國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士論文

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「庸才的守護神！」：彼得·謝弗《阿瑪迪斯》中薩里耶里的自我認識

“Patron Saint of Mediocrities!”：Reading Salieri’s Self-Recognition in Peter Shaffer’s *Amadeus*

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“Patron Saint of Mediocrities!”: Reading Salieri’s self-recognition in Peter Shaffer’s Amadeus

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國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士班

碩士論文提要

論文名稱：「庸才的守護神 ！」：彼得·謝弗《阿瑪迪斯》中薩里耶里的自我認識

指導教授：姜翠芬 教授

研究生：陳奎含

論文提要內容：

於西元一九七九年，彼得·謝弗出版其劇作《阿瑪迪斯》。本劇是由一則關於音樂家沃夫岡·阿瑪迪斯·莫札特與同為音樂家的安東尼奧·薩里耶里流傳的故事改編而成。本劇描述薩里耶里以向上帝宣戰為由持續地暗中迫害莫札特。對莫札特的愛與恨促使薩里耶里的自我認同受到龐大的改變。本論文以心理分析之角度檢視薩里耶里的自我認同與其變化。經歷了鏡像階段、無大他者的階段、莫札特（大他者之提示）的出現、莫札特之死、至最後的自我起名為「庸才的守護神」，薩里耶里的自我認同由父母的投射轉換成成自我欺騙式的認同，最後結束於無奈的自我接受。

關鍵字：《阿瑪迪斯》、心理分析、自我認同、自我欺騙式的認同、自我接受

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Abstract

Written in 1979, Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus* reintroduces the old tale of the two musicians — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Antonio Salieri. This play depicts the battles Salieri has with God by destroying Mozart. Being the only person who can recognize Mozart's celestial music and being threatened by Mozart, Salieri faces the tremendous transformations of his self-identification; eventually, he addresses himself as "Patron Saint of Mediocrities."

This thesis, treating *Amadeus* from the Lacanian lens, points out that Salieri's self-identification has gone through certain times of transformations. Having his first self-identification in the Mirror Stage, experiencing the Other-less period of time, having Mozart (the reminder of his Other) appear in his life, losing Mozart, and finally recognizing himself as a mediocre, Salieri re-identifies himself throughout his lifetime. I argue that Salieri's self-identification has changed from the reflection of his parents to self-deceptive identification, and finally, to a helpless self-recognition of his mediocrity.

Keywords: *Amadeus*, psychoanalysis, self-identification, self-deceptive identification, self-recognition

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Chapter One

Introduction

1. Introduction

In 1832, five years after Antonio Salieri's death, Alexander Pushkin introduced the fascinating rumor about the murderer of Mozart to the world with a tint of poetic imagination — "Mozart and Salieri."[1] Since then, the short tale has been covered with a veil of mystery and has subtly lighted the audience's flame of curiosity. After a century, the popularity of this rumor reached its peak in 1979 owing to the exquisite delineation of Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*, a masterpiece that won him the Tony Award for Best Play in 1981.

Before *Amadeus*, Peter Shaffer has already thrived an eminent success with his distinguishing works such as *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* and *Equus*. With the proficient talent in both literature and creativity, Shaffer has composed more than 15 plays throughout his life and *Amadeus* has surpassed what had come before and has reached the apex of his career.

Weaving with his creative imagination, theatrical effect as well as the historical records, Shaffer reintroduces the tension between the two talented musicians, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Antonio Salieri, based on the old tale taken place in late 18th century Vienna. This play begins with the seventy-three-year-old Salieri (in the year of 1823) recollecting his memories from thirty-two years ago when his promising court composer life was suddenly full of Mozart. With the flashbacks, Salieri, as the narrator of this play, tells his imaginative 19th century audience how his great plan of destroying Mozart works, describes the unforgettable face-off moments he has with God, and explains the reason why he decides to tell the world that he, Antonio Salieri, is the murderer of Mozart thirty-two years later after Mozart's death.

[1] See Alexander Pushkin. "Mozart and Salieri." Translated by G M Lee. *Music & Letters*, vol. 38, no. 4, 1957, pp. 315–319.

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Amadeus's last encounter scene has been rewritten for around six times. In 1984, the third version was specifically revised into a movie, which was the most known one and won multiple awards after its release.[2] Every version has some adjustments, but generally speaking, the characterization and the plots are not changed in a way of influencing the whole storyline. Finally, in circa 1998, the last version of the last encounter is produced and this is the *Amadeus* this thesis employs in the following context.

With his jealous, resentful, and perhaps despicable characteristics, Antonio Salieri has always been put under the spotlight due to his "evilness." Rather than categorizing Salieri into good or evil, this thesis intends to employ the Lacanian theory to read Salieri's self-recognition through his life from the viewpoint of the "Mirror Stage" theory and his relationship with "the Other." Dissecting mainly on how the Other affects Salieri's formation of his identity, I argue that Salieri's self-identification has changed from the self-deceptive identification that he is God's chosen one because of his virtuous and pious devotion to a self-recognition of his mediocrity.

2. Literature Review

Amadeus has been a success since its first premiere in 1979 and is popularized ever since the movie version has released in 1984. The criticisms have covered from the factual credibility of its historical context, psychoanalytic reading, pathological reading, ideological viewpoint, biblical interpretation, comparative study, to the twinship analysis (the Shaffer brothers; Mozart and Salieri).

Since its premiere, *Amadeus* has received great attention and has won many prizes. Though many critics applaud for Shaffer's creativity of rewriting the history which triumphantly evokes audience's interest in both musicians, Mozart and Salieri, others disfavor

[2] "The critically acclaimed film racked up 40 wins out of 53 nominations, including 8 Academy Awards, 4 BAFTA awards, and 4 Golden Globes" (Harsono 72).

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the play for Shaffer's presentation. Robert Brustein who finds fault in Shaffer's characterization comments, ". . . a secondary playwright named Peter Shaffer is reducing this genius, one of the greatest artists of all time to the level of a simpering, braying ninny" (23) and further points out Shaffer's "borrowed" (24) materials from works of Ibsen.

Joseph Horowitz, too, in his "Mozart as Midcult: Mass Snob Appeal" criticizes Shaffer's problematic characterization that "Shaffer's Mozart resembles no Mozart I can glean . . . if Shaffer's Mozart cartoon contains shreds of veracity, his Salieri and Joseph II are purely exploitative" (4). Horowitz reckons that "if he [Shaffer] had called his characters by other, unfamiliar names, the play would have forfeited its appeal" (4). Suggesting that Shaffer is taking the advantage of the renowned Mozart, Horowitz believes Shaffer's production is "phony and opportunistic" (14).

In defense of Shaffer's creativity on rewriting history, Simon P. Keefe avers that *Amadeus* "is no ordinary biographical portrait of Mozart: Shaffer readily acknowledges as much" (46). In dissection of historical facts and fictional plots, Keefe makes his point that *Amadeus* "encourages us to reflect on the biographical enterprise relating to Mozart . . . ." (52). It is not about how many facts we receive from *Amadeus* but how fascinating it is to intrigue readers (at any given time) into the exploration on the history of hundred(s) years ago.

Robert L. Marshall, also, has a similar view as to the doubts on Shaffer for being ignorant of history. In his "Film as Musicology: 'Amadeus,'" he explains that *Amadeus* does not mean to be viewed as a biography but "a fable about God's capricious apportionment of talent among his creatures . . ." (Marshall 176). By praising the positive effects of the play, similar to Keefe's argument, Marshall notes what *Amadeus* can evoke is valuable. Sabbar S. Sultan, similarly, does not position *Amadeus* as a historical biography. In his "Shaffer's *Amadeus*: A Dramatic Re-writing of History," Sultan looks into Shaffer's reproduction of

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Mozart and Salieri, asserting that "the play in general dissects and shows the different concentric levels of the play — psychological, moral, artistic, and religious" (Sultan 601). To Sultan, *Amadeus* stands for more than biography.

Freudian study has been a popular instrument for literature analysis, and *Amadeus* is often investigated with it. Jeffrey Berman and William J. Sullivan take Freud's psychoanalysis in their research by shedding light on the father-son relationship. Both Berman and Sullivan emphasize the tension between real/symbolic father(s) and the protagonists. Berman, in his "The Search for the Father in *Amadeus*," focusing on Salieri's relationship with his Father, believes that "Shaffer hints at a troubled parent-child relationship, with neither father nor son able to give love freely and unconditionally to each other" (563). As for Mozart, his biological father, Leopold, is a "cold, rejecting father who cynically uses his son as a narcissistic object" (Berman 568). Sullivan, similarly but more precisely, crystalizes the father-son relationship and its effect in depth. He categorizes the father images to real father (Leopold Mozart), symbolic father (Gluck, Joseph, Van Swieten) and the Father (God). He argues "Salieri's super-ego is his God" (Sullivan 50) and "Van Swieten is Mozart's super-ego projection" (Sullivan 51). Both Berman and Sullivan use Freudian theories in exploring how the protagonists' mental state is affected by the father-images and their power.

Bernard Schweizer, uses Freud's theory to read characters' misotheism in Shaffer's *Amadeus*. Schweizer in his article claims that Salieri, instead of fighting with the Deity, is fighting with his own creation. On the one hand, his dispute with God comes from his "pride and narcissism" (Schweizer 184). On the other hand, from the audience's point of view, there is no actual conversation between God and Salieri; therefore, his interaction with God is "conjured up by himself" (Schweizer 185). Schweizer believes that Salieri's misothesim, instead of attacking the God we perceive, is arguing with his own demon.

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Ivonne Muliawati Harsono examines Salieri with pathological spectacles. Linking concepts of one's identity, social acceptance, industriousness, and mediocrity, Harsono figures that Salieri is one of those who has Narcissistic Personality Disorder by tracing his expression of jealousy, emulation, covetousness, anger, etc. For individuals who have pathological narcissism, Harsono stresses, "the discrepancy between their sense of grandiose and their actual mediocrity can propel them to 'do whatever it takes' to preserve their ideal self" (76). Harsono examines how Salieri's sense of being mediocre leads to Narcissistic Personality Disorder and how this disorder affects himself and others.

Offering another perspective to grasp how Mozart's emergence becomes a threat, C. J. Gianakaris contends that Mozart is "a threat to Salieri personally, to Viennese music generally, and to the pervasive attitudes of the Enlightenment metaphysically" (40). Mozart's presence, therefore, is challenging the established order: Salieri's order on life and career; Viennese's musical aesthetics; the ideology of the Age of Reason. What has been thrilled is not only Salieri's title as a court composer but Salieri's "stubborn belief in an ordered universe which his entire being had been built" (Gianakaris 51). Salieri's life and identity are shaken by Mozart as the Age of Reason is replaced by the Age of Romanticism.

Nehama Aschkenasy and Martin Bidney provide the Biblical interpretation of *Amadeus*. Aschkenasy centers on the relations between Salieri and Mozart, suggesting that they are like Saul and David: "just as King Saul became a mere footnote in Israelite chronicle, giving way to the eternally remembered David" (46). Bidney, drawing his attention on God and Salieri asserts, "the central problem . . . is a Jobean one" (184). Similar to how the Biblical Job is confronting the struggle between justice and faith, Salieri experiences it in the art realm. Bidney argues that the way Salieri serves his God is actually self-serving, "Salieri deceives himself when he speaks of absolute music" (187). Bidney explains that Salieri's devotion to music is conditional because his ambition of fame is what he serves.

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However, Bidney also points out Salieri's Jobean struggle between justice and art later becomes Satanic when he tries to justify his wrongdoing.

Daniel R. Jones, examining Shaffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, *Equus*, and *Amadeus* in juxtaposition, proves that Shaffer's theme of "God-hunting" (146) is prominent in all three plays. Jones observes Shaffer's techniques in pursuing God from his earlier works to *Amadeus* and finds similarities in these three plays, claiming that "all three protagonists symbolize what Shaffer believes is man's primordial need for worship" (Jones 151).

Following Jules Glenn's analysis of demonstrating "that the protagonists of many plays by the twin playwrights, Anthony and Peter Shaffer, manifest the personality characteristics of twins, even though these characters are not manifestly twins" (Glenn 270), James W. Hamilton notices Glenn's concept of "twins in disguise" (qtd. in Hamilton 270) in *Amadeus* that Shaffer's creation of Mozart and Salieri also hints on the twin's rivalry.

3. Contribution

Ranging from the historical approach, psychological approach, pathological examination, to biblical reading, etc., many scholars in the past four decades have dedicated their fruitful research to *Amadeus*; however, few sheds light on the transformation of Salieri's self-identification from self-deceptive identification to self-recognition. Although Martin Bidney has mentioned Salieri's self-deceptive act when Salieri considers himself devoted to music, Bidney does not have an in-depth analysis on this topic.

The previous psychological critical researches give me a conclusion that we readers easily choose a side: the good side. We notice what Mozart has been through, what Mozart has changed, and how Mozart's talent is sabotaged by Salieri, the bad guy in the play. Thus, in my opinion, the existing psychoanalytic studies show that critics are prone to examine Salieri's role/identification in the other characters' shoes with the mindset of affirming Salieri is a flat character in *Amadeus*: Salieri is read as a son figure because of God's existence;

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Salieri is a father figure because of Mozart's presence; Salieri is narcissistic because of his response to others. The result of this approach is that we know Salieri is definitely an intriguing figure whose psychological condition is valuable to look into for knowing how his mind is distorted only through how others identify him.

However, this way of reading Salieri overlooks his complicated character development. We readers very soon recognize the good and bad characters so we take our stance, and thus we identify Salieri as a mean, self-centered, probably pathological character who is intriguing for us to find out how his psychological problem generates his wicked behaviors. We identify Salieri through others' perspectives. Even if we do it from his angle, we most often do it cynically. In other words, Salieri is pre-identified by us before we start to study/identify him. How Salieri identifies himself is neglected. Salieri's self-identification as "Patron Saint of Mediocrities" (Shaffer 117) at the end of the play arouses my interest in his self-identifying journey.

In this thesis, I take the advantage of the arrangement that Salieri is the narrator of the play to dive into his psychological world to discover his transformation through his memories. With a Lacanian lens, this paper argues that Salieri's identification of himself is first established in the mirror stage during his childhood and is altered largely because of Mozart, his Other. Salieri's self-identification transforms from a man who seems to serve God, devoting himself to music, living in virtue, to his self-naming as "Patron Saint of Mediocrities" (117).

Salieri is talented, but Mozart is a genius. The fact that Salieri is the only one who recognizes Mozart's sublime music indicates Salieri's talent is beyond the norm; nonetheless, there will never be enough talent to confront with a genius. From self-deceptive identification to self-recognition, Salieri endeavors to live out a "perfect" life; nevertheless, at the end of his life, the last discernment of his identity seems to be a perfectionist's helpless declaration

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of his failure.

4. Argument

From praising God to cursing God, Salieri, with a privileged position as a court composer, drags himself into a living hell. The man in his best time encounters a gifted prodigy and starts his revenge on God's unfairness. Through the success he achieves in ruining Mozart, Salieri's attempt to commit suicide can be regarded as a recognition of his true self. This thesis intends to penetrate the process of Salieri's self-recognition through the Lacanian lens with Lacan's Mirror Stage theory as well as the tension Salieri has with the Other. The discussion will be based on the progression of Salieri's life, which is divided into four periods — his childhood, the court-composer life (when Mozart is not yet his match), after Mozart appears in his life, and finally, after Mozart is dead. The discussion on the first two periods of time explains what Salieri's first and rooted identification is and how his self-deceptive identification is formed. The latter two periods of time, when Mozart is involved, show how Salieri's false identification is shaken and shattered.

5. Theoretical Framework

Jacques Lacan, enlightens us about "unconsciousness" with his psychoanalytical theories. According to him, one's self-image is affected by one's experience (how one interacts with others). Influenced by the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, Lacan develops his theories such as "the mirror stage," "three orders (imaginary, symbolic, and real)," "Other/other," etc. in the signifying chain.

John Shannon Hendrix explains that in Saussure's system of signified/signifier, "the signifier can only represent the subject as a signifier in language to another signifier; it represents the insertion of the speaking subject into the network of signifiers that constitute signification in language" (262). Following the same system, Lévi-Strauss considers culture is "a combination of symbolic systems headed by language, the matrimonial rules, the

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economic relations, art, science and religion," (qtd. in Wiseman 21). Based on this line of thinking, Lacan develops the theory of how a subject's identity is formed by others.

Lacan proposes that the "mirror stage" takes place during the infancy and functions as "*an identification*" (Lacan 1). In this period of time, a child recognizes his/her image through "the relation between the movements assumed in the image and the reflected environment" (Lacan 1). Lacan explains the mirror stage with the scenario of a child looking at his mirror reflection for the first time. The child, according to Lacan, will feel a sense of ecstasy because of seeing his complete body and this complete body is what the baby imagines to be. However, the mirror reflection is not confined in one's own reflection according to this theory. In other words, this act could lead one to (mis)recognize one's image with others as Bruce Fink explains "one believes everyone functions in the same way as oneself, regardless of species; everyone else's motives are like one's own" (557). Mirror stage, thus, is the time when one's first identification of oneself is constructed.

When one goes through the mirror stage, one's identity is altered and constructed by the influence of the Other with the appearance of language. Calum Neill, making the concept of language clear, expounds,

> The subject, in a sense, is nothing but language while, at the same time, the subject is nothing because of language. It is only through being represented that the subject can be said to exist at all and yet, at the same time, in being so represented, the subject is strictly not there. The signifier is there. (23)

Language seams things together. It is because of language we perceive ourselves and define others; it is because of language we are able to describe our surroundings and are influenced by it. Language gives everything, anything we can give meaning to (a person, a concept, a thing . . . , etc.), its significance. We use language to communicate, which becomes a process of signifying and being signified, and so we learn about ourselves through what we perceive

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via language. The role of the Other is always the major influence in one's identification; it begets the subject's lack and desire as stated by Lacan:

> Desire is that which is manifested in the interval that demand [sic] hollows within itself, in as much as the subject, in articulating the signifying chain, brings to light the want-to-be, together with the appeal to receive the complement from the Other, if the Other, the locus of speech, is also the locus of this want, or lack. (Lacan 200)

Desire conditions the subject as the subject is also dependent on the Other. Calum Neill asserts, "for Lacan the subject is always (being) constituted in relation to the Other and, in particular, in relation to the desire of/for the Other" (16). One's identification therefore is particularly altered because of the signifying chain with the Other. The moment when language becomes comprehensible is approximately the time when one is capable of recognizing the difference between oneself and others. The question of one's existence accordingly is raised specifically by the Other based on language. One identifies him/herself because of the Other's presence. Thereupon, the formation of one's identity is a series of ongoing changes which hinge on the Other.

Assembling the former concepts into this thesis, with the aid of Lacan's Mirror Stage theory, I begin with seeking how Salieri identifies himself during his childhood. From Salieri's childhood memories and his adulthood experiences, it is noticeable that Salieri relates himself to his parents in a way of feeling stuck in mediocrity as well as behaving like a merchant. After discerning Salieri's first self-identification, I then go on to unveil his later transformation. During the time when he serves as a court composer, after making a deal with God, Salieri seems to put every effort in maintaining his image as a pious and devoted court composer. This is the time when Salieri has not yet met Mozart, also the best moment of his life because even the emperor, to some extent, is under his influence. The role of the Other during this period is barely seen for the fact that he is almost on the top of the pyramid so that

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Salieri himself is the only weighty existence to him. Yet, the image of God's chosen one or the virtuous and devoted image he has is merely a self-deceptive identification.

Salieri's life of nothing to fear or desire is ceased as soon as Mozart appears. The life of a court composer changes its stance to mainly be Mozart's opponent. In following Mozart's news and secretly attending Mozart's concerts, Salieri is severely affected by Mozart. At this moment, Salieri's Other appears when Salieri finds out that Mozart's music is the language he himself can understand but cannot speak. Mozart therefore turns into the one he adores and hates simultaneously. This is the moment when his self-identification vacillates. To secure his self-image that he has always believed in, he pays full attention on reducing Mozart, the uncertainty factor, regardless of Mozart's innocence.

Considering himself as the one who is supposed to earn the musical talents from God for his good deed, Salieri plots on continuous schemes in annihilating Mozart. However, at the moment of Mozart's death, Salieri realizes that in ruining Mozart, he ruins himself as well. Although Mozart is dead, his music lives. The identity of Salieri is still affected by Mozart, the Other. After Mozart is dead, Salieri's life without Mozart's sublime music forces himself to acknowledge that Salieri's musical talent is no comparison to Mozart's because Salieri's music is in fact embraced by those mediocres who cannot recognize Mozart's genius. In addition, Salieri's life is long enough for him to witness his own music's fall and Mozart's rise. Recognizing Mozart's incomparable gift, Salieri addresses himself as "Patron Saint of Mediocrities" (Shaffer 117).

From a boy who asks for God's art, a respectful court composer, a murderer who is swallowed in the sea of jealousy, to the old man who is attempting suicide, Salieri is going through a train of re-identifying himself. Mozart's presence reminds Salieri of his unconsciously formed false self-image that he lives with, and Salieri in deceiving himself silences Mozart. He thought he defeated God, yet, his life is long enough for him to validate

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his mediocrity and Mozart's invincibility.

6. Chapter Layout

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter contains the introduction of *Amadeus*, the literature reviews, the methodology this thesis employs and the argument of this thesis. Chapter two explores the formation of Salieri's identification which leads to a self-deceptive identification from his childhood and his life as a court composer (before Mozart becomes his match). With the help of Lacan's mirror-stage concept, I look into Salieri's first identification with his parents and later with the Emperor of Austria — Joseph II and his co-workers. Identifying with his parents, Salieri and his parents both pursue a sense of security with a merchant's skill and vision. Considering how Salieri distances himself from his parents by seeing their mediocrity, this thesis believes that his parents are the image he identifies with during the mirror stage who triggers the transformation of his identity. I next draw attention on the relationship Salieri shares with Joseph II and his co-workers. During this period of Salieri's life, the image of the Other is barely seen. This thesis argues that when his power reaches to some extent higher than the emperor's, Salieri starts to live in a life of self-deceptive identification because he actually believes himself as God's approved one.

Chapter three deals with Salieri's interaction with Mozart, alive and dead. Mozart reminds Salieri of his Other and shatters Salieri's self-identification. I argue that seeing himself as a superior musician and an instrument of God, Salieri confronts Mozart who forces him to face his lack. This is the state of his contradicted mind wavering between his Apollonian and Dionysian sides when Salieri knows the beauty in Mozart's music, but does not dare to or is not willing to admit it. Mozart, as Salieri's delighted agony, falls into Salieri's victim for him to maintain his image. Even though Mozart is dead, Salieri's life is still full of him. The everlasting haunting Mozart keeps reminding Salieri of his Other and pushes Salieri to have a final self-identification: "Patron Saint of Mediocrities!" (Shaffer

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117). This self-label is eventually Salieri's self-recognition, in which he confirms his helplessness in pursuit of the unreachable.

The last chapter is the conclusion of this thesis. From self-deceptive identification to self-recognition, Salieri's transformation of his self-identification is affected by the Other (his belief in ultimate talent/power) in his life. Salieri's parents influence Salieri's first self-identification; Mozart's existence greatly confronts his belief in himself. I argue that Salieri's last self-naming gesture is his self-recognition, which at the same time is a signal of awakening from his self-deceptive identification. It is the declaration of a failing perfectionist. Salieri is talented enough to achieve the things others cannot achieve; however, in his life confronted with Mozart, the "impossible" one, Salieri can never truly achieve what he would like to identify with. However, even though Salieri is awakening from his self-deceptive identification, he does not awaken from his self-deception of the omnipotence (his Other). Therefore, eventually he is still stuck in the mindset of the unreachable.

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Chapter Two

The Mirror Stage, Childhood, Court Composer

"We seldom think of what we have, but always of what we lack." (*Controversy*)

"If any like quality is consciously exercised, it means that it has been worked up; it becomes intentional, and therefore matter of affectation, in other words, of deception." (*Pessimism*)

— Arthur Schopenhauer

A person's identification is constantly changing. One often recognizes him/herself through conversations, through words, and through the signification behind the conversations and words. To put it simply, one hears others' description of oneself and knows what kind of person he/she may be. However, before the difference between others and oneself is distinguishable to us and before language is comprehensible to us, our first identification of ourselves, according to Lacan, takes place during the period of time which he named as "the mirror stage" from circa the sixth to the eighteenth month as infant.

This is the time when one develops the self-image in the realm of Imaginary. Lacan uses the mirror reflection to explain how a child learns about his/her own image; that is, this child recognizes his/her first identification from the mirror reflection which he/she looks at. Though Lacan's example of the mirror stage pictures the scenario of one's own reflection, the identification is not confined to one's own image. Calum Neill explains, "the specific example Lacan gives is of the mirror image of one's own body, but there is no real reason to suggest that this misrecognised and formative image could not be something else entirely" (36).

Kevin J. Holohan points out "although not able to walk or even stand, children take in

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a view of their image reflected in the mirror and forever fix it in their mind" (455); that is to say, the identification formed in the mirror stage will root in one no matter which stage he/she is at. Knowing the significance of the first identification from the mirror stage, I in this chapter start by digging out what Salieri's first self-identification is. After recognizing Salieri's first identification from the mirror stage, this chapter next explores how his identification is changed and temporarily fixed as his own envision when he lives in the-Other-less life as a successful court composer. In the second part of this chapter I argue that his self-deceptive identification has shaped ever since Salieri believed his contract with God finally pays off because he does follow his commitment.

1. The Mirror Stage: The First Identification

In Lacan's description of the mirror stage, one's first identification is recognized by oneself at one's infancy period of time. Watching his/her mirror reflection, a child has his/her first self-identification. This first identification will always have its place in the following identifications as Jane Gallop denotes "according to Lacan, what is formed in the mirror stage 'will be the root stock' . . . of later identifications" (119). Gallop on this issue elucidates that

> "will be" is an anticipatory gesture, but what is anticipated is that "this form" will have been the "root stock," that is, the necessary antecedent to the later identifications. Only by an effect of retroaction from the anticipated identifications do we understand that what happens in the mirror stage is the formation of a "root stock." (122)

That is, one does not recognize one's first identification at the moment when this first identification emerges. The first identification (rooted identification) needs to be differentiated by tracing back from the later identifications to figure out what is always there.

2. Childhood: the First Self-Identification

There will have no past without the existence of future. This part thus is tracing Salieri's first identification through his childhood memories along with his adulthood

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behaviors. Sewing his childhood memories with his later experiences, this chapter aims to unveil his first identification which is formed in the mirror stage.

2.1 The Importance

Salieri's childhood is only known from age ten to sixteen. Inferring from his depiction, we can know the year of his birth and so that we get to integrate the history around then with his state of mind. Salieri tells the audience in the year of 1781, he is thirty-one years old, which means that he was born in 1750. Therefore, the years around 1750 are the historical information we need in order to make connection with his description for obtaining the importance of his childhood memories. The emphasis in Salieri's statement includes his parents, locations, and mediocrity:

> My Parents were provincial objects of the Austrian Empire. A Lombardy merchant and his Lombardy wife. Their notion of place was the tiny town of Legnago — which I could not wait to leave. Their notion of God was a superior Habsburg emperor, inhabiting a Heaven only slightly off than Vienna. All they required of Him was to protect commerce, and keep them forever preserved in *mediocrity* . . . . My own requirements were very different. [*Pause*] I wanted *Fame*. (Shaffer 16)

What comes into light first is how Salieri describes his parents as objects, as a merchant and a wife. The distance he draws from his parents is sensed in his statement especially when he keeps emphasizing the distinction between "I" and "they." Salieri seems to separate himself from his parents entirely while the two-thirds of his statement is about his parents.

Second, the locations Salieri mentions in his child statement, Lombardy and Legnago, express their meaning in relation to Salieri's resentment towards his parents and his hometown. As we have acquired, Salieri spent his childhood in Legnago during the mid-18th century. Legnago, compared to Lombardy, is a small town, where the military forces locate during that period of time. Lombardy is different to Legnago because it is a region that is

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much larger geographically. The connection between Lombardy and merchant is strongly tighten up. A study by Luca Mocarelli states that

> If we examine the case of Lombardy in early modern times, what we see, in particular from the seventeenth century onwards, is a growing tendency to economic integration supported by the progressive implementation of a framework that create a balance between agriculture and commerce and by the complementary characteristics that existed between the different parts of a still divided Lombard territory. (318)

Lombardy is the region in which trading is one of the main activities. This highlights the difference between the hometown of Salieri's Lombardy merchant father and Salieri's hometown. Last, the emphasis on "mediocrity" by Salieri stands out as his conclusion of his parents and his childhood in general.

The presence of the past is valid only when the future happens. With the aid of the Mirror Stage theory, Salieri's first self-identification can be seen from the way he describes his childhood memories and his future behaviors. The overlapping identification between past and future deduces the rooted identification from the mirror stage. In Salieri's statement, although Salieri clearly recognizes the difference between himself and his parents at the time he makes this statement, one can still infer from his complaint of childhood confinement that his mirror reflection is his parents' image: acting like a merchant who is stuck forever in the mindset of being mediocre.

2.1.1 Father: Merchant

First of all, Salieri's initial identification from the mirror stage can be inferred from his merchant-like aspiration and conduct. On the one hand, Salieri and his parents both seek the ability/resources of their own particular field to secure their positions. Even though he claims his requirements are different from his parents, he too goes to the "God of Bargains" (Shaffer 16) and makes a deal: "*Signore*, let me be a composer! Grant me sufficient fame to enjoy it.

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In return, I will live with virtue" (17). In trading with God for fame in the musical field, the boy, Salieri, who longs to be a composer, promises to live with virtue; similarly, his father, as a merchant and his wife, ask their protector for the stable business. Simply put, Salieri and his parents are basically doing the same thing but in different fields: artists need talent as merchants need commerce.

On the other hand, the way Salieri digests the merchant image is unspoken but evidently performed by him because he acts like a merchant and sees things with a merchant's eyes when he asserts that the God he prays for is not the Christ but "God of Bargains," who grants one's wishes in a business term: "You give me so — I will give you so! No more, no less!" (16). What Salieri has done indicates that his first identification from the mirror stage is a reflection of his parent's identification in both skill and vision.

2.1.2 Locations: Lombardy and Legnago

As mentioned, Lombardy has its significance related to commerce, and Legnago in comparison is just a small town. The reason to pin on these two points is that I believe this is one of the factors which leads Salieri to have a sensitive nerve and extreme reaction when the sense of mediocre hits him even in the slightest way.

Based on Salieri's childhood statement, Lombardy is where his parents come from, and Salieri himself lives his childhood in the small town called Legnago. This difference between being labeled with a region and being labeled with a town shows how Salieri regards himself the mediocre one during his childhood. However, this feeling of being mediocre is not getting any easier because he sees his parents, even from a large region, striving their life by staying content with ordinary as one of those mediocrities. This realization that their lives are counting on the superior pushes Salieri to have a further resentment onto his parents and his unwillingness to be mediocre.

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2.1.3 Mediocrity

"Mediocrity," the word Salieri stresses for multiple times throughout this play, is the word he describes his parents and eventually himself. This is the other clue we can take to verify that Salieri indeed has his first identification, which formed in the mirror stage, with his parents. As a child, he has no autonomy of his life. Not until his family friend took him to Vienna would he have the chance to make the change. Parents are the governing figure during this period of time. The image he sees himself, accordingly, is largely dominated by how he perceives his parents. Since the mirror stage identification is not restricted to be one's own mirror reflection, chances are the child is rather possible to see his/her parents' images as this mirror reflection. Kevin J. Holohan explains

> The images to which we attach need not be confined to the literal images reflected back in an actual mirror. These images are also reflected back to us via other seemingly whole and complete individuals and by the parental Other in the language they use to describe us as well as their body language, gestures, and overall affect. Both the images of our bodies reflected back to us in the mirror and the images of our seemingly more capable, coordinated, and powerful caregivers exert a profound influence on how we view ourselves and our place in the world. (455-456)

Holohan points out the reflection could be the words a child receives from his surroundings; especially parents, the caregivers. To extend this notion, a child can as well receive his/her parents' image as his/her own reflection as long as this is the way this child learns about him/herself.

The first time in this play Salieri mentions "mediocrity" is in the aforesaid childhood statement when he talks about his parents: "All they required of Him was to protect commerce, and keep them forever preserved in *mediocrity*" (Shaffer 16). From this, we can tell the link Salieri gives between parents and mediocrity. The frequency of Salieri

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mentioning “mediocrity” is too large to neglect: when Salieri praises musicians’ accomplishments, he says, “We took remarkable men . . . and sacramentalized their mediocrity” (19); When Salieri is in the argument with God, he too complains, “You put into me the perception of the Incomparable . . . then ensured that I would know myself forever mediocre” (59); Lastly, when Salieri makes his final self-recognition, he names himself “Antonio Salieri: Patron Saint of Mediocrities” (117). The continuous bringing up of mediocrity in all places suggests the embedded image of mediocrity is also a part of his mirror stage identification. Hence, the hypothetical theory that Salieri’s first self-identification is his parents’ image is double confirmed.

Seeing his merchant parent pursuing security, Salieri gradually builds up the mentality of trading behaviors and the resentment of being mediocre. Believing in the profit he could earn in trading with God, Salieri regards himself naturally deserves what he asks for as long as he does follow the pact which only he agrees with. Salieri’s merchant vision and skill is like a projection of his parent. Fame and musical talent which he desires are the perfect means for him to live in security as his parents’ desire of steady income and secure protection. Salieri’s mindset of running away from having a life like his parents’ and sparing no effort on lessening the chance of being mediocre ultimately becomes a part of his internalized self-identification. Salieri’s first and perpetual identification formed in the mirror stage is the image of his mediocre merchant parents.

3. Court Composer

The next self-identification of Salieri can be found during his court composer life when Mozart is not yet his match. Since his age indicates that he is in the symbolic order where the language is involved and the realization of differences from others is noticed, supposedly Salieri should have a great chance to re-identify because of the Other’s presence. Because in this realm, according to Lacan, “the question of his existence bathes the subject, supports

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him, invades him, tears him apart . . . , by means of elements of the particular discourse in which this question is articulated in the Other" (Lacan 148). When one is in a linguistic world, the Other generally will serve as the stimulator to arouse one's awareness of one's lack, desire, etc.

Nevertheless, the life after Salieri is favored by the Emperor of Austria is the prime of his life when he feels mediocre no more. He has power, title, and wife; moreover, he is an adept manipulator. During this period of time, he has everything he asks for. The role of the Other is barely seen for the fact that he does not feel the lack and he has no certain desire at this moment. Salieri is powerful, the-other-less, and blessed. These qualities actuate Salieri to have a false self-identification (which will be explained later in this chapter) as a good and pious man.

3.1 The-Other-less

Due to the title of the court composer and his vow of living a virtuous life, Salieri develops an identification of "the good man" (Shaffer 61) which enlarges to the point that he seemingly regards himself the chosen one. Salieri has always believed that he deserves to be peerless because he acts well and he is favored by God. This mentality is understandable since his wish is almost immediately granted, which means, if God does listen to his prayer, from Salieri's perspective, he could really be favored by God, or otherwise, his dream would not be realized all of a sudden. This "good man" self-identification formed in the-Other-less surroundings can be inferred more clearly from his later reaction to Mozart's musical talent. Salieri's power makes him the-Other-less, and when he is the-Other-less, Salieri very easily considers himself a "good man," an image he has been endeavoring to maintain.

3.1.1 Power

Salieri has the capacity to control his co-workers and even the Emperor, Joseph II, easily, which allows him to form a potent and fearless characteristic. For example, when

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Rosenberg, director of the Imperial Opera, is unable to stop Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Salieri provides a stratagem by asking Rosenberg if ballet is forbidden. Salieri on the one hand does not point out his idea directly; on the other hand, he claims he has said nothing when Rosenberg praises his brilliant scheme. The whole plan is designed by Salieri but is run by Rosenberg. Joseph, too, is manipulated under Salieri's influence:

JOSEPH. Herr Sommer. A dull man, surely? What of Mozart?

SALIERI. Majesty, I cannot with a clear conscience recommend Mozart to teach royalty. One hears too many stories.

JOESPH. They may be just gossip.

SALIERI. One of them, I regret, relates to a protégée of my own. A very young singer.

JOSEPH. *Charmant!*

SALIERI. Not pleasant, but true.

JOSEPH. I see. . . . Let it be Herr Sommer then. (Shaffer 64)

When Joseph asks for Salieri's recommendation on Princess Elizabeth's instructor, Salieri disposes Joseph's decision with his seemingly sincere concern. Salieri plays a babbler who is covered with sincerity. What he has done, from Joseph's perspective, is just loyally advising "with conscience."

One's self-identification is easily altered when one's the Other makes the scene for one to review oneself. Yet, Salieri obviously does not have this role in his court composer life before Mozart's appearance becomes a threat. Salieri uses only a few words to induce his co-worker to play the bad cop and to change Joseph's potential decision. In other words, Salieri's competence to influence his fellow co-workers and his ability to dominate Joseph not only provide him with an almost the same position as Joseph, the top of the authority pyramid, but also ensure Salieri's power and social status so that there is really nothing Salieri has to be afraid of and nothing he needs to pursue for.

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3.2 A Good Man, the Chosen One

Abiding by the contract with God, Salieri does keep his promise of living with social and sexual virtues. Salieri, crowning as an influential court composer, is entitled to use his power to assist other musicians and stays loyal in his marriage. Living his life in comfort, Salieri gradually believes himself truly a "good man" (Shaffer 61) so that he positions all the good things he has done as his true personal will rather than an act of following his contract with God. This self-identification of being a "good man" convinces him to have a further self-identification as the chosen, unique, and favored one; therefore, when he discerns Mozart's sublime music, Salieri feels a great sense of betrayal and unfairness.

The first time Salieri reads Mozart's manuscript reveals his strong belief in his desire and individuality. When addressing God as his enemy, Salieri cries

> *Grazie, Signore!* You gave me the desire to serve You — which most men do not have — then saw to it the service was shameful in the ears of the server. *Grazie!* You gave me the desire to praise You — which most men do not feel — then made me mute . . . . *What is my fault?* . . . Until this day I have pursued virtue with rigor. I have labored long hours to relieve my fellow men. I have worked and worked the talent You allowed me. (Shaffer 59)

Evaluating this statement about his desire and virtue, one can immediately discover Salieri's interpretation of his being is that he genuinely sees himself as a faithful server to God even though he does all the goodness because of the deal. Salieri at this point of his life identifies himself a good man.

Salieri regards himself not only a good man, but a chosen one. From his point of view, he is a powerless child who all of a sudden has a completely different life right after he prayed to God: "Clearly my bargain had been accepted!" (Shaffer 17) — So, God exists and roots for him. Extrapolating from how Salieri cleaves to his commitment, I reckon since the

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mirror stage identification of being average is stuck in his mind, Salieri does not regard his success simply as his capacity or luck but God's consent on their contract. His dependence on that contract with God unfolds his belief that it is due to his obedience and good deeds that earns God's agreement. If God does not choose him, then how come his life changes rapidly. Since God has granted Salieri wishes and is on his side, God is supposed to maintain the agreement when Salieri does not violate the terms. The subtext of this howling is a protest that God is the wicked one who plays fool on Salieri, and Salieri himself is a pious, innocent, and suffering one who is severely betrayed by God. The fault, consequently, is not on the harmless Salieri, but the One stabs in Salieri's back. To Salieri, he truly thinks himself was responded by God, was a good man, and was chosen.

3.3 The Unconscious Self-Deceptive Identification

Salieri, as a providential court composer, has lived with virtues and is treated with respect. The result of this "perfect" world turns Salieri into a self-deceptive person who actually believes that he solemnly dedicates his life to music, to God, to his fellow musicians, and to his wife. His self-identification as a good man or as the chosen one lays bare the fact that he has been living in self-deception because Salieri actually is just abiding by the contract. However, Salieri performs the good man too well so that he himself veritably believes in his role-playing. His self-deception in having a deal with God produces his self-deceptive identification of believing himself a good man and a chosen one.

Regarding himself as God's chosen one, Salieri is not fully aware of the fact that the intention of his doing all the good things is under the imagined contract he has with God. That is, the initial attempt of being good is subjected to his pact: he has to do the goodness to make sure his deal with God is valid. It is not that he wants to do so, but he has to do so. Nonetheless, it seems that the longer he abides by the contract, the more he believes himself a "good man."

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According to his contract with God: "*Signore*, let me be a composer! Grant me sufficient fame to enjoy it. In return, I will live with virtue" (Shaffer 17), what Salieri desires is fame and what he pays with it is living with virtue. Nonetheless, when he cries out "*What is my fault?* . . . Until this day I have pursued virtue with rigor. I have labored long hours to relieve my fellow men. I have worked and worked the talent You allowed me" (Shaffer 59), his lamentation for unfairness conveys a message that Salieri actually believes himself a good man. The service Salieri provides to God is conditional, which is validated in the next scene. Salieri soon has an affair with his pupil Katherina and says "So much for my vow of sexual virtue. [*Slight pause*] The same evening I went to the Palace and resigned from all my committees to help the lot of poor musicians. So much for my vow of social virtue" (Shaffer 64). Deep down in his heart, he is not willing to help others unconditionally and is not sincerely loyal to his wife. The affection Salieri has to Katherina, his student, is no longer oppressed. As soon as Salieri finds that he is not the chosen one and he does not get the rewards he deserves, he looks at the bond, which he has with God, and breaks it with the stubborn belief that "I was a good man" (Shaffer 61).

Transforming from a boy who unconsciously identify himself with his parent to a court composer who regards himself an upright, honest, man favored by God, Salieri identifies his image from a mirror-reflection to self-deceptive identification. Seeing his merchant parent and their mediocrity, Salieri naturally internalized this image as his first self-identification which is planted deeply and firmly ever since. Later when living in a life in which Salieri has nothing to fear and pursue for, he has no the Other for him to review his identity so that Salieri is getting used to this perfect world as a "perfect" person and is therefore getting to believe himself a righteous and talented musician, which is only a self-deceptive identification based on the imagined contract Salieri has with God.

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Chapter Three

The Other, Living Mozart, Departing/Departed Mozart

"We forfeit three-fourths of ourselves in order to be like other people."

— Schopenhauer

"In ten years of unrelenting spite — I had destroyed *myself!*" (Shaffer 107)

— Salieri

"I am thirty-one. Already a prolific composer to the Habsburg court. I own a respectable house and a respectable wife — Teresa," (Shaffer 18) says Salieri. Establishing the image of a perfect man with remarkable musical talent, Salieri has been living in a promising life without any threats until Mozart, the prodigy, shows up. Just as mentioned in chapter two, Salieri's self-identification is nothing but self-deceptive because he does not have the Other in challenging his identification. Mozart's emergence compels Salieri to question his self and to revisit his lack; hence, Mozart alters Salieri's established self-identification and reminds Salieri of his Other, or the one that equals the ultimate talent. This is a crucial moment when Salieri transforms his good-man image into a contemptible one.

With the appearance of the Other in his life, Salieri faces the humongous transformation in his self-deceptive good-man identification. His self-deceptive identification is officially shaken and shattered because of Mozart. To save his self-deceptive identification, he puts every effort in jeopardizing Mozart, the one who forces him to acknowledge his mediocrity. He is fully aware of his self-deceptive identification but he still refuses to concede. Unexpectedly, his nightmare does not cease even after Mozart's death because Mozart's music never dies. Salieri, under the pressure of Mozart's greatness, eventually makes his final self-identification as his recognition of being mediocre.

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1. The Other

It is the linguistic structure that brings one into the symbolic realm to re-identify oneself through the Other. Language is the medium for us to know the world and to define things; we are also known and defined by others through the linguistic system. The Other is the crucial role in one's self-identifying process. The simplest way to acquire "the Other" is to understand it as anything that influences one the most. For example, one's parents, the country's law, the significant one's opinion, etc. That is to say, "the Other" is not defined as a person; it could be a concept; it could be anything. Kevin J. Holohan in comparing Freire and Lacan explains how the Other is involved in one's self-awareness,

> both thinkers utilize the model of struggle laid out and described in Hegel's (1977) dialectic of recognition between master and slave. That is, one conscious being only comes to self-consciousness through encounter with another conscious being and via an ensuing struggle with one another for recognition and to assert their will. Following Hegel (1977), both Freire and Lacan ascribe primary importance to the encounter with the "Other" in the development of self-awareness. (458)

The Other has its weight in the progress of one's understanding of oneself, and the kernel/foundation of this concept is the linguistic system. This thesis argues that the linguistic system in this play, specifically between Salieri and Mozart, is music.

1.1 Language

Through others' words we review ourselves. For example, one may only be aware of his/her body type when someone else judges his/her body. Language thus is the base of our awareness of ourselves and others. Holohan explains, "subjects are constructed by language, alienated in language, and offered the possibility of shifting their position and the Symbolic order itself through language" (456). A person's self-identification can be constantly altered because of the Other through language.

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However, in my opinion, a language system should not be limited in a specific spoken language. As long as the conversation is set up, the communicating ways should not be confined. As Neill clarifies the notion of language,

> Language, in the sense of a natural language, is other insofar as it precedes any given subject. We do not invent the language we speak, read, write or think and, consequently, the words we use, even the most 'personal' of words, are always already something alien to us. Language precedes us and succeeds us. . . . In another sense, this is the language with which we attempt to communicate and understand both ourselves and the world around us, including the language or languages we are immersed in. To conceive of a thought, or even a feeling, requires us to utilise and, therefore, rely upon language. (21)

Language provides meanings. As long as any linguistic system can offer meanings, it should be the valid language. Imagine a scenario of two people whose native languages are completely different are communicating with their hand gestures. Would anyone say this is not a communication? Hand gesture, hence, is the linguistic system in this scenario. In other words, language is not a spoken system only.

1.1.1 Music

The same logic I apply here is music, the language specifically spoken by musicians. It is noticeable that Salieri's emotion and identification are shaken when Mozart starts to play his music. For instance, Salieri cannot correctly judge Mozart's musical talent from Mozart's spoken language, but he learns immediately how extraordinary Mozart's talent is from Mozart's music. The first time Salieri hears Mozart's music, he comments:

> It hung there unwavering, piercing me through, till breath could hold it no longer, and a clarinet withdrew it out of me, and sweetened it into a phrase of such delight it had me trembling. My eyes clouded! [*with ever-increasing emotion and vigor*] The squeezebox

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> groaned louder, and over it the higher instruments wailed and warbled, throwing lines of sound around me — long lines of pain around and through me. Ah, the pain! Pain as I had never known it. (Shaffer 27)

Salieri's reaction to and description about Mozart's music show that music is the meaningful medium which builds up the conversation between Salieri and Mozart. Salieri does not just comment in one or two adjectives such as brilliant or perfect because this music gives meanings. The multiple times of Salieri mentions his feeling in this comment verify that music is his way to communicate, to signify and to be signified. He could have simply described how the major and minor chords go, while, he has given/received the meaning of every note.

This linguistic system explains Salieri's deep resentment. He is hurt deeply when he finds out the foul-mouthed boy who plays around with his partner in the formal occasion is the one who creates the most beautiful music he has ever heard. His mind is unbalanced due to the fact that he has been keeping himself "being good" in order to get the fame he enjoys. However, this boy, Mozart, has the talent which Salieri desires without working hard at all.

As a language, music is not comprehensible to everyone, but it is a valid communicating system when it conveys meanings. The fact that Mozart's music is not understood and appreciated by everyone except Salieri increases the threat Salieri has already felt. In his face-off with God, he howls:

> You put into me the perception of the Incomparable — which most men do not know! — then ensured that I would know myself forever mediocre. . . . And *my* only reward — my sublime privilege — is to be the sole man alive in this time who shall clearly recognize Your Incarnation! (Shaffer 59)

Salieri is the only one who can understand Mozart's celestial language, but he cannot share the truth with others. As soon as he translates Mozart's language to the world, Mozart will be

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seen and he himself will be forgotten. This ineffable truth is what Salieri tries hard to conceal from the world. The interaction and confrontation between these two musicians are based on the music, the language of musicians.

1.2 Mozart: The Reminder of Salieri's Other

The threat Salieri has received from Mozart's music makes Mozart's appearance a challenge to his self-identification because Salieri's awareness of his lack and desire is raised by Mozart, the one Salieri believes to have the ultimate talent. Holohan believes that one's relation between self-identification and the Other is largely based on the lack and desire:

> Lacan states, "desire is the desire of the other." This phrase should be understood on three different levels. First, the subject desires what the Other (one's primary caregivers, initially) desires, that which seems to make the Other full or complete. Second, the subject desires that the Other recognizes and desires it. Third, because the Other is also a desiring and incomplete or lacking subject, it can never fulfil the desire of the subject and so attempts to fill the Other's lack with him/herself. This relationship to the Other, desire as desire of the Other, continues on throughout life, repeatedly projected onto others with whom we form close relationships. (457)

According to Holohan's enunciation, the Other is a concept which has a special tension with a person. It affects one's desire and reminds one's lack. Hence, the Other is not fixed but is designated. One may experience different Others throughout one's life; however, it does not mean the Other changes daily. The Other has a stronger bond with one so that one is constantly influenced by it. Consequently, this thesis notices that Salieri's belief in ultimate talent/power is his Other when Mozart reminds Salieri of his lack and desire whether Mozart is alive or not. When Mozart is alive, Salieri desires to exceed him; when Mozart is dying, Salieri loses his life focus; when Mozart is dead, Salieri cannot help but noticing how Mozart's music replaces his. Salieri's belief in the omnipotent talent is his Other (also his

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self-deception) and Mozart is his reminder.

2. Living Mozart: The Shaken Identification

Mozart's presence reminds Salieri of his lack and makes Salieri question his identification. Although admiring Mozart's music, Salieri in preserving his image as the successful and remarkable one, tries to silence Mozart as well as his music. During a series of artifices, Salieri sees his ugly side and recognizes that he might not be the one who is chosen by God; therefore, his self-deceptive identification is shaken. Although Salieri is sparing no effort on securing his perfect image, he is evidently no longer the perfect man he endeavored to be.

2.1 The Shaken Self-Identification and the Other

"That night changed my life" (Shaffer 24), says Salieri when he first hears the music of Mozart. Salieri's identification of the chosen musician is shaken when he finds Mozart's music "a voice of God" (Shaffer 28). Ever since Salieri has heard Mozart's performance, Mozart affects Salieri's transformation of self-identification, which can be seen in Salieri's reaction:

> I ran home and buried my fear in work. More pupils — till there were thirty and forty. More committees to help musicians. More motets to God's glory. And at night I prayed for just one thing. [He kneels desperately.] "Let your voice enter *me!* Let me be your conduit! . . . *Let* me!" [Pause. He rises.] As for Mozart, I avoided meeting him— and sent out my Little Winds for whatever scores of his could be found. (Shaffer 28-29)

After hearing Mozart's sublime music, Salieri has the fear he once had when he was a child — the fear of being mediocre. This fear invites Salieri to check on his contract with God again so that Salieri does more good things in order to trade with God's support.

This is the time when Salieri leaves out of his comfortable environment and starts to

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have the feeling that God has chosen someone else. His fear of being mediocre and his desire of powerful fame are brought up again by Mozart's existence. From the way Salieri is avoiding to confront Mozart but at the same time he is following Mozart, one can clearly tell that Salieri is putting his whole attention on Mozart so that Salieri can make his next move. His life and identification are influenced and almost decided by Mozart from this very moment.

2.2 Apollonian and Dionysian Contradiction

Mozart's music on the one hand casts doubt on Salieri's musical talent; on the other hand, it stirs up Salieri's identification in an Apollonian and Dionysian ambivalence. C. J. Gianakaris provides an insightful viewpoint in scrutinizing Mozart's role that he is "a threat to Salieri personally, to Viennese music generally, and to the pervasive attitudes of the Enlightenment metaphysically" (40). The Apollonian and Dionysian contradiction in general can be seen as that Mozart's advent stands for the emergence of Romanticism; while, Salieri represents the Enlightenment. That is, with this interpretation, how Mozart is threatening Salieri is as how Romanticism is replacing the Enlightenment. Borrowing from Gianakaris' argument, I take this Apollonian and Dionysian vacillation further in reading Salieri's mind: outer effect (Joseph's reaction) and inner struggle (Salieri's own admiration of Mozart).

The ideology of the moment is what Salieri has been living with — and, what the Emperor, Joseph, has been living with. Joseph plays an important role in affecting Salieri's ambivalent state of mind. From the comments of Joseph on music along with court members' reactions toward these comments, one can gather the notion that all the court members, including Salieri, simply go with whatever Joseph is content with. Joseph's comment on Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio* shows how court members have to agree with Joseph regardless of their own opinions:

JOSEPH. I thought it was most interesting. Yes, indeed. A trifle . . . how shall one say?

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[*To* ROSENBERG] How shall one say, Director?

ROSENBERG. [*Subserviently*]. Too many notes, Your Majesty?

JOSEPH. Very well put. Too many notes.

MOZART. I don't understand.

JOSEPH. My dear fellow, don't take it too hard. There are in fact only so many notes the ear can hear in the course of an evening. I think I'm right in saying that, aren't *I*, Court Composer?

SALIERI. [*Uncomfortably*]. Well, yes, I would say yes, on the whole, yes, Majesty. (Shaffer 39)

How Rosenberg has to find a suitable comment for Joseph and how Salieri "uncomfortably" answers Joseph's question imply the fact that the emperor's taste is the court members' taste whether they like it or not. The same situation happens again when Salieri later finds Joseph's reaction towards *Figaro* "Through my tears I saw the Emperor . . . yawn" (Shaffer 79). Salieri himself is touched to the extent his eyes are watered by Mozart's music; however, Joseph does not see Mozart's superiority in music, Mozart is doomed to be great in that given time. Being an emperor-pleaser is the key to gain his majesty's impression. Even though Salieri himself is attracted by Mozart's music, he is not supposed to go against Joseph. Joseph, therefore, is a crucial key to stop Salieri accepting his Dionysian side.

Although Joseph has his weight in Salieri's wavering identification, he is not the only factor. Salieri himself is going through an inner struggle as well. He describes ". . . 1781. The age still that of the Enlightenment: that clear time before the guillotine fell in France and cut our lives in half" (Shaffer 18). The man who lives with rational ideology feels pain towards the fact that the era of Enlightenment is fading. Salieri cannot abandon his Apollonian self because this is how he sees the world and sees himself. Salieri's inner struggle can therefore be understood from two angles: first, his fear to step out the comfort zone. Second, he has an

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unbalanced mind as he regards himself as a good man.

On the one hand, Mozart brings him the impact of the unknown. He loves Mozart's music; however, he realizes the chance that the moment he walks into Mozart's world, the meaning of his life vanishes. On the other hand, Salieri can tell the beauty of Mozart's music but he cannot produce it. He understands the musical language Mozart speaks but he is aware that he himself can never master it. If Mozart is seen by the world, Salieri would be the unseen one. To Salieri, it is unfair and unjust because he is the one who has been good, as he believes. Hence, to protect his comfort zone and to secure his position, Salieri blocks both his own Dionysian side and Mozart's chances in every possible way.

2.3 The Conscious Self-Deceptive Identification

After the scene where Salieri's mind is wavering, his self-deceptive identification is disintegrated. Before Mozart appears in his life, Salieri is unaware of his self-deceptive identification and he regards himself as a good man. Nevertheless, the most decisive transformation on Salieri's self-identification takes place when he reads Mozart's manuscript: "What was evident was that Mozart was simply transcribing music completely finished in his head. And finished as most music is never finished" (Shaffer 57). This validates Mozart as the actual chosen one; Salieri is not the one who is especially favored by God. The result of this realization is that after the identification as the chosen one is shattered, Salieri's self-identification as the good man is broken as well.

The stage direction describes " . . . . SALIERI *is quite still, lying among the manuscript. Finally the clock sounds: seven times.* SALIERI *stirs as it does. Slowly he raises his head and looks up. And now — quietly at first — he addresses his God*" (Shaffer 58). With the sounds of the clock, seven times, Salieri is seemingly stepping on the road of seven deadly sins: gluttony (loving desserts), greed (longing for fame) and pride (seeing himself better than the mediocre norm) are actually always there from the very beginning. What

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emerges now is wrath (challenging God), lust (having adultery), sloth (resigning from committees), envy (plotting on Mozart); his identification now is changed to the man who is eager to maintain his image.

Salieri at this moment is aware of his self-deceptive identification. His aim is to stay in where he has always been and to be seen as how he has always been. He refuses to accept the cruel truth that he is not the best in both music and personal characteristics and he rejects to admit that all the good things he has done in order to keep his special place in musical field is nothing but a contract. Salieri's solution is deterring Mozart so that he can maintain his self-deceptive identification.

3. Departing/Departed Mozart: The Final Self-Identification

To maintain his image of the "best musician", Salieri succeeds in impoverishing Mozart in finances, marriage, and health. Finally, Mozart faces death. When Mozart is about to die, Salieri confesses to Mozart that he has been working hard in ruining him. At this moment, he has given up retaining his self-deceptive identification; obviously, his self-deceptive identification by now has been completely shattered. After Mozart's death, Salieri eventually and inevitably realizes his musical talent could never match with Mozart's. Failing in his last struggle to make his name more astounding than Mozart's, Salieri at the end declares his final self-identification: "Patron Saint of Mediocrities" (Shaffer 117).

3.1 Departing Mozart: The End of Self-Deceptive Identification

After Mozart's last performance, which is also sabotaged by Salieri, Mozart basically loses everything. He then pays his whole attention on "The Requiem," which gets on his nerve for the rest of his lifetime. However, Salieri is not pleased with this situation even if he has put Mozart in a quandary. Anxious to know what Mozart is doing even after Mozart is barely noticed by people, he rushes immediately to spy on Mozart in person. His eagerness to know everything about Mozart indicates the fact that his life focus is on Mozart entirely.

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Mozart's failure does not make him feel any better, nor does it reduce his fear of Mozart. Visible or not, Mozart has been reminding Salieri of his Other: the one that equals the ultimate talent.

The scene where Salieri's secret visit is accidently noticed by Mozart is the time when Mozart is getting close to his death. Seeing Mozart's weary appearance and his disturbed mind, Salieri makes his confessions, to the audience and to Mozart. His confessions disclose that the meaning of his own existence depends largely on Mozart. At this moment, he has given up retaining his self-deceptive identification when he realizes he has ruined both Mozart and himself.

3.1.1 A Confession to the Audience

During the visit, Mozart asks Salieri to have a look on his Requiem and tell him how he thinks of it. Salieri reads with astonishment and then makes his first confession to the audience:

> I stood there — his despairing Mass sounding over and over in my head its gigantic lamentation — and knew *absolutely* who it was for! . . . *The boy!* . . . That eager boy who once stumbled around the fields of Lombardy, singing up his anthems to his Lord. [*Pause*] In the years of unrelenting spite — I had destroyed *myself!* (Shaffer 107)

Salieri at this point has a full awareness that he is not the person he had expected to be or the person he has been pretending to be, and especially, he is no longer the person who once truly valued music. He becomes the person who cares only about his social stance and his perfect image.

Salieri continues, "And then — any feelings still left uncorrupted in me rose up, crying, "*End this!* Before it is too late! . . . *Confess! Confess to him!* . . . Get from him whatever absolution he can possibly grant. *He — he alone!* — the Creature you have broken. . . . How else can you live on after?" (107). Form this section of his statement, it is inferable that

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Salieri recognizes his sin and desperately needs Mozart's forgiveness so that he could possibly feel guiltless. Facing his own crime, Salieri speaks to himself, "How else can you live on after?" (107). In my opinion, this not only indicates how Salieri yearns for Mozart's absolution but also the fact that he is losing his life focus when Mozart is on his way of departing. The man he jeopardizes is the one he has dreamed to be — a dream which he once thought God had granted to him; a dream he knows clearly that has already happened and will not happen again. Losing Mozart is as losing his goal; without Mozart, there is no other things that can make his life meaningful again.

3.1.2 A Confession to Mozart

Salieri's confession to Mozart begins with telling him that he is poisoned by Salieri: "By me! No one else. . . . We are both poisoned. *Both — together*" (Shaffer 107). With a forced and flattering smile, Salieri explains to Mozart, "My God smiled — and *permitted it!* . . . Whatever I did — *you* would fill the world! [*Outraged*] You left me with *nothing*!" (Shaffer 109). The way he compliments and blames Mozart simultaneously, in my opinion, is a gesture of realizing his mistakes, trying to rationalize his mistakes, giving up on making more excuses, and finally facing his breakdown. Salieri continues, "No matter. You're not to blame. It's His will. I don't hate *you* — you're only an instrument" (109). This confession shows that he eventually admits that his wrongdoings come from the lack and the fear he has so he blames God's betrayal on Mozart, an innocent human being. The confession of his fear signals that Salieri is about to renounce his self-deceptive identification: it is meaningless to maintain his best image when Mozart is the image he endeavors to maintain and when Mozart is ruined by himself. This is the end of Salieri's self-deceptive identification; he finally accepts his inferiority compared to Mozart.

3.2 Departed Mozart: Self-Recognition — the Last Self-Identification

Mozart, though dead, is still reminding Salieri of his Other in Salieri's self-identifying

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journey. Even if Mozart has left the world, his music lives on. Moreover, Mozart's music keeps reminding Salieri of his mundaneness and pushing him to have his last self-identification as a mediocre. After Mozart's death, Salieri wins the fame he has yearned for because his music is celebrated by the majority of the people, but this majority is the mediocrity in his eyes. As Salieri has this realization, he says, "I must endure thirty-two years of being called 'distinguished' by people incapable of distinguishing!" (Shaffer 115). Witnessing Mozart's existence, Salieri can never see himself the way he used to be. He does not have the sublime skill at music like Mozart does and his music is not applauded for its beauty but for its amiable comprehensibility. Later, with the rise of Mozart's music, Salieri says, "I must survive to see myself become . . . *extinct* . . . ." (115). His wish is to see his name and music everlasting, but now he sees himself extinct. Mozart is dead, but his music is not. Eventually, Salieri fails in keeping himself from being replaced by Mozart.

The last attempt Salieri plans to regain his fame is to attach his name on Mozart's by letting the world know that he is the murderer. This last desperate struggle is supposed to end with his self-naming "Antonio Salieri: Patron Saint of Mediocrities!" (Shaffer 117) followed by Salieri's suicide. He cuts his throat, but he fails to die. This last self-identification is the self-recognition of Salieri's mediocrity in comparison with Mozart. We know Salieri is far from being mediocre when he can be the court composer and be able to recognize Mozart's superiority when others cannot. However, to Salieri, if he cannot be the best, then he belongs to the mediocrities.

Because of Mozart — the reminder of Salieri's Other, Salieri begins to be aware of his lack, his desire and his self-deceptive identification. His self-deceptive identification of his expected self is therefore shaken, and eventually shattered. He goes through the ambivalent state of mind and then makes up his mind to maintain his false self-identification. Unwilling to be replaced and to face his inferiority, he spares no effort in keeping himself from being

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shattered by sabotaging Mozart. However, Mozart's death does not end the attention he gives on Mozart. With the rise of Mozart's music, Salieri sees his own expiration with his eyes. His mind is full of Mozart whether Mozart is alive or dead. He has spent his whole life to strive for living in his perfect world he expected; nonetheless, his last struggle fails. This leads him to have a final self-identification as a recognition from a failing perfectionist: "Antonio Salieri: Patron Saint of Mediocrities" (117).

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Chapter Four

Conclusion — Antonio Salieri: Patron Saint of Mediocrities!

"The person who write for fools is always sure of a large audience."

"Talent hits a target no one else can hit. Genius hits a target no one else can see."

— Schopenhauer

Shaffer's *Amadeus* portrays a conflict between the talented and the genius. In Shaffer's arrangement, Antonio Salieri, the narrator of this play, makes every effort in vanquishing Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the prodigy. He takes Mozart as the sacrifice between God and himself since he feels unbalanced and unfair with God's design. Many scholars dedicate their insightful researches in *Amadeus* with various aspects: historical, pathological, psychological, etc. However, few of them shed light on Salieri's last declaration: "Antonio Salieri: Patron Saint of Mediocrities" (Shaffer 117). This thesis notices that this act of self-identification seems to be hopeless and helpless, and thus aims to trace the development of Salieri's self-identifications. This thesis argues Salieri's self-identifications change in mainly four periods of time: childhood, his life as a court composer (before Mozart becomes a threat to him), the time when Mozart appears as a threat and the time after Mozart's death. With a Lacanian lens, I argue that after his Mirror Stage identification, Salieri forms his self-deceptive identification and this false identification is shaken and eventually shattered when Mozart trespasses into his life.

From his childhood memories, it is noticeable that Salieri has resentment towards his parents. He was not abused and did not starve. This resentment comes from the mediocrity he sees in his parents. Salieri despises being mediocre and avoids to become one. Based on Salieri's later experiences, this thesis argues that Salieri's first self-identification at the Mirror

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Stage is his parents' reflection: a combination of his father's merchant skill and his parents' mediocrity. Being mediocre is unacceptable to him, so he prays to God and successfully escapes from his small hometown.

Crowned as a court composer, Salieri abides by the commitments he has with God to secure his position; though not in sincerity, he does follow what he has promised to God. His musical skill makes him an important role in court and his manipulative skill assists him in living comfortably. This is the prime of his life when he has nothing to fear. Staying in his comfort zone, Salieri is at the Other-less period of time, with his self-deceptive identification — a good man and the chosen one.

His perfect life is shaken when Mozart, the reminder of his Other, steps into his world. Salieri begins to have a realization that he is not the chosen one and he is not willing to be "good." However, the unfairness he feels dominates his revenge. His heart is almost broken into pieces when he hears the sublime music from a foul-mouthed boy who is obviously lack of manners. After these years of practicing his own music skills and doing good things, he cannot accept that this heavenly music comes not from him. What wounds him the most is that God gives him, only him, the ability to appreciate this music, and he cannot disclose this particular gift he has. Because if he does, Mozart will most certainly surpass him. His self-identification as a good man is shaken so that he spares no effort in maintaining this false identification.

Near Mozart's death, Salieri is awakened by Mozart's weary situation. He faces his fear and confesses the fact that he is the one who has been undermining Mozart. Along with Mozart's death, Salieri's self-deceptive identification is shattered. After Mozart leaves the world, Salieri enjoys years of fame but eventually witnesses his name's and music's disappearance. Mozart is dead, but his music is not. Mozart is still reminding Salieri of his Other, alive or not. Salieri, at the end, sees his fall and Mozart's rise with his own eyes.

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Making up his mind to commit suicide after spreading the message that he is the murderer of Mozart, Salieri sarcastically makes his last self-identification as “Patron Saint of Mediocrities” (Shaffer 117).

This self-recognition is like a perfectionist’s desperate, hopeless, and helpless declaration of his failure. Salieri knows that this failure is inevitable eventually because Mozart’s music is celestial. In my opinion, Salieri is not a mediocre; actually, he is far from being a mediocre. Nonetheless, in comparison with a genius, no matter how talented and extraordinary he is, Salieri would never match with Mozart. What Salieri has actually failed at is perhaps the fact that even though he is aware of Mozart being a signifier when Mozart is about to die, he still does not figure out his Other, the ultimate talent, does not exist. His last attempt to tie his name with the famous one indicates that he does not understand that Mozart is a signifier to his imagined Other instead of a signifier to God. It is because of his imagined Other of the heavenly talent which makes himself regard Mozart as the representation of it. He is aware of his self-deceptive identification; however, he is stubbornly stuck in his self-deception that the ultimate talent exists. He believes Mozart owns that talent and neglects the fact that both the power structure of musical talent and God’s contract with him are nothing but his imaginations.

With his artistic license, Shaffer has every right to modify Salieri into his imaginative tragedy. Therefore, I believe Shaffer’s creativity is not trying to damage Mozart’s or Salieri’s image in historical records. Instead, his *Amadeus* evokes the readers’ interest in both musicians, and provides the audience a perspective to review the unfairness of this world. I also believe that there are still lots of messages we could acquire from this play because *Amadeus* is a rich play worthy of re-reading, re-thinking, and re-interpreting.

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