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## COMPARISON OF THE OPERAS *LA TRAVIATA* BY VERDI AND *LA BOHEME* BY PUCCINI IN TERMS OF LOVE, LIFE AND DEATH THEMES

### VERDİ'NİN *LA TRAVIATA* OPERASIYLA PUCCINI'NİN *LA BOHEME* OPERASININ AŐK, HAYAT VE ÖLÜM TEMALARI BAĐLAMINDA KARŐILAŐTIRILMASI

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#### Abstract

The operas *La Traviata* by Verdi and *La Boheme* by Puccini both depict Parisian female protagonists' love stories entwined by a deathly disease, tuberculosis. In this paper, these operas are compared in terms of the composers' point of views about life, especially love and death, about how they handle these two issues with different characters and perspectives. It can be concluded that they both make their audiences feel the pain of the characters deeply, thus the operas resemble each other in case of the emotions depicted. However, their methods of presenting these emotions differ ideologically. In Puccini's world, life is simple, unexpected and random; while it is more complicated and special for Verdi. Being more serious, *La Traviata* uses romanticism and drama, in contrast to *La Boheme* which addresses simplicity and realism via the elements of Verismo. In *La Boheme*, the Bohemian life style is praised and emphasized while materialistic world is depicted to be meaningless. *La Traviata* takes place in luxurious environments with elitist high class society instead of poor and dirty neighborhoods of ordinary and low class people. Nonetheless, showing different perspectives of life, both *La Traviata* and *La Boheme* give the audience artistic joy and musical satisfaction, emotionally dragged by the love stories combined with the inevitable reality of death.

**Keywords:** La Traviata, La Boheme, Verdi, Puccini, Romanticism, Verismo.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the circumstances that led to the compositions of *La Traviata* and *La Boheme*, artistic dominant ideologies of the era should be covered. The 19<sup>th</sup> century culture is led by the French Revolution in 1789, bringing together hopes, desires and fears into something powerful, visible and irrevocable. All these new demands and elements made a way for new ideologies to be formed: Romanticism between the years 1820 and 1865, and Realism between 1865 and 1914 (Encyclopedia

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Britannica, 2020). The artistic elements of Romanticism project onto an imaginative level where the properties of time and place are forgotten. Its typical motivation is to deny history by concentrating on the self, creativity, nature, imagination (Duff, 2017, 25-37). The characters of Romanticism may be larger than life, experimenting unusual mystery or adventure, in which the language is generally formal. Historical or legendary elements are the main interests in contrast to Realism, which involves characters of ordinary people living ordinary lives using everyday language. The settings of Realism are common, and involve actual prototypes in contemporary life (Anoka Ramsey, 2017).

## 2. ROMANTICISM AND VERDI

Romanticism in music showed itself with experimentation of form, personal emotional expression, freedom, and emphasis on individuality and originality. Ludwig van Beethoven and Franz Schubert served as a bridge between the Classical and the Romantic eras, being essential models for the 19<sup>th</sup> century Romantic composers. Under the influence of folk stories as well as legends, they showed their own emotions in the music they composed. Some of the Romantic period musicians are Berlioz, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Dvorak, Grieg and Tchaikovsky. Romantic opera began with Weber in Germany, while Donizetti, Bellini and Rossini started it in Italy. The height of its full development came to Italian Romantic opera in the 1830s with the Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi (Kuiper, 2020).

The second section of the 19<sup>th</sup> century's music in Italy was dominated by Verdi, being an acknowledged master of Romanticism. His works are some of the very well-known and staged operas all over the world even today. Gifted for musical characterization, his rich melodic invention combined with his imagination fired by the librettos made him a musical dramatist. *La Traviata*, not well received at first, was accepted to be a masterpiece in which Verdi earned his right to depict everyday scenes (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). Via using a courtesan as a heroine in the opera, Verdi questioned the social boundaries of his era. During those days, opera intended to look backward only, contrasting with Verdi who took an ordinary topic and use it on the stage (Salazar, 2018). The heroine was based on a real courtesan called Marie Duplessis, with whom the writer Alexander Dumas fils was in a romantic relationship. After her death at the age of 23 from tuberculosis, Dumas fils wrote the novel *The Dame of the Camellias*. The novel was followed by a play, which encouraged Verdi to compose an opera using this story (Rakatsansky, 2015, 11-12). Salazar accepts Violetta to be an admirable and powerful woman on the stage, making the opera unforgettable in the music world (Salazar, 2018). *La Traviata*'s premiere was a failure in 1853. But now, the musical portrait of tubercular courtesan Violetta whose character is affected by love and sorrow is at the top list of any soprano. As an elite courtesan, she is a complex role questioning the society's fixed ideas. The society depicted in the opera uses Violetta to amuse himself while neglecting her aspirations for a higher social standing (Salazar, 2018).

## 3. VERISMO AND PUCCINI

Meaning 'realism' in Italian language, the term Verismo in literature was affected by French naturalism, via the realist movement in Europe following the French revolution. Zola's and Balzac's novels influenced some Italian novelists who were the main examples of verismo in Europe. The primary goal of Verismo was presenting life objectively, usually that of lower classes, via clear and direct details, plain language and realistic conversations. In opera, verismo showed itself by violent and melodramatic plots around ordinary characters. Musically it was practiced via emotional speech of the solo voices and passionate melodies and harmonies (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020).

After the triumphs of Verdi on the operatic stage, Italian composers struggled to gain a place in the world of opera. Popularity of violent and melodramatic librettos ensured to turn toward Verismo, with the leading examples of *Cavalleria Rusticana* composed by Pietro Mascagni in 1890, and *Pagliacci* composed by Ruggero Leoncavallo in 1892. Puccini was influenced by Verismo, especially in *Tosca* composed in 1900. He is the most significant post-Verdian Italian opera composer. His works were remarked as having rich, colorful orchestration and emotional directness of charm. His reputation built up with *La Boheme* in 1896. The opera was followed by *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*, composed in 1904. All the works symbolized Puccini's ability to create sad heroines on the stage. Franco Alfano completed *Turandot*, which was staged after Puccini's death. Puccini tried to balance colorful orchestration and exoticism with his emotionally direct and melody-centered method (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020).

One of the most majestic love stories belongs to *La Boheme*, after *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakespeare. The hero Rodolfo and the heroine Mimi are parted and reunited in the final act, as usual operatic ups and



downs. Mimi goes to a happy death sleep from which Rodolfo cannot wake her up with his crying out her name as if a spear has entered his heart, causing the audience melt into tears (Kirby, 2019, 311-315). The libretto of the work was written by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica (Carner, 1992). The opera shows the Bohemian lifestyle of 1830s, depicted with the friendship of the poet Rodolfo, the musician Schaunard, the painter Marcello and the philosopher Colline, who all live in a cheap attic in Paris. Verdi shows the beautiful period "Belle Epoque" of France through artistic romanticism and the passionate and tragic love story between Mimi and Rodolfo (Ursachi, 2018, 38-45). Introduced on Christmas Eve to the audience, the characters depict seductive lyricism with shared sorrow (Degrada, *et al.*, 1983). All these features of the opera make it unforgettable and indispensable throughout the years. Puccini's work of young lovers and memorable arias inspired the lovers of the genre ever since (Carner, 1992). There are contemporary works using similar stories to *La Boheme*, such as the work by Jonathan Larson depicting impoverished young artists' struggle in Lower Manhattan's East Village under the threat of HIV/AIDS (Larson, *et al.*, 1997).

#### 4. SYNOPSIS OF LA TRAVIATA

The heroine of *La Traviata* composed by Verdi is Violetta Valery. She knows that she will die soon because of her restless life as a courtesan. In a Parisian party, she is introduced to the hero Alfredo Germont, who has been interested in her for a long time, asking for her health situation to others every day. He confesses about his interest to her (The Metropolitan Opera, 2020). He warns her that her hedonistic lifestyle will kill her, and that he would protect her if they were lovers (Glyndebourne, 2020). As a response she laughs and sings "Libiamo ne'lieti calici", praising free love instead of being bounded by one person only. However, she is influenced by his honesty and sincerity. Violetta does not desire to leave her lifestyle; on the other hand, Alfredo awakened her desire to be loved truly, which she has never experienced. All these contradictions of emotions lead her to express via singing her doubts about choosing in between being loved sincerely by a single person or insincerely by everyone. In the second act, the audience witnesses their love in the countryside, away from the eyes of the Parisian society (The Metropolitan Opera, 2020). However, Violetta sells her belongings to cover their expenses in their new lifestyle. Alfredo feels ashamed and decides to provide financial support (Glyndebourne, 2020). When Violetta is alone, Alfredo's father visits her, and demands their separation in order to protect the dignity of Alfredo's sister, who is about to marry. Violetta is a lower-class courtesan, who will stain Alfredo's family's name. As a generous spirit, she accepts and leaves Alfredo forever, asking his father to confess to Alfredo about her sacrifice someday. The act lasts with a masked ball scene in which Violetta seems to be very happy with Baron Douphol, while Alfredo is disappointed and raging against her. In the last act, Violetta is on her death bed, and Alfredo's father tells him about her sacrifice. She sings her last aria "Addio del passato", saying farewell to their beautiful and happy days (The Metropolitan Opera, 2020). Alfredo arrives at her last minutes and begs for forgiveness, making them forget the illness and dream a happy life together for a short while in vain. Violetta lives her last joyful moments and has a peaceful death in her beloved's arms (Glyndebourne, 2020).

#### 5. SYNOPSIS OF LA BOHEME

*La Boheme* composed by Puccini starts with an ironical scene in which Rodolfo and Marcello ignite the arts works of Rodolfo in order to heat their cold house. Both feel hunger and cannot even pay their rent to their landlord. Their neighbor Mimi asks for fire for the extinguished candle from Rodolfo when he is alone at his apartment. Thus, the love story of them begins at the first scene of the opera, as they talk about their lives and dreams (Opera Inside, 2020). In the second act, Rodolfo introduces Mimi to his Bohemian friends at Café Momus, where the audience witnesses the flirtations of Marcello and Musetta after her famous aria praising herself. Overall, the whole act is very colorful and presents the Bohemian lifestyle as picturesque, attractive and delighting. In the third act, Rodolfo wants to separate from Mimi because he claims that she is flirting with other men. Later he confesses to Marcello the real reason why he wants to separate: Mimi cannot be healthy while sharing Rodolfo's poverty. She should find a rich man who can help her about her disease. Hearing this reason secretly, Mimi comes forward and they decide to be together until springtime. Meanwhile Marcello and Musetta still quarrel about flirtations in contrast with the other couple. The last act of the opera is set at Rodolfo's attic where it all began. Rodolfo and Marcello are separated from their lovers. The four Bohemian men try to enlighten their spirits by dancing and having fun when Musetta breaks in, telling that Mimi wants to see Rodolfo for the last time since she is close to death (The Metropolitan Opera, 2020). All of their friends leave the apartment to sell their most valuable belongings in order to buy medicine for Mimi (Opera Inside, 2020). Rodolfo and Mimi are alone for the last time, reaffirming their love for each other and reminding their first encounter on Christmas Eve. The friends



return, only for Musetta to pray for Mimi and let her die in peace among friends. Heartbreakingly, the opera finishes with the last cries of Rodolfo, shouting Mimi's name in great despair and agony (Blakeley, 2020).

## 6. DISEASE AND DEATH THEMES IN THE OPERAS

Of all the hazards that has come to humanity, tuberculosis was found to be the most romantic one by the writers and the artists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Markel, 2015). Tubercular artists were thought to have bursts of creativity as the disease proceeded (San Francisco Opera Education, 2020). This disease carried away Keats, Bronte, Moliere and Chekhov. It is easy for the music lovers to visualize Chopin trying to compose at the piano while coughing (Markel, 2015). During those times, many people believed that the illness produced feelings of euphoria referred to as "Spec phthisica" which may be described as "hope of the consumptive". The sufferers had a final burst of energy just before they died, making men more creative and women more beautiful. The disease was called "consumption" because it looked like consuming humans from inside with a fever, bloody cough, paleness and long merciless wasting. It has been observed in humans since antiquity. Hippocrates identified tuberculosis as almost always fatal and the most widespread disease of his time in 460 BC (San Francisco Opera Education, 2020).

Operas provide information about the medical knowledge of their times (Aroiso, *et al.*, 2017, 617-618). With the leadership of Verdi, Romantic period's opera focused on ordinary people's emotions, nature and death, especially from a disease, instead of the religious or lofty figures of the earlier periods (Goldberg, 2016). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the diseased character was always a beautiful young, fragile 'tubercular heroine' in need of protection. From a feminist point of view, this situation of tuberculosis can be evaluated as anti-female theme (Goldberg, 2016), since the diseased person is always a female figure who is fragile and weak at the same time. There are three operas in which the soprano heroines die of tuberculosis tragically: *La Traviata*, *Tales of Hoffmann* and *La Boheme* in chronological order. In the early 1900s, it was thought that the disease was caused by miasmas, extreme emotions or mysterious causes. A thin, weak and pale woman was the image of beauty of its time, associated with this disease. The women who were consumed with this mysterious misery could be viewed as sinful (Rakatansky, 2015, 11-12). Being young and beautiful ladies in love, both Violetta in *La Traviata* and Mimi in *La Boheme* face the dark side of tuberculosis and are doomed to die from it. This disease may be evaluated as the archetypal operatic disease (Goldberg, 2016). Markel explained the reality behind this fearful disease very dramatically: The experience of active tuberculosis is fatigue instead of literary inspiration; perspiration instead of hypersexual attraction; disturbing moaning instead of beautiful arias, a pitiless cough with blood instead of the kiss of a lover (Markel, 2015).

The death of Violetta in *La Traviata* suggests the romantic idea that the highest virtue in a human being is indeed a good heart. If a person is too good and dignified for the world and must leave it early, that is the world's loss (San Francisco Opera Education, 2020). The same idea can be interpreted for Mimi, too; she can be seen as a very naïve and pure for this world. But her death can be evaluated to be more natural and realistic compared to that of Violetta; since Rodolfo does not even realize the moment of her death as Rodolfo is fully aware of Violetta's death. In general, Violetta seems to die for a good reason such as dignity and honor, while Mimi dies because of poverty, and it cannot be evaluated as a sacrifice as in Violetta's case.

Mimi gives some hints about her future health situation when she enters the stage in act one of *La Boheme*: As she goes up the stairs of Rodolfo's house, she indicates that she is out of breath, followed by her going pale and fainting. After falling in love with her beautiful face, Rodolfo touches her hand and notices how cold her hands are (Aroiso, *et al.*, 2017, 617-618). *La Boheme* also uses metaphors of color, light and temperature signs in order to show the symptoms of tuberculosis. The romantic understanding of tuberculosis is shown via flowers and farewells in *La Traviata*.

## 7. LOVE THEME IN THE OPERAS

*La Traviata's* perspective of love is more romantic and dramatic when compared with that of *La Boheme*; Mimi and Rodolfo's love begins more cheerfully and energetically than that of Violetta and Alfredo. In general, giving the impression that everything is temporary, *La Boheme* touches love and life with a more subtle and lighter hand; not as seriously as *La Traviata* does.

The two operas differ when they are compared according to the events following each other in love relationship. For example, Alfredo is in love with Violetta for two years from far away. Their real relationship starts when he confesses his love and affection to her and she discovers that Alfredo is the man who has been asking about her health all the time during her sickness. Therefore, it can be concluded that *La Traviata* wants to dramatize the love story by increasing the tension between the couple using a large time



gap. However, the love relationship between Mimi and Rodolfo developed very suddenly; it is not very dramatic and touching to see them kissing in great joy the day they meet for the first time. Maybe, Puccini again wants to show that life is unexpected and there is no need to search for great meanings in the events, such as love.

In both of the operas, the flower is used as a symbol of love and unification. In *La Traviata*, Violetta giving a camellia to Alfredo and asking him to give it back to her when the flower fades, may symbolize their love story which will not end happily and die at a point sometime. Camellia is actually the nickname of the courtesan Marguerite in *La Dame aux Camélias*, so it may be a reference to the novel. In *La Bohème*, Mimi tells Rodolfo about her lonely life in which she embroiders flowers and waits for the spring, during her first aria. She earns her life by selling these flowers (The Metropolitan Opera, 2020). Therefore, it may be concluded that the concept of flower is used to show that love is very naïve, pure and easy to lose because of death. Lovers can be separated in a breeze due to the burdens in life.

Violetta is a character aware of her limits as a courtesan but does not prevent herself from dreaming for a better life, especially with a love story in it. As an example to her hopes for a real love, Verdi introduces Violetta's double aria at the end of the first act, in which the composer shows her character with splendid perspective. Here, she sings "E strano", questioning her new feelings quietly. Just before singing it, as a wild coquette she has ignored Alfredo's love affections by behaving passive aggressively. Verdi connects the two of them in this music piece by making Violetta repeat Alfredo's melody while confessing his love. The transformation of her emotions is shown better as she sings "Ah fors'è lui" in F minor, emphasizing her insecure and ambiguous feelings; and shifting to F major while repeating Alfredo's melody. Then she rejects this love story with the word "Follie" and her famous second aria. While listening to this music, the audience remembers the hesitation of hers related to this love affair. She starts to hear Alfredo's voice, uncertain if it is real or not. The melody sung by him now belongs to her, connecting the love theme to each other through music. Throughout the opera, she draws a very tense profile, with unclear choices and forced decisions. Nothing is happy or simple for her; the last decision she makes so desperately takes everything away from her eternally (Salazar, 2018).

Mimi's asking for fire from Rodolfo to light her extinguished candle seems to make a reference to her need for love and affection while fire may symbolize passion. In response to Rodolfo's surprise about the coldness and cuteness of her hands, she sings her first aria with speech-like intoning to introduce her life story to him (Simeonov, 2016). Surprisingly her text remains unpoetic at first, opening herself to Rodolfo by saying that her name is Mimi, once her name was Lucia, she is hardworking and she cooks her own food. The musical harmony is also as simple as her sentences. At one point, she recognizes her feelings for Rodolfo and the text becomes poetic, accompanying one of Puccini's best musical inspirations. She is full of emotions while singing "Il primo sole è mio". At the end, Puccini brings the audience back into the mood of the beginning of the aria with a speech like attitude of Mimi (Lutz, 2019). The end of the aria seems to be weird and abrupt, with too many sixteenth and the same pitch notes used with dotted rhythm (Simeonov, 2016). This type of composing may express the shyness and naiveness of Mimi, since she explained a great deal about her dreams and desire for love to a man that she just met. The sudden end as well as the natural and speech-like aria may also refer to the beginnings and ends of the instant love stories.

On the whole, according to their connections with love theme, a character analysis may be done for Violetta and Mimi. Mimi is very peaceful compared to Violetta; she is happy just by making flowers. While telling Rodolfo about herself, she just starts to talk about how much she loves flowers and how beautiful the real flowers' fragrances are. She becomes very grateful for Rodolfo's simple present of a hat; she simply asks if it suits her or not. Violetta's sentences and arias have deeper meanings such as being liberal all the time, impossible love or making sacrifices. Compared to Mimi, she is a more spiritual woman who looks for divine answers about love and life.

In *La Bohème*, the love story of Musetta and Marcello is a different one from that of Mimi and Rodolfo, since Musetta is a coquettish, flirtatious and more self-confident woman compared to Mimi, who symbolizes purity and mildness. Musetta entering in the 2nd act suddenly becomes the *Carmen* of the opera; the center figure shifts from Mimi to her. She also resembles Violetta with her life style and flirtatious manners. She seems to prefer a rich life instead of the bohemian life style with Marcello. This second female figure idea in a more flirtatious manners and a more stormy relationship symbolize that life includes all kinds of loves. With the presence of an alternative and interesting couple, the audience witnesses a lighter and more relaxed approach to Bohemian love, while the version of Mimi and Rodolfo is more naïve and romantic. It can be pointed out that the composer wanted to balance the emotions in the opera, using contradicting love stories. Thus, the opera becomes more realistic just like every day love stories.



## 8. FINANCIAL APPROACH IN THE OPERAS

One of the differences between the operas is the approach to financial situation in conjunction with class distinctions. In *La Traviata*, being broke is such a great issue since Violetta is an elite courtesan of a luxurious life. But in *La Boheme*, Mimi is just a woman who earns money by selling fake flowers. When Benoit, the landlord of Rodolfo's house, comes to warn them about the rent, penniless poet Rodolfo and his friends who are also poor artists find a way to get rid of him, not bothering themselves about their debts. Moreover, the opera beginning with Rodolfo burning the pages from his latest drama work is both ironical and also very Bohemian, emphasizing their broke life on the other hand. They make fun of their poor situation; they don't take life as seriously as Violetta and Alfredo. This is one of the reasons why the name of the opera is *La Boheme*; indicating the free and easy-going, simple life style of artists. The second act of the opera also contributes to this relaxed approach. The characters are in a street full of people and noise as if the scene is from a carnival. It may remind the audience some of *Carmen's* scenes in which children and ordinary people come into the stage symbolizing the happiness that a simple life gives.

Moreover, Violetta is a woman whose heart seems to be gained more difficult compared to Mimi's. She has seen all kinds of lives and luxury, thus it is normal that she expects something different or more valuable than the materialistic world can give to her. However, Mimi has a simpler life and seems more naive and easy to handle. She is never seen in clothes as beautiful and expensive as Violetta's. The little pink hat that Rodolfo buys for her is enough to satisfy her deeply. Even one of Rodolfo's friends makes fun of his present for Mimi for being too simple and cheap. Rodolfo says "I am poor but happy; rich in poet's words" while he introduces himself to Mimi, bringing the bohemian living style idea to life again. "What a little cold hand, let me warm it for you" are his words when he explains his feelings to her. This sentence again is very minimalistic; this love affair will not be a great drama, but a sweet and cozy joy of being together. Financial situation or society's class distinctions do not bother them; they are happy to live as poor and low as they are. As a matter of fact, both of the heroines die in poverty as lower-class women, but at least in a joyful mood next to their beloved ones.

## 9. MUSICAL AND EMOTIONAL APPROACHES OF THE COMPOSERS

The beginning motif of *La Boheme* is a cheerful melody when compared with the dark melancholic mood of *La Traviata's* prelude, in which Violetta's impending and inevitable doom is foreshadowed with a light, beautiful and also descending death motive (Goldberg, 2016). *La Boheme's* prelude is cut with the speech of the characters very naturally, as if Puccini did not care about being serious or about presenting a regular opera with a proper beginning. Puccini seems to search for a way to be different from all other operas; he seems to like suddenness and disorder in opera. He makes fun of opera-seria and romantic-dramatic operas via Rodolfo who says that love is a stove that burns fiercely, and that his passionate drama will warm them, referring to *La Traviata*. He also refers to the opera by depicting it as a passionate, colorful love scene full of kisses. These phrases show that Puccini does not want the opera to be only very dramatic and romantic; he wants something referring to life, including both joy and pain together, pointing out Verismo elements. Also, *La Boheme's* music sounds like there are very rare arias in contrast with *La Traviata*. This style of Puccini is a new concept of his time. In *La Traviata*, it is much easier to distinguish the arias from the recitatives; but *La Boheme* sounds as a long recitative. The recitatives and arias are difficult to separate and differentiate; making the opera sound more natural and irregular. Every speech is very random; there is not an abundance of meaningful words and feelings as in *La Traviata*. The band entering on of the scenes is very abrupt and meaningless just as Puccini expected it to be sudden and temporary, like love and death. During the opera, someone feeling happy at a moment can easily be at the verge of tears of pain at the next one. In the sad scenes, the mood changes rapidly again and the audience cannot control herself/himself, too. The production set designer Franco Zeffirelli says about Puccini that he wants the audience to cry there and she/he can't resist (French, 2008). Life includes every feeling intermingled to each other. All these points make *La Boheme* like a comedy when compared with *La Traviata*. While Puccini tries to show the comedy in deep drama of *La Traviata* by making fun of it, the sudden changes in the moods and events in his own opera are extraordinary and amusing, too, and thus maybe show how funny the audiences' own realistic lives are.

## 10. COMPARISON OF THE OPERAS' LAST SCENES

The death scenes of both *La Traviata* and *La Boheme* are long and heavy to watch. Violetta dies with great pleasure and ecstasy, since everybody understands her sacrifice, forgives and adores her. Mimi, too, is happy for being with her beloved one at her last breath, but her death is depicted very ordinary and light



compared to that of Violetta's. For example, the stage thus life itself freezes when Violetta dies, but Mimi's death is realized sometime after her last breath. Besides, Mimi does not die in Rodolfo's arms and he cannot witness that very moment since he thinks that she is asleep. Even music does not change very dramatically as in *La Traviata*. Nevertheless, the cry of Rodolfo at the end touches the heart of the audience with the word "Mimi!" in a high pitch and shocked tune hurting the audience. The death of Mimi is more touching than that of Violetta because nobody realizes that very moment and she does not have a last chance to cry her whole energy out as Violetta does. Mimi's last words are about how she will be asleep, and even her voice loses its energy and life as if she really will sleep. Life still continues after her death, and Rodolfo may find some other little cold hands to warm up; he may not be as desperate as Alfredo. This may make the audience both sad and relieved at the same time; sad for the loss of Mimi, relieved for the temporality of the pain after someone's loss and the possibilities of new love stories. Life bears new joys and pleasures for Rodolfo and for the audience; people are not always doomed to feel the pain that Alfredo goes through. Humans have the capacity to forget the pain and repress the saddening moments. This is a present given to human mind to move on and endure new pains. Indeed, Puccini is more realistic compared to Verdi's dramatic and heavy opera and the audience may find more of herself/himself in Puccini's works.

## 11. CONCLUSION

In short, both *La Traviata* of Verdi and *La Boheme* of Puccini have the same topics in basic; love and death intermingled together in life. But their way of handling these passionate moments are very different both structurally and emotionally. Having a heavier and more serious atmosphere, *La Traviata* is an opera of drama and romanticism, while *La Boheme* symbolizes the realism with more natural and simpler emotions, via the elements of Verismo. In *La Boheme*, materialistic world has no meanings and the bohemian life style is emphasized, while *La Traviata* takes place in luxurious ball saloons and rich houses instead of poor streets with ordinary people such as sweepers. According to Puccini's point of view, life is unexpected, simple, natural and random; while Verdi looks for great meanings under the actions, composing an opera searching for more spiritual aspects. Nevertheless, both operas show different perspectives of main topics related to life and as an audience one can get artistic satisfaction from both in musical and emotional aspects. Unless societies give up feeling human emotions such as the ecstasy of love, the loss of a beloved to death, the grief after her/him, the operas will be continued to stage and appreciated throughout the world.

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