

W.A. Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*: Gender roles revisited

by

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to determine to what extent the way in which gender roles are portrayed in Mozart's opera *Die Zauberflöte* reflect the conventions of the time. A case study forms the basis for the research, where narrative data analysis is used to compare the non-indexical material found in the documents. A close reading of the libretto forms the first part of the analysis, after which four documents used as source material for the libretto are analysed, namely De Troyes' *Yvain*, Terrasson's *Sethos*, Von Born's *Über die Mysterien*, and Wieland's *Dschinnistan*. To compare the libretto to other contemporary German literature of its time, an analysis of Goethe's *Torquato Tasso* and Schiller's *Don Karlos* and *Maria Stuart* is undertaken. All of these analyses are done within the theoretical frameworks of feminism and gender studies. The research also incorporates elements of Cultural Materialism.

It is found that Mozart's opera takes a middle road amidst the contradictory viewpoints of the time (1791) by pitting weak male characters (Tamino and Papageno) against strong female characters (Pamina, the *Königin* and the *Damen*) in a misogynistic setting that gains the upper hand through Sarastro.

KEYWORDS

Die Zauberflöte, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Johan Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Feminism, Gender studies, Cultural Materialism, German literature, Enlightenment, 18th-century

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Recently, a number of scholars and researchers have started to view musical works, especially those that set words to music, from the perspective of how these settings reflect the historical context of the years of composition. Influenced by the theoretical movement known as Cultural Materialism, a field that has been established in literary and cultural studies since the 1980s through the work of Raymond Williams, an approach to musical works that combines the basic tenets of Cultural Materialism with music studies offers many new insights into works of the “standard” repertoire, and beyond.

Cultural Materialism accepts that everyone lives and works within a culture constructed by ideology, through discourses. This ideology is internalised, whether actively acknowledged or not. This is also true for authors [composers] in whose works one can expect such ideology to become a part of their creative work. Their works are, therefore, always political and simultaneously always a vehicle of power.

Cultural Materialists agree that, at first sight, a text will seem supportive of the dominant or contemporary ideology. However, they are particularly interested in uncovering how the dominant ideology is challenged by alternative views and beliefs. In the analysis of a text, Cultural Materialists attempt to demonstrate how the apparent coherence of a particular order or ideology is challenged by contradictions and tensions within the text. They are also interested in how traditional receptions and interpretations may have obscured the presentation of alternative views and beliefs, and how such interpretations may have been used to promote particular points of view.

Opera is especially well-suited to such an approach. Many were written as commissioned works by the nobility and generally reflected the status of the commissioning person, or the event to be celebrated around that person’s life and/or achievements, in some way. Such references were usually thinly-veiled allegories

as, for example, in Henry Purcell's *The Fairy-Queen* (an adaptation of William Shakespeare's *A midsummer night's dream*). The various references have been documented by Muller, Frans & Julie (2005). It was performed on 4 November 1692 to celebrate the fifteenth wedding anniversary of William III and Mary II of England as well as the King's birthday which occurred on the same day. The allusion to this celebration is made in "All Salute the rising Sun"/...The Birthday of King Oberon" (King Oberon of the play is equated with King William). Other references to the monarchs are found in the final masque which is set in a Garden of Fountains to symbolise King William's hobby, and a Chinese scene in the same section pays homage to Queen Mary's extensive collection of china. Hymen's song in praise of marriage, plus the stage direction to bring (Mary's) china vases containing (William's) orange trees to the front of the stage complete the symbolism.

Of all Mozart's operas *La clemenza di Tito* (1791) is the one that was written primarily in service of a political agenda. This opera is especially interesting because Mozart interrupted the writing of *Die Zauberflöte* to accept the commission from Domenico Guardasoni. Guardasoni was charged by the Estates of Bohemia to provide a new work in celebration of the coronation of Leopold II, Holy Roman Emperor, as King of Bohemia. The opera served Leopold's purposes in that he pacified the aristocratic elite in order to avoid strong political and social revolt, which was spreading throughout Europe from France. (Freeman 2013)

The apparent illustration of contemporary social and cultural behaviour, however, is to be found in all Mozart's operas, but more especially in the three operas with libretti by Lorenzo Da Ponte that precede *Die Zauberflöte*, namely *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), *Don Giovanni* (1787) and *Così fan tutte* (1790). They have been widely recognised (by, for example, Campana 2009; Lang 1978; Steptoe 1988) as reflecting the social, economic and political issues of the time.

Given this background, one may also expect to find comments pertaining to the social, economic and political issues of the time reflected in *Die Zauberflöte*. The two major political and economic events that changed 18th-century Europe were the industrial revolution and the French Revolution (1789-1795). These events particularly had a big impact on the role women played in society, and indeed two of

the approaches that have been used to analyse *Die Zauberflöte* have been feminism and gender studies. According to Stuckey (1995: 6) "...the conflict between the realms of light and darkness in the opera is at its core a gendered conflict...a metaphor that spills across the boundaries of gender in this opera to describe also the categories of class and race." Clement (1992: 98) writes "If there is an opera that represents the symbolism of the crushing of women by men with all its verbal and musical power, this opera is *Die Zauberflöte*".

When analysing the opera using these theoretical frameworks, it is important firstly to know what the social situation for women was at the time. Eighteenth-century European institutions of Church, State and family rested on patriarchal assumptions subordinating women to men. Literature often depicted women as "inherently dependent, wickedly sexual or simply evil" (Winslow 2004: 187). Many of these ideas can be traced back to the Church: the biblical Book of Genesis, for example, tells of the weakness and disobedience of the first woman (Eve), who obeys evil (in the form of a snake) and then persuades the first man (Adam) to follow her lead, resulting in a corrupted humanity. An interpretation that could have portrayed the male as being the weaker character for succumbing to the persuasive woman was not considered; if it was, it resulted in the man being advised to avoid women so that his weakness would not be tested. Such an interpretation is included in *Die Zauberflöte*, as shall be demonstrated in Chapter 3.

One of the first persons to critique this state of gender relations was Christine de Pizan. In *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405), published in France, she confronted men's power to determine women's value. Schneir (1994) is of the opinion that De Pizan left an influential footprint in the field of rhetorical discourse in an otherwise male-dominated literary field. According to Anderson and Zinsser (1988), this was the start of the European feminist movement, which continued into the 18th- century during the Age of Enlightenment. Although this is usually viewed as the triumph of rationality over the world-view of medieval times, the thoughts were both contradictory and confusing, for arguments centred on nature as well as reason. "Did women have distinct and different natures? Would equal education and equal laws enable women to develop the reason necessary for involvement in political decision-making?" (Winslow 2004: 189) These thoughts also implicated class and race.

“Some Enlightenment thinkers who saw women as closer to nature and therefore less capable of reason idealised non-Europeans as natural as well while others saw them as exotic or inferior.”(189)

When looking at the two major events previously mentioned, it is interesting to note that women participated actively in both the industrial and the French revolutions. In France, women participated in the politics of the street, actively bringing down the Bastille and the tollgates surrounding Paris. Their actions contributed to a new sense of authority that attended to the basic needs of all people. However, the revolutionary concepts of Liberty, Fraternity, Equality and Citizenship were still gendered. “The men of the Revolution, while needing women’s support to remove the king and to push the more radical Jacobin agenda forward, feared the power of women’s organization. In the name of public order, the Jacobins outlawed the radical women’s clubs and chastised their behaviour as going against nature.” (Winslow 2004: 191)

With the French Revolution, the idea of oppressive fathers also had to be abolished in favour of representations of “good fathers”. This was necessary to prepare the collective psychological ground for attacking absolute monarchical authority. The same way as tyrannical fathers could not be allowed anymore, despotic kings could also not be tolerated. (Kent 2004: 100)

The industrial revolution meant that women’s work moved out of the home and into the factory. In German towns, women formed the bulk of the workforce that ultimately broke the monopoly of guilds over the production of cloth in the 18th-century. However, it was only later that they entered unions and thus could have a voice in industrial action.

Valenze (2004: 463) notes that, despite both revolutions taking place within the Enlightenment, “Enlightenment principles of individualism, though proclaimed for all people, failed to eclipse a contradictory view of female identity, that of the exalted and exceptionally sensitive creature, who was passive and dependent on men.” This can, for example, clearly be seen in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *La Nouvelle Heloise* (1761) and *Emile* (1762).

Because these ideas are so often represented in literature, as in the case of Rousseau, it is useful also to compare the libretto of *Die Zauberflöte* with other literature of the time, as a libretto can also be regarded as a literary genre. The libretto of this opera falls in the period of German literature which saw the end of the *Sturm und Drang* era and the overlapping of the development of Classicism and Romanticism. (It should be noted that although the terms Classicism and Romanticism are used to describe time periods in German literature, they should not be confused with the same terms used to indicate a delineation of musical styles.)

The portrayal of gender roles was approached slightly differently in each of these periods. The two major literary exponents of these periods were Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller (Wucherpfenning 2010: 153). Some of their works will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. The concept of the "eternal feminine" (*das Ewig-Weibliche*) was particularly important to Goethe, who introduces it at the end of *Faust*, Part 2. For Goethe, "woman" symbolized pure contemplation, in contrast to masculine action (Gubart & Gilbert 1979: 21). Martinson (2005) is of the opinion that Schiller's portrayal of female characters is progressive within the historical context of his time. These characters often force the reader or spectator to consider critically his assumptions and biases regarding the sexes.

While analysing the literature of the time is useful, it is important also to note that the libretto of *Die Zauberflöte* draws heavily on a variety of sources. These include Chretien de Troyes's *Yvain* (c. 1177), a medieval romance; Jean Terrasson's *Sethos* (1731), which contains many Egyptian and Masonic references; to Christoph Martin Wieland's *Dschinnestan* (1786-89), a collection of fairy tales (Buch 2004). As a result, I cannot limit my comparison to the literature of the time in the examination of the portrayal of gender roles in the opera but need to expand it to other sources of influence. One may, however, assume that these sources may also have been adapted to suit the prevalent *Zeitgeist*. Such adaptations will be briefly examined where appropriate; an in-depth study would be beyond the scope of this dissertation.

When looking at the gender roles of *Die Zauberflöte*, it may seem that the portrayal of the women in the opera adheres to the generally-accepted gender conventions of the time, thus leading to the earlier comment by Clement (1992: 98) that "If there is

an opera that represents the symbolism of the crushing of women by men with all its verbal and musical power, this opera is *Die Zauberflöte*". On closer reading, this is not necessarily the case. Instead, it could be hypothesized that the females are portrayed as the stronger characters, helping the males to fulfil their concepts of manliness. This could be foreshadowing the gender roles in the operas that would be written within the next few years, such as Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1805/1814), where Leonore bravely rescues her husband Florestan from death in a political prison.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Mozart does not necessarily adhere to all the conventional gender interpretations of his time (which have generally been interpreted to be misogynist in nature) when portraying the main characters in his opera *Die Zauberflöte*. Instead, a closer reading of the text reveals that his female characters tend to be stronger and more street-wise than the males, and the weaker male characters depend on them to help them fulfil their goals. This is the case in the relationship between Tamino and Pamina (the upper class) as well as between Papageno and Papagena (the lower class). Sarastro and the *Königin's* relationship is a lot more complicated, as they are locked in a power-struggle with each other. The research problem addresses to what extent conventional interpretations by for example Clement (1992), Zech (1995) and Coser (1978) are reflected in the libretto.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to determine the extent to which the characters in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* portray gender roles differently to the conventions of the time. Apart from a close reading of the libretto itself, the study will also examine selected German literature of the time to determine whether the views portrayed are indeed new. The source material of the libretto will also be analysed to decide whether its ideas about gender could be traced to them rather than being a result of Mozart and Schikaneder's collaboration.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.4.1 Main research question

- How do gender roles in Mozart's opera *Die Zauberflöte* reflect the conventions of the time?

1.4.2 Subsidiary research questions

- How are gender roles dealt with in the various sources of the opera's libretto, specifically in the works of Chretien De Troyes, Jean Terrasson, Ignaz Von Born and Christoph Wieland?
- How do the gender roles in *Die Zauberflöte* compare to roles in influential German literary works of the time, specifically in the works of Goethe and Schiller?
- To what extent does the opera reflect its *Zeitgeist* regarding the role of men and women in society?

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative study based on the libretto of *Die Zauberflöte*. The research design will be that of case-study based research. Maree (2016: 81) states that this research refers to “an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon, set within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”.

The “case” in this study is therefore the gender representations in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, with the context being placed within the boundaries of time and place (Creswell 2003) of late-18th century Germany/Austria.

As mentioned in the Background to this chapter, the study also incorporates elements of Cultural Materialism, in that it tries to bring to light how ideology and thus existing social order tries to maintain itself through literature without losing its grip. (Deepak 2011)

The literature overview will provide an overview of the scholarship within this field. Data will be gathered by means of documents. “When you use documents (textual data) as a data-gathering technique you will focus on all types of written communications that may shed light on the phenomenon you are investigating” (Maree 2016, 88). The documents that will be used for this will be the libretto of *Die Zauberflöte*, De Troyes’ *Yvain*, Terrasson’s *Sethos*, Von Born’s *Über die Mysterien*, and Wieland’s *Dschinnistan*. Schiller’s *Don Karlos* and *Maria Stuart* and Goethe’s *Torquato Tasso* are also used.

The data then needs to be analysed, which will be done using narrative data-analysis. Although several types of narrative data-analysis exist (such as personal experiences and oral historical narratives), this study will focus on narratives presented in the literary sources that have been analysed.

Maree (2016: 104) states that narrative data-analysis includes:

formal and structural means of analysis (e.g. examining how a story is organized, how it is developed, and where it begins and ends) as well as a functional analysis that looks at what the story (narrative) is ‘doing’ or what is being told in the story (e.g. a moral tale or a success story)...the researcher analyses the data in search of narrative strings (present commonalities running through and across texts) narrative threads (major emerging themes) and temporal/spatial themes (past, present and future contexts).

To undertake the narrative analysis, the following three steps of the six (the other three steps do not lend themselves to an analysis of literary texts, but rather of oral narratives) proposed by Schütze (1983 as cited in Maree 2016: 104) will be followed:

1. Separating the text into indexical (i.e. statements have a concrete reference to “who did what, when, where and why”) and non-indexical material (i.e. statements that go beyond the events and express values, judgements and any other form of generalized “life wisdom”). Non-indexical statements can be of two kinds: descriptive (i.e. how events are felt and experienced, or it may describe values and opinions attached to them) and argumentative (i.e. the legitimisations of what is not taken for granted in the story).

2. Analysing the non-indexical dimensions of the text as “knowledge analysis” focusing on the opinions, concepts and general theories, reflections and separations between the usual and the unusual. These serve as the basis on which to reconstruct operative theories shedding light on the self-understanding of the informant.
3. Synthesis is done, often through extreme-case comparison where individual trajectories are put into context and similarities are established. This process allows for the recognition of collective trajectories.

By comparing the non-indexical material found in the documents, I will then provide an answer to the research question.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.6.1 Feminism

Feminist literary criticism has developed parallel to the beginning of the late twentieth-century women’s movement. Although there are important contributions by earlier nineteenth- and twentieth-century authors such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, George Elliot, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Virginia Woolf, it was *The Second Sex*, published in 1949 by Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1996), that is considered to be the pioneering work of the modern feminist movement. Kate Millet and Betty Friedan continued this work by examining “a female ‘self’ constructed in literature by male authors to embody various male fears and anxieties. They saw literary texts as models and agents of power.” (Guerin et al 2005: 223)

This early period is sometimes described as having embraced two objectives. The first was concerned with the critique of misogynist stereotypes in male literature, and the second was concerned with the recovery of lost literature by women and reconstructing history to include women.

Elaine Showalter identifies three phases of modern literary development in her article “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness” (1981). These are the feminine phase (1840-80), where women writers imitated the dominant male traditions, the feminist phase (1880-1920) when women advocated for their rights, and the female phase (1920-

present), when dependency upon opposition is replaced by the rediscovery of women's texts and women. (Showalter 1981: 327)

Showalter identifies four models which feminists have been using in their research during the latest, "female phase". The first is a biological model in which the question "if the text can be said in some way to mirror the body, then does that reduce women writers merely to bodies?" is examined. The second is a linguistic model that asserts that women are speaking men's language as a foreign tongue. The psychoanalytical model identifies gender difference in both the psyche and in the artistic process. Her cultural model places feminist concerns in social contexts, acknowledging class, racial, national and historical differences and determinants among women. (Showalter 1981: 330)

The encounter with psychoanalysis has been very important to the development of contemporary feminist thinking about literature and culture. Sigmund Freud's theories are now regarded as misunderstanding women as he was interested only in male psychology. Juliet Mitchell (1974) has argued that what is important about Freud's work is that it gave rise to the theory of engendering. Gender is now regarded as being socially constructed, and while Freud's work stems from a patriarchal point of view, other ways in which the manifestation of human sexuality may be described have been developed. (Mitchell 1974: 21)

Freud favoured using the Oedipal drama for gender inscription, whereby the father's intervention between mother and son initiates the separation that preserves civilization. Rivkin and Ryan (2004) detail how Jacques Lacan's notion of "Imaginary" described by contrast "a pre-oedipal stage in which the child has not yet differentiated her- or himself from the mother and as a consequence has not learned language, which is the Symbolic Order to be taught by the father." The relevance of Freud and Lacan has mainly to do with the intersections of language and the psyche. (Rivkin & Ryan 2004a: 768)

According to Guerin et al (2005: 226), there appear to be two general tendencies in feminist literary criticism, one emphasizing Showalter's biological, linguistic and psychoanalytical models, and the other emphasizing Showalter's cultural model. The

split into these two streams took place in the mid-1980s with the rise of “French feminism” through the works of Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous. Both perspectives have found support in French Post-Structuralism (Rivkin and Ryan 2004a: 766).

On the one hand, there is the essentialist argument for inherent feminine traits. These theories focus on sexual difference and sexual politics, and are often aimed at defining or establishing a feminist literary canon or re-interpreting literature from a less patriarchal slant. Luce Irigaray (1985) notes how matter (which links etymologically to maternity and to the matrix) is irreducible to male Western conceptuality. Men must abstract themselves from the material world as they separate from mothers in order to acquire a license to enter the patriarchy, and they then acquire an aggressive attitude towards the world they have left behind. Women are, however, not required to separate from their mother as they acquire gender identity.

The opposing notion is constructivist feminism, which considers the role that culture and society have played in deeming certain traits to be inherently feminine. The constructionists took inspiration from the Marxist theory of the social construction of individual subjectivity (Althusser) and from the Post-Structuralist idea that language writes rather than reflects identities. At its most radical, this position embraces such categories as performativity, masquerade and imitation. (Rivkin & Ryan 2004a: 768)

Constructivist feminism thus also helped give rise to gender studies, where the framing of all gender categories is cultural instead of biological. (Guerin et al 2005: 227)

1.6.2 Gender studies

When the Gay and Lesbian Liberation Movement started in the late 1960s, its work intersected with that of feminists regarding sexuality and gender identity. The work of anthropologists like Gayle Rubin and historians like Alan Bray and Michel Foucault bore out the point that gender is variable: “in history and between societies, there is a variation between different ways of practicing sex and being one gender or

another.” In the late 1970s a new field of Gender Studies constituted itself in conjunction with Gay and Lesbian Studies, turning its attention to all gender formations, both heterosexual and homosexual.

“Gender scholars found that heterosexuality can be understood as forming a continuum with homosexuality in that such ideals as heterosexual masculinity seem inseparable from a ‘panic’ component...in *Between Men* (1985), Eve Sedgwick notices that male heterosexual desire is always modelled on another male’s desire and always has a ‘homosocial’ cast. The male bonding that sutures patriarchy is necessarily homophilic and forms a continuum with homosexuality...Sedgwick’s work demonstrates the significance of Post-Structuralist thinking for Gender Theory, since it underscores the contingency of all supposedly axiomatic oppositions as that between homosexuality and heterosexuality.” (Rivkin & Ryan 2004b: 886)

Showalter (1989: 4) maintains that gender is not only a question of difference, which assumes that the sexes are different and equal, but of power, “since in looking at the history of gender relations, we find sexual asymmetry, inequality and male dominance in every known society.” Rivkin and Ryan (2004b: 765), however, note that “an analysis of gender that ignores race, class, nationality and sexuality is one that assumes a white, middle-class, heterosexual woman inclined towards motherhood as the subject of feminism”. The critic should question the status of “woman” to avoid the masculinist cultural error of taking the dominant for the universal. This agrees with Fuss (1989), who attempts to destabilise the category “woman”, arguing that it is impossible to justify the category’s boundaries as we cannot base it on essence nor on experience. “Can we ever speak...simply of the female...or the male...as if these categories were not transgressed already by other axes (class, culture, nationality, ethnicity of difference?” (Fuss 1989: 28)

Rivkin & Ryan (2004b: 888) identify three broad areas of work in literary and cultural theory with which Gender Studies, Gay/Lesbian Studies and Queer Theory are concerned. “First, the examination of the history of the oppression of gays, lesbians, and practitioners of sexualities other than those deemed normal by the dominant heterosexual group. Second, the exploration of the countercultures of gay and lesbian writing that existed in parallel fashion with the dominant heterosexual culture.

And third, the analysis of the instability and indeterminacy of all gender identity, such that even ‘normal’ heterosexuality itself might be seen as a kind of panicked closure imposed on a variable, contingent, and multiple sexuality whose mobility and potentiality is signalled by the worlds of possibility opened up by gays and lesbians.”

When situating gender studies in *Die Zauberflöte*, Eigler and Kord (1997) note that the Western theory of gender characteristics originated in the literary and philosophical discourses of eighteenth-century Germany. These discourses claimed that women were “by nature” passive and emotional, and men were “by nature” active and rational. According to this notion, women were supposed to be dedicated, loving, tender and patient wives and mothers, whereas men were supposed to exert an authoritative and active role as women’s representatives and guardians. The propagation of such roles for women was achieved via *Mädchenliteratur*. The German feminist scholar Hausen (2012) asserts that, while the concept of femininity and masculinity was supposed to form the ideal basis of humanity in early Enlightenment discourse, in reality “the idea of complementary spheres became repressive, because the gender differences bound women to domesticity” (Hausen 2012: 56).

1.7 LITERATURE OVERVIEW

The study commences with an overview of the libretto of the *Die Zauberflöte*, which was written by Emmanuel Schikaneder in collaboration with Mozart.

Four different literary sources which were used to write the libretto will then be analysed. According to Buch (2004) these sources were:

- The medieval romance *Yvain* (c.1177) by Chrétien de Troyes which appeared in a German translation by K. J. Michaele in 1786–7.
- The novel *Sethos* (“Life of Sethos, taken from private memoirs of the ancient Egyptians”) by the French author Jean Terrasson (1732) appeared in a German translation by Matthias Claudius in 1777–8. The novel is in two parts, but only Part I was translated and this was probably read by Schikaneder; Part II is therefore not analysed.

- The long essay *Über die Mysterien der Ägypter* (“On the mysteries of the Egyptians”) was published by the Viennese scientist and Freemason Ignaz von Born in the first issue of the Masonic journal *Journal für Freymaurer* (“Journal for Freemasons”) in 1784.
- A series of three books entitled *Dschinnistan* published by Christoph Martin Wieland in 1786–9 contains a total of 19 fairy tales. Wieland wrote the first 12 which will be analysed; the remaining 7 are written by other authors.

Three works from German literature will also be analysed, namely Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Torquato Tasso* (1790), and Friedrich Schiller’s *Don Karlos* (1787) and *Maria Stuart* (1800). The reason for choosing these works is that they appeared at more or less the same time as the publication of *Die Zauberflöte*. Goethe’s *Tasso* is the work that chronologically was published closest to the opera. Schiller’s works were written just prior to and just after his time as a professor in Jena, where he did not write any novels. *Die Zauberflöte* chronologically falls between these two works, and one could assume that there would be a noticeable change in the portrayal of women in the literary output of both Goethe and Schiller, considering the political and economic changes that took place during that time.

1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study will focus on the libretto of *Die Zauberflöte* and the way in which it reflects the role of women within their specific class and society.

The sources to be analysed will be De Troyes’s *Yvain*, Terrasson’s *Sethos*, Von Born’s *Über die Mysterien*, and Wieland’s *Dschinnistan* because they provided the main source material for the libretto of *Die Zauberflöte*.

This study will not undertake an interpretation of biographical aspects that could have led to Mozart’s portrayal of women. It will use the libretto of the opera as the basis for analysis.

The texts will not be analysed using a framework of linguistic theories (grammatical,

lexical, pragmatic, discourse), but will rather focus on the literary devices used to portray the characters.

1.9 VALUE OF THE STUDY

In the last few years there has been a growth in the diversity of feminist theories as they interact with other fields such as biology, linguistics, Marxism and cultural studies.

Pertaining to music studies, several topics are still unexplored. Although some aspects of the opera, such as its relation to the Masonic tradition, have been thoroughly researched, the literature on gender roles is relatively scarce. Little has been written on the parallels between the opera's libretto and other literature of the time, and although some aspects of the source material's influence on the libretto have been discussed, none has explored the gender-issues found in both.

This study, therefore, provides a new perspective not only regarding an interpretation of *Die Zauberflöte* itself, but also provides a framework according to which the libretti of other operas may be analysed to verify or to challenge accepted interpretations

2 LITERATURE OVERVIEW

2.1 LIBRETTO

The immediate social context for the *Die Zauberflöte* was a Europe wracked with conflict and revolution. Mozart's time in Vienna (1781-1791) coincided with the Austro-Turkish War (1788-1791) as well as the start of the French Revolution. These events especially prompted rising middle class aspirations. According to Joubert (2009), the establishment of German comic opera as a genre functioned as a musical manifestation of an emerging sense of national identity while serving to articulate the political ideology promoted by the emerging German public. This was especially true in Vienna, where Joseph II designated the Habsburg court theatre as the National Theatre in 1776.

Mozart's operas in general, and specifically *Die Zauberflöte*, are generally accepted to reflect the socio-political events of his time, as explained by Hunter (2010). Hunter does not discuss whether this also relates to gender aspects of the opera.

Cowgill (2010) finds the libretto problematic and sees the reason for this as being due to its semantic confusion. She finds evidence of this in the fact the opera was made to "shape-shift" between genres (*Singspiel*, *dramma eroicomico*, *Grand Romantic Opera* and *fairy tale opera*) in its first decades of performance (Cowgill 2010: 25). Moreover, because of its fantastical components, she is uncertain whether to view the opera as pure fantasy or not. The inclusion of characters that are clearly not human (for example, the Queen of the Night and her servants) seems, in my opinion, to indicate a mix of reality, fantasy and allegory typical of fairy tales and plays such as William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In other words, it falls into the realm of fairy tale opera where reality is expected to be suspended by the audience.

Much of the critical writing regarding this opera is concerned with the articulation and conceptualization of universal principles. One of the most prominent concerning gender is the allegorical confrontation between Light and Darkness (Cosser 1978;

Wildt 2009; Zech 1995). The fundamental dichotomy that governs and gives meaning to *Die Zauberflöte*, namely Light/Darkness, is symbolized by Sarastro/the Queen of the Night and made analogous to Man/Woman. The allegorical confrontation of the symbolic universals is thus played out in gendered terms. The male world of Sarastro is associated with daylight and rationalism, and the dark world of the Queen of the Night is associated with emotional, illogical reactions.

The most important question relating to this study is, however, if the opera can be considered as reflecting misogynist views or not. By answering this, one can determine whether it adheres to gender conventions of the time. When McClary (1991) sought to denounce the alleged chauvinism of Western classical music, she included *Die Zauberflöte* among her illustrations. In her view, there is a bogus tradition of “how women sound” in European classical music; a code transmitted by men, in which women are either docile and passive (Monteverdi’s *Euridice*, Bizet’s *Micaela*, Mozart’s *Pamina*) or else “man-devouring harpies” (Monteverdi’s *Poppea*, Mozart’s *Queen of the Night*, Bizet’s *Carmen*, Strauss’s *Salome*) (McClary 1991: 114).

Cairns (2006) does not concur with this notion. Although Schikaneder is described as being sexist and a womanizer, he claims that Mozart consistently omitted the worst of what Schikaneder wrote in this respect, and that Mozart more generally enriched and ennobled the character of Pamina. This is similar to Mozart’s lifelong practice, as Cairns (2006: 210) suggests:

How could Mozart have done otherwise? [His portrayal of Pamina] is one more example of the thread that runs through the operas – what Daniel Hertz has called Mozart’s “infinite care to create strong and deeply moving female characters in [...] all of his operas.”

This also raises the question of how much of the libretto Schikaneder wrote and how much Mozart finally contributed. This however requires a more detailed, independent study.

Kramer (2008) is one of the authors who believes that, although the opera is misogynist in nature, many of the gender biases are contradicted by Pamina. He

does not, however, discuss Papagena or give an in-depth analysis of Pamina, nor does he focus on the relatively weak characters of Tamino and Papageno.

Other critics such as Branscombe (1991) are of the opinion that, although misogynist elements are found in the libretto, it might be regarded as representing an apologist view. These critics have generally claimed that the gender hierarchies maintained by the symbolic structure are resolved in Pamina's union with Tamino and her initiation into the realm of Light. While the conclusion of the opera denotes the physical existence of a woman in Sarastro's realm, however, it does not represent an ontological presence of women within the moral system operating in the opera. Pamina's "rise to glory" does not signify the inclusion of a feminine identity in Sarastro's order; rather, it idealizes its absence.

Robbins-Landon (1991) does not agree with this view, but suggests that it demonstrates Mozart's wish to reform the St John Masonry to which he belonged by asking for women to be included in the Craft's membership. Since Mozart "allows" Pamina into Sarastro's inner circle, there is a strong argument to be made for this interpretation of her role within the opera.

Freemasonry symbolism has been identified by scholars such as Muhlestein (2004) and Nedbal (2009), but this only reflects that Mozart was a Freemason himself, a fact that has been widely corroborated. Mozart was widely criticised by his contemporary Freemasons for including this symbolism, as they (erroneously) regarded these references as providing too much information about their secret ceremonies (Kerry 2004). In fact, without oneself being a Freemason, it would have been almost impossible to decide which symbols belong to Freemasonry, and which to the realm of fantasy. This is of course not the case anymore today, where these symbols and ceremonies are well-documented.

When investigating the source material of the opera, Buch (2008) argues that the opera leans heavily on the tradition of the fairy tale opera. It is only fairly recently that feminist scholars have begun to analyse fairy tales written by women as well as gender subjects in fairy tales in general. Benedikte Naubert and Bettina von Arnim illustrated in their fairy tales the challenge of confronting the inherited value

judgements that women face (Buch 2008: 14).

Buch (1992) offers a brief review of fairy tale literature since the Renaissance and looks at the emergence of the genre during the German Enlightenment, culminating in Christoph Martin Wieland's *Dschinnistan*, on which some sections of the opera are based. Buch (1992) further discusses the fact that eighteenth-century narrative folk literature was often seen as "low art". Schikaneder's approach to Mozart to write an opera to appeal to "low and high alike" confirms this distinction between high and low art.

Other than the characters themselves, a symbol that has been considered to be gendered in the opera is the flute. According to Powley (2004) it is a phallic symbol, representing the virility that Tamino lacks at the outset, but gains through his quests. Tettlebaum's (2008) view is that whoever has the flute is the source of the power that governs the opera. This brings a new dimension to the role of the woman, because the Queen of the Night originally had the flute and handed it to Pamina, who brings it to Tamino in his hour of need. By contrast, in some film adaptations of the opera, notably that by Ingmar Bergman (1975), plot changes have been introduced to make it more consistently and manifestly a glorification of patriarchy. These plot changes include Sarastro being Pamina's father and the trios in Act 2 being omitted, and therefore Pamina's courage not being shown (see Chapter 3).

One of the most important articles written on the subject of gender in the opera is by Stuckey (1995). She uses the theories of duality of Julia Kristeva and Evan Zuesse to conduct an interdisciplinary analysis of the libretto of the opera, also using tools from history, anthropology, and psychoanalytic philosophy to reflect on issues of ritual and society and the particular shape of gender, class, and race representations in this opera. She does not, however, focus on the gender roles as they are represented in the libretto, but rather on their symbolic meanings.

Stuckey (1995) also maintains that the opera does not fit into the secular world of Enlightenment rationality. She states that "although it incorporates Enlightenment esteem for rational order and receives inspiration from the classical world, the opera draws its life not from philosophy but from mythology" (Stuckey 1995: 24). She does

not state which myths she regards as having been drawn upon.

Zech (1995) is the writer who comes closest to analyzing some characters regarding their gender roles. Her analysis leans towards a musical analysis, and does not discuss the libretto and socio-cultural aspects. She also only analyses the characters of the *Königin* and Pamina. She sees the end of this opera as not just the defeat of the forces of superstition by those of reason, but the defeat of eighteenth-century women as well. Pamina is the only woman remaining (the *Königin* and her *Damen* have been vanquished) and she is no more than a puppet who will be ruled by men. Zech notes that, at this time in history, opportunities for women in all areas of society were closing down, so it is not surprising to find that this opera reflects that trend.

2.2 SOURCE MATERIAL

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the four sources that are analysed in this paper are De Troyes's *Yvain* (c.1177), Terrasson's *Sethos* (1731), Von Born's *Über die Mysterien der Ägypter* (1784) and Wieland's *Dschinnistan* (1786–9).

According to Priestly (2014) De Troye's *The Knight with the Lion* (c.1177) is about "a knight named Yvain who seeks to improve his prowess and loses his lover in the process because of his skewed priorities" (Priestly 2014: 3). She discusses how a knight represented the ideals of the people in the court and in this way formed a framework for them. "It was by chivalric ideas and through chivalric practices that elite lay folk organized their thoughts and directed action in basic categories of life" (Priestly 2014: 5) She then proceeds to describe all the qualities that a knight should possess, and what the contemporary idea of "manly" qualities were.

Otto (2013) discusses how in many Arthurian tales (of which Yvain is one), the expectations of characters are deeply rooted in gender roles, one being the manner in which men and women grieve. With women, grief becomes typified by weeping, fainting, mutilation of self and clothing, and/or suicide. "This grieving is portrayed as being shallow and entirely physical, in and of itself congruent with the medieval

sentiment that women were focused on the physical rather than mental.” (Otto 2013: 5) Masculine grieving however, focuses on mental and spiritual representations, and was characterized by insanity, self-loathing, amnesia, and/or extreme isolation.

Horn (2014) is of the opinion that De Troyes’s work is interesting because of the way in which it addresses issues of gender equality and how it “frames women as authority figures in a patriarchal society...masculine identity in Arthurian narratives is often rooted in their relationship with women, and though women are often signifiers that validate masculinity, women are the ones who seem to have the autonomy and whose identity is defined through a masculine signifier.” (Horn 2014:1) He further addresses a “might is right” mentality. According to this, feminine identity is represented through masculine action, and no questions about ethics and morality are raised.

By contrast, Selden (2003) describes how male characters in Arthurian legends portray the practical side of chivalry. Female characters, however, represented the intellectual side of chivalry. There is therefore a distinction between characters of action and reflection.

Grant (2012) discusses the significance of ancient Egyptian mysticism in the opera. To that end, he analyses three of the main sources for the libretto: the fairy tales from Wieland’s *Dschinnistan*, Von Born’s *Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier*, and Terrasson’s *Sethos* are explored. In addition, the writings of the Freemasons as well as eighteenth-century literature and philosophy are examined to ascertain the degree to which the system of contrary duality (two opposite parts, e.g. Light/Darkness concept discussed earlier in the chapter) was relevant in Mozart’s time. However, he does not address any gender-related issues.

The year in which Mozart became a Freemason (1784) was also the year in which an essay by Ignaz von Born *Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier* was published in the first issue of the Viennese Masonic magazine, *Journal für Freymaurer*. Branscombe (1991) states that Von Born’s essay was the most “outspokenly Masonic source” for the opera, and that *Über die Mysterien* was “the product of a man close to Mozart.” (Branscombe 1991: 34) Branscombe makes several associations between the essay

and libretto, importantly concluding “that Schikaneder had a copy of Born’s essay before him, or was at least recalling details of its phraseology, is suggested by the verbal echoes...” Von Born’s essay provides much light not only on the symbolism of the opera, but also on its main message (the attainment of wisdom and light).

The opera’s links to the Masonic tradition have, as discussed earlier, been analysed quite exhaustively. Florian Ebeling has, for example, discussed Von Born’s essay and the parallels it has to the libretto twice: in 2003 and in 1991.

Terrasson’s novel *The Life of Sethos* has been described as “a combination of political instruction, a guide to Egyptian antiquity, and a novel of Masonic initiation.” (Branscombe 1991: 40) Branscombe also states that there are “numerous similarities between Terrasson’s novel and Schikaneder’s libretto”.

Because *Sethos* is rooted in the Egyptian tradition, many authors such as Branscombe (1991) and Brophy (2013) have also analysed the similarities between this work and *Die Zauberflöte*. However, nothing has been written on the gender roles in this opera or in Terrasson’s novel

Both Von Born’s *Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier* and Terrasson’s *Sethos* introduce the reader to Ancient Egyptian wisdom as expressed in its moral laws. Both authors claim that attaining wisdom and light is the general purpose of these moral laws. According to Grant (2012: 20), the underlying message of *Die Zauberflöte* has the same purpose (see previous statement on the message of the opera).

Buch (2008) considers the most important literary source for *Die Zauberflöte* to be the *Dschinnistan* stories by Wieland, Einsendel, and Liebeskind, which provided the basic fairytale material for several Schikaneder productions, both before and after *Die Zauberflöte*. Schikaneder especially used material from *Der Stein, Nadir und Nadine, Timander und Melissa, Der Druiden, and Adis und Dahy*. According to Buch, Egon Komorzynski has demonstrated the close relationship of *Die Zauberflöte* to Wieland’s collection as a whole, identifying motifs borrowed from other stories in the collection, as well as from Wieland’s *Oberon*. (Buch 2008: 333-334)

The obvious parallels to be drawn between *Dschinnistan* and the opera are identified and discussed by Grant (2012) as “the double couples, one heroic, the other rustic: Nadir and Nadine and Lubano and Lubanara, (Tamino/Pamina, and Papageno/Papagena), a flying machine, a magic object (here a bird), subterranean vaults where only men are allowed, a temple, and a final wedding of the heroic couple.” (Grant 2012: 19)

Koehler (2016) discusses how we read fairy tales today “through the filter of the men who carefully selected which tales would be published and then edited and embellished them according to a male value system.” (Koehler 2016: 2) She also states that feminist fairy tale scholars have given much attention to reframing the Grimms’ collection in light of their corruption of female sources. (Koehler 2016: 8) This means they did not analyse the gender roles portrayed in these fairy tales.

Sandstede (1999) describes how in contrast to the petty-bourgeois confines of most 18th-century women, Wieland created emancipated female figures in his novels and narrative stories, usually having the function of turning idealistic heroes back to reality and to help form them into a rounded human being. (Sandstede 1999: 38) However, Sandstede has not researched this position specifically relating to Wieland’s fairy tales.

Van den Berk (2004) compares various elements from the fairy tales of *Dschinnistan* to the libretto of the opera. However, Van den Berk maintains that the context of a text in *Dschinnistan* is of little significance to Schikaneder and Mozart. “For instance: when they portray the Queen of the Night, they do so based on the description of a certain fairy in one of the tales, while that fairy in fact has a completely different character from the Queen and the storylines of the fairy and opera have nothing to do with each other whatsoever.” (Van den Berk 2004: 394) He also indicates many other places in the libretto where secondary references may be found.

2.3 GERMAN LITERATURE

Kelley (2000) describes the different issues in literary criticism regarding women and gender in different parts of Europe in the late eighteenth century “In France, literary discussions of women and gender which begin with Rousseau tend to emphasize the problematic status of his fictional women and the role of passion in a civil society. In Germany, such discussions emphasize or critique the idealist identification of woman as the beautiful or ideal soul, particularly when this soul can be made to sponsor an androgenous model of imaginative creativity in male authors. In Britain, Wollstonecraft’s 1792 call for ‘a revolution in female manners’ in *Vindication of the rights of woman* defends reason over the passion and sensibility.” (Kelley 2000: 321)

According to Becker-Cantarino (2002) “Goethe created poetic and complex female and male characters in his key works...biographical accounts of Goethe’s relationship with women coloured the readings of his works for almost two centuries; moreover, they were often marked by a condescending attitude towards the women in Goethe’s life...Goethe’s Faust and his concept of the ‘Eternal Feminine’ were seen as the loftiest ideal of modern German man...feminist and gender studies have produced new readings of his female (and male) characters in their gender roles and relationships. They have started a lively debate about Goethe’s representations of gender dichotomy, his sophisticated gender discourse, his negotiations of femininity, masculinity, androgyny, homoeroticism and male bonding in the patriarchal setting of his age.” (Becker-Cantarino 2002: 179)

Becker-Cantarino (2002) further notes that, in the aesthetics of German classicism, there was no place for independent literary women because of the concept of the “naturally” dependent female under male tutelage. Their work was instead considered dilettantish. Dilettantism was a key concept in Goethe and Schiller’s thinking in the 1790s. She reaches the conclusion that Goethe’s “poetic imaginations of male-female relations, male and female characters and masculinity and femininity are shaped by his notions of patriarchy, gender roles and hierarchy.” (Becker-Cantarino 2002: 191)

Wilson (1996) earlier described the paucity in literature on feminism and Goethe’s

writings. Subsequently, authors like Becker-Cantarino (2002) have focused on *Faust* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*. He is also of the opinion that gender and specifically gay studies can enrich the analysis of Goethe, as his works contain quite a few homoerotic scenes. For his time, Goethe had a remarkably uninhibited attitude towards homosexuality. He then proceeds to analyse *Egmont*, where he writes that this work was concerned with the “dialectic ambivalence” found in the gender discourse of the time. This ambivalence refers to the changing roles of women in the eighteenth century, where women’s education and the promotion of female writers at the beginning of the century had been “overwhelmed by sentimentalism and by the economic developments that affected the social structure of the family.” (Wilson 1996: 127) He also explains how these social structures, which described women as “passive (thus suited to household duties), nonaggressive (thus unsuited to competitive world outside household), emotional and religious (thus not equipped for the rationally oriented sphere of the state and business but for the religious upbringing of the children) and beautiful (thus a decoration suited to entertainment)”. (Wilson 1996: 127)

Tantillo (1998) focuses on Goethe’s scientific works when discussing gender. In these scientific works, Goethe “examines sexual differences, discusses the relationship between the sexes, and ultimately presents a theory of gender that is not based upon sexual organs. Moreover, these texts describe the relationship between the masculine and the feminine as complex and not strictly hierarchical.” (Tantillo 1998: 123) Gender is, instead, shown to be equal elements that compete for control.

Mathäs (2008) argues that *Torquato Tasso* presents the problem of the bourgeois artist, who was striving for artistic autonomy while serving his aristocratic patrons. This is done in terms of a conflict regarding gender roles. The bourgeois artist is seen as an emasculated outsider in the court. This “conditioned the bourgeois male’s divided mode of consciousness, which is torn between independence and dependence, freedom and servitude, autonomy and self-willed subjugation. This division became a conceptual cornerstone of German idealist philosophy and literature”. (Mathäs 2008: 144) Because of these insecurities regarding his gender role, *Torquato Tasso* addresses the construction of masculinity at this time.

Martinson (2005) is of the opinion that Schiller's female characters were definitely conditioned by the times in which he was living. Most of his literary-dramatic representation of women are forward-looking, with their "combination of sharpness of mind and quickness of wit, emotional passion and compassion and passion" (Martinson 2005: 219), regardless of their social standing.

In Lokke's (1990) article concerning sublimity and aesthetics, she notes that Schiller's most sublime heroine is the "feminine" Mary Stuart, "whom he depicts as a martyr to the cause of human dignity and freedom". (Lokke 1990: 124) This contrasts with the "masculine" Queen Elizabeth I who is portrayed as a clever, pragmatic realist. This opposition is the source for their almost archetypal conflict. Lokke (1990) is of the opinion that Schiller's portrayal of these two characters provides insight into the "problematical question of woman's potential for historical agency as conceived in the late eighteenth century...his artistic renderings of these two historical personages, seen from a feminist perspective, make clear the necessity of a redefinition and a rethinking of the gendered opposition between the sublime and the beautiful". (Lokke 1990: 124)

Hart (2005) discusses various poems of Schiller that address gender issues. She also shows how the many instances in which women suffer punishment in Schiller's works are, in fact, usually engineered by other women, such as in *Maria Stuart*. This is reflected in *Die Zauberflöte*, where the *Königin* wishes to harm Pamina, even though she is her daughter.

In her essay on the character of Maria Stuart in 3 different British plays, Tönnies (1999) raises an important concept regarding the complexity of the femininity of the character:

Mary Stuart can be understood to embody a cluster of its [the period's] key anxieties, namely the question of the appropriate feminine role and the character traits with which 'woman' could be taken to be automatically endowed. In official gender concepts like Coventry Patmore's "angel in the house" and John Ruskin's model of "separate spheres", these issues were addressed by proclaiming the inherent and unqualified moral goodness and sexual purity of 'woman', whose activities were naturally grounded in the

domestic realm. Recent feminist criticism, however, refuses to take these answers at face value and considers their absoluteness and polished smugness an indication that the real situation was far less comfortable. The dominant image is then given a prescriptive force meant to curb actual or anticipated feminine transgressions and the threat they implied for the social order. Quite apart from such a reading against the grain, official conduct books and advice manuals themselves made it clear that a single deviation from the norm would lead to an irrevocable exclusion from the status of 'woman'. They thus implicitly created a second category with darker images of female human beings, which could only gradually be referred to explicitly in humanitarian and sociological treatments of criminal and "fallen" members of the sex." (Tönnies 1999: 1)

Sautermeister (1971) points out that the two queens in *Maria Stuart* are women in a male-dominant society. He maintains that this is an attempt by Schiller to comment on gender relations, mainly because Schiller refers to traditionally feminine qualities such as beauty in the work. He also sees the interaction of Maria and Elizabeth as a struggle in which neither of the women reach their initial goals.

2.4 SUMMARY

This literature review shows that there has been some scholarly research on gender in the *Die Zauberflöte*. However, it focuses mainly on the role of Pamina and to some extent Tamino, and does not take the other literature of the time into consideration. There is therefore paucity in research which warrants revisiting the gender roles in the opera.

With regards to the source material, gender in Arthurian novels has been dealt with, but not necessarily specifically in *Yvain*. Masonic tradition has been researched in *Sethos* and *Über die Mysterien*, but none of it relating to gender. Parallels have been drawn between several fairy tales in *Dschinnistan* and *Die Zauberflöte*; feminist readings of fairy tales written by male authors are however fairly new.

It can be seen that, although there are some writings on the works of gender and feminism in Goethe and Schiller's works, and specifically also Schiller's *Maria Stuart*, these are limited in scope. *Torquato Tasso* has largely been ignored.

3 DISCUSSION

3.1 CLOSE READING OF THE LIBRETTO

The first section of the discussion concerns an analysis of the libretto of the opera. The focus here concerns what the characters say, what their actions are, and how each one is described in the text. This all pertains to the gender roles they are portraying.

Each character is discussed act by act, and scene by scene, until the end of the opera to provide a rounded picture of the character.

3.1.1 Tamino

Act 1 Scene 1

Tamino, the hero of the opera, is introduced to the audience as he is fleeing from a giant snake, making his introduction to the audience quite comical. He is carrying a bow, but no arrows, and mention is made of his splendid outfit. He calls out for someone to save and defend him, after which he faints.

All the qualities that are ascribed to Tamino to inform the audience's first impression of him are rooted in the feminine tradition. He is weak and needs someone stronger to help him, and he faints because of his fear of danger. His arrows are all already spent, which means that he is either an inadequate archer, or that he was unprepared for his journey. He has all the trappings of being a hunter (the Javanese hunting-costume), but seemingly no skill or bravery to back it up.

It is ironic that he will be saved by three *Damen* (ladies), who, as women, are generally depicted as being the weaker gender.

As he is lying unconscious, the *Damen* fawn over him and use the adjective "schön" (pretty/fair) four times in the next few lines. It is remarkable that a great deal of

emphasis is placed on the looks of the prince (prettiness and splendid clothes); his non-existent bravery is not questioned. Yet: he is a man, so in the minds of the *Damen* he must surely be able to help their *Königin* (Queen), so they go to inform her of his arrival in the forest.

As Tamino awakes, he wonders aloud what higher power could possibly have saved him; ironically, this “power” consisted of three women. He almost immediately again shows his cowardice by hiding away when he sees a “male figure” approaching.

Act 1 Scene 2

The “male figure” is Papageno, a strange character who makes a living by catching birds in the forest to barter for food. When he introduces himself to Papageno, Tamino says that his father is a ruler, which is why people call him “prince”. The unusual way of describing himself strengthens the idea that he has none of the brave qualities generally associated with a princely role – he is called “prince” because of his father’s status, and is not necessarily deserving of the title.

Act 1 Scene 3 & 4

After the *Damen* hand Tamino the picture of Pamina, he immediately falls in love with her, and expresses it in very emotive language in his aria “*Dies Bildniß ist bezaubernd schön*” (“This likeness is enchantingly lovely”). The traditional idea of manliness where men do not tend to express their emotions and certainly not with such tenderness, is negated here. This might fall into the “knightly” expression of emotion, and also into the idea of knights loving from afar. Pamina’s expression of her love in the aria “*Ach ich fühl’s*” (“Oh, I feel it”) seems to be different from this highly idealised, romantic love. It rather seems to be more sincere and also does not focus on Tamino’s appearance. She is filled with sadness as she acknowledges the fact he might not love her back

Act 1 Scene 5

When the *Damen* return to announce the *Königin*’s arrival, they relate that the *Königin* is of the opinion that, if Tamino has as much bravery as he is gentle, her daughter is sure to be rescued. This is despite the fact that he proved that he is not

brave when he was confronted by the serpent. Tamino, however, is full of bravado and maintains that the evil forces will definitely “fall by his arm” (“falle von meinem Arm”).

Act 1 Scene 6

When the *Königin* meets Tamino, she first of all tells him not to tremble (“zittre nicht”), as he is clearly afraid of her (a woman), and then she tells him he is guiltless, wise and good (“du bist unschuldig, weise, fromm”). However, bravery is not one of the qualities she attributes to him.

Act 1 Scene 7

The *Königin* leaves, and Papageno is still unable to speak. Tamino says that he cannot help him, as he is too weak (“weil ich zu schwach zu helfen bin”). Yet he was ready to go to save the princess from evil in Act 1 Scene 5. Regarding Tamino as a heroic figure becomes less plausible, and it also emphasises the comical aspect of operatic tradition where the tenor is always a hero.

Act 1 Scene 8

The *Damen* return and give Tamino the magic flute to aid him in his adventures. Once more, he will not be able to accomplish his mission without help. It is also remarkable that music-making is, in fairy tales, regarded as a woman’s domain, yet he will be helped by it, as he was saved earlier by the *Damen*.

Although Tamino is a prince, Papageno mistrusts him, and thinks he will steal away from him “like a thief (“wie ein Dieb”). Tamino therefore conveys an impression of unreliability to Papageno.

At the end of this Scene, Tamino and Papageno are introduced to the three *Knaben* who will be their guides, and whose counsel they are to follow. The men are portrayed as being so inadequate that they need the help of three little boys.

Act 1 Scene 14

To be on the safe side, Tamino sends Papageno into the Temple first to look for Pamina and to announce his arrival (“Zur Sicherheit also war der Prinz so fein, mich [Papageno] voraus zu schicken, um dir uns’re Ankunft anzukündigen”). This seems especially pompous: Tamino sends someone whom he does not know at all but whom he regards as his inferior and therefore treats like a servant to do the dangerous work, while he enters through the front door, all the while professing to be madly in love with Pamina. It also emphasises his (and, by implication, the nobility’s) lack of bravery as opposed to Papageno’s (and, by implication, the working class’s) daring.

Act 1 Scene 15

After Tamino is encouraged by the *Knaben* to act in a “manly” way, he warns his enemies that he is on his way and that they should tremble (“Erzittre, feiger Bösewicht”). However, just as he is about to enter the Temple, a faceless voice says “Go back” (“Züruck”), which he dutifully obeys, and he timidly wonders if he will be allowed to enter through one of the other doors.

After the priests have left Tamino, he is still unable to find Pamina. Yet Papageno was able to find her, and one wonders what Tamino is actually able to do.

Act 2 Scene 3

When Tamino is questioned by the priests regarding whether he is willing to put his life at risk for the ideals of the Brotherhood, he unwaveringly answers in the affirmative several times. However, he is now in a safe place with no immediate threat to be seen, which was not the case earlier on, and it is therefore easy to be brave.

Tamino and Papageno are put through the test of silence, in which they have to withstand the urge to talk to women. This trial stems from the Masonic tradition, but outside of this context it does not provide any evidence of commitment on a man’s side.

Act 2 Scene 4

When Papageno complains about this test, Tamino says that he should bear it with patience, and that it is the will of the gods. We can see here that Tamino does not question anything as a rational person in the Enlightenment would do. Instead, he accepts authority as being the “will of the gods”. This contrasts with Papageno, who does not as readily accept an authority with which he is unfamiliar. It is Papageno’s questioning of this authority that most closely reflects the rationality associated with the Enlightenment.

Act 2 Scene 5

As the *Damen* enter the halls of the temple and try to speak to Tamino, he is unwavering in his resolution to ignore them. Although this may be applauded, one is also reminded of his weakness in changing his allegiance from the *Königin* to Sarastro without question. He was easily swayed by the words of Sarastro, whose main argument was, in fact, that the *Königin* is a woman with a woman’s mind (“Sie ist ein Weib, hat Weibersinn”). In contrast to Tamino, Pamina has, at this stage, not yet been convinced of Sarastro’s goodness. In this scene, Tamino also says, as an aside, that a wise man seeks proof and disregards what the common rabble say (“Ein Weiser prüft und achtet nicht was der verworfne Pöbel spricht”), yet he himself seeks no proof in what Sarastro has told him about the *Königin*. In Tamino’s case, indoctrination supplants actual experience. Although he was saved by the *Damen*, he now chooses to mistrust them because of what Sarastro has been telling him.

Act 2 Scene 6

As the *Damen* leave, the priests return to congratulate Tamino on successfully completing his first trial, and they applaud his “steadfast manly behaviour (“dein standhaft männliches Betragen”). Being steadfast and unwavering is thus identified as representing one aspect of manly behaviour.

Act 2 Scene 19

When Tamino and Papageno are assailed by lions, Tamino plays on the flute and the lions disappear. Again, he needs outside help to overcome the dangers, and no bravery on his part is shown.

Act 2 Scene 20

Just before the trial of fire and water, Sarastro commends Tamino for his manly behaviour up to that point (“dein Betragen war bis hierher männlich”). Ironically, the only thing that Tamino has done is to refuse to respond when Pamina and the *Damen* tried talking to him, which does not necessarily warrant the description of “manly”. However, Tamino also changed his allegiance to Sarastro, which is possibly why Sarastro approves his behaviour.

Act 2 Scene 28

Tamino does not go through the final trial alone: instead, he has the help of Pamina and of the magic flute.

3.1.2 Pamina

Act 1 Scene 9

Before the audience sees Pamina on stage for the first time, she is introduced through the conversation that Sarastro’s slaves have about her. From the outset the impression is positive: she has managed to escape from them. She was not only cleverer than they expected her to be (“das Mädchen aber war klüger als ich dachte”), but also stronger (she managed to row away on her own in a gondola). By contrast, the *Damen*’s comments about Pamina only relate to her extraordinary beauty and do not address her personality.

Act 1 Scene 11

Pamina is brought in to face Monostatos, the black overseer of Sarastro’s temple. He states that she is doomed to die. Her reaction to this pronouncement shows her courage when she proclaims that “Death does not make me quake” (“der Tod macht mich nicht beben”).

Act 1 Scene 14

When Papageno finds her and tells her that Tamino has come to save her, Pamina again shows her ability to rationalize her situation (in accordance with Enlightenment

ideals). She does not accept what Papageno says at face value, asking “and what if this is a trap?” (“Aber wenn dieß ein Fallstrick wäre?”)

Act 1 Scene 17 & 18

When Pamina and Papageno are found, she is the brave one and says that they should speak “the truth, even if it be a crime” (“die Wahrheit! Sey sie auch Verbrechen!”), and not hide away. When confronted by Sarastro, she stays true to this stance and does not conceal her actions or motives.

Act 2 Scene 8

At the beginning of the second act, Pamina must decide whether her allegiance is to her mother, the *Königin*, or to Tamino (and in effect then also to Sarastro). With the appearance of the *Königin* in her chambers, Pamina looks to her for refuge. When the *Königin* reveals that Pamina’s father wanted them to submit themselves to Sarastro, Pamina is convinced that he must be a virtuous man. This confirms the authority of a father, who can exert influence on his family from beyond the grave.

It seems that the audience is being confronted with the possibility of the male-female roles being assigned to good and evil, with woman always being weak and possibly also evil. That certainly seems to be Sarastro’s view, and it is possibly why some commentators see the opera as being misogynistic. However, the confrontation between Sarastro and the *Königin* could also be at a more basic level: a male-female conflict that the male must win.

Act 2 Scene 10

Pamina shows her bravery as Monostatos promises to save her and her mother’s life if she agrees to love him. Monostatos’s perception of “love” is not in any way an abstract emotion, but a very real request for intercourse. “Love” is often used at this time to imply sexual relations, and not an emotion. However, she refuses him, and so maintains her integrity.

After her conversation with Sarastro, she is also (like Tamino) ordered to go through certain trials. However, in contrast to Tamino who has Papageno’s and the

Brotherhood's support, she must go through her initiation virtually alone and in relative ignorance. She is kept in the dark about what is happening throughout and must also deal with Tamino's apparent rejection which she does not understand. In the end, she has to go through a double trial: her own and also Tamino's, as she accompanies him.

Act 2 Scene 18

She chances upon Tamino, but he keeps silent and ignores her tears. By choosing to be loyal to the commands of the Brotherhood instead of to Pamina, Tamino makes it clear that his priorities are to his manliness, and not to the woman he professes to love. This compels Pamina to consider committing suicide, ("lieber durch dies Eisen sterben, als durch Liebesgram verderben") expressed in the aria "*Ach ich fühl's*", but she is prevented from doing this by the *Knaben*. They convince her that Tamino does love her. This shows that she is open to logical explanations, and logical actions replace an over-emotional response. Although Pamina blames her mother for her fate when she sings "Mother, it is through you that I suffer, and your curse follows me" ("Mutter, durch dich leide ich, und dein Fluch verfolgt mich"), it is Sarastro who is in control of her and Tamino's circumstances.

Act 2 Scene 21

In the trio "*Soll ich dich Teurer nicht mehr sein*" ("Am I to see you no more, my dear one?") which is sung by Pamina, Tamino and Sarastro, Pamina shows true courage. Sarastro answers for Tamino or responds simultaneously with him, while Pamina continues to speak only directly to Tamino and to come between him and Sarastro. This shows how she challenges the system and refuses to let the Brotherhood mediate her love which is in complete contrast to Tamino's obedience to Sarastro.

Act 2 Scene 28

Pamina appears finally to assume control and insists that she will lead Tamino through the trial of fire and water when she sings "I will guide you, and love will lead me" ("ich führe dich, die Liebe leite mich"). However, she thereafter immediately subordinates herself to the magic flute itself, which was created by her father ("Es

schnitt in einer Zauberstunde mein Vater sie aus tiefstem Grunde der tausendjährigen Eiche”) (“In a magic hour, my father cut it from the deepest roots of a thousand-year-old oak”).

3.1.3 Die Königin der Nacht

Act 1 Scene 2

Before the audience meets the *Königin*, they are primed for the appearance of a mighty sovereign with magical presence. This takes place in the dialogue between Tamino and Papageno, for example, “have you been so lucky to see this goddess of the night” (“warst du schonso glücklich, diese Göttin der Nacht zu sehen”) and “what mortal can boast that he has seen her?” (“welcher Sterbliche kann sich rühmen, sie je gesehen zu haben?”).

Act 1 Scene 6

When the audience is first introduced to the *Königin*, she is depicted as a bereft mother who is aching for the return of her stolen daughter (“durch sie ging all mein Glück verloren”). As she relates how her daughter was abducted, there is nothing false about her description of the situation. It is clear she hates the abductor, which is understandable.

She is defined by her lack of power – although she is the monarch of her kingdom, she must seek the help of a man (a weak man, it seems) to get her daughter back. Part of her frustration stems from this humiliation. Although the reason for her frustration is not clarified in this, her first aria, it can be seen in Act 2 Scene 8 (see previous discussion and also below) when she speaks with her daughter and explains that her husband had said they should submit themselves to Sarastro.

Pamina describes her as a “loving mother” (“zärtliche Mutter”) on several occasions, and her willingness to do her mother’s bidding – even though she is horrified because she is later required to kill Sarastro – illustrates her own love for her mother. Sarastro’s servants describe the *Königin* in the same way (“zärtliche Mutter”), which is curious as she is depicted as Sarastro’s adversary.

Act 2 Scene 8

In the dialogue with her daughter, the *Königin* tells Pamina that before her father died, he bequeathed the “siebenfachen Sonnenkreis” (the great circle of the sun, the emblem of authoritarian rule) to Sarastro and decreed that the two women should submit themselves to Sarastro and his Brotherhood. The only reason for this seems to be that they are woman and should be protected by men. Her anger therefore stems from her feeling of being stripped of her power, and not necessarily from evil. This was common practice as far back as Biblical times when a widow was automatically absorbed into her brother-in-law’s house. In other words, the Queen was rebelling against customary practice and Sarastro’s actions can be explained because he is enforcing it.

Another indication that the Queen’s behaviour stems from anger and humiliation and not from evil is that she was the wife of the holder of the “Sonnenkreis”. In addition, her only daughter has been abducted; thus, the audience can begin to understand some of her anger.

After the Queen senses that Pamina’s allegiance has changed, she curses her in the aria “*Der Hölle Rache*” (“Hell’s vengeance”). The aria is, therefore, not the cause of Pamina’s separation from her mother, but rather a last attempt by the *Königin* to negate Sarastro’s victory.

As can be seen in works by Cowgill (2010) and Pahlen (1992), the idea that Schikaneder and Mozart must have changed their dramatic concept of the plot midway through the creation of the opera (*Bruchtheorie*) used to be present in many textbooks. This idea may account for the two extreme images of the *Königin*. A different critical view (e.g. as expressed by Chailley (1991)) argues that the *Königin* is inherently dishonest and only reveals her true self in Act 2.

As has been shown in the discussion thus far, the first line of thinking has no factual basis. All the Queen’s actions can be explained by a detailed study of the libretto. The second view is based on the idea of women’s inherent ability to deceive. This

idea, although popular, is time and again challenged by Mozart. In an opera such as *Così fan tutte*, for example, the “tutte” reflects on the men rather than on the women, who prove how deceitful they are.

When analysing the libretto, Abbate’s (2001) theory seems more appropriate. She views the *Königin*’s actions in the second act not as a revelation of concealed truth, but as a parallel truth: “There is no initial deceptiveness, no revelation of a hidden truth, but simply a great change. She is prone to metamorphosis, to mutation in body and mind: that is her symptom.” (Abbate 2001: 57)

This may stem from the fusion of two roles in the *Königin* – that of mother and that of desperate regent. In the first act her identity as a mother is prevalent. In the second act, when she loses her daughter as well as the last bit of power that she has, she can be understood from the viewpoint of a sovereign.

The *Königin* is betrayed by everyone: first by her husband and his decree that she should submit to Sarastro; then by Tamino, who abandons the quest to bring her daughter back to her; and lastly by her only daughter who, as her father wished, joins the Brotherhood – the same order that will cast her into “eternal darkness”.

Act 2 Scene 30

At the end of the opera, the *Königin* makes one last attempt to bring down the Brotherhood, but it is futile, and she is eternally cast into darkness.

3.1.4 Sarastro

Act 1 Scene 18

When Sarastro is introduced to the audience, it is clear that he is idolized by his people. They sing “He is our idol” (“Er is unser Abgott”) although they are to all intents and purposes his “slaves”.

Sarastro has stolen Pamina away from her mother, with no justification other than that the *Königin* is a woman (“Ein Mann muß eure Herzen leiten, den ohne ihn pflegt jedes Weib aus ihrem Wirkungskreis zu schreiten”) (“A man must guide your heart,

for without that, every woman tends to overstep her natural sphere”). Although one may take into consideration the social norms of a time when women were almost barred from having their own income (Empress Maria Theresa, who ruled Austria in Mozart’s lifetime, was one of the few powerful women), none of this is hinted at in the libretto. In fact, the *Königin* inherited all her late husband’s land and his throne. Without the *Sonnenkreis*, however, she had no power.

Sarastro preaches love to mankind but will not allow Pamina’s love for her mother. He believes that Pamina’s two attachments (to Tamino and her mother) are incompatible, and that her allegiance must be transferred to a man (“Ein Mann muss eure Herzen leiten...”)

Act 1 Scene 19

Sarastro’s motives to induct Tamino into the Brotherhood are not clear. Sarastro insists that Tamino’s qualities are admirable, yet he does not know Tamino at all, and his “admirable” qualities have also not been apparent to the audience. One could, therefore, argue that, through Tamino’s union with Pamina, Sarastro would have secured control over Pamina, thus fulfilling his obligation to her father. The scheming that he attributes to women is, in fact, also part of his own character.

Act 2 Scene 12 and Scene 30

Sarastro is portrayed as the ideal father whose kindness culminates in the union of Tamino and Pamina. However, one wonders whether he would have allowed any other outcome, as he is always in control. Despite his benevolent veneer, his own prejudice against women’s independence forms an important part of his decisions.

When Sarastro condemns the *Königin* at the end of the opera, it is difficult to reconcile his views regarding humanitarianism with his vengeful actions. In the aria “*In diesen heil’gen Hallen*” (“Within these hallowed halls”), he says that “revenge has no place...enemies are forgiven” (“kennt man die Rache nicht...weil man dem Feind vergibt”). He has no forgiveness for the *Königin* – someone who does not want to submit to a rigorously patriarchal regime and is, therefore his enemy – but exerts revenge by taking her daughter away from her and casting her into eternal darkness.

3.1.5 Papageno

Act 1 Scene 1 and Scene 2

Papageno is introduced by Tamino's remark that a male figure is approaching ("eine männliche Figure nähert sich"). The English translation of a "manly figure" implies qualities that are clearly not present in Papageno's behaviour: he pretends that he was Tamino's saviour, although he is a coward and shakes with fear when he sees the (dead) serpent. His character is revealed fully in the aria "I am the bird catcher" ("*Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja*") where he states that the thing that he desires most is a little wife, but he cannot see how he will catch one without using a trap.

Papageno provides the *Damen* with birds for the *Königin* in exchange for his daily food and drink and is therefore dependent on women for his survival.

Act 1 Scene 8

After the lock on Papageno's mouth has been removed, he is happy that he can chatter ("plaudern") again. This is a negative quality associated with women, particularly in this opera when the men are, for example, warned by the priests to "Guard yourself from women's tricks" ("Bewahret euch vor Weibertücken").

Papageno, like Tamino, is also given a musical instrument (a set of bells) by the *Damen* to assist him.

Act 1 Scene 13

Like Tamino who lost his way in the forest, Papageno gets lost in Sarastro's temple. This is an "unmanly" trait: men are supposed to be able to know and to find their way around. As Tamino was afraid when he first saw Papageno, so Papageno again shows his cowardice by being afraid when he encounters Monostatos. There is thus little difference between the behaviour and reactions of Tamino and Papageno.

Act 1 Scene 17

When Pamina and Papageno are found, Papageno is the cowardly one who wants

to hide. He sings: “O wär ich eine Maus! Wie wollt ich mich verstecken, wär ich so klein wie Schnecken, so kröch ich in mein Haus” (If only I were a mouse, how I’d hide myself – if only I were tiny as a snail, I’d creep into my house).

Act 2 Scene 2

As Papageno is again fearful at the beginning of this act, Tamino tells him to “be a man”, to which Papageno replies “I would rather want to be a girl” (“Ich wollt’ ich wär ein Mädchen”). The hackneyed ideal of a strong man is not applicable to Papageno, who possibly comes the closest to representing a realistic image of a man because he represents no gender “ideal”. His sole desire is to “catch a pretty girl”, and he has no wish to be a hero, except where it could impress such a girl.

Act 2 Scene 6

As the *Damen* leave Tamino and Papageno and the priests return, Papageno faints, and a priest needs to tell him to “be a man”. Again, fainting, or going into a swoon, is behaviour associated with a woman, yet both Tamino and Papageno have done this while the women have not.

Act 2 Scene 23 & 29

The idea of what a perfect wife could be is clearly expressed in Papageno’s aria “A young girl or a little wife is Papageno’s wish for himself” (“*Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen wünscht Papageno sich*”). For displaying the minimal qualities of character that the priests regard as important for marriage, he is rewarded with a wife, Papagena. She is primarily conceived as a necessary complement to her husband.

3.1.6 Die drei Damen

Act 1 Scene 1

The first impression given of women in this opera is a very strong one. The *Damen* succeed where Tamino could not and kill the giant serpent with their silver spears. They praise themselves for their bravery (“durch unsres Tapferkeit”).

However, this image is quickly reduced to one of girls fawning over the pretty Tamino, each one jealous that the others might be favoured above herself, and they start to squabble over his attention: a hypothetical question as he has fainted and is not aware of them at all.

Act 1 Scene 3 & 8

When the *Damen* return, the earlier impression of their strength is reinforced. They punish Papageno for lying and they also give the two men the musical instruments which they will need for their later trials. All of this is, of course, done in the service of the *Königin*, which reflects on her power. The only weakening of this image takes place through the jibes of Papageno, who clearly disrespects them. As Papageno has, however, thus far not made a very good impression because of his lying and his fear, one cannot necessarily trust his judgment.

Act 2 Scene 4

Where the *Damen* were portrayed as benevolent participants in the *Königin's* kingdom in the first act, they are portrayed as unworthy women who are enemies of the Brotherhood in this Act and Scene. However, this is not deduced from their actions or words, but from Tamino's disapproving attitude towards them as reflected in "ein Weiser prüft und achtet nicht was der verworfne Pöbel spricht" ("a wise man seeks proof and disregards what the common rabble say") and "Geschwätz von Weibern nachgesagt, von Heuchlern aber ausgedacht" ("only idle's women's talk, but invented by deceivers").

Just as they are about to leave, the temple priests exclaim "profaned is the sacred threshold! Down with the women to Hell! ("Hinab mit den Weibern zur Hölle!"). This seems a harsh punishment because their only known "crime" is to be the *Königin's* servants, whose crime in turn seems to be that she is a woman and Pamina's mother. By contrast, both Pamina and Papagena are allowed into the halls. It seems that only a specific type of woman that can profane their halls, namely a woman who is not bound to, and thus not directed by, a man.

Act 2 Scene 30

At the end of the opera, the *Damen* together with their *Königin* are damned to “eternal darkness” (“ewige Nacht”)

3.2 ANALYSIS OF THE LITERARY SOURCES

This section will focus on the four most important works from which Schikaneder and Mozart drew inspiration for their libretto. The works will each be analysed regarding themes of gender and feminism, with a focus on the portrayed gender roles that are found in these texts. Those scenes and themes that are found in these works and bear a strong resemblance to those in *Die Zauberflöte* but that do not relate to these gender themes, will not be discussed. I aim to investigate whether Schikaneder and Mozart chose to portray the gender roles of the different characters by taking direct inspiration from these works, or whether the themes were assimilated on a subconscious level, and then manifested themselves in their libretto.

3.2.1 *Yvain* by Chrétien de Troyes

Part 1

Within the first few pages, the reader encounters a description of Lunette as a “...very fair and gentle maid”, and this is how almost every woman in the novel will subsequently be described. The main purpose of a woman is therefore to look pretty, more specifically “tall and slim and straight” (4). It seems that the gentlewomen are set apart from other maidens by being “elegant, so fair of speech and so well-informed, of such pleasing manners and character...” (4). When Tamino first sees Pamina’s picture, he is enamoured with her because of her pretty looks (“*Dies Bildneß*”). As the opera progresses, he never once mentions anything about her character, but continues to comment on her beauty.

The knights (the pinnacle of manliness in King Arthur’s time) should be “brave and courteous”, and they “betook themselves whither they were summoned by the ladies, damsels and maidens.” They are also “fully armed as a knight should be” (4). Although Tamino was a prince and not a knight, one expects him to be fully armed; his quiver is, however, empty.

As we follow the main character through his adventures, we come to realise that he is not fearless. "He drew back in fear, for there is no beast for fierce and dangerous as a bull" (8); "and indeed, had I had the courage [to follow after the knight]" (11). As Yvain encounters something he does not immediately recognize, he asks "Which creature are you?" to which it answers, "I am a man" (11). This encounter corresponds to the encounter between Papageno and Tamino in the opera. It is interesting that the unknown person identifies himself by his gender and not by his species (human).

The quality of talking too much, which is one of the main characteristics ascribed to women in the opera, is also found in this novel. It is, however, here ascribed to a man, and moreover to one who is at court. Against Kay (a man) the Queen says, "are you beside yourself that your tongue always runs on so...It babbles so that it makes you hated everywhere. It cannot do you greater treachery."

Yvain is saved by a damsel (Lunette), and in the ensuing scenes she manages to keep him safe and to secure his position by using her wit and words, which are her only weapons. She does this to repay an earlier service of the knight towards her, saying, "repayment, because in your kindness, you honoured and aided me" (16). The reason for this, she says, is "It is not manly to cherish fear." (16) She therefore acknowledges that a man will and can experience fear, but that this is not regarded as a desirable characteristic.

Immediately after this show of woman's strength by the Lunette, it is negated in the next section as Yvain comments on a woman's indecisiveness and ease of being persuaded in maintaining, "...a woman has more than one mind. That mind in which she is just now I trust she will soon change; indeed, it will change it certainly." (20) He (Yvain) continues, "this lady, as also are other women, almost without exception...guilty of their own folly, and refuse to accept what they really wish....for a woman will grow irate when she hears any one give her good advice."(23)

After the Lady of the Keep's husband is killed, she is reminded by Lunette that "it is not fitting that so great a lady should keep up her grief so long." She is persuaded to

consider taking a new husband (Yvain, who killed her husband), and “thus, by her own arguments, she succeeds in discovering justice, reason, and common sense, how that there is no cause for hating him” (24) and decides to marry him. If she were a man, she would have been expected to want revenge, but she needs him to defend her keep. This illustrates her willingness to put aside her personal feelings for the sake of her people.

Her attitude is in stark contrast to what is written a few pages earlier, when two knights are “so intent on each other’s death” (14) merely for the sake of “honour” and not to avenge the death of a loved one.

Although the Lady of the Keep has selected Yvain as her new husband she nevertheless “needs the unanimous consent of the men of her court to marry her chosen husband” (25), as there is “more honour for him in being accepted with the approval of her men.” (28)

Part 2

The wedding between Yvain and the Lady of the Keep takes place. This happens just days after her husband’s death, and no mention is made of love for her new husband. It is a pragmatic decision: he is from a noble lineage.

Gawain (Yvain’s friend and also a knight) tries to persuade the Lady of the Keep to let Yvain go away for some time to have the opportunity to go and fight, as he knows that Yvain misses doing it. Gawain maintains that “a woman quickly withdraws her love and despises him who degenerates in any way when he has become lord of the realm” (32). By “degenerating” is meant men who grow “soft”, and do not venture out of their castle to fight. This indicates that he believes women only admire and love men who are brave fighters.

Yvain professes to love his new wife dearly, but, after promising to return to her after one year, he does not because he forgets to do so. This is not typical of lovers who are supposed to “keep count of the time and the season.”(35)

When she leaves Yvain out of anger because he took too long to return, “such a storm broke loose in his brain that he loses his senses; he tears his flesh and, stripping off his clothes, he flees across the meadows and fields...he dwelt in the forest like a madman or a savage.” (36) This is not the behaviour expected of a brave knight.

As in part 1, he again needs the help of a woman, and a passing lady sends her maid to give him a remedy for his madness.

The idea that women who are loved (and looked after) by a strong man are lucky is confirmed when one soldier remarks that “a woman would be blessed who should be loved by one who is so powerful in arms.” (38)

Like Tamino, Yvain battles a great serpent. However, unlike Tamino, he manages to kill the serpent by himself.

As Yvain stumbles across a place which brings back memories of the lady of the keep leaving him, “so great was his distress that thousand times he sighed ‘alas!’ and fell in a swoon.” (42) This behaviour is not expected from a knight, particularly since the reason for it is his emotional state.

The same reaction is seen a few pages later as the lord of a castle “again and again bemoans his fate, and weeps aloud and sighs,” (50) the reason being that his sons were taken captive by a giant.

When Yvain is engaged in battles, it is remarked that “the ladies, having no other weapons, thus assist him with their prayers” (54)

Part 3

Gawain becomes involved in a land dispute between two sisters. He agrees to help and fight for the sister who is in the wrong and who is also opposed by King Arthur. The sister who is in the right sets out to look for Yvain to fight for her. However, she encounters some difficulty, as “any damsel might well be terrified to be in the woods, without escort, in such bad weather and in such darkness, that she could not see the

horse she was riding.” (58) Despite this she bravely continues.

Lunette (the damsel who saved Yvain in part 1) again shows her cleverness by manipulating her lady to take back Yvain. Yvain uses the excuse that “it was madness that made me stay away.” (78) However, we are aware that he forgot about his promise to return within one year because of his love for battle and performing heroic deeds.

3.2.2 *Sethos* by Jean Terrasson

Preface

In the preface to this novel, the importance of lineage is emphasized. With nobility, it is the responsibility of sons to take over the rule of the kingdom from their fathers when they die. This raises the question of where Tamino’s obligation lies. As a prince, he is meant to lead his people after his father, the king, has died. However, he has abandoned this path to join the Brotherhood and follow Sarastro.

It is also mentioned several times that Sethos has a refined and profound moral sense (in the same manner as bravery is mentioned in *Yvain*). Is this perhaps why Tamino can be described as brave? The difference between religious morals and morals as abstract concepts is discussed by Terrasson. One wonders which morality motivated Tamino’s choice.

Book 1

From the outset the importance of the gods Osiris and Isis (who are also referred to in the opera) in Egyptian culture is emphasized. They are brother and sister, husband and wife, and representative of the two sexes of nature. As can be seen later in the novel, Isis is the one who is given more attention.

The ruler at the beginning of the book is also a woman. King Osoroth entrusted the reins of government to his Queen Nephte. “For great was the love the people bore to their king, or rather to their queen, who, though young in years, governed them with an admirable wisdom and goodness.” (9) The contrast between them is quite significant, as Osoroth is described as a creature of “sloth and inactivity”, while Nephte is described as “more capable than any receiving [the governance of the

country]”. Her style of governance is described as having “the affection of a mother and the foresight of a wise queen...gentle government...devoted herself to affairs of the state.” (11) By contrast, the *Königin* struggled to combine the roles of motherhood and regency. However, Nephte did not have to deal with either her regency or her offspring being taken away from her.

As the queen is taken ill, everyone is trying their best to save her. The healers try all methods available (even those not allowed), and all the common people are in constant prayer. Nephte is clearly much loved by her people. The *Königin* did not manage to inspire this love from her people. The few followers she has seem to rather worship and fear her.

After Nephte’s death, a very long eulogy is recited by the head of the priests before her spirit continues on its journey. Its content affirms her excellent rule. A clear picture of what life under the rule of the *Königin* would be is never explored in the opera.

Book 2

Throughout the book, the king is described as “weak and indolent”, and as having “false principles of courage”. The king proves this by thinking that anyone can govern the kingdom and gives it over to his new love-interest, Daluca. In his defence, she is also quite skilled in manipulation, and used her arguments very effectively to persuade him to do so.

Realising that the people are still faithful to the memory of their previous queen, Daluca tries to corrupt the morals of the court by a relaxation of manners and levity of mind. Through this she hopes that she will become popular and accepted.

Although there are constant misogynistic references in the text, for example regarding knowledge, “the people, and especially the women, knew no more of it than what the priests taught them”(86) and “to such ladies of the court who were most vain, who talked loudest and upon nothing and which already sensibly lessened the regard otherwise had to them and the whole sex”(101), the women

were still “allowed freedom of conversation with the men, contrary to the customs of other countries.”(90)

The thorough education of the prince is discussed, whose main purpose is to “inspire him with the principles of every virtue, which he might stand in need of to support him in the most adverse fortune”. This suggests that it was generally accepted that a prince would receive certain instruction by virtue of his birth, and that Tamino went through similar lessons. This would imply that Sarastro could have assumed all Tamino’s virtues because of his social standing; however Sarastro insists on Tamino proving his virtue by setting him certain trials despite describing him as a virtuous man.

Book 3

Although there are priestesses in the order, they have no sacerdotal function – they are only priestesses because of marriage. They are not allowed to make contact with the house.

The trials that Tamino had to go through are similar to those of Sethos. Sethos, however, endures the trial of fire and water alone, and receives no help. It is mentioned that Sethos is “driven by the whole motive being his curiosity.”(157) We are, however, unsure of Tamino’s motive, for it was apparently not love.

The purpose of the silence trial is described in this section “to resist the charms of the sex when they appear in competition with his duty.”(187) This is one of the main trials in the opera.

Sethos is given three questions to answer before he is accepted into the order: “What is the principal virtue of a hero? Does heroism consist in exceeding the bounds of duty? Is it heroic to sacrifice even one’s honour to the interest of our country, or the general good mankind?”(195) Tamino does not have to answer such questions.

Book 4

This book starts with Sethos's discourse about heroism: "An heroic action cannot have the glory of him that does it for its object and aim, but must necessarily have in view the interest and advantage of others...an heroic action proceeds from a principle of virtue...the chief virtue of a hero is not valour; valour is rather a natural and advantageous disposition of the mind and body...it is a zealous love of mankind". (216-221) When applying these ideas about heroism to Tamino, he falls short of the expectations of a prince.

At the age of eight the sexes were separated in school – the boys and the girls thus received different educations according to their roles they need to fulfil later in life.

A passage is written about the manner of offerings, and here even the writer is feeling awkward about the misogyny: "and here the truth of the historical facts obliges me to say, that these offerings were carried by priests' daughters, to the number of 18, two and two, naked." (277)

Book 5

The queen again tries to manipulate the king to start a war, but he does not fall for it. However, he also does not see through her actual reasons for wanting to start one (to get rid of Sethos). She is willing to put the entire kingdom at risk for her own designs.

Sethos shows his courage and cleverness in war. When he is taken captive and hears that his father is looking for him, he knows it will ruin the kingdom should his father give away half of his treasure as ransom, so he stays hidden and subsequently becomes a slave. One wonders whether Tamino would've have shown these qualities when put to the test.

When the king hears of the news of the death of his son, he "falls in a swoon". (373)

3.2.3 *Über die Mysterien der Ägypter* by Ignaz von Born

As in *Sethos*, the goddess Isis plays an important part in the Egyptians' lives. A significant section is dedicated to describing her history. Her bravery is shown (for example, "Isis persecuted the perpetrators, killed them, and conquered the rest of their spouses (30)) as one of her admirable qualities. Isis is revered in the opera by the Brotherhood, together with Osiris.

However, the overall tone of this essay is certainly misogynistic. This is to be found even in small details, such as depicting "superstition" as the *daughter* of "ignorance" (27), and that knowledge is only transferred from "father to son" (78).

The rules of society are quite clear: the female gender will "always be excluded from the services of the gods" (49). This is also found in the Brotherhood where it seems that women are not allowed to be part of it. It is worthwhile to quote the whole section on why women should be excluded:

The fair sex was forever excluded from the mysteries, and from this cause no woman could succeed the dynasty of the Greeks and the Ptolemies, because this would have given her the right to enter the sanctuary desire. It is true that in the lists of the dynasties there are the names of the queens Skemiophri, Amesses and Ackenchres, but they were only shapers of the heirs of the throne. For in the hall at Memphis, which contained the images of all the rulers, there was no female figure, and if he also mentioned Nitocris, which by violence forced the Egyptians to make her queen, it is only proof that violence is law, and this exception to the rule bestows even the general principle of the law, also by its conqueror.

The priests could not allow women to perform priestly duties. They believed that the female brain was incapable of the higher knowledge which the priests possessed, and doubted their ability to maintain secrecy, which always carefully concealed the pedestals on which the colossus of the Egyptian priesthood was built...the Egyptian priests on various later artworks also always just portrayed men...only Isis was ever portrayed, never any priestesses

The whole ministry of the women in the Mysteries restricted themselves to the unimportant occupation of feeding beetles, shrews, and some other animals

sacred to the Egyptians. However, they had the greatest veneration for the fair sex, which was based on the awe they had for Isis...Wise legislators also removed the fair sex from our secrets, but under a more flattering pretext: they feared that the charms of the sisters would disturb the brothers in the work. (91-93)

The symbolic meaning of the sun and the moon is discussed, which is interesting considering that Sarastro and his Brotherhood are associated with the sun (day) and the *Königin* and her *Damen* with the moon (night). However, it was the sign of the sun that the *Königin* was actually after. It had belonged to her husband, and she wanted it to be able to enforce her power. "In mystical understanding...the sun was the supreme single deity, the source of all good, and the moon the image of the omnipotence of the Creator, and the sign of the sun often hinted at the spirit and the fire. The sign of the moon, on the other hand, is the water and the earth, to which, as the effective causes of the whole procreation, the air owes its existence to its form."(63)

Although the sun is considered to be on a higher hierarchical level than the moon, the moon is not associated with evil. In *Die Zauberflöte*, the *Königin* also does not bring (physical) darkness (evil) with her. She is described as "sternflammend", which has a positive connotation: "Finally, the flaming star, which, according to the explanation of our symbolic table, is said to have a reference to the eternal fire which burned in Solomon's temple, seems to have had a different meaning among the Egyptians...it was a high object of their worship."(110)

With regard to sphinxes (the head of a woman and body of a lion), it is said "who does not know that the ancients described sphinxes as wise? The shape of the woman's head expresses beauty, and the lion's body strength. Are not wisdom, beauty, and strength the qualities which must be borne in mind by the mason in the designs for the building which he presents?"(116)

There seems to be many paradoxes concerning gender in this essay, and this could be one reason for the paradoxes encountered in Mozart's opera.

3.2.4 *Dschinnistan* by Christoph Martin Wieland

Wieland's work is a collection of fairy tales, and several contain an aspect(s) that is also to be found in *Die Zauberflöte*. The following stories do not have a direct connection to the libretto of the opera and have been omitted from the discussion: *Der Stein der Weisen, Himmelblau und Lupine, Die Salamandrin und die Bildsäule, Alboflede, Pertharin und Ferrandine, Der eiserne Armleuchter* and *Der Greif vom Gebirge Kaf*.

Nadir und Nadine

When Nadir's love of his life is chosen by the wizard to be the year's tribute, he "fainted and was carried home before he could be brought to his senses" ("der in Ohnmacht gefallen war und nach Hause getragen wurde, ehe man ihn wieder zur Besinnung bringen konnte"). When he is awake again, one might expect him to find, fight and defeat the wizard, but he states that he will go and simply ask for Nadine to be returned.

As in *Die Zauberflöte*, the reader is not certain who represents "good" and who represents "evil". Nadir is sent by the wizard (as Tamino was sent by the *Königin*) to his evil brother to retrieve a magic necklace, after which he will get back Nadine. However, when he reaches this brother, he is told that it is actually the wizard who sent him who is evil. As the story progresses, one learns that the first wizard was, in fact, the good person. However, unlike the *Königin*, the second, evil wizard is offered the chance to explain why he made the choices he did, so that the reader ends up sympathising with him. The *Königin* never gets this chance – she is portrayed as the evil counterpart of Sarastro because she is a woman and does not want to submit to him and therefore is also not prepared to honour her late husband's wishes.

It is interesting that it is the women in this story who suffer - the one is innocently turned into a dog (a princess who defied the evil wizard), while Nadine has to endure many trials before she is reunited with her beloved. The story focuses on the men and their conquests, and brushes over the ordeals of the women. The same thing happens in the opera where Pamina's ordeals are not discussed, but where the focus is on Tamino and his trials.

Adis und Dahy

In this story one of the ladies rejects the advances of a black man. In his vanity he cannot understand that anybody would want to resist him except if she were in love with someone else: “The good opinion that he had of himself did not make him realize that Farsana could have resisted him even if her heart had not already been taken by a favoured lover...” (“Die gute Meinung, die er von sich selber hatte, ließ ihr Herz nicht schon für einen andern begünstigten Liebhaber eingenommen gewesen wäre...”). This shows that men can also be vain, and that it is not an attribute exclusively reserved for women.

The word “listig” (“cunning”) is used several times to describe the female characters. This is especially fitting in the case of Farsana, who manipulates two brothers to disobey their lord and become her lovers. She even goes as far as to point out that it is unfair and selfish of them to not satisfy her sexual needs. However, they remain the ones who fall for her games, and both show their weakness when it comes to desiring a beautiful woman. This is exactly the behaviour of women that Tamino is warned against.

Dahy expects the young Kadidsche to look past his old age and ugliness and marry him because he is a good man. He himself does not think twice about refusing a queen, who is not the most beautiful of women, who proposes to him and who is a good woman (“gute” is used several times to describe her). One thinks here of Papageno and his longing for a (beautiful) wife. In the end he is willing to take an old hag, and is rewarded for it.

Neangir and his brothers, Argentine and her sisters (Neangir und seine Brüder, Argentine und ihre Schwestern)

The physical appearances of the female characters are described in some detail in this tale, which may point to the fact that the most important deciding factor of a woman’s success is her beauty. Zelide is e.g. described: “her pitch-black eyes, which were filled with the gentlest fire, seemed as big as her mouth, whose redness surpassed the brilliancy of a ruby. Her hair fell in beautiful curls on a bosom which has only begun to swell, her figure was perfectly shaped, her movements were

pure..." ("ihre pechscharze, mit dem sanftesten Feuer erfüllten Augen schienen so groß als ihr Mund, dessen Röte den Glanz des Rubins übertraf. Ihre Haaren fielen in schönen Locken auf einen Busen, der nur eben aufzuquellen anfang; ihre Figur war lauter Ebenmaß, ihre Bewegungen lauter Anmut"). This is strongly reminiscent of Tamino's reaction when he sees Pamino's likeness.

Sumi is, by contrast, a female character who is described as clever and who is in possession of the Book of Secrets. The main characters constantly need to consult with her when they want answers and they heed her advice to make important decisions.

Another of the female characters, Dely, also took it upon herself to take revenge on the man who (accidentally) killed her lover. She did not go and look for a stronger man to do this for her, but had the courage (like Pamina) to take control of her own fate.

Timander and Melissa (Timander und Melissa)

In this tale, the nymphs are described as and reduced to sex symbols. "One imagined a hundred young nymphs of the most flourishing beauty in all their manifold forms and charms...they barely concealed their arms and their bosom..." ("Man stelle sich hundert junge Nymphen von der blühendsten Schönheit in allen ihren mannichfaltigen Formen und Reizen vor...sie trugen alle die Arme bloß und den Busen nur leicht verdeckt..."). While half of them come dancing seductively to Timander to bring him to their fairy-leader, the other half are playing mesmerizing music.

Timander falls in love with the fairy-leader although he never sees her face, as she is heavily veiled. However, he is entranced by her body, and she "gave him so many opportunities to show his own wit" ("gab ihm so viele Gelegenheit, seinen eigenen Witz zu zeigen"). This suggests that he wants a wife who gives him the opportunity to show off.

The veiled fairy reminds us of the veiled *Damen*. She hid an ugly face, but we are

never told what the *Damen* hid. The fairy did not try to trick Timander. Because of the social emphasis on physical beauty, she mistrusted him at first and only removed her veil after she felt safe with him, and sure that he would love her no matter what the circumstances, as he assured her he would.

Timander's love for her faded immediately after he got to know her true self. One wonders how long Tamino and Pamina's love for each other would last, since the end of the opera seems to signify that they are bound together as Initiates into the Brotherhood, and not necessarily as man and wife (as described in Papageno and Pamina's "*Bei Männern*").

The golden branch (Der goldene Zweig)

In this tale the king locks his son up in a tower to rot away because he has refused to marry the woman to whom he is betrothed, even though she has also refused to marry him. It is interesting that the king does this to his only son, for this means the crown will pass to someone else when he dies. One wonders what happened to Tamino's father and the kingdom after he left. Did Tamino return to his father or not? Is it possible to be part of the Brotherhood as well as a prince?

The prince is subjected to testing situations. He finds, for example, a severed hand in a dresser, and "nearly fainted at the sight, his hair straightened, his knees shivered, and he could scarcely stay standing upon his feet" ("Er fuhr bei diesem Anblick zusammen, seine Haare richteten sich empor, seine Knie schlugen gegeneinander, und er konnte sich kaum auf seinen Füßen erhalten").

The prince and the princess, to whom he is betrothed, are both locked up in the tower. They are both described as ugly to look upon, but that their hearts were pure. The prince is visited by a fairy and she will grant him anything he wishes. He chooses to be attractive. When the fairy visits the princess, she is given a choice: she can either remain ugly and pure of heart, or she can become beautiful and stop being noble and good of heart; she chooses to remain as she is. It is interesting that the princess is given a choice, while the prince is given what he desires.

Their refusal to marry each other also has different motives. He does not want to marry her because she is ugly; she does not want to marry him because she does not want to bind anyone to someone as ugly as she is.

When the princess is later confronted with the severed hand, “she felt compelled to express extraordinary courage on such an extraordinary occasion” (“sie fühlte sich aufgefordert, in einer so außerordentlichen Gelegenheit auch außerordentlichen Mut zu äußern”).

The difference in courage between the prince and princess in this story is quite evident.

3.3 COMPARISON TO OTHER CONTEMPORARY GERMAN LITERATURE OF *DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE*

This section will investigate three German plays written during the same time as the opera. The focus will be on feminist and gender issues to determine whether *Die Zauberflöte* adheres to the gender conventions found in other literature of the time, thus reflective of the *Zeitgeist*, or whether it is foreshadowing a Romantic conception. This section will therefore not draw parallels to the plot of the libretto. This will also not be an in-depth study, as that goes beyond the scope of this dissertation.

3.3.1 *Torquato Tasso* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Background

The play takes place around the year 1577 in Belriguardo, a palace of Alphons II, the Duke of Ferrara. The main theme of the play is the role of the poet (Tasso) in the courtly society. Other themes that are explored are the antagonism between him and the Secretary of State, Antonio Montecatino, and the love of Tasso to the Princess of Este, the sister of the Duke. However, at the end of the play Tasso's problems remain unresolved.

Act 1

When Tasso is crowned with his wreath, it is described that it is placed on his “weak head” (“schwaches Haupt”). Tasso accepts Antonio’s insult “wer drückte diesen Kranz auf Ariostens Stirne?” (“who pressed this wreath on Ariosten's forehead?”) without any retaliation, showing a weakness of character, which gives Antonio the opportunity to continue insulting him. However, this could also perhaps be traced back to the difference in class (The poet does not want to engage in a fight with the Secretary of State), as none of the other characters (who seemingly think highly of Tasso) say anything to stop it.

When Leonore refers to the son she has with her husband, she does not describe him as “her” son, but as “his” son, and remarks that she has the privilege of sharing his (her husband’s) fatherly joys. This shows that the man is irrefutably the head of the household, and the woman is subservient.

The Princess and Leonore are both educated; they speak about Greek mythology. The Princess remarks that she owes her knowledge of ancient languages and the best that there is to know about history to her mother. Directly after this she refers to a world of which she cannot be a part, namely the world of “kluge Männer” (“clever men”).

The Princess needs to ask her brother for permission to back to the city with him. Although a grown woman, she still can’t act without his charge. When the ladies later ask to hear what Antonio has to say about Rome, they are told that it does not concern them, “ihr Kinder” (“you children”).

Act 2

As Tasso declares his love to the Princess, the reader realises how weak his character is. His utterances go further than what can simply be classified as being love-sick and he resorts to self-pity.

What is interesting is that Tasso is much more comfortable in the company of women than men. His manners seem affected and awkward when he is around Antonio and Alphons.

One of the things that are often held against women is that they talk too much. When Tasso meets with Antonio to make peace, the length and imagery in the dialogue (or rather monologue) between them is indicative of his feminine inclinations.

When at last he pulls out his sword to attack Antonio, one cannot interpret this violent act as being either manly or brave. It is interpreted as the action of a rash, unwise mind.

When Tasso is sentenced to house arrest, a very light punishment for pulling out a sword at court, he takes it more seriously than what was intended by the Count. His reaction is overly dramatic, and he is convinced of the Count's wrath against him. This shows that his ideas about life are still childish and narrow-minded. However, the question is whether this immaturity could be Goethe portraying the mind of an artist, with a warped sense of reality. The artist's mind is constantly busy with his work and he lives in a fantasy world.

The Princess remarks that while men strive towards having freedom in their lives, women want to have customs and routine. ("Nach Freiheit strebt der Mann, das Weib nach Sitte").

Act 3

Tasso needs the help of the women to take care of him ("lass uns für ihn sorgen"), as he is clearly incapable of fixing his problems on his own.

The Princess remarks that although her sister's husband does not hold it against her for not giving him any children, there is no joy in her life. This seems to emphasize the fact that a woman's main purpose is to have children. This is further strengthened by the Princess's rhetorical question of asking how her mother's cleverness helped her in life.

Leonore is certain that she will convince Antonio to do what she wants, but Antonio has the upper hand in their conversation, and she ends up doing his bidding.

Act 4

Tasso is again interpreting people's characters, emotions and intentions wrongly. One starts to wonder if his skewed viewpoint can really be traced back to his artist's temperament, or if he is in fact immature.

In his conversation with Leonore Tasso is again overly dramatic, and one is impressed by her patience with him. Tasso is not accepting advice from anyone – he is convinced he knows best.

Antonio apologizes to Tasso for his behaviour. One is surprised, because the image that was painted of him so far was that of a rude and self-important man, and not at all portraying those qualities that could be associated with a count.

Tasso's later monologues seem like the ranting of a madman. If he was previously emotional, he is now irrationally so.

3.3.2 *Don Karlos, Infant von Spanien* by Friedrich Schiller

Background

The title character is Karlos, Prince of Asturias, and the play is loosely modelled on historical events in the 16th-century under the reign of King Philip II of Spain. It deals with social intrigues of the family at the court, and also incorporates political-social conflicts such as the beginning of the Eighty Years' War, in which the Dutch provinces won their independence from Spain.

Act 1

We learn that the present Queen was originally Don Karlos's fiancé, but the King took her as his wife, and, as indicated throughout the text, she is therefore Karlos's (step)mother. His natural mother died in childbirth, for which the King still blames him ("Muttermord"). This change of role from fiancée to mother gives a new twist to the Oedipal complex, especially because he still loves her and wants to be with her. Also noteworthy is that the Queen has no say in who she wants to marry. She sees it as her duty ("Pflicht") to do as she is told.

There are homoerotic overtones in the manner that Karlos and the Marquis greet each other, and their ensuing conversation is more suitable to lovers than between two friends, for example when they speak of “und unsrer Seelen zartes Saitenspiel...” (“and our souls’ delicate string playing”).

The Marquis mentions at court that the knight’s highest duty is that of protecting the ladies.

The king has so far been painted as a cruel and harsh man, for example, he sends one of the queen’s handmaids into exile for ten years, because she left the queen alone for a few minutes (on the queen’s orders).

Act 2

The King considers Karlos to be thoughtless, soft and cowardly, and says he needs to go to war before he will acknowledge him as a man. Both talk about “Versöhnung” (“reconciliation”) the whole time. It is, however, not exactly clear why this is necessary.

Eboli, the king’s mistress, is treated like a tradable commodity when she is compelled by him to marry a count. This demonstrates the double standards at play regarding sexual behaviour. When the king is convinced later (falsely) that his wife is having an affair, he wants to sentence her and their child to death; however, he had no scruples about taking a mistress.

We learn that the queen did return Karlos’s love; she is showing much restraint and a sense of duty to refuse his advances.

Eboli deduces that the person Karlos loves is the queen. However, she then wants to take revenge on him.

The King’s servants plot to expose a false affair between the queen and Karlos. This is not done out of love or loyalty towards the King. It is done simply because they do not want to see Karlos, who they consider to be immature, on the throne. They also do not care that the queen will be sentenced to death although she has done nothing

wrong.

Act 3

When the King is being told of his wife's "affair" by Eboli, he does not believe it. Because it comes from a woman, he considers it "slander" ("Verleumdung") and will only believe the accusation if a man can confirm it ("bis mir's ein Mann bekräftigt"). It is the Marquis whose character is the strongest at this point. He shows intelligence with his clever plans to ensure the safety of Karlos and the queen, integrity when he stands up for his principles, and he refuses to be swayed by the grandeur of the King's request to serve him. One is therefore more inclined to believe the Marquis's impression of Karlos than that of the King. He believes Karlos has all the qualities to make an excellent king and he knows that Karlos has the love and support of the people of the city. This is verified when the people are demanding Karlos's freedom and want him to lead them into battle. However, he has not yet shown any of the courage and wisdom in the time-frame of the play itself – he is portrayed as being rather naïve.

Act 4

The King is still blinded by his hatred for Karlos. Although he realises the queen and Karlos have not done anything wrong, he still wants Karlos to die. It is not clear whether he is just an unfortunate product of his position as king, or whether he is really such a harsh man, especially since his only child is involved. His isolation as ruler has possibly caused him to lose touch with reality.

When Karlos wants entry to the queen's chambers, he is stopped by a bitter Eboli. He asks her to "be bigger than your sex. Forget about insults! Do what no woman did before you – and what no woman will do after you. I demand something unheard of from you." ("sei größer als dein Geschlecht. Vergiß Beleidigungen! Thu', was vor dir kein Weib gethan – nach dir kein Weib mehr thun wird. Etwas Unerhörtes fordr' ich von dir.")

The Marquis delivers a moving speech regarding his love for Karlos. Again, the imagery he uses eclipses that of what one would simply use for a friend.

All the King's advisors are stunned that he has been moved to tears by everything that has happened. This indicates that he is possibly not as harsh man as we have been led to believe.

Act 5

Before the Marquis says farewell to Karlos, he urges him to be "be a man" ("sei ein Mann"). The Marquis's bravery is proven when he is willing to die for the greater good. One realises that all the stories that had been told about his bravery were correct, and that this was the reason why the King had been so eager to employ him.

The King is overcome by emotion when he hears of the Marquis's death. "Ich habe ihn lieb gehabt...er war mir wie ein Sohn...meine erste Liebe" ("I loved him...he was like a son to me...my first love"). This is ironic, for he barely knew him.

It seems that Karlos has conflicting loyalties between his love for the queen and his political duty. One could argue that Tamino finds himself in a similar position: he has to refuse to speak to Pamina in order to pass the test to be allowed into the Brotherhood.

3.3.3 *Maria Stuart* by Friedrich Schiller

Background

The play takes place in 1587, and revolves around the last days of the catholic Maria Stuart, Queen of Scots and her rivalry with her cousin, the protestant Queen Elisabeth I of England. A fictional meeting between the two queens form the central point of the plot.

Act 1

As Paulet is looking through Maria's things, he finds incriminating jewels that she has hidden away, and curses her "womanly wiles" ("Weiberlist"). Some of her servants have sacrificed their lives for her, but she is seemingly only bothered by her appearance and the nice things that surround her. Paulet also does not think much of her professed piety, as he remarks that she has "den Christus in der Hand, die Hoffart und die Weltlust in dem Herzen" ("Christ in the hand, arrogance and worldly

lust in the heart"). Her pride and arrogance are referred to many times throughout the play.

Emphasis is placed on physical appearance. When Mortimer enters the room without giving Maria any notice at all, Paulet remarks to her "Lady, an dem ist eure Kunst verloren!" (On him your womanly arts are lost").

Maria conspired to have her husband killed. She says in her defence that it was done in a moment of "madness", and that she was beguiled into doing so. This shows that she does not want to accept full responsibility for her actions.

It seems that Maria has lost touch with reality. She is sure that Elisabeth will be merciful to her and she is also convinced of the loyalty of the whole of England to her as queen.

When Maria realises that she is not going to win an argument against Burleigh, she resorts to playing the innocent. "Wie werd ich mich, ein ungelehrtes Weib, mit so kunstfert'gem Redner messen können"? ("How will I, an uneducated woman, be able to compete with such an artful speaker") She is, in fact, not an uneducated woman, but pretends to be one when it suits her.

Burleigh has the following to say about justice and women: "Das Richtschwert, womit der Mann sich ziert, verhaßt ist's in der Frauen Hand. Die Welt glaubt nicht an die Gerechtigkeit des Weibes, sobald ein Weib das Opfer wird." ("The sword of justice, with which a man adorns himself, is hated in the woman's hand. The world does not believe in the justice of a woman as soon as she becomes the victim.")

Act 2

Elisabeth is referred to as a "keusche Festung der Schönheit" ("chaste fortress of beauty"). This refers to her refusal to marry anyone to date. However, her people and advisors are trying to force her to enter into marriage. To Elisabeth, this proves that she is a mere woman to them, no matter that she tries to rule like a man and king. She believes she as queen should be exempted from that rule of nature which makes women subservient to men. "Hat die Königin doch nichts voraus vor dem

gemeinen Bürgerweibe?“ (“Does the queen not have any advantage over the common bourgeoisie?”)

Talbot remarks that God did not put severity (“Strenge”) into the soft heart of women, therefore Elisabeth needs a man. He also calls women “frail beings” (“gebrechliche Wesen”). Elisabeth forbids him to call women weak in her presence.

Elisabeth shows logical and rational thinking when she consults all her advisors about Maria’s case, and then says that she will consider each one’s advice before making a decision. She is not inherently harsh and is moved to pity by Maria’s letter. However, she is also envious, and asks whether Maria is really as pretty as everyone says she is. Despite her being the queen, she is still bothered by such a matter. This is one example where Schiller’s realistic view of people can be seen; he does not forget that Maria is also Elisabeth’s cousin, and that the family rivalry was always present. He does not necessarily create strong as opposed to weak characters, but rather humans who have strengths and weaknesses.

Leicester was supposed to marry Maria a few years ago, but left her because he had hopes of securing Elisabeth as a wife. Now that there are talks of her marrying the Dauphin, he throws himself back into the arms of Maria, whom he confesses to love. She promises to marry him only if he can secure her freedom.

Act 3

When Maria hears that she will meet with Elisabeth, she almost faints and becomes pale. She starts shaking and must lean on Kennedy to prevent her from sinking to the ground. Her previous confidence and bravado have disappeared.

Maria has the choice to be sensible and declare herself loyal to Elisabeth, or be proud and make Elisabeth angry, which will result in her death. When they start their dialogue, Elisabeth is cold and distant, while Maria maintains that she has done nothing wrong. She instead focuses on (according to her) Elisabeth’s uncalled-for retaliation against her. As their argument becomes more heated, Elisabeth can no longer control her anger and leaves Maria. Maria is triumphant because she humiliated Elisabeth in front of Leicester, but if this is actually the case, it is not much

to rejoice over.

Act 4

Mortimer chooses to commit suicide rather than be tried for treason. His last words are that he is giving Maria “ein männliches Beispiel” (“a manly example”).

After Burleigh has told Elisabeth of Leicester’s double role, she is persuaded by Leicester to listen to his side of the story. He knows exactly how to manipulate Elisabeth emotionally, and finally he is exonerated of wrong-doing. One wonders whether Leicester would have been able to persuade a man in this way. In *Die Zauberflöte*, Tamino is constantly warned about the wiles of women. However, in this play at least two men – Mortimer and Leicester – use very similar “wiles”.

Elisabeth has difficulty in signing Maria’s death warrant. She feels as if she is the slave of her people. She is torn between her personal feelings and her position as the queen (as was the king in *Don Karlos*). Furthermore, she is a woman, and therefore there are certain expectations of how she should act. In her anger, as she is reminded of Maria’s pride, she signs the death warrant. However, she is shocked by her own action. She hands it to Davidson, the state secretary, and tries to evade personal responsibility by telling him he must do with it what he wants.

Act 5

Maria shows bravery in her last hours and bears her sentence with dignity. This contrasts strongly with the behaviour of her servants who are falling apart.

The play ends with Elisabeth alone. Her advisors have left, and she is filled with doubt as to whether she did the right thing by sentencing Maria to death.

4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to determine to what extent the way in which gender roles are portrayed in Mozart's opera *Die Zauberflöte* reflect the conventions of the time. A case study formed the basis for the research, where narrative data analysis was used to compare the non-indexical material found in the documents. A close reading of the libretto formed the first part of the analysis, after which four documents used as source material for the libretto were analysed, namely De Troyes' *Yvain*, Terrasson's *Sethos*, Von Born's *Über die Mysterien*, and Wieland's *Dschinnistan*. To compare the libretto to other contemporary Germany literature of its time, an analysis of Goethe's *Torquato Tasso* and Schiller's *Don Karlos* and *Maria Stuart* was undertaken. All of these analyses have been done within the theoretical frameworks of feminism and gender studies. The research also incorporated elements of Cultural Materialism.

4.2 SUMMARY

Tamino makes an unfavourable impression in the first scene, and this impression does not improve as the opera progresses. He is unsuccessful as a warrior, weak in the face of danger (though still convinced of his own courage), has an idealised image of romantic love, cannot find Pamina in the temple, and relies on other people (Papageno, Pamina, the *Damen* and the *Knaben*) and objects (the flute) to help him along the way. The only thing that he manages to do successfully is pass the trial of silence. In the process he upset Pamina because he accepted Sarastro's instructions unquestioningly, thereby also showing how indoctrination supplants actual experience. Although he is a prince, he shows none of the expected qualities of bravery and wisdom. Yet, because of his title and also because he is a man, he is trusted by the *Königin* (whom he betrays), sought after by Sarastro, and lauded by the priests for his manly behaviour, albeit undeserved.

Pamina repeatedly shows her courage in the face of danger which we witness when she is confronted by Monostatos's sexual advances; when she is brought before Sarastro and sticks to the truth; and when she has to go through her own trials alone and in general ignorance. Although she is reduced by Tamino to being merely a beautiful princess, she can think rationally about her situations, and she is also physically strong (she rows away on a gondola). She is the one who takes charge and leads Tamino through his trials. Despite her physical and mental strength, she does, however, submit herself to Sarastro and his misogynistic Brotherhood at the end of the opera.

When analysing the libretto, it becomes clear that the *Königin's* behaviour stems from her anger and humiliation at her lack of power and not from evil. She is betrayed by her husband (seemingly because she is a woman), her adversary steals her only daughter, and finally she is betrayed by both Tamino and Pamina. Before this she is on several occasions described by her daughter as well as the servants of Sarastro as a loving mother. While her extreme change in behaviour from Act 1 to Act 2 has in previous literature been attributed to the *Bruchtheorie*, or to her being inherently deceptive, one could rather argue for a parallel truth, stemming from her fusion of roles as mother and desperate regent. In her attempts to defy the customary and misogynistic practices of the time, she is finally damned.

Although Sarastro is seemingly an ideal and kindly father-figure, on closer examination it is his prejudice against women that informs his decisions. He steals Pamina away from her mother with no justification other than that the *Königin* is a woman, and he wants Pamina's allegiance to be transferred to a man. Sarastro's interest in Tamino seems only to further his agenda against the *Königin*, and his outspoken humanitarian ideals fall flat when considering his actions.

Papageno is dependent on women for his livelihood. He pretends that he is Tamino's saviour, swoons, is cowardly and afraid throughout the opera, gets lost in the temple, and constantly chatters. He does not pass the silence trials, yet is finally also rewarded with a wife. Clearly no strong male character, he perhaps comes closest to representing a realistic image of man, as he represents no gender ideal.

Die drei Damen give a very strong impression throughout the opera. They defeat the serpent at the beginning, punish Papageno for lying, and provide Tamino and Papageno with their magical instruments. They do, however, fawn over Tamino and squabble amongst themselves regarding whom he would find most attractive. The other negative images painted of them are gained indirectly through comments like Papageno's jibes, Tamino's disapproving attitude towards women in the temple, and the priests' damnation.

Although a knight is presumed to represent the epitome of heroism, the title character in De Troyes's *Yvain* regularly exhibits his weaker and more human side. He is not always fearless and sometimes needs the help of women to save him. However, there are also situations where he is decidedly unheroic, for example when he loses his mind after his wife leaves him, and later when he simply forgets to return to his wife (whom he professes to love greatly) after a year's absence. Although almost every woman encountered is described as fair and gentle, there are some who exhibit strength of character. Lunette saves Yvain's life and twice uses her wit and skill of persuasion to help him. The Lady of the Keep puts her personal feelings aside for the good of her people and exhibits logical reasoning. Other ladies are also mentioned where they assist knights and show bravery in the face of danger. Despite this, misogynistic views are still expressed in the novel. Comments on women's indecisiveness and how they love to be taken care of by a strong man can be found. Even the Lady of the Keep is forced to have her marriage first approved by the men of her court for it to be regarded as more honourable.

The title character in Terrasson's *Sethos* is an exemplary hero. Sethos's education aims to imbue him with principles of every virtue, and he successfully passes all the trials set to test him of having them. His answers pertaining to the essence of heroism and bravery are important. Through them he shows that he can also transform this philosophical knowledge into courage and cleverness in battle. Sethos's life has many parallels with that of Tamino's. A comparison between the two men shows how Tamino falls short of being a strong character. Queen Nephte's character is in strong contrast with that of her husband, King Osoroth, and her successor, Daluca. Nephte's rule is characterized by wisdom, love and loyalty, and she governs Egypt very successfully. Osoroth is, however, described as weak and

indolent, and having no courage. Daluca exemplifies the woman that is warned against in the opera: she is manipulative (convincing the king to let her rule), corrupt (relaxing the rules at court to make herself popular) and selfish (starting a war to get rid of Sethos). Despite showing both strong and weak male and female characters in this work, there are passages that are misogynistic. Women, for example, are not allowed to have any sacerdotal function, and are only called priestesses by virtue of marriage.

The overall tone of Von Born's essay *Über die Mysterien der Ägypter* is misogynistic, even in small details. Women are not allowed to perform any priestly duties because it is believed that their brains are not capable of the higher knowledge required, and they can also not keep secrets. Additionally, it is believed that they will be a distraction to the priests, which in its turn says something about the priests' steadfastness in their duties. The only female who is accorded any honour is the goddess Isis. The symbolic meaning of the sun and the moon is discussed, and this has direct links to the roles of Sarastro and the *Königin*. Although the sun is on a higher hierarchical level than the moon, the moon is not considered to be evil. A sphinx is described as one of the wisest creatures, although it has the head of a woman.

Several of the fairy-tales in Wieland's *Dschinnistan* have weak male characters that are contrasted with strong female characters. This is most evident in *Der goldene Zweig*, where the prince and princess are subjected to the same horrors, but only the princess shows courage. Other examples of weak male characters are to be found in *Nadir und Nadine*, where Nadir faints at the sight of danger and also does not want to fight the wizard to get Nadine back, and in *Timander und Melissa*, where Timander's love for the veiled fairy fades immediately when he gets to know her true self (after promising he would love her forever). While there are other male characters who are not weak, they cannot be classified as particularly brave or having strength of character. Other strong female characters are to be found in *Neangir und Argentine*, where Sumi is the wise woman who is consulted before important decisions are made, and where Dely takes matters into her own hands and kills the man who murdered her lover herself without any help.

Much emphasis is placed on “beauty”. In the fairy-tales most women’s outward appearance is described in detail, avoiding any mention of their character. In *Timander und Melissa* the nymphs are simply reduced to sex symbols. The only time the physical beauty of a woman is not described is with the veiled fairy in *Timander und Melissa*, who is abandoned when it is discovered she is not pretty. Her charming personality is not enough to elicit love. This is in contrast with Dahy in *Adis und Dahy* who cannot understand why Kadidsche does not want to marry him, although he is very old and she not even of age.

The cunning of women is referred to in *Adis und Dahy* where Farsana manipulates two brothers to become her lovers. The genders are not always treated equally. In *Der goldene Zweig* the fairy, for example, does not give the prince and princess equal wishes, and in *Nadir und Nadine* the focus is on the male characters and their conquests, although it is the female characters who must endure more trials and tribulations.

The main character in *Torquato Tasso* appears to be very weak. He does not defend himself when verbally abused by Antonio; he reverts to self-pity when the princess rejects him; he generally talks too much, has a rash mind, and is overly dramatic; he needs the help of women to address his problems; and he seems to be unwise in his dealings with other people. Some of these traits can possibly be regarded as a manifestation of his artistic temperament and his warped sense of reality, but most of them point to a weakness of character.

Yet it is the women who must deal with misogynistic notions. The woman is subservient to her husband, and if not married, then to her father or brother, and her main purpose in life is to produce children. Although the women in this play are educated, this will not help them in life. In the only measuring of strengths between man and woman in this play, which is that between Leonore and Antonio, Antonio easily persuades Leonore to do his bidding.

The title character in *Don Karlos* shows no particular strength of character. He is naïve and more concerned with his love for the queen than with going to war and proving his bravery in battle. He is overshadowed by the Marquis, who shows

intelligence, integrity and bravery, and whose belief in the greater good causes him to commit suicide. There are homo-erotic overtones in the relationship between the Marquis and Karlos. The king is seen to be a cruel and harsh man, and is blinded by his hatred for his son. The only time he shows emotion and cries is when the Marquis dies; however, this is a man he barely knows.

It is the king that most often promotes misogynist views in the play. He considers Eboli's accounts to be slanderous because they emanate from a woman and cannot be verified by a man. His double standards regarding sexual behaviour are evident in that he treats both his mistress and his queen as tradable commodities yet demands absolute loyalty from them. The women's behaviour in the play does not, however, contradict or question these views. The queen sees it as her duty to be subservient to her husband, and, because of her sense of duty, does not accede to Karlos's love requests although she loves him (and had been his fiancée). When Eboli is rejected by Karlos, she is asked by Karlos to be superior to that of her sex, and not become bitter and seek revenge.

The two main characters in *Maria Stuart*, Elisabeth and Maria, are both in leadership positions because of their birth, and demonstrate a strength of character that explains why they are in these positions and able to command loyalty and respect. Elisabeth shows logical and rational thinking, and Maria shows courage at the end of the play when she accepts her impending death. Their gender, however, plays an important role in the decisions that they take. Elisabeth is pressured by her people and advisors to marry and produce an heir. Although she is the queen, she is also a woman, and therefore expected to fulfil the traditional role of a woman to produce an heir. Maria resorts to playing the innocent, uneducated woman to manipulate men and win an argument. Weak "womanly" characteristics are ascribed to them: Elisabeth tries to evade responsibility when signing Maria's death warrant and almost fixates on finding out whether Maria is as beautiful as is said, while Maria is described as having "womanly wiles" and almost faints when she must meet Elisabeth. These characteristics can, however, be traced to Schiller's idea of people who have strengths and weaknesses, as opposed to creating strong and weak characters. Mortimer and Leicester, two male characters in the play, show how men can be manipulative and change their allegiance to best suit their plans. In spite of

the two strong females, the general attitude of the men in the play is still misogynistic, illustrated in quotes by Burleigh and Talbot.

4.3 CONCLUSIONS

This study has shown that the libretto of *Die Zauberflöte* reflects the dominant ideology of the time regarding gender. Although the viewpoints on gender might seem ambivalent, the historical context of the opera itself was ambivalent. The concept of rights for women was starting to emerge, a factor that is directly related to both the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, but it was still a society governed mainly by the Church, where patriarchal assumptions subordinate women to men. The philosophies of the Enlightenment centred on reason as well as on nature.

Mozart's opera therefore takes a middle road amidst these contradictory viewpoints. While the opera contains misogynistic references and celebrates manliness through the Brotherhood, it is Pamina, and not Tamino, who steals the show. Mozart thus pits weak male characters (Tamino and Papageno) against strong female characters (Pamina, the *Königin* and the *Damen*) in a misogynistic setting. Through the *Königin* he shows us what happens to a woman who tries to defy the system and concludes that strong women cannot escape it. Finally, Pamina, too, has to submit herself to Sarastro – even though it is through Tamino – to survive.

The ideas about gender are not only indicative of the opera's historical context (1791) but can also be traced back to the source material, some of it directly, and some of which seem to have been assimilated by Mozart and Schikaneder. *Yvain* shows that men are also allowed to be afraid and not be in control of their feelings. It seems, however, as though Mozart wanted to prove a point by extending this notion to create a hero without any strengths. By giving Tamino the same background as Sethos, we are shown what greatness could be expected of Tamino. However, Mozart chooses to deny him this and rather give the positive qualities to Pamina. We are also shown what rule under the *Königin* might have been without her power and

child taken away from her.

Von Born's essay is firmly rooted in the Masonic tradition, which is why it was one of the main sources Mozart used. However, it is thoroughly misogynistic, not only regarding what is said about women but also regarding what they are allowed to do. These views are reflected in the ideas of Sarastro and the Brotherhood.

The libretto therefore seems to follow the tendency of the fairy-tales in *Dschinnistan*, with emancipated female characters set in a misogynistic society. The whole opera is, in fact, rooted in the fairy-tale tradition. One could postulate that Mozart possibly considered this medium as best suited to educating his audiences on gender issues, since reality is effectively suspended. As such, it is a remarkably subversive work, achieving its goals despite the strict application of censorship in Austria at the time.

When comparing the libretto of the opera to German literature of the late 1700s, it is apparent that Mozart was indeed one of the first opera composers to use these ideas concerning gender. In the two Schiller works studied, there is also clear progress in the portrayal of women from the publication of *Don Karlos* (1787) to *Maria Stuart* (1800), reflecting the change in society. Although still having to deal with prejudices against them as women, Elisabeth and Maria's prospects are better than those of the women in *Don Karlos*, forcing the reader to reconsider gender biases. One could argue that this is due to their rank in society, but the queen in *Don Karlos* occupies the same rank and yet has poorer prospects. Goethe's *Torquato Tasso* (1790) still portrays the women as trapped in a patriarchal society, but he chooses to have a weak main male character, thereby addressing the contemporary construction of masculinity.

When considering traditional scholarship regarding *Die Zauberflöte* as well as recent productions and film versions of it, one realises that some of these interpretations are still obscured by the ever-prominent patriarchal value system in contemporary, modern society. As the opera reflected its *Zeitgeist* in 1791, the interpretations of it reflect ours. As our own *Zeitgeist* changes, so do the possibilities to keep revisiting these gender roles as portrayed by Mozart.

4.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

An important topic that requires further research concerns our current, 21st-century view of the male character in literature and thus also in opera. In *Yvain*, for example, women think no less of men who cry or exhibit other “feminine” emotions. This leads to the following questions:

- When did it become regarded as problematic to portray male characters as sensitive and capable of fear, anxiety and other emotions?
- Do operas written in the 1600s and the first half of the eighteenth century avoid such depictions of men?
- How are Mozart’s depictions of the men in *Die Zauberflöte* reflected in his other operas?
- Are there similar depictions in operas composed by Mozart’s contemporaries, for example Domenico Cimarosa and Luigi Cherubini?
- Are new perspectives on gender roles depicted in operas composed during the 1800s, and was this change carried into operas written in the twentieth century?

When analysing the libretto, one is tempted to draw parallels between Mozart’s own life and that of the fairy-tale created. Being powerless in the face of the prevailing system of patronage but, like Tamino, being compelled to accept the status quo and its almost ridiculous requirements while, like Papageno, questioning its validity are questions that were faced by him as he grew in artistic maturity. They are, however, also eternal questions faced by many, and this is possibly one of the reasons why this particular opera remains one of those most often performed, even 227 years after it was written.

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