

3 Morality and Germanness in Die Zauberflöte

As shown in Chapter 2, the intensely didactic moments in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, exhorting the audience to accept Enlightenment principles such as compassion, fidelity, and magnanimity, to a large extent grew out of the aesthetics of German national theater debated in Vienna from the mid-eighteenth century on. The moralistic aesthetics were put into operatic practice with the foundation of Joseph II's National Singspiel company in 1778; but Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* was conceived under radically different circumstances. After 1788, the court theater no longer produced German-language operas, and Mozart wrote his final *Singspiel* for Emanuel Schikaneder's suburban company, less concerned with appealing the ideologies of state-supported national theater than attracting paying audiences from diverse social backgrounds (the distinctions between the National Singspiel and the suburban companies are discussed in Chapter 4). And yet, *Die Zauberflöte* exhibits moralistic preoccupations that are at least as intense as those in *Die Entführung*.¹ Leaving aside the suburban context for now, this chapter argues that *Die Zauberflöte*'s didacticism was heavily indebted to the operatic developments at the court theater during the 1780s; in their collaborative work Mozart and Schikaneder both incorporated didactic tropes associated with earlier *Singspiele* and avoided the ironic approaches to moral instruction typical for Italian-language works produced at the court theater in the previous decade.

Die Zauberflöte's didactic intensity becomes apparent as early as the first-act quintet (No. 5). Here the three Ladies remove the padlock that they placed on Papageno's mouth earlier to punish him for lying to Tamino, Papageno promises never to tell a lie, and afterwards all five characters unite in a communal statement:²

Bekämen doch die Lügner alle	If the lips of all liars
Ein solches Schloß vor ihren Mund:	Could be padlocked like this:
Statt Haß, Verleumdung, schwarzer	Instead of hate, slander and black bile,
Galle	
Bestünde Lieb' und Bruderbund.	Love and brotherhood would reign.

In his musical setting, Mozart is clearly implementing the tropes and techniques he developed during his cooperation with the National Singspiel. Similar to some of the maxims in *Die Entführung*, Mozart creates a moment of musical rupture

that emphasizes the narrative shift in Schikaneder's libretto: a sudden change in dynamics (from *crescendo* to *piano*) accompanies the onset of moralizing, and the performers deliver the maxim *sotto voce* (Example 3.1, mm. 53–54).

The softer dynamic level was perhaps meant to grab the spectators' attention and make them more alert to the text. Mozart parcels out the first sentence of the maxim in groupings of several words at a time and separates the fragments by extended rests. The verbal fragmentation slows down the process of delivery as if to allow the audience to grasp the meaning of the whole statement more easily—the characters appear to be dictating a message that they expect the audience to write down.³ Mozart also employs skillfully executed rhetorical figures. In particular, the emphatic musical madrigalisms in the maxim's second couplet (“statt Haß . . .” and “bestünde . . .”) express the opposition of hate and brotherly love. In the couplet's first line, an accented opening leap of a fourth, orchestral *sforzandi*, and repeated melodic half-steps depict the odiousness of hate, slander and bile, whereas in the following line mellifluous melodies illustrate the desired love and brotherhood (Example 3.2).⁴

Similar to *Die Entführung*, moreover, Mozart's approach to the “padlock” maxim creates striking analogies to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's theoretical discussion of maxims in *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (see Chapter 2). Lessing viewed maxims as transcendental moments, and he encouraged actors to deliver maxims with gestures that created an impression as if they spoke in a different kind of voice. The unexpected change in the mode of musical delivery in Mozart's setting of the padlock maxim makes it seem as if the onstage characters were no longer speaking about their personal experience, and were possessed by a new, transcendental voice, similar to the one that Lessing imagined. The performers, in short, briefly cease to function as characters in the opera's plot and metamorphose into a univocal omniscient narrator. *Die Zauberflöte* here to some extent creates an Enlightenment counterpart to a Greek chorus, thus responding to the eighteenth-century German fascination with ancient Greek theater that was to receive its most prominent expression in Schiller's 1803 essay “On the Use of the Chorus in Tragedy” (discussed in Chapter 6).

Numerous other maxims and aphorisms appear throughout later portions of *Die Zauberflöte*, and they, likewise, received emphatic and insightful musical settings from Mozart. This intense musical attention to didacticism has elicited varied interpretations from generations of critics and scholars. Numerous nineteenth- and twentieth-century interpreters treated *Die Zauberflöte*'s maxims as a proof of the opera's purported Masonic message.⁵ Another group of exegetes concentrated on linking the maxims to other esoteric ideologies, such as Rosicrucianism.⁶ Perhaps in response to the arcane interpretations, certain commentators read elements of irony into *Die Zauberflöte*'s maxims.⁷ Several early twentieth-century German commentators suggested, by contrast, that *Die Zauberflöte*'s ardent treatment of maxims was somehow connected to the work's inherent Germanness.⁸ This chapter takes the nationalistic interpretations at face value, though it does not argue that *Die Zauberflöte* is inherently Germanic. Instead, my claim is that Mozart and Schikaneder's work closely resonates with eighteenth-century German

Example 3.1 Die Zauberflöte, Quintet no. 5 (Act I, scene 7), padlock maxim opening.

Bass: *Bedrückt soll mit - ne War - tung sein. War - tung sein.*
 Papageno: *He - ka - men doch!*
 Tamino: *He - ka - men doch!*
 Third Lady: *soll mit - ne War - tung, die - ne War - tung sein.*
 First & Second Lady: *soll die - ne War - tung, die - ne War - tung sein.*
 First & Second Lady: *solo voce*
 Third Lady: *solo voce*
 Tamino: *solo voce*
 Papageno: *solo voce*
 Bass: *solo voce*

Line 1
 Line 2

Example 3.2 Die Zauberflöte, padlock maxim, vengeance versus brotherhood.

Bass: *starr Hass. Ver - leum - dung, schwar - zer Gal - le*
 Papageno: *starr Hass. Ver - leum - dung, schwar - zer Gal - le*
 Tamino: *starr Hass. Ver - leum - dung, schwar - zer Gal - le*
 Third Lady: *starr Hass. Ver - leum - dung, schwar - zer Gal - le*
 First & Second Lady: *starr Hass. Ver - leum - dung, schwar - zer Gal - le*
 First & Second Lady: *solo voce*
 Third Lady: *solo voce*
 Tamino: *solo voce*
 Papageno: *solo voce*
 Bass: *solo voce*

Line 1
 Line 2

approaches to the idea of didactic national theater. *Die Zauberflöte*'s moral fervor, in other words, is closely connected to Mozart's exposure to Viennese theories and practices of German national opera in the 1780s and early 1790s, which explains its close links to *Die Einführung* and clarifies the distinction of its approach to morality in comparison to Mozart's Viennese *opere buffe*.

Masonic or ironic?

Similar to other didactic moments in *Die Zauberflöte*, the "padlock" maxim has been scrutinized for various Masonic subtexts and hidden political references. For instance, Jan Assmann thought that the maxim's condemnation of hate and slander reflected factional disputes within, and political persecution of, Viennese Masonic lodges in the early 1790s, whereas Nicolas Till viewed the padlock as a symbol of Josephine censorship and police surveillance.⁹ As discussed in previous chapters, however, many German theater aestheticians and authors in late eighteenth-century Vienna welcomed and embraced censorship, because it represented a means to validate their works vis-à-vis foreign-language productions—namely, French theater and Italian opera—traditionally favored by the Viennese court and aristocracy. A reconsideration of *Die Zauberflöte*'s maxims from the perspective of eighteenth-century debates about reformed German theater provides insights into Mozart's opera that undermine the Masonic interpretations.

Proponents of *Die Zauberflöte*'s Masonic orientation focus not only on the maxims that Mozart set to music, but also the one that he excluded from his final setting of the first-act finale. The maxim appears in the printed libretto and follows Pamina's decision to be truthful with Sarastro about her attempted escape:¹⁰

Die Wahrheit ist nicht immer gut, Weil sie den Großen wehe thut; Doch wär sie allezeit verhaßt, So wär mein Leben mir zur Last.	To tell the truth is not always good, Because it harms the greats; But if it were always hated, Then I would not want to live any more.
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According to Assmann, Mozart was aware that the maxim would not pass the censors since the image of "truths" that damage "the greats" stood too openly for the idea that the truths preserved in the Masonic mystery rituals contradicted the official ideologies of the absolutist government.¹¹ This interpretation is problematic for a number of reasons. First, the fact that the supposedly subversive maxim was printed in the first edition of the libretto suggests that it was most likely approved by the censor before publication. Second, the records of the various Viennese censors (especially Sonnenfels and Hägelin) contain very few examples of textual passages that the censors rejected because of political references as obscure as the one Assmann reads into the maxim. If Hägelin, who most likely read through this libretto, had found the maxim's second line unacceptable, he would probably not have removed the whole stanza, but simply changed "der Großen" ("the greats") into something more innocuous, such as "der And'ren" ("the others").¹²

The person responsible for excising the maxim from the final version of the opera was therefore Mozart, who must have cut the text during the process of setting the libretto to music, independently of the censorial review.¹³ The decision to leave out this particular maxim is in fact resonant with the idea, propounded by Lessing and other contemporary German critics and embraced by certain Viennese theater authors, that theatrical texts should employ only maxims promoting principles considered correct, straightforward, and worthy. By suggesting that sometimes it is necessary to lie, the statement presents what eighteenth-century moralists would have considered a dubious and convoluted principle. The maxim, moreover, contradicts the statement that immediately precedes it within the first-act finale, not to mention the lesson about truthfulness contained in the "padlock" episode. In the finale, Pamina fears Sarastro's reaction to her escape with Papageno but resolves to tell "the truth, even if it be [considered] a crime" ("Die Wahrheit, wär' sie auch Verbrechen"). Mozart highlights the watchword "die Wahrheit" through repetition, melodic leaps, and by setting the whole statement off from the preceding music by a quarter-note rest (Example 3.3, mm. 368–72).

Example 3.3 *Die Zauberflöte*, first-act finale, Pamina's decision to tell the truth.

As Jessica Waldoff has pointed out, moreover, it is precisely during this moment that the music associated with onstage characters briefly restores the finale's home key of C major, which enhances the import of Pamina's words.¹⁴ Mozart's music therefore transforms the onstage depiction of commendable behavior into a maxim that parallels Papageno's promise to stop telling lies. Had Mozart and Schikaneder kept the maxim that originally followed Pamina's profession of truthfulness, they would have rendered that profession ambiguous and contradictory.

In contrast to the interpretations focused on arcane symbolism, numerous commentators, dating back to at least as early as Ulybyshev's 1843 Mozart biography, read the "padlock" maxim as ironic. Ulybyshev was particularly bothered by the participation of the three Ladies, whom the plot soon debunks as evil, in the

presentation of the maxim.¹⁵ In the twentieth century, ironic readings of *Die Zauberflöte*'s maxims became widespread, both in critical assessments of the opera and in staged productions.¹⁶ Ingrid Bergman's famous film adaptation of *Die Zauberflöte* (*Trollflöjten*, 1975), for example, makes the ironic undertones of the "padlock" maxim more explicit. On the one hand, Bergman draws the audience's attention to the fact that they are being instructed by adding placards inscribed with the words of the maxim. On the other hand, Bergman does not bring out the striking madrigalisms with which Mozart illustrated the opposing concepts of hate and brotherhood; contrary to the text and the music, Bergman's characters keep a surprisingly pleasant smile on their lips throughout the whole section. Both the self-conscious artificiality of Bergman's placards and the facial expressions of the actors interpret the maxim as ironic. A staging in which the characters would smile during the statement about brotherhood and frown during the statement about hate, by contrast, would chase away the suspicions of irony and highlight the emphatic endorsement of the didactic message in Mozart's music, thus staying closer to the more straightforward approaches to maxims by eighteenth-century German theorists of national theater.

Lessing's *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* suggests one type of reaction that Mozart might have expected from his audience during the presentation of maxims in *Die Zauberflöte*. In his discussion of maxims in Johann Friedrich von Cronegk's tragedy *Oliindo und Sophronia*, Lessing notes: "I was struck to see a general movement in the parterre and to hear murmurs with which approval is expressed even when [the audience's] close attention [to the play] does not permit it to break out in full."¹⁷ The remark suggests that Hamburg audiences did not (or were not supposed to) consider maxims as empty platitudes; rather, Lessing expected the audience to identify subconsciously with and internalize the "wisdom" that the instructional statements imparted. Lessing later further praises the Hamburg spectators for their attention to maxims: "I thought: 'Wonderful! People love morals in this city. The theatergoers in the parterre take delight in maxims; a Euripides could gain acclaim on a stage like this, and a Socrates would want to visit it.'"¹⁸ By imbuing their operas with maxims, German librettists and composers, including Schikaneder and Mozart, must have thought of themselves as providing their audience with the opportunity to react in a positive manner, affirm their superior moral sensibility, and emulate the ancient Greeks.

One can see the importance of maxims in the everyday life of the eighteenth-century Viennese in the example of Mozart himself who wrote numerous aphorisms into family albums of his friends and acquaintances and had others write them into his own notebooks.¹⁹ These autograph books belong to the tradition of commonplace books, hand-written scrapbooks in which early-modern intellectuals compiled different kinds of notes, quotes, excerpts, as well as maxims or moral *sententiae*.²⁰ *Die Zauberflöte* with its collection of memorable instructive passages, made even more noteworthy by Mozart's musical setting, should in fact be considered as resonating with the tradition of commonplace books.

The celebratory reviews of particularly moralistic plays in the Viennese press further illuminate the public and critical admiration for theatrical didacticism.

One contemporary writer, for instance, praised Stephanie the Younger's critique of female vanity in his 1775 comedy *Die Wölfe in der Heerde*. In his review of the play he exclaimed: "Coquetry, you naughty daughter of vanity, you fashionable peccadillo of the goddesses whom we [the men] admire! Hail and blessings to the healer, who attempts to clear the air that you poison! How many righteous husbands, how many sensible young men will unanimously agree with this statement by the writer of these lines! [The playwright] certainly deserves [such a praise for his activities] as a moralist."²¹ This enthusiastic reception of Stephanie's play is significant not only as an illustration of the importance that late eighteenth-century Viennese critics attributed to didactic plays, but also in connection to the numerous misogynist maxims in *Die Zauberflöte*—it is possible that some of Mozart's Viennese contemporaries were as favorable toward them as the anonymous critic was about Stephanie's castigation of female vanity.²²

Finally, the famous letter Mozart wrote to his wife on October 8–9, 1791 suggests that he took the instructive aspects of *Die Zauberflöte* seriously. In the letter, he describes his visit to a performance of *Die Zauberflöte* with an unspecified man who laughed at the comical aspects of the opera but did not appreciate enough "certain speeches" ("einige Reden") during the "solemn scene" at the beginning of the second act although Mozart drew his attention to them. As is well known, the composer became so infuriated that he moved to another part of the theater calling the man a "Papageno" due to his lack of "understanding."²³ By "Reden" Mozart might have meant the numerous passages about virtue, patience, humanity, wisdom, and self-control that the priests announce during the opening scene of the second act.²⁴ Mozart's reverent attitude to the priests' instructive announcements indicates that he believed in his opera's potential and mission to impart didactic lessons to his audiences.²⁵

Ambiguous morals in the "Da Ponte" operas

Mozart's serious approach to moral instruction in *Die Zauberflöte* might seem generally associated with the moral and sentimental aesthetics of eighteenth-century theater. Yet, a comparison with the composer's much more subversive treatment of moral edification in his Viennese *opere buffe* also points to an exclusively German aspect in *Die Zauberflöte*'s didacticism. Mozart's handling of didactic issues is particularly relevant in *Così fan tutte*, since the opera premiered at the Burgtheater in January 1790, just about a year and a half prior to the completion of *Die Zauberflöte*. In *Così*, Mozart and Da Ponte tackle moral education in a self-conscious and ostentatious manner: both the opera's title *Così fan tutte* ("All Women Do the Same," a maxim of sorts) and its subtitle *La scuola degli amanti* ("The School for Lovers") signal an educational intent. The didactic principle that Mozart and Da Ponte chose to put at the head of their opera, no matter how strongly it might or might not be validated throughout the work, stands in opposition to the moral views presented in Mozart's German *Singspiele*, as well as those written for the National Theater in the early 1780s. True, the plot of *Così* is quite ambiguous and it is far from certain that it actually demonstrates the validity

of the maxim in its main title. The ambiguity itself, however, contrasts with the straightforward principles promoted in the two Mozart *Singspiele*. The idea that all women are unfaithful, illustrated, albeit ambiguously, in the cases of Dorabella and Fiordiligi and propounded as a general principle by Don Alfonso, clashes in particular with the notion of absolute constancy incorporated into Konstanze's story in *Die Entführung* and many other operas of the National Singspiel period (see Chapter 2). On a more general level, this distinction parallels the notions of German sincerity and seriousness as opposed to Italian word/deliness and frivolity that preoccupied German intellectuals throughout the eighteenth century (see the Introduction and Chapter 1).

The opera's motto also collides with principles of German dramas from the late 1780s and early 1790s. Especially noticeable in this regard is Karl Ludwig Gieseke's *Es gibt doch noch treue Weiber!* (Faithful Women Still Exist!), published in Vienna in 1790 (the same year as *Così*) and supposedly based on a real story.²⁶ At the time of the play's publication, Gieseke was a member of the production team at Schikaneder's Theater auf der Wieden, and the play was therefore probably premiered there. One of the play's characters, the philosophizing Metzler, resembles Don Alfonso. At the beginning of the play, Metzler delivers a long speech about female infidelity, but eventually the deeds of the main heroine make him change his opinion, as he admits in the concluding conversation with his friend Freyberg:

FREYBERG: Happy is the man who has such a good friend and such a wife.—
Do you see now, Metzler, here you have proof that there still are faithful women.

METZLER: I see it [the proof]—and I ask the whole female sex to forgive me for my doubts about them.²⁷

The fact that Gieseke's play was published in the year of *Così*'s premiere makes it likely that *Es gibt doch noch treue Weiber!* represented a disapproving commentary on *Così*'s main premise; it is unclear, however, when and where it was produced.²⁸ Even if it is not specifically connected to *Così*, the play exemplifies the more optimistic attitude to female fidelity in reformed German theater around 1790.

Mozart's musical approach to morality in *Così* reflects the ambiguity of its title. In several numbers Mozart's music openly ridicules the righteous proclamations about constancy by the two Ferrarese sisters. In the first-act duet (no. 4), for instance, Fiordiligi and Dorabella take a vow of fidelity and ask the God of Love to exact revenge upon them should they break that vow by subjecting them to "vivendo penar" (lively pain). The image of suffering *lively pain* exudes erotic overtones, and the sexual metaphor becomes even more prominent in the musical setting, where Mozart underlines the words "Amore" and "vivendo" with sensual melismas and chromaticism.²⁹ In the duet's coda, the sisters repeat their promise, yet, as Bruce Alan Brown points out, they also trade each other's melodic motives,

thus foreshadowing their future exchange of lovers and undermining the idea of steadfastness.³⁰

Even explicitly homiletic moments in *Così* are filled with ambiguity, as can be seen in the opera's final maxim, in which the principal characters ostentatiously point out the purported didactic message of the whole work:

Fortunato l'uom, che prende
Ogni cosa pel buon verso,
E tra i casi, e le vicende
Da ragion guidar si fa.
Happy is the man, who approaches
Everything from the positive side,
And who, through the vicissitudes of life,
Allows reason to be his guide.

Quel che suole altrui far piangere
Fia per lui cagion di riso,
E del mondo in mezzo i turbini,
Bella calma troverà.
That which makes others weep
Will be a cause of laughter for him.
And, even in the midst of whirlwind,
He will find beautiful tranquility.

Whereas the maxims in *Die Zauberflöte* and *Die Entführung* clearly define various moralistic dualisms (e.g., vengeance vs. mercy, lying vs. telling the truth, hate vs. love, or jealousy vs. trust), Da Ponte's maxim is not as straightforward and relies on abstract concepts of reason, tranquility, and resignation.³¹ The vapidty of the maxim resonates with what Goehring refers to as the "anti-moralizing tone" of the whole opera, according to which the adherence to strict, clear-cut moral precepts brings a lot of trouble—as it did to the lovers throughout the opera.³² As I have shown above, however, it was precisely these clear-cut moral principles that Mozart sought to instill with his German operas; or at least he attempted to appear as if instilling them in order to satisfy the censors, the nationalist promoters of German theater, and eventually also the German bourgeois audiences who throughout the late eighteenth century came to perceive moralistic theater as an expression of their national and cultural identity.

Mozart's music captures the anti-utopian views of *Così*'s final maxim effectively in that he employs some of the sermonizing techniques from his *Singspiele*, yet also allows for elements of ambiguity and multivalence to seep in. The first couplet of the maxim's second stanza, for instance, presents two opposing images (weeping and laughing at the vicissitudes of fate), and Mozart responds with affirmation and subversion at once. Just as in the *Singspiele*, Mozart opens the maxim with a radical change in musical style, including a sudden onset of *sotto voce* and homophonic texture. The line about weeping does feature an effective switch from C major to F minor together with a melisma on the word "piangere" (weep), whereas the musical depiction of laughter brings a return to a more cheerful G major and chuckling trills in the woodwinds. Yet, the setting of the cheerful line also carries on the demure *sotto voce* from the preceding tearful line, and the subdued dynamic level produces an image of a constrained smile rather than laughter (Example 3.4).

The strict, antiphonal texture underlying "di riso" (of laughter) also feeds the supposition that the merriment described in the text is somehow constrained or forced. The music therefore reflects many different kinds of laughter, ranging from a content smile expressing the acceptance of fate's vicissitudes to a face-deforming guffaw viewed by many in the eighteenth century as an expression of diabolical barbarity or hysteria.³³

On a more abstract level, *Così* does live up to its self-proclaimed didactic intentions. It presents at least one instructive element that corresponds to those in Mozart's German operas, in that it, like *Die Entführung*, warns against lovers' mistrust and jealousy.³⁴ In both works, the men eventually renounce their desire to test their beloved's fidelity in the future. Despite this outward similarity, the treatment of the tale about cured jealousy reveals important differences between *Singspiel* and *buffo* didacticism. *Die Entführung* devotes an entire musical number (the second-act finale) to a demonstration of the dangers of jealousy, browbeating its audiences with an anti-jealousy message throughout its stern, canonic ending. *Così*, as Kunze and others have pointed out, only implies that Dorabella's and Fiordiligi's change of heart most likely did not reflect the natural unfaithfulness and inborn frivolity of the two women but resulted instead from the reckless test set up by Don Alfonso and from the delusional idealism of the lovers at the outset of the opera.³⁵ Also, nowhere throughout the *Così* finale is there a statement explaining the premise, stressed over and over in numerous eighteenth-century didactic works, that fidelity requires trust.

The lack of emphasis on these more straightforward teachings, so common in Mozart's *Singspiele*, becomes particularly apparent in two related moments of *Così*. In the opening *Terzetto*, Don Alfonso warns Ferrando and Guglielmo, who boast about the fidelity of their beloveds, to resist testing it:

O pazzo desire! O mad desire!
 Cercar di scorpire To seek that evil
 Quel mal trovato Which when found
 Meschini ci fa. Makes one wretched.

Instead of highlighting this aphorism, Mozart buries it under the two soldiers' fulminations. The ensuing plot presents a cautionary tale about following the "mad desire." By the second-act finale, Ferrando and Guglielmo have learned their lesson and proclaim their newly acquired resolve to trust the women:

Te lo credo, gioia bella, I believe you, my beautiful beloved,
 Ma la prova io far non vò. But I do not want to ask for a proof
 [of your fidelity].

This important announcement is presented in a mere couplet, and no one comments on it, as one could easily imagine would be the case in a more didactically inclined *Singspiel*. Far from emphasizing the phrase musically, moreover, Mozart combines it with Fiordiligi and Dorabella's assurances of their eternal love and Despina's confused exclamations (Example 3.5).³⁶

The image shows a musical score for three vocal parts: Soprano (Fi), Alto (Do), and Bass (D.A.). The score is divided into two sections: 'LINE 5 - WEEPING' and 'LINE 6 - LAUGHTER'. The lyrics are in Italian. The first section, 'LINE 5 - WEEPING', features a melodic line with a long note on 'pian' and a fermata. The second section, 'LINE 6 - LAUGHTER', features a more rhythmic and melodic line with a long note on 'so' and a fermata. The score includes various musical notations such as clefs, time signatures, and dynamic markings.

Example 3.4 *Così fan tutte*, second-act finale, final maxim, lines 5 and 6.

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Fi. guor sa - pro, cel - la - fr - de e cel - la - fr - de

Do. guor sa - pro, cel - la - fr - de e cel - la - fr - de

FERRANDO

Te lo credo, - gio - tu - bel - la, ma la prova io far non vo.

GUGLIELMO

Te lo credo, - gio - tu - bel - la, ma la prova io far non vo.

f

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Fi. com - pen - sar - so - pro il tu - o

Do. com - pen - sar - so - pro il tu - o

DESPINA

la, non so se questo è so - gno, mi com - fan - da, mi ver - go - gno:

te lo cre - do, gio - tu - bel - la,

cre - do, gio - tu - bel - la,

cresc.

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Fi. co - do

Do. co - do

De. ma - co mal se a me l'han - fa - ta el'ha molti altri anch'io la fa,

Fe. ma la pro - va io far non - vo,

G. ma la pro - va io far non - vo,

f

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Fi. rar - ti o - gior - sa - pro, o

Do. rar - ti o - gior - sa - pro, o

De. ma - co mal se a me l'han

Fe. ma la pro - va io far non - vo,

G. ma la pro - va io far non - vo,

cresc.

Example 3.5 (Continued)

Example 3.5 *Così fan tutte*, second-act finale, male lovers renounce jealousy.

Thus the arguably most instructive message of the opera remains hidden while the irony-ridden, ambiguous statements dominate the dramaturgical foreground.³⁷

Though not as prominent, analogous issues mark the treatment of explicit didacticism in the other two Da Ponte operas.³⁸ The concluding maxim of *Don Giovanni* as it appears in the original ending of 1787 is famously filled with explicitly ironic overtones:

Questo è il fin di chi fa mal: This is the end of all evildoers!
 E de perfidi la morte That the death of sinners
 Alla vita è sempre uguai! Is always equal to how they lived!

Unlike the maxims in *Die Zauberflöte*, this is not just an attempt at correcting a vice or praising a certain virtuous action, but rather an absolute castigation of those who commit evil deeds to eternal damnation.³⁹ Yet, as Allanbrook explains, “the very moral cockiness of the three-line epigram is testimony to the unreality of the close: the wicked rarely die in a fashion commensurate with their deserts.”⁴⁰ The fervor of the concluding maxim, in other words, is so intense that it seems to overstretch itself, a notion that the music implies as well. The musical setting seems lofty at first thanks to its two fugal subject entries, but the loftiness is undermined from the very beginning by the fast tempo (“Presto”), the overly agitated runs in the second violins, and the fact that the second entry lacks any contrapuntal counterpart; the fugue, moreover, dissolves abruptly into straightforward homophonic declamation (mm. 756–770, Example 3.6). This subverted counterpoint contrasts with the final maxim in the second-act finale of *Die Entführung*, in which Mozart never abandons the “ecclesiastical” and more elevated styles.

In *Le nozze di Figaro*, the maxims presented throughout the opera differ from their *Singspiel* counterparts both through their dramaturgical placement and musical treatment. The most prominent instances of explicit didacticism occur in the fourth act of the opera when Basilio, Marcellina, and Figaro sing three overtly moralistic arias in a row. These arias contrast with didactic moments in *Die Entführung* and *Die Zauberflöte* because of their dialogic relationship to one another as well as their explicitly ironic leanings. Marcellina sings her proto-feminist aria “Il capro e la capretta” immediately after Figaro expresses his suspicions about Susanna’s fidelity—in the aria’s final stanza she accuses men of treating women with cruelty, and thus creates a parallel to the anti-jealousy statements in *Die Entführung*.⁴¹ But it is significant that the aria is delivered by a secondary character, and a few scenes later is followed by Figaro’s famous misogynist diatribe about female infidelity, “Aprite un po’ quegli occhi.” Positioned in between these contradictory sermonizing arias is Basilio’s “In quegli anni in cui val poco,” an explicitly instructive aria that ends with a maxim but also contains scatological references reminiscent of the crass humor of *commedia dell’arte*.⁴² Allanbrook has also discussed a different kind of cynical moralizing that appears in the second-act finale.⁴³ There the Countess and Susanna sing pompous aphorisms about male jealousy to increase the Count’s embarrassment at discovering Susanna instead of Cherubino in the Countess’s closet. Although the maxims the

Presto
DONNA ANNA - DONNA ELVIRA

756 A. E. Que sti cchi fa mal, di chi fa mal, di

761 A. E. f cchi fa mal, Z. Que sti cchi fa mal, di chi fa mal, di

O. DON OCTAVIO Que sti cchi fa mal, di chi fa mal, di

M. MASETTO Que sti cchi fa mal, di chi fa mal, di

L. LEPORELLO Que sti cchi fa mal, di chi fa mal, di

Z. ZERLINA Que sti cchi fa mal, di chi fa mal, di

Example 3.6 (Continued)

In spite of his female disguise, Amor flirts with both males and females. In Act I, scene 7, the disguised Amor tells Diana that she is beautiful and that if Diana were not a woman he/she would fall in love with her. In Act I, scene 10, furthermore, the disguised Amor expresses interest in Doristo, and the shepherd finds Amor attractive, though at first he is not sure whether Amor is a boy or a girl. Da Ponte and Martin's Amor is therefore even more ambivalent than Cherubino, who flirts only with women. The spicy conversation between Amor and Doristo leads to the ribald duet "Occhietto furbetto" that contains a particularly suggestive interchange.⁴⁶

AMORE
Occhietto furbetto,
Che cosa m'hai detto
Baciadomi qui?
DORISTO
Se furba tu sei,
Capire io dei.
AMORE
Capisco, sì, sì.
DORISTO
Ebben, che diss'io?
AMORE
Che sei l'idol mio.
DORISTO/AMORE
E poi?
AMORE/DORISTO
Che vorresti ...
DORISTO/AMORE
E poi?
AMORE/DORISTO
Che faresti ...

In the context of kissing and flirtation discussed throughout the duet, the ellipses create a prominent sexual innuendo. Martin increases the suggestiveness by repeating the final incomplete sentences several times (mm. 19–28 and 75–81—Example 3.7). Moreover, the composer concludes the section with a fermata followed by a passage in which the voices sing in homophonic thirds—the musical union of the voices here symbolizes the sexual union that was hinted at through the ellipses.

The evocative nature of the duet is made particularly striking by the gender ambiguity of Amor—a male character (albeit in female clothes and performed by a female singer) who sings about mutual desire with another male character.⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, the suggestive nature of Amor's gender was deemed "immoral" by at least one Viennese contemporary of Da Ponte and Martin. The author of a handwritten philippic, entitled "Letter by an Inhabitant of Vienna to His Friend in Prague, Who Requested His Opinion about the Opera Titled *L'Arbore di Diana*," expressed outrage at the opera's purported licentiousness, suggesting that the authors must have found the inspiration in a brothel.⁴⁸ The critique takes particular

issue with the stage representation of Amor at the beginning of the opera. The male clothes of Amor's female performer (Luise Mombelli) were supposedly too revealing of her female anatomy: "At first, Amor appears as a man, with the chest or the body of a woman, a bare throat, and since it is a woman who plays the role, one can see a pair of breasts uncovered up to the nipples."⁴⁹

The gender ambiguity of Da Ponte and Martin's Amor was also problematic for Ferdinand Eberl who adapted *L'arbore di Diana* as a *Singspiel* for the Leopoldstädter Theater under the title *Der Baum der Diana* in 1788.⁵⁰ The adaptation abandons the original work's depiction of a male Amor dressed in female clothes; instead, Amor is a female from the very beginning of the *Singspiel*. That the Viennese critics of German theater were sensitive to the cross-dressing issue becomes obvious in a 1788 review of the Leopoldstadt production, which specifically mentions Amor's reassigned gender.⁵¹ Eberl touched up not only Amor's gender but the overall characterization of the figure, making her more righteous. This becomes obvious already at the end of Act I, scene 2, where the Leopoldstadt Amor urges Doristo to restrain his desires for Diana's nymphs at all costs. In the opera's final scene, moreover, she identifies herself as a goddess of tranquility and peace, which does not fit with the Italian Amor's mischievous nature.⁵²

Example 3.7 (Continued)

Example 3.7 *L'arborne di Diana*, Act I, scene 10, suggestive exchanges in Amor-Doristo duet (mm. 21–28 and 74–81).

Opera buffa censorship?

The differing standards of propriety in the Italian and German versions of *L'arborne di Diana*, as well as the differences between the treatment of moral instruction in Mozart's *opere buffe* and *Singspiele*, were to some extent conditioned by the separation of German and non-German theater censorship in Josephine Vienna. Although little is known about the censorship of Italian opera in Vienna during this period, the few scattered sources show that German and non-German theatrical works were censored separately by different personnel, and that the non-German supervision was not as organized nor as rigorous as the German one, led by Hägelin.⁵³ The person who had the final choice of which libretto would fit the needs of the court-theater Italian company was probably the emperor himself, or a close associate of his responsible for theater affairs, such as Count Johann Joseph Khevenhüller or Prince Orsini-Rosenberg.⁵⁴ In some ways this approach resembled the disorganized process of content control in French *opéras-comiques* during the reign of Maria Theresa, discussed in Chapter 1. But Joseph II apparently did not uphold the same strict principles as his mother and her associates; this is what the anonymous critic of *L'arborne di Diana* seems to be getting at

when he asks, in his "Letter by an Inhabitant of Vienna to His Friend in Prague," how the Viennese authorities could have allowed the publication and performance of such an immoral opera. In the conclusion of the diatribe, moreover, the critic exclaims, switching from French to Latin: "O tempora! O mores! O beati Cineres Maria Theresia!"⁵⁵ This melodramatic reference to the ashes of the late empress obliquely suggests that the dissoluteness of theater became more intense under Joseph II and his administration.

In the letters from his travels in Italy in 1784, Joseph II discusses the libretti of operas he heard there—he even sent some of those libretti to Vienna, accompanied by his personal evaluations—but nowhere does he show much concern for moral issues.⁵⁶ The only instance when the emperor mentions censorship is in connection with the German translation of Beaumarchais's *Le Mariage de Figaro*: he points out that there are many offensive passages in the text, but he leaves it to the censor (Hägelin) to make the necessary corrections or prohibit the piece altogether.⁵⁷ According to Lorenzo Da Ponte, however, when it came to evaluating the appropriateness of Da Ponte's own Italian adaptation of the French play and Mozart's musical setting, it was the emperor himself who was the arbiter and let the adaptation pass.⁵⁸ As explained in Chapter 1, the emperor was also involved in evaluating the German repertoire of the National Theater in the early years of its existence, and often expressed quite prudish and moralistic views. But the moralistic "improvements" of the German works also came from other personnel, such as the board of directors and the censor. No such multi-level system of control is documented in connection to the Italian opera company. Moreover, one can imagine that the emperor was not as prudish in his approach to Italian librettos, since his Italian opera company was not considered a part of the German national theater tradition and therefore did not have to be judged according to the same strictly moralistic principles as the pieces presented by the German troupe. In other words, if the Da Ponte operas had been produced in Vienna as *Singspiele* during the composer's lifetime, they would have almost certainly not been admitted for performance alongside the German-language works presented at the court theater. This is in fact what happened elsewhere in the Empire during Mozart's lifetime: in the summer of 1791, Munich censors forbade a German version of *Don Giovanni*, purportedly (that is, according to the official report) due to Don Giovanni's attempted rape of Zerlina in the first-act finale. The same moment became problematic in Vienna as well, once *Don Giovanni* was produced as a *Singspiel* in 1798 (see Chapter 5).⁵⁹ Eberl's revisions of Martin's operas suggest, moreover, that even in the suburban theaters Mozart's Viennese Italian comic operas would have undergone a moralistic purge.

The 1786 purging of *Le nozze di Figaro* by Da Ponte represents a notable exception within the more flexible approaches to the moral content of Viennese Italian operas. As numerous commentators have noted, the Viennese Italian adaptation of the French original excises elements that would have been considered problematic from a moralistic point of view. Tim Carter observed that Da Ponte downplayed Beaumarchais's hints that the Countess is attracted to Cherubino and made Susanna less flirtatious in her interactions with the Count.⁶⁰ These

revisions are quite unusual considering the content of other Da Ponte operas, such as *L'ar bore di Diana*.⁶¹ Equally unusual is Da Ponte's self-conscious emphasis on these moralistic revisions in his memoirs; although Da Ponte's reminiscences were written long after the fact (he started to write them down in 1807), he recalls telling the emperor that he "omitted or cut anything that might offend the good taste and public decency at a performance over which the Sovereign Majesty might preside."⁶² A possible explanation for Da Ponte's careful treatment of the libretto might have to do with the notoriety of Beaumarchais's play and the censorial ban on the performance of the German translation at the Kärntnertheater—Da Ponte might have felt he needed to be extra careful with such a controversial subject.⁶³

There are hints, however, that even in the most risqué librettos Da Ponte and his composers were thinking about what were the acceptable limits of operatic decorum, because even in the absence of strict and organized censorship, morality was a powerful aspect of Viennese opera politics. Assessing *L'ar bore di Diana* in his memoirs, Da Ponte describes it as "voluptuous without overstepping into the lascivious."⁶⁴ Dorothea Link has explained Da Ponte's concept of the "voluptuous" in terms of teasing: Da Ponte "set up provocative situations but then refused to go beyond the limits dictated by his concept of good taste."⁶⁵ Similar provocative situations that tease but stay away from the "too explicit" occur in other Da Ponte librettos. Sometimes Da Ponte in fact seems to be executing a moralistic self-censorship, such as when he replaces the famous spicy line about the "devil's tale" from Despina's second-act aria "Una donna a quindici anni" in the second edition of *Così fan tutte*'s libretto (both editions were published in 1790).⁶⁶ Mozart and Da Ponte were also probably looking for ways to soften the risqué aspects of Despina's interactions with Don Alfonso: in the second edition of the text for Act I, scene 10, Despina says that "a man" ("un uomo") like Don Alfonso can do her no good, whereas in the first edition she referred to him as "an old man" ("un vecchio"); the whole passage, furthermore, was cut during early performances of the opera at the Burgtheater, possibly at Mozart's request.⁶⁷ Similarly, the interruption of Don Giovanni and Zerlina's tryst after the duet "La ci darem la mano" by Donna Elvira in the first act of *Don Giovanni* might be related to Da Ponte's interest in observing the unwritten Viennese rules of *opera buffa* decorum.⁶⁸ In the immediate source for the *Don Giovanni* libretto, Giovanni Bertati and Giuseppe Gazzaniga's 1787 opera *Don Giovanni, o sia Il convitato di pietra*, Don Giovanni seduces the peasant girl Maturina, she sings an aria, and the two depart for Maturina's house. By having Donna Elvira prevent the departure of Don Giovanni and Zerlina for a small garden house ("quel casinetto") in his 1787 libretto, Da Ponte seems to be following the specifically Viennese principle—later articulated and enforced in German works by the censor Hägelin—that no two lovers be allowed to depart the stage together for an enclosed space, since such a departure would prompt the spectators to imagine that they engage in sexual activity once off the stage.⁶⁹ That these concerns applied even to serious Italian opera becomes clear from a 1762 diary entry by Count Karl von Zinzendorf who feared the suggestive potential of the ending of the second act in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*: "at the end

of the second act Orfeo goes away with Euridice and the spectator does not know what they do together ... after they disappear from the stage."⁷⁰

One reason for Da Ponte's concern about the voluptuous turning into lasciviousness might have to do with the fact that accusations of immorality could become powerful weapons in the hands of Da Ponte's Viennese rivals. As Michtner has suggested, for example, the vituperative fulminations against *L'ar bore di Diana* in the "Letter by an Inhabitant of Vienna to His Friend in Prague" could have been part of a campaign to defame Da Ponte and Martin.⁷¹ Similar attacks against the "immorality" of Da Ponte's librettos in fact appear in the treatise *Der Anti Da Ponte*, published around the time of Da Ponte's dismissal from his post as the court poet.⁷² Complaints about "immorality" represented a common trope in criticism of theatrical productions in late eighteenth-century Vienna, and the distinction between what was considered moral and immoral was often highly subjective. The reviewer for the 1788 issue of the *Kritisches Theaterjournal von Wien*, for instance, claimed that Luisa Mombelli's Amor in the court theater production of *L'ar bore di Diana* was "grace personified."⁷³ The *Theaterjournal* critic's praise of Mombelli, however, was a part of his attack against the impersonator of Amor in the Leopoldstadt production of Eberl's German adaptation: in the critic's opinion the Leopoldstadt Amor was "a dissolute faun, who through his most insulting grimaces ... arouses disgust."⁷⁴ Not even Eberl's purge of Da Ponte's libretto for the Leopoldstädter Theater could save the German Amor from the righteous wrath of the *Theaterjournal* critic.

A righteous *opera buffa*?

As Edmund Goehring has explained, some of Da Ponte's librettos (such as *Don Giovanni*, and to a great extent *L'ar bore di Diana*) emphasize the cynical elements of eighteenth-century pastoral comedy, whereas others espouse more sentimental and nostalgic approaches (this was partially the case with *Le nozze di Figaro*).⁷⁵ The works closer to the sentimentalizing mode of pastoral comedy, Goehring continues, often incorporate "stern moral precepts," partially as a result of Carlo Goldoni's mid-eighteenth century reform of Italian comedy.⁷⁶ The virtuous principles associated with the reformed Italian comedy are reflected in another enormously popular opera by Da Ponte and Martin—the 1786 *Una cosa rara, ossia Bellezza ed Onestà* ("A Rare Thing, or Beauty and Virtue"). The opera avoids the risqué elements that dominate *L'ar bore di Diana*: the plot focuses on an exemplary tale of Lilla, a virtuous maiden who overcomes the wooing of a prince, the intrigues and an abduction attempt of an elderly courtier, and the jealous accusations of her beloved, Lubino. Lilla therefore incorporates the aphoristic and idealistic message of the opera's title: although rarely, in some cases inner virtue does coincide with outer beauty. To some extent, the plot of *Una cosa rara* negates the message of *Così*—female virtue and fidelity *do* exist, as Gieseke would claim in his *Es gibt doch noch treue Weiber!* a few years later.

Yet, although it is based on "instructive" premises, the text and music of *Una cosa rara* focus much more on paying homage to Queen Isabella than on emphasizing Lilla's virtuous behavior. In the opening chorus, for instance, it is the Queen

(not Lilla) who is associated with the crucial qualities of honesty and beauty advertised in the opera's title.⁷⁷

Salva, salva, o Dea de' Boschi, Save her, save her, o Goddess of the woods,
Lo splendor della Castiglia, The splendor of Castile,
Salva lei, che a te somiglia Save her because she resembles you
In bellezza, ed onestà. In beauty and honesty.

The opera's conclusion also remains strangely unreflective of Lilla's virtue, focusing once again on paying homage to the Queen. This stress on royal figures and acts of clemency as opposed to the virtuous servant characters was typical for Viennese court operas from the mid-eighteenth century (see Chapter 2). But the National Singspiel operas, such as *Die Entführung*, began to combine celebrations of absolutist rulers with promotions of various types of virtuous behavior applicable to lower classes as well. Da Ponte's libretto is devoid of any such non-absolutist didactic impulses. *Una cosa rara's* curious (from the German theater's point of view) lack of emphasis on the peasant maiden's virtue thus to some extent illustrates Mary Hunter's observation that *opera buffa* "refers to but does not signify or embody" bourgeois values, such as fidelity.⁷⁸ The authors of *Una cosa rara*, in other words, merely hinted at the issue of constancy but did not explicitly preach about it, and even obfuscated the issue's significance. Even one of the most explicitly righteous *opere buffe* produced in Josephine Vienna therefore confirms the Italian genre's subtly titillating and slightly ambiguous approach to moral education.

The standards of decorum in *Una cosa rara* were also perceived as contrasting with those typical for contemporary Viennese German theater. A particularly "improper" part of the opera was the duet "Pace caro mio sposo" that the main couple Lilla and Lubino sings towards the end of the second act. Several contemporaneous commentators viewed the duet as potentially subversive. In two diary entries from December 1786 and January 1787, Zinzendorf noted how the repeated performances of the duet started to trouble him because "it [was] very voluptuous" and "pose[d] danger to the young members of the audience."⁷⁹ Zinzendorf must have been particularly concerned about the image of dying in each other's breasts in the duet's refrain, a moment that Johann Pezzl also singled out as particularly lecherous, most likely picking up on the metaphorical meaning of death as sexual climax.⁸⁰ Eberl's German adaptation of *Una cosa rara* (produced at the Leopoldstädter Theater in 1787 under the title *Der seltene Fall, oder Die Schönheit und Tugend*) attempted to diminish the duet's suggestiveness by transforming the idea of dying in a lover's arms into an image of eternal love that stretches beyond the grave.⁸¹

Italian refrain

Vieni tra i lacci Come into my arms
miei
Stringi mio caro Embrace me, my dear
ben, dear

Eberl's revision

Laß an den Busen Let me press myself
mich drücken,
Dir, Liebe, dir nur To your breast,
allein. my only love.

L'anima mia You are my soul Stets mit dem Always with the
tu sei. wärmsten warmest delight,
Entzücken,
Ti vo morir I want to die in Selbst noch im Even in death.
nel sen. your breast Sterben wird
seyn!

The nonsensical grammar and syntax in the translation hints at the unease with which Eberl approached the troublesome passage. Many other revisions by Eberl occur in passages that the censors and other theatrical personnel would have considered morally subversive had the opera been adapted for the National Theater.⁸² Thus even a righteous *opera buffa* was deemed too risqué for Viennese German stages of the 1780s.⁸³

Eberl's transformation of Lilla and Lubino's duet to some extent grows out of the procedures commonly undertaken by the associates of the National Singspiel. In the third act of *Die Entführung*, for example, Belmonte and Konstanze sing a duet in which they bid each other farewell before their presumed death. Stephanie and Mozart based the duet on Bretzner's Berlin text, but imported a prominent didactic element. The ending of Bretzner's duet was filled with sentimental outpourings:

Constanze: O wie selig! What bliss!
Belmont: Belmont:
O wie glücklich! What happiness!
Constanze: Constanze:
Mein Geliebter! My beloved!
Belmont: Belmont:
Ach, Geliebte! Ah, love!
Beide: Both:
Lächelnd sink' ich in das Grab! I sink into the grave with a smile!

In the Viennese rendition, by contrast, the two lovers acquire a philosophizing streak and turn away from emotional pathos towards a self-sacrificial sermon, accompanied by a switch from the first-person singular to the third-person indefinite point of view:

Mit der/dem Geliebten sterben To die with one's beloved,
Ist seliges Entzücken! Is a pleasure!
Mit wonnevollen Blicken With blissful glances
Verläßt man da die Welt. One takes leave from the world.

Mozart prompts the audience to pay special attention to the duet's final directive with his customary tools: a grand pause and a radical shift to a subdued, elevated style (Example 3.8).⁸⁴

→ FINAL, MAXIM

K. Mit dem Ge-lieb-ten ster - ben, ist se - li - ges Ent - zü - eken, mit wem - ne vul - len

B. Mit dem Ge-lieb-ten ster - ben, ist se - li - ges Ent - zü - eken, mit wem - ne vul - len

MAXIM
← ENDS

K. Blicken ver-läßt man da die Welt, ver - läßt man, ver - läßt man da die Welt!

B. Blicken ver-läßt man da die Welt, ver - läßt man, ver - läßt man da die Welt!

K. o wel-cher Se-ig-keit, o wel-cher Se-ig-keit, o wel-cher Se-ig-keit, o wel-cher Se-ig-keit

B. o wel-cher Se-ig-keit, o wel-cher Se-ig-keit, o wel-cher Se-ig-keit, o wel-cher Se-ig-keit

Example 3.8 (Continued)

K. Mit dem Ge-lieb-ten ster - ben, ist se - li - ges Ent - zü - eken, mit wem - ne vul - len

B. Mit dem Ge-lieb-ten ster - ben, ist se - li - ges Ent - zü - eken, mit wem - ne vul - len

→ FINAL MAXIM REPEATED

K. Mit dem Ge-lieb-ten ster - ben, ist se - li - ges Ent - zü - eken, mit wem - ne vul - len

B. Mit dem Ge-lieb-ten ster - ben, ist se - li - ges Ent - zü - eken, mit wem - ne vul - len

K. Blicken ver-läßt man da die Welt, ver - läßt man, ver - läßt man da die Welt, ver - läßt man, ver - läßt man da die Welt, ver - läßt man, ver - läßt man da die Welt!

B. Blicken ver-läßt man da die Welt, ver - läßt man, ver - läßt man da die Welt, ver - läßt man, ver - läßt man da die Welt, ver - läßt man, ver - läßt man da die Welt!

Example 3.8 (Continued)

The librettos produced by the so-called German *Opéra comique* but based on pre-existing foreign works illustrate that the supervision over theatrical content was as rigorous in 1785–88 as in the National Singspiel period (1778–83). In his 1787 reworking of Bretzner's 1779 *Das wütende Heer*, for instance, Stephanie the Younger attempted to improve the moral import of the original libretto by cutting suggestive content and adding maxims, just as he had in the times of the National Singspiel.⁸⁶ The composers writing original works for the *Opéra comique*, moreover, continued to engage the musical tropes of didacticism developed during the National Singspiel period. In the extremely popular 1786 *Betrug durch Aberglauben*, for instance, Ferdinand Eberl (who was soon to adapt Martin's operas for the Leopoldstädter Theater) and his collaborator Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf expressed their didactic zeal in several multi-sectional ensembles, such as the first-act quartet. The opera's principal character, Baron von Lindburg, wants to send his daughter (Luise) to a convent, but Count Walldorf wants to elope with her. Although Luise is in love with Walldorf, she firmly rejects the elopement out of respect for her filial duties. Dittersdorf and Eberl expanded the debate about parental obedience among Luise, Walldorf, his servant Wilhelm, and Luise's maid Friederike into a multi-sectional ensemble. Throughout the ensemble Dittersdorf underlines instructive statements, just as Mozart had in *Die Entführung* (see Table 3.2). At the beginning, Luise's statement about her love for Walldorf is set in a pair of parallel phrases in G major, but the second and third lines (expressing Luise's dutiful rejection of the proposed elopement) unexpectedly (and somewhat prematurely) shift to the dominant. In the latter part of the quartet's opening section, the tonic returns only in moments when Luise talks about her resolution to be unhappy in love rather than deceive her father—the attempts by the remaining characters to persuade her otherwise occur in other keys. At a later point, Wilhelm praises Luise's obedience and honesty ("Gott erhalte ..."), and his eulogy is made to coincide with the beginning of the finale's second section—marked by a sudden shift in tempo (*Allegro to Andante*), meter (3/4 to 2/4), and key (G major to C major).

Dittersdorf explored similar issues at the beginning of the first-act finale of his 1786 *Der Apotheker und der Doktor*. Here, too, Gotthold tries to persuade his beloved Leonore (whom her parents wish to marry an old, disabled war veteran, Sturmwald) to elope. Leonore refuses at first with a generalized question: "Wer meidet wohl der Liebe wegen / Der Eltern Haus und ihren Segen?" ("Who would for love forsake / The parents' house and their blessing?").⁸⁷ Dittersdorf separates the question from the preceding speeches by tonicizing the dominant of the dominant (F major). Leonore is eventually persuaded to flee with Gotthold and announces her resolution in the tonic key of E-flat major. The reason why Leonore lets herself be persuaded where Luise does not might have to do with the fact that before the finale begins, Gotthold specifically promises he is going to marry her and shows her a contract listing his obligations towards her.

The court-theater works of Dittersdorf, Eberl, Stephanie, and others from the late 1780s show that the moralistic ideals of the National Singspiel influenced the content of Viennese German-language operas even after that company's premature demise in 1783. These works and their didactic orientation must have also been on the minds of Mozart and Schikaneder during their collaboration on *Die*

Table 3.2 *Betrug durch Aberglauben*, first-act quartet, opening two sections

Allegro non troppo, Presto	
3/4	
G major	
G major	LUISE
D major	LUISE
A major	LUISE
D major	LUISE
C major	LUISE
G major	LUISE
A major	LUISE
F major	LUISE
G major	LUISE

G major	LUISE	I love you with all my heart; But to take lightly my filial duty, Has no one taught me.
D major	LUISE	Could you calm down a little And accept my/his proposal?
A major	LUISE	This is unheard of!— Oh, what a superb creature!
D major	LUISE	Women have their minds This particular one has the whim, To be completely virtuous.
C major	LUISE	No, really I have to admit freely I have never seen something like that (<i>to the lady</i>) please think it over.
G major	LUISE	Think about your father! That is why I don't want to hurt him.
A major	LUISE	You are not breaking any duties. I will not flee— And you love me?
F major	LUISE	Yes!—I love you!— Is there a lover in the world, Who would not want to be happy? If your happiness depended on it I would gladly sacrifice my life. But the sacred filial duty Luise will never break.—
G major	LUISE	Her virtue astonishes me! (<i>Continued</i>)

Allegro non troppo, Presto		
3/4		
G major		
G major	LUISE	I love you with all my heart; But to take lightly my filial duty, Has no one taught me.
D major	LUISE	Could you calm down a little And accept my/his proposal?
A major	LUISE	This is unheard of!— Oh, what a superb creature!
D major	LUISE	Women have their minds This particular one has the whim, To be completely virtuous.
C major	LUISE	No, really I have to admit freely I have never seen something like that (<i>to the lady</i>) please think it over.
G major	LUISE	Think about your father! That is why I don't want to hurt him.
A major	LUISE	You are not breaking any duties. I will not flee— And you love me?
F major	LUISE	Yes!—I love you!— Is there a lover in the world, Who would not want to be happy? If your happiness depended on it I would gladly sacrifice my life. But the sacred filial duty Luise will never break.—
G major	LUISE	Her virtue astonishes me! (<i>Continued</i>)

Andante
2/4
C major

C major	WILLHELM Gott erhalte diese Launen Und sie halte einst als Frau Treu und Pflicht auch so genau! WALLDORF	God protect a mind like this And may she as a wife Keep the same honesty and fidelity. You say you don't want to hurt your father with the elopement, But I hope you won't think twice, Which will make you my wife.
F major	Sie sollen ihren Väter nicht durch Fleihen kränken, Doch Sie werden, hof ich, sich nicht lang bedenken, Schlag ich ein ander Mittel ein, Zum Lohne meine Frau zu sein. LUISE (<i>zärtlich</i>)	If you suggest another solution, I will be gladly yours.
C major	FRJEDERIKE, WILLHELM Welch ander Mittel fällt ihm ein, Daß er wohl könnte Sieger sein? ALLE	What solution will he think of, So that he can win her?
D major	Still! Still! Ich höre kommen Nun Frisch! Reißaus genommen.	Quiet! Quiet! Someone's coming Quickly now! Let's resolve this.

Zauberflöte. In the handwritten list of his compositions, Mozart described *Die Zauberflöte* as a “teutsche Oper,” an unusual designation since the titles of most other contemporaneous Viennese operas referred to the works’ dramaturgical features, not their language or national character: *Una cosa rara* was referred to as a *dramma giocoso* (in the 1786 Italian print of the libretto), a *Iustiges Singspiel* (in the 1787 German translation of that libretto), and a *kömisches Singspiel* (in Eberl’s 1789 German adaptation for the Leopoldstädter Theater); similarly, Dittersdorf’s *Betrug durch Aberglauben* was subtitled *Iustiges Singspiel*. In the same handwritten list, Mozart called all three “Da Ponte” operas “opera buffa,” once again preferring the generic title. In his idiosyncratic description of *Die Zauberflöte* as a “teutsche Oper” Mozart might have simply referred to the language of his work—marking its difference from his Italian *opere buffe* written in the previous years. Yet, the resonance between *Die Zauberflöte* and the moralistic concepts of German national theater and the different treatment of morality in Mozart’s *Singspiele* and *opere buffe* suggest that the description has a more symbolic meaning—that *Die Zauberflöte* and its moralistic features represent Mozart’s musico-dramatic incarnation of Germanness.

Notes

- 1 The similarities between *Die Zauberflöte*’s and *Die Entführung*’s didacticism have previously been discussed in Bauman, *W. A. Mozart: Die Entführung*, 97; Kunze, 221; and Julian Rushton, *Mozart* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 224–225.
- 2 For my discussions of *Die Zauberflöte*’s text, I use the version that appears in Mozart’s autograph score and also in the first edition of the libretto.

- 3 Mozart employs similar techniques in aphoristic moments of his other operas, for example, in *Così fan tutte* at the end of the first stanza in “E la fede delle femine” (in the line “Nessun lo sa”) and at the end of “Tutti accusan le donne” (in the line “Così fan tutte”) and in *Don Giovanni* at the end of Leporello’s “Catalogue” aria (“Voi sapete quel che fa”). In all of these aphorisms, Mozart leaves rests in between individual syllables, making it sound as if the narrators were dictating to their interlocutors word by word. On the rhetorical and poetic aspects specifically of Don Alfonso’s aphorisms in *Così fan tutte*, see Edmund J. Goehring, *Three Modes of Perception in Mozart: The Philosophical, Pastoral, and Comic in Così fan tutte* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 109.
- 4 Mozart’s harmony intensifies the negativity of the phrase about hate by shifting, with the help of a French augmented-sixth, from F major to G minor—a tonal center that is associated with disagreeable actions later in the opera, such as during Pamina’s and Papageno’s suicide scenes in the second-act. Erik Smith calls G minor *Die Zauberflöte*’s “key of suffering.” Erik Smith, “The Music,” in Peter Branscombe, *W. A. Mozart: Die Zauberflöte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 130.
- 5 The nineteenth-century interpretations are explained in Emil Karl Blüml, “Ausdeutungen der *Zauberflöte*,” *Mozart-Jahrbuch* 1 (1923): 128ff. The most widespread twentieth-century Masonic exegesis is in Jacques Chailley, *The Magic Flute, Masonic Opera: An Interpretation of the Libretto and the Music*, trans. Herbert Weinstock (New York: Knopf, 1971). The discussion of morals is found especially in pp. 198 ff. The most recent Masonic look at *Die Zauberflöte* is Jan Assmann’s *Die Zauberflöte: Oper und Mysterium* (Vienna: Hanser, 2005).
- 6 According to David Buch, the interpretations that proliferated the most in the twentieth century were “Rosicrucian mysticism, alchemy, numerology, Gnosticism, or even a fully worked-out numerical code of hidden messages based on Cabalistic gematria.” David Buch, “*Die Zauberflöte*, Masonic Opera, and Other Fairy Tales,” *Acta Musicologica* 76, no. 2 (2004): 201.
- 7 According to the Schikaneder biographer Kurt Honolka, wise teachings in verse never appealed to Mozart. Kurt Honolka, *Papageno: Emanuel Schikaneder, Man of the Theater in Mozart’s Time*, trans. Jane Mary Wilde (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1984), 126. More recently, Claudia Maurer Zenck thought that Mozart “travestied” Schikaneder’s maxims with “scorching irony,” and that he obviously “did not think much” of them. Claudia Maurer Zenck, “Einige ungewohnte Bemerkungen über die *Zauberflöte* oder: Pamina waltzt, Tamino sitzt im Wirtshaus,” *Die Musikforschung* 57 (2004): 55.
- 8 Hermann Abert saw the didactic features of both *Die Zauberflöte* and *Die Entführung* as mystical and growing out of Mozart’s unique (Germanic) genius. About the A-major *Andantino* maxim in the second-act finale of *Die Entführung* (see Chapter 2), Abert wrote, for example: “Here the tone associated with the popular singspiel is supremely transfigured in a way that we shall not find again until *Die Zauberflöte*.” Hermann Abert, *W. A. Mozart*, trans. Stewart Spencer, ed. Cliff Eisen (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 680.
- 9 Assmann, 65–66; Nicholas Till, *Mozart and the Enlightenment: Truth, Virtue, and Beauty in Mozart’s Operas* (New York: Norton, 1995), 306.
- 10 For a list of the textual differences between the libretto and the autograph score see Peter Branscombe, “*Die Zauberflöte*: Some Textual and Interpretative Problems,” *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 92 (1966): 45–63.
- 11 Assmann, 139.
- 12 A specific extant example of a passage in another Mozart work to which the censor Hägelin did make corrections although he could have easily crossed it out completely is the end of the conversation between Zerlina and Don Juan (that precedes the duet “Là ci darem la mano”) in the 1798 *Singspiel* adaptation of *Don Giovanni* for the Vienna court theater. In Zerlina’s sentence “Wenn nur die vornehmen Herrn, bessere Absichten hätten” (“If only the distinguished gentlemen had more respectable intentions”), Hägelin changes “vornehmen Herrn” into “solchen Herrn wie Sie sind” (“such gentlemen as yourself”). In Don Juan’s sarcastic response “So lange ein vornehmer Herr liebt, hat er auch gute Absichten” (“As long as a distinguished gentleman is in love, he has nothing but

- respectable intentions"), Hägelin replaces the same phrase with "Herr meines gleichen" ("a man like me").
- 13 This would also suggest that the censored libretto of *Die Zauberflöte* was published before Mozart finished his musical setting. This was not unusual for Mozart, as illustrated by the incomplete Vienna print of the libretto for *Don Giovanni* from 1787 and the first edition of the *Così fan tutte* libretto (which contains passages that were left out from Mozart's setting).
- 14 Waldoff, 36. The key of C major is presented already a few measures earlier, during the brief intrusion of the chorus celebrating Sarastro (mm. 351–354), and Pamina's appropriation of that key in her exemplary statement aligns her with Sarastro's moral authority, which becomes established later in the opera.
- 15 See Alexander Oulibicheff, *Mozarts Opern: Kritische Erläuterungen*, trans. C. Kossmaly (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1848), 291.
- 16 See Claudia Maurer-Zenck, "Einige ungewohnte Bemerkungen," and "German Opera from Reinhard Keiser to Peter Winter," in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Music*, ed. Simon P. Keefe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 347. For a discussion of potential irony in the "padlock" maxim, see also Wilaschek, 322. In English-language scholarship see Edward Dent, *Mozart's Operas: A Critical Study*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 219. Dent views Schikaneder's libretto as "one of the most absurd specimens of that form of literature in which absurdity is regarded as a matter of course."
- 17 Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, 21.
- 18 Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, 21.
- 19 Several of these maxims are listed in Maurer Zenck, "Einige ungewohnte Bemerkungen," 48. On 8/1/1787, for example, Mozart wrote into the album of Edmund Weber the exhortation "seyen sie fleissig—fliehen sie den Müßiggang," which prefigures Tamino's observation in *Die Zauberflöte*'s first-act finale "wo Thätigkeit thronet und Müßiggang weicht, erhält seine Herrschaft das Laster nicht leicht." Mozart's setting emphasizes that maxim by briefly switching from accompanied recitative into arioso during the passage (mm. 50–56).
- 20 See Lucia Dacome, "Noting the Mind: Commonplace Books and the Pursuit of the Self in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 65, no. 4 (October 2004): 603–625.
- 21 "Coquetterie, du schlimme Tochter der Eitelkeit, du Modeübel unsrer Huldgöttinnen! Hey!, und Segen dem Arzte, der es versucht, die Luft zu reinigen, die du vergriffest! wie viele rechtschaffene Ehemänner, wie viele empfindsame Jünglinge werden dem Verfasser diesen Glückwunsch mit mir einstimmig zuzufeln! So viel gebührt [dem Dichter] als Sittenlehrer." Susanne Hochstötter cites this as originating in *Almanach der deutschen Museen auf das Jahr 1777* in her "Gottlieb Stephanie der Jüngere: Schauspieler, Dramaturg und Dramatiker (1741–1800)," *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für Theaterforschung* 12 (1960), 64. The sentence, however, does not occur in that volume, and Hochstötter must have been copied it from somewhere else.
- 22 Particularly prominent in this respect are the statements in the first-act finale by the Priest to Tamino that "ein Weib thut wenig, plaudert viel," and by Sarastro to Pamina that "ein Mann muss eure Herzen leiten."
- 23 John Arthur explained that due to Georg Nikolaus Nissen's cuts in Mozart's letter, the identity of the unspecified visitor remains unclear, though the opera box where the encounter occurred might have belonged to the tenor Valentin Adamberger. John Arthur, "'N.N.' Revisited: New Light on Mozart's Late Correspondence," in *Haydn, Mozart, & Beethoven: Studies in the Music of the Classical Period. Essays in Honor of Alan Tyson*, ed. Sieghard Brandenburg (New York: Clarendon Press, 1998), 144–145.
- 24 Jessica Waldoff views *Die Zauberflöte*'s didactic elements as connected to the Aristotelian concept of recognition, an ability of a theatrical work to create an experience of moral, philosophical, and emotional understanding both for the on-stage characters and for the audience in the theater. Waldoff singles out the passage in the same
- letter by Mozart where he talks about the pleasure he derived from the audience's "silent approval" during *Die Zauberflöte*'s performances as signifying his inadvertent acknowledgement of the importance of "recognition." Waldoff, 310–311. But Mozart's idea of "silent approval" also resonates with Lessing's appraisal of the Hamburg audience's quiet "murmur" during the presentations of maxims.
- 25 According to Heinz Kindermann, even those passages from late eighteenth-century plays produced at the National Theater that seem banal to latter-day observers were taken extremely seriously among the German-speaking theater critics, literate theatergoers, and actors in Vienna of the 1780s and early 1790s. See Heinz Kindermann, "Das Publikum und die Schauspielerrepublik," 102.
- 26 The Theatersammlung of the Austrian National Library owns a copy of the play—shelfmark 626070-A. The.
- 27 Gieseke, 190.
- 28 Eva Gesine Baur presents this possibility as a fact but does not cite her sources. See Eva Gesine Baur, *Emanuel Schikaneder: Der Mann für Mozart* (München: Beck, 2012), 184. I was unable to find out when and where Gieseke's play was produced for the first time. The fact that it was published in Vienna in 1790 and Gieseke's authorship point to Wiednertheater. The play also contains numerous references to Martín y Soler's opera *Una cosa rara* (premiered in Burgtheater in 1786), which also points to the year 1790 when Schikaneder's theater produced a sequel to Martín's play, titled *Der Fall ist noch weit seltnere, oder Die geplagten Ehemänner*. Gieseke's play was performed in Linz in November of 1795—see Konrad Schiffmann, *Drama und Theater in Österreich ob der Enns bis zum Jahre 1803* (Linz: Museum Francisco-Carolinum, 1905), 213.
- 29 Bruce Alan Brown, *W. A. Mozart: Così fan tutte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 114.
- 30 Brown, *W. A. Mozart: Così fan tutte*, 114.
- 31 Allanbrook has suggested that the maxims concluding many *opere buffe* are meaningless and platitudinous because their function is not necessarily to deliver a simple and clear message but to bring about a ritualistic conclusion that would overpower the oft uneasy resolution of the comic plot. See Wye Jamison Allanbrook, *The Secular Commedia: Comic Mimesis in Late Eighteenth-Century Music* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014), 133–139.
- 32 Goehring, 98.
- 33 Goehring reviews the different conceptualizations of laughter in the eighteenth century in *Three Modes of Perception in Mozart*, 268–270.
- 34 See Brown's discussion of Mozart's treatment of this theme in *Die Entführung, Le Nozze di Figaro, Così* and other Viennese operas of the time. Brown, *W. A. Mozart: Così fan tutte*, 3–7.
- 35 Kunze, *Mozarts Opern*, 454.
- 36 Goehring sees the correction of the soldiers' delusional, unrealistic expectation as the main message of the opera as well. Yet he does not explain why this message does not receive more emphasis from Mozart. See Goehring, 56–57, 100, and 273.
- 37 Many recent productions have brought out the ironies of the opera's ending. In John Eliot Gardiner's 1992 production of the opera for the Théâtre du Châtelet, for example, the original couples start singing the final maxim facing each other, while Fiordiligi and Ferrando hold hands behind their backs.
- 38 For a more detailed discussion of moral ambiguity in earlier *opere buffe* by Mozart, see Edmund J. Goehring, "The Opere Buffe," in *The Cambridge Companion to Mozart*, ed. Simon B. Keefe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 131–146. Goehring's view that in *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte* "Mozart does not overreach by reducing ambiguity to moral platitudes" and that "rather than systematize [i.e., moralize], [Mozart] merely observes" applies well to the lack of explicit didacticism in *Così*'s second-act finale. See Goehring, "The Opere Buffe," 145.
- 39 The message is similar to the call presented in *Die Entführung*'s third-act vaudeville to "view with contempt" anyone who does not appreciate Pasha Selim's merciful decision

- to pardon his European captives. As Chapter 2 has shown, Mozart subtly undermines that exhortation, as he does the vengeful maxim at the end of *Don Giovanni*.
- 40 Wye Jamison Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: Le nozze di Figaro and Don Giovanni* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 323.
- 41 Many commentators, moreover, have viewed Marcellina's aria as inferior and added only to give the performers of the role a number of their own. See Dent, *Mozart's Operas*, 110 and Daniel Heartz and Thomas Bauman, *Mozart's Operas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 150. Allanbrook has argued against this view, claiming that the aria is "crucial to the theme of feminine friendship" and helps enforce the transformation of Marcellina into the opera's quasi-heroine in the fourth act. Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 160.
- 42 Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 165–167.
- 43 Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 125.
- 44 Mary Hunter, *The Culture of Opera Buffa*, 4–9.
- 45 According to Da Ponte, moreover, the destruction of Diana's tree, the safeguard of chastity, represented a political allusion to Joseph II's abolition of monasteries. The emperor supposedly caught the allusion and rewarded Da Ponte with money. Lorenzo Da Ponte, *Memoires of Lorenzo Da Ponte*, trans. Elisabeth Abbott, ed. Arthur Livingston (New York: Dover, 1967), 157–158. Politically allusive plots were much more problematic in German theater, as suggested by the episode "in 1779 when the National Theater directors rejected Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter's tragedy 'Marianne' because it contained passages that supposedly could have been interpreted as anti-clerical." See Teuber, 42.
- 46 *L'arboré di Diana* (Vienna: Kurzbek, [1787]), 27.
- 47 As Dorothea Link has pointed out, the roles in which a woman plays a man who disguises as a woman are common both in *commedia dell'arte* and in Italian comic opera. Link, *National Court Theater*, 105. Another famous case of multiple cross-dressing occurs in *Le nozze di Figaro*. But in that opera, Cherubino merely poses as a girl and flirts only with women—not with men. These types of cross-dressing roles, moreover, were not common in Viennese German operas performed at the court theater in the final decades of the eighteenth century.
- 48 Transcribed in Michtner, 435–439.
- 49 Michtner, 436. "D'abord, l'Amour paraît en homme, avec un buste ou corpe de femme, la gorge nue, et comme c'est une femme qui joue ce rôle, on lui voit une paire de tetons decouverts jusqu'aux mamelles."
- 50 See Rudolf Angermüller, *Wenzel Müller und "sein" Leopoldstädter Theater: Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Tagebücher Wenzel Müllers* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2010), 36.
- 51 *Etwas für Alle: Über die Aufführung des Baums der Diana, in dem marinellischen Schauspielhause in der Leopoldstadt* ([Vienna]: 1788), 10. "... die Göttin der Liebe ... sandte ... Amorn, (der hier als ein Mädchen erscheint) Dianen zu besiegen, und dieser schlauer Gott fengt das Ding damit an, daß sie sich zuerst selbst einen hübschen Jungen freite."
- 52 *Baum der Diana* (Vienna: Theater in der Leopoldstadt, 1788), 13–14 and 85.
- 53 The materials documenting censorship of non-German works after the instituting of the German theater censor in 1770 are sparse. A special censor was responsible for the French plays and Italian operas, but little is known about his activities. At first, the office was held by Johann Theodor von Gontier, who was removed in October 1770 and replaced by August von Wober. See Zechmeister, 50; and Brosche, 132. On the lack of documentation accounting for the operation of *opera buffa* in the 1780s, see Link, *National Court Theater*, 484–485.
- 54 Derek Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 465–469.
- 55 Cited in Michtner, 439.
- 56 See Rudolf Payer von Thurn, ed., *Josef II. als Theaterdirektor: Ungedruckte Briefe und Aktenstücke aus den Kinderjahren des Burgtheaters* (Vienna: Heidrich, 1920), 44, 47, 48.
- 57 Letter to Count Perglen from January 31, 1785, in von Thurn, 60.
- 58 *Memoires of Lorenzo Da Ponte*, 151.
- 59 Hans Weidinger, "Il dissoluto punito: Untersuchungen zur äußeren und inneren Entstehungsgeschichte von Lorenzo da Ponte und Wolfgang Amadeus Mozarts Don Giovanni," (Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 2002), 832–833.
- 60 Tim Carter, *W. A. Mozart: Le nozze di Figaro* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 41 and 47. Daniel Heartz also claims that the countess's two arias help to transform her "into a model wife, a nearly saintly tower of constancy." Heartz, "Mozart's Operas," 110.
- 61 Numerous elements in *Don Giovanni*, furthermore, would have contradicted censorial and editorial principles applied to German works during the National Theater throughout the 1780s. Weidinger has pointed out some of these: attempted rape, hedonism, adultery, the willingness of female characters to engage in sexual relations with men outside of marriage, celebrations of orgiastic excess, hints at sexual acts that occur behind the scene, and the generalized criticism of nobility. Weidinger, 876.
- 62 *Memoires of Lorenzo Da Ponte*, 129–130.
- 63 Daniel Heartz notes that the treatment of morality in Beaumarchais's play was offensive to both the French conservatives and the liberals, as well as to certain members of more tolerant London audiences. Heartz, "Mozart's Operas," 131.
- 64 *Memoires of Lorenzo Da Ponte*, 158.
- 65 Dorothea Link, "The Da Ponte Operas of Vincente Martín y Soler," (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1991), 108.
- 66 The new, purged text ("Quel che il cor più brame e loda") did not make it into the autograph or conducting scores of the opera. See Ian Woodfield, *Mozart's Così fan tutte: A Compositional History* (Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2008), 96; and Brown, *W. A. Mozart: Così fan tutte*, 23. Brown proposes that the change was executed at the censor's request, but that seems uncertain due to the loose censorship of *opera buffa* in Mozart's Vienna.
- 67 Brown once again attributed the change to the censor. Brown, *W. A. Mozart: Così fan tutte*, 22–23. But Woodfield explained that the spicy banter between Don Alfonso and the maid was mainly problematic because the two roles were performed by an age-mismatched married couple—Dorothea and Francesco Bussani. Woodfield, 96–97. Woodfield also found traces of Mozart and Da Ponte altering the opera's plot so that the new couples of the second act would no longer be mismatched—i.e., that Fiordiligi would be seduced by the disguised Guglielmo and Dorabella by Ferrando. Woodfield, however, does not see this issue as being necessarily driven by worries about supposed immorality but rather concerns about creating an effective drama. Woodfield, 91–150.
- 68 Don Giovanni was originally produced in Prague, but it was supposed to be premiered to celebrate the visit of Joseph II's niece Maria Theresa of Austria with her husband Prince Anthony of Saxony to the Bohemian capital. Some scholars have suggested that the connection to the Habsburg dynastic politics was more significant in shaping the content of the opera than the commonly accepted account of *Don Giovanni* as a commercial venture by the Prague Italian company of Pasquale Bondini. See Weidinger, 798–812. Moreover, although they first produced *Don Giovanni* in Prague, Mozart and Da Ponte must have also planned for a timely production of the opera in Vienna.
- 69 De Alwis has explained, "enclosed spaces in which couples can hide [and engage in sexual activity] seem to be one of Hägelin's particular concerns." De Alwis, diss., 99.
- 70 Cited in Brown, *Gluck and the French Theater*, 105.
- 71 See Michtner, 241.
- 72 See Lisa de Alwis's English translation of the treatise in *Newsletter of the Mozart Society of America* 12, nos. 1–2 (January and August 2008), 7–15 and 4–12, and 13, no. 1 (January 2009), 1, 4–13. The anonymous author, for example, has the Leopoldstadt Kasperl accuse Da Ponte of plagiarizing crass jokes from the Leopoldstadt works; Kasperl also calls for stricter control of the content of Italian operas performed at the court theater; the imaginary Da Ponte acknowledges on several occasions that he allowed double entendres into his librettos.
- 73 *Kritisches Theaterjournal von Wien* 12 (January 22, 1789), 264.

74 *Kritisches Theaterjournal*, 264–265. “... ein liebender Faun, der durch die widrigsten Grimassen die Grazie durch frosterweckendes Zänbleken, das Lächeln ersetzen will.—Ein Amor, der, wenn er eine Empfindung erregt, gewiß nur das Gefühl des Abscheues erwecken kann.”

75 Goehring, 143–144.

76 Goehring, 145 and 209.

77 *Una cosa rara* (Vienna, Kurzbek, 1786), 3.

78 Mary Hunter, “Bourgeois Values and Opera Buffa in 1780s Vienna,” in *Opera Buffa in Mozart’s Vienna*, ed. Mary Hunter and James Webster (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 185.

79 Link, “The Da Ponte Operas,” 39.

80 See Goehring, 159 and Johann Peztl, *Skizze von Wien*, ed. Gustav Gugitz and Anton Schlossar (Graz: Leykam, 1923), 319.

81 For basic information about the adaptation, see Angermüller, 47. See also *Una cosa rara* (Vienna: Kurzbek, 1786), 75; and *Der seltene Fall oder: Schönheit und Tugend* (Vienna: Wallishauser, 1789), 91–92.

82 For example, at the beginning of the second-act sextet where Lilla and her friend Ghita mistake the courtier Corrado and the prince for their husbands because of darkness, Eberl deleted the stage directions that ask the two “adulterous” couples to embrace. Eberl also rewrites those passages where various characters accuse women of lacking constancy. From Corrado’s monologue in Act II, scene 5, for instance, Eberl deleted the passage where Corrado imagines that Lilla will become his lover once she has fallen for the prince because women become more yielding after “the first fall.”

83 On May 10, 1790, Schikaneder and Benedikt Schack produced a sequel to *Una cosa rara*, titled *Der Fall ist noch seltnere, oder Die geplagten Ehemänner* (“The Case Is Far Rarer, or The Troubled Husbands”). The work partially abandoned the restraint with which Eberl approached Da Ponte’s libretto. In Schack’s opera Lilla and Ghita flirt with the mayor (whom they firmly rejected in the earlier work) and let themselves be persuaded to kiss him; the sequel also features a love duet in which Lilla and Lubino openly discuss procreation, in the manner of Papageno and Papagena in the *Die Zauberflöte*. See Katharina Löthe, “Die geplagten Ehemänner: Benedikt Schacks und Emanuel Schikaneders Singspiel und Ehe auf der Bühne des Hamburgs Theaters im ausgehenden 18. Jahrhundert,” in *Musiktheater in Hamburg um 1800*, ed. Claudia Maurer Zenck (New York: Lang, 2005), 183 and 187. The looser approach to infidelity in the sequel is indicative of the loosening state supervision over suburban theater in the 1790s (see Chapter 4).

84 The section immediately preceding the maxim ends with an extended melisma (on the word “Seligkeit”) sung by Belmonte and Konstanze in thirds. After a grand pause, the maxim begins and the vocal lines now consist of repeated pitches separated by eighth-note rests that interchange with octave leaps. The wide leaps, the omnipresent rests, and the staccatos suddenly introduced in the orchestra create a sense of breathlessness that alerts the listeners to pay attention to the text after the previous coloratura section. The straightforward diction and the reduced orchestration, moreover, ensure that the text can be easily understood.

85 For a concise summary of the documents concerning the establishment and abolition of the *Singspiel* company, see Link, *The National Court Theater*, 11–12.

86 *Operetten von C. F. Bretzner* (Leipzig: Schneider, 1779), 99–192; *Das wütende Heer, oder Das Mädchen im Turme* ([Vienna: Logenmeister], 1779). For example, in the second act the servant Robert fears that his wife might be unfaithful and sings about it in his aria “Ha! Die Schlange.” In the aria, Robert does not specifically mention adultery and cuckoldry, but the 1779 libretto has him point at his forehead as if in anticipation of growing horns. The stage direction does not appear in the Viennese libretto, although the other stage directions were retained in that particular scene.

87 *Der Apotheker und der Doktor* (Vienna: Logenmeister, 1786), 33.

4 *Die Zauberflöte* and subversive morality in suburban operas

One of the most striking and commented upon features of the duet “Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen” from *Die Zauberflöte* is that although the princess Pamina and the servant Papageno sing about love, their duet is not a “love duet,” that is, a musical number where two lovers express mutual feelings for one another.¹ Instead, Pamina and Papageno sing about love in general from a depersonalized and de-sexualized perspective.² One reason for this is that the text of the duet does not easily fit the situation at hand. Immediately before the duet, Papageno complains to Pamina that he cannot find a female companion despite his affectionate heart, and Pamina assures him that he will find one soon. Instead of expressing Papageno’s frustration and Pamina’s hopes, the ensuing duet discusses the positive effects love has on the human disposition (especially in couplets 1, 4, and 5), and celebrates the noble and divine nature of amorous feelings between men and women (the final quatrain).³ Thus in dramaturgical terms, the duet transcends the on-stage reality and possesses an aura of a metaphysical maxim.⁴

Numerous *Singspiele* produced in the 1790s by the two main suburban theaters in Vienna, Schikaneder’s Wiedentheater and Marinelli’s Leopoldstädter Theater, featured love duets between an aristocratic character and a servant. As the following pages show, however, most of these duets put a sexual twist on the interaction between the nobles and the servants. These socially mismatched, racy “love” duets are particularly prominent in a group of suburban works that I refer to as “heroic-comic operas.” A list of the heroic-comic operas selected as a representative sample, based on availability of their librettos and music, can be found in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.⁵ Suburban librettists used that term quite often, particularly in the later 1790s, though not all works discussed in my study are referred to as “heroisch-komische Opern” in their librettos (columns 2 of Tables 4.1 and 4.2 list the generic title of each opera after its main title). I use the term “heroic-comic opera” in connection to any *Singspiel* from the 1790s that closely resembles *Die Zauberflöte* in its reliance on magic and exoticism and its use of at least two pairs of lovers: one serious couple of royal or aristocratic descent and one servant couple for comedic relief. Within the comic, genre-bending dramaturgy of these *Singspiele*, the convention of two classes of lovers almost seems to beg for a duet that mixes a high-class lover with one of the servants.⁶ *Die Zauberflöte*’s duet therefore both develops an important convention of suburban opera but also represents a curious exception within that convention.