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Wonderful India: interior and outer landscapes in Indian classical poetry

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SUMMARY: My brief article deals with two topics. The ***first*** one concerns one on the main aspects of Indian "Nature-poetry", *i.e.* the portrayal of natural lanscapes depicted and considered as an instrument able to show and to reflect the inner conditions of humanity in love. In brief, we consider here the dominating role played, already in the *Sattasaī*, by natural objects, plants, and meteorological phenomena, and the parallelism between the human and natural sphere. Without doubt, all elements of Nature cooperate in the creation of vistas in which an "interior geography" appears: the physical data duplicate and mirror the mental and emotional landscape of lovers. Natural elements keep their intrinsic characteristics, but these are now contextualised in a poetical world in which the law of Nature seems to go side by side with the law of love, which seems to be the Supreme Law. At the same time, the deep insight into the heart of Nature demonstrates that man is not independent and above all that the world is not human: on the contrary, the most profound knowledge of the human hearth shown by Indian love- and Nature-poetry is possible only because for poets all forms of Nature have a conscious individuality and a real personal life, as men or gods. So, in the end all of these landscapes become "non-places" – that is, an evocative receptacle of personal or collective memories, longings and emotions. The ***second*** focus of my paper is the influence that Indian panoramas have had on the Western world, and on Western collective imagination. Maybe also the extreme and evocative ambiguity of the (interior and external) landscapes pictured in Indian poetry has constituted a source of inspiration for the European figurative art of the 18th century, and, in particular, for that particular artistic trend which is represented by the *mises en scènes*, the stage designs, the costumes, etc. used for staging melodramas which have Indian plots, characters or settings.

1. Nature imagery in poetry

The topics of my paper are two. The first one deals with nature scenes as they are portrayed in Indian classical poetry, *kāvya*. The second one concerns the Indian natural sceneries as they appear in the European

art during the so-called colonialist era: it is plain that – under the aegis of "orientalism" – figurative arts played a significant role in the construction of a vision of India both appealing and misleading.

As for the Indian poetry, I wish to underline that, above all in love poems, the real and objective landscapes always become (or are closely interwoven with) interior landscapes. Nature (its scenery, flora, fauna, etc.) and time-units (hours, nights and days, seasons, etc.) of course remain the same, but they reflect and echo the inner panoramas.

It is surely correct to affirm that the great Vedic tradition reaches an identifiable epoch around the end of the first millennium B.C.E., and that, on the literary level (though not on the religious one), a secular tradition comes to replace the religious one that had informed the poetry of the fourfold *Veda*. In this new literary tradition, the main role is played – as some scholars have correctly remarked – by Nature and love.

In this new period, the theme of secular love is without doubt a new element in Sanskrit literature (even if at least some hymns of the *Atharvaveda* echo – without positively celebrating – various aspects of the earthly passions); but the same cannot be said about the depiction of Nature, for Nature had already been vividly present in the *Veda* as a kind of numinous presence, sometimes benevolent, sometimes dangerous. But Nature has a new aspect in the post-Vedic literature: in the *Veda*, natural phenomena had been worshipped and invoked, and experienced as parts of a superhuman sphere (even if they remain "natural" in the strict meaning of the term). Vedic man's natural environment was not on terms of emotional equality with Vedic man. But in post-Vedic Sanskrit literature, nature interpenetrates with the emotional life of humankind.

These "Vedic powers" or deities (sun, moon, sky, earth, rain, trees, etc.) were not much more than names used to point out particular functions of the world beyond the control of men, functions to be propitiated, coaxed, or kept at a distance. Therefore they are to be respected,

and, very often, feared; and therefore, too, Vedic nature is an arena for the exercise of prescriptions and rules, for only they can guarantee the right course of Nature: a right course unconsciously defined by human need; and therefore "right order" and "right behaviour" have the same name: *dharma*. Vedic man was conscious of being (actively and passively) bound to natural powers and phenomena, and, as a consequence, he felt the duty of "worshipping" them. On the other hand, these natural "elements" were also *devas*, that is, people, and Vedic man knew that these people, like any others, needed to be revigorated, and kept in their ordained, "natural" place, by means of the binding efficacy of rites.

Classical poetry testifies to a quite different attitude to man's environment: a sense of "elective affinity" replaces the *Vedas*' reverential fear, and its counterparts, ritually effective words and deeds. Nature retains its importance in human life, but a new human relationship with nature has been born: without altogether deleting the magical and sacred aspects of certain natural phenomena, the poet is now chiefly concerned to cast them in the role of co-protagonists in the love stories of humankind. In other words, analogy replaces contrast: natural phenomena are no more observed with cautious and circumspect glances, but are exploited for their potential to furnish eloquent terms of comparison, and to act as companions and messengers of women and men in their amorous vicissitudes. And when a character prays or invokes them, the purpose is no longer to control their numinous and mysterious energy, but (so to speak) to remind them that they are part of a whole, that is, of a globalized emotional world: with the paradoxical consequence that, sometimes, they are again "worshipped", and sometimes, on the contrary, cursed: but now, they are worshipped and cursed not as personal gods, but as people who are lovers and friends.

At the same time, a reciprocal relation is now vividly perceived to exist between various phenomena, a relation that no longer seems to be due to *dharmic* order alone, but also to a sort of emotional companionship, as if Nature itself was now regulated not only by *dharma*,

but by *kāma* too. So that, for instance, the behaviour of animals is often used as an example of certain sentiments and of certain moments in the love stories of humankind: an animal couple is often cited as a touching example of passion that endures forever, and natural phenomena – clouds and rivers, creepers and trees – are seen to be in love.

The connection between a concrete and actual landscape and its interior counterpart is no mere scholarly fantasy: on the contrary, in Indian poetry there appears a "third" vista, a vista that represents, so to speak, the offspring of the inner and outer words. Thus, though this interplay between lovers, and between lovers and world, a new world is born: so that being in love (or other existential situations) is located in (and expressed by, and explained by) natural phenomena. And the converse also becomes true: to describe a natural scene means to depict (amidst and through a now reborn and re-evaluated scenery) passions, sorrows, hopes and despairs.

In *kāvya* from the *Sattasaī* onward, landscapes and vistas mirror human sentiments. Now, this does not imply that Nature in itself has no aesthetic value for poets and their audience beyond its function as a mirror of human life, or that all the aspects of the landscape are necessarily charged with a symbolic meaning; but in general, even when nature is represented at its most literal in *kāvya*, its literary role as an evoker of the human is unmistakable (though Nature is always more itself in the *kāvya* than it was in the *Veda*). Each landscape definitely offers a repertoire of images of which one, or all, can be used to symbolize and evoke a specific emotion. Thus, the descriptions of landscapes may be concise or diffuse. In other words, an allusion either to a general, panoramic, view, or to a single particular, is enough to set the scene, and to call the corresponding sentimental landscape to mind. On the other hand, the descriptions may be dilated: so that either a detailed description of a scene, or a single object described with a lot of particulars, powerfully and effectively mirror the emotional panorama.

The case of the *Ṛtusaṃhāra* is emblematic. The miniatures of this little poem reveal the constant relationships between atmospheric phenomena, the landscape, flora and fauna, and above all, humankind. Thus, the noises, colours and smells that mark the cycle of the seasons merge with (and are indistinguishable from) the jingling of anklets and bracelets, the sighs of persons in love, garlands, powders and *kajal*, and lovers' tears and joys. In the *Meghadūta*, Kālidāsa is often virtually a poetic photographer of his landscapes, showing an astonishing fidelity to his sensory data: a fidelity that, nevertheless, springs not only from direct observation, but also from the creative transfiguration of traditional and canonised motives.

This shows that, in the *kāvya*, a landscape is not necessarily the sum of a complete set of elements, because a single element can evoke an entire landscape, and vice versa. One of the miracles of the fully developed *kāvya* is its capacity for selecting a set of canonized topics that, very often by means of a single word, like monsoon, *cakora*, *kadamba*, lotus, falling bracelets, etc., are able to sketch an entire landscape, both real and interiorly reflected. On the other hand (in a play, so to speak, of macrocosms and microcosms), a fully described scenery indicates the individual emotional condition of a character, so that, for instance, for a suffering *nāyikā* a sumptuous panorama (that the poet minutely portrays) summarises and condenses her personal desolation.

To cite just two images very widespread already in the *Sattasaī*: for an abandoned girl the mere sight of a bee flying among different flowers evokes the inconstancy of her unfaithful lover: the separation between lovers is not portrayed or recalled, because describing this scene is sufficient to describe her suffering. On the other hand, the panoramic sight of the monsoons with their various phenomena induces in the *nāyikās*' minds either joy or sorrow. Of course, this very same play between a single particular and wholly portrayed scenery may assume different meanings, because Nature is constant, but, obviously, the condition of persons in love is anything but. For instance, the complete description of the spring (with lotuses in blossom on the ponds, starry

nights, the scent of mangos, the singing of cuckoos etc.) may "cut the hearts of the ladies separated from their lovers" (*Subhāṣitaratnakośa* 152) but, in the same fully depicted situation, "the hearts of women become gay" (*ibid.*, 156); and yet, the filament of the flame-tree flower is sufficient to remind one of Love, and his welcome bow (*ibid.*, 172); yet again, the lonely girls feel the chilly rays of the moon as if they were burning arrows (*ibid.*, 714); etc. Further, the at least twenty-two varieties of flowers and plants mentioned in the *Sattasaī* all play different roles, and are cited for different purposes: to provide similes or metaphors; to evoke the emotional status of a character; to announce or depict a particular season (with all its sentimental implications); and sometimes, to give some ethical instructions.

Both in a *kośa* and in a *khaṇḍakāvya*, in every single stanza these different types of description take their turns: the process that takes place in poetry is always that of the accumulation, amplification, and building up (or dissection) of motives. Thus, as in figurative art, mountains, lakes, flora and fauna, etc., are always the same, but the resulting pictures are always different. Miniatures and large frescoes evoke the emotions of *rasikas*, as they do those of the characters within the poems themselves. If you prefer, it is Nature's very constancy that assists the portrayal of the inconstancy of the human heart.

Let me recall some stanzas of the *Sattasaī*, in which, as we know, natural images, views and landscapes are the most recurrent frame. Even though every one of its stanzas may be appreciated, tasted, on its own, it is nevertheless true that this anthology gives us a varied but coherent and complete picture (in this case) of the scenes typical of the village and the countryside. In other words, this *kośa* as a whole provides a good picture of both Nature and of Society as they existed in ancient India, especially in Deccan. In stanza 10 the panorama is, as it were, held together by a creeper – the love that binds the lovers together; a woman uses a detailed description of the moon to send a sort of message to her distant lover (16); a village scene eloquently evokes the fire of separation (43); the portrayal of spring inspires fear

in a woman who is not sure of her partner's love (97); for a girl, the careful description of the site of the (missed) rendezvous answers the purpose of asking her lover the reason for his disappearance (110); the typical elements of the spring – as they are so often depicted in poetry – induce a lonely woman to sing a sad song (128); it is hoped that the mango bud – herald of spring – will discourage the lover from departing (143); and so on. A complete and evocative landscape appears in some stanzas of the *Amaruśataka* (118, 119, 122, 125, 135), in which, with that cycle's usual refined simplicity, the poet sketches in detail natural settings that are perfectly mirrored in the women's emotional landscapes.

As the *Agnipurāṇa* maintains (334,10), "The poet is Prajāpati himself in the immense, shoreless ocean of poetry. Like Prajāpati, the poet changes the appearance of the universe… a new universe of love is reborn in his poem." The role of the poet – a new demiurge and seer – is that of transforming the objective views of the world, and converting their description into an instrument of knowledge of the human heart.

The power of a poet is that of revealing what is concealed under the images, that is, the secret structure of their relationships. And this is how the "interior geography" becomes known: the consonance and harmony between the natural settings, and the emotional conditions of the characters who inhabit them, are so great, that it is no longer possible to distinguish between what is real and what happens in the heart of the protagonists.

Very often the factual and "prosaic" topographical description goes side by side with a highly conventionalised "lyrical" description of Nature: the scene usually dissolves into an account of the character's emotions, and this allows another "shift" – that towards the mythological or divine or magical aspects of Nature, which, through the visual representation of the characters, acquire the same reality as Nature proper. This happens because, behind a natural phenomenon (that can be *per se* propitious or not for the poetical characters, as

happens with the widespread motif of the monsoons) the presence of a supernatural force may sometimes be felt. In this way, the boundary line between the human and non-human spheres dissolves. Even the heavenly world becomes part of the now interiorised landscape – or, sometimes, inexplicable fate (the *longa manus* of Mysterious Divinity) reveals itself in what superficially seems a non-numinous view. Now, in addition to the links that sustain a poetic similitude between natural vistas and human emotions, an alliance (or sometimes a hostility) between different Worlds appears.

Nobody can do anything (even in the realm of love) against the will of an adverse fate: here the dominant tonality is the frailty of life and of the passions (see *Sattasaī* 245, 247, 279, 423, 430 and 658 and *Amaruśataka* 28, 33, 38, 54, 81 and 114). On the other hand, at times some benevolent divinities come into view (chiefly Kāma, to whom an entire section of the *Subhāṣitaratnakośa* is dedicated) just to cooperate with the lovers, perhaps to relieve the (sometimes pleasant!) dangers that the landscape may present: see, for instance, *Amaruśataka* 68, 100 and 101. Similarly, a woman with a beautiful face shining like the moon is told that she need not be afraid of Rāhu, demon of eclipses (*Bhāminīvilāsa* II, 1). The red *aśoka* tree, considered to be the messenger of Lord Kama, rebukes the men who have abandoned their mistresses (*Subhāṣitaratnakośa* 160); the benevolent Creator himself has drawn the perfect and divine "aggregation" of elements that is the beloved woman's body (*ibid.*, 415; see also, for instance, *ibid.*, 430), but the very same God falls (so to speak) into confusion exactly in constructing her body with natural elements (*ibid.*, 433; see also, for instance, *ibid.*, 442); etc. Nevertheless, often divine intervention is not so sympathetic: for instance, in stanza I, 4 of the *Bhāminīvilāsa*, both female *cakoras* and girls in love are waiting for Kāma's love-inducing arrows: why does the Creator – in such an auspicious setting as this – deliberately darken the moon with clouds, thwarting the anticipated love trysts? And why (*ibid.*, II, 102) (a woman asks God) does only rain fall from the sky, and not beautiful men? In many other stanzas

the ascetic's striving after imperishable realms of bliss is mocked, because only in this life, and in passions, is the true *ānanda* to be found: here we find neither concord nor hostility between different spheres, but only a laughing indifference towards so-called heaven. See (to give only a few examples) stanzas 21 and 24 of the *Śṛṅgāratilaka*; stanzas 333, 401 and 408 of the *Subhāṣitaratnakośa*; stanzas 3, 4, 116 of the *Amaruśataka*; and stanzas 88, 113, 115, 116, 120, 135 and 147 of the *Śatakatraya* of Bhartṛhari.

Finally, even the most primal of distinctions are annihilated: that between beauty and ugliness, and between benevolence and malevolence. Thus, the discovery of the splendour of a landscape becomes, sometimes, the discovery of its ugliness too. The very same natural view and its elements are lovable or terrible only with reference to the protagonist's emotional landscape: clouds are no longer mere clouds, the moon is no longer a mere planet, the groves are labyrinths of desperation, or auspicious shelters, time is no longer a bare sequence of hours – and the birds may sing (to the protagonist's ears) either a wedding song or a funeral march. And it goes further: a conventional image (and all the particulars that form it) ceases to be conventional, and loses its character as a reliable cliché, thanks to the twofold, threefold, manifold significance that the poet can concoct for it from his improvised pool of natural and erotic associations.

In other words: in love poetry there is a fund of standardised and canonised images, each of them capable of setting off a certain alarm bell within the mind of the *rasika*. But none of these images is univocal, as we see, for example, from the natural images used as terms of comparison for parts of the beloved woman's face or body. Her lotus eyes can inspire happiness, or despair; her creeper-like limbs may be a wonderful refuge or a dangerous prison; her sinuous body is a pond in which her lover can gloriously sail or drown; her full breasts may be cups of ambrosia or of poison. Monsoons, rains and clouds can play opposite roles (*Sattasaī* 29, 70, 315 336 and 386); nights and days, like trees, animals and other natural phenomena, always appear different

to the lovers' eyes (*ibid.*, 46, 103, 163, 218, 229, 239, 335, 365, 385, 445, 491, 531, 536, 609). Stanzas 83, 91 and 92 of the *Amaruśataka* evoke the same touching ambiguities. See also stanzas 102 (in which the wanderer's cries compete with the "moo" of the cloud, in a picture whose landscape is complete: we find the night, the storm, the village) and 103 (in which the *nāyikā* asks a cloud – in the season of Malaya's winds – to bring back her unfaithful lover). In the *Bhāminivilāsa* (II, 73), all the elements of the springtime, joyful in themselves, change their meaning in the eyes of the unhappy *nāyikā*, to whom portents of love are converted to portents of death; and in stanza 85 of book II, the moon shows all its ambiguity: to see it is terrible for the separated lovers, wonderful for the united couple who may make love during the night.

In other words, Indian "Nature-poetry" is constituted by fixed elements, which belong either to the realm of common reality, like natural phenomena, or to mythological and divine reality, as in the case of mythologized animals or plants, such as the *cakora* bird, the *aśoka* tree, etc.; but their description changes according to the varying types of observation and contemplation of the characters – that is, according to the characters' internal landscape, which the poet paints with the colours of the *kāvya*'s traditional palette. And here we note another wonderful possibility: that of watching every part of a landscape in its "personal" relationship with other parts of the same picture. In this way the *liaison à deux* (character-landscape) becomes a *ménage à trois*, or the numbers may grow yet more. This can happen because the natural phenomenon is brought into contact not only with the main characters (the *nāyikā* or the *nāyaka* with their accompanying emotional situations), but with other phenomena which are felt to be in an intimate kinship with it: and this gives the picture yet more depth.

From the rhetorical point of view, these cases are defined as *utprekṣa*, even when the description of the "humanised phenomenon" is not introduced by expressions like *iva*, "so to speak". The bitter cold mercilessly transforms the beautiful lotus grove into a ravaged sesame field

(as the now chilled passion of the husband devastates the splendour of his young wife, *Sattasaī* 8). The freshly sprouted mango bud is like the tail of a lizard (i.e., the monsoon season is coming, with all its sorrows and joys, *ibid.*, 62). The temple "weeps" with doves' cries: it is, without doubt, a ruin (… and thus an excellent site for a clandestine meeting, *ibid.*, 64). The ungrateful bee abandons the now "pregnant" jasmine (*ibid.*, 92 and other similar ones). The winter kills some flowers, but it allows some others to bloom (as the inconstant man does with his partners, *ibid.*, 426). Because of the romantic atmosphere of the autumn, the young creeper climbs even the very old tree (… as happens also to young lovers blinded by an indiscriminate and wild desire, *ibid.*, 535). Because of the hot season, the buffalo licks a serpent, mistaking it for a little river, and the serpent licks the buffalo's saliva, mistaking it for a little cascade (i.e.: passion blinds everybody, *ibid.*, 552). "What will happen to me when I shall be in the barn?" the rice asks, and it weeps with tears made of dew (like a weeping girl waiting for the initial meeting with her first lover, *ibid.*, 560); etc. Let me again recall the *Meghadūta*: in the framework of the praise for the cloud-messenger, and in the framework of the description of its journey, the connection of the *megha* with other loved and loving beings, both natural (above all rivers) and supernatural, is constantly remembered by the *yakṣa*. So that, in the end, the interior landscape of the lover in separation becomes that of the messenger: "You must carry my message," the *yakṣa* seems to say to the cloud, "because you too know love, and its unpredictable laws." The poem ascribes to the *megha* qualities that connect it to both the earthly and heavenly worlds, to both the human and the natural kingdoms, and to both the profane and the sacred spheres. The cloud is a shelter for all beings who burn with love (7), and women waiting for their lovers look at him in hope (8); the mountain sacred to Rāma and Sītā feels affection for it (9); both the mythical *cātaka* and the cranes welcome it with gratitude (10); the cloud's association with elephants is both a mark of the its nobility (14 and 51), and an erotic allusion (19); the wives of the *siddha* will look at

it with awe, mistaking it for the mountain top (14); it is compared with the voluptuous Kṛṣṇa (15); it is associated with the fruitfulness of the land, with women's sexual desire (16), and with the rejuvenation of the earth (21); the welcome offered to it by peacocks suggests both love and worship of the cloud (22); again, the strong sensuality of its relationship with women in love is evoked in stanzas 25, 26, 27, and 35; in strophe 34 the *megha* is associated with Śiva; stanza 37 underlines the double character of the cloud, since with its lightning it may illuminate the path of women who run to meet their lovers in the night, but it can also frighten them with its thunder; in stanza 44 the cloud is invited to serve as Śiva's drum in the god's ritual dance; the *megha* pays homage to Kurukṣetra (48), and afterwards reaches the Gaṅgā (50): thus is its relationship with rivers emphasised again, and the erotic and sacred liaison of the cloud with the sacred waters again appears at the end of stanza 51; etc. Without a doubt, the cloud is a sort of quasi-divine mediator who promotes harmony between different domains of existence.

2. Indian nature scenery as reflected by European art

The second focus of this paper (strictly tied to the first one) is the influence that Nature in India, the same nature and natural scenes that inspired the poetry that I have just been discussing, has had on Western figurative art, and specifically on that trend of art that is represented by the *mises en scènes*, the stage designs, costumes, etc., that have been used in staging operas with Indian plots or settings.

Of course it cannot be my task here (as it is not within my sphere of knowledge) to make an aesthetic judgment of these images. I can only hint at a fairly evident fact: that the same Nature (not yet very changed in those pre-industrial times) that suggested to the poets of Indian classical times topics and themes for their poetry, evoked similarly strong emotions also in the first European travellers (and, among

them, artists) who arrived in India, strong emotions which they naturally expressed according to the very different aesthetic world from which they came. Their works (paintings and etchings) seem from the beginning to emphasize the "photogenic" character of the Indian landscapes (and peoples), a fact confirmed by two of the principles that governed this body of work: the principle of the "picturesque" and the "exotic", and the principle of the "documentary". Moreover, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the newborn science and art of photography gave, along with older media, a strong impetus to the cultural construction of exoticism. Without question, the figurative arts cooperated, in the first phases of Europeans' linguistic and cultural discovery of India, with that cultural current named "orientalism".

The contradiction between the impartial and scientific claims of orientalism and its tendency to nourish an artistic (and basically imaginary) vision of India, is plain to us now, and we may perceive in these purportedly aesthetic works a political dimension that was not evident to its makers. Thus the colonialist-orientalist mythology (whose distortions are most obvious in the Western study of Indian history) is in part mirrored by the artistic production of the XIX century: for instance Thomas and William Daniell, who worked in India in the years 1786–1794, and through their images, widely known at the time, made a strong contribution to the formation of the mental picture of India that to some extent survives even to this day in the popular mind. It is a romantic, and thus unrealistic, vision, which, according to some modern scholars, leads to a complete annulment of the "other" and (by means of the transformation of the other into a mere metaphor or stereotype) to an absolute inability to view him as he is. The egocentrism of the colonialist interpretation of its subject presents in this "exotic art" (with few exceptions) a perhaps less brutal – but no less arrogant – aspect of the orientalist vision.

Perhaps it was the extreme and complex ambiguity of the Indian landscape (the same ambiguity that found its uniquely Indian expression in the *kāvyas* just described) that furnished the inspiration for the

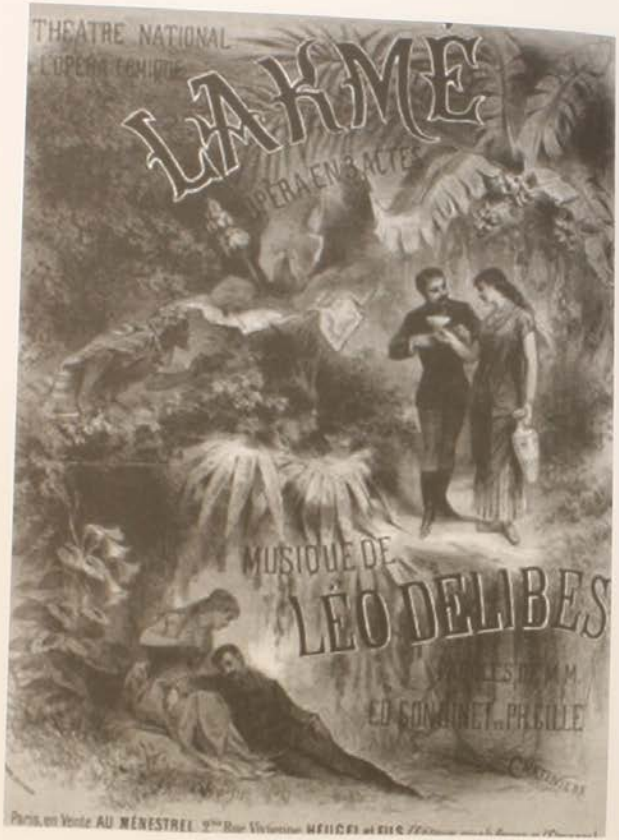
landscapes of this orientalist school, and, in particular, for the *mises en scènes* of the operas that take their inspiration from India, as the little set of images that I'm presenting hopefully demonstrates.[1]

[1] List of the painters:
Olfert Dapper (1635–1689)
William Hodges (1744–1797)
Thomas Daniell (1749–1840), William Daniell (1769–1837)
James Gillray (1756–1815)
Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827)
Baltazar Solvyns (1760–1824)
Charles D'Oyly (1781–1869)
George Jones (1786–1869)
Edward Goodall (1795–1870)
Thomas Higham (1796–1844)
Edward Lear (1812–1888)
Charles Stewart Hardinge (1822–1894)
Andrea Gastaldi (1826–1889)
George Landseer (1829–1878)
Charles W. Bartlett (1860–1940)
Music for the soundtrack:
Philipp Glass, *Concerto* per violino e orchestra
Georges Bizet, *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, Romanza di Nadir
Léo Delibes, *Lakmé*, Duetto Lakmé-Mallika

1. Emmerich Kálmán (1882–1953), *La Bayadère* (*Die Bajadere*). First performance, 1921. Poster (private collection).

2. *La charmeuse de serpents*, Folies-Bergère. Anonimous operetta, 1920 circa. Poster (private collection).

3. Léo Delibes (1836–1891), *Lakmé*. First performance, 1883. Picture from a XIX century weekly magazine.



4. Léo Delibes (1836–1891), *Lakmé*. First performance, 1883. Poster (private collection).

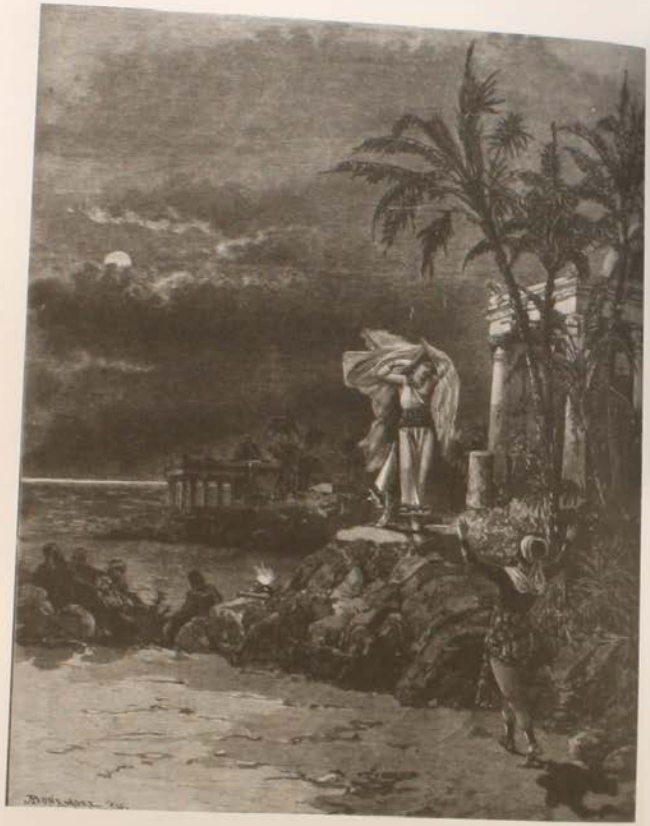
5. Léo Delibes (1836–1891), *Lakmé*. First performance, 1883. Picture from a XIX century weekly magazine.

6. Jules Massenet (1842–1912), *Le Roi de Lahore*. First performance, 1877.
Cover of a XIX century score (private collection).

7. Spiro Samara (1861–1917), *Medgé*. First performance, 1888.
Picture from a XIX century weekly magazine.

8. Spiro Samara (1861–1917), *Medgé*. First performance, 1888. Picture from a XIX century weekly magazine.

9. Georges Bizet (1838–1875), *Les pêcheurs de perles*. First performance, 1863. Poster (private collection).



10. Georges Bizet (1838–1875), *Les pêcheurs de perles*. First performance, 1863. Picture from a XIX century weekly magazine for the performance of 1886 at the Scala Theatre of Milan.

11. Georges Bizet (1838–1875), *Les pêcheurs de perles*. First performance, 1863. Picture from a XIX century weekly magazine for the performance of 1886 at the Scala Theatre of Milan.