

David Schroeder

*A note of introduction: Fortunately for Mozart historiography, the composer and his family did not live in an era of e-mails and SMS-ing. In the 18th century in Europe, letters were written, often long letters and even to those living just around the corner. And letters were read, and passed around, and saved. The Mozart family correspondence – principally that of Leopold and Wolfgang – that has come down to us numbers in the hundreds of letters. It was an epistolary age. But there is a problem: how are we to understand all that was written, especially between father and son, and especially in the years from 1777 on, when the Väterlicher Freund and the “gehorsamster Sohn” were separated by hundreds of kilometers and the son was increasingly determined to go his own way? David Schroeder’s important book, “Mozart in Revolt”, deals with just this problem. In the excerpts that follow, Prof. Schroeder guides us to an understanding.*

### Mozart in Revolt: The Virtuosity of Deceit

When as a child Mozart received a gift of Gellert’s *Geistliche Oden und Lieder* from Baron von Bose, Leopold proudly quoted the inscription to Lorenz Hagenhauer: ‘Take this book, little seven-year-old Orpheus, from the hand of your admirer and friend! Read it often – and feel its god-like songs and lend them (in these spiritual hours of feeling) your irresistible harmonies: so that the callous despiser of religion may read them – and take notice – may hear them – and fall down and worship God’ (MBA i 140). Leopold’s sentiments exactly. When the not yet fourteen-year-old Wolfgang learned of Gellert’s death in 1769, the influential Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, moralist, teacher of German youth, professor at the University of Leipzig, correspondent and model to Leopold, he drolly commented to Nannerl, with a pun on Gellert and *gelehrt* (learned), that, ‘I have nothing new except that Herr gelehrt, the poet from Leipzig, died, and since his death has composed no more poetry’ (MBA i 309). Nannerl, too, had been plagued with more than her share of learned moralizing à la Gellert, and undoubtedly shared her brother’s immense relief that no more would be coming from that quarter. In one terse sentence to the appropriate addressee, Mozart dropped the obsequious mask he frequently wore, exploding the image of the child receptive in all respects to his father. Already at this tender age he could manage this with consummate skill, not shrieking defiance and disgust but subtly and humorously turning the rapier in a way leaving the intended victim uncertain of the wound. From this one sentence we learn legions about the young Mozart, in particular that we should be wary of believing everything he writes, especially to his father.

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© DAVID SCHROEDER. THIS CONTRIBUTION IS DRAWN FROM PROF. SCHROEDER’S BOOK, “MOZART IN REVOLT: STRATEGIES OF RESISTANCE, MISCHIEF, AND DECEPTION”, [HTTP://YALEPRESS.YALE.EDU/YUPBOOKS/BOOK.ASP?ISBN=9780300075427](http://YALEPRESS.YALE.EDU/YUPBOOKS/BOOK.ASP?ISBN=9780300075427), AND IS REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, [HTTP://YALEPRESS.YALE.EDU/YUPBOOKS/HOME.ASP](http://YALEPRESS.YALE.EDU/YUPBOOKS/HOME.ASP). PAGES 1 – 15 CONSTITUTE THE ENTIRE TEXT OF CHAPTER 5, “THE VIRTUOSITY OF DECEIT”.

NOTE: THE ABBREVIATION ‘MBA’ FOLLOWING EACH QUOTED PASSAGE IS USED AS A PARENTHETICAL CITATION TO *MOZART: BRIEFE UND AUFZEICHNUNG* (KASSEL, BASEL, LONDON, NEW YORK, 7 VOLS,

1962-75).  
PAGE 18.

ENDNOTES ARE FOUND HERE ON

The difficulties in establishing that Leopold had career plans as a writer involving his son become even more nagging in probing the extent of Wolfgang's knowledge of the project. As reporters in centers of political intrigue such as Washington, D.C., can attest, establishing who knew what and when they knew it can be all but impossible in recent cases like the Watergate or Iran-Contra scandals, where live but often dissimulating respondents still abound. In attempting to clarify these points in matters from over two centuries ago, we have nothing but correspondence to build the case on, and the veracity or biographical authority of that correspondence can crumble very quickly when put to the test. In all likelihood, Mozart was never entirely privy to his father's apparent plan, since full knowledge would spoil the spontaneity of his responses, resulting in a correspondence too contrived to convince the reader of its genuineness and moral authority. Yet Mozart must have been made aware of it on certain levels, knowing of his involvement in an epistolary commerce, or his suspicion would surely have been aroused. The matter of saving letters, for example, which Leopold had always insisted on not only in early correspondences with Hagenauer or his wife but after September 1777 with his son as well, would have left little doubt that these letters had a purpose beyond the immediate addressee. While the latter correspondence progressed, complicated by Mozart's frequent moves from city to city, or from lodging to lodging within a given town, Leopold's constant admonitions about the security of the post and enumerations of letters sent (noted in Chapter 3) similarly showed something of the father's hand.

#### EARLY STRATEGIES

Well aware of his father's literary aspirations, as noted to Padre Martini in 1776 (MBA i 532), Mozart undoubtedly felt admiration at this point for the direction in which Leopold's career appeared to be turning. Mozart could readily accept that their common enemy, the Archbishop of Salzburg, had been as detrimental to his father's career as his own, and to see his father circumventing his patron and establishing an international reputation through the wiles of his literary skill no doubt gave him much satisfaction. But this took a different turn late in 1777, when the paternal pattern of the correspondence became patently clear. Mozart had frequently traversed with his father's guidance down the moral avenues of Gellert's writing, and he did not have to be the genius he was to recognize in the bombardment of advice the genre of these letters with their advice intended for someone considerably younger than himself. Judgment on the truthfulness of Mozart's responses at the earliest stages of the correspondence must for the moment be reserved, but assuredly his replies were compliant, so much so that one suspects collusion in the project. While he was in Augsburg during October the advice flowed freely, and Mozart responded near the end of the month that 'I too will certainly make a great effort to live most exactly by your orders and the advice which you have been so good as to give me' (MBA ii 85).

These were exactly the words a father would wish to hear and they were eminently printable in a published moral biography, not only these words, but the ones that follow as well: 'Papa can live without worry. I always have God before my eyes. I recognize his omnipotence, and I fear his anger; but I also recognize his love, his compassion and his mercy towards his creatures. He will never forsake those who serve him. If it stands according to his will, it also

stands according to mine.’ The final point, seeming innocent enough at this time, proved more troublesome as the correspondence continued, as God’s will and Mozart’s will became increasingly indistinguishable and God’s will offered a convenient hedge against points of more questionable judgment. As it became more difficult to explain his actions on certain matters a month later, Mozart invoked this defence again, writing, ‘What after all is the point of useless speculation? What will happen we do not know — but yet we know it! — the will of God. So now a cheerful Allegro, non siate so Pegro’ (MBA ii 146). Early in December he tried it one more time, with the equivocation ‘incidentally, regardless of what comes, it can never be bad, if it follows the will of God; and it is my daily request to be thus’ (MBA ii 170). He did not know that a letter in the post saw through the ruse of this line of defence. Three days earlier, on 4 December, Leopold had pricked the balloon:

But that you, my son, write me *that all deliberation is useless and without any point, since we do not know what will happen*, that must have popped out of your head without any reflection — and was certainly written down rashly. *That all things will and must proceed according to the will of God*, no sensible man, to say nothing of a Christian, will deny. But does it follow from this that we should deal with things blindly, always live without caring, make no preparations and just wait until something flies down from above on its own? Does not God himself and all reasonable people demand that in all our dealings we should consider, according to our human reason, the consequences and their outcomes, and should strive to plan ahead as much as possible? If this is necessary in all our actions, then how much more crucial is it in your present circumstances on a journey? Have you not already met with some of the consequences of your conduct? (MBA ii 166).

Leopold was either generous or naive to call his son's approach 'rash'; Wolfgang by this point had developed his own strategy, and this time it did not work. When he used the 'will of God' stance in the future, as he would half a year later in relation to his mother's death — knowing his father had deciphered his own deceitful use of it — the implications appeared much more ominous.

While Mozart attempted for a few months to maintain an obsequious tone, he found this all but impossible to continue in the face of the often insulting advice Leopold heaped on him. If this correspondence was to be published, as Wolfgang had some inkling it would, it became all the more important to adjust or skew the impression posterity presumably would have of him based on these letters, as an incompetent fool. An early strategy involved being facetious, as he attempted from Mannheim on 14 November, in a 'confession' quoted in full in the previous chapter (p. 89):

I ... plead guilty that yesterday and the day before (and already many other times) I ... frequently ... spouted — rhymes, in fact of garbage, namely, about dirt, shitting and arse-licking — and actually in thoughts, words and — but not in deeds .... Hence I beg for the holy dispensation, if it can be easily secured; if not, it's all the same to me, for the game will carry on anyway (MBA ii 123-4).

Not being a hypocrite, Leopold probably enjoyed the sport in this; the game, however, no doubt went further, beyond the good humour of the Cannabichs, to other facets of behaviour Wolfgang omitted in his description. He had by now encountered his cousin Maria Anna Thekla in Augsburg, and also appeared to be falling in with some less than savoury characters in Mannheim; the confession may have been only partly facetious.

Another early strategy involved trivializing advice with light comments, such as those written on 22 November:

What you write about Mannheim I already fully know — but I never like to write about anything prematurely; everything will go fine. Perhaps in a future letter I can write you something *very good* for you, but only *good* for me, or something *very bad* in your eyes, but something *passable* in my eyes, or perhaps also something *passable* for you, but *very good, dear and valuable* for me! That's somewhat oracle-like, don't you agree? — it's cryptic, but still intelligible (MBA ii 138).

Hardly an oracle and certainly not intelligible; if anything, this approaches the style of a *commedia dell'arte* harlequin, bordering on the totally nonsensical. In garble such as this, the intelligibility certainly escaped his father: 'I've almost racked my brain out of my head — and written myself blind. I would like to take care of things in advance. And you see everything as a trifle, you are apathetic, you tie my hands when I try to advise and help you' (MBA ii 149).

As Leopold's advice and chiding became more upbraiding, Wolfgang became less inclined to let it pass without response. By the end of November he had had enough: 'You make many reproaches to both of us — and without our deserving it .... But if you ascribe the cause to my thoughtlessness, carelessness and laziness, I can do nothing but thank you for your good opinion of me, and regret with all my heart that you do not know me, your son' (MBA ii 152-3). Later in December came more of the same:

I had written to you that your last letter gave me much joy; that is true! But one thing annoyed me a little — your question of whether I wasn't becoming somewhat negligent about confession. I have no great objection to this. Just allow me one request: and this is not to think so miserably of me! I like to have a good time, but rest assured that I can be as serious as anyone else ... Once again I entreat you, most humbly, to have a better opinion of me (MBA ii 199).

By the end of December, responding to Leopold's travel plans for his mother, the tone of Wolfgang's opinion had now moved beyond facetiousness to a darker mode of irony: 'That is only what I believe; what I most certainly know is that whatever you find appropriate will be the best for us, for you are Herr Court Kapellmeister, and a pillar of good sense! [to quote Madame Robinig]. I kiss Papa, if you know him, on the hands a 1,000 times' (MBA ii 207). Leopold was not Court Kapellmeister, only an assistant, but could anything be more insulting than invoking his mediocre position in the Salzburg court as the basis for his authority? Indeed there could, and that lay in putting the words recognizing Leopold's superiority in the mouth of Mme Robinig, a woman Mozart groaned about on another occasion that it had been 'a long time since I spoke with such a fool' (MBA ii 536).

## THE TRUTH?

Following these few outbursts of filial frustration late in 1777, one finds virtually nothing in Mozart's subsequent letters with an accusatory or insulting tone. As a tactic it simply did not work; instead of stemming the tide of censure from Leopold it had the effect of making his disapproval even more excoriating. In the first two and a half months of 1778, before arriving in Paris in mid-March, Mozart returned in his letters to a more obsequious tone, but now handled with greater style and sophistication. Instead of the irony and insolence noted above,

he now made these types of comments seem like genuine compliments, such as, 'I am much obliged to you, my dear Papa, for the fatherly letter you wrote me; I will keep it with my treasures and always make use of it' (MBA ii 28 I). Later in February, the tone of filial devotion continued:

My chief purpose was, is and forever will be to strive to bring us together soon and happily — but we must have patience. ... We can trust in God, who will never forsake us. I will not be found lacking. How can you possibly doubt me? Is it just for myself that I work with all my strength, so that I may have such honour, such joys of love and pleasure to embrace with all my heart my most worthy and dearest father? ... I have placed my confidence in three friends, and these are powerful and invincible friends, namely in God, your head and in my head. Our heads are admittedly very different, but each in its own way is very good, workable and useful; and I hope that in time my head will little by little begin to approach yours in those areas in which yours is superior. Now all the best! Be merry and light-hearted. Be aware that you have a son who certainly has never, knowingly, neglected his filial duty to you, who will take the trouble to become always more worthy of so good a father, and who will remain unalterably your most obedient ... (MBA ii 306).

Shortly before leaving for Paris, Mozart reiterated the semi-deification of Leopold: '*Near to God comes Papa*; as a child that was my motto or axiom, and with that I remain firm' (MBA ii 318).

The truthfulness of these expressions remains very much in doubt; instead of being placed on that type of scale, they must be looked at more in terms of epistolary strategy. On numerous other matters over the previous few months, Mozart's truthfulness came very much into question, and on more than one of these Leopold called his son's bluff. In one case, involving a young singer, Mlle Kaiser in Munich, Mozart admitted to lying, although his motives for both lying and admitting to it seem less than clear. Early in October, he had praised her singing highly (MBA ii 29), but in February Leopold doubted his sincerity about this in light of Wolfgang's apparent turnaround on German and comic opera. Mozart's curious admission of deception appeared on the surface a humbling experience:

About your reproach concerning the little singer in Munich, I must admit that I was an ass to write you such a bold lie. In fact, she does not yet know what *singing* means. ... The reason I praised her so highly may well have been because from morning to night I heard nothing but: there is no better singer in all Europe. Whoever has not heard her, has not yet heard anything. I certainly did not dare to contradict them, partly because I wished to make some good friends, and partly because I had just come straight from Salzburg, where we have been cured of contradicting anyone. But as soon as I was alone, I laughed until my sides ached; why didn't I also laugh in my letter to you? That I really do not understand (MBA ii 286).

The explanation does not ring true; in fact, it seems designed to put Leopold off the track. He did not tell Leopold the truth on a number of subjects, and admitting here what was more contradiction than lie may well have been intended to divert Leopold from scrutinizing other matters, especially involving his interest in young women.

Compositional productivity and opportunities for making money were particularly sensitive subjects for Leopold, and Wolfgang's casual treatment of the commission from De Jean, the Dutch amateur flutist, drove Leopold, ever conscious of the state of their finances, to distraction. On these concertos and quartets, Leopold finally exploded in February 1778:

When I believe that everything is now on a better footing, and taking a correct course, in a flash again along comes a foolish, unexpected notion, or matters are revealed ultimately as having being different from how you reported them to me. So once more I have guessed it? In fact you have received only 96 florins instead of 200? — and why? — because you finished only two concertos and only three quartets for him. How many were you to have written for him, that he would only pay you half? Why do you write such a *lie* to me, that you had to compose only three short easy concertos and a pair of quartets? And why did you not follow my directive when I *specifically* wrote you: *You should satisfy this gentleman completely as quickly as possible*. ... Have I not in fact guessed everything? It appears that I see more and judge better from a distance than you do with these people right in front of your nose (MBA ii 293).

As to his honesty on various subjects, Mozart could merely protest, 'I beg you, believe anything you want of me, just nothing bad' (MBA ii 290). Leopold's refusal and the resultant nagging and carping called for other strategies, ones he would perfect in France under the apparent tutorship of one of the great French minds and *épistolières*.

## FRENCH EPISTOLARY MODELS

In what appears to be the substantial amount of pleasurable time Mozart and Mme d'Épinay spent together, one can only assume that he learned much from her about her own background and struggles, her epistolary and other literary endeavours, as well as something of the lives and thinking of a few of the great people in her intimate circle, such as Diderot and Voltaire. Considering the importance of epistolary style to her, especially in her novel *Histoire de Madame de Montbrillant* — an epistolary novel like those of Richardson, Fielding or Laclos (in fact preceding the last's *Les Liaisons dangereuses*) — as well as her contributions to the *Correspondance littéraire* and her enormous correspondence with numerous people, in all probability she exposed Mozart to epistolary concepts and approaches he had no idea existed. While German epistolary masters such as Gellert developed their styles in part in response to French influences, fundamental differences existed. The evolution of German as a literary language depended on a new, simpler and less encumbered style,<sup>1</sup> one ideally suited to moral discourse. France already had great writers in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Racine, Corneille and Molière to name a few, and French was poised as a much more sophisticated language in the second half of the eighteenth century, one capable of sustaining higher levels of irony, intrigue, double entendre and various modes of indirect or dissimulating expression. The role of letters proved crucial to this sophistication, and few understood the potential and achievements as well as Mme d'Épinay.

In matters of epistolary breadth and sophistication, arguably Voltaire had no equal in any country or language; even Gellert — who probably detested him — learned much from him about style and form. The known correspondence of Voltaire includes some 1,200 correspondents and as many as 17,000 letters, spanning a sixty-year period. In such an enormous correspondence one should not be surprised to find the writer perfecting his own style and devising forms and strategies appropriate to the addressee(s), the subject matter, his persuasiveness, how he wished to be perceived, or what enduring impression he wished to leave. He moves strategically between seriousness and humour, or sincerity and subterfuge, using whichever best suits his calculation of distance or intimacy, and he places his shifts of emotion or mood at the most suitable point in a letter to carry the addressee through a progression or development designed to have the desired effect. Wearing the appropriate epistolary mask, or putting on the desired persona, became the trademark of his letters, a process Samuel S. B. Taylor describes in the following way:

Voltaire's pursuit of an image or a disguise through his letters was normal and frequent. He uses a form of ventriloquism, a verbal play of *personae* that borrows clothing from the Biblical text, from medicine, philosophy, literary allusion. He 'dials' a disguise, almost as a game, and invites the recipient to a form of complex epistolary dance. It is here that his virtuosity of style is so evident, since he borrows styles as a temporary convenience, but, even more, as a kind of performance art, a verbal pantomime.<sup>2</sup>

Similarities with conversation remain, but a fundamental difference lies in the fact that while letters may at times cultivate an improvisatory style similar to conversation, the letter writer retains the ability to determine strategies and approaches, controlling reception in ways impossible in direct interaction.

Of course one cannot say that upon setting foot on French soil Mozart acquired an entirely new epistolary approach, either in writing to his father or to his various other correspondents. Yet, he may have become more conscious of the strategic possibilities for shifting his mask from one correspondent to another, transforming moods within a single letter, and particularly, in dealing more effectively with his father — to maintain the impression of filial duty and intimacy while at the same time putting up less perceptible means of distancing. Unlike Voltaire, Mozart engaged in relatively little correspondence with the exception of his letters to his father, although it included enough people to give one a sense of the diversity of masks he could wear. His letters to one of these others, his cousin Maria Anna Thekla, stand at the opposite end of the spectrum from those to his father. These letters continue to be troubling to some of today's readers, and a separate chapter therefore seems useful to put them in their eighteenth-century setting. His letters to Michael Puchberg and other friends will be considered in chapter 8. Since the letters to his father take a somewhat different turn from Paris onward, showing greater skill in manipulating the reader — sometimes bordering on epistolary fiction — it is well worth devoting a separate section to them.

## LIES MY SON TOLD ME

Mozart's most skilful use of correspondence — his finest epistolary virtuosity — came in the letters written to his father from late March 1778, on his arrival in Paris, to January 1779, when he finally and reluctantly returned home to Salzburg. Leopold had not yet given up on the project during the summer of 1778 since the advice still flowed freely, but by autumn his replies to Wolfgang were so distressed, angered and out of control that one can no longer imagine publication as a possibility. In the end, Leopold hoped for little more than to survive the sojourn of his son with a modicum of his own credibility in Salzburg intact. The process by which things came to this was not one of defiance on the part of Wolfgang; in fact, Wolfgang achieved the direct opposite of that, feigning obedience while widening the gap between words and deeds. Success could be measured by Leopold's happy responses, which occasionally were forthcoming, although this could not always be so since Leopold had ways of knowing that certain words and actions did not correlate. In spite of periodic angry responses, Wolfgang maintained his obsequious strategy to the end, ingratiating, thanking, praising, calming, stroking, cajoling — in short, lying his way through ten critical months of correspondence.

As a primary objective in these letters, Mozart attempted to give the impression of pleasing his father, and he occasionally uses words to this effect in a direct manner, as he does early in April: 'But I am prepared to do anything to give you pleasure' (MBA ii 332). As a formality it remained crucial to end letters in the appropriate manner, with words such as 'Farewell and best wishes. I kiss your hands a thousand times ... and remain your most obedient son' (MBA ii

358). Success appeared to be in hand if he could write as follows: 'Your last letter drew tears of joy from me — in that it completely revealed to me more than ever your true fatherly love and concern. I will strive with all my strength to deserve more than ever your fatherly love' (MBA ii 422).

The evidence, however, places these words in a context suggesting anything but true filial devotion or obedience, and one finds this demonstrated in a number of matters, some in response to Leopold's questions and others strategically invented and placed by Wolfgang. One of these, a longstanding concern for Leopold (as it was for Gellert in his epistolary discourse to his son), involved Wolfgang's productivity, which should have been considerable during this sojourn if he hoped to secure a position. Old works by a young composer would not always be suitable; they might in fact give the wrong impression to a court searching for a mature and able composer, making necessary the composition of new works which should, of course, according to Leopold, follow the Parisian taste about which Grimm should be consulted. To satisfy Leopold's concern in this matter, Wolfgang periodically informed him of works in progress, sometimes breaking off short on a letter claiming the need to get back to work on a composition in question, works there is not the least shred of evidence existed or for that matter were ever started. The first of these phantom works was a large project, an opera: 'I will not write an act for an opera, but instead an opera entirely by me, en deux actes. The poet has already completed the first act. Noverre (at whose place I eat as often as I like) has taken it over, and in fact came up with the idea' (MBA ii 332). A week later he sends more news, although now slightly less definite: 'Soon now, I believe, I will receive the libretto for my opera en deux actes. Then I must first present it to the Director M. de Huime, for him to accept it. But that is not in doubt, for Noverre initiated it and De Huime can thank Noverre for his position' (MBA ii 357). Two months later it became clear the project would not get off the ground:

With the opera, this is how things stand just now. Finding a good text is very difficult. The old ones, which are the best, are not convertible to the modern style, and none of the new ones are of any use. For poetic texts, which alone the French can take pride in, become worse every day — and yet the poetry is the single thing that remains good here — because they do not understand music. There are now two operas in aria which I may write, one en deux actes, and the other en trois. The one en deux is *Alexandre et Roxane* — but the poet who is writing the libretto is still in the country — the en trois is *Demofont* (translated from *Metastasio*). ... Of this one I have also not yet been able to see anything (MBA ii 389).

Clearly no libretto existed to begin with, nor would there be one in the foreseeable future. In the meanwhile, Leopold had felt useful by giving all sorts of advice on operatic writing and the French taste.

Other phantom works continue to pop up with clockwork regularity. The ruse has been as successful for many subsequent music scholars as for Leopold himself; much energy has gone into identifying certain of these works such as a concertante noted on 5 April 1778,<sup>3</sup> and a second symphony he claimed the French performed on 8 September (MBA ii 473). Neal Zaslaw has expressed some doubts about the existence of a newly composed second symphony,<sup>4</sup> and Alan Tyson has been much more prepared to doubt Mozart's veracity, suggesting Mozart used the reference to mislead Leopold.<sup>5</sup> Tyson also picks up on Mozart's means of covering his tracks; Mozart offered this explanation of why he would not have two symphonies in hand on his return to Salzburg: 'Le Gros purchased from me the two overtures and the *sinfonia concertante*. He imagines that he alone has them, but that is not true; I have them still fresh in my mind, and, I will draft them again as soon as I get home' (MBA ii 492).

It is much more likely that if Mozart were to write them out, it would be for the first time.

Other works referred to seem even more obscure or unlikely to have ever had pen set to paper. These include a scena for Giustino Ferdinando Tenducci, a male soprano (MBA ii 458), six trios (ii 476), and yet another opera: 'Why must I be brief? Because my hands are full with things to do. Just to please Herr von Gemmingen and myself I am now writing the first act of the declaimed opera (which I was engaged to write) *for nothing*; I will bring it with me and then complete it at home' (MBA ii 516). Once again no evidence exists to suggest that Mozart ever started to write it. In one other case of a claimed work, a concerto for violin and clavier, he actually did write an initial fragment of 120 measures. It should also be noted that certain works long believed to have been composed in 1778, including the piano sonatas K.330,331,332 and 333, come from some time later.<sup>6</sup>

Leopold very much looked forward to seeing some of these works, making his request in July: 'If you could delight us with something of yours, then do so! When will such a convenient opportunity come again to send us something?' (MBA ii 413). On the same day Mozart had written to his sister, apologizing 'that I cannot offer you a piece of music, as in other years' (MBA ii 411). By October, no longer in Paris and possibly en route to Salzburg, Mozart realized that he had built a large phantom repertoire, and he had better begin to revise this list to something closer to the truth: 'I have not produced very much. I do not have the three quartets and the flute concerto for M. De Jean; when he went to Paris, he packed them into the wrong trunk, and they consequently remained in Mannheim. ... Therefore I will be bringing nothing completed with me except my sonatas' (MBA ii 492). The works quickly evaporated through various vanishing tricks, in wrong trunks (he had written only two quartets for De Jean) or the purchases of Le Gros, existing now only in his memory. Along with not writing, he similarly took few pupils in Paris, and worded his explanation as follows: 'For giving lessons here is no joke — you can easily exhaust yourself at it; and if you do not take *many* pupils, you cannot make much money. You must not think that this is laziness — No! — rather because it goes entirely against my genius, against my manner of life' (MBA ii 427).

## EVASIVENESS

Evasiveness also proved to be a fairly effective strategy in these letters — simply avoiding discussion of certain topics or issues or not replying on certain points raised by Leopold. A more drastic form of evasion involved not writing at all, as occasionally happened for an entire month. During August Leopold heard nothing from his son, and expressed his concern on 3 September: 'I wrote to you on the 3rd of August, the 13th and the 27<sup>th</sup>. ... Yet since your short letter of July 31st I have seen nothing from you. This makes my oppressed heart even more troubled' (MBA ii 463). By 10 September he had still heard nothing: 'The anxiety that I feel, not having received a letter from you for an entire month, is indescribable' (MBA ii 468). Referring to a later hiatus in writing, Mozart made the following apology: 'Concerning two things I have to ask your forgiveness, first, that I have not written to you for so long, and second, that this time I must be brief' (MBA ii 516). The reason: he was too busy working on his (nonexistent) opera.

That, of course, was a crude form of evasiveness, not like the type he usually practised, such as a letter to his father from Paris dated 12 June 1778, a fairly long chatty letter which goes on endlessly about certain friends and singers but says very little of substance, and certainly not the substance

concerning activities or plans Leopold hoped to hear. In his reply of 29 June, Leopold insisted on receiving some real news:

But there are no more announcements about *your composition students* — nothing more about *the ballet with Noverre* — nothing more about *your opera*. Also no word whether *Wendling* is still in Paris? — whether Wolfgang has seen Baron Bach? — whether Piccinni is still in Paris? — whether he [Wolfgang] has met the two *Staymetzes* [Stamitzes]? — whether he has seen *Grétry*? — whether the performers at the concert spirituel and the production are any good? I would be very pleased to have some mention of all these things with just a few words (but without covering whole pages on them). ... My dear son can easily imagine that it is a little like torture for me to know that in the meanwhile he has been composing many works — and that I, alas! cannot hear any of these, which at one time afforded me my greatest pleasure (MBA ii 384).

At this point Wolfgang's evasiveness had not yet become a matter of frustration, and Leopold accepted the stories about composition.

Another technique of evasion involved changing the subject, first used by Mozart in letters dealing with the disagreeable subject of his mother's illness and death. In his letter of 9 July 1778, after giving only a few details of the death, Mozart quickly moves to other happier subjects: 'Let us therefore say a devout Our Father for her soul — and now get on with other matters; everything has its appropriate time' (MBA ii 394). This, of course, could not possibly satisfy Leopold, who wanted details: 'Write to me soon — with everything — what day she was buried — where?' (MBA ii 404). But Wolfgang remained taciturn: 'I hope you have safely received my last two letters. Now we will no longer talk about their main contents — it is all over now — and were we to cover whole pages about it, the events could not be altered' (MBA ii 405). Wolfgang proceeds with a profusion of anecdotes of little interest to Leopold, although one comment suggested something of the current working of Wolfgang's mind: 'Only a very clumsy story-teller not of the first rank would avoid some fabrication — I'm saying, some fictionalizing' (MBA ii 406). In writing to Fridolin Weber at about this time, Mozart advised him on a professional matter concerning Aloysia's performance career, attempting to teach his older friend how to work a deception to his advantage: 'then you will see what effect this thing can have; — but this must be done with great subtlety and cunning' (MBA ii 415). This scheme would require Weber to act his role convincingly — curious advice to be given to the professional actor.

## ON HIS MOTHER'S DEATH

Undoubtedly the most famous of all Mozart's deceptions is also his most benevolent, his letter written to his father immediately after the death of his mother. Even though she had died a few hours earlier, he described her as being ill and that hope should not yet be forfeited. On the same night, he also wrote to the close family friend, the Abbé Bullinger in Salzburg, telling him the truth and asking him to break it gently to Leopold. This Bullinger did, and Leopold was prepared to accept what Mozart described as 'this small and very necessary deception' (MBA ii 393). While the deception may be regarded as benevolent, a type that the influence of Mme d'Épinay or Diderot may have helped Mozart to write, it nevertheless has some disturbing aspects that one finds difficult to reconcile with his good intentions. One of these concerns his sudden changing of the subject in the two primary letters. In the first, dated 3 July 1778, he abruptly shifts from the discussion of her illness, with the words 'Now on to other things; let us dispel these melancholy thoughts', and then moving on to a lengthy description of the performance of the Paris symphony as well as details concerning his nonexistent opera. In the next letter, he launches into chitchat that seems entirely inappropriate in a letter describing his mother's

death. Leopold had recently passed on some amusing anecdotes about Salzburg musicians, and Mozart now responds at length to these descriptions. Again this letter goes on and on, with little real news, seeming altogether too frivolous for the letters whose main subject concerned the most monumental loss possible to Leopold.

The other disturbing element in these letters, particularly the first in which he claimed she was still alive, involves his discussion of the will of God. Mozart had used reference to this before as a ruse and Leopold had chastised him for it. Now Mozart uses it again as a deception, his mother already having died, and he uses it in a repetitive way seemingly designed to underline its deceit. In the space of half a paragraph, he makes reference to God, and the will of God especially, eight times, giving these words a rhetorical sense detached from the writer's genuine sentiments. Even then, at the moment of his mother's death, which surely aroused the deepest emotion in Mozart, he wrote to his father with consummate epistolary skill and style.

The various deceptions of this letter, dated 3 July 1778, do not end with his suspension 'day and night between fear and hope', his having 'submitted myself completely to the will of God', or his equivocations about a nonexistent opera. In the middle of this letter he dropped his scurrilous view on the death of Voltaire, 'the godless arch-roogue' who 'like a dog, kicked the bucket like a beast!' (MBA ii 389). He immediately preceded this with a comment about honest Germans, Christians and husbands, and followed it with a note of agreement on the wages owed to Theresa the maid, all in the same long paragraph. With this short, detached, punctuated remark, Mozart, on the night of his mother's death, demonstrated perhaps his highest achievement as an *épistolier*, as a true disciple of the French letter-writers, as a beneficiary, it would appear, of the mentoring of Voltaire himself. In dismissing Voltaire so contemptuously to his father, Mozart appears to have paid him the ultimate compliment. Voltaire's own first epistolary dictum was to write appropriately for one's addressee, and this Mozart did — although perhaps with a touch of overkill.

With this shot at Voltaire, Mozart wore his Christian-moralist mask, as he already had in the sentence leading up to it: 'for I always am and always will be happiest in the house — or with a good, true, honest German who, if he is single, lives alone as a good Christian, or if married, loves his wife and raises his children properly' (MBA ii 389). Speaking words such as these occasionally, as he did, affirming his adherence to the standards of morality his father had so often admonished him about, would surely help to deflect constant nagging and probing into his behaviour. When subjected to this type of scrutiny or when chided for fearing his father's reproaches, Mozart protested with righteous indignation, such as in his reply on 8 January 1779: 'I know of no transgressions that should cause me to fear your reproaches. I have made no mistake (by that I mean a mistake which does not befit a Christian and honourable man)' (MBA ii 536). Leopold's fears of unsavoury travel companions who might lure his son into licentious situations were similarly met with pacification: 'Concerning the businessman who travels with me, you can banish all your worries; he is the most honourable man in the world, more concerned about me than for himself, travelling, to please me, to Augsburg and Munich, and perhaps even to Salzburg' (MBA ii 502). To clear the air completely about this unidentified traveller, he continues, 'We always weep together when we think that we will eventually have to separate. He is not a learned man, but a man of experience; we live together like children. When he thinks of his wife and children, whom he has left behind in Paris, I try to comfort him; when I think of my family he attempts to console me.' The truest statement here is probably that they lived like children; as for the mode of consolation, one can only speculate.

## BEHAVIOUR UNBECOMING

The details of some of Mozart's escapades did reach Leopold's ears, including whatever indulgence there had been with Maria Anna Thekla in Augsburg, news we can presume that Leopold's brother had passed on to him. In the letter of 12 February 1778, in which Leopold assumed that his son's intentions toward Aloysia Weber were less than honourable, he also raises the romp with the 'Bäsle', taking it as yet another example of Wolfgang's irresponsible behaviour with women, accusing him of amusing himself 'with my brother's daughter, who must now send you her portrait' (MBA ii 274). Mozart's indignant reply to his father's cutting remarks 'about my merry indulgence with your brother's daughter' in which 'the situation is not like that' (MBA ii 286) proved one of his weaker efforts in refracting the truth.

How matters actually were, perhaps in this case or in other escapades from this time, we get some idea when Mozart lived in Vienna early in 1781, and again reports reached Leopold about the unbecoming behaviour of his son. In order to deflect these admonitions, he compared his present aspirations with those of his more youthful and reckless adventures of 1777-9. On 4 April 1781 he assures Leopold that he need 'think no more of my stupid actions, of which I have repented long ago with all my heart. With misfortune comes wisdom, and I now have very different thoughts' (MBA ii 103). One such assurance proved not to be enough, as the next one came a month later: 'You surely must believe me that I have changed completely. ... You certainly must have confidence in me, that I am no longer a fool. And even less should you believe that I am a godless, ungrateful son' (MBA ii 121). Even this did not suffice, as the protests continued in June:

Incidentally, you can rest assured that I genuinely hold my religion securely — and should I ever have the misfortune (which God forbid) to fall into misdirected ways, I shall speak of you, my upright father, as entirely blameless. For I alone would be the scoundrel — as I have you to thank for all good things and for both my temporal and spiritual well-being and salvation (MBA ii 130).

This is not what Leopold would want to hear, and reveals a much more independent-minded Mozart than the one in Paris. These protestations appear to show that Mozart had behaved dissolutely on the Paris sojourn, and lied about it at the time, simply wearing morality as one of his many epistolary masks.

## WHERE IN THE WORLD IS WOLFGANG AMADEUS?

Throughout 1778 Mozart had seldom been more than vague in discussing his travel plans with his father, but after he left Paris in late September, at which time Leopold expected him to come home, his vagueness, silence or misinformation became much more contentious. Knowing that the plan to find a new appointment and relocate the family had all but run its course and the pressure to return was intensifying, Mozart decided to prolong his freedom as much as possible, and also to spend more time with his favourite people such as the Weber family, which he assumed was still in Mannheim, and perhaps his cousin in Augsburg. Since the Mannheim court had moved to Munich, and no prospects remained for making money in that city, Leopold advised him strongly not to return to Mannheim. After departing from Paris, Mozart prolonged his stopover in Nancy, and not informing his father of this drew an angry response:

Now comes a stab in the heart! *A horrible stab in the heart!* I had written to the brothers Frank at Strassburg on October 1<sup>st</sup>, reporting your arrival and my money order to Herr Scherz. They replied on the 9<sup>th</sup>, *that you had not yet arrived, that*

*the conductor of the coach reported that you had stayed behind in Nancy with some travelling companions, etc. But you wrote to me from Nancy on about the 3<sup>rd</sup>, that you and the businessman with whom you travelled had left the coach behind at Nancy, and that you were setting off on the following morning to Strassburg if the opportunity of a reduced cost should arise (MBA ii 499).*

Mozart's long and convoluted explanation for staying longer, his being persuaded to stay and play a concert to which virtually no one came, simply does not ring true. Similarly his staying longer than expected in Strasbourg because of floods may simply have been an inventive excuse.

When he then popped up in Mannheim in November, against his father's wishes, Leopold's exasperation began to spin out of control: 'Frankly, I don't know what I should write — I will lose my mind, or die of emaciation. It is impossible to remember all your projects which since you departed from Salzburg you have kept in your head and also written about to me, without losing my wits. They have all amounted to proposals, empty words, in the end resulting in *absolutely nothing*' (MBA ii 508). The berating continues:

During your stay in Nancy you literally threw money out the window, when instead of squandering it uselessly, you had a number of opportunities to travel to Strassburg, where you could more readily apply your money to good use. ... I could not possibly imagine the crazy notion that you would remain in Mannheim, where there is no court, and consequently believed that you must have come to Augsburg on the 10th at the very latest.

He finally left Mannheim in mid-December, again saying very little to his father, and explaining his silence in the following way: 'The reason why I did not reply to you right away was because I wanted to report to you the most certain and precise information about my departure from here, and I did not know it myself at the time' (MBA ii 520). All of this vexed Leopold beyond the limit:

I have already written you repeatedly that our interest and my prospects demand that you should return forthwith to Salzburg, and I believed that you would give more consideration to reason, and frankly that you would be more familiar with your father's insight, rather than relying on your own futile wishes. So I hadn't the slightest doubt that finally by the New Year you would then surely be back in Salzburg. However, when I least anticipated it, and was already expecting to see a letter from you from Augsburg, you give me the news that you will be travelling to Munich with the Prelate on the 26th or 27th at the earliest. Good! The opportunity justifies it. But do not imagine that you can loaf about in Munich doing nothing. ... But what is the point of my saying more? You yourself, if without prejudice (setting aside all your merry dreams) you consider everything, will have to be so good as to accept that I am right; and so what if I give an explanation of my opinion, reproaching you about one thing or another, as I am heartily sick of writing so much that during the last fifteen months my eyes have almost popped out of my head from writing. ... Therefore you must follow my order and depart immediately, for you have been loathsome, and I am shamed before the whole world for having given assurances that you would most certainly be home by Christmas or by the New Year at the very latest. Good heavens! How often have you made a liar of me! (MBA ii 528).

By this point, it should be clear, the biographical project had come to an end. These words do not belong to a staunch if stern moralist, writing to edify an audience; these are the screams of one totally defeated at an epistolary enterprise which could have made his fame and fortune, to say nothing of being

deeply in debt, consigned to patriarchal oblivion and facing the grim prospect for the future of business as usual in Salzburg.

#### THE PRODIGAL'S RELUCTANT RETURN

Yet, for Leopold one more blow remained, connected with his son's circuitous and prolonged travel, perhaps harder than any of the above to accept since it involved him most personally. Not only was his son's return to Salzburg a matter of professional pride and necessity; at the heart of the matter stood his relationship with his son which appeared by the end of December to have vanished into the void. Wolfgang's happy return to his father's arms had been a frequent topic throughout the entire correspondence, and it took on a new urgency about the time he left Paris. Lest Mozart should not fully appreciate the depth of his father's sentiment about this, Leopold began to put it in stronger, more guilt-evoking terms: 'You may rest assured and believe it well, my dearest son, that without you near me, I will die much sooner, and that if I could have the pleasure of having you with me, I would live many years longer' (MBA ii 435). While still in Paris, in what seemed an eternity from Salzburg, Mozart could assure his father that 'when we finally have the joy and pleasure (which is my single endeavour) of living together in one place — when this happy time eventually comes — God grant it — soon! — then the time will have come — and then it will be only up to you' (MBA ii 425) .

As the physical distance to Salzburg diminished, these assurances became much more difficult to make; at the same time Leopold's need for affirmation and insistence on the fulfillment of filial duty multiplied accordingly. While still in Paris, such as in his letter of 11 September 1778, Mozart could even write of how he looked forward to returning to his home town, the 'one place where I can say I am at home — can live in peace and quiet with my finest father and my dearest sister — can do as I like — where apart from the duties of service I am my own master — I have a permanent salary — can go away when I like — and can make a journey every two years. What more could I want?' (MBA ii 472). Only hints of discontent about working for the Archbishop surface in this letter, but as he gets closer to home this moves from the present *pianissimo* to a resounding *fortissimo* as the grim reality of it returns. He attempts to assure Leopold that his loathing applied only to the Archbishop and the low inhabitants of Salzburg — not his father — although in this he does not entirely succeed. In spite of outpourings of emotion, demands, threats or doses of guilt, nothing seemed to be bringing his son closer to home; Mozart always found one more reason for staying away longer, awakening in Leopold his deepest fears.

Not wishing to confront his father directly with a discussion of the possible barrier between them, Mozart resorted to the triangular epistolary approach he had used before to break the news of his mother's death, this time explaining his position to their common friend Johann Baptist Becke, who in turn wrote to Leopold as the buffer for Mozart's feelings. Leopold, in his reply to Mozart, appeared to be surprised by Becke's letter:

If your tears, your melancholy and heart-rending anxiety have no basis other than that you doubt my love and tenderness for you, then you can sleep peacefully — eat and drink peacefully and travel home even more peacefully. I now realize all too well that you do not entirely know your father. It seems from our friend's letter that this is the main substance of your sadness; oh, I hope there is no other! Then you have no other reason to fear a reception lacking in tenderness or unpleasant days with me and your sister. ... The main thing that places me in a state of angst and makes me anxious is your extended absence. As it is already four months since I received in hand your interim certificate [of appointment] — as people know that you left Paris on September 26th — as they know that I have

been forever writing you that you should come — that people believed they would see you here on my name-day — then at Christmas — and finally with absolute certainty by the New Year, therefore I must tell you that people are saying to my face that you are treating the Prince — and, even worse, your father, as a fool ... I will embrace you with joy. I am quickly becoming a fool as I write this . . . (MBA ii 532).

To this, Mozart replied,

I assure you, my dearest father, that I am now looking forward with all joy to returning just to *you* (but not to Salzburg), since I am convinced by your last letter that you know me better than before! There never was any other reason for my long delay in travelling home — for the sadness which finally I could no longer hold back, and therefore completely opened my heart to my friend Becke — than this doubt. What other possible reason could I have? I am not aware of any guilt that should cause me to fear your reproaches (MBA ii 536).

Not only does he employ the strategy of the epistolary third party here, but he also resorts to the language of novels, of 'opening his heart' to someone who could be the conduit, taking off the sharp edge of emotion in a dispassionate transmission of the source of the sadness. These words, though, did not hasten his departure, as he found yet another reason for delay, this time waiting for his cousin in the hope of travelling together with her to Salzburg.

Leopold's last words on the subject cascaded with as much dismay as ever:

But you cannot stay on [in Munich] to wait for an answer from my brother about this, *for I am absolutely determined that you will leave with Gschwendner*. I have told everyone that you will come with him, and you must not drive this thing any further, making me sound like a perpetual liar. If my niece wants to honour me with her presence, *she can follow on the 20th by the mail coach*. ... Now you have no more excuses. You have seen the opera, and consequently you have done everything you wanted to do. I am therefore expecting you to arrive with Herr Gschwendner without any more delays (MBA ii 539-40).

While this may have been his last word on the matter at hand, he more pointedly and ironically expressed his resignation to the way he had been treated in the letters a month and a half earlier: 'I want, if it is God's will, to live yet a couple of years more, pay my debts — and then, if you have the appetite, you can run your head up against the wall. But, no! you have too good a heart! You have no vices — you are just rash! Everything in its time!' (MBA ii 515).

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TO CLOSE HIS STUDY AND INVESTIGATIONS, David Schroeder offers these concluding thoughts on the epistolary Mozart at the end of Chapter 8, "Mozart as Harlequin":

#### OPENING HIS HEART

Different masks proved useful for other purposes, and that included obtaining money. His need during the last few years of his life became fairly urgent, as his sources for financial stability during the mid-1780s had more or less dried up. The rumour spreading in Vienna immediately after his death that his debts amounted to 30,000 florins, though, appears to have been exaggerated tenfold.<sup>11</sup> Michael Puchberg turned out to be as willing a source for providing money as the Baroness had been in providing for other needs, and Mozart had no difficulty perfecting the epistolary style that would most effectively keep it flowing. In fact, borrowing money from Puchberg proved to be very much an epistolary exercise; most of the letters sent to this fellow freemason were written in Vienna and sent within Vienna, often shortly before or after the two had met for lunch where they could have discussed such matters but apparently did not. Puchberg was not the only freemason able to provide loans to the sometimes strapped composer, and a letter to Franz Hofdemel dated March 1789 demonstrated how Mozart would request a loan in a normal way, with minimal embellishment:

I am taking the liberty without standing on formality to ask a favour of you. I would be very much bound to you if you could or would lend me a hundred florins until the 20th of next month. On the 20th I receive the quarterly installment of my salary, and would then pay back the debt with thanks. I have depended too much on the hundred ducats (which I expect to receive from abroad). ... I have left my cash supply too depleted, so that *at the moment* I have an urgent necessity for some money and have therefore placed my trust in you, for I am completely convinced of your friendship (MBA iv 77-8).

Mozart could ask for a loan in a straightforward manner and be successful, as proved true in this case.

On about twenty occasions, beginning in June 1788, Mozart wrote to Michael Puchberg begging for money, ranging from a few florins up to as much as two thousand, and on most attempts he succeeded — although not in receiving the huge sums that would have amounted to a year's salary. In one of these letters, dated 12 July 1789, Mozart actually clarified the epistolary nature of these requests:

Just recently when I was with you I was longing to unburden my heart to you, although I did not have the courage! — and I would still not have — and I tremble as I dare to write you — and I would not even dare to write, were I not certain that you know me, that you are aware of my circumstances, and are entirely convinced of my *innocence* regarding my unfortunate and most sorry situation (MBA iv 92).

This relationship worked very much on two tiers: on one level, they met for lunch, chamber music, or other social activities, and on the other, they communicated more intimately through letters in which Mozart felt he could 'unburden his heart' to his friend. 'Unburden his heart' stands as the operative phrase in these letters, repeated often by Mozart in them, followed by all the sordid details of his 'wretched condition', his illnesses, his headaches, his toothaches, his insomnia, as well as the details of Constanze's health and sleeping habits, and the expensive cures for both of them. Mozart did not divulge these details to anyone else in his letters, and clearly none of his other letters from this time wallow in such a lugubrious way, suggesting he presented

these details very much for Puchberg's benefit. Puchberg, an obviously successful man of business, also had a sentimental streak — sympathy for the downtrodden — and a fascination with tales of woe, with details of suffering and sadness; he may very well have been an avid reader of the epistolary novels of Richardson or Gellert. Mozart recognized what moved him, that he was deeply touched by these matters — perhaps moved by sympathy and perhaps made uncomfortable by the embarrassment of his own riches — and could be stirred into giving to relieve his own sense of guilt or embarrassment. For Puchberg, Mozart acted a role he played for no one else, becoming for him a real-life sentimental *épistolier*, a familiar character emerging from the pages of a recognizable literary genre to touch his subject's heart (and, in this case, purse).

Assessing the actual level of misery in the descriptions Mozart penned for Puchberg has proved difficult in the light of Mozart's cheerful letters to other people at the same time. Perhaps he wrote to Puchberg only on bad days, and we should not doubt that he had many. Starting a letter with 'I am very sorry that I cannot go out and speak with you myself, but my toothache and headache are still too great and in general I still feel devoid of strength' (MBA iv 106) sets a distinctive tone for what follows. Similarly, words such as 'for some time you will have noticed my perpetual sadness' (MBA iv 104) seem somewhat calculated considering the side of Mozart that Stoll or von Jacquin enjoyed during these years. Along with the invocation of opening his heart, Mozart's postscript to one of the Puchberg letters also helps to place his epistolary mode in perspective: 'My wife was wretchedly ill again yesterday. Today leeches were attached to her and, thank God, she improves. I am truly most unfortunate, forever suspended between fear and hope!' (MBA iv 95). Readers will, of course, remember Mozart's words to his father on the night of his mother's death: 'My dear mother is very ill — she has been bled, as has become the routine. ... For a long time now I have been suspended day and night between fear and hope — but now I have submitted myself completely to the will of God. ... Let us dispel these melancholy thoughts; we must hope, but not too much' (MBA ii 387-8). In that case his mother's lifeless body lay in the same room in which he wrote these words, and 'hope' was intended to divert his father's attention from the grim truth. Now he used the same technique (virtually the same words), but since Constanze surely was nowhere near death's door, 'hope' probably had more to do with a forgivable loan than her health. Linking these letters with reality has proved to be a very risky business; we have here a calculated strategy — the wearing of a highly distinctive literary mask — with no more connection to the actual events of his life than the letters to his father had offered.

#### POSTSCRIPT

Mozart's letters to his various correspondents show him to be a harlequinesque masquerader, selecting the appropriate mask not only for the benefit of his addressee but for his own purposes which could be serious or light-hearted. No unified Mozart presents himself here; instead, he emits diverse and often contradictory signals as sinner and reformer or scamp and confidante, appearing obedient and recalcitrant or sophisticated and crude, and appealing above the shoulders as well as below the waist. To some he writes as a novelist, giving the illusion of opening his heart and occupying the moral high ground, while to others he belongs with the lowest of the Grub Street hacks, little more than a smutty pamphleteer. This diversity has caused some to doubt a connection between Mozart the correspondent and Mozart the composer; for them the letters represent the all-too-human Mozart whereas the compositions occupy a superhuman domain of genius, untouched by the sweat, the pockmarks or the occasional pleasures of reality.

Mozart's genius cannot be doubted — that, after all, accounts for the unabated fascination after two centuries — but must that genius exist in some untouchable and inscrutable realm of the mind unrelated to the person it resides in? There are, of course, risks in answering no to that question, such as opening the floodgate to ventures which use the letters as raw material for personality analysis. Wearing masks in letters, it must be concluded, obscures the person more than reveals him, making the letters unreliable documents for the formulation of a composite character sketch. Yet, the letters of Mozart can play a crucial role in the ways we understand him as a composer, and that role depends on how we read the letters. They most certainly tell us much about his times, and in part that emerges in the orbit of what eighteenth-century letter writers wished to accomplish strategically in evoking responses from readers. They tell us much about the person as well, although less in a taming biographical way than in the type of insight one can gain into the person who achieves such virtuosity in letter-writing strategies.

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#### ENDNOTES:

##### TO CHAPTER 5, "THE VIRTUOSITY OF DECEIT"

1. See Eric Blackwell, *The Emergence of German as a Literary Language* (Cambridge, 1959), 297, 478 and 505.
2. Samuel S.B. Taylor, 'Voltaire Letter-Writer', *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 21 (1985): 345.
3. D.N. Leeson and R.D. Levin, 'On the authenticity of K. Anh. C 14.01 (297b), a Symphonia Concertante for Four Winds and Orchestra', *Mozart-Jahrbuch* (1976-7): 70-96.
4. Neal Zaslaw, 'Mozart's Paris Symphonies', *The Musical Times* 119 (1978): 756.
5. Alan Tyson, 'Mozart's Truthfulness', *The Musical Times* 119 (1978): 938.
6. Wolfgang Plath, 'Beiträge zur Mozart-Autobiographie II: Schriftchronologie 1770-1780', *Mozart-Jahrbuch* (1976-7): 171.

##### TO CHAPTER 8, "MOZART AS HARLEQUIN"

11. Julia Moore, 'Mozart in the Market-Place', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 114, no. 1 (1989): 18. For the rumour itself, see Franz Xaver Niemetschek, *Lebensbeschreibung des k.k. Kapellmeisters Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart aus Originalquellen*, 2nd ed. (Prague, 1808), 57.