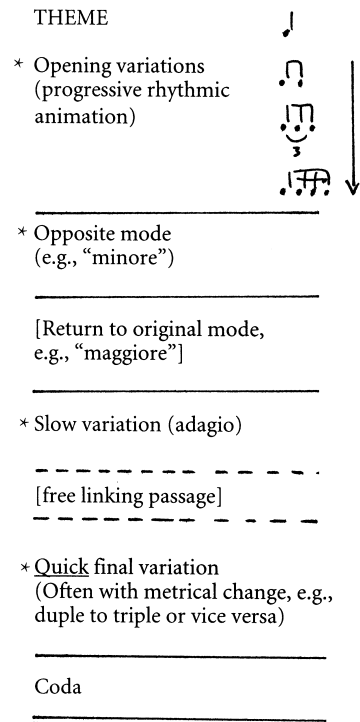**The shape of a typical Classical variation set**
(Not all items are used in a particular set; but events usually occur in this order. The backbone is marked with asterisks)

THEME

* Opening variations
  (progressive rhythmic
  animation)

─────────────────────

* Opposite mode
  (e.g., "minore")

─────────────────────

[Return to original mode,
e.g., "maggiore"]

─────────────────────

* Slow variation (adagio)

- - - - - - - - - - - -

[free linking passage]

- - - - - - - - - - - -

* Quick final variation
  (Often with metrical change, e.g.,
  duple to triple or vice versa)

─────────────────────

Coda

═════════════════════

Some useful variation terms

"progressive rhythmic animation": gradually increasing the subdivision of figuration from one variation to the next (e.g., quarter to eighth to sixteenth notes, etc.). This process of increasing surface activity is often used at the beginning of a set. It binds together single variations into a larger group.

"mirroring": The common variation strategy of textural inversion, which serves structurally either to bind together two adjacent variations or to enliven the repeated halves of a single variation. Quintessentially a keyboard technique.

"interlacing": Variation technique in which written-out repeats of a binary-form variation are themselves subject to variation procedure. Although the alterations might be slight, sometimes they are so substantial that one gets the impression of two distinct variation textures, which have been overlapped or <u>interlaced</u> about their midpoints:

‖: A :‖: B :‖   ⟹   A A B B
                      1   2 1   2
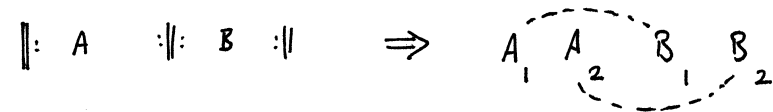
The flexible technique—which admits many degrees of shading—is much more characteristic of Mozart's variation procedure (compared with Haydn's), and, within Mozart, especially prevalent in his piano concertos.

"double variation": Term used most frequently to describe alternating variations on <u>two separate themes</u>, which are often in opposite modes (major/minor). This process is most closely associated with Haydn, who used it frequently (Mozart never used it).

Mozart, Piano Concerto in G, K.453, III: Map of variation finale

17

33

65

81

Theme

Var. ①

Var. ② Interlaced

Var. ③ Interlaced

Var. ④ : minore Interlaced

‖: A :‖: B :‖

Pno. (+ strings)

$A_1 B_1$: Winds (melody)
Pno (figuration RH)

$A_2 B_2$: strings (melody)
Pno (figuration LH,
melody RH)

"mirroring"

$A_1 B_1$: Concertante winds,
string accomp. (♩♫ | ♫♩)
(3)

$A_2 B_2$: Piano melody
(based on winds)

LH: (str. accomp, new
pattern).

$A_1 B_1$: orch (str/wind)
syncopated d

$A_2 B_2$: piano solo
(first time!)
syncopated .

response
by winds.

129

160

171 ——→

346 (c—d)

Var. ⑤
Interlaced

$A_1 B_1$: full orch (w/ horns, first
time since theme), 11

$A_2 B_2$: Piano solo. ——
(trans)

"Bridge" to finale -----

- IAC
- reminiscence-ish.
- syncopations
from minore
- slowing down it
pno: ♫ → ♫ → ♪ → stop ...
- approach to HC w/ stepwise
bassline : like II?

Finale w/ theme statements :
(Presto)
249 ... 257 ---- 331 ----
(new consequent ♪♪♪ HC split d/ ^4/^3, ^5 ——→^1 PAC ‖
- new consequent: ♪♪♪♪