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Mozart in Turkey[1]

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Abstract: The essay analyses the Turkish mode in Mozart's output, discovering some unexpected examples, particularly Don Giovanni's aria 'Fin ch'han dal vino', whose uncommon sonority, obsessive rhythm and harmonic poverty evoke this *topos*. Don Giovanni may present Turkish features because his character coincides with eighteenth-century Western European views of the Turks as a threat to the established order and inclined to reckless sensuality. The romantic view of Don Giovanni as an ideal figure may also be connected with eighteenth-century thinking about 'orientals' as the representatives of utopia.

The Turkish mode, or mood, persists through Mozart's oeuvre. The list of works which prominently include this *topos* starts with the sketch for the ballet-music 'Le gelosie del seraglio' for '*Lucio Silla*' (1773)[2] and the inserted section in the last movement of his fifth violin concerto KV 219 (1779); after this it appears most expansively, of course, in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782), next comes the 'alla turca' movement from the piano sonata KV 331 (1783);[3] and its last appearance is in Monostatos's aria 'Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden' from *Die Zauberflöte* (1791).[4]

The musicological literature has dealt extensively with the 'alla turca' style in eighteenth-century music in general,[5] as well as in Mozart in particular. Earlier writers concentrated on the use of percussion instruments representing the

[1] This article is based on a paper read at the annual meeting of the Mozart Society of America in Kansas City, November 1999.

[2] Walter Senn ('Mozarts Skizze der Ballettmusik zu *Le gelosie del seraglio*', *Acta Musicologica*, 33 [1961], 169–92) shows that six (of eight) pieces forming the sketch for the ballet music to 'Le gelosie del seraglio' were not original pieces by Mozart, but citations by memory from Starzer's ballet *Le cinque soltane*. None of these is the 'Turkish' piece later included in the violin concerto, but the originality of the ballet sketch, following the revelations of Senn, was doubtful enough for the NMA not to include it in the score of *Lucio Silla* but in the volume dedicated to doubtful and spurious compositions. It is curious to note that the first appearance of the 'Turkish' mode in Mozart's compositions may have been a conscious plagiarism from another composer.

[3] This sonata has long been dated from Mozart's visit to Paris in 1778. NMA editors Angermüller and Plath, referring also to Tyson's watermark researches, date it to about 1783, that is, after *Die Entführung*.

[4] Monostatos is certainly not Turkish, but the Turkish features of the aria are obvious, as is Mozart's tendency to amalgamate all extra-European features.

[5] The following is a list of some publications on the subject in the last century: Walter Preibisch, 'Quellenstudien zu Mozarts 'Entführung aus dem Serail', ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Türkenoper', *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft* 10 (Leipzig, 1908–9), 430–76; Bence Szabolcsi, 'Exoticisms in Mozart', *Music & Letters*, 37 (1956), 323–32; Miriam Karpilow Whaples, *Exoticism in Dramatic Music, 1600–1800*, Ph.D. diss., Indiana University (1958); Carl Signell, 'Mozart and the mehter', *Consort* (Annual Journal of the Dolmetsch Foundation), 24 (1967), 310–22. Kurt Reinhard, 'Mozarts Rezeption türkischer Musik', *Bericht über den internationalen musikwissenschaftlichen Kongress Berlin 1974*, ed. Helmut Kuhn und Peter Nitsche (Kassel, 1980), 518–23; Peter Gradenwitz, *Musik zwischen Orient und Okzident, eine Kulturgeschichte der Wechselbeziehungen* (Wilhelmshaven, 1977); Anke Schmitt, *Der Exotismus in der deutschen Oper zwischen Mozart und Spohr*, Hamburger Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft 36, ed. Constantin Floros (Hamburg, 1988), 301–65; G. Joppig, 'Alla turca, Orientalismen in der europäischen Kunstmusik vom 18. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert',

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Janissary orchestras: especially bass drum, cymbals and triangle, obligatory for every operatic representation of 'Turkish' music. Recently more attention has been paid to the purely musical means by which composers in this period portray extra-European, 'oriental' music, as they knew and heard, or just imagined it.[6]

Though the alla turca pieces mentioned above are far from being stylistically uniform, they have in common a marked difference from Mozart's 'non-orientalist' styles and *topoi*. In addition, Mozart tends not to integrate the alla turca *topos* smoothly into the movements in which it occurs, so that most instances appear abruptly or unexpectedly. Compare, for example, the last movements of violin concertos Nos. 3, 4 and 5 (KV 217, 218 and 219): each includes an inserted passage in different tempo, metre and mode, in folk-like character. In both Nos. 3 and 4 this passage is a gavotte in French style which is stylistically or gesturally continuous with the main part of the movement. In No. 5, however, the so-called 'Turkish' episode feels much more intrusive and altogether harsher. The A minor episode bursts in without preparation and sounds alien to everything preceding and following it, like something erupting from beneath. The score of this passage, however, nowhere designates it as 'Turkish', and, to be sure, it was not always identified as such: some writers associated it, justifiably, with the 'all'ongherese' style, which is prominent in a few Haydn compositions from the same period.[7] To ascribe quite different ethnicities to the same set of musical characteristics is, of course, entirely consistent with orientalist practice.

Another 'Turkish' moment, never designated as such but nevertheless quite striking in context, occurs in the first movement of the sonata KV 331. Hermann Abert already noted the coloristic resemblance between a passage in the last variation of the first movement, with its low-register chords imitating the cymbals, and the accompaniment of the major section in the alla turca movement.[8] But another likeness, no less significant, has been overlooked: the third (A minor) variation in the first movement has a curiously winding line, slightly chromatic, which gives it an orientalist tinge; moreover, the curious parallel-octave 'orchestration' of the repetitions of both parts of this variation, connects it with the clearly 'Turkish' major theme of the last movement;

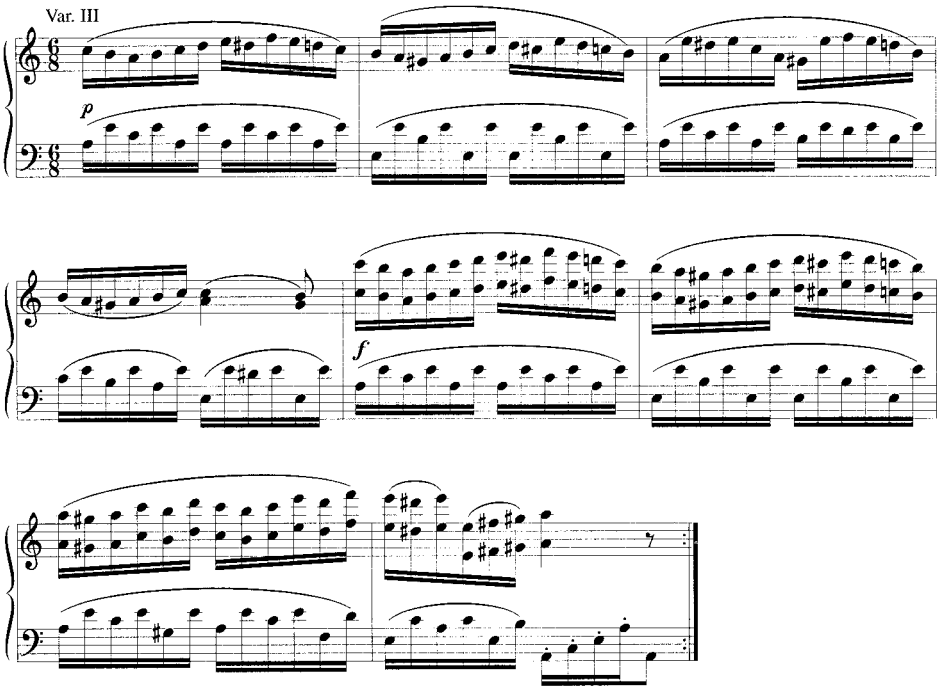
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Europa und der Orient, 800–1900, ed. G. Sievernich and H. Budde (Gutersloh, 1989), 295–304; Thomas Betzwieser, *Exotismus und 'Türkenoper' in der französischen Musik des ancien Régime* (Laaber, 1993); R. M. Jäger, *Die türkische Kunstmusik und ihre handschriftlichen Quellen aus dem 19. Jahrhundert* Schriften zur Musikwissenschaft aus Münster (Eisenach, 1996); Mary Hunter, 'The "Alla Turca" Style in the late Eighteenth Century: Race and Gender in the Symphony and the Seraglio', in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston, 1998), 43–73.

[6] Among the publications mentioned in the foregoing note, Reinhard, Szabolcsi and Hunter concentrate mainly on these aspects.

[7] See Wyzewa – St. Foix and Dénes Bartha, cited in the introduction to the NMA edition of the concerto: *W. A. Mozart, Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke* (Kassel, 1955), V:14:i. A list of Haydn's works inspired by Hungarian folk music may be found in H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works* (London, 1978) III, 280–1. The current designation of this Mozart concerto as 'Turkish' probably comes from the association of this passage with the identical section from 'Le gelosie del seraglio'.

[8] Hermann Abert, *W. A. Mozart* (Leipzig 1956), I, 511.

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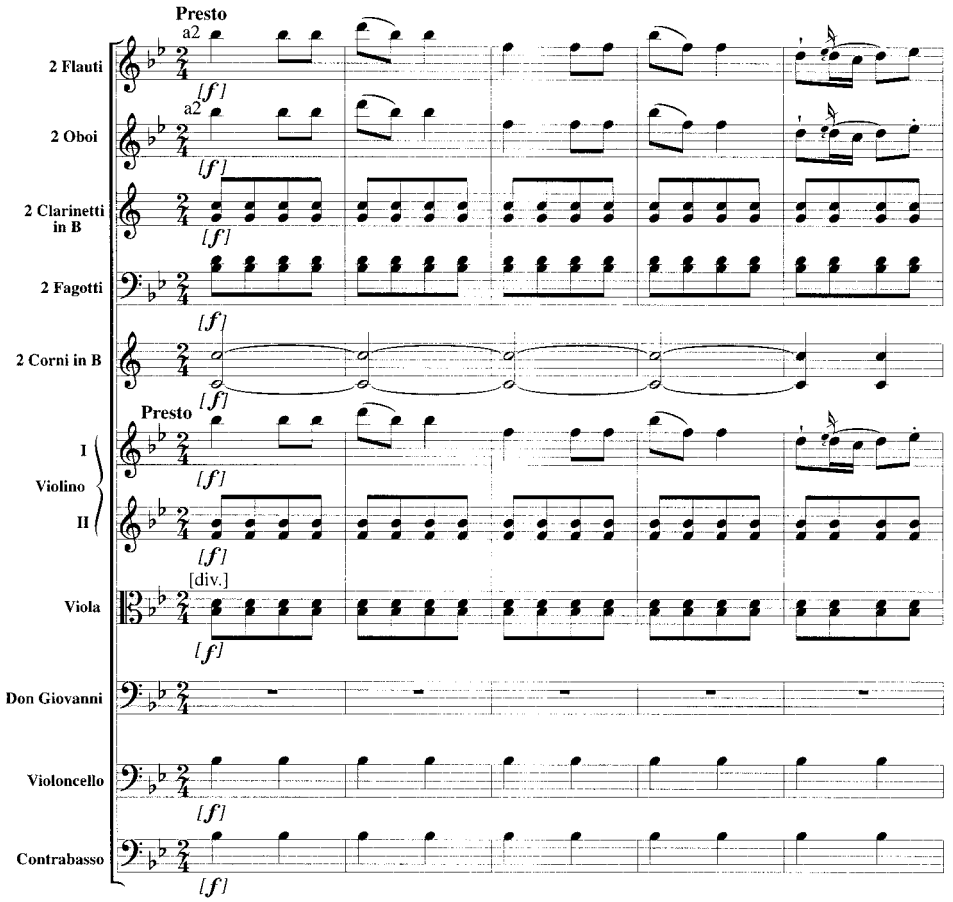


Ex. 1: Mozart, Sonata for Piano in A major, KV 331 (300i), first movement, Var. III.

nowhere else in Mozart, to my knowledge, is there a legato melody in octaves for the piano (see Ex. 1).

If we consider Mozart's recurring preoccupation with this style, and take into account that it may also appear in places where it is not explicitly designated as such, we should be prepared to make more discoveries of 'Turkish' pieces among Mozart's compositions. Such a discovery is one of the most famous arias in Mozart's operatic oeuvre, Don Giovanni's 'Fin ch'han dal vino'. This number is especially difficult to place in context and seems in many ways quite un-Mozartean. Much has been written about the stunning effect of this aria,[9] but I have long been struck primarily by its negative qualities: its crudity, its lack of refinement, the roughness of its sound, the monotony of its rhythm and its unsophisticated harmony. The text of this aria is anything but an outpouring of feeling. Don Giovanni is simply planning a feast: the catering, the music, and, most cynically, the outcome for him: 'la mia lista . . . d'una decina voglio aumentar'. And yet, compared to his two other arias in the opera, the serenade sung to an anonymous (and even unseen) girl in an empty window ('Deh, vieni alla finestra') and his instructions to Masetto ('Metà di voi qua vadano'), this is

[9] E.g., Abert *W. A. Mozart*, II, 325, 'But even this fundamental power has a shrill and breathless quality, and it has something elemental and volcanic about it'. See also Joseph Kerman, 'Reading Don Giovanni', in *Don Giovanni, Myths of Seduction and Betrayal*, ed. Jonathan Miller (Baltimore, 1990), 117 ff.

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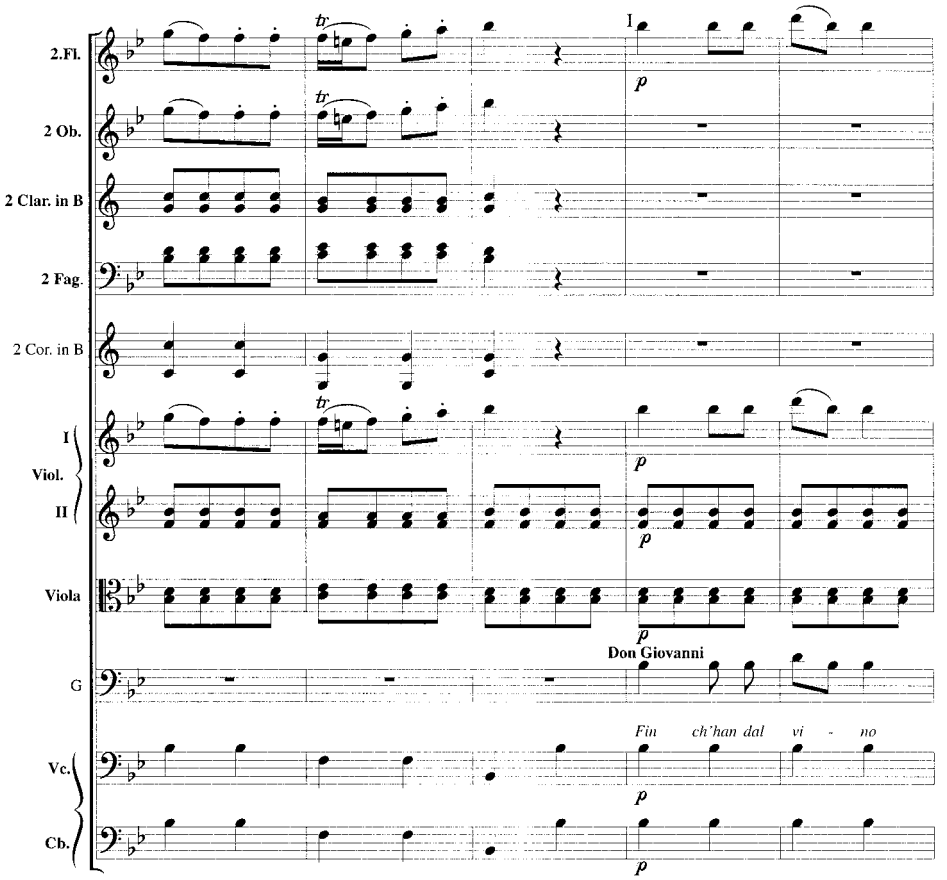


Ex. 2: Mozart, *Don Giovanni*, 'Fin ch'han dal vino', bars 1–10.

musically a most personal uttering. Its very strangeness sheds some light on the dark recesses of Don Giovanni's soul.

The first thing that may strike the listener is the unison of high-pitched instruments in the orchestral introduction, presenting the main motif: flutes and oboes 'à 2' in unison with the first violins, producing a shrill sound, uncommon in Mozart. Secondly, the fast repeated notes in the middle range (second violins and violas, clarinets and bassoons, in the postlude even joined by horns) creating a noisy effect, again most untypical of Mozart's background sonorities (Ex. 2). As the music goes on, we may wonder at the obsessive repetition of the same rhythmic motif: the pattern ♩♪♪|♩♩ is there practically all the time. If we take into account some variants: ♩♪♪|♪♪♩, ♩♪♪|♩ 𝅘𝅥𝅯. ♩♪♪|♪♪𝄾, ♩♪♪|♪♪♪♪, ♩♪♪|♩𝄾, the pattern is repeated fifty-nine times in the course of the aria.[10] Our attention is caught next by the aria's harmonic crudities: endless alternation of I and V, mostly in root position, and the total absence of the

[10] Abert (*W. A. Mozart* [see n. 8], I, 361) cites Paisiello's aria for Don Peppe 'Sore mia bella' (*La vedova di bel genio* Act I scene 1) where this rhythm is prominent. He calls it 'The rhythm of unrestrained exhilaration'.

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Ex. 2: cont'd.

subdominant (or its substitutes) all through the aria![11] There are recurring parallel octaves between the melodic line and the bass (bars 7–8, 15–16, 27–32, 55–56 etc.); there are many literal repetitions of motifs, not just twice but three (bars 27–32), four (bars 37–44), and even six times (bars 105–16), and not just in closing sections (which would be normal), but all through the aria. All these features combine to present an irresistible impression of roughness.

The problem is not to explain why Mozart took such pains to strip away all the refinements and delicacies of his style. This may well be justified by the dramatic context of the aria: the 'volcanic' quality of unrestrained sexual desire, the spontaneous explosion of Don Giovanni's innermost feelings, hidden otherwise behind the mask of the Spanish nobleman. Don Giovanni feels threatened by Donna Anna's and Don Ottavio's suspicions, pronounced in the foregoing quartet ('Non ti fidar, o misera'). He needs now to escape into a world of profligacy and noisy feasts, where he feels protected. Perhaps, already sensing approaching doom,

[11] The only hint of a subdominant function appears in bars 94–5: the unison notes Eb–G, leading back (through A) to the main theme.

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he strives for total abandon. 'Fin ch'han dal vino' is certainly not joyful and merry, but maniacal, obsessive,[12] and aggressive.[13] The problem here is to associate this aria meaningfully with a *topos*, to put it in a resonant social and musical context in order to consider what category of utterance this is.[14]

We may think in the first place that our aria is a kind of *contredanse*. This dance actually appears a bit later in the opera, when the feast planned in this aria becomes a reality: it is one of the three dances performed simultaneously on stage in the first act finale (bars 449 ff). Wye Allanbrook reads the aria this way, calling the *contredanse* a 'new dance' and a 'dance of No-Man', bringing it thus into relation with Don Giovanni's anarchic character. Actually, though, it was the most popular dance of the upper middle class in Western Europe at Mozart's time, with a tradition of more than a hundred years. Allanbrook rightly perceives the additive construction of the aria, with no qualitative differentiation between consecutive phrases, and brilliantly connects this trait with Don Giovanni's list of conquests. Nevertheless, she shows no similarity between this unique mode of construction and the actual music of *contredanses*, including the many by Mozart himself. These show a quite normal rondeau form. Furthermore, I know no *contredanse* with the typical rhythmic pattern of 'Fin ch'han dal vino' nor with its breathless tempo. Thus there seems to be no real foundation for identifying the *contredanse* as the original *topos* of this aria, and we must look for it elsewhere.

The *topos* most suitable to this aria is in fact the 'Turkish mode', with which it shares $\frac{2}{4}$ time, rapid tempo, wild and orgiastic character, many repetitions of motifs, rudimentary harmony and fast repeated notes in middle-range accompaniment. In Pedrillo's and Osmin's 'Vivat Bacchus' and Monostatos's 'Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden' – both explicitly alla turca pieces – we have also the high unison of woodwinds,[15] which, together with the middle-range repeated notes, create a shrill and tumultuous sonority (even in Monostatos's aria, where the dynamics are *pp*). The most general feature common to 'Fin ch'han dal vino' and most 'Turkish' pieces of Mozart is the lack of rhythmic and harmonic variety – a variety notably

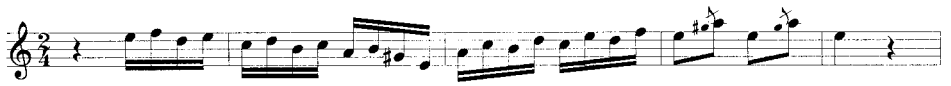
[12] A similarity may indeed be observed between this aria and the restless and obsessive last movement of the piano sonata in A minor, KV 310, $\frac{2}{4}$, *Presto*.

[13] Kerman, 'Reading Don Giovanni' (see n. 9) discusses 'Fin ch'han dal vino' and anger. See below for more on this subject.
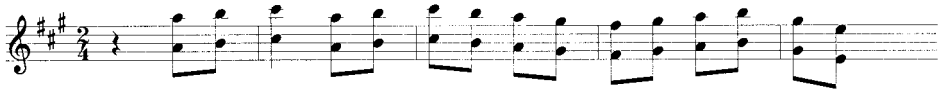
[14] 'For Mozart was in possession of something we may call an expressive vocabulary, a collection in music of what in the theory of rhetoric are called *topoi*, or topics for formal discourse. He held it in common with his audience, and used it in his operas with the skill of a master craftsman. This vocabulary, when captured and categorized, provides a tool for analysis which can mediate between the operas and our individual responses to them, supplying independent information about the expressive content of the arias and ensembles'. Wye Jamison Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart, Le nozze di Figaro and Don Giovanni* (Chicago, 1983), 2.

[15] This may be an imitation of the sound of the *zurna*, a high-pitched oboe-like wind instrument, which carried the melodic line in the Janissary orchestras. This refers us again to the third variation of KV 331.

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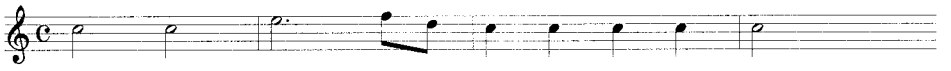
Ex. 3a: Mozart, Concerto for Violin in A major, KV 219, third movement, bars 134–138.



Ex. 3b: Mozart, Sonata for Piano in A major, KV 331, third movement, bars 25–9.



Ex. 3c: Mozart, Sonata for Piano in A major, KV 331, third movement, bars 122–7.



Ex. 3d: Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Overture, bars 1–4.



Ex. 3e: Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, No. 14, 'Vivat Bacchus' bars 1–3.



Ex. 3f: Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, No. 21b, Chor der Janitscharen, bars 21–4.
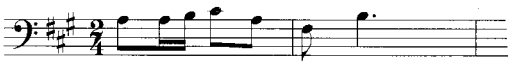
present in most of Mozart's non-Turkish music. This lack makes explicit the feeling of a 'primitive', less articulate musical culture.[16]

Let us add to these the principal motif of 'Fin ch'han dal vino', the rising and falling third, which has been recognised as a characteristic trait of 'Turkish' music by several commentators.[17] In Mozart's 'Turkish' output this trait is prominent in the major section of the 'alla turca' movement from the sonata KV 331, in the
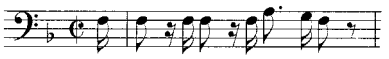
[16] 'in the absence of specific signs of "Turkishness", "deficiency" and "incoherence" must take particular forms to function as markers of exoticism' (Hunter, 'The "Alla Turca" Style' [see n. 5], 49). As signs of deficiency she mentions later on 'lack of polyphony or harmony'. These are, as I have shown, prominent features of 'Fin ch'han dal vino'. The incoherence in our aria manifests itself by its lack of formal articulation. Her description of the final Scythian dance movement from Gluck's 'Iphigénie en Tauride' (*ibid.*, 51) as an example of 'deficiency' and 'incoherence' in the alla turca style could apply almost literally to 'Fin ch'han dal vino'.

[17] Szabolcsi, 'Exoticism, in Mozart' (see n. 5), finds this melodic feature in a Hungarian, march-like dance called 'Törökös' ('Turkish' in Hungarian) which appears in several sources from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries.

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Ex. 4a: Mozart, *Don Giovanni*, No. 7, 'Là ci darem la mano', bars 1–2.



Ex. 4b: Mozart, *Don Giovanni*, No. 17, 'Metà di voi qua vadano', bar 1.

principal theme of the overture to the 'Abduction' and in its second Janissary choir; if we include the up and down leaps of a fourth, we find it also, most pronouncedly, in 'Vivat Bacchus' and in the violin concerto (see Exx. 3a–f).[18] We may even go further: this rising and falling third may be called Don Giovanni's leitmotif: it appears clearly as head motif in 'Là ci darem la mano' and 'Metà di voi qua vadano' (see Exx. 4a–b).

Odd as it may sound, Don Giovanni's aria is in a sense more 'Turkish' than most compositions recognized under this label. Kurt Reinhard lists fourteen characteristics for the alla turca style,[19] of which ten may be found in 'Fin ch'han dal vino': duple metre, marked accents on strong beats, loudness, simple rhythmic patterns and repeated notes in the accompaniment, rudimentary harmony, doubling of the sung melodic line by octaves, thirds as melodic outline, short motifs, and multiple repetitions of motifs.[20] This is more than may be said about any other single overtly 'Turkish' composition by Mozart. To these we may add the 'heterophonic' effect of the ornaments added in some places in the doubling of the voice by the flute and the violins, for example bars 15, 27, 63 etc., and the sudden change to minor in bars 57–69. We may compare these 'Turkish' traits in 'Fin ch'han dal vino' with the most obviously 'Turkish' piece by Mozart, the 'alla turca' movement from the sonata KV 331, where we have the $\frac{2}{4}$ time, the drum-like ostinato in the bass, the repeated notes in the middle range, the ornamented melody built on thirds, with many repeats and sequences, the back-and-forth between parallel minor and major, the octave doublings in the major section and the relatively impoverished harmonic language, consisting mainly of alternations between I–V in root position. Both pieces as wholes manifest a striking voluntary impoverishment of musical means.

Let us move one step further into the field of pure speculation, considering the choice of tonality, B flat major, for 'Fin ch'han dal vino'. C. F. D. Schubart (1739–91) in his *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst*,[21] an often-cited source about Janissary music in Mozart's time, says: 'F major and B flat major seem to be the

[18] This motif, though, is also a characteristic of gypsy music.
[19] Reinhard, 'Mozarts Rezeption türkischer Musik' (see n. 5).
[20] The typical rhythmic pattern of 'Fin ch'han dal vino' also appears in other 'alla turca' contexts: Gluck, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Act I scene 6, chorus of the Scythian priests, 'Blut kann den göttlichen Zorn'; Haydn, *Lo speziale*, Act III no. 20, Volpino's aria 'Salamelica, Semprugna cara'; Mozart, *Die Zauberflöte*, Act II no. 13, Monostatos', aria 'Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden'.
[21] C. F. D. Schubart, *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (Vienna, 1806), 332.

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favourite tonalities of the Turks, because in these the range of all their instruments coincides most precisely'. In Mozart's 'Turkish' output the tonality of A is prominent (see especially the violin concerto and the piano sonata).[22] Both of Beethoven's contributions to this style, the Turkish March from his incidental music to *The Ruins of Athens* and the strophe 'Froh wie deine Sonnen' from the 'Ode to Joy' are in B flat major. If we grant that the tuning of Janissary orchestras did not correspond exactly to Western instruments, we may assume that much of the Janissary music Mozart and Beethoven might have heard was in a tonality somewhere between A and B flat. This may explain why these tonalities occurred to them immediately when they wrote in this style.[23] Even Osmin's 'Erst geköpft, dann gehangen' which appears unexpectedly in A minor (appended to an aria in F major) may belong here. Mozart's own explanation of this unprepared modulation, in his famous letter to his father (26 September 1781) is as follows:

> But as passions, whether violent or not, must never be expressed in such a way as to excite disgust, and as music even in the most terrible situations, must never offend the ear, but must please the hearer, or in other words must never cease to be *music*, I have gone from F (the key in which the aria is written) not into a remote key but into a related one, not, however into its nearest relative D minor, but into the more remote A minor.[24]

This explanation is not altogether convincing: it is not obvious why the tonality of A minor would be more expressive of anger in this context than D minor, solely because it is a bit more remote from F major than D minor. It may be a rationalization concealing the compulsion Mozart felt to use the tonality of A whenever he needed to show 'Turkishness', especially in its wild aspect. Actually, this excerpt recalls the eruptive A minor episode in the fifth violin concerto, and perhaps, again, the last movement of KV 310, which is of course in A minor too (see n. 12). Nevertheless, the key of A is otherwise absent from the 'Abduction'. The 'alla turca' pieces are written for the most part in C major, and one ('Ach, wie will ich triumphieren') in D major.
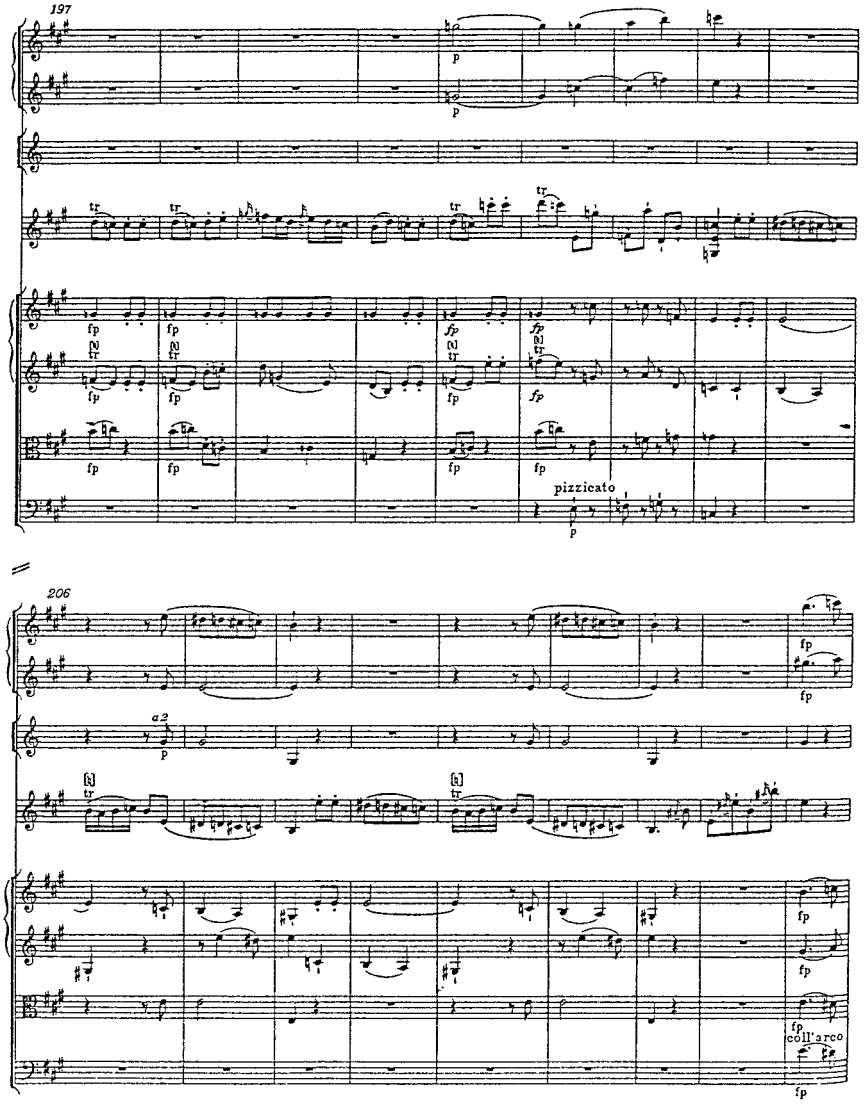
Another melodic detail in 'Fin ch'han dal vino' may lead us again on to the same track: the chromatic descent from C to G, to the words 'teco ancor quella cerca menar' (bars 21–4). This chromaticism is a curious feature in a melody governed otherwise by strict diatonism and broken chords (some hint of it appears three times later, to the words 'chi il minuetto . . . la follia . . . l'alemanna', bars 45–54). Chromaticism normally goes with heightened expression, mostly of pain or fear. Julian Rushton convincingly interprets these same notes as a death-motif, making its first appearance in the opera immediately after the death of the Commendatore, then twice transposed, first at the end of Donna Anna and Ottavio's duet where they swear revenge, and finally at Don Giovanni's descent into hell in the second

[22] We may add to this Gluck's overture to *La rencontre imprévue*, also in A major, also using the Turkish instrumentarium and showing other marked exotic musical characteristics.

[23] Let me add here, as a mere curiosity, that Mozart's 'alla turca' movement from the sonata KV 331 was incorporated, orchestrated by Auber, into a performance of *Don Giovanni* by the Paris Opéra in 1866 (Rudolph Angermüller, 'Pariser *Don Juan* – Rezensionen 1805–1866', in *Mozart-Studien*, ed. Manfred Hermann Schmid (Tutzing, 1998), 213.

[24] Emily Anderson, trans. and ed., *The Letters of Mozart & His Family* (London, 1938), 1144.

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Ex. 5: Mozart, Violin Concerto No. 5, KV 219, third movement, bars 197–214.

finale.[25] This descending chromaticism is a prominent feature of some of Mozart's finest instrumental compositions of the same period: amongst others the C minor piano concerto KV 491 (first and last movements), the G minor quintet KV 516 (first movement), and above all in the A minor Rondo for piano KV 511.[26] All

[25] Julian Rushton, *W. A. Mozart: Don Giovanni* (Cambridge, 1981), 117–19. A similar interpretation may be found in Daniel Heartz, *Mozart's Operas* (Oxford, 1990), 181. Heartz, like Rushton, sees the symbolism of death in descending chromaticisms, but at the same time rising chromaticism is connected with sexual desire. He cites in this context the rising chromatic line of clarinets and bassoons in bars 107–10 of our aria.

[26] Later it appears again, most emphatically, in Pamina's 'Des Jämmers Mass ist voll', *Die Zauberflöte*, Act II, finale, bars 84–6.

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these pieces have a quality of deep sorrow, even wailing, which bring them in direct relation to the examples in *Don Giovanni* quoted by Julian Rushton.

But does the chromatic motif in 'Fin ch'han dal vino', as conspicuous as it is, have anything to do with the mood just described? The words are not really significant and have no emotional impact. The fast tempo and the rhythmic shape suggest altogether different issues. It seems absurd to assume that Don Giovanni, in the midst of his preparation for the feast, is subconsciously haunted by guilty thoughts of imminent death. I would suggest that this motif in this aria points in a quite different direction: it functions as a kind of stylistic reference to the chromatic passage from the A minor section of the last movement of the fifth violin concerto (bars 204–12), which manifests the same fast tempo and fiercely agitated mood. This may be seen as another link between this aria and the Turkish *topos* (see Ex. 5).

This motif has yet another history within the opera, connected to its genre:[27] in the monumental sextet in Act II (from bar 61) it appears in a pattern of dotted notes, repeated over and over again by the violins. When sung by Donna Anna and Zerlina to the words 'che mai sarà?' (bars 125–7), this motif concisely expresses uneasiness, worry, underlying fear – but looked at with a certain (comic) irony, as if from outside. The culmination of this passage is Leporello's plea for mercy 'pietà, Signori' (bars 98–102) where the colour of the music is unmistakably 'oriental'. Leporello sings in the Phrygian mode, harmonized in a unique way (the Neapolitan chord figuring as an upward returning chord, above a tonic organ point) and the chromatic descent of the woodwinds in octaves, punctuating the sung phrases, reminds us again of the *zurna* (see Ex. 6). If we believe that Don Giovanni is related to Turkey in some way, then Leporello, his shadow or alter ego, should also be. It seems as if, believing himself about to die, Leporello falls back upon his musical mother tongue. This passage, then, combines very well with Rushton's death motif.

But why would Don Giovanni sing in Turkish style? He is a Spanish aristocrat and nothing in his story connects him in any way to Turkey. Yet a closer inspection reveals a connection. Since the Turkish siege on Vienna in 1689, the Turks were remembered as a very tangible threat to Western civilisation. Even though the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Europe had improved considerably during Maria Theresia's reign[28] the threatening image of the Turks was still alive in the minds of Mozart's contemporaries[29] and Joseph II was just about to wage war once more against the Turks.[30] If we keep in mind that the character of Don Giovanni has been interpreted as undermining established
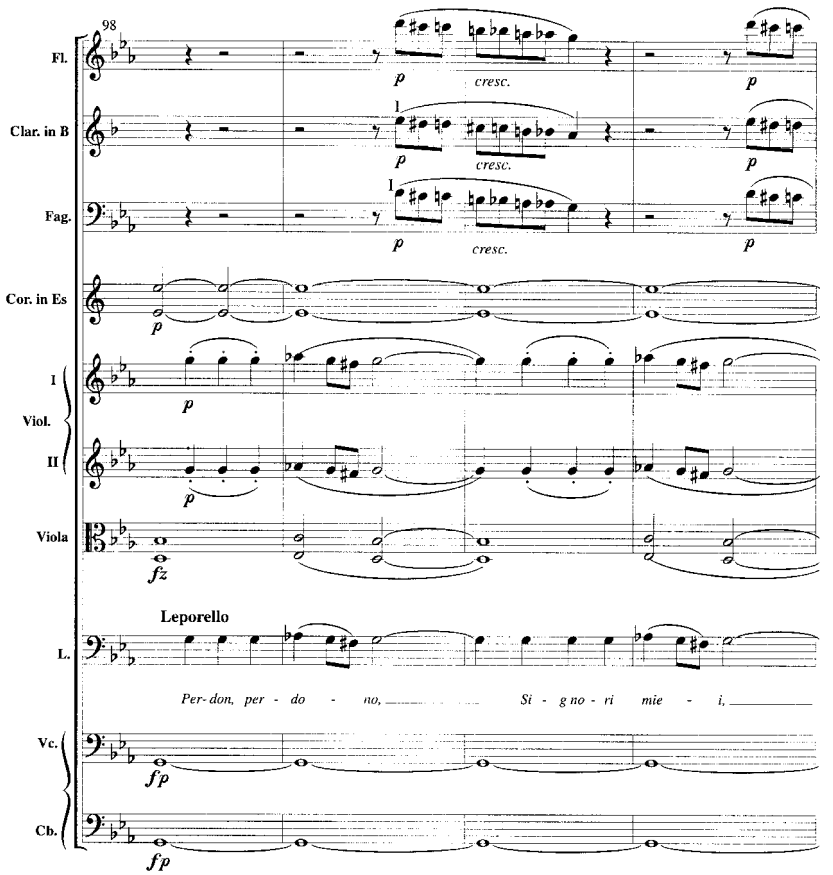
[27] This motif has also a 'buffo' tradition in other Mozart operas: Figaro's 'e stravolto m'ho un nervo del piè', *Le nozze di Figaro*, Act II, finale. Further such examples may be found in the fragment 'L'oca del Cairo'.

[28] See C. M. Altar, 'W. A. Mozart im Lichte osmanisch-österreichischer Beziehungen', *Revue Belge de Musicologie*, 10 (1956), 138–48.

[29] Turks, and 'orientals' in general, from Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* on, were often said to represent both the enlightened rulers of utopian domains and cruel or threatening figures. In Mozart's *Entführung* we have both: Osmin versus Bassa Selim. See below.

[30] In 1788, joining the Russians.

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Ex. 6: *Don Giovanni*, No. 19, Sextet, bars 96–101.

society,[31] it might not be beyond the pale to associate this figure with the malicious Turk.

But there is a more specific association: in the view of the eighteenth century, Turks were associated with sexual licentiousness,[32] their rulers thought to possess harems with hundreds of women, among whom they could choose at will for sexual enjoyment. In fact the women in Turkey enjoyed much more freedom, and had their say even in politics, but what concerns us here is how they were perceived by Mozart and his Western European contemporaries: nothing more remote from official Christian morality. Instead of incorporating the morals of his caste, the stiff manners of Spanish nobility, Don Giovanni creates a behavioral ethical code much closer to the 'Turkish': he keeps a successive harem, instead of the simultaneous one of the Turkish pasha. His rules are even stricter: every woman may fulfill her role

[31] Frits Noske, 'Don Giovanni: an Interpretation', in *The Signifier and the Signified: Studies in Mozart and Verdi* (The Hague, 1977), 86.

[32] Cf. Gradenwitz, *Musik zwischen Orient und Okzident* (see n. 5), 212–13; Thomas Bauman, *W. A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Cambridge, 1987), 273–4; and Hunter, 'The "Alla Turca" Style' (see n. 5), 56.

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in the harem just once, and is then cast out. Yet she is symbolically 'kept' there: the harem-keeper being Leporello, Giovanni's Osmin, who holds the famous 'catalogo', a harem in book form, enclosing all his master's women.[33]

We have no unequivocal indication of Mozart's intention to create any link between Don Giovanni and the Turks. And yet a curious detail may point in this direction: when Leporello in his catalogue-aria presents the statistics about Don Giovanni's amorous achievements in different countries, he mentions, after Italy, Germany and France, 'in *Turchia* novantuna'. This detail becomes more significant if we compare Da Ponte's text to his model: Bertati's words for this aria are as follows:

Dell'Italia, ed Allemagna
Ve ne ho scritto cento, e tante.
Della Francia, e della Spagna
Ve ne sono non so quante[34]

[From Italy and Germany I've written a hundred or more; I have no idea how many from France and Spain].

Bertati mentions all countries found in Da Ponte, except Turkey. Thus it seems that the bewildering idea of mentioning Turkey among the countries where Don Giovanni made his conquests was Da Ponte's, or perhaps even Mozart's own (there is no direct testimony confirming it, but it is clear that the collaboration between the two in creating the libretto was close).[35] Even the number of Don Giovanni's conquests in Spain – the famous 'mille e tre' – may evoke oriental associations: perhaps it stems from '1001 Nights'.

Don Giovanni's 'Turkish' connection may be approached from another direction as well. Joseph Kerman's 'Reading Don Giovanni' presents a detailed and masterly analysis of 'Fin ch'han dal vino', stressing its violent musical qualities, lingering on its curious construction and the unusual relation between the stanzas of the poem and the sections of the aria.[36] Kerman, too, brings it into relation with Osmin's rage aria from the *Entführung*, especially with the A minor section 'Erst geköpft, dann gehangen' and with Figaro's cavatina 'Se vuol ballare', referring again mainly to the fast section 'L'arte schermendo'. The musical common denominator to all three of

[33] A hint, referring negatively to this association, may be found in Bernard Williams, 'Don Giovanni as an Idea', in Rushton, *W. A. Mozart: Don Giovanni*, 85: 'The catalogue, as Jean Massin said, is the negation of the harem'. I could not find the phrase in Massin's book, and Williams gives no precise reference. He obviously means that Don Giovanni's pursuits are concerned with the moment only, with immediate conquest, and not with long-lasting possession. But if that is true why is there a catalogue? The catalogue is clearly instituted by Don Giovanni himself, as it is mentioned not only in Leporello's aria but also in 'Fin ch'han dal vino'. If Don Giovanni feels the need to keep on record all the women he seduced, this must indicate some instinct of possession.

[34] *Don Giovanni, o sia il convitato di pietra*, libretto di Giovanni Bertati, musica di Gazzaniga, ed. S. Kunze, (Kassel and Basle, 1974). Cited in Alfred Einstein, *Mozart, his Character, his Work* (London, 1945), 437, and in John Platoff, 'Catalogue Arias and the "Catalogue Aria" ', *Wolfgang Amadè Mozart: Essays on his Life and his Music*, ed. Stanley Sadie (Oxford, 1996), 304.

[35] Daniel Heartz gives several examples of Mozart's probable interference in the creation of Da Ponte's libretto of *Don Giovanni*. See Heartz, *Mozart's Operas* (Berkeley, 1990), 165–9.

[36] Kerman, 'Reading Don Giovanni,' (see n. 9).

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these arias is the obsessive repetition of the same rhythmic pattern in a fast tempo – and Figaro's aria uses exactly the same pattern as Giovanni's. Dramatically, then, this pattern seems to represent uncontrolled anger 'associated with, about, at, or in sex'.[37] Osmin's fierce hatred against the Europeans is motivated by his rejection by Blonde, who turns him down because of her attachment to Pedrillo.[38] Figaro is enraged by jealousy because of the Count's advances to Susanna. Don Giovanni, though he never says so, is frustrated in all his amorous attempts from the beginning of the opera: his attempted rape of Donna Anna (probably) failed, and Elvira's intrusion has thwarted his seduction of Zerlina.

Let us add here a sentence from Mozart's famous letter on the composition of Osmin's rage-aria: 'Der Zorn des osmin wird dadurch in das Komische gebracht, weil die türkische Musik dabey angebracht ist'.[39] In other words: 'if you want him to sound angry, let him sing Turkish, and then it will sound really ridiculous'. Here we have an amalgamation of anger, Turkishness and ridicule. No wonder that in later situations when Mozart needed musical expression of extreme anger (which, seen from outside, is never devoid of ridicule) he would come back to the musical associations of the Turkish mode.[40]

The association of Don Giovanni's figure with the Turkish sphere, whether consciously intended by Mozart or not, would also confirm some impressions of this exceptional operatic hero. On the one hand he is the monster, the enemy not only of the established order, but alien to human feelings of sympathy: coldly planning his seductions, cruelly rejecting those women who, once possessed, claim his love and fidelity. In these qualities he may resemble the image of the ferocious Muslim Turk, who lacks all restraint and Christian humanity – a figure which most probably persisted in the imagination of Europeans in Mozart's time. Bauman cites Norman Daniel: 'The two most important aspects of Muhammad's life, Christians believed, were his sexual license and his use of force to establish his religion'.[41] On the other hand, Don Giovanni is the preacher of 'libertà', the representative of a new, utopian order of things, where he, as a kind of Nietzschean *Übermensch*, may experience his life to the full, unhampered by traditions and arbitrary rules. In

[37] *Ibid.*, 119.

[38] Nowhere in *Die Entführung* is Osmin referred to as a eunuch, but his position as harem-keeper and his irritable and malicious character may imply this. Montesquieu's fictional description of a eunuch's state of mind and behaviour strikingly resembles Osmin: 'I hoped that I would be delivered from attacks of love by the impossibility of satisfying them. Alas! The effects of passion were extinguished in me without extinguishing the cause, and far from being soothed, I found myself surrounded by objects which ceaselessly excited them . . . The harem is like a little empire for me, and my only ambition, the only passion left to me, can be satisfied a little . . . I voluntarily burden myself with the hate of all these women . . .' *Lettres Persanes* (Paris, 1975), Lettre IX, 23–6.

[39] Mozart, *Letters* (see n. 24).

[40] Wye Allanbrook shows us that Mozart can express jealous anger by quite opposing means: In the Count's aria 'Vedrò mentr'io sospiro' in *Le nozze di Figaro* the protagonist's extreme anger is shown by extending the 'paradigmatic' two-bar phrases into three bars (to the words 'Tu non nascesti, audace') and adding a bar to repeat the words 'per ridere'. This is anger expressed by extension and lingering, as opposed to the model we examined, where it is expressed by rushing forward and mechanical repetition.

[41] Bauman, *W. A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (see n. 32), 27.

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Kierkegaard's words: 'This force in Don Juan, this omnipotence, this animation, only music can express, and I know no other predicate to describe it than this: it is exuberant Joy of life'.[42] This can be associated with the 'enlightened Orientals' of eighteenth-century literature and art, who may represent a utopian ideal, or a higher stage of humanity.[43] This ambiguity finds its correspondence in the Don's music: 'Fin ch'han dal vino' certainly presents a negative view of Don Giovanni's character, while in many other numbers where his role is prominent – the duet 'Là ci darem la mano', the hymn to liberty in the first act finale and the serenade with the mandoline – he gets some of Mozart's most attractive music. Thus Mozart achieves a high degree of identification on the part of the listener with this hero. Moreover, the scene of his downfall in the second finale has a claim as Mozart's highest achievement in staged musical tragedy. The death of a repellent and unworthy character would surely not be shown in such a sublime and deeply moving way.

This duality of Don Giovanni's character may be better understood if we compare him to other heroes from Mozart's mature operas. Kierkegaard sees him as the third and final step of evolution in the hierarchy of eroticism: from Cherubino through Papageno to Giovanni (Papageno having been invented later does not seem to undermine the theory). But having established the possibility of a 'Turkish' interpretation of Don Giovanni, I would like to draw another line of inter-relations between three operas, where Don Giovanni may be seen as a fusion of two character types, separate in the other two works: Bassa Selim and Osmin of the 'Abduction' becoming one in *Don Giovanni*, and splitting up again into Sarastro and Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte*.

Bassa Selim has his harem of course, and in his endeavours to gain Konstanze's favours 'runs the gamut from persuasion to force'[44] (he threatens her with 'Martern aller Arten'). But in the end he emerges as the magnanimous ruler who deals out 'libertà' to his prisoners. His lack of a singing voice despite being one of the main characters of the plot remains a mystery. Maybe Mozart was not really sure what voice he should sing in: he could not sing in Sarastro's voice, being a Turkish despot kidnapping innocent Westerners. Moreover, Sarastro's music was not part of Mozart's musical vocabulary at this pre-Masonic stage of his career. On the other hand, Selim could not use Osmin's 'Turkish' idiom, being a Christian-born renegade, and, after all, an enlightened ruler. Osmin, on the other hand, has a very clear voice of his own: he has the fierce and angry side of Don Giovanni, without any of his attractive, immediately erotic qualities.

Giovanni, as we have seen, has both sides: the hellish, devouring, unrestrained one, which predominates, but in some places, shining through, the idealistic, utopian

[42] Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, trans. David F. Swenson and Lillian Marvin Swenson (New York, 1959), 100.

[43] The Persian Uzbek, in Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* (see n. 38), 169, describes the ideal government: 'I have often considered which would be the government which would most conform with reason. It has seemed to me that the most perfect would be that . . . which led men in a way which best suited their desires and inclinations.'

[44] Kerman, 'Reading Don Giovanni' (see n. 9), 110.

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side. In addition to the hymn-like 'libertà'-chorus this aspect is tangible in a phrase he sings in the second finale: after having invited Elvira, ironically, to dine with him, he sings in praise of women and wine, 'sostegno e gloria dell'umanità'. The words seem to point to an ironic interpretation, but the melody, again, has a lofty tone, which is otherwise absent from Don Giovanni's music.[45] Again, as mentioned earlier, this idealistic quality may be sensed in his last scene, where it is difficult not to admire Don Giovanni's proud standing.

If we crystallize just these aspects of the Don Giovanni who speaks about 'umanità', we may discover them later on in the figure of Sarastro,[46] the full-fledged prophet of humanistic ideals. But Sarastro, too, has his Don Giovanni aspects, or rather, he goes back to the Bassa Selim model: 'Zur Liebe kann ich dich nicht zwingen . . .'[47] – I cannot force you to love (my position would not permit that, though perhaps I would wish to). This sentence disavows Sarastro's claim to have kidnapped Pamina to save her from the evil influence of her mother. Tamino, at least before his conversion to Sarastro's cult, seems to understand it this way: 'Die Absicht ist nur allzuklar!' (The intention is all too clear!). Later on, like Bassa Selim, Sarastro gives up Pamina and hands her over to Tamino. But in the first place he abandons her to Monostatos, his 'harem-guardian' (though what we see in the opera is only a one-woman harem).[48] And indeed, Pamina is subjected to the same kind of treatment as she would be in Bassa Selim's harem: seclusion and sexual harassment. Monostatos represents, of course, Sarastro's dark side,[49] in any sense of the term. He resembles Don Giovanni in his cold sexuality,[50] never expressing – or even pretending to express – love to Pamina. He is the Don Giovanni of 'Fin ch'han dal vino', rushing forward to fulfilment. Being black he is, in the terms of the drama, predestined to act this way, while Don Giovanni repudiates the codes of behavior of his class. Thus, Monostatos may figure as a one-sided, basically simple character, whereas Giovanni is more complex, retaining, even in Mozart's eyes, the privileges of his birth. Thus, that Monostatos's only aria is 'Turkish' ('Alles fühlt'), is justified not merely by his race, but by his dramatic persona. Except that here this music comes already 'as if from afar':[51] it is Mozart's farewell to Turkishness.

[45] It is, perhaps by mere coincidence, the same melody that Papageno sings in his 'suicide'-aria, to the words 'Schöne Mädchen, denkt an mich'.

[46] Something gets lost as well in this transformation: the ideals we hear of in the *Die Zauberflöte* are wisdom, virtue, perseverence, never 'libertà' in any meaning of the term. It sounds all more like submission: more spiritual, but also tamer than *Don Giovanni*.

[47] See Peter Branscombe, *W. A. Mozart, Die Zauberflöte* (Cambridge, 1991), 128.

[48] For all practical purposes, Bassa Selim's is a one-woman harem as well, since we see only Konstanze and Blonde. See Bauman, *W. A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 33.

[49] See Anthony Besch, 'A Director's Approach', in *W. A. Mozart: Die Zauberflöte*, ed. Branscombe, 198.

[50] See Abert, *W. A. Mozart* (see n. 8), II, 663–5.

[51] A general direction for the performance of the orchestra and the singer in the score of this aria (unique, as far as I know) says: 'Alles wird so piano gesungen und gespielt, als wenn die Musik in weiter Entfernung wäre' (Everything should be so quietly sung and played that it seems as if the music were in the distance).

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Don Giovanni remains the only Mozartean figure where both voices, the demoniac and the idealistic, unite into one.[52] He is the lascivious Turk and the utopian Oriental at the same time.[53] The Mozart of *Don Giovanni* is already a Mason, fully mature, aware of his forces, sensing the unrestrained cravings of instinct and, at the same time, the tragic limitations of human existence. The Turkish 'other', loitering through Mozart's music, is nowhere better integrated into the composition than in *Don Giovanni*, but its weirdness is still perceptible in those passages of the opera where Mozart steps out of his 'style': in 'Fin ch'han dal vino' and in Leporello's orientalizing plea for mercy.

[52] 'The sense of freedom that he expresses does not have all the metaphysical resonances that existentialist writers found in it, but it does have a significance which goes beyond an individual personal characteristic . . .', Bernard Williams, 'Don Giovanni as an Idea', in *W. A. Mozart: Don Giovanni*, ed. Rushton, 90.

[53] Matthew Head's *Orientalism, Masquerade and Mozart's Turkish Music* (London, 2000) appeared after this article was in the publication process, and thus could not receive the attention it deserves. Head does not mention *Don Giovanni* in relation to the Turkish topic in Mozart's music, but in Ch. 4 he describes the popularity of Turkishness in late 18th-century Vienna as one manifestation of a general delight in masquerade, citing Pezzl's description of a carnival ball at the Redoutensaal with the blur of one music against another (p. 101). This brings to mind, of course, the first finale of *Don Giovanni*. However, in my interpretation Don Giovanni does not wear a Turkish 'mask', but is, rather, a 'Turk' disguised as Spanish nobleman, whose 'true' identity occasionally shines through.

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