

The Figure of Monostatos in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (1791)

Abstract

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's 1791 opera *The Magic Flute* produced and reproduced in the figure of Monostatos the racialized thinking of difference prevalent in the late eighteenth century. The "Moor" was non-white, Muslim, and supposedly sexually uncontrolled. The love of a black man for a white woman appeared as an unacceptable crossing of a boundary that was simultaneously created by these binary attributions.

Source

Everyone feels the joys of love,
Bill and coo, flirt, snuggle, and kiss,
And I am supposed to avoid love,
Because a Black is ugly,
Because a Black is ugly.
Have I, then, been given no heart?
I am also fond of girls,
I am also fond of girls,
Always to live without a woman
Would truly be the blaze of hell,
Would truly be the blaze of hell,
So, therefore I want, because I am alive,
to bill and coo, kiss, be tender.
Dear, good moon, forgive me,
A White took possession of me,
A White took possession of me,
White is beautiful! I must kiss her;
Moon, hide yourself from this!
Should it vex you too much,
Oh, then close your eyes!
Oh, then close your eyes!
Oh, then close your eyes!

Source of English translation: Kira Thurman for Black Central Europe,
<https://blackcentraleurope.com/sources/1750-1850/the-character-monostatos-in-mozarts-opera-the-magic-flute-1791/>

Source of original German text: Emanuel Schikaneder and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Die Zauberflöte: Eine grosse Oper in zwey Aufzügen*. Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1794, no pagination.

Recommended Citation: The Figure of Monostatos in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (1791),
published in: *German History Intersections*,
<<https://germanhistory-intersections.org/en/germanness/ghis:document-310>> [April 25, 2024].