Un précurseur de Gluck," p. 421; Della Corte, Gluck, p. 84; Einstein, Gluck, pp. 103-04.

[70]Saggio, p. 90.

Notes to Calzabigi

[1]Ranieri Calzabigi (1714-1795) changed his name to de'Calsabigi in an attempt to gallicize it during a sojourn in France. For his biography, see Ghino Lazzeri, La vita e l'opera letteraria di Ranieri Calzabigi (Città di Castello: Lapi, 1907). For Calzabigi's translations into English, see Anton Ranieri Parra, "Le esperienze inglesi di Ranieri de'Calzabigi," Rivista di letterature moderne e comparate, 23 (1970), 21-56. Parra conjectures that Calzabigi must have travelled to England, as did his brother Anton Maria, though the documentation of the trip is scant (p. 39). From a study of Calzabigi's translations of Milton, Gray, James Thomson and Shakespeare, Parra draws the conclusion that Calzabigi had a good knowledge of the English language, its meanings and rhythms (p. 38). He also concludes that Calzabigi was open to other cultures, especially the English (p. 21). Corroboration of this claim can be seen in Calzabigi's statements on how to build up theatrical knowledge: "Nè questa indispensabile pratica tragica acquistar si può senza frequentare il teatro, e meditarlo. . . . Mancando questa esperienza, (che difficilmente si ottiene, se, col possesso di lingue straniere, i teatri meglio corredati d'attori delle altre nazioni non si veggano, non si meditino, con critica e sano discernimento) . . ." (Lettera di Ranieri de'Calsabigi all'Autore [Alfieri] sulle quattro sue prime tragedie, in Vittorio Alfieri, Tragedie, ed. Nicola Bruscoli [Bari: Laterza, 1946], I, 5; this will be cited in subsequent notes as Lettera a Alfieri). Casanova recorded his impressions of Calzabigi in his memoirs (see Jacques Casanova de Seingalt, Histoire de ma vie, V [Weisbaden: Brockhaus, 1960], 28).

[2]Calzabigi sent the second of the two libretti (Il sogno di Olimpia, described as a serenata teatrale) to Metastasio for his approval, receiving from the Imperial poet some praise, some critical remarks, and much encouragement (see Metastasio's letter, dated Vienna, 30 December 1747, in Opere di Metastasio, III, 330-33). Parra claims that the serenata has a notable affinity with Dryden's Alexander's Feast on the Power of Music (p. 38).

[3]In August, 1752, a troupe of Italian opera-singers arrived in Paris and scored a phenomenal success with their performance of Pergolesi's La serva padrona. The immense popularity achieved by this little opera buffa initiated the controversy known in the history of music as la Querelle des Bouffons. Musicians and public took up opposing positions, those defending French opera and its two major composers, Lully and Rameau, and those favouring Italian opera. Endless polemics ensued, with such literary figures as Rousseau, Diderot, Grimm, D'Alembert in the forefront. The controversy inspired Rousseau's famous Lettre sur la musique française (Paris,

1753), with its attack on French music, and his composition of the opera Le Devin du Village (1753) which led to a resurgence of the lyric form later known as opéra comique. The Encyclopedists defended the Italians and sought the renewal of French opera along Italian lines. The innumerable pamphlets inspired by the controversy (1752-54), most of whose titles, according to D'Alembert, were already forgotten when he was writing his essay De la liberté de la musique (first published in 1759), can be found in the three volumes of La Querelle des Bouffons, ed. Denise Launay (Genève: Minkoff, 1973). For more details of this interesting and important incident in French operatic history, see Lionel de la Laurencie, "La Grande Saison italienne de 1752: Les Bouffons," S. I. M.: La Revue Musicale, June 1912, pp. 18-33 and July - August 1912, pp. 13-22; Paul-Marie Masson, "La Lettre sur Omphale (1752)," Revue de musicologie, 27 (1945), 1-19; Alfred Richard Oliver, The Encyclopedists as Critics of Music (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), 86-100; Donald J. Grout, "Opéra bouffe et Opéra-comique" and E. Borrel, "La Querelle des Bouffons," both in Histoire de la musique, ed. Roland Manuel, II (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), 5-25 and 26-39 respectively.

[4]Calzabigi began the poem in 1752 but did not complete it until 1789. He did not have it published. Selections can be found in Lazzeri, La vita e l'opera; in Anton Giulio Bragaglia, "La Lulliade poema di Ranieri di Calzabigi sulle vicende della musica italiana in Francia," Musica d'oggi, 15 (1933), 383-88 and 426-33; and in Della Corte, Satire e grotteschi, pp. 453-517.

[5]On Gluck's involvement with the ballet, see Martin Cooper, Gluck (New York: Oxford University Press, 1935), pp. 79-97. Gasparo Angiolini (1731-1803) was one of the major choreographers involved in eighteenth-century reform of the ballet, through a movement away from the hedonistic dance for divertissement towards a return to the pantomime of the ancients, and to the type of representational ballet which expresses a dramatic action in dance.

[6]Among Calzabigi's comic operas is the libretto used by Mozart for his La finta giardiniera, performed in Munich in 1775. Elfrida and Elvira were put to music by Paisiello, but did not enjoy much success. Little is known about Semiramide beyond Calzabigi's reference to it in his letters. In a letter to the editor of the Mercure de France (published in the issue of 21 August 1784, pp. 128-37), he mentions having sent the libretto to Gluck in Paris (p. 129).

[7]On the Danaïde incident, see Cooper, Gluck, pp. 273-75; Einstein, Gluck, pp. 177-78.

[8]For a full reference to the letter, dated 25 June 1784, see

note 6 of this section.

[9]Although he did admit to Gluck's share in the creative process ("J'espère que vous convendriez, Monsieur, d'après cet exposé, que si M. Gluck a été le créateur de la Musique dramatique, il ne l'a pas créée [sic] de rien. Je lui ai fourni la matière ou le chaos si vous voulez; l'honneur de cette création nous est donc commun" (p. 136), in the letter to the Mercure de France Calzabigi claimed for himself the principal share of the responsibility of Gluck's three "reform" operas. Della Corte (Gluck e i suoi tempi, p. 88) tends to take him at his word. So do other musicologists. In his monograph on Gluck, Einstein states: "without Calzabigi Gluck would never have become what he did become. Calzabigi's merits simply cannot be exaggerated: he it was who gave the decisive impulse by supplying subjects in their proper form" (Gluck, p. 67). Cooper agrees: "it is unlikely that without Calzabigi Gluck's musical career would have taken quite the same course as it did" (Gluck, p. 98). Paul Henry Lang adds: "There can be no question that it was this clear-headed man of letters who steered Gluck toward his goal, and there is little doubt that he was responsible for the whole idea of reform as far as Gluck was concerned" (Music in Western Civilization [New York: Norton, 1941], p. 560). And, according to Grout, "Calzabigi was the real standard-bearer of the revolt against Metastasio" (A Short History of Opera, I, 232). Ernest Newman, on the other hand, rejects Calzabigi's remarks as gross exaggeration (Gluck and the Opera [1895; rpt. London: Gollancz, 1964], pp. 194-95). Though less dogmatic on this point, Patricia Howard also questions Calzabigi's claim. Nevertheless, she does recognize the importance of the librettist's influence on Gluck (Gluck and the Birth of Modern Opera [London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1963], pp. 8 and 24-25). Hanns Hammelmann and Michael Rose reduce Calzabigi's contributions to a practical rather than theoretical level ("New Light on Calzabigi and Gluck," The Musical Times, 110 [1969], 609-11). Gustave Desnoiresterres (Gluck et Piccinni (1774-1800) [Paris: Didier, 1875], pp. 46-47), and J. -G. Prod'homme (Gluck [Paris: Société d'Editions Françaises et Internationales, 1948], p.125) claim that Gluck was already examining the possibility of reforming opera after his stay in London, and that in Calzabigi he had found the ideal librettist. Daniel Heartz concurs, claiming that Gluck was deeply affected by the theatre of Garrick during his sojourn in England, and that the reform may not have taken place if Gluck had not also been influenced in his writing by the singing style of Gaetano Guadagni, the principal singer in Orfeo, who had been trained in acting by Garrick. See Heartz, "From Garrick to Gluck: The Reform of the Theatre and Opera in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association, 94 (1967-68), 111-127.

[10]See, for example, Lang, Music in Western Civilization, pp.

560-63; Howard, pp. 8-25.

[11]Calzabigi so called himself in his letter to Count Antonio Greppi, dated Vienna, 12 December 1768, published in Carlo Antonio Vianello, Teatri, spettacoli, musiche a Milano nei secoli scorsi (Milano: Libreria Lombarda, 1941), p. 246.

[12]Lang, Music in Western Civilization, p. 560; Einstein, Gluck, p. 117.

[13]Lettera a Alfieri, pp. 6-7.

[14]"Uguagliano [i grandi francesi] gli antichi Greci, e in alcune cose, anzi in molte, li superano. Se piú avessero imitata la natura; se meno avessero concesso al gusto frivolo del tempo in cui scrissero . . . avrebbero per i tragici futuri stabilito il non plus ultra teatrale. Ma la perfezione è collocata al di sopra dell'umanitá; il piú grande in qualunque scienza, o bell'arte, è quello che ha meno difetti" (Lettera a Alfieri, p. 14).

[15]Lettera a Alfieri, p. 9 et passim; Risposta che ritrovò Don Santigliano (Venezia: Curti, 1790), p. 75.

[16]Risposta, p. 167.

[17]Lettera a Alfieri, pp. 2 and 29. Alfieri's style offended Calzabigi's ideals of an harmonious language, of a simple and clear, unambiguous style. In the letter to Alfieri, he cites several examples (pp. 32-37). He also regards some passages of Alfieri's tragedies as implausible and indecorous (pp. 28-29).

[18]This essay, added as preface to Calzabigi's edition of Metastasio's works, was first published in Paris in 1755. All quotations in the text are taken from the edition in Opere di Pietro Metastasio, vol. XV (Padova, 1811), pp. 81-269. The work will be referred to in subsequent notes as Dissertazione.

[19]The preface to Don Juan is cited in Della Corte, Gluck e i suoi tempi, pp. 74-75. The dedicatory prefaces to the operas can be found in The Collected Corresponsdence and Papers of Gluck, ed. von Asow, pp. 22-24 and 27-29 respectively: Quotations are taken from this edition, which, unfortunately, has been published only in the English translation.

[20]The full reference to a modern edition of the letter, dated 20 August 1783, is to be found in note 1 of this section.

[21][Calzabigi], Risposta che ritrovò casualmente nella gran città di Napoli il licenziato Don Santigliano di Gilblas, y

Tormes, y Alfarace. Discendente per linea paterna, e materna di tutti quegli insigni Personaggi delle Spagne; alla critica ragionatissima delle Poesie Drammatiche del C. de'Calsabigi, fatta dal Baccelliere D. Stefano Arteaga suo illustre Compatriotto (Venezia: Curti, 1790). This work will be cited in subsequent notes as Risposta.

[22]A recent edition of L'opera seria is published in an appendix to Metastasio, Opere, ed. Fubini, pp. 883-937. Fubini's remark is taken from his "Nota biografico-critica" on Calzabigi, on p. 842 of the work just cited.

[23]Dissertazione, pp. 83-85.

[24]Fubini, ed., Opere di Metastasio, p. 838. Russo also attests to its critical importance (Metastasio, p. 196). See Romagnoli, "Pietro Metastasio," pp. 52-53. While a closer examination of Calzabigi's criticism of Metastasio would be of interest, it would be out of place here. The bulk of the observations in the essay deal simply with the aesthetic qualities of Metastasio's libretti as drama, with only sporadic reference to theories of melodramma.

[25]Lettera a Alfieri, p. 3. Giazotto takes the letter to Alfieri to be an indication that up to 1783 Calzabigi had not altered his favourable opinion of Metastasio (Poesia melodrammatica, pp. 124-25). Giazotto does not seem to be aware that already in 1768, in a letter to Paolo Frisi, Calzabigi had mocked the involuted love-schemes of Metastasio's melodrammi (Vianello, pp. 248-49). Nor would he have known Calzabigi's letter of 6 March 1767 to Prince Kaunitz, recently published in translation by Hammelmann and Rose ("New Light," pp. 609-10). In this letter, Calzabigi criticizes Metastasio's drammi in very colourful terms: "Only the dramas of the Abbé Metastasio, whose length . . . is such that they cannot, from the outset, hope to hold the attention of the spectator, enjoy the privilege of being saddles for all horses. There it matters not whether a character in the drama is sung by a Farinelli, Caffarelli, Guadagni or Toschi . . . since the audience does not expect nor demand from the singers more than a couple of arias and a duet, having from the start abandoned all hope of taking an interest in the action." Metastasio's heroines "are at bottom no more than little Roman or Neapolitan courtesans who sentimentalize about love in polite language on the stage." The protagonists are "utterly unnatural, philosophizing heroes . . . the like of which are not be met in this world." Calzabigi continues: "Since these dramas could not, in performance, please the mind, they had need to entertain the senses: the eye by the sight of live horses in cardboard forests . . . the ear by . . . producing whole concerts with the human mouth alone, thus giving rise to that musical gargling which in Naples they call trocciolette (because it closely resembles the noise of

the wheels passing over the ropes of a pulley)." The letter is of interest, not only because of the lively criticism of Metastasio, of which the above is a sample, but also because, written shortly before the Vienna première of Alceste, it shows Calzabigi's intent to reform Metastasian melodramma: "Matters are entirely different in the new plan of musical drama which has been, if not invented, at least first put into practice by me in Orfeo, then in Alceste."

[26]Calzabigi himself claimed that the seeds of his reform could be found already in the Dissertazione (Risposta, p. 67). Many musicologists agree that the Dissertazione is basically a document which, behind its apparent praise of Metastasio, laid bare the faults of the Imperial poet and looked to a reform inspired by the French opera of Quinault and Lully (Einstein, Gluck, p. 69; Prod'homme, pp. 99-100; Desnoiresterres, pp. 46-47; Lang, p. 560). Della Corte questions these conclusions, suggesting that the ideas expressed on opera in the essay are still conventional and superficial, thus indicating to him that in 1755 Calzabigi had not yet subjected the genre to close scrutiny or thought, and that he had not yet questioned the efficacy and value of Metastasian opera as an art form (Gluck e i suoi tempi, p. 83). Lazzeri believes that the different purposes of the two works, the apologetic function of the Dissertazione, and the defence of his reform-operas in the Risposta, justify the differing attitudes presented by Calzabigi (p. 152). Giazotto tends to agree with Lazzeri, adding that in 1755 Calzabigi was praising the work of a dramatist at his peak, whilst in 1790, the date of the publication of the Risposta di Don Santigliano, he was attacking the abuses perpetrated by Metastasian opera, its imitators, and the cult of Metastasio (Poesia melodrammatica, pp. 82, 119, 125).

[27]As a further indication that the dissertation was not an expression of the author's carefully thought-out programme for an operatic system, we may cite the fact that Calzabigi incorporated into the essay en masse Metastasio's own ideas on the concept of unity of place and the use of choruses. And he did so of his own volition, for it is certain that the Imperial poet would have preferred Calzabigi to make use of his own ideas in a more subtle manner. In a letter to Calzabigi, dated 14 February 1755, Metastasio wrote: "Mi piace l'ordine de'componimenti nella ristampa; ma mi sarebbe piaciuto assai più che voi aveste fusi e mescolati, non così semplicemente inseriti, nella vostra bellissima dissertazione, i miei dettami intorno all'unità del luogo e dell'antico coro" (Opere di Metastasio, III, p. 986). This point has been missed by critics in their discussions on the conception of the Dissertazione.

[28]Signs of the patriotism felt by Calzabigi in matters of literature can be found not only in the Dissertazione, but

also in passages such as the note in which he praises Racine's verses, but only after having pointed out some of his faults. Calzabigi closes the note with the cry: "Son giusto, ma dovrebbe esser a noi resa egual giustizia dagli scrittori francesi" (Lettera a Alfieri, p. 13n).

[29]Le rivoluzioni del teatro musicale, III, 119-125.

[30]See Vincenzo Manfredini, Difesa della musica moderna e de'suoi celebri esecutori (1788; rpt. Bologna: Forni, 1972). Arteaga published his reply in an appendix to the 1785 edition of his Rivoluzioni, III, 285-391.

[31]Risposta, p. 166

[32]Dissertazione, pp. 96-97.

[33]"A me basta d'aver provato . . . che le drammatiche composizioni del Signor Metastasio sono perfette tragedie, lavorate sulle vere leggi che dagli antichi ci sono state prescritte" (Dissertazione, pp. 252-53).

[34]Dissertazione, p. 86

[35]Lettera a Alfieri, pp. 6-8.

[36]Letter to Greppi, 6 April 1768, reproduced by Vianello, pp. 238-39. In the letter to Prince Kaunitz (6 March 1767) Calzabigi claimed that the action in Alceste is "reduced to the dimensions of Greek tragedy, and therefore has the unique advantage of exciting terror and compassion in the same way as spoken tragedy" (pp. 609-10); see also the reference to the libretti for Gluck: "io ho dati [sic] questi pochi saggi della vera Tragedia in Vienna" (letter to Antonio Montefani, 11 May 1778, reproduced by Corrado Ricci, I teatri di Bologna nei secoli XVII e XVIII [1888; rpt. Bologna: Forni, 1965], p. 636), and Calzabigi's letter to the Mercure, p. 130.

[37]Letter to the Mercure, p. 130.

[38]Letter to the Mercure, p. 132.

[39]Risposta, pp. 137-39. Yet in the Dissertazione he had defended Metastasio's use of historical figures.

[40]Lazzeri conjectures that Calzabigi, in writing his two dramas Elfrida and Elvira, turned to historical subjects out of a sense of disappointment with the reception given to his three reform-operas (p. 93).

[41]Lettera a Alfieri, pp. 2-9.

[42]Lettera a Alfieri, p. 14.

[43]The Sister Arts (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 129-30. On the relations between poetry and painting in the eighteenth century, see Thomas Munro, The Arts and Their Interrelation (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1951), pp. 155-72; Lipking, The Ordering of the Arts, pp. 16 ff; Malek, The Arts Compared, p. 15

[44]Hagstrum, pp. 121-22.

[45]Hagstrum, p. 146.

[46]"[M]i compiaccio in credere che sia più significante e misterioso, di quello che comunemente si pensa: parmi che, a guisa d'un oracolo, gran cose racchiuda, e che molto sia necessario meditarci sopra per interpretarlo" (Lettera a Alfieri, p. 14).

[47]Essentially, each scene should represent the material covered in one act of the tragedy (Lettera a Alfieri, p. 16n).

[48]This is in criticism of French tragedy; cf. Dissertazione, p. 238; Lettera a Alfieri, p. 10.

[49]Lettera a Alfieri, pp. 14-19.

[50]Risposta, p. 123. The underlining is mine.

[51]Risposta, p. 28. The same principle reappears on pp. 38-39, again on p. 59, as well as in the Lettera a Alfieri, p. 5.

[52]Dissertazione, pp. 256-57.

[53]Dissertazione, p. 87. In his letter to Count Alessandro Pepoli on his drama Elfrida, Calzabigi writes: "[L]a Poesia è tutto nella musica Drammatica, e se manca questo appoggio al Maestro non è possibil mai ch'ei faccia eccellente musica, e venga pure un Pergolese [sic], un Vinci, un Gluck, un Paisiello. . . . Non si agita, non si commove, non si straccia il core co' suoni . . . sempre insignificanti quando son soli, ma bensì con appropriate note, da un sublime linguaggio poetico accompagnate" (published in Poesie e prose diverse di Ranieri de'Calzabigi [Napoli: Zambraja, 1793], II, 182).

[54]Dissertazione, pp. 257-59.

[55]Letter to the Mercure, pp. 133-36. In his letter of 6 April 1768 to Greppi, Calzabigi writes: "non potendo nè dovendo la musica d'Alceste essere altro che l'espressione schietta del valore delle parole" (p. 244). In the letter to the Mercure

(p. 136), Calzabigi claimed that he had annotated his libretti with great detail and care. Einstein notes that an examination of Gluck's scores and Calzabigi's original texts reveals that Gluck observed literally the directions given by Calzabigi for declamation (Gluck, p. 68).

[56]Letter to Greppi, 6 April 1768, p. 244.

[57]Demuth, French Opera: Its Development to the Revolution (Sussex: Artemis, 1963), pp. 149-50.

[58]A strong contrast is provided by Pasquale Anfossi's Antigone, in which one hundred and fifty-two notes are devoted to the second syllable of the word amato, to be followed immediately by a reprise.

[59]See Paul-Marie Masson, L'Opéra de Rameau (Paris: Laurens, 1930), p. 137.

[60]On the tragédie-lyrique and declamation notée, see Demuth, pp. 147-206; Masson, pp. 132-201.

[61]In a letter to Paolo Frisi, Calzabigi complains: "Hanno fatto a Milano coll'Alceste quello che farebbe a una sua dimostrazione geometrica chi alla figura aggiungesse a capriccio delle linee inutili per arrotondarla o riquadrarla ad oggetto di renderla, a suo credere, più graziosa alla vista" (The letter, undated, is quoted in Vianello, p. 247). Calzabigi reacted bitterly to Parini's re-working of his libretto. In the undated letter to Frisi he states: "Il Poeta del Mattino non è niente proprio per la sera al lume delle scene. Ella sa quanto sia diverso il parlare ex se, o sia fare il predicatore, dal far parlar altri" (p. 247). In another letter to Frisi, dated Vienna, 12 January 1769, he accuses Parini of having changed the text out of a purely gratuitous desire to alter it: "Quest'orgoglio poetico è insoffribile, tanto più in lui, che non ha merito affatto per assumerlo, non avendo a miei giorni veduto cosa più meschina, plus plate, che i suoi versi drammatici" (Vianello, p. 250). Giuseppe Parini (1729-1799), was associated with the Ducal Theatre in various capacities, among which was that of librettist. He adapted Calsabigi's Alceste in 1768, composed the libretto Ascanio in Alba in 1771 to be put to music by the sixteen-year old Mozart, and worked on two other libretti, Iside salvata (c. 1768-70) and the incomplete comic opera L'amorosa incostanza. His melodramatic works are mediocre, and A. Pompeati claims that Parini gathered aesthetic impressions which are musically superficial from his frequent visits to the theatre ("Il Parini e la Musica," Rivista musicale italiana, 36 [1929], 563). Certainly his critical writings on opera are not of a theoretical nature, but seem to be

associated chiefly with his social and moral preoccupations, rather than with the problem of the opera as an art-form. Thus Il Teatro is more concerned with the actors' performances and the reaction of the audiences. Similarly the ode entitled La musica, also known as La evirazione (Tutte le poesie, ed. Ettore Mazzali, [Milano: Ceschina, 1968] pp. 437-42), deals with the moral indignation felt by the poet in the matter of the castrati: "Aborro in su la scena / un canoro elefante / che si strascina a pena / su le adipose piante, / e manda per gran foce / di bocca un fil di voce," (p. 438). But his indignation turns more towards the people who insist upon such a practice, rather than at the castrati themselves: the father of the singer who is willing to have a son mutilated out of greed, and the public who tolerate it for the sake of novelty and pleasure. The notes that Parini left for the unfinished Notte (which was to have included a visit to the theatre), and the never-realized treatise on opera found in his Schema di un saggio sull'opera in musica also show a preoccupation with social mores rather than with artistic problems. The only pages which he dedicated to the melodramma as an art-form are to be found in his De'principi delle belle lettere (Prose, ed. Egidio Bellorini, I [Bari: Laterza, 1913], 181-303). On pp. 206-211 of the section "Della imitazione e della espressione" he deals with imitation as created by several arts working in unison, and uses opera as an example of this type of imitation. Therefore he discusses opera, not as it is in reality, but in its ideal form, which, as a union of all the arts, would "recare alle anime delicate ed oneste il massimo de'piaceri." (p. 206), as indeed it did for Algarotti and later for Arteaga. For Parini poetry should be the main component of the drama in its ideal form: "Ecco di poi che viene sul teatro la poesia ad adoperar di conserva colle altre arti, anzi più veramente ad assumerle come sue ministre, a guidarle ad un medesimo fine ed a costituire la necessaria unitá della rappresentazione," (p. 209). Parini then outlines the role that poetry must play in directing the activities of the other participants in the drama. The remarks are conventional, with the possible exception of Poetry's direction to the maestro di ballo to the effect that, rather than choreograph ballet, he should teach the actors to move with harmony and nobility. (p. 210).

[62]Letter to Frisi, 15-20 December 1768, p. 249.

[63]Letter to Greppi, 6 April 1768, pp. 244-45.

[64]Letter to Montefani, 11 May 1778, p. 638. The five letters to Montefani on the occasion of the performance of Alceste in the Teatro Communale of Bologna in 1778, the detailed stage-directions he offers (published in an appendix to Ricci, Teatri di Bologna, pp. 628-640), as well as the earlier letter to Kaunitz on the première of Alceste, attest to the great interest entertained by Calzabigi in all aspects of operatic

production.

[65]Dissertazione, pp. 99-100.

[66]Risposta, p. 69.

[67]L'opera seria, p. 883.

[68]Preface published in Collected Correspondence, ed. von Asow, p. 22.

[69]"Se egli [il poeta] . . . il primo non è stato impaurito o intenerito; se non ha fatto passare nelle sue parole questi movimenti del suo cuore . . . il musico non troverà Armonia corrispondente al soggetto, e non sentendosi egli niente agitare, mentre compone, perchè niente lo fu il poeta, quando scrisse, non produrrà che accozzamenti di suoni scomposti ed inefficaci" (Dissertazione, p. 254).

[70]Preface published in Collected Correspondence, ed. von Asow, p. 28.

[71]Risposta, p. 21.

[72]Collected Correspondence, ed. von Asow, p. 29.

[73]Letter to Greppi, 6 April 1768, p. 239.

[74]Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), while not the instigator of eighteenth-century reform ballet, aided greatly in its propagation, both through his choreography and his celebrated Lettres sur la Danse (1760), an important critical document of the reform. Noverre insisted on dance as a dramatic spectacle that developed an action through mimetic expression. On Noverre's contributions, see D. Lynham, The Chevalier Noverre, Father of Modern Ballet: A Biography (London: Sylvan Press, 1950).

[75]Letter to Montefani, 17 April 1778, p. 632.

[76]Letter to Greppi, 6 April 1768, p. 241; letter to Montefani, 11 May 1778, pp. 637-38.

[77]Letter to the Mercure, p. 135.

[78]Preface in Collected Correspondence, ed. von Asow, pp. 22-23.

[79]Letter to Greppi, 6 April, 1768, p. 241.

[80]Risposta, p. 48

[81]Risposta, pp. 67-68.

[82]"Il sopraintendente a quell'epoca degli spettacoli della Imp. Corte, credè, che il C. (poco prima giunto in quella Capitale con qualche stima poetica) potesse aver de'Drammi inediti, e lo sollecitò a darglieli. Convenne cedere al C. alle premure di persone autorevoli, onde scrisse l'Orfeo, che fu presentato al Teatro della Corte colla nota musica del Gluck" (Risposta, p. 20).

[83]Letter to Greppi, 6 April 1768, pp. 241-42. In a letter to the Mercure de France of February 1773, Gluck supported Calzabigi's claim: "Je me ferois une reproche encore plus sensible si jè consentois à me laisser attribuer l'invention du nouveau genre d'opéra italien dont le succès a justifié la tentative; c'est à M. De Calsabigi, qu'en appartient le principal mérite; et si ma musique a eu quelqu'éclat, je crois devoir reconnoître que c'est à lui que j'en suis redevable, puisque c'est lui qui m'a mis à portée de développer les ressources de mon art. . . . Quelque talent qu'ait le compositeur, il ne fera jamais que de la musique médiocre, si le poète n'excite pas en lui cet enthousiasme, sans lequel les productions de tous les arts son foibles et languissants" (p. 182). Einstein states furthermore that Calzabigi's claims in this regard can be believed, for he was writing during Gluck's lifetime, and the latter would certainly have refuted the veracity of Calzabigi's statements if it had been necessary to do so (Gluck, p. 68).

[84]Letter to Greppi, 6 April 1768, p. 242.

[85]Einstein, Gluck, p. 69; Prod'homme, Gluck, pp. 99-104; Lang, Music in Western Civilization, p. 561; Howard, Gluck, p. 8.

[86]On the reform ideals of the Encyclopédie, see Oliver, The Encyclopedists, pp. 21-60; Enrico Fubini, Gli enciclopedisti e la musica. On Rousseau and Diderot, see also Arnold Whittall, "Rousseau and the Scope of Opera," Music and Letters, 45 (1964), 369-76; Georges Snyders, Le Goût musical en France au XVII^{e} et XVIII^{e} siècles (Paris: Vrin, 1968), pp. 108-21, 121-34; Jean-michel Bardez, Diderot et la musique: Valeur de la contribution d'un mélomane (Paris: Champion, 1975).

[87]Preface in Collected Correspondence, ed. von Asow, p. 23.

[88]See Daniel Heartz, "Opera and the Periodization of Eighteenth-century Music," in Report of the Tenth Congress of the International Musicological Society, Ljubljana 1967 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), pp. 160-68. Calzabigi himself became very bitter about the lack of success of his "reform" (and his operas) in Italy. On 11 May 1778 he wrote to Montefani: "Replico amico stimatissimo e lo replico con dispiacere ma forzato: Che l'Italia non è ancora matura per la Tragedia

. . . il nostro [teatro italiano] è sempre fermo, senza alterazione in quelle nauseose, e barbare farse di maledetti Istrioni . . . [che] producono più danaro alla cassa. Ad un pubblico in tal maniera mentecatto, come si vuol poi presentare la Tragedia Greca? Come può sperarsi di riuscire in tal impegno?" (p. 636).

[89]Lang notes that Gluck did not emphasize the reform nature of Orfeo at the time of its production, and adds "there was nothing in the work that would have startled an audience accustomed to the opera seria" (Music in Western Civilization, p. 556).

[90]Gluck, p. 105.

[91]Calzabigi stated in the Risposta: " . . . ho aperto una nuova strada; altri vi faranno progressi maggiori" (pp. 30-31). In the preface to Paride, Gluck wrote: "The sole reason that induced me to publish my music for Alceste was the hope of finding imitators" (ed. von Asow, p. 27).

[92]Cooper, Gluck, pp. 282-83; Grout, Short History of Opera, pp. 244-45.

Notes to Bettinelli

[1]For a general introduction to Bettinelli and his works, see Giovanni Federico, L'opera letteraria di Saverio Bettinelli (1718-1808) (Roma: Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, 1913); Carlo Muscetta, "Saverio Bettinelli," in Letteratura italiana: I minori, III, 2013-41.

[2]Costa, Pref., Storia critica delle Lettere virgiliane, by Betti (Verona: Fiorini, 1972), p. 7.

[3]On this particular point Fubini observes: "Perchè del resto ricercare nel Bettinelli la coerenza di uno spirito fedele ad alcuni princìpi basilari? E sacrificare, nella ricerca di un presunto principio direttivo dell'opera sua, quella varietà di atteggiamenti, quelle stesse contradizioni, che sono forse uno dei motivi precipui dell'interesse di noi posteri per la sua figura? Non la coerenza, bensì la sua mutevolezza, la sua attitudine a conformarsi all'ambiente in cui vive, a riecheggiare, con sincerità se non con fede profonda, le idee del secolo, è, se non m'inganno, il carattere più evidente e notevole della sua personalità" ("Introduzione alle 'Virgiliane,'" in Dal Muratori al Baretti, p. 216). On the complexity of Bettinelli's character see also Binni, "Il Settecento", p. 630; Betti, Storia critica, p. 46; Carlo Calcaterra, "La questione estetica delle 'Lettere virgiliane': Dante gotico e il Petrarca 'creatore dell'Italica Poesia'," Archivio storico per le province parmensi, 34 (1935), 7-27; Gilberto Finzi's introduction to his edition of Bettinelli, Lettere virgiliane, Lettere inglesi e Mia vita letteraria (Milano: Rizzoli, 1962); Vittorio Enzo Alfieri, "Bettinelli e l'illuminismo," in Atti del Convegno sul Settecento parmense pp. 67-76; Ettore Bonora, "L'abate Bettinelli," in La cultura illuministica in Italia, pp. 87-101; and "Classicismo e illuminismo in Saverio Bettinelli," Atti del Convegno sul Settecento parmense, pp. 49-65.

[4]See, for example, Binni, "Fra Illuminismo e Romanticismo: Saverio Bettinelli," in Preromanticismo italiano (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1959), pp. 51-76; Ettore Bonora, "Pietro Verri e l'Entusiasmo del Bettinelli," Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana, 130 (1953), 204-25.

[5]Tragedie dell'abate Saverio Bettinelli . . . accresciuta d'alcuni Dialoghi sopra il teatro moderno (Bassano, 1788), p.)(3)(. The Dialoghi are printed in the pages numbered 1-82 in parentheses.

[6]For the relationship between Bettinelli and Du Tillot, see Henri Bédarida, Parme et la France de 1748 à 1789 (Paris: Champion, 1928); A. De Carli, Riflessi francesi nell'opera di Saverio Bettinelli (Torino: Chiantore, 1928); Enrico Agosta

del Forte, Corrispondenti francesi di Saverio Bettinelli (Mantova: Ponte Vecchio, 1970), pp. 43-59. On Bettinelli's tragedies, which enjoyed moderate success, see Francesco Colagrosso, Saverio Bettinelli e il teatro gesuitico (Firenze: Sansoni, 1901). Colagrosso characterizes the Jesuit college at Parma as "uno de'Collegi più celebri della Compagnia, inferiore forse solo al Luigi il Grande di Parigi nella sontuosità dei teatri." He also claims that the Jesuits of the college could practically be called "la più antica compagnia stabile" of the Duke of Parma (pp. xiii-xiv). Of Bettinelli he writes: "Aveva egli nel Collegio di Parma la carica di Accademico, che, come il maestro di retorica negl'istituti gesuitici di Francia, attendeva principalmente a comporre per il teatro e a dirigere le rappresentazioni" (p. 81). He also claims that Bettinelli was responsible for changing the Duchess of Parma's attitude towards Italian theatre from one of aversion to that of benevolence. Bettinelli was active in theatrical matters in a court that had an especial interest in the theatre.

[7]Quotations from the Discorso sopra il teatro are taken from the edition by Bonora in Opere di Francesco Algarotti e di Saverio Bettinelli, pp. 1113-45. First published in 1771 as the introduction to the first edition of his tragedies, the Discorso is the Italian version of the treatise in French which Bettinelli had written in Parma at the request of the duke Philip of Bourbon. The Discorso was republished in 1788 with the second edition of the tragedies, and in the two editions of his complete works printed in Venice during his lifetime, namely, the Zatta edition of 1780-82 and the Cesare edition of 1799-1801. The Discorso was edited in 1931 by Silvio D'Amico, though a word of warning must be given concerning the reliability of D'Amico's edition. The printing is very careless and there are some grave errors. For example, on p. 15 we find the Merope attributed to Mattei (this error is repeated three times, though elsewhere the authorship is correctly attributed to Maffei), a lapse that is particularly misleading since Saverio Mattei was also interested in the theatre. Other typographical errors render passages meaningless, e.g., prima for priva (p. 18), bel for del (p. 16), etc. In the Discorso, Bettinelli remarks on his experience with musical accompaniments to drama: "Il difficil tragico nello stile de'drammi io l'ho provato alle occasioni e ne'Cori del Gionata e nella Cantata qui ristampata specialmente senza lusingarmi d'aver colto nel segno, non però senza d'aver ottenuta grazia presso i musici e i compositori, che non mi chiesero mai di cambiar per lor comodo alcuna parola o sentimento. Rara fortuna, che mi fa andar superbo" (p. 1142n).

[8]"I Dialoghi d'Amore dell'abate Saverio Bettinelli," Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana, 108 (1936), 39-42.

[9]Poesia melodrammatica, pp. 185-220.

[10]"Pietro Metastasio," p. 58.

[11]Dieci lettere di Publio Virgilio Marone (1757), known generally as Lettere virgiliane, in Lettere virgiliane e inglesi e altri scritti, ed. Vittorio Enzo Alfieri, (Bari: Laterza, 1930), pp. 1-67. Quotations are taken from this edition.

[12]In the Lettere sopra vari argomenti di letteratura scritte da un inglese ad un veneziano (1766), known generally as Lettere inglesi, Bettinelli claims that rules and precepts can steer poets away from some faults, but they cannot create a single line of poetry. He continues: "Le regole, in poesia e in oratoria, servono come i cannocchiali, cioè non servono fuor che a coloro che han buona vista" (in Lettere virgiliane e inglesi, ed. V. E. Alfieri, p. 168).

[13]In the Discorso sopra la poesia (1781), Bettinelli purports to show what is good poetry "col Tasso e coll'Ariosto alla mano, invece de ripetere inutilmente precetti e dottrine" (in Lettere virgiliane e inglesi, ed. V. E. Alfieri, p. 228). In Dell'entusiasmo delle belle arti he sets out to search for the nature and characteristics of poetic frenzy in what poets themselves had written, rather than in abstract, metaphysical ideas, for the poeto are "degni d'esser maestri dell'arte loro arcana, più che i sottili e freddi analitici co'lor sistemi" (in Opere di . . . Bettinelli, ed. Bonora, p. 805). Quotations from the Entusiasmo are taken from the Bonora edition.

[14]Full references to the editions from which are taken the quotations from the Discorso sopra il teatro and the Discorso sopra la poesia are found in notes 7 and 13 respectively. Quotations from Il Risorgimento (1773) are taken from Vol. IX of Opere edite e inedite (Venezia: Cesare, 1799).

[15]Quotations from the Dialoghi d'Amore are taken from Vol. V of Bettinelli's Opere edite e inedite (Venezia: Cesare, 1799), hereafter cited as Dialoghi.

[16]On the fortune of the Dialoghi, see Macchia Alongi, pp. 10-20. For Bettinelli's version of their fortune, see the second canto of his poem Il Pindemonte, cited in Macchia Alongi, pp. 15-17n. In her article, the critic claims that Leopardi knew and used portions of the Dialoghi for his own Dialoghi del Poeta (pp. 19-20).

[17]When Amore questions her position, Melpomene answers: "M'adatto ai tempi, e ai gusti" (Dialoghi, p. 191).

[18]Dialoghi, p. 223.

[19]Dialoghi, pp. 226-31.

[20]Dialoghi, p. 234.

[21]Dialoghi, pp. 234-42. In his portrayal of the performance of Metastasio's Catone there are echoes of Parini's Il teatro which satirizes the actors' improbable make-up in the rôles of Cato and Caesar (cf. Dialoghi, p. 248 and Il teatro, ll. 73-79, in Tutte le poesie, pp. 691-92).

[22]Dialoghi, pp. 251, 243-44, 268.

[23]Dialoghi, p. 241.

[24]Dialoghi, p. 244.

[25]Discorso sopra il teatro, p. 1120-21. In a note to the text Bettinelli adds: "Frase spiacevole per uno straniero, che in più tomi dà la sferza agl'Italiani ignari delle cose loro, e sin del galateo teatrale e patrio." (The note against Arteaga was already in the 1788 edition, p. 15, and not added in the Cesare edition of 1800, as Bonora claims). This note gives the tone of the reaction of Bettinelli to the Rivoluzioni. Not only did the Italian critic not comprehend Arteaga's position on opera, but he reacted to the work with an apparently instinctive gesture of nationalism.

[26]Discorso sopra il teatro, p. 1139.

[27]Dialoghi, pp. 256 and 284.

[28]Dialoghi, pp. 260-61.

[29]Dialoghi, p. 283.

[30]Dialoghi, p. 247.

[31]Discorso sopra il teatro, p. 1144.

[32]Dialoghi, p. 312. Elsewhere he writes in reference to the theme of love in melodramma: "Che passione, se non mai fa sparger lagrime vere, il cuor sempre è freddo, tutto è pei sensi? (Dialoghi, p. 257).

[33]Dialoghi, p. 282.

[34]In the Risorgimento Bettinelli calls music "un'arte imitatrice della natura", and again, "quell'arte sicura che principalmente unita alla poesia parla dipinge muove rapisce" (p. 265).

[35]Dialoghi, p. 244. The phrase echoes the title of a libretto by Giambattista Casti (1724-1803), with whose melodrammi

Bettinelli was acquainted (see Dialoghi, p. 248). Casti's libretto, Prima la musica e poi le parole was set to music by Antonio Salieri in 1786, and had its première in Vienna along with Mozart's L'impresario. Prima la musica is a fanciful one-act comic opera which parodies in a light vein the intrigues, caprices and incongruities of the operatic world. At the wishes of a count who desires a new opera composed for a festivity to take place some four days hence, and at the instances of a composer who reiterates that no one pays any attention to the words ("Musica in oggi, musica ci vuole"), and that his music, already composed, can be adapted to suit any expression of sentiment, a poet is persuaded to produce a libretto on short notice. Naturally he does so, by adapting his own verses written previously for other operas, adding a few verses here and there, although he mutters that adapting words to a score already composed "è l'istesso / che far l'abito, e poi / far l'uomo a cui s'adatti" (Quotations are taken from the edition in Metastasio, Opere, ed. Fubini, pp. 1041-69). Casti's work was revived at the St. Paul Opera Summer Festival (Katonah, New York) in July 1974; its music was not received favourably by the modern audience. On Casti, see. H. van der Bergh, Giambattista Casti, l'homme et l'oeuvre (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1951); Roberto Benaglia Sangiorgi, "L'abate Casti: poeta melodrammatico successore del Metastasio a Vienna," Italica, 33 (1956), 180-92; and "I melodrammi giocosi dell'abate Casti poeta cesareo e successore del Metastasio a Vienna," Italica, 36 (1959), 101-26; Bonora, "I melodrammi del Casti," Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana, 134 (1957), 169-248.

[36]Rousseau had claimed this in his Lettre sur la musique française (1753).

[37]Il Risorgimento, pp. 274-75.

[38]Il Risorgimento, pp. 263-64. Cf. Algarotti, Saggio sull'opera in musica, pp. 159-60, which Bettinelli paraphrases. In the Dialoghi d'Amore Bettinelli writes as follows of recitatives: "Mi piacquero assai quando furon la parte più importante dell'Opera" (p. 247).

[39]Dialoghi, p. 253.

[40]Dialoghi, pp. 256-57.

[41]Discorso sopra la poesia, p. 185.

[42]Discorso sopra il teatro, pp. 1137-38.

[43]Lettere virgiliane, p. 13.

[44]Discorso sopra il teatro, p. 1143.

[45]*Dialoghi*, p. 266. In the *Discorso sopra la poesia*, Bettinelli writes: "Infatti i drammi d'Apostolo Zeno, sí bene scritti, non fecer fortuna su le scene, e udii quel Frugoni sí armonico lagnarsi del mon poter far mai paghi i musici ed i maestri per la loro materiale armonia. Donde ciò, se non perché mai non potea del tutto lasciar l'eleganza" (p. 218*n*).

[46]*Discorso sopra il teatro*, p. 1139.

[47]*Dialoghi*, pp. 258-59.

[48]On Bettinelli's position in the controversy, see Betti, *Storia critica*, pp. 53-62. As well as the poetry of Frugoni, Algarotti and Bettinelli, the *Versi sciolti di tre eccellenti moderni autori* (1758) also contained the *Lettere virgiliane*. On Algarotti's reaction to the publication of his verses in the same volume as the notorious *Virgiliane*, see Betti, "Bettinelli, Algarotti e la polemica delle *Virgiliane*," *Atti dell'Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti*, 130 (1971-72), 233-59; and *Storia critica*, pp. 41-93; Carlo Calcaterra, "La questione storica delle *Lettere virgiliane*," *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, 97 (1931), 108-20.

[49]*Discorso sopra il teatro*, p. 1140.

[50]*Dell'entusiasmo*, pp. 848-49.

[51]*Dialoghi*, p. 268.

[52]*Saggio sull'eloquenza* (1782), in *Opere di . . . Bettinelli*, ed. Bonora, p. 1011.

[53]*Dell'entusiasmo*, p. 823.

[54]*Saggio sull'eloquenza*, p. 1008; *Discorso sopra il teatro*, pp. 1131-32.

[55]*Dialoghi*, p. 267.

[56]*Dialoghi*, pp. 255, 258.

[57]The *Osservazioni* formed the last two volumes of the Nice edition of Metastasio's *Opere*. It is difficult to build a convincing argument against Bettinelli's judgement of these volumes. The commentaries on Metastasio's *melodrammi* are conventional *pièces d'occasion*, rather than serious and valid criticism.

[58]*Dialoghi*, pp. 284-87; *Discorso sopra il teatro*, p. 1124.

[59]*Dialoghi*, p. 288.

[60]*Dialoghi*, p. 278.

[61]*Dialoghi*, p. 289.

[62]Melpomene concludes: "Ei [Amore] se ne andò, e peggio per lui. Non posso negare che non abbia molta ragione, ma è troppo ostinato ne'suoi pregiudicj. Non vuol altra legge che quella fondata in natura, e non conosce quella che vuole la moda. Io debbo seguir questa, e mi guarderò bene dal parlare delle sue critiche. Che furie incontrerei! Andar contro al torrente, esiger gusto sodo, citar esempj classici . . . guai a me. . . . riderebbon di me che vo'corregger gl'incorreggibili" (*Dialoghi*, pp. 313-314).

[63]*Dialoghi*, pp. 264-65.

[64]*Dialoghi*, p. 311.

[65]*Discorso sopra il teatro*, p. 1141.

[66]Commenting on Bettinelli's polemical nature, Fubini notes that in Bettinelli's writings "prevale il gusto polemico dell'autore, il piacere dell'avventura in cui si è impegnato, fidente nel consenso esplicito o tacito di tanta parte del pubblico e degli uomini di lettere e non meno fortemente stimolato dal pensiero degli avversari" (*Dal Muratori al Baretti*, p. 217). On Bettinelli's polemical nature, see also Wido Hempel, "Per la storia delle polemiche fra Bettinelli, Tiraboschi, Napoli-Signorelli e i gesuiti spagnuoli," in *Problemi di lingua e letteratura italiana*, pp. 115-20.

Notes to Arteaga

[1]The first volume of the Rivoluzioni was published by Carlo Trenti in Bologna in 1783. A second edition, revised and enlarged to three volumes, was issued by the publishing house of Carlo Palese in Venice between 1785 and 1788, though bearing the date of 1785. Quotations in the text are taken from this 1785 edition, identified in subsequent notes as Rivoluzioni. As far as the title is concerned, Batllori claims in the introduction to his edition of Arteaga's Lettere musico-filologiche (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1944), p. xxvi, that it stems from Arteaga's desire to undertake his study not simply as an historian, but as a philosopher. Consequently, he chose a title that would convey his philosophical intent better than a simple Storia del teatro musicale. Batllori adds that the title Rivoluzioni del teatro musicale was "inspirado sin duda en los famosos Rivoluzioni d'Italia del abate piamontés Carlo Denina, publicado por vez primera en Turín de 1769 al 70." This conjecture has been repeated by later critics such as Eva Marja Rudat, Las ideas estéticas de Esteban de Arteaga: Orígenes, significado y actualidad, trans. Carmen Criado de Rodríguez-Puértolas (Madrid: Gredos, 1971), p. 28n, and Fedele d'Amico, "Arteaga," Enciclopedia dello spettacolo, I (Roma: Le Maschere, 1954), cols. 975-79. This assumption is open to question. The term rivoluzioni had already been used in the field of music, and at a closer date to that of the composition of Arteaga's treatise. In 1777 an anonymous pamphlet was published in Paris. Occasioned by the controversy over Gluck's reform-operas, it was entitled Essai sur les révolutions de la musique en France, and attempted, albeit on a much smaller scale than Arteaga's work, to study the evolution of opera in France. The pamphlet (written by Jean-François Marmontel, editor of the Mercure de France from 1785 and collaborator in the Encyclopédie) was republished, still anonymously, by Gaspar Michel Leblond in his Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la révolution opérée dans la musique par M. le Chevalier Gluck which appeared in Naples in 1781, two years before the publication of the first volume of Arteaga's Rivoluzioni. Several passages of the Essai are echoed in Arteaga's treatise. The Essai is found on pp. 153-90 of Leblond's Mémoires (1781; rpt. Amsterdam: Antiqua, 1967).

[2]The most accurate biography of Arteaga (c. 1747-1799) can be found in Miguel Batllori's prologue to his edition of Arteaga's Investigaciones filosóficas sobre la belleza ideal considerada como objeto de todas las artes de imitación. These Investigaciones appeared in Madrid in 1789; they are published by Batllori with the shorter title La belleza ideal (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1943), from which edition all my quotations are taken. Among Arteaga's other works, we may point out his dissertation Dell'influenza degli arabi sull'origine

della poesia moderna in Europa (1791); his edition of Gonzalo Pérez's translation from the Greek, La Ulixea de Homero (in manuscript); incomplete studies on the musical system of the ancients: I, Lettere musico-filologiche, and II, Del ritmo sonoro e del ritmo muto nella musica degli antichi, published for the first time in 1944 with an introduction by Batllori; editions of Latin authors: Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius (1794), and the complete works of Horace (prepared in collaboration with Carlo Fea and Ennio Quirino Visconti, and published in 1791 by Giambattista Bodoni). Arteaga also studied sciences and theology at Bologna; see Highini Anglés' article on Arteaga, German translation by G. Felske, in Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 1960 ed. At that time, the study of such writers as Gassendi, Locke, Condillac and Diderot flourished at the University of Bologna; see Berengo, pp. 623-24.

[3]For a partial list of Arteaga's correspondence, see Batllori in La cultura hispano-italiana de los jesuitas expulsos (Madrid: Gredos, 1966), pp. 149-56.

[4]See Ippolito Pindemonte, Lettere inedite, ed. Francesco Gimmino in Ippolito Pindemonte e il suo tempo (Roma: Abete, 1968), II, 78, 84, 87, 88, 95, 97, 114, 145, 146, 147, 218, 219, 277, 418, 437. Pindemonte knew Arteaga personally, as is clear for example from one of Pindemonte's letters to Clementino Vannetti with whom Arteaga had a literary altercation (Lettere inedite, p. 87).

[5]See Monti's letter to his publisher, Bodoni, 9 August 1786, in Vincenzo Monti, Epistolario, ed. Alfonso Bertoldi (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1928), I, 285.

[6]Juan Andrés had requested this information while compiling his chief work, Dell'origine, progressi e stato attuale d'ogni letteratura, 7 vols. (Parma, 1782-99) (see Rudat, Las ideas estéticas, pp. 23-25). Padre Juan Andrés (1740-1817) was one of the better-known Spanish Jesuits in exile, and became one of the principal exponents of eighteenth-century culture in the field of encyclopedic erudition. See Batllori, La cultura hispano-italiana, p. 535.

[7]See Carmine Giustino Mininni, Pietro Napoli Signorelli: Vita, opere, tempi, amici; con lettere, documenti (Città di Castello: Lapi, 1914), pp. 310-11n. In his Storia critica de'teatri antichi e moderni, Napoli Signorelli reviewed the history of melodramma and representative authors and works. An admirer of opera, he especially praised the dramas of Metastasio. However, his Storia does not delve into the theory of melodramma, which he claimed to have discussed in his unpublished 1783 treatise "Sistema melodrammatico" (Storia, VI [Napoli: Orsino, 1790], 247n). Unfortunately, I have been unable to consult this work.

[8]Tiraboschi's Riflessioni are in the Preface to Vol. III, Part I of his Opere (Firenze: Landi, 1806), pp. xviii-xlii. Matteo Borsa (1752-1798), a relative of Saverio Bettinelli, was a personal friend of Arteaga, and was instrumental in fostering the relations between Arteaga and Bettinelli. In response to one of the literary discourses held by the Academy of Mantua, Borsa produced a dissertation later published with annotations by Arteaga with the title Del gusto presente in letteratura italiana (Venezia, 1784). Borsa's treatise caused no stir, but Arteaga's observations on certain defects of Italian literature and language raised a furore (see Batllori's prologue to his edition of La belleza ideal, pp. xxi-xxii). Borsa also wrote an essay entitled "Musica imitativa teatrale" (1781). In the Avvertimento that precedes this essay in his complete works, Borsa claims that his treatise afforded Arteaga material for the Rivoluzioni. He continues: "Ora nel corso dell'Opera l'amico [Arteaga] ha parlato di me con cortesia veramente; ma nel caldo d'un'impresa grandiosa non si è ricordato sempre d'indicare chi abbia recate le prime pietre" ("Musica imitativa teatrale," in Opere di Matteo Borsa, I [Verona: Giulari, 1800], 3). There are undeniable similarities between Arteaga's treatise and Borsa's essay, especially in the sections dealing with dance, the imitative nature of music, the characters and passions suited for opera, and the qualities of the recitative. In his essay, Borsa sets out to investigate the extent to which music can imitate nature by means of instruments and song. He finds that instrumental music is limited basically to the direct imitation of sounds, or, in the case of an original without sonorous qualities, to the imitation or evocation in sound of the action or effect of the original ("Musica imitativa," pp. 66-78). The imitative properties of vocal music are greater because the words make the terms of the imitation more precise. However, vocal music can only imitate satisfactorily the passions of men, for only impassioned speech provides enough movement and variety to allow for musical expression (pp. 13-17). Borsa applies his examination of music to opera. While he concludes that music is able to emulate dramatic poetry, he finds that the taste of an uncultured public and the whims of the singers lead to the composition of operatic music that appeals to the ear through pure melody, rather than to the heart and intellect through the emulation of the words sung. However, Borsa believes that if the libretto were to portray lively passions suitable for musical accompaniment, then contemporary opera could equal the feats of Greek tragedy. But, he concludes, unfortunately the present state of melodramma is such that no one pays attention to the words, nor demands of music more than that it please the ear. Thus, only music reigns in the theatre (pp. 64-65). Borsa's essay limits itself basically to a consideration of music, and pays but scant attention to the other components of opera. It is a very readable work that reveals an acute mind. While it expressed many of the ideas later developed by Arteaga, it did not have the impact of the Rivoluzioni, and remains among

the minor writings on eighteenth-century opera. For further details of Borsa and his works, see Natali, Il Settecento, II, 1195-96; E. Bigi, "Tra classicismo e preromanticismo: Matteo Borsa," in Lettere italiane, 11 (1959), 320-33; Binni, "Lo sviluppo del neoclassicismo nelle discussioni sul 'gusto presente'," in Classicismo e neoclassicismo, pp. 125, 136.

[9]For the relationship between Arteaga and Tiraboschi, see Giuseppe Cavazzuti, "Tra eruditi giornalisti del sec. XVIII: G. Tiraboschi e il 'Nuovo Giornale dei letterati'," Atti e memorie della R. Deputazione di storia patria per le province modenesi, 7th ser., 3 (1924), 31-134; Batllori, ed., La belleza ideal, pp. xxviii-xxx.

[10]Cesarotti, Saggio sulla filosofia delle lingue, p. 93. See p. 166, where Cesarotti calls Arteaga a "friend" in a note to the text.

[11]For the reactions of his contemporaries, see Riccardo Allorto, "Stefano Arteaga e le Rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano," Rivista musicale italiana, 52 (1950), 130-33; see also Batllori's Prologue to his edition of La belleza ideal, pp. xiii-xv.

[12]Stephan Arteaga, Geschichte der italiänischen Oper, aus dem Italiänischen übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen begleitet von Johann Nicolaus Forkel, Doctor der Philosophie und Musikdirektor zu Göttingen, 2 vols (Leipzig: Schwickert, 1789).

[13]Les Révolutions du théâtre musical en Italie, depuis son origine jusques à nos jours, trans. Baron de R. [Lavalley de Rouvron] (Londres: L. Nardini, 1802).

[14]Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, Historia de las ideas estéticas en España, in Edición nacional de las obras completas, III (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1957), 359; "Histoire de la musique," Encyclopédie de la musique, IV (Paris: Delagrave, 1920), 2217. Mitjana adds that Arteaga "a formulé des jugements admirables (que la posterité a presque aceptés ad pedem litteris)" on the principal librettists of the time (p. 2220). On Wagner's theory on opera, see his Oper und Drama (1851); Ernest Newman, Wagner as Man and Artist (New York: Knopf, 1924), pp. 220-56; Bryan Magee, Aspects of Wagner (London: Ross, 1968), pp. 9-31; Robert L. Jacobs, Wagner (London: Dent, 1974), pp. 58-63.

[15]Allorto, p. 140.

[16]Poesia melodrammatica, Ch. VII. For Giazotto, the contradictions he sees in Arteaga's work are a "prodotto di critica

innaveduta, irresponsabile per mancanza di giudizio e d'ogni più elementare senso del lecito e delle proporzioni" (p. 131).

[17]Oliver, The Encyclopedists, pp. 112; 129-33. Oliver ignores completely the Italian critics who insisted that music must serve poetry, when he makes such statements as "the overemphasis of the role of the poem in the opera reveals to how great an extent Arteaga was following French theorists" (p. 131), or "the essentially French conception of opera as a literary form stood in direct opposition to the Italian attitude which rejected all literary implications in the art" (p. 5). Another misunderstanding of Arteaga's thought appears in Oliver's claim that Arteaga "desired to have the dance form a part of the dramatic action of the opera" (p. 132). A careful reading of Chapter 16 of the Rivoluzioni leads to quite different conclusions concerning Arteaga's ideas on dance as a component of opera.

[18]Rudat, Las ideas estéticas de Esteban de Arteaga.

[19]Batllori, Prologue to his edition of La belleza ideal, pp. xiii-xvii; d'Amico, "Arteaga," cols. 975-79.

[20]Luigi F. Tagliarini, article on Martini in Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, VIII, cols. 1719-24. See also: Argia Bertini, article on Martini, Enciclopedia della musica (Milano: Ricordi, 1964); Leonida Busi, Il Padre G. B. Martini: Musicista-letterato del secolo XVIII (1891; rpt. Bologna: Forni, 1969), p. xvi.

[21]"Una fortunata combinazione . . . mi fece scoprire una miniera di notizie appartenenti alla musica nella conoscenza ed amicizia del Reverendissimo Padre Maestro Fra Giambattista Martini de'Minori Conventuali. Questo dottissimo religioso, del quale è inutile fermarsi a tesser l'elogio, poichè meglio di me lo fa l'Italia tutta e l'Europa, fu il primiero, che mi confortò alla intrapresa, che rimosse da me ogni dubbiezza, che m'indicò le sorgenti, che mi fornì buon numero di libri rari, e di manoscritti, e che m'aprì ne'suoi famigliari discorsi fonti d'erudizione vieppiù copiosi di quelli che ritrovassi negli autori" (Rivoluzioni, I, xxv-xxvi). Charles Burney, the famous eighteenth-century English music critic, recounts his amazement at the sight of Martini's library which filled several rooms with an immense collection of printed books, manuscripts and copies of manuscripts from all parts of the world. At the time of Burney's visit, it numbered 17,000 volumes and was still increasing (see The Present State of Music in France and Italy [London, 1773; rpt. New York: Broude, 1969], pp. 202-03).

[22]Rudat records that Arteaga was instrumental in healing the

rift that developed between Martini and Antonio Eximeno (1729-1808) over Eximeno's treatise Dell'origine e delle regole della musica, colla storia del suo progresso, decadenza e rinnovazione (Roma, 1774). Eximeno's letter to Arteaga, dated 17 February 1781, reveals the friendship that had developed among the three scholars (see Rudat, p. 22n).

[23]Allorto, p. 128.

[24]See Burney, The Present State of Music in France and Italy, pp. 199-201. On Martini's students, see Bertini, p. 114; Vittore Zaccaria, Padre Giambattista Martini: Compositore, musicologo e maestro (Padova: Messagero di S. Antonio [196-?]), pp. 57-59, 128.

[25]"Als Forscher, Historiker und Theoretiker hat sich Martini in erster Linie als bienenfleissiger Sammler von Material und Quellen auf jedem Gebiet des mus[ikalischen] Wissens hervorragend augezeichnet; seine systematische Forschung und seine Anwendung einer streng krit[ischen] Methode haben ihn zu einem unmittelbaren Vorläufen der modernen M[usik]w[issenschaft] und in seiner Zeit zu dem allgemein höchst verehrten Orakel der mus[ikalischen] Welt gemacht, das als "Padre Martini" unbestrittene Autorität unter den Musiken aller Länden genoss" (Tagliarini, "Martini," col. 1723).

[26]On Martini's theatrical works, see Francesco Vatielli, "Le opere comiche di G. B. Martini," Rivista musicale italiana, 40 (1936), 450-76. Vatielli states that Martini's arias are full of "vocalizzi e abbellimenti" (p. 464), and concludes that Martini "riesce più felicemente espressivo nelle scene sentimentali" (p. 476), these being characteristics of the opera that Arteaga will in some measure attempt to justify.

[27]For details of Arteaga's education and cultural background, see Batllori's Prologue to La belleza ideal, pp. xxxv-lxiii; Rudat, pp. 62-78.

[28]Rivoluzioni, I, xxxviii-xxxix.

[29]Rivoluzioni, I, xxxix.

[30]Francesco Saverio Quadrio, Della storia e della ragione d'ogni poesia, III:2 (Milano: Agnelli, 1744), 425.

[31]Quadrio, III:2, 435. Cf. Martello's words: "Ma bisogna suporre per fondamento che in questo vago spettacolo non dee negarsi la preminenza della musica. Ella è l'anima di un tale

recitamento, e ad essa debbesi il principale riguardo di chi è chiamato a parte, o per poesia o per apparato, di simil componimento" (Della tragedia antica e moderna, p. 275).

[32]Della storia e della ragione d'ogni poesia, III:2, 451.

[33]Rivoluzioni, I, xxxix.

[34]Trattato dell'opera in musica (Napoli: Campo, 1772). For a biography of Planelli, see Mario Bellucci La Salandra, Triade musicale bitontina: Brevi cenni biografici di Bonifacio Logroscino (1689-1760), Tommasso Traetta (1727-1779) e Antonio Planelli (1747-1803) (Bitonto, 1935).

[35]Rivoluzioni, I, xxxix-xl.

[36]See, for example, Giazotto, Poesia melodrammatica, p. 98; Anna Mondolfi, "A. Planelli," Enciclopedia dello spettacolo, VIII (1961), col. 220. Although his name usually appears in histories of eighteenth-century opera, Planelli's treatise has not been studied. Francesco Degrada claims that Planelli had a personal experience with concrete theatrical problems that led to his sound, practical observations on staging; see his article on Planelli in Enciclopedia della musica (Milano: Ricordi, 1964).

[37]Introduction to Forkel's translation of the Rivoluzioni, p. iv, cited by Rudat, pp. 32-33.

[38]Planelli, p. 8 of the Preface to his Trattato dell'opera in musica.

[39]Preface, pp. 7-9.

[40]According to Freeman, Planelli puts forward the idea that "Opera is not simply sung tragedy, but an independent genre with conventions and requirements of its own" ("Opera without Drama," I, 90).

[41]Trattato dell'opera in musica, pp. 65-66.

[42]Trattato dell'opera in musica, p. 17.

[43]Trattato dell'opera in musica, p. 272.

[44]Trattato dell'opera in musica, pp. 240-72. Cf. Algarotti, Saggio sopra l'opera in musica, p. 151.

[45]Rivoluzioni, I, xlii.

[46]Rivoluzioni, I, xix-xxv.

[47]See the Discours préliminaire de l'Encyclopédie (1763), in which Jean Le Rond D'Alembert described his philosophical and scientific method of investigation. His translator regards those pages as an exposition of the philosophy of the Enlightenment (D'Alembert, Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot, trans. Richard N. Schwab [New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963], pp. 16-17n).

[48]"Ho cercato di far conoscere la rettorica e la filosofia del l'arte, quelle parti cioè le più trascurate dai moderni musici, ma le quali io giudico essere le più essenziali fra tutte, poichè c'insegnano l'uso che dee farsi de'mezzi particolari ad ottenere nella maggior estensione possibile il fin generale" (Avvertimento al Lettore to the Venice edition of the Rivoluzioni, I, x).

[49]Avvertimento, pp. xli-xlii.

[50]Letter published by Batllori in "Arteaga e Bettinelli," Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana, 113 (1939), 104-05. The fundamental importance of the naturalistic and experimental positions revealed here by Arteaga are repeated in other works. In the Introduction to La belleza ideal, Arteaga writes: "Los grandes escritores de filosofía moral van conociendo que el mejor método de tratarla no es el de sentar principios aéreos, sino el de estudiar la naturaleza del hombre, siguiéndola en las varias modificaciones que puede recibir de la educación, del clima, de la religión, de las leyes y demás circunstancias" (ed. Batllori, p. 10).

[51]Rivoluzioni, III, 237.

[52]For an exposition of the critical position on Arteaga's musical theory, see Rudat, pp. 31-33. To these may be added Della Corte's conclusion that Arteaga is a critic of the libretto rather than of opera (La critica musicale e i critici [Torino: U.T.E.T., 1961], p. 193).

[53]"Cominciossi allora ad applicar la musica ai funerali, alle nozze, ed ad altre solennità, come ancora a'Ludi, o misteri della Passione, de'quali, per essere stati in certa guisa i primi abbozzi del dramma musicale, ci convien fare più distinta menzione affinchè si vegga la rassomiglianza d'origine nella poesia drammatica di tutti i tempi" (Rivoluzioni, I, 114-15).

Planelli had conjectured that the origin of melodramma might be found in the dramatic performance described in such chronicles as those of Giovanni Villani and Albertino Mussato. He wrote, for instance: "In effetti Albertino Mussato, Storico padovano . . . parla del pronunziar su'Teatri col canto, e in volgar lingua, le geste de'Duci, e de'Monarchi, come d'un costume non recente. Dalla maniera dunque, onde il lodato Storico fa menzione di queste volgari, e cantate Tragedie [in De gestis Italicorum post mortem Henrici VII], par verisimile, ch'esse ben prima del secolo, nel quale nacque il Mussato, avessero avuta origine" (Trattato dell'opera in musica, p.2). The Encyclopedists had also realized that the fêtes or sacre rappresentazioni had contributed to the development of opera (see Oliver, The Encyclopedists, p. 21).

[54]Problems arose with his publisher in Bologna, and Arteaga took his work to the Venetian Carlo Palese who published a revised and corrected version of the original eleven chapters, together with the balance of the Rivoluzioni, in three volumes which appeared between 1785 and 1788 (dated 1785). Arteaga did not hesitate to learn from the criticism levelled at him following the appearance of the first volume, and he revised and corrected his second edition accordingly. Since Bettinelli had warned him that the Italian in the first volume contained hispanisms, Arteaga had requested his help in correcting the language. However, it seems that Bettinelli did not hasten to send his corrections, for they did not reach Arteaga until after the publication of the second volume. For Arteaga's relations with Bettinelli, see Batllori, "Arteaga e Bettinelli."

[55]Manfredini later published his review, Arteaga's reply, and his own rebuttal in Difesa della musica moderna e de'suoi celebri esecutori (Bologna; 1788; rpt. Bologna: Forni, 1972). However, Arteaga's Bolognese publisher did not give up. At the time that the second volume was published in Venice, Trenti issued the remaining four-and-a-half chapters that he already had in press, and following the appearance of the third volume in Venice, he brought out his own third volume, culled from the Palese edition, and including Manfredini's rebuttal of Arteaga's appendix to the third Venetian volume. The dates for the Bologna edition, therefore, are 1783-1788. The complete edition authorized by Arteaga is the Palese edition of Venice. It is a little disconcerting, therefore, to find that the Bologna edition is the only one listed in Elvidio Surian, A Checklist of Writings on 18th-Century French and Italian Opera (Excluding Mozart) (Hackensack, N.J.: J. Boomin, 1970), p. 25, especially since this work claims to be comprehensive in its coverage.

[56]Rivoluzioni, I, x-xi. For a schematic list of the polemics involving Arteaga, see d'Amico, "Arteaga," cols. 976-77.

[57]Letter published by Batllori in "Arteaga e Bettinelli," p. 107.

[58]Rivoluzioni, I, xxvii-xxviii. In his Investigaciones sobre la belleza ideal, published six years after the first volume of the Rivoluzioni, Arteaga expresses a similar concept, though it is followed by a caveat: "La belleza mayor en este género sería la unión perfecta de la música, de la poesía, de la danza y de la perspectiva en el espectáculo teatral que los italianos llaman opera, último esfuerzo del ingenio humano y complemento de perfección en las artes imitativas, si una multitud de causas no contribuyera a estorbar los progresos del drama músico y los prodigiosos efectos que debieran esperarse de semejante unión" (La belleza ideal, p. 104).

[59]In 1714, Martello had already implied that melodramma was a different genre. However, he had attached no importance to the new genre. Martello's intuition had not been grasped in the intervening years. Arteaga himself did not appreciate it, for he summarily dismisses Martello by including him among those critics who, in his opinion, had written about melodramma "alla sfuggita" (Rivoluzioni, I, xxxviii). In France, La Bruyère and Perrault had already suggested that a different set of criteria should be used to judge opera, and the Encyclopedists sought to establish opera's independence (see Oliver, p. 10; E. Fubini, Gli enciclopedisti e la musica, p. 30).

[60]Rivoluzioni, I, xxxvii-xxxviii. Marmontel expresses a similar reservation at the beginning of his Essai sur les révolutions de la musique, justifying the uncertainty of the times by stating that it is impossible to draw up rules until the spectator "aura epuisé les comparisons, &, à force d'expérience, trouvé le point fixe du beau" (p. 153).

[61]"Ma siccome la parte più essenziale del dramma viene commune-mente riputata la musica, e che da lei prende sua maggior forza, e vaghezza la poesia, così le mutazioni da essa introdotte formano il principal carattere dell'Opera" (Rivoluzioni, I, 2).

[62]Rudat, pp. 259-63. For a broader analysis of this concept, which forms the basis of Arteaga's aesthetics, see the section "La teoría de la imitación" in Rudat, pp. 258-79; see also Manuel Olguín, "The Theory of Ideal Beauty in Arteaga and Winckelmann," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 8 (1949), 12-33.

[63]Rivoluzioni, I, 3-4.

[64]La belleza ideal, p. 14. On this treatise, see also the

studies by Batllori, "Ideario filosófico y estético de Arteaga," Spanische Forschungen der Görres-Gesellschaft, 1st ser., 7 (1938), 293-325; "Ideario estético de Esteban de Arteaga," Revista de ideas estéticas, 3 (1943), 87-108.

[65]In La belleza ideal, Arteaga explains what instruments are suitable to each of the arts (pp. 13 and 50-51). In Rivoluzioni, III, 71, he states that the music must demand of the listener "che ammiri la possente magia dei suoni che pervennero a [ingannarlo], che paragoni que'punti di rassomiglianza col vero onde trasse origine il [suo] delizioso delirio; che sillogizzi comparando la voce che cantò colla passione o l'idea che voleva rappresentar[gli]." A similar concept is found in Johann E. Schlegel, On Imitation, trans. E. A. McCormick (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 30-33, and in Metastasio, Estratto dell'Arte poetica, II, 985-87. Most students of Arteaga have criticized him for what they call an excessive emphasis on the importance of the instrument, and on the admiration for the extent of the difficulty to be overcome, in imitation. See Batllori, La belleza ideal, p. lx; Vittorio Borghini, Problemi di estetica e di cultura nel Settecento spagnolo: Feijóo, Luzán, Arteaga (Genova, 1958), pp. 211-12; José Luis Micó Buchón, "Aproximación a la estética de Arteaga," Revista de ideas estéticas, 17 (1959), 40. Rudat attempts to defend Arteaga in these words: "Es posible que sea ésta una de las ideas menos afortunadas de Arteaga. Pero no podemos dejar de tener en cuenta el propósito que le guía al formularla: distinguir entre arte y naturaleza, y destacar, al mismo tiempo, la peculiaridad del fenómeno artístico. El artista puede convertir en una hermosa obra de arte no sólo lo bello, sino también lo física y moralmente desagradable" (p. 268).

[66]La belleza ideal, p. 14.

[67]Rivoluzioni, I, 4-5. Concerning the imitation of nature in music, he wrote elsewhere: "Il risultato non per tanto della imitazion musicale benchè tale qual è non esista nella natura, ha nondimeno in essa il suo fondamento, poichè sebbene non trovisi alcun oggetto sonoro in particolare che presenti all'orecchio la serie dei tuoni contenuti nell'aria, per esempio, se mai senti spirarti sul volto di Gluck, egli è però indubitabile che separatamente presi si trovano tutti nella voce delle persone da passioni amorose agitate" (Rivoluzioni, III, 32).

[68]Batteux published his famous treatise in 1746. The single principle to which he reduces all arts is that of the imitation of nature, or more precisely, of beautiful nature, thus excluding the imitation of ugliness. Arteaga argued against the limitations of this concept in the third chapter of La belleza ideal: "[E]l principio fundamental del señor Batteux

. . . no sólo es insuficiente, sino falsísimo; porque, suponiendo que en la naturaleza los objetos imitables son los que nos excitan las ideas de la unidad, de la variedad, de la simetría y de la perfección, viene a concluir que solamente la belleza y la bondad son objetos de imitación en las artes representativas, aserción que la historia de las bellas artes y de las bellas letras desmiente a cada página" (p. 47). Arteaga believed that his theory of art as imitating not only what is beautiful in nature (as the neo-Classicists affirmed), but also what is ugly (which the neo-Classicists did not accept), was a new and original concept. Naturally, it was not. For a discussion of this, see Rudat, pp. 84-92. Arteaga's thought, then, differed from that of the Encyclopedists who, according to McCormick (Introduction to Schlegel, On Imitation, p. xxiv), supported Batteux's unified view of the arts. However, Diderot referred to Batteux's treatise as "un oeuvre acéphale" because it did not give a definition of la belle nature (Plan d'une université, in Oeuvres completes, XI [Paris: Le Club français du livre, 1971], 806).

[69]See Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp (London, 1953; rpt. New York: Norton, 1958), pp. 91-94; Paul Henry Lang, "The Enlightenment and Music," Eighteenth-Century Studies, 1 (1968), 93-108. Arteaga dismissed this new movement in his usual contentious fashion. Discussing a treatise by M. Boyè, L'expression musicale mise au rang des chimères (1779), he wrote: "Attalchè molto male, a mio avviso, opinò quel moderno Autore che ripose l'imitazione musicale nel rango delle chimere; opinione, che non potè nascere in lui se non di poca filosofia, o dal desiderio di distinguersi con qualche novità stravagante" (Rivoluzioni, III, 32-33).

[70]Rivoluzioni, I, 5.

[71]For Arteaga, the principal aim of opera is to "penetrare addentro nel cuore, e intenerirlo" (Rivoluzioni, I, 46); and again (p. 47) he states that opera is "un componimento teatrale destinato alla mozione degli affetti."

[72]According to Arteaga, poetry instructs, but it must be combined with the act of giving pleasure: "cosicchè una istruzione scompagnata da ogni sentimento e da ogni immagine nulla affatto si converebbe alla poesia" (Rivoluzioni, I, 7). It is interesting to observe Arteaga's informal thoughts on the matter in a letter to Bettinelli dated 4 February 1786: "Poco soggiungerò intorno al pregio che V.S. concede alle lettere di fortificar l'anima colle utili cognizioni. Siccome questo è un affare di sentimento, così sarebbe una follia il disputar sull'effetto che ponno elleno generare su tale o tale individuo. Quanto a me, benchè coltivi ed ami all'estremo le lettere, non le amo nè le coltivo perchè esse mi fortifican

l'anima, ma perchè mi sminuiscono i mali della vita, procacciandomi nuove sorgenti di sensazioni aggradevoli" (cited by Batllori, "Arteaga e Bettinelli," p. 105). A similar concept of what we might call the "escapist" function of art was developed by the Abbé Du Bos in his Réflexions critiques (1719). According to Du Bos, art serves to occupy the spirit of man, to help him escape from the ennui which engulfs him in life by creating new sources of pleasurable emotions for him to experience (Réflexions, I, 6-28).

[73]Rivoluzioni, III, 71.

[74]"Dipinge [la musica] ora rivestendo d'immagini materiali le idee spirituali ed astratte: ora raccogliendo le bellezze sparse nella natura per ragunarle in un solo oggetto: ora la proprietà d'un essere ad un altro trasferendo a vicenda: ora cercando, che la collocazione, la pronunzia, e il suono stesso de'segni arbitrarj, cioè delle parole l'immagine mentale da lui creata esprimano perfettamente. Anche in quest'ultima proprietà un'altra ragione d'analogia della musica colla poesia consiste: imperciocchè quanto più la espressione poetica de'motti s'avvicina alla natura delle cose, che si rappresentano, tanto più agevolmente potrà la musica le cose stesse imitare" (Rivoluzioni, I, 6).

[75]"Commuove la musica ora imitando colla melodìa vocale le interiezioni, i sospiri, gli accenti, l'esclamazioni, e le inflessioni della favella ordinaria, onde si risvegliano le idee, che delle passioni furono principio: ora raccogliendo cotali inflessioni, che si trovano sparse ordinariamente nella voce appassionata, e radunandole in un canto continuo . . . ora ricercando coi suoni armonici, colla misura, col movimento, e colla melodìa que'fisici riposti nervi, i quali con certa ma inesplicabil legge movendosi, all'odio, o all'amore, all'ira, al gaudio, o alla tristezza ci spingono" (Rivoluzioni, I, 8-9). Planelli had also discussed the physiology of artistic apprehension (Trattato dell'opera, pp. 106-11). As a student in Bologna (1773), Arteaga had worked on a psychological treatise entitled Economía físico-moral, which has not survived (see Batllori, "Los manuscritos de Esteban Arteaga," in La cultura hispano-italiana, p. 136). Arteaga was acquainted with the thought of Descartes, Locke, Conti and the Encyclopedists on the senses and the emotions. For the importance of the investigations into the psychological impact and effects of music on the listener in the eighteenth century, see Lang, "The Enlightenment and Music," pp. 95-108; Dénes Zoltai, Ethos und Affekt (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970), pp. 151-228.

[76]Rivoluzioni, I, 9-14.

[77]Abrams, pp. 92-93. Charles Avison (Essay on Musical Expression [1753]), and Adam Smith ("Of the Nature of that Imitation which Takes Place in What Are Called the Imitative Arts," published posthumously in Essays Philosophical and Literary [London: Ward, Lock, 1880], pp. 405-34) are proponents of the first tendency. Rousseau, in his Essai sur l'origine des langues (1752), and Dr. John Brown, in his Dissertation on . . . Poetry and Music (1763), follow the second current of thought.

[78]In 1799, Wackenroder wrote: "What do they want, the faint-hearted and doubting reasoners, who require each of the hundreds and hundreds of musical pieces explained in words, and who cannot understand that not every piece has an expressible meaning like a painting? Are they trying to measure the richer language by the poorer and to resolve into words that which disdains words? Or have they never felt without words? Have they filled up their hollow hearts merely with descriptions of feelings? Have they never perceived within themselves the mute singing, the masked dance of invisible spirits? . . . The human heart becomes acquainted with itself in the mirror of musical sounds" (Contributions to the Fantasies on Art for Friends of Art, in Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder's 'Confessions" and 'Fantasies', trans. Mary Hurst Schubert [University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971], p. 191). Herder had already written in 1769 "Was wars, das man mit der ersten Musik ausdrücken wollte? Leidenschaft, Empfindung." This expression of passion, according to Herder, became "eine Wundermusik aller Affekte, eine neue Zaubersprache der Empfindung" (Kritische Wälder oder Betrachtungen über die Wissenschaft und Kunst des Schönen, in Herders Sämmtliche Werke, ed. Bernhard Suphan, IV [Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1878], 117-18). Novalis denied the mimetic quality of music: "Der Musiker nimmt das Wesen seiner Kunst aus sich--auch nicht der leiseste Verdacht von Nachahmung kann ihn treffen" (Romantische Welt: Die Fragmente, ed. Otto Mann [Leipzig: Dieterich'schen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1939], pp. 297-98). For the history of the concept of imitation in music in Germany, see Stanislaw A. Markus, Musikästhetik I. Teil: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Nachahmungsästhetik und Affektenlehre sowie der idealistichen Musikästhetik in Deutschland, trans. Karl Krämer (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1967).

[79]"[L]a musica è più povera della poesia, limitandosi quella al cuore, all'orecchio, e in qualche modo alla immaginazione, laddove questa si stende anche allo spirito, ed alla ragione. In contraccambio la musica è più espressiva della poesia, perchè imita i segni inarticolati, che sono il linguaggio naturale, e per conseguenza il più energico, e gli imita col mezzo de'suoni, i quali, perchè agiscono fisicamente sopra di noi, sono più atti a conseguire l'effetto loro che non sono

i versi, i quali dipendono dalla parola, che è un segno di convenzione, e parlando unicamente alle facoltà interne del l'uomo, hanno per esser gustati bisogno di più squisito, e dilicato sentimento. Quindi è, che una melodìa semplice commuove universalmente assai più che non faccia un bel componimento poetico" (Rivoluzioni, I, 14).

[80]A similar position was taken, for example, by James Beattie (An Essay on Poetry and Music, as They Affect the Mind [1762], in Essays [Edinburgh: Creech, 1776; rpt. New York: Garland, 1971], pp. 347-580). Both Beattie and Arteaga in general exclude instrumental music from the imitative arts, but their opinions on vocal music differ. Arteaga considers vocal music as a valid imitative art, while Beattie admits only that some imitation is possible in the musical accompaniment to song (not in the vocal part itself), but that imitation is of secondary importance and not in fact essential to the art (pp. 436-55). Pathos or expression is the essential characteristic of vocal music according to Beattie, and since music (whether vocal or instrumental) is not essentially an imitative art, it has need of poetry (to which art it is already related by its power of raising emotions) to make clear the emotion it is expressing: "Yet it is in general true, that Poetry is the most immediate and most accurate interpreter of Music. Without this auxiliary, a piece of the best music, heard for the first time, might be said to mean something, but we should not be able to say what. It might incline the heart to sensibility; but poetry, or language, would be necessary to improve that sensibility into a real emotion, by fixing the fancy upon some definite and affecting ideas. A fine instrumental symphony well performed, is like an oration delivered with propriety, but in an unknown tongue; it may affect us a little, but conveys no determinate feeling; we are alarmed, perhaps, or melted, or soothed, but it is very imperfectly, because we know not why:--the singer, by taking up the same air, and applying words to it, immediately translates the oration into our own language; then all uncertainty vanishes, the fancy is filled with determinate ideas, and determinate emotions take possession of the heart" (p. 465). Therefore, while their point of departure differs, both Arteaga and Beattie concur on the suitability of the union of music and poetry.

[81]See Abrams, pp. 84-88. In Chapter IV of his Essay on Poetry and Music, Beattie points out that both music and poetry gain from the union of the two arts, but he emphasized the benefit of that union to music which, "to a certain degree imperfect" when its meaning is vague and ambiguous, gains in expressive powers through its union with poetry (pp. 461-66).

[82]Already in 1692 Charles Perrault had remarked on the higher

emotional power of song in comparison with the spoken word. Oliver claims that Perrault's "definition of song as exalted speech became the touchstone of French operatic criticism for more than a century" (The Encyclopedists, p. 13). See also E. Fubini, Gli enciclopedisti e la musica, pp. 30-32. Diderot also held the same principle (see Bardez, p. 68 et passim).

[83]Rivoluzioni, I, 14-16.

[84]But Arteaga does admit "che non ogni argomento di storia è proprio dell'opera, siccome non è improprio ogni soggetto favoloso" (Rivoluzioni, I, 49-52).

[85]Arteaga translates from d'Alembert and Marmontel: "Presso di noi dice il primo, la commedia è lo spettacolo dello spirito: la tragedia quello dell'anima: l'Opera quello dei sensi. L'Opera, dice il secondo, non è che il maraviglioso dell'Epica trasferito al Teatro" (Rivoluzioni, I, 46). For a discussion of the Encyclopedists' conflicting opinions on the merveilleux as an element of the opera, see Oliver, pp. 47-53.

[86]"Il fine ultimo della tragedia, e dell'Opera è dunque lo stesso, ne si distinguono se non pei mezzi, che vi conducono: quella per lo sviluppo più circonstanziato de'caratteri, e degl'affetti, questa pei prestigj della illusione, e della melodìa" (Rivoluzioni, I, 46).

[87]Rivoluzioni, I, 24-26. However, these characters are sometimes needed for the development of the plot, but they must be kept in secondary rôles which can be portrayed by means of simple recitative (I, 26-27).

[88]Rivoluzioni, I, 18-24.

[89]Rivoluzioni, I, 41. The emphasis is mine.

[90]Rivoluzioni, I, 53-57. Arteaga cites in support of his view the theory of the convention of the happy ending referred to by Friedrich Melchior Grimm in his article on the "Poème lyrique" in the Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers (1765).

[91]Arteaga seems to be the first to underscore this important interpretation of the nature of the partnership. The concept of the opera as a union of arts in which each component works towards creating a perfect whole was commonplace enough, but what does not seem to have been specifically defined before

Arteaga was the episodic quality of the union.

[92]Allorto, p. 141.

[93]Rivoluzioni, I, 51-52, 40-41.

[94]Rivoluzioni, I, 59. Arteaga did not complete either the Lettere musico-filologiche or the treatise Del ritmo sonoro e del ritmo muto nella musica degli antichi. Batllori published the incomplete manuscripts in 1944. For full bibliographical details, see Note 2 to this Chapter.

[95]Rivoluzioni, III, 16-17.

[96]La belleza ideal, p. 95. The chapter "Ideal en la música y en la pantomima" in La belleza ideal, published six years after the appearance of the first volume of the Rivoluzioni, is basically a reworking of the ideas expressed in the earlier treatise on melodramma.

[97]Rivoluzioni, II, 265; I, 20-21. Arteaga praises Metastasio for distinguishing between what should be sung by the human voice and what should be expressed by instrumental music alone (II, 263).

[98]Rivoluzioni, II, 269.

[99]The connection between music and mathematics is present in Western thought from the time of Pythagoras. The most famous French composer of the eighteenth century, Jean Philippe Rameau, restated it forcefully in his Traité de l'harmonie réduite à ses principes naturels (1722) and his later writings. Rameau claimed that harmony was based on geometry, and that melody derived from harmony. On the disagreements between Rameau and the Encyclopedists concerning the relative superiority of melody or harmony, see Oliver, pp. 100-12; Snyders, pp. 71-137; E. Fubini, Gli enciclopedisti e la musica, pp. 59-91.

[100]Rivoluzioni, I, 26-28; III, 22-25. This concept was not grasped, for instance, by Algarotti for whom the attraction of the accompanied recitative would merely be to reduce the disparity between recitative and aria, while the rôle of the music would be to reinforce the poetry, rather than to act in a cooperative capacity as envisaged by Arteaga.

[101]Rivoluzioni, I, 28.

[102]"La sua maniera d'imitare e così indeterminata e generica, i sagrifizj che ci costrigne a fare nella poesia e nella declamazion naturale sono tanti, sì replicati e sì grandi, i segni esteriori delle passioni, che servono di materia al linguaggio musicale, sono così poco energici e così ambigui . . . i punti in somma dov'ella può afferrare gli oggetti sono sì oscuri e sì rari che la musica non ci offrirebbe verun compenso, ne meriterebbe gli omaggi delle persone di gusto se l'arte d'illegiadrire le cose, e per conseguenza una discreta licenza negli ornamenti non supplisce in lei alle altre mancanze" (Rivoluzioni, III, 33-35).

[103]Rivoluzioni, II, 295-300.

[104]Rivoluzioni, III, 29.

[105]Arteaga believed that the aria "dee con ragione chiamarsi il capo d'opera del teatro drammatico" (Rivoluzioni, II, 133). Rousseau had already expressed a similar view in his Lettre sur la musique françoise, in which he described arias as "grands morceaux de musique italienne qui ravissent, ces chefs-d'oeuvre de génie qui arrachent des larmes, qui offrent les tableaux les plus frappans . . . et portent dans l'âme toutes les passions qu'ils expriment" (ed. in Oeuvres complètes de J. J. Rousseau, III [Paris: Houssiaux, 1853], 536). A few years later, Grimm presented an analogous opinion in his article "Poème lyrique": "L'air, comme le plus puissant moyen du compositeur, doit etre réservé aux grands tableaux et aux moments sublimes du drame lyrique" (Encyclopédie, XII [1765], 826).

[106]Abrams, pp. 73-74.

[107]Natali agrees with Arteaga that Planelli wished to have the melodramma composed only of recitative (Natali, Il Settecento, II, 810). This conclusion is surprising, as Planelli devotes several passages of his treatise to a discussion of the aria and its composition. It is true that he states (as does Algarotti) that the recitative can at times be superior in quality to the aria; nor does he deny that the melodramma would gain in dignity if it were composed entirely in recitative: "Io non vo'negare, che più dignitoso riuscerebbe il Melodramma, se tutto in essi fosse recitativo, come furono tutti i Melodrammi fino a'primi anni del diciasettesimo secolo" (Trattato dell'opera in musica, p. 183). He does however defend the custom of having the aria express the passion that grows from the recitative, and he feels that the adverse criticism of the aria is the result of the abuses practiced by composers and artists, and that given the proper musical accompaniment,

the aria would be capable of moving the heart of the spectators (Trattato dell'opera in musica, p. 94). It is perhaps the extreme simplicity of style in the poetry and musical accompaniment advocated by Planelli that leads Arteaga (who defended--with reservations--the bel canto aria) to his conclusions concerning the intent of the author of the Trattato dell'opera in musica.

[108]Rivoluzioni, III, 270-71n. The Encyclopedists generally preferred the aria of the Italian opera, although Marmontel is an exception: "Mais veut-en nous persuader que ses airs, qu'on appelle en Italie, airs de bravoure, airs destinés à faire briller la voix, soient la Musique Italienne par excellence & par essence? De l'aveu des Italiens-mêmes, ce n'est là qu'un vain luxe, & qu'un abus de leurs richesses: ce n'est pas ce qu'ils nous proposent d'imiter de leur Opéra. La partie sublime de leur Musique, celle qu'ils admirent sérieusement, ce sont des récitatifs obligés du plus grand caractère" (Essai sur les Révolutions, p. 182).

[109]Rivoluzioni, I, 53-54. Arteaga does not spend much time in a discussion of the rules. The aim of the Enlightenment was no longer that of setting up rules as such, but rather that of investigating the principles of things.

[110]Rivoluzioni, I, 42-54.

[111]Rivoluzioni, III, 171-84.

[112]Rivoluzioni, II, 78-176. Arteaga has been accused of self-contradiction in his chapter on Metastasio, of first praising and then apparently criticizing the same points. Giazotto, for example, concludes that the praise of Metastasio seems "quasi messa contro voglia, dettata da alcuni consigli e con fini nascosti," while the section on the defects "pare la più spontanea e la più intelligente" (Poesia melodrammatica, p. 116). Arteaga was himself aware that he was open to such charges in his section on Metastasio, and he therefore set out to defend himself in a note to his text (Rivoluzioni, II, 157-58n).

[113]Rivoluzioni, II, 177-82.

[114]Rivoluzioni, Chapters XIII-XV.

[115]Rivoluzioni, III, 237-41.

[116]Rivoluzioni, I, 80.

[117]*Rivoluzioni*, I, 82.

[118]Cf. *Rivoluzioni*, I, 66-67, and Rousseau's *Lettre sur la musique françoise*, pp. 524-57. Arteaga also cites the very stanzas from Tasso quoted by Rousseau to show the harmonious qualities of the Italian language, and to defend it from the accusation of effeminacy (cf. *Rivoluzioni*, I, 71-73, and *Lettre sur la musique françoise*, p. 527).

[119]Cf. *Rivoluzioni*, I, 66 and 73, and Baretti's *Discours sur Shakespeare*, ed. Francesco Biondolillo (Lanciano: Carabba, 1911), pp. 120-23.

[120]Cf. *Rivoluzioni*, I, 71 and 82, and Bettinelli's *Discorso sopra la poesia*, pp. 187-88 and 192.

[121]Cf. [Alessandro Verri], "Rinunzia avanti notaio degli autori del presente foglio periodico al Vocabolario della Crusca," *Il Caffè*, No. 4 (1764; rpt. and ed. Sergio Romagnoli [Milano: Feltrinelli, 1960]), p. 40.

[122]Cf. *Rivoluzioni*, I, 68-69 and 83, and Cesarotti, *Saggio*, pp. 19-22, 56-60.

[123]Oliver's translation of this passage from *Rivoluzioni*, III, 111 ("The plots taken from history and the prevailing trend of Italian opera no longer make good theater" [*The Encyclopedists*, p. 131]) is acephalous, beginning in the middle of Arteaga's sentence and hence misrepresenting the point he is trying to make, i.e. that it is the failure to follow Metastasio's example that has caused a decline in the quality of *melodramma*, not that Arteaga believes that historical subjects are unsuitable *per se*.

[124]*Rivoluzioni*, III, 111.

[125]*Rivoluzioni*, III, 119-25. "[D]opo avere nella sua dissertazione sopra Metastasio inalzato fine alle stelle il merito del poeta cesareo, e poste nel più chiaro lume le stranezze e le irregolarità del sistema melodrammatico francese, s'avvicina poi altrettanto nella esecuzione a questo, quanto si disparte dal retto sentiero indicato da quello ai poeti italiani" (p. 121). Calzabigi deeply resented Arteaga's analysis of his libretti, and he replied with his mordant *Risposta di Don Santigliano* (1790).

[126]Allorto, pp. 136-37.

[127]*Rivoluzioni*, II, 252.

[128]*Rivoluzioni*, I, xx-xxi, xxviii, xlii.

[129]Letter dated 15 May 1790, cited in Batllori, "Arteaga e Bettinelli," p. 101.

[130]"Arteaga e Bettinelli," p. 101.

[131]*La belleza ideal*, pp. 131-32, 156. On p. 155 he writes: "Toda la Europa, por ejemplo, aplaude el talento de Shakespeare, cuya pluma retrató con tal evidencia los puntos más finos de las pasiones y de los caracteres de los hombres, que parece negado a la humana capacidad el ir adelante. . . . Shakespeare parece el intérprete de la naturaleza, destinado por ella a ser el espejo que represente con puntualidad sus movimientos más imperceptibles." However, he then goes on to add: "Pero cuando se reflexiona sobre los enormes defectos a que dió lugar en el poeta inglés la escrupulosa exactitud en imitar lo natural; cuando se leen las bajas expresiones . . . cuando se ven infringidas . . . las reglas de unidad . . . cuando se observa su estilo, ya pomposo fuera de sazón, ya laxo y difuso . . . el lector ya no puede menos de disgustarse viendo delante de sus ojos la representación de una naturaleza tan cargada de imperfecciones."

[132]*Rivoluzioni*, II, 252 and 137; III, 358.

[133]Allorto, p. 142. Allorto judges what he terms as Arteaga's incomprehension of Gluck's reform to be all the more serious if his position is compared to Planelli's opinion of Gluck as expressed in "quel trattato che l'Arteaga aveva asserito di conoscer bene" (p. 143), and from which Allorto quotes: "Questa musica [Gluck's *Alceste*] è sì conforme all'idea qui espressa della Musica Teatrale, ch'io, osservata così ben intesa composizione, mi sentii inondar l'animo da un maraviglioso piacere in considerando, che mentre in questa estrema parte d'Europa io stendea un teorico saggio, ma debolissimo, e breve, di quella Musica; in altra parte un degno Professore ne mostrava sì sensatamente la pratica" (*Trattato dell'opera*, p. 148). Allorto then adds: "Per il Planelli l'opera di Gluck esaurisce, con l'autorità di una compiuta esperienza artistica, il precettismo sull'opera musicale" (p. 144). It seems, however, that Allorto's conclusions on Planelli are, at this point, premature, for after quoting Gluck's preface to *Alceste*, Planelli qualifies his praise of Gluck with these words: "E se fosse stato anche più parco nelle repliche delle parole, e nell'uso degli stromenti; avrebbe fatta una Musica Teatrale totalmente secondo il mio cuore" (*Trattato dell'opera*,

p. 151). This would suggest that Gluck's instrumentation was not understood by Planelli either.

[134]Rivoluzioni, II, 326-27.

[135]Allorto, p. 146.

[136]Heartz, "Opera and Periodization," p. 167.

[137]The Encyclopedists, p. 132. See also Riccardo Malipiero, L'opera nel Settecento (Roma: Frattina, 1970), pp. 50-52.

[138]Donald J. Grout, A History of Western Music (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 467; Oliver, p. 143; P. H. Lang, Music in Western Civilization, p. 558.

[139]Rivoluzioni, II, 160. Arteaga is frequent and lavish in his praise of Metastasio and when speaking in general terms, he makes of him the one who has perfected melodramma. For example: "[E] così la tragedia musicale, che fra le mani dell'illustre poeta cesareo avea toccato la perfezione. . . ." (Rivoluzioni, III, 383). Or again: "Metastasio, il più gran giudice in fatto di musica e di stile musicale" (letter to Bettinelli, quoted by Batllori, "Arteaga e Bettinelli," p. 100). But it is when Arteaga is dealing specifically with Metastasio as a reformer that he expresses reservations: "[A]sserirò francamente che nel caso che non risorga un novello spirito in Italia simile al nobil discepolo del Gravina, il quale, promovendo le di lui virtù, compisca cio ch'egli non ebbe coraggio d'intraprendere, il melodramma è per cadere in un grado di depravazione non diverso da quello, in cui giaceva nel secolo passato" (Rivoluzioni, III, 112).

[140]Allorto, p. 143.

[141]"Arnaud, François," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 1954 ed. In Grove it is stated that such men as J. F. de La Harpe, a very influential critic, and Marmontel found the Abbé Arnaud to be a redoubtable disputant. Most of his writings on the Gluck-Piccinni quarrel are to be found in Leblond, Mémoires.

[142]Rivoluzioni, III, 240-41.

[143]Rivoluzioni, III, 284n. The text that Arteaga reproduces is that of Arnaud's Lettre sur la musique à M. le comte de Caylus, published in 1754 (Rivoluzioni, III, 243-84).

[144]Rivoluzioni, III, 270-79.

[145]See, for example, Arnaud's La Soirée perdue à l'Opéra (in Mémoires, pp.46-56), in which Arnaud criticizes the opera where "les Instruments accompagnent la voix, comme un valet accompagne son maître" (p. 54); see also his Lettre sur Iphigénie en Tauride, and his Lettre au P. Martini, both in Mémoires, pp. 432-35 and 240-48.

[146]Arteaga claims to present Arnaud's letter "corredata con alcune mie note a maggior illustrazione dell'argomento" (Rivoluzioni, III, 242). It should be noted, however, that the annotation to the letter is for the most part Arnaud's, Arteaga adding only three brief notes, including the one on Brown (which is in fact the only one that deals with reform).

[147]Published in 4 volumes (Paris: Pierres, 1780), the Essai is considered the first French encyclopedia of music. La Borde had been in contact with P. Martini about his work (Zaccaria, p. 128), and we can suppose that Martini would have possessed a copy in his vast library. Proof of Arteaga's knowledge of the work can be found in the Introduction to his translation of Arnaud's letter in the Rivoluzioni; it bears a striking similarity to La Borde's Introduction to the same letter in his Essai; both men praise Arnaud, express their regret that the longer work he had planned on music was not completed, and both give as their reason for publishing the letter in its entirety the fact that it had become very rare. Cf. Arteaga, Rivoluzioni, III, 241-42, and La Borde, III, 547-48. Arnaud's letter is reproduced in Vol. III of the Essai, pp. 551-67.

[148]In the "Discorso preliminare," Arteaga recognizes that the artist is essential, when he writes that in order to put into effect the dramatic system that he envisages, one must find united in one person the talents not only of a philosopher like Locke, or a grammarian like du Marsais, but also "d'un musico come Hendel, o Pergolesi, e d'un poeta come Metastasio" (Rivoluzioni, I, xli).

[149]Rivoluzioni, III, 70-71.

Conclusion

[1]See Norman Del Mar, Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1972), III, 245. The circumstances of the composition of Capriccio are dealt with by Del Mar, III, 179-245. See also Strauss' preface to Capriccio, published in Strauss, Recollections and Reflections, ed. Willi Schuh, trans. L. J. Lawrence (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1953), pp. 106-110.

[2]This is Strauss' own phrase, cited in Del Mar, p. 183.

[3]C. M. Bowra, Primitive Song (Cleveland: World Publishing Co. 1962), p. 29.

[4]Bowra, pp. 36-40. The remarks of an Eskimo song-maker on the creative process are rather striking, as they have their direct counterpart in Arteaga: "'Songs are thoughts, sung out with the breath when people are moved by great forces and ordinary speech no longer suffices'" (cited by Bowra, p. 36).

[5]Poetics, 1448 b -1449 a.

[6]See, for example, Hendrik van der Werf, The Chansons of the Troubadours and Trouvères: A Study of the Melodies and Their Relation to the Poems (Utrecht: Oösthoek, 1972), pp. 37-38.

[7]In addition to the individual critics studied in the preceding chapters, we may also point out Antonio Conti, Preface to his Prose e poesie, I (Venezia: Pasquali, 1739); Melchiorre Cesarotti, Dell'Epistolario, in Opere, vols. 35-40; Cesare Beccaria, "Notes," in Mémoires de la révolution opérée dans la musique, pp. 57-58; P. Verri and A. Verri, Carteggio di Pietro e Alessandro Verri, ed. Emanuele Greppi et al., 12 vols. (Milano: Giuffre, 1910-42); P. Verri, "La Musica," Il Caffé, 2, No. 8 (1765), ed. Romagnoli, pp. 343-47; Vittorio Alfieri, Vita scritta da esso, ed. Luigi Fassò in vol. I of Opere (Asti: Casa d'Alfieri, 1951); and Satira IX in Vita, rime e satire, Vol. I of Opere, ed. Luigi Fassò (Torino: U.T.E.T., 1949), cap. ii; and "Risposta dell'autore [al Calzabigi]," in Tragedie, ed. Bruscoli, I, 38-54; and Preface to Abele, in Tragedie (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1926), vol. II. These writings make no significant contributions to the discussions on melodramma and for that reason have not been examined in the present study.

[8]Poesia melodrammatica, pp. 176-77.

[9]Libretti d'opera e altri saggi (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1974), p. vii.

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