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Reason and Desire, Education and Regression: Aspects of Rousseauist Gender Roles in Così fan tutte

by

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ABSTRACT

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Angela M. Marroy

Mozart’s opera Cosi fan tutte encapsulates various theories of Enlightenment sexual expression and presents a didactic program aiming at appropriate male comportment in a love situation. Through various musical devices, Mozart establishes ideal Rousseauist gender characteristics and their debased forms, and applies them to the respective sexes as evidence of weakened or enlightened states. Mozart also provides an educative voice in the character of Don Alfonso, whose musical lines are appropriately instructive. An exploration of sexual ideals in the Enlightenment as expressed in contemporary texts and civil documents will provide a framework for Rousseau’s theories of education and gender formation as postulated in Émile, ou de l’education and Sophie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse. A musical analysis of several numbers in Cosi demonstrates the unfolding weaknesses of the characters. While the men progress towards an enlightened education in the natures of the sexes, the women undergo a regression of character.
# CONTENTS

Abstract

Table of Contents

I. Introduction

II. Sexual Ideals of the Enlightenment

III. Rousseau's Julie and Sophie: Women's Character and Societal Role

IV. *Cosi fan tutte* as a Didactic Enterprise

V. Conclusion: Tragedies and Ambiguities

Appendix: Musical Examples

Bibliography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Sexual Ideals of the Enlightenment</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Rousseau's Julie and Sophie: Women's Character and Societal Role</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. <em>Cosi fan tutte</em> as a Didactic Enterprise</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Conclusion: Tragedies and Ambiguities</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix: Musical Examples</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter One:

Introduction
In the medieval romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Gawain faces the conflicting demands of reason and desire. On his way to certain death at the hands of a mysterious green knight, he happens upon a sumptuous castle whose lord welcomes him as an honored guest and whose lady exerts all her power in attempting to seduce him. Although he deftly avoids falling prey to her through careful exercise of his chivalry, he eventually accepts her green girdle as a keepsake, which she tells him has the power to protect him from death. Mistakenly believing that it would protect him from the green knight, Gawain actually committed a violation of chivalry. Not accepting the girdle would have been discourteous to the lady, while accepting it was a breach of loyalty to the lord. Gawain faced a no-win situation.

The lovers of Mozart’s *Cosi fan tutte* face dilemmas of much the same kind. The women must choose between remaining loyal to their original lovers or submitting to the insistent demands of seduction, while the men must either succeed at their cross-seductions or remain in a pre-enlightened state of blind naïveté. In one instance, the women act against their desires in denying themselves a love condition, while the men’s education is thwarted; in the other, the men come to enlightenment only at the expense of their lovers’ grace and devotion. Like Gawain, each of the lovers unknowingly acts in opposition to his or her desires. In trying to save themselves, they contribute to their own falls; trying to demonstrate their reason for pride, they bring themselves to shame.
These contradictions reveal dark undertones that reach down to the opera’s very foundation. Indeed, historical views of the opera have detected this murkiness of intent. Though primarily guided by the moral conventions of their time, nineteenth-century critics of Cosi sensed serious qualities inherent in the opera that were later ignored by succeeding reviewers who deemed the work a frivolous, delicate and rococo trifle. The “strongly moralistic Beethoven,” if I may borrow a phrase of Bruce Alan Brown, censured the work’s depravity,¹ while Richard Wagner considered the work a veritable insult to the operatic repertoire. He wrote in Oper und Drama (1851), “O, how doubly dear and above honour is Mozart to me, that it was not possible for him to invent music for Tito like that of Don Giovanni, for Cosi fan tutte like that to Figaro! How shamefully would it have desecrated Music!”²

The Romantic queasiness towards the opera one senses in Beethoven and Wagner stemmed largely from Da Ponte’s libretto, although Wagner’s assertion that Cosi’s music does not equal that of Don Giovanni and Figaro is patently absurd. Certainly, the seduction of women within the frames of a disinterested “experiment” and a quasi-chauvinistic bet upheld in the name of military honor is heavier than most buffa material. However, Mozart elsewhere treated equally serious topics as opere buffe with more widely-accepted success. Bernard Williams states, “To take Cosi fan tutte seriously is

² Cited in Brown, 172.
not...to refuse to treat it as a comedy. On the contrary, it is to take it seriously as a comedy, something we are certainly prepared to do with other comedies, and with Mozart’s other great Italian operas.”

Mozart’s lack of connection with the libretto must be ruled out, for the way he sets certain texts betrays a marked interest in the libretto’s program. Williams places the opera’s power to upset not in its inability to reflect the libretto. Rather, he claims that some of Mozart’s music is too strong for a plot so based in “farcical artificiality.” He states, “The problem is not that the libretto is cynical or silly or disagreeable about women. The problem is rather the emotional power which Mozart has vested in that artificial narrative structure...”

At the same time, Goehring ventures an alternate definition of comedy as reflected in Così, in which intentional artifice denies realism, and warns of the dangers of sympathy while simultaneously encouraging them.

One clue to why the opera exists in a kind of limbo between opera buffa and something more serious can be found in the opera’s subtitle, La scuola degli amanti. If the opera is cast as a school for lovers, many of its curious disparities are resolved. Education in the Enlightenment was a matter of supreme importance, vested with the power to raise man from his untamed roots and to confer upon him the rights of the citizen. It was concern for the quality of the male citizen that gave rise to the importance of education.

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4 Ibid.
Therefore, if both groups of lovers come to a sort of enlightenment in Cosi, then what the men learn is privileged above the women’s knowledge. It would be much more important that the male realize the true nature of woman, so that he could go about his civil duties unhampered by maudlin attachments. The disastrous fall of the women in this regard is more of a secondary outcome than a primary goal of the opera. It is necessary insofar as it allows the men’s education.

In my study, I intend to demonstrate that the actions of Cosi fan tutte aim towards such an educative goal, based on differences of gender as expressed in the sexual mores of the Enlightenment, and especially the didactic treatises of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Ferrando and Guglielmo, as first presented in the opera, are so overcome with the infirmity of love that they are completely debilitated by it. The course of the action aims at curing them of this weakness and conferring upon them attributes more appropriate for an ideal male. Female character receives a similar amount of attention, although the women’s narrative develops inversely. If the men begin in a low state antithetical to their natures and travel to a higher state, the women begin in a relatively high state, largely at peace with their natures, and eventually fall to ruin. It will be informative to conduct a study of Rousseau’s two treatises on education, Émile, ou de l’éducation, and Sophie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse, in order to discern the ideals of gender, reason, and the role of education in gender formation. In addition, the notoriously tragic ends of Rousseau’s two heroines may serve as a model for the dénouement of
Cosi. It will also be informative to study the general Enlightenment views on sexuality and seduction of which Rousseau’s theories are an essential part. In my treatment of Mozart’s music, I will attempt to demonstrate that he set up clear gender roles from the very beginning of the opera, creating states of musical weakness. Through the use of metric displacement, avoidance of the tonic, lack of modulation, elided cadences, and what could be called a deliberate lack of melodic imagination, Mozart sets up a state of weakness in the men and connects it to their love susceptibility. In contrast to this style, Mozart represents Don Alfonso as the didactic voice of reason. His lines cadence and modulate quickly in a kind of “masculine” strength in direct opposition to Ferrando’s and Guglielmo’s musical reluctance. His lines are also very repetitive and simple, for the sake of being easily understood. The didactic voice must be clear, and Don Alfonso’s lines are never lost in the shuffle. All of these elements contribute to the construction of a Rousseauist framework in the opera.

This approach differs from many previous studies in that it concentrates specifically on Enlightenment roles of gender and sexuality and applies them to the guiding forces of the opera. While other scholars have concentrated on other aspects of the Enlightenment or on modern theories of sexuality as frameworks for the opera, none has specifically combined a historicist approach to sexuality and education, and applied it to Cosi fan tutte. Although scholars have not pinpointed the Enlightenment compulsions for effecting such a large censure of women, many accurately
describe qualities in the opera that might be viewed as "symptoms," without a consideration of the cause. However, any study benefits from a consideration of the past material on which it is built.

Bernard Williams, for example, concentrates on the creation of cynicism, viewing the ending as a main element contributing to this effect. The outcome enacts a return to a much shallower relationship, rejecting the "natural" sentiments of the women for their new lovers, which Mozart had taken seriously through the composition of representatively beautiful and expressive music. He states, "After we have been led, very carefully, through all this, and the desires and demands presented in it have been acknowledged, everyone is briskly, indeed brutally, returned to a conventional arrangement which was grounded, as we were carefully shown, in shallower sentiments." The opera demonstrates that emotions are serious and powerful attachments, but little acknowledged by the world and the social order, which both continue in opposition to them. Cosi's ultimate sadness stems from the fact that this occurs, while at the same time the depth of what happened is not denied.

Scott Burnham also picks up on the separation between libretto and music, claiming that the music is most sincere and expressive in situations created by the lowest sorts of ruses. "Where we might expect bald comedy, the music falls like a scrim of melancholy beauty over the preposterous action."

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He sees this disparity as the "opera's consciousness of itself," acting as a critique of Enlightenment theories of reason and nature.\textsuperscript{8} He evaluates the outcome of the lovers' painful education as more a lesson in what love is than what it is not, as Alfonso had intended to demonstrate. Ballantine concurs with such an evaluation, claiming that "the opera laughs not with but against the established order..."\textsuperscript{9} However, is it appropriate to call situations with such sensitive and serious music the "lowest sorts of ruses"? It is precisely because Mozart treats them so surprisingly that we should pay more attention to them. I submit that Mozart approached the action with a much more authentic and educational intent than Burnham and Ballantine would seem to allow.

However, to assert that Mozart achieved a full inversion of the libretto's intent is to ignore other musical elements that work in concert with an Enlightenment educational program. Steptoe goes so far as to claim that the process of seduction is "presented with such orderly detachment and clarity that the subtitle, \textit{La scuola degli amanti}, is well justified."\textsuperscript{10} He places the lack of contemporary success of the opera not in any internal fault of libretto or music, but in the disappearance of its intended audience: "the opera emerged at the moment when the world for which it was designed had

begun to crumble. Steptoe is working here from the assumption that *Cosi* was meant as a frivolous trifle for a dissipated aristocracy, and that its relative failure was the result of the disappearance of its audience. However, *Cosi*’s roots are tied much more closely with the emerging bourgeois class through its insistence on proper behavior in marriage and ideal male characteristics.

Sexual behavior, seduction, characteristics of the sexes, and outcome: these are refrains that are manifest in the libretto, as well as in numerous fictional and philosophical texts of the period, and in Mozart’s musical texture. Just as the Enlightenment provided a medium for the cultivation of diverse theories of sexuality and pleasure, as well as hypotheses on their practical application and result, so does a work like *Cosi* reflect back on these investigative roots. Several scholars have observed this connection and applied strands of Enlightenment thought to works produced in that period. Brigid Brophy postulates that the Enlightenment view of pleasure was concerned largely with forcing the vestments of reason on the highly unscientific doctrines of sexuality. Concerning physical attraction and susceptibility to it, she writes, "the business of reason was to distinguish between long- and short-term, genuine and specious, pleasures."\(^{12}\) Reason in this view could actually encourage or curb the desires of the body. She continues, "Reason could not compel man to take the right course; but once reason had made the right course plain, man would be compelled to take it,

\(^{11}\) Steptoe, 293.
by his own instinctual nature...the instinct of a self towards pleasure was at once, and by the same token, natural, benevolent, and virtuous.”

In this view, the women of Cosi exist outside the realm of reason. Through their indulgences, they prove their inability to recognize what could only be a very short-term pleasure as such. They bring about their own downfalls because they do not accept the “Albanians” as passing fancies, dandies for pleasant occupation while their “real” lovers are away, but rather as complete, replacement lovers, worthy of immediate marriage. They reject their previous lovers, who are soldiers, eschewing the standard of male glory rewarded by female admiration and love, for two foreigners who may or may not have any military prowess whatsoever.

Brophy further notes an Enlightenment-based educative program in the opera. She writes,

That Cosi is a school [for lovers] is part of the Enlightenment’s educative programme; it enlightens its pupils by the rational exploration of nature, including the nature of their own emotions; the lesson is the almost biological one that, although sexual love seems to be aroused by so particular an object, the species is not at all particular about which object provides it with satisfaction.

Brophy insists that a work such as Cosi is possible only because women had become able to choose a husband; the “sex war” could ensue subsequently.

“The woman ceased to be a possessible object, which which can be lost as well as taken...”

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13 Brophy, 64-65.
14 Brophy, 123.
15 Ibid.
Contrary to Brophy’s claims, however, the men of the opera do clearly care which object provides them with satisfaction, as shown by their agony and rage when learning of their lovers’ infidelities. Furthermore, they react the way they do because they viewed their women as possessions. The knowledge that Dorabella and Fiordiligi have shared themselves with someone else taints them in the minds of their original lovers. The reasoning is circular; it does not matter that they themselves were the pernicious seducers. The women have been both lost and taken away. Brophy’s claims about Cosi’s educative program would be more effective if limited to the female of the species. But where does this leave the men? I propose that the goal of the entire opera is their enlightenment, not the women’s. Male education served the more pressing need of creating effective citizens and members of society, and Cosi subscribes to this standard of male-privileged enlightenment.

A fair amount of scholarly literature has been devoted to an exploration of Cosi’s placement in an Enlightenment “nature” setting. Goehring notes the nature-based foundation of much of Cosi’s action, responding to Despina’s grounding in the pastoral mode and noting that her pastoral gestures do much to accomplish an alteration of passions. He considers other pastoral and natural elements in the opera: “Dorabella’s and Guglielmo’s seduction takes place in a garden, for example, and if the story begins in a café, it is only because the opera is creating a contrast between the
urban and the rustic, the familiar and the Other, which is the main impulse behind pastoral literature." Noske too remarks on the pervasiveness of nature in the opera, stemming from visual aspects. "No other mature opera of Mozart makes use of 'nature' as much as this one. It is not the Rousseau-like concept of wild nature, but nature as modified by man: ornamental gardens with turf-seats, a barque adorned with flowers, actors entwined with garlands, vases filled with bouquets." Noske goes on to suggest that these stage settings easily conjured up a world of ancien régime frivolity, which contributes to the opera's censure. "If frivolity and libertinage were censured and punished in Figaro and Don Giovanni, how could one accept Cosi fan tutte's idealization of immoral behavior?"

Other scholars have seen the garden setting as a prerequisite for the women's fall. The confinement of the women in a closed space is necessary for the manipulation of their emotions. DeNora sees Cosi fan tutte as an interrogation of woman's nature, an obsessive discussion of woman's sexual weakness. She describes the opera as a manifestation of the seduction plot, "a contrived or man-made environment in which the controlled or quasi-experimental procedure of testing women could be carried out in clinical

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17 Goehringer, 130-131.
19 Ibid.
detail. She finds it significant that Cosi largely takes place in nature, in a garden, "nature’s laboratory." The action occurs in two gardens, where the women are tempted, try to resist, and eventually succumb.

Nicholas Till has made some of the most insightful comments on the relationship of Cosi fan tutte to the Enlightenment. He sees the opera as a reflection of the failure of materialist solutions to cure society’s ills; its irony and cynicism are merely symptoms of the state of society. When Cosi was first performed in 1790, the Josephine Enlightenment had faded into cynicism and its former supporters had become jaded. Till interprets the outcome of the opera not merely as an individual loss of innocence or the negation of idealized and youthful love. He applies the work’s cynicism to the secular Enlightenment itself.

Till comments on Cosi’s organization as a kind of scientific test, supported by its stark self-referentiality. He states, “There is no real world outside that of the opera: the war to which the men depart is imaginary, and the chorus appears and disappears like rabbits from a conjurer’s hat. As a result, there are no objective standards by which we or the characters can judge their actions. The setting of the story -- its deliberate artifice and lack of external referents--forces the characters to exist in a world of essences,

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22 Till, 233.
hermetically sealed from the redeeming inconsistencies of the real world.”

This “world of essences,” however, permits a view of the characters as paradigms of male and female behavior. If the didactic program is to be applicable to society as a whole, the lovers cannot be mere characters, but paradigms of their sexes.

Till is one of very few scholars to comment on the relationship of the opera to contemporary philosophy, in particular that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Other authors have done preliminary studies connecting Mozart with Rousseau. In 1964, Alfred Schutz suggested that Mozart may have become acquainted with various philosophical theories during his stay in Paris in 1778. Mozart’s mentor there, Baron Friedrich Melchior Grimm, was a close friend of several of the philosophes, including D’Alembert, Diderot, Holbach, and Rousseau.

In another interesting work, Ann Livermore studied the Marriage of Figaro and Barber of Seville, suggesting that both of these works were modeled after Rousseau’s Confessions, and that specific characters in them were in fact patterned after acquaintances of Rousseau’s. However, studies specifically relating Mozart’s music to Rousseau’s philosophy are rare.

Bruce Alan Brown is one of the exceptions. According to his view, both Mozart and Rousseau share a nucleus of theories on love, fidelity, and

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23 Till, 237.
enlightenment. Till takes another approach and comments on Enlightenment views of education as a cure-all and as popular inspiration for fiction of the period. The taming of individuals to conform to society was fertile ground for Enlightenment discussion and provided the inspiration for Rousseau’s novel-treatise Émile, the most influential educational work of the period. In it, Rousseau sought to find a balance between reason and feeling, one of the fundamental conflicts of Così fan tutte. Till also notes that Da Ponte had written a Rousseauist essay on “Whether Man is happier in an organized society or in a simple state of nature.” Da Ponte’s clear knowledge of Rousseau’s theories opens up the possibility of his hand-tailoring Così to be another program of education according to the dictates of Rousseau.

Scholars have seized upon many different theories of enlightenment, education, and seduction in their explorations of Così fan tutte. In order to gain a better understanding of Rousseau’s and Mozart’s portrayal of these processes and women’s interaction with them, we shall now turn to an exploration of seduction and sexual practices in the Enlightenment.

26 Brown, 85.
27 Till, 239.
28 Till, 240.
Chapter Two:

Sexual Ideals of the Enlightenment
"It is tempting to write the history of sex as if all in darkness lay till God said 'Let Freud be' and all was light," as G.S. Rousseau and Roy Porter proclaim with flourish in the introductory essay of their book Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment. They continue with a more sedate admonition to the eighteenth-century scholar not to be lured by similarly facile paradigms,

...if we slip into the labels and stereotypes so tempting in the history of ideas, we can easily conjure up a vision in which, after the stern asceticism of the age of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, after the celebration of the triumph of Reason over the passions to be found in the Classical tradition from the Early Renaissance onwards, and particularly in seventeenth-century Stoicism, the Age of Enlightenment presents itself as an age of sexual enlightenment as well.29

To be sure, the era betrays a marked interest in all matters sexual, manifested in literature and the stage, philosophy, medical and paramedical scientific writings, and civil writings and laws.

Eighteenth-century biology found sexuality to be the foundation of all living beings. Erasmus Darwin, in his evolutionary theories, hailed sexuality as the cosmic arbiter of progress, order, and happiness. As philosophical hedonism and utilitarianism radiated from Lamettrie, d’Holbach, Diderot, and Jeremy Bentham, among others, the view of sex as an essential expression of human pleasure circulated, encouraging less inhibited sexual

behavior; those actions traditionally considered unnatural, sinful, and vicious were absolved so long as they yielded more pleasure than pain.30

This interest in sexuality easily moved on to the medical realm, and the confrontation of early medicine with Enlightenment thought produced an infection of writings exploring various aspects of sexuality and sexual behavior. Studying sexuality was apparently so alluring that men not specifically trained to practice medicine began to specialize in the field. In addition to learned experts who absorbed philosophical ideas and applied them in their medical treatises, there existed a great number of “hacks, quacks, and charlatans [who] declared themselves doctors overnight and, often at the cost of their patients, began practicing and publishing.”31 In this manner, much of what came to be standard Enlightenment medicine was informed by such sub-intellectual “research.” This fringe-group no doubt was drawn in because of the fame and money promised by a field so closely allied with what was then sensational and taboo. Matters that ordinarily were considered obscene and off-limits were then acceptable material for discussion, under the guise of scientific inquiry.32 Because of the diverse content of Enlightenment medicine, its writings ranged from highly advanced, rationally-thought treatises to published writings that were marred by conjecture and prejudice.33 However, both of these forums provide insight

30 Ibid.
32 Wagner, 46-47.
33 Wagner, 47.
into how Enlightenment ideas spread and were degraded in society as a whole.

In other circles, sexual taboos that Europeans had inherited and imposed came to be considered contradictory to fundamental human nature, a proposition seen to be proven by the discovery of the innocent promiscuity of native Tahitians. Writers from Diderot to Swift drew on the Tahitians as a model of natural sexual conduct, coming to the conclusion that European sexual prohibitions were arbitrary and unnatural, superimposed over man's natural inclinations by a scheming priesthood. Freer sexual expression would produce social harmony. The extent to which Europeans put theory into practice and partook of this liberationist advice is a subject of much speculation and is notoriously difficult to measure. But that sexuality itself had seduced the public imagination should be clear through the wide dissemination and increasing commercialization of sexual prints, bawdy novels, and erotic publications.

These beliefs notwithstanding, the view that the Enlightenment achieved a full paradigm shift into sexual emancipation and hedonistic freedom is rather too facile. The near ubiquitous interest in sex in this age could reflect "less an age of erotic pleasure than ... a new era of sexual anxiety." Rousseau and Porter posit a view of the time as one of a liberation for the male of the species from previous sexual restraints, a shift that created a new way of controlling women. Sexual freedom was only one of the issues

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34 Rousseau and Porter, 2.
organized according to gender in the eighteenth century. The attitudes that produced such a split between male and female sexual propriety are the same ones that eventually produced “that idealisation, that angelification, of woman which found its apotheosis in the frail, feeble, but blameless Victorian wife.”

Much of the Enlightenment discourse on sex reflects a need to contain what was perceived to be a dangerous female presence, although it ostensibly aimed at a pure and rationalistic exposition of human sexuality. The stereotypes of the private and “natural” woman that resulted were not merely inheritances of the ancien régime, and as such abhorrent to Enlightenment thinkers, but were largely the creation of the progressives themselves. The women of Così fan tutte present a new development of this “natural” woman in their susceptibility to certain weaknesses both as shown in their texts and in their musical characterizations.

The progression from absolutism to civil society was characterized by a gradual shift in the definition of morality. Moving away from a sense of the public good as based in Christian principles and towards a more secularized formation, morality by the end of the century included a reference to the good of the individual. Morality thus became more privatized. Collective groups organized society less and less, to be supplanted by the individual citizen. No longer categorized according to class or region, the citizen had to be defined by

35 Ibid.
36 Rousseau and Porter, 4.
37 Ibid.
some universal principle. Enlightenment thinkers found this quality in the body. Married, heterosexual, and male, the prototype for an ideal citizen was based not on bourgeois class but on gender. The citizen derived his freedoms through his private and familial position instead of his public or estate-based position.39

Although certain topics were more popular for discourse in German-speaking lands than elsewhere, the male bodily definition of citizenship and the public/private split of gender domain were themes common to all of western Europe during the Enlightenment. Previously, conventions of marriage and the distinctions of the sexes were passed down through the authorities of the Church and the state. It is certainly true that women had long been conditioned to comport themselves modestly, submissively, and in a manner pleasing to men. However, with the demise of the ancien régime and the increasing secularization of society in the Enlightenment, theorists found new justification for these conventions in the prototype for the male citizen, whose right to authority was based in his body. Citizenship, an individual’s membership in the civil state, was participation in a civil association, through which man might acquire the full powers inherent to him, living up to his full capacities and completing his humanity. Citizenship was a lofty designation, but one reserved exclusively for males.

39 Hull, 5.
Aspects of the state and civil society are brought to the fore through a consideration of sexuality, and the sexual history of the Enlightenment cannot be approximated without a reference to them. In sum, the disparity between the theoretical embrace of sexual freedom and expression and the considerably more disjunct establishment of the citizen merits a study of actual sexual practices in an interpretive framework that is not quite so limited.

The difficulties in divining the actual amorous practices of any historical age should not come as a surprise, and untying this Gordian knot from the various strands of Enlightenment documents can be even more laborious. Contemporary authors, including les moralistes, engaged in a great deal of cogitative mastication on the subject of love, but did so in general terms, rarely sharpening their philosophical teeth on the experiences of individuals or societal phenomena. Statistical materials seem not to have interested them at all. Thus the historian may turn to demographic registers, birth records, and confessors' handbooks, but actual information about sexual habits is paltry, and little remains outside of figures.

A reliance on novels too is risky, although they certainly contain more explicit accounts of sexual adventure. Fiction for this reason came under some amount of attack and was accused of corrupting and sullying the young. Bienville, in his essay De la Nymphomanie ou fureur uterine of 1771, points

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40 Hull, 6.
to associations with servants as harmful interactions and especially Marivaux’s novels as pernicious despoilers, both leading directly to female nymphomania. However, for us to use the novel as an indication of social reality constitutes a logical problem and vastly underestimates the imaginative extent of the authors. Goulemot sees in literature evidence of the imagination of writers and their readers, hardly an insight to be discounted. Amorous literature can be seen as imagination in concrete form, as an effort to surpass, repress, and conceal reality. It exists in a form in which shocking, unspeakable, and untried material can be foisted upon the reader. Thus, literature and social conduct inhabit the same sexual realm and lay claim to some communal territory, but remain essentially separate in system. While knowledge about the imaginative properties of authors and audiences may be informative and provocative, the historian must tread carefully when researching actual sexual practices and pick sources with scrutiny.

Nevertheless, several outstanding historical examples of male promiscuity leap out at the scholar. Figures such as Casanova and the Marquis de Sade come to mind first. The exploits of other men were no less excessive. The aptly-named Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, acknowledged having sired 354 bastards, while in England, Boswell admitted to having three married women as mistresses, three lower-

42 Ibid.
43 Goulemot, 23.
class mistresses, and four actresses as paramours, and recorded sexual
relations with over sixty prostitutes in the 1760s.\textsuperscript{45} At the court of Charles II
of England, it was recommended that the less famous Lord Guildford “keep a
whore” because “he was ill looked upon for want of doing so.”\textsuperscript{46} Clearly
marital infidelity in the male population found remarkable acceptance,
especially among the nobility.\textsuperscript{47}

John Wesley voiced the frustrations of moralists across Europe when
he fumed, “Where is male chastity to be found?...Amongst the nobility,
among the gentry, among the tradesmen, or among the common people of
England?”\textsuperscript{48} Wesley highlights the remarkable prevalence of promiscuity
across all levels of society in his lifetime. As Porter sums it up,

Other eras had had their notorious pockets of immorality, their courts
of voluptuaries, their wenching warriors, their wandering scholars
chanting the Carmina Burana, or a peasantry still wedded more to
carnival than to Christianity. Yet in the age of Wesley -- the age of
Mozart -- commentators the length and breadth of Europe were struck
by the universal profligacy which seemed to be infecting all ranks and
sectors of society.\textsuperscript{49}

Certainly there are other indications that not every Enlightenment thinker
welcomed promiscuity as the new naturalism. In his print sequences,
Hogarth demonstrated his belief that the Rake’s Progress led to the madhouse
and the Harlot’s Progress to death. But despite the fulminations of Wesley,
Hogarth, and other moralists, the Enlightenment provided a fertile culture

\textsuperscript{45} Porter, 4.
\textsuperscript{46} Quoted in Porter, 2-3.
\textsuperscript{47} Porter, 3.
\textsuperscript{48} Quoted in Porter, 1.
\textsuperscript{49} Porter, 1.
for an apparently great number of men across society for the cultivation of libertinism.\textsuperscript{50}

The position of these men's wives in the framework of promiscuity was clear. Porter relates,

Dr. Johnson thought sensible wives should turn a blind eye to their husbands' adulteries (as no bastards were imposed on them, no real harm was done), and many wives did just that. ... When Boswell himself told his wife Margaret he must 'have a concubine', she replied that he 'might go to whom he pleased', prepared, it seems, to put up with his endless infidelities, so long as he didn't pox her.\textsuperscript{51}

The point at the heart of the matter seems to be that men were free to do as they wished because nature had not made it incumbent upon them to carry the burdens of pregnancy and bastardry. The onus of defending the nuclear family from outside intrusion fell entirely on the wife, to whom infidelity was thus prohibited. License and indulgence were not granted to women. Porter cites a passage as example, "when Boswell's Dutch sweetheart, Zélide, told him she would 'like to have a husband who could let her go away sometimes to amuse herself,' Boswell was furious: 'she seemed a frantic libertine.'\textsuperscript{52}

The appellation of "libertine" in this instance seems highly ironic next to Boswell's excessive number of seductions. However, the term itself hardly had a set definition in the eighteenth century. Turner postulates that contemporary usage of the term reflected a dynamic and fluid field of illicit

\textsuperscript{50} Porter, 4.
\textsuperscript{51} Porter, 3.
\textsuperscript{52} Porter, 4.
acts, and "libertines" ranged from cavaliers, sensualists, rakes, murderous ruffians, and even "men of sense," among others. Turner clarifies, however, claiming that most eighteenth-century readers would stipulate certain characteristics for the libertine: using Machiavellian means towards Hobbesian ends, seeking power and glory, and pushing lawlessness to its own limits.

Libertinism is most clearly a manifestation of Enlightenment mores in its hedonism, fervent cultivation of sexuality, and pretensions of naturalism. Turner names as qualities of libertines “cynical assumptions about female virtue and the gentleman’s right to assault it, the politely aggressive testing game, the pleasure in forcing blushes, and the delight in the power to shock.” The title of libertine clearly is a highly multi-faceted designation. Boswell’s christening of Zélide as a “libertine” is rendered ironic by the utterly male-dominated imagery of the term.

This unfairness with respect to the censure women received when entertaining thoughts of taking lovers is rendered all the sharper when one considers that for quite some time, men and women were thought to have equal sexual drives. As early as 1705, Johann Joachim Becher observed, “A female is easily seduced by a loose fellow, and a man as easily by a loose female,” while Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi claimed that “Nature has put in people a drive to reproduce the species, and both sexes feel this drive

54 Turner, 76.
equally." If both men and women felt equally driven to sexual expression, but only males could entertain their desires, then one can begin to see the inequality of this system.

Justi's view concerning sexual expression was much more rigid. He hypothesized a strict gender-specific nature from which respective behavior followed. Assuming a conflation of men with sexual power, he claimed, "So nature had to ordain that one sex should bid and order while the other should defend itself. One sees that among all animals nature has allotted to the male sex attack, and to the female, defense." Thus, to Justi, nature had appointed men and women to opposite standards of sexual conduct. Gender proved to determine ideas about sexual conduct more than vice versa, and through the sexual model, society found a paradigm for civil relations between men and women.

The clearest manifestation of these associations is witnessed in civil theorists' thoughts about marital relations. Samuel Pufendorf claimed that "it is particularly in keeping with the natural condition of both sexes not only that the man's position should be superior, but also that the husband should be the head of the family which he has established." Christian Wolff went so far as to say that a woman's sexual desires would be satisfied in direct proportion to the level she subordinated them to her husband's will, even when he was wrong in a matter. Thus, women were to attain fulfillment

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55 Turner, 84.  
56 Hull, 173.  
57 Hull, 181.  
58 Hull, 231.
through self-subordination and sacrifice. Justi argued that women's concerns were inferior to men's happiness, even if they were made unhappy by their subjection, because men's interests were guided by the higher worth of the commonwealth.

Widespread opinion held that women needed sex for their health, and that they were less harmed by it than men because they lost less vital energy, as they were the passive parties in intercourse. The greatest good offered to women was not the elimination of their passion, but rather its redirection. Likewise, Cosi fan tutte does not posit an elimination of passion at its end; it would be hard to imagine that the women could possibly forget their desires. The best future they could possibly foresee would be ruled by a such a redirection of passion. In 1791, Kall Gottfried Bauer stated, "Wife, mother, and overseer of the house is the purpose of the woman for the world; and also her absolute purpose...can never be achieved except via the capacity to fulfill these relative purposes; she will always be less, if she tries to be more..." Part of this extremism may be attributed to the societal danger an unmarried woman represented. Once married, a woman was subject to her husband and her sexual expression came under his domain. An unmarried woman who exercised her sexuality, however, was accused of brutality, of having an uncontrolled desire for lascivious excesses at the foundation of her

59 Hull, 185.
60 Hull, 187.
61 Hull, 188.
62 Hull, 251.
63 Hull, 255.
character, of being brutal, uncontrollable, insatiable, and filled with the blackest malice and meanness.\textsuperscript{64}

Marriage in this way was held up as the only possibility for respectable womanhood. It was the standard against which sexuality was deemed either legitimate or illegitimate.\textsuperscript{65} In addition, the state of marriage holds center stage in the amount of attention it received from literary and philosophical authors. Of all the writings devoted to sexual matters at this time, almost all of them are written either within marriage or about it.\textsuperscript{66} Certainly it is one of the central focuses of Cosi, where the fiancés must come to a realization about the nature of women before their marriages. The expectation to marry did not apply solely to women. Indeed, it had become a duty for all adults, the only form of legitimate existence. Bachelors and clerical celibates were attacked as either immoral or unnatural, and single people were considered unemancipated and therefore not full members of civil society.\textsuperscript{67}

Considering the extent to which marriage was viewed as a civil imperative, it is surprising how often the theme of "unhappy marriage" arises in writings of the Enlightenment. Writers complained of the increasing rarity of happy marriages, and marital disaster captured the literary imagination. The problem may lie precisely with the perilous sexuality that rendered marriage necessary. Even before Enlightenment transformations of personal citizenship and identity, sexual attraction had been considered far

\textsuperscript{64} Hull, 253.
\textsuperscript{65} Hull, 257.
\textsuperscript{66} Hull, 285.
\textsuperscript{67} Hull, 286.
too fickle and capricious to be a stable basis for a satisfying marriage. Once
citizenship became a reflection of the male self, then marital duty changed
dramatically. Lasting sexual satisfaction was expected of a marriage. However,

male desire was thought of as transitory in capacity, concentration, and
recipient. Too much passion also was eschewed; it was thought to produce
"disgust and disdain of both spouses for one another." This danger, coupled
with the fear that men would cease wanting to marry altogether since they
were thought to bear the greater sexual dissatisfaction, carry the heavier
burden of providing for a family, and lose the greater amount of freedom,
created the need for some sort of enticement or compensation for the male to
want to enter into the state of marriage. If men heeded all of the theoretical
discourse postulating the imperfection of marriage, they would have been
little inclined to marry at all.

The promise of wifely submission was one of the clearest
compensations to assuage the male reluctance to enter into a marriage, and
central to this plan was the proper education of women. Countless
pedagogical handbooks on women's education were devoted to producing
appropriate submission. Theorists identified submission as woman's natural
character and feminine sensibility. As the theorist K.G. Horstig has written,

The wife has without question the most unerring means in her hands,
via the wise and careful use of tenderness, for nature has not given her
in vain so many instincts to secure for herself forever the love of her
husband. The wife has the means at hand, both through her sweet

68 Hull, 286-287.
69 Hull, 288.
70 Ibid.
obligingness as well as her charming refusal, to spice the life of her spouse with such grace that she binds her spouse indissolubly to her with a tie of eternal thankfulness. ... But who teaches the wife how to increase for her husband the enjoyment of love, to sweeten, lengthen, and multiply it? Who teaches her how to spare without ever becoming a burden to him with her own love, or transforming the sweetness of his emotions into indifference by untimeliness.71

The wife was to study her husband, intuit his needs, and satisfy his desires accordingly. In the process, she was to subsume her own desires. The woman was not to be a passive slave, but rather actively seek self-effacement for the good of the marriage.72 At the end of Così, the only path left for the women is to subsume their own desires in acquiescing to the altered wants of their lovers; this is presented as their ultimate good, and one way in which they could rectify their transgressions.

Soon this self-limitation, together with sexual temperance, came to be seen as the highest goal of marriage. Sheer sexual attraction was animalistic, whereas the chaste marital bed represented the highest virtues and purest desires of the soul.73 Rehearsed restraint and stringent observance of oneself, instead of unabandoned passion, led to a peaceful marriage.

In the Enlightenment, the institution of marriage mediated between the public and private spheres, between individual desire and civil duty, with the male citizen as its centerpoint. The hierarchy of marriage was founded on gender differences, with these differences providing the framework for individual duties and natures within the marriage, and on a larger scale,

71 Quoted in Hull, 291.
72 Hull, 291.
73 Hull, 292.
within society as a whole. Thus, marriage was comprised of a kind of institutionalized love, whereby natures and differences were bent and molded to fit society. Marriage was not the equivalent of sexual expression, but rather was a particular kind of tempered sexual expression that was considered higher and more befitting the civilized.74 This higher form of sex was reflective of the higher sorts of people who adhered to it, and was in this manner a determinant of class. Enlightened citizens should practice such cultivation of self-control, a reserve that would separate them from the “great sensual mass.”75 A related separation existed within the marriage as well. Whereas marriage had a social or civil purpose for the husband, it was a natural responsibility for the wife. This distinction is at the heart of the methods and goals of women’s education.

Sexuality found expression in diverse areas of Enlightenment thought, most often those with a pervading interest in constructions of gender. It is informative both to view Enlightenment sexuality as a contributing factor to the richness of these fields, and to view these fields as intricately tied back to sexual roots. A consideration of the sexual metaphor not only provides guidelines for the study of Rousseau’s heroines in the next chapter, but also lays the foundation for the exploration of women in Mozart’s opera.

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74 Hull, 294-6.
75 Hull, 298.
Chapter Three:

Rousseau's Julie and Sophie:

Women's Character and Societal Role
Like many writers of his time, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) expended much time and effort developing theories of the natural and issuing pedagogical programs of their implementation. In certain of his works, namely Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse and Émile, ou de l'Éducation, Rousseau adjusted his didactic purposes to the form of the novel, using fictional re-creations of the educational encounter to instruct his readers. As Joan DeJean has shown, the author of these works, along with some of his philosophe compatriots, achieved a construction of literary fortresses, in texts concerned with constraining, controlling, and repressing all disorderly appetites, in an age whose crowning triumph was the destruction of another fortress of oppression, the Bastille.76

In this manner, Rousseau's enterprises in his novel-treatises are driven by strategy and feats of engineering: by his own invention, his territory is established and the reader swayed.77 This method particularly informs the multitude of his writings concerning women. Indeed, women's character, education, and relations with the opposite sex find extensive discussion in nearly all of Rousseau's major works.78 The theories of woman that arise are complex, unsettlingly contradictory, and discontinuous, and have yielded interpretations of the most varied sort. It should be clear, however, that woman does not exist outside of Rousseau's system of nature and politics, but is an inherent and essential component of it. Rousseau's

77 DeJean, 5.
understanding of both human sexuality and woman asserts itself in his political philosophy, which might at first glance appear free from sexual implications. But in the words of Linda Zerilli, woman is neither outside the margins nor at the margins of the political. Rather, she comprises and disrupts those margins. "A frontier figure that is neither wholly inside nor wholly outside political space, woman is elusive, sometimes reassuring, yet also quite dangerous. She signifies both culture and chaos -- one can never be sure which."  

Woman in Così holds much the same position. She holds center stage in the course of the narrative; the men's education is entirely contingent upon her actions. In addition, at the beginning of the opera, the men base their own characters and reactions on their lovers, deriving their self-worth entirely from them. Woman is so central to the opera that the title refers only to the female of the species.

In the two works already mentioned, La Nouvelle Héloïse and Émile, ou de l'Éducation, Rousseau expands on his theories of woman and gender most comprehensively. The first of the two to be begun, Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse, was published in 1761, and was written in the same time as

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Du contrat social, but stands after the Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité. It is an epistolary novel in six parts. Schwartz provides this succinct synopsis:

[Julie] is the only living child of Baron d'Étange...she and her tutor, Saint-Preux, who is a commoner, fall passionately in love. However, it seems impossible for them to marry...because of the baron's opposition, Julie is torn between her passion for her lover and her devotion to her father...Julie and Saint-Preux continue to correspond until their letters are discovered...the baron...has promised to marry Julie to Wolmar, an old friend who once saved his life. Julie asks and receives Saint-Preux's permission to marry Wolmar...she reports that she has become far more devout as a result of her experience of the wedding ceremony. She praises Wolmar highly as a husband. Although she admits that she does not love him (and did love Saint-Preux), she declares that she is happier as Wolmar's wife than she could ever have been as Saint-Preux's...Édouard Bomston, an English nobleman who is a close friend of his...arranges a berth for Saint-Preux on board a ship leaving for a voyage around the world. Several years pass. Julie is now a mother; her life at Clarens is almost ideal...Saint-Preux returns from his expedition. Wolmar invites Saint-Preux to visit Julie at the estate of Clarens at which he and she now live, knowing full well that Saint-Preux had been her lover. Wolmar likes and...asks him to reside at Clarens and eventually to tutor his children...Julie falls ill as a result of rescuing her drowning child. She dies, but before doing so writes a letter to Saint-Preux, in which she declares that her death was well-timed, because she now realizes that she has never overcome her love for him...

Rousseau probably began work on Émile in early 1759 and worked on it concurrently with La Nouvelle Héloïse. Despite its subtitle, the work's scope is not limited to education, but includes child-rearing and the development of the person to an ideal form both as an individual and within society.83

Except for its fifth book, Émile is far closer to a treatise than a novel, and indeed, both of the works vacillate between these two sometimes

82 Schwartz, 116-117.
incompatible forms. They posit concrete solutions to the theoretical problems Rousseau raises in his less novelistic works, fashioning a polis from his theories on the nature of human love.\textsuperscript{84} In the case of Julie, the work's subtitle gives the work an aura of historical veracity. The main character is not merely fictional, but a remade medieval Héloïse, the reincarnation of a moral paradigm. The work can sustain readings that stress both the individuality of its characters and their love story (i.e. as a novel) and the larger implications of its moral and didactic approach.\textsuperscript{85} A similar kind of dichotomy can be seen in Cosi's resistance to simple classification. The opera certainly leans more to the side of opera buffa than opera seria, but far surpasses the carefree harmlessness normally found in buffa material. It is precisely because Cosi aims at instruction in such perilous fields as sexuality and love that it welcomes readings outside of simple opera buffa.

Émile and Julie are linked inversely by their specific kind of narrative construction. Through the course of its action, Julie becomes less of a novel and more of a treatise, while Émile becomes less of a treatise and more of a novel.\textsuperscript{86} This self-conscious construction becomes a strategic move intended to strengthen the texts' purposes. As DeJean asserts, the texts "work to become all-seeing and all-powerful, to perfect the ability to trap any victim in

\textsuperscript{85} DeJean, 122.
\textsuperscript{86} DeJean, 128.
their snares. Both the internal and the external fortifiers are constantly involved in the task of making their defenses airtight."

Thus, the tragic dénouements that Julie and Émile share call into question Rousseau’s intention in the didactic act. The failures of Julie and Sophie are not merely individual falls, but that of women raised to be paragons of their sex. In this manner, there is a monstrosity at the heart of Rousseau’s pedagogical enterprise. The teaching that goes on occurs within a self-made enclosure that both idealizes the heroines and sets up their respective downfalls, just as occurs in Così.

Let us begin by exploring Rousseau’s formation of gender and woman. In his view, anatomy determines the destiny of the respective sexes. Both biologically and socially, a woman’s life is defined entirely by her physiology, by her “nature” as female, starting from birth and extending throughout her life. According to Rousseau, “A male is male only at certain moments, whereas a female is female all her life...; she is constantly reminded of her sex.” [IV:697] Rousseau uses woman’s procreative ability to signify her ultimate function -- as wife, mother, and maîtresse de maison. Women’s anatomy thus distinguishes them from men not only in physiology but in...

87 DeJean, 6.
89 DeJean, 132.
90 I have used the standard complete works edition of Rousseau: the Œuvres complètes  (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1969), in which Émile ou de l’éducation is vol. IV and Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse is vol. II. Hereafter, references to this edition will be cited in the text in brackets with volume and page number.
psychology as well, defining their social, maternal role. Rousseau uses this argument to restrict the education of women.\(^91\)

Certainly Rousseau does not insist that men and women differ only in bodily respects, but would assert that all other differences stem from a bodily cause. The proclivity of men to acquire some qualities and females others is based on anatomy, as are the gender prescriptions for living in and reacting to the world. Joel Schwartz identifies this as a materialist doctrine, but one whose egalitarian pretensions are tempered. "If we are all alike in having bodies, we may also all be differentiated by virtue of having different sorts of bodies."\(^92\)

In this manner, Rousseau creates a highly subjective and personal definition of nature and uses it to define women's place and to argue for their subordination. In his system, it is man's nature (i.e. male of the species) to be equal and free, while it is woman's nature to be subordinate, unequal, and dependent.\(^93\) He writes,

> Since dependence is a state natural to women, girls feel themselves made to obey; they have, or should have, little freedom... Destined to obey a being as imperfect as man, a woman should learn to suffer -- even suffer injustice -- at an early age, and to bear the wrongs of her husband without complaint. You will never reduce boys to the same point; their inner sense of justice rises up and rebels against such injustice, which nature never intended them to tolerate. [IV: 710-711.]

While Rousseau considers it natural for man to fight against injustice, he denies woman even the desire to resist it, much less the right; it is natural for

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\(^91\) Trouille, 15.
\(^92\) Schwartz, 3.
a woman to suffer. Natural man exists in a state of selfless independence, is
equal to any other man, and reacts to suffering beings with pity and goodness.
Natural woman is defined by her role and does not inherently possess those
same qualities.94 The qualities supposed to be inherently feminine and
innate in the female are shame, modesty, love of detail and embellishment,
the desire to be pleasing and polite, and proficient duplicity.95 Female
intellect is in essence different from and inferior to that of men; they are less
creative and less disposed to abstract reasoning. Women cannot devise
principles or theories, their capacity for detail rendering their attention far too
capricious.96

Rousseau goes on to ask if reason is indeed necessary for women. He
asserts that female children are more precocious than male children, but his
explanation is purely functional: it has to do with the precious job of
preserving female virginity. He has Julie explain, “If reason is ordinarily
weaker and fades sooner in women it is also formed earlier, as a frail
sunflower grows and dies before an oak. We find ourselves from the very
beginning entrusted with such a dangerous treasure that the care of
preserving it soon awakens our judgment...” Apparently, after a woman’s
reason has developed enough for her to know how to protect her virginity
and to be compelled to do so at all costs, her reason need not develop any
further. In Émile, Rousseau responds to the question of whether reason is

93 Trouille, 17.
94 Okin, 121.
95 Okin, 127.
96 Okin, 131.
necessary for women thus: “Is it essential for them to cultivate it.... is this culture useful for the functions imposed on them, is it compatible with the simplicity that suits them?” For women, reason is permissible if and only if it helps them perform their marital and familial duties and does not render them any less desirable to men.97

Chastity was the highest of all feminine qualities because of woman’s predestined function in life. Female dignity and decency were equivalent with modesty, shame, and chasteness, while male dignity is provided by freedom. Virtue is not to be found among desirable male qualities, but is exceedingly important for the woman.98 Because a woman who had lost her honor represented such a threat to the autonomous family, which was to be free from bastard children, Rousseau expended great effort in his support of female chastity. This vast difference between male and female virtue is not simply a manifestation of a double standard, as Okin asserts; this is “not two standards on the same ethical scale, but the construction of two radically different scales.”99 Woman’s standard of virtue was formed within the function she was expected to perform in a paternalistic culture, while male virtue was prejudged in no such way.

In some measure, this dichotomy could provide an explanation of Cosi’s ending. The women, who have engaged in illicit relations with someone other than their respective fiancés, must be censured because they

97 Okin, 133.
98 Okin, 161.
99 Okin, 163.
have caused a rupture in the paternalistic organization of marriage. Their punishment is called for by the culture that set up the rules they transgressed. However, the men are free from any such punishment, although they too betrayed their lovers. Their principal virtue is the freedom to do as they wish. They therefore escape the condemnation the women incurred by doing exactly the same thing.

Rousseau bases his justification for this comprehensive subordination of women on one of his fundamental laws of nature: the survival of the species. Actions outside of the domestic sphere would impinge on woman's maternal ability. Rousseau used as additional support le droit de plus fort—the right of the stronger. Man's dominance is naturally supported by right of his superior strength and intellect. Woman is weaker in these respects, in addition to being further incapacitated by her reproductive functions. Woman's true role was as educator and moral protector of the family, a duty sufficiently honorable to merit her exclusion from life outside the domestic realm.\(^{100}\)

In one final attempt to justify his case, Rousseau uses the excuse of social expediency. In his Lettre de M. d'Alembert, he states,

Even if it could be denied that a special sentiment of chasteness was natural to women, would it be any less true that in society their lot ought to be a domestic and retired life, and that they ought to be raised in principles appropriate to it? If the timidity, chasteness, and modesty which are proper to them are social inventions, it is in society's interest that women acquire these qualities; they must be cultivated in women, and any woman who disdains them offends good morals.\(^{101}\)

\(^{100}\) Trouille, 18.
\(^{101}\) Quoted in Okin, 122.
Is it possible that Rousseau considered his case weak enough to warrant such a lapse? It is impossible to know how necessary he considered this addendum, but clearly he considered it in society’s best interest that women bind themselves to the home, for their own betterment and that of society.

Women’s education provides a crucial ingredient in the development of character, and specific differences between the sexes are brought to light by contrasting their very different educations. Émile is to be educated in a way that does not rely on the prejudices of any age; he is to be isolated from the distortions of the world around him. Encouraged to explore his own curiosity, he should be made to think matters through for himself, rather than simply being told things on authority. Thus, his reason is encouraged to develop through careful guidance. While Émile’s education seems to transform him into what Penny Weiss calls the “ultimate Boy Scout,” Sophie’s education does little more than prepare her for a life of domesticity, modesty, and submissiveness to outside opinion. She is not trained to be an ideal citizen, or indeed an independent person at all. Her schooling prepares her to be alluring to her man, obedient as his wife, and devoted as the mother of children that are undeniably his. As Okin states, “that Émile should be educated to be his own man, while Sophie is educated to be his

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102 Okin, 125.
104 Okin, 134.
own woman, is in accordance with the dictates of nature.\textsuperscript{105} Sophie is educated to be Émile's helpmate, a role that is crucial to Émile's own development. Although subsidiary, Sophie will enable him to take his place in society and within the family.\textsuperscript{106}

Rousseau has made it clear that he is not as interested in nurturing woman's intellectual potential as in matching her to her position within the family.\textsuperscript{107} Therefore, woman's education is totally determined by her role and the characteristics necessary to fulfill that role. Consequently, the educations Rousseau recommends for men and women are in direct conflict. Man's education is based on an exploration of unmapped potential, while woman's education is derived from an already solidified end -- her restricted domestic and procreative responsibilities.\textsuperscript{108} He states,

\begin{quote}
The entire education of women must be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to be loved and honored by them, to rear them when they are young, to care for them when they are grown up, to counsel and console, to make their lives pleasant and charming, these are the duties of women at all times, and they should be taught them in their childhood. To the extent that we refuse to go back to this principle, we will stray from our goal, and all the precepts women are given will not result in their happiness or our own. [IV: 703]
\end{quote}

While Émile's education rejects appeals to previous authority, Sophie's is almost completely dependent on such appeals. As another example of this

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{105} Okin, 119.
\textsuperscript{106} Morgenstern, 108.
\textsuperscript{107} Okin, 132.
\textsuperscript{108} Okin, 135.
\end{flushright}
reliance on outside forces and opinion in women’s education, Sophie’s religious education utterly denies any element of self-reasoning:109

Due to the very fact that in her conduct woman is enslaved by public opinion, in her belief she is enslaved by authority. Every girl ought to have her mother’s religion, and every woman her husband’s... Since authority ought to rule the religion of women, the issue is not so much one of explaining to them the reasons there are for believing as of explaining distinctly what we believe. [IV: 377-378]

Central to Rousseau’s plan for women’s education was their moral education. Self-discipline and self-control were most important in his formulation since women were to be liable to the laws of decorum all of their lives.110 In the words of Morgenstern, “Whereas Émile’s education is structured to teach him the necessities imposed by things, Sophie is educated to accommodate the necessities imposed by people.”111 According to Rousseau, constraint was key in this education:

Women should be subjected to constraint from an early age. This misfortune, if it is one at all, is inseparable from their sex. Throughout their lives, they will be subjected to the most constant and severe of restraints: the rules of decorum. They should be accustomed to constraint early, so that it costs them nothing to control their whims and to submit to the will of others. [IV: 709-710]

However, Rousseau recommended against excessive restraint and endless sermonizing, as these could lead to rebellion, boredom, and scorn for duties in the female pupil. He favored a gentle and reasonable medium in this moral area, as well as in education in general. At either extreme, a girl would be either totally ignorant, easily seduced and a dull wife, or over-

109 Weiss, 23.
110 Trouille, 31.
111 Morgenstern, 111.
educated and a bluestocking, usurping the intellectual dominance granted to the husband.\footnote{Ibid.}

Rousseau's conception of the relations between men and women has often been described as complementary, an interdependent connection and a symbiotic relationship. Both sexes are individually incomplete, and are completed only with a member of the opposite sex. Indeed, both sexes are far better off when paired than when alone. This theory applies to both the intellectual and moral realms.\footnote{Okin, 133.} According to Rousseau in Émile, "Woman has more wit, and man more genius, woman observes while man reasons; from this cooperation results the clearest enlightenment and the most complete knowledge that the human mind on its own can achieve." [IV: 737] He repeats this theory with respect to morals:

The social relation of the sexes is a wonderful thing. From this association results a moral person of which the woman is the eye and the man the arm, but with such dependence of one on the other that the man teaches the woman what she should see and the woman teaches the man what he should do. [IV: 720]

This absence of self-sufficiency is important in encouraging men and women to place themselves in a social environment. If men and women see themselves as social dependents, they will be more likely to act unselfishly and for the good of society.\footnote{Schwartz, 3.} In addition, Rousseau argues that if men and women did not possess such mutual dependence, the state of marriage would be vastly undermined, and with it, the entire bedrock of social stability. If
people were complete unto themselves, "they would live in never-ending discord, and relations between them would be impossible." [IV: 720]¹¹⁵

Sophie’s role in Émile’s life is to provide a means of socialization through love. She supports his efforts lovingly from the background and applies his beliefs to his children. Her role in life determines the type of personality she will have: she will be a passive enabler, whereas Émile is an active participant. Sophie is the means for Émile to achieve his goals. Pursuing ideas of her own, even if she had any, is simply out of the question. Since Rousseau equated Sophie with the prototypical “Woman,” his comments on the relationship between man and woman takes on greater meaning. He was not simply describing an individual instance, but what he considered an exemplary relationship to be applied widely. He supports his argument by claiming that it is based on the observation of women as a whole. Ordinary people are thus encouraged to set up similar relations, rejecting the corruption of their age and taking control of their destinies.¹¹⁶

However, Rousseau does not fuse mutual dependence with equality. The complementary aspects of men and women’s relations do not make them equal. In fact, their dependence itself is unequal, and men are much more self-sufficient than women. This disparity once again highlights the superiority of man.¹¹⁷ Rousseau recommends that women be strong so that their sons will be strong. They should be reasonable so that they may protect

¹¹⁵ Okin, 134.
¹¹⁶ Morgenstern, 110.
¹¹⁷ Trouille, 21.
their virginity, and attractive enough only to be appealing, but not threatening to peace of mind. In all of these cases, women's qualities are derived from some effect or desire originating outside of themselves.

Despite his insistence on the complementary quality of relations between the sexes, Rousseau did not recommend too much association between them. Men should live for the most part separate from women, as he writes: "Let us follow the inclinations of nature, let us consult the good of society; we shall find that the two sexes ought to come together sometimes and to live separated ordinarily." He also advocated same-sex gatherings, in which men could get together without the demands and idle talk of women to discuss important matters, and women could amuse themselves with gossip. Too much association of the sexes would lead directly both to a decrease in morality and a loss of male virility. While too much mixing would produce both effeminized men and virilized women who would shirk their natural roles as parents and citizens, separation would allow men and women to cultivate the qualities inherent to their sex that would presumably develop naturally. He was less concerned with precautions against the temptations of excessive familiarity than supporting the distinctions between gender characteristics. Rousseau maintained that women who strove to

118 Okin, 160.
119 Quoted in Okin, 137.
120 Okin, 137-138.
121 Trouille, 18.
develop the talents of men simply worked against themselves, lacking in the end the feminine charms necessary to attract men.122

One might wonder where love fits into such a system. Rousseau’s primary concern with love was how it could provide the basis for social stability. Overall, he occupies himself more with how love might provide this cohesive function than with exploring love’s emotional and inclusive aspects, and he rarely asks what comprises love. Rousseau writes a great deal on the duality of love: it both unites and divides; it is both inclusive and exclusive. The unifying aspects of love are fairly clear. Mutual affection causes people to want to be close to one another. The divisive aspects are less clear, but Rousseau nevertheless considers them integral to his theories of love.123

One of the unavoidable traits of love is that it points both to the other and to the self. It is both selfless and selfish. Rousseau presents two kinds of love: *amour-propre*, which is openly selfish, and *amour de soi*, which is more of a reaction to others in society and leads to humane justice. However, these categories are not clear-cut. There are positive and negative aspects to both types. Julie notes this contradiction when she states that loving only one person is inherently selfish since it is a reversed form of self-love. On the other side of the coin, to love the entire world is internal insofar as it

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122 Trouille, 19.
123 Morgenstern, 81.
disallows one from giving one’s self to only one person and proscribes personal commitment.\textsuperscript{124}

Nevertheless, \textit{amour-propre} and \textit{amour de soi} represent the good and bad types of self-love, according to Rousseau. \textit{Amour-propre} stems from the imagination and is based on a comparison of the self with others. It aims to elevate the conception of the self. On the other hand, \textit{amour de soi} supersedes reflection. It is a basic and natural sentiment that exists outside of comparison. Although it is originally instinctual, it does not remain so, and in this way is open to corruption. By the same token, however, \textit{amour-propre} is open to redemption.\textsuperscript{125}

Love of another human being develops out of \textit{amour de soi} and is a crucial component of Rousseau’s social theory in that it provides stability. Reciprocity is the necessary characteristic in love. In contrast with one-sided or unrequited love, completed love is an exchange of feelings on both sides. Such a relationship should be a dynamic interchange. Rousseau describes love in \textit{Émile} as “an exchange, a contract like the others... the most sacred of all.” [IV: 520]. Here, the exchange of love is an equal contract. Both parties give and commit mutually. Because love exists in the framework of \textit{amour de soi}, there should be no comparison or attempt to cheat the other partner. Equality permits the positive benefits of love to flourish in society.\textsuperscript{126}

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\textsuperscript{124} Morgenstern, 82-83. \\
\textsuperscript{125} Morgenstern, 84. \\
\textsuperscript{126} Morgenstern, 86.
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Despite these utopian aspirations, Rousseau elsewhere shows love to be at odds with human happiness. These two emotions exist in a paradoxical relationship. While love might be seen as allowing boundless happiness, it actually limits it because it is dependent on another person. The fulfillment of personal desires becomes contingent on another being. On the other hand, love is essential to happiness; without it, there would be no happiness at all. Human need for society creates the impulse to love, but the happiness that results is necessarily incomplete. Imperfect creatures can never know complete happiness because they are not utterly self-sufficient. Thus, in the words of Morgenstern, "love defines the ambiguity of the human condition by simultaneously delimiting the area of man's happiness and of his imperfection."[127]

Elsewhere, Rousseau deliberately contradicts himself in claiming that love is essentially an illusion and necessarily a fantasy. Clearly these contentions predict grave consequences for the state of the love relationship, as well as social cohesion. But in support of these claims, Rousseau's examples of love relationships certainly end in disaster and betray faulty underpinnings.[128] Love creates its own object through fantasy. Rousseau has Julie state, "We are far more in love with the image we conjure up than with the object to which we attach it. If we saw the object of our love exactly as it is, there would be no more love in the world." [II: 372-3]. Émile too loves an object of his imagination. Sophie is described and presented as an imaginary

idealization before he even meets her. He falls in love with her only upon hearing her name and learning that she is the object of description. The men of *Cosi fan tutte* also approach the love situation rather blindly. They pine after their lovers, believing them to be utterly perfect, and refusing to believe that they could commit any fault, least of all the fault of infidelity.

Apparently, even the *amour de soi* category of human can lapse into selfishness and weakness, qualities more common to *amour-propre*. Bringing this quality of comparison to the fore, Rousseau remarks in *Émile*, “One loves only after having judged; one prefers only after having compared.” [IV: 493] Rousseau also redefines his conception of reciprocity in love. He emphasizes that this quality is not merely a desire to give, but a desire to receive the same in return. Reciprocity is more a method of making oneself loveable so as to be loved than simply loving another. Love becomes a process of marketing oneself in a comparative system. Appearance and falsehood support this process in place of authenticity; the self is subsumed in a fiction that exists in the other’s imagination, in essence a slave of that person’s perception.

Perhaps the absolute demands of self-abandonment in romantic sexual love led Rousseau to censure it. He has Saint-Preux say of the romantic bond, “All laws which impede it are unjust... all fathers who dare to form or break it are tyrants. This chaste or natural bond is subject neither to sovereign power

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128 Morgenstern, 90.
129 Okin 180-181.
130 Morgenstern, 92.
131 Morgenstern, 91.
nor to paternal authority...” [II: 194] Any condition that was so subversive to paternal and sovereign authority would be a dangerous power indeed. Saint-Preux’s use to society, the state, and the family is questionable, just as the men at the beginning of Cosi are held back by their love from being sturdy, upstanding citizens. Rousseau’s conclusion was that passion and love were acceptable only if they are kept under moderation and do not control our other (more important) responsibilities. In any case, this moderation ultimately proved to be impossible for Rousseau’s heroines.

Before her final downfall, Julie and her husband Wolmar are of the opinion that love is only temporary. Since Julie and Saint-Preux were separated at their most passionate moment, they were led to believe that their love was enduring. Wolmar believes that if they had not been separated at that point, their passion would have cooled considerably over the course of time. Their love remains at that passionate moment just prior to the rupture, relived vividly in the imagination. Love is an invocation of the past. Wolmar intends to cure Julie and Saint-Preux of their love by bringing their conception of each other to the present. He states,

She has become more beautiful, but she has changed; in this sense what she has gained is to her detriment; for he loves the old Julie and not another... In place of his mistress I force him always to see the wife of an honest man and the mother of my children: I erase one picture with another, and cover the past with the present. [II: 509-11]

Rousseau recommended that men and women recognize that love is only temporary, just as the present will eventually outweigh the past, and that

132 Okin, 182.
reality will triumph over imagination. Nothing human is permanent; why should love be? He writes,

All changes in nature, all is in a continual flux, and you want to aspire to constant order? And with what right do you aspire to be loved today because you were loved yesterday? ... Always be the same and you will always be loved, if you can be. But to change without cease and to want always to be loved, is to want at each instant that one no longer be loved; it is not to seek constant hearts, but hearts as subject to change as you are. [II: 509-510]

In any case, romantic love is rife with pitfalls that often surpass men's and women's stamina to avoid them. Amour-propre and amour-de-soi are intricately linked, and human love often lapses into selfishness and manipulation, in addition to loss of the self and immoderation. All of these ends are risked, but only if romantic love manages to survive the capriciousness and inconstancy of human nature at all.

All of these contradictions make it unclear what exactly Rousseau's views on marriage and the place of love within marriage might be. He maintained that it was nature's intention that men and women be married to each other, but advocated a tempered mariage de raison or mariage d'estime as the correct path to social order and domestic harmony. These types of marriages, by sidestepping the perils of romantic passion, would allow the greatest amount of personal happiness. Rousseau has Julie present an idealized account of such a marriage in her recollection of her own marriage ceremony:

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133 Schwartz, 132.
134 Ibid.
135 Morgenstern, 93.
136 Trouille, 22.
The chaste and sublime duties of marriage, so crucial to the happiness, peace, order, and survival of the human race, the dignity and the sanctity of the marriage vow, so forcefully expressed in the Scriptures -- all this made such a strong impression on me that I seemed to feel a sudden inward revolution... Suddenly, an unknown power seemed to correct the disorder of my affections and to set them straight according to the law of duty and nature. [II: 354]

The disruptive effects of romantic love are thus cured by an appropriate marriage, which would be ordered by the dictates of nature. Rousseau does not simply argue that romantic love has no place in marriage because it will not endure, but rather that it has no place in marriage in the first place. Julie writes,

Love is accompanied by a continual anxiety over jealousy or privation, little suited to marriage, which is a state of joy and peace. People do not marry in order to think exclusively of one another, but to fulfill together the duties of civic life, to govern their houses prudently, and to bring up their children well. Lovers never see anyone but themselves, are concerned only with each other, and the only thing they can do is love each other. This is not enough for married people who have so many other cares to attend to. [II: 372]

Marriage is based on compatibility and virtue; it is an honorable institution that has no place for the distraction of passion. *La Nouvelle Héloïse* demonstrates just this point in the fate to which Julie falls prey. If marriage is supportive of the social order, love is just as subversive to it. 

Nevertheless, a certain amount and kind of love is essential to successful marriage. Although Julie contends that it is erroneous to believe that “love is necessary to have a happy marriage,” she supports a modified kind of love in marriage, which must rest on “a very tender attachment

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137 Okin, 184.
138 Schwartz, 128.
which, for all that it is not precisely love, is not less sweet and is more durable than love.” [II: 372]. Likewise, Wolmar expresses a feeble passion for Julie. She reciprocates, “If he didn’t love me, we would live badly together; if he loved me too much, he would be troublesome to me.” [II: 373] The relationship of Julie and Wolmar is one based on complementary qualities. Julie socializes Wolmar, while he conducts intellectual experiments. Once again we have returned to the language of reciprocity.

Indeed, reciprocality is another requirement that figures into Rousseau’s prescriptions for a successful marriage. On their wedding day, the Tutor reminds Émile and Sophie that love in marriage is reciprocal, not possessive. He applies this tenet to their sexual life as well: it is not a right due to Émile, but an expression of mutual agreement. Sexuality is an expression of mutual esteem and not merely the release of desire. If passion alone were the arbiter of marriage, such a union would be placed in severe jeopardy when passion waned. Since marriage is based on mutual respect and honor, this reformed and tempered kind of love will persist when passion no longer plays a role.

Despite all of these idealistic proclamations on the requirements of successful marriage, Rousseau again disrupts his own system through examples of subversion. In La Nouvelle Héloïse, a novel that ostensibly is about love, few characters achieve love at all. Julie’s father, the Baron

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139 Schwartz, 118.
140 Schwartz, 120.
141 Morgenstern, 112.
d'Étange, marries his daughter off in direct opposition to her wishes; Julie's husband admits of only a feeble love for his wife; Julie's cousin Claire eschews the sentiment entirely. Marriage too finds little success in the novel. At the end, both the Baron d'Étange and Wolmar are widowers, Claire is a widow, and Saint-Preux and Bomston are bachelors. None of these people has prospect, hope, or wish either to marry or remarry. If this is a novel that specifically supports the state of marriage, its characters do much to subvert its goal.

This subversion is accomplished most strikingly in Julie's final action before her death: the composition of a passionate love letter to Saint-Preux, which she asks her husband to read before sending on to her lover. Wolmar is forced to read a letter in which his wife freely admits to having loved Saint-Preux throughout her marriage. She welcomes death because it allows her an escape from it; she looks forward to being able to love Saint-Preux without crime. In this dénouement, there is a dramatic victory of passion and extramarital love at the end of La Nouvelle Héloïse.

Rousseau himself admitted that the work is actually two different novels -- but he indicated that he meant that its two parts are comprised of a section on love and a section on marriage, not that many of the outcomes of the characters conflict directly with many of the professed goals and theories posited in other sections. Love in Julie is a puzzle, and Rousseau's

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142 Morgenstern, 96.
143 Schwartz, 134.
144 Trouille, 66.
145 Schwartz, 117.
proclamations on it rank as some of his most ambiguous. It is perhaps an essential ambiguity in the state of love that Rousseau wanted to explore above all. Morgenstern notes that "it is ironic and sad that no character in La Nouvelle Héloïse, a novel dedicated to love, arrives at a practical realization and understanding of love's fundamental ambiguity." There may be no ultimate solution to the internal problems of love -- the self may be ultimately incompatible with the other. However, it stresses the importance of partial solutions. Perhaps the failure of the love relationships is due more to attempts at complete solutions that were overly formulaic. Despite all, the novel proclaims the importance of marriage and love, the failures of its characters notwithstanding.\footnote{Morgenstern, 105.} \footnote{Morgenstern, 106-107.}
Chapter Four:

_Cosi fan tutte_ as a Didactic Enterprise
It should be clear at first sight that sexual expression is one of the guiding concerns of *Cosi fan tutte*. In fact, it is the concern of the opera, and without it, there would exist no development of character, either through narrative or music. Through Don Alfonso, the opera calls into question the possibility of female fidelity; the duration of the opera brings about the fall of such a virtue. The implied question of outcome is answered for us in the title long before the characters are able to fulfill their roles: “All women do this.” In this manner, the opera becomes a demonstrational work, positing a theory of the nature of women and demonstrating its veracity. The inconstancy of women is a rather heavy matter to be offered up as a postulate awaiting an inevitable proof. This assumption establishes the opera’s essentially didactic purpose and places it firmly within a Rousseauist system. The themes of education and reform as traced in Enlightenment culture find ample expression in the opera. The opera’s internal framework supports such a reading: Don Alfonso is the mastermind whose ruse and subterfuge disguise his effort to educate Ferrando and Guglielmo, to raise them from a weaker state to one of enlightened awareness. But if *Cosi fan tutte* is a didactic treatise, its lesson is one intended for the male. The women, like Rousseau’s Sophie and Julie, are female prototypes destined for falls. They too exhibit both exemplary and typical behavior and are torn between these conflicting impulses. However, while the men rise through education to a higher state, the women regress through their seductions to a fallen state. The creation of gender roles according to the mores of Rousseau has much to do with these
apparent conflicts and the great disparities between the developments of the
two sexes. It is to Mozart’s musical presentation of these qualities that we will
now turn.

From the very onset of the opera, Mozart establishes two crucial
strands that will be continued throughout the work: contrast and instability.
The Andante introduction to the Overture brings contrast to the immediate
fore. The boisterous C-major tutti chords in the first measure, with double-
stops in the violins, impart a mood of strength and vigor. The dynamic is
forte, and the upbeat to the second chord creates two strong, regular impulses
in the measure: on beats one and three. In the second measure, this gesture is
totally subverted. A lone oboe enters with a rising melody, later accompanied
by oboe II and bassoons, all piano. Unlike the preceding measure, which
could be described as one containing rests punctuated by chords, the melody
appearing in measure two is longer and more sinuous, and contains no rests
from the point of entrance to cadence. The phrase is of irregular structure; it
lasts two and a half measures, with little emphasis on bar lines, the
accompanimental instruments entering on beat two of the measure. It
cadences abruptly on V, before the tutti returns forte and interjects V chords.
Subsequently the oboe melody returns, again irregular in length, in measure
six, cadencing back on tonic. (See Music Example No. 1.) In the remainder of
the Andante, quiet strings (plus bassoon) effect a deceptive cadence, with two
accented dissonances (mm. 10 and 11), before tutti chords return strongly with
I - IV⁰ - IV - V, a cadence formula that will culminate on the downbeat of the Presto.

In these first fourteen measures, Mozart has already created the tension that will prove to be a generating force in the rest of the opera. The contrast between the two moods of the Andante--one strong and forthright, the other wan and irregular--is representative of the two gender roles. Although Mozart has not yet assigned gender to these moods, they can be viewed as paradigms of gender characteristics. That the men, when they first appear in the next number, do not completely display the stronger musical characteristics, is indicative of their need for education and reform. The weakness that accompanies the men’s vocal lines can be seen as a feminizing characteristic; it is later an essential part of the women’s vocal action, as they fall from relative strength to debility.

We first witness this male infirmity in the opening Terzetto, “La mia Dorabella.” This number introduces all three of the men in the opera. Ferrando and Guglielmo believe their women utterly incapable of infidelity. Ferrando states, “Fedel quanto bella / il cielo la fè” (“heaven made her as faithful as she is fair”), and Guglielmo reciprocates, “Uguale in lei credo / costanza e beltà” (“I believe her constancy equals her beauty”). Both of the men locate the source of their women’s fidelity in their appearances; women as beautiful as Dorabella and Fiordiligi must be faithful. Beauty is equivalent with constancy. The men’s music demonstrates this naïve fault of logic.
At first glance, the men's music (first heard in the violins in the introduction) appears appropriately masculine, with strong aristocratic (or perhaps military) dotting. However, the melody, sung by Ferrando, enters and hovers around the fifth scale degree, fairly avoiding the tonic. In addition, the voice enters with an anacrusis to the third beat and repeats its oscillation between D and B in the next measure. As the second D is merely a melodic repetition and occurs in the middle of a word ("Do-ra-bel-la"), we are led to believe that the bar line falls on "mia." We are in fact off by half of a measure. This meter displacement is only one of the ways in which Mozart demonstrates male infirmity. The entire tone of the music accompanying the first two lines of text is questionable. As Ferrando states, "La mia Dorabella / Capace non è" ("my Dorabella couldn't do such a thing"), the second violins run along with triplet eighth notes that provide an incessant and repetitive background. Their mindless accompaniment gives the voice an almost sing-song quality and transforms the meter into 12/8, whereas the voice alone still fits into the 4/4 indicated. Both of the men's first two lines of text are set in this manner, as they claim proudly that their women are incapable of betrayal. (See Example No. 2.)

The next two lines of text, which extol the women's beauty, are set in a correspondingly more lyrical and florid style. At "fedel quanto bella," Ferrando's melodic line changes its direction and aims upwards, while the first violins, which had matched his line, move to a more active, triplet counterpoint. Ferrando ends with an extended triplet ornamentation. He
does not modulate to V, as one might expect, but returns to the tonic. Guglielmo enters exactly as Ferrando had, hovering at the fifth scale degree of the tonic key. The extreme similarity of the two men’s parts indicates the exactness of their fault: both believe unreasonably in the fidelity of their women.

In comparing Ferrando and Guglielmo’s lines with those of Don Alfonso, one sees that their weaknesses are highlighted. At his entrance in measure 22, Don Alfonso sings only an A until rising to cadence on D. Although he enters on the fifth scale degree as the men had, Don Alfonso stays on the A as the harmony changes to support him on the dominant. In addition, his cadence re-asserts the true bar line, as his D occurs on beat one. (See Example No. 3.) Don Alfonso’s musical line is short, sturdy, and regular, in stark contrast with the patterns of Ferrando and Guglielmo.

The extreme similarity between the male lovers is demonstrated elsewhere. In measures 29 through 33, the men move in perfect parallel thirds, while in measure 34, they proceed in perfect parallel octaves. In measures 35 through 37, they move again in thirds. In these sections they demand proof from Don Alfonso that what he insinuates about the women is not groundless; they become more irate and set their hands on their swords. Sudden thirty-second note scales in the violins set against “O fuori la spada” (“or out with your sword”) provide a musical representation of their rising ire. (See Example No. 4.) The men’s mirror-like reactions prove their communal belief in their women’s inviolability, just as their rapid rise to
anger shows their irrationality. Both responses establish them as needful of education and enlightenment.

In this terzetto, Mozart achieved a representation of male weakness through meter disruption, avoidance of tonic, infrequent modulation, sudden contrasts, and excessive parallelisms. By introducing the lovers with these qualities and placing them in direct opposition with the vocal qualities of Don Alfonso, Mozart set up a hierarchical system. Mozart thus censured the lovers’ quickness to anger, susceptibility to women, and lack of independence, and privileged the strength and regularity of Don Alfonso, endowing him with a voice of authority sufficient to instruct the lovers.

These depictions are sustained in the next number, the terzetto “È la fede delle femmine.” Don Alfonso enters in what can be seen as his first instructional music. Amid a simple texture of repeating eighth notes in the upper strings and an E pedal in the lower strings, Alfonso presents a straight-forward vocal line. With little ornamentation, he moves stepwise from G-sharp down to E, while declaiming the “lesson” text, “È la fede delle femmine / come l’araba fenice” (“women’s constancy is like the Arabian phoenix”). Don Alfonso repeats the greater part of the next line, “Che vi sia chascun lo dice” in exactly the same manner as it is first proclaimed. Through this rote repetition, Alfonso mocks those who “swear that it exists” by making them appear mindless and foolish. He goes on to dramatize the text “Dove sia” (“where it is”) by interspersing rests, repeating it, and waiting through a pianissimo orchestral forerunner of his response, before proclaiming his
answer, "nessun lo sa" ("no one knows"). (See Example No. 5.) With this proclamation, Don Alfonso offers his final say on the matter of women's fidelity: it is as an Arabian phoenix, a chimera, a myth. In now-typical fashion, Ferrando and Guglielmo respond with aplomb, claiming that their respective lovers are this phoenix. Ferrando declares first, "La fenice è Dorabella," in florid eighth-notes, against hefty I - V - I chords in the strings; subsequently, Guglielmo claims just as pompously, "La fenice è Fiordiligi," against the inverse I - V - I chords. These claims compete with one another and drive forward to a moment of repose: at measure 26, the two men reach a fermata, waxing maudlin in their belief that each of their lovers is the elusive Arabian phoenix of constancy. (See Example No. 6.)

At this point, the men have demonstrated the unhealthiness of their love from a Rousseauist standpoint. This love is all about comparison and competition, the characteristics of selfish amour propre. Not only have the men lapsed into competitiveness, but they have gone so far as to allow themselves to become intemperate over it. Such men as these would hardly be useful to civil society in such a state.

When Don Alfonso re-enters, he once again drives his point home through the use of simple melody and repetition. At his text, "Non è questa, non è quella, / non fu mai, non vi sara" ("it's neither one nor the other, it's never existed, and never will"), from measure 27 to 32, he artlessly outlines an E major triad over and over again, as if he will convince the lovers by making his point as simple as possible. (See Example No. 7.) At the end of
this line, at measure 33, he mocks the lovers by including a fermata of his own, highlighting the absurdity of becoming expressive over such a matter as the fidelity of women. When he states that the phoenix (female fidelity) never existed and never will, resting on a solo fermata as if expressing some heartfelt emotion, he ironically implies that such gushing sentiments have little place in the communications of men.

The next terzetto, "Una bella serenata," demonstrates some of the mindless qualities of the lovers in more explicit ways. Starting in the last section, at measure 38, "E che brindis replicati / far vogliamo al Dio d’amor" ("and many a toast we’ll offer to the god of love"), the style suddenly becomes more forthright. At the next statement of the text, with the addition of clarinets and timpani supporting the strong V - I motion and the sixteenth-note fortissimos of the violins, the mood becomes outright militaristic. All instruments enter a kind of endless loop, repeating a single pattern over and over again, as the men become fixated on their victory toasts. (See Example No. 8.) In another instance, the men repeat only the text "far vogliamo al Dio d’amor," to a different melody, this one embellished by chromatic inflections as appropriate for a reflection on the god of love. This line occurs at measures 50 through 52, and three times in the space between measures 56 through 60. (See Example No. 9.)

Once again, the men have lost themselves in the moment, gushing about their love and their expectations of success. Their irrationality has won out over the teaching of Don Alfonso, whose lines are repetitive merely for
the sake of being simple and educational. Through these introductory
terzettos, Ferrando and Guglielmo have amply demonstrated their weakened
state as lovers, their irrationality and imbalance, and hence their need for
correction through Don Alfonso.

In setting up the characters of the women, Mozart presents us with a
complete change, appropriate for the great disparity between male and female
characteristics. Having just cadenced in C major in the previous number,
Mozart introduces A major in the duetto "Ah, guarda, sorella," the first work
in which the women appear. Moving to a key three sharps away is a large
change, but by no means the only one achieved in this number. In addition,
this is the first number not in a duple meter and the first vocal number not to
be marked Allegro. The gently rocking accompanimental violins and the
clarinets and bassoons moving in thirds create a serenade-like atmosphere.
The changes in line do not disrupt the dolce mood, which sustains
ornamentation in cadenza-like passages of thirty-second notes. By the time
Fiordiligi enters with her first line of text, this atmosphere is well established.
One of the characteristics already identified as an agent of male weakening
figures prominently in her phrase: avoidance of the first scale degree. In
Fiordiligi's four-measure phrase, she never uses the tonic. Indeed, she does
not sing an A until measure twenty, where it occurs on beat two, as the
destination of a falling arpeggiated triad. In this manner, a characteristic that
is feminizing for the male is used more naturally as a female trait. (See
Example No. 10.)
In her second entrance, Fiordiligi continues with the text, “Se bocca più bella, / se aspetto più nobile / si può ritrovar,” (“A sweeter mouth, a nobler face, would anyone ever find”). In this phrase, her line gradually grows into increased activity, eventually engaging in a short, free-flowing mini-cadenza. Unlike almost all of the phrases we have seen from the men, this phrase is a true consequent, rather than being a mere repetition of previous material. In addition, her embellishments are in no way boisterous, but present themselves much more spontaneously and naturally, as if they were truer emotional responses. This ease could be due to the fact that she is expressing sentiments more typically female: admiring the beauty of her lover’s mouth and the nobility of his face. These are occupations appropriate for women, who are supposed to be easily swayed by appearances.

Dorabella’s entrance establishes an individuality of character. Neither her text nor her music is constructed along parallel lines. She enters firmly on V / V, in measure 34, and cadences in the key of the dominant. Although she too has a mini-cadenza, her phrase is completely different from that of Fiordiligi. (See Example No. 11.) This separation of character is yet another way of establishing a divergence between the men and women. While the men resist individuality of phrases, often mirroring each other and even entering on the same notes, the women do not have such trouble, immediately avoiding conformity and modulating much more easily. This is supported by their musical responses to texts that begin along parallel lines: Fiordiligi’s “Se vede un sembiante / guerriero ed amante” (“this is the face of
a soldier and a lover”), and Dorabella’s “Se vede una faccia / che alletta è minaccia” (“this is a face both charming and alarming”). While both women begin with the B to E leap, that is where the similarities end. Dorabella’s musical phrase is considerably longer than Fiordiligi’s, and ventures into minor modes and chromaticism. (See Example No. 12.)

In this manner, Mozart presents gender differences and characteristics very clearly in his initial emphasis on difference of key, meter, tempo, and phrase construction. However, that is not to say that the women never resort to parallelisms. Clearly they do, even in this duet. However, parallel thirds and other similarities occur only after the beginning of the ensuing Allegro duple meter section at measure 71. The Andante preserves the initial differences, and since this is the first section in which the women appear, these differences present the most important characteristics of woman.

The quintet, “Sento, o Dio, che questo piede,” (no. 6), is the first number in which the men and women are confronted with each other. After introductory forte chords, Guglielmo and Ferrando express their physical weakness at the sight of their lovers: “Sento, o Dio, che questo piede / è restio nel girle avante” (“O heaven, I feel my feet falter in their progress towards her”) and “Il mio labbro palpitante / non può detto pronunziar” (“my trembling lips cannot utter a word”). Guglielmo sings in halting tones, with piano accompaniment, and his text punctuated by rests. His second sub-phrase, at measure four, is merely a transposition of the first up a minor
third, and the two cannot be seen to exist in an antecedent - consequent relationship. (See Example 13.)

When Ferrando enters with his text on a B-flat, he has inverted the tonic cord. By the end of his text, he has neither modulated nor changed the phrase to any meaningful degree. However, when Don Alfonso enters, the style changes immediately. Violins enter with dotted figures that double Alfonso's line, which soon rests on B-flat. The second half of his line cadences on the dominant. Once again, Alfonso has presented a stronger, more active musical line than that of the two men. This contrast only points out all the more starkly the difference between the lovers' texts and Don Alfonso's, which reads, "Nei momenti più terribili / sua virtù l'eroe palesa."

While Guglielmo and Ferrando are paralyzed by a parting they know to be a ruse, Alfonso reminds them that true heroes find little to faze them even in moments of the greatest stress. (See Example No. 14.)

Fiordiligi and Dorabella enter immediately afterwards on the dominant, singing in straight parallel thirds. They build through their repetitions of "Fate core" ("be brave"), staying at the dominant of B-flat. Then, at measure 26, at the text, "a entrambe in seno / immergeteci l'acciar" ("and plunge your blade into this breast"), they suddenly modulate to the very dark key of B-flat minor, indicating their melodrama. They progress through C-diminished, G-flat major, and A fully-diminished chords before cadencing on B-flat minor. (See Example No. 15.) After the men return with their musical style from the beginning of the quintet, the women interrupt
with quick musical interjections in a different style: "Ah, no, no, non partirai!" ("no, no, don’t go"), "No, crudel, non te n’andrai!" ("cruel one, don’t leave me"). They become more irrational with "Voglio pria cavarmi il core!" ("I would sooner tear my heart out") and "Pria ti vo’ morire ai piedi!" ("I would sooner die at your feet"). To demonstrate this frenzy, every orchestral instrument playing at this point has fortепианоs. Once the women finish declaiming these lines, the swirling sixteenth notes in the strings cease. The women’s hysterics may seem to be in contrast with their previous composure, but this reaction is entirely in keeping with women’s lack of reason. Fiordiligi and Dorabella react to the departure of their lovers as if they can foresee no outcome whatsoever. Without them, they have no hope and wish for no life. They react utterly without reason, for indeed, they are not endowed with the faculty of reason in a Rousseauist system.

Fiordiligi demonstrates this frenzy in a coloratura passage on the word "mai" ("never") in measure 91. (See Example 16.) Following that outburst, both of the women engage in an arpeggiated ornamentation of the vocal line, a very affective embellishment showing their devastation, and hence, a natural female reaction to the events.

A comparison of the two farewell numbers, "Al fato dan legge" and "Soave sia il vento" provides the most effective encapsulation of musical differences of gender. The duettino, "Al fato," is the men’s farewell number to the women. It is full of rests, is frankly sequential, and is repetitive. It does modulate, but only after prolonging the tonic in measures 8 through 10. The
two instances of ornamentation are almost identical, and one follows the other as if it occurs in competitive response. (See Example No. 17.)

In contrast, "Soave sia il vento" presents a much more fluid, "natural" style. The phrases flow more freely and easily form antecedent - consequent relationships. Upon completion of the first text statement, the voices have neatly arrived at a half cadence, and will subsequently repeat the text to new music. Although there is some motivic repetition, the trio is essentially through composed. (See Example 18.) There is little differentiation between the voices, especially between the two women, who largely move in thirds. At one point, (measures 13-14), Fiordiligi first sings a motive while Dorabella holds a B in accompaniment; in the next measure, Dorabella sings the same motive a third lower while Fiordiligi holds an E. In this exchange, there is no competition between the voices. Don Alfonso alone distinguishes himself from this texture. He brings about the move to V in measure 4, while the women engage in escape tones, and the return to I in measure 6, while the women have appoggiaturas. His directing of the bass movement is representative of his position as mastermind of the action. He takes part in what would be the women's farewell duet so as to guide them through this "natural" music of flowing violins and gentle breezes. As the women surrender themselves to such affective music and sentiments, they move one step closer to the full capitulation necessary for the success of Don Alfonso's plan of seduction. In this manner, the more the women embrace their natures, the weaker and more susceptible they become to corruption.
Fiordiligi's aria "Come scoglio" is imbued with a musical representation of such a conflict of the self. The music first appears appropriately strong, the rightfully incensed reaction of a woman whose virtue has been insulted. Fiordiligi in this respect is presented as a paragon of female righteousness, one who protects her honor in the face of attack. However, many of the musical characteristics that we have seen as representative of weakness begin to disrupt this impression. The aria is marked Andante maestoso, a justifiably grand mood for a number protecting female fidelity. It opens with a forte B-flat chord, immediately followed by a unison dotted figure played by the tutti orchestra. In the next measure, after this aristocratic gesture lands on the downbeat, all instruments drop out except for the violins, who continue the arpeggio upwards but change the mood, switching the dynamic to piano, omitting the dots, and beginning with a trill and mordent. In only the first two bars, Mozart has set up yet another internal contrast, here signifying Fiordiligi's conflicting desires.

Fiordiligi enters in bar three, stating the first half of the line "Come scoglio immoto resta" ("like a rock standing impervious") with authority; she lands on the seventh of V as she finishes this half-line. Fiordiligi does not enter again until the anacrusis to bar six, with a similarly sturdy line. Her long rests create a somewhat static quality, which is supported through her next wait; she enters at measure nine with the text, "Contra i venti e la tempesta." This passage is rife with large leaps, implying the difficulty of "standing impervious to winds and tempest." She repeats "e la tempesta,"
rising to a high B-flat fermata with a kind of frenetic drive. (See Example No. 19.)

The following Allegro begins with the next two lines of text, “Cosi ognor quest' alma è forte / nella fede e nell' amor.” Immediately the style is more fluid, with shorter rests and far more embellishment and ornamentation. The declamation of text having to do with a heart always strong in faith and love causes a softening of Fiordiligi's style. She modulates and cadences frequently: on F (V) in measure 22 and on C (V/V) in measure 29. In measure 36, she repeats the text, “la morte sola,” with a furious run of sixteenth notes on “morte” (“death”); “sola” (“alone”) is treated with only one note. The extremism of her sentiments as she claims that death alone could change her heart’s affections compels this rather hysterical run. (See Example No. 20.) Beginning at bar 58, Fiordiligi repeats the text from the first stanza. Now the first two lines are declaimed to new music that is considerably busier than the initial music from the opening of the aria. While the first two lines occupy the space of twelve measures the first time around, the second time they use up only eight measures. There are far fewer rests and held notes, and more sixteenth notes beginning with the line “contra i venti.” The orchestral accompaniment is more brusque, with thirty-second-note scales and punctuating chords. (See Example No. 21.)

In this section, Fiordiligi is working up and building towards her invective at measure 79, the Più allegro, in which she counsels the men to “Rispettate, anime ingrate, / questo esempio di costanza” (“respect, you
despicable creatures, this example of constancy”). After forte sixteenth notes in the violins, Fiordiligi enters with an ornate line whose eighth notes can be reduced to a D - C - B-flat descent. Her entrance at measure 87 is structured in exactly the same way. After this point, Fiordiligi enters a loop-like section on “E una barbara speranza / non vi renda audaci ancor” (“do not let a base hope make you so rash again”) with the short melodic line repeated three times against incessantly repeating triplet figures in the violins. Fiordiligi is now displaying the same kind of mindlessness that the men exhibited in the beginning of the opera, in their weakened state. Whereas this was an undesirable trait in the men and something that merited correction, in Fiordiligi it is desirable insofar as it facilitates her eventual seduction, the avowed goal of the opera. From this repeating loop, Fiordiligi moves on to a ridiculously ornate section on “speranza,” and a prolonged ending section. From measure 110 to the end of the aria, Fiordiligi repeatedly elides cadences in a large prolongation.

Despite the clear proclivity towards weakness as seen in Fiordiligi’s aria “Come scoglio,” the actual seductions are achieved largely by the seduction numbers sung by the men. Guglielmo’s aria, “Non siate ritrosi,” woos through its reliance on women’s susceptibility to appearance and visual stimuli. He uses a musical language very similar to Don Alfonso’s early instructional music, as seen in “È la fede delle femmine.” Beginning in measure 28, with the third stanza of text, Guglielmo instructs the women, “Guardate, toccate, il tutto osservate” (“look at us, touch us, observe
everything"). These commands serve as introductions to a long list of attributes: “Siam due cari matti, / siam forti e ben fatti” (“we’re crazy but charming; we’re strong and well made”), and later, “Abbiamo bel piede, / bell’occhio, bel naso” (“we have good feet, good eyes, a nice nose”). Mozart sets this section in a very simple style, especially from measures 39 to 52. It can hardly be said to be melodic; it merely repeats related intervals. Mozart sets this list of male attributes with so much repetition and resting that one’s attention is called to each particular characteristic as it is offered up for inspection. It is a veritable ambush of appearances, and represents one of the main areas of female susceptibility.

The seduction duet between Dorabella and Guglielmo, “Il core vi dono,” demonstrates a growing strength on Guglielmo’s part. Dorabella has already been swayed to Guglielmo’s cause in the preceding recitative, and the aria then plays out her complete reliance on Guglielmo for musical inspiration. The music would seem to belong to the realm of the feminine as seen in the number “Ah, guarda, sorella.” Its Andante tempo and flat key resemble the atmosphere of the earlier duet. Here, however, Dorabella does not achieve any contrast of line, as she had in her duet with Fiordiligi. Guglielmo presents his line in a straight-forward fashion; although it contains several rests and fermatas, it is pleasingly varied and cadences neatly on the dominant. When Dorabella enters, however, she bases her line on only a fragment of Guglielmo’s, which she repeats at different scale levels, rather than providing a consequent to Guglielmo’s antecedent. The rhythm
of her line is completely derivative and repetitive, in a mimic-like fashion. Dorabella here has no style of her own. She can only respond to Guglielmo in a mindless way. This lack of character should be attributed to a loss of self subsequent to her seduction. She can have no individuality outside of the one provided her by paternalistic society.

In the meantime, Ferrando is still engrossed with Fiordiligi. One of his seduction arias, “Ah, lo veggio,” appeals to another of the female weaknesses, their pity. The aria as a whole is fast and pushing, insisting on attention. The text claims victory: “Ah, lo veggio: quell’ anima bella / Al mio pianto resister non sa; / non è fatta per esser rubella / agli affetti amica pietà” (“ah, I see it, this lovely creature cannot resist my pleading...”). From measure 4 to 14, Ferrando repeats the last two lines of text as the music builds and rises in range, insisting that Fiordiligi is not obdurate to the expression of kindly pity. Certainly if she were, it would be difficult to continue to resist with such persuasive, coercive music. (See Example No. 22.)

At the text, “Ah, cessate, speranze fallaci, / la crudel mi condanna a morir” “Ah, cease, deceitful hopes; the cruel one condemns me to die”), Ferrando appeals to the pity of Fiordiligi. He drives this sentiment home by repeating it without breaks or rests. From measure 111 to his exit at measure 126, Ferrando does not have one rest. His musical style is insistent and does not permit resistance, particularly in the identical statements of “morir,” at measures 119, 121, and 123. (See Example No. 23.)
The final effects of Fiordiligi’s transformation can be seen in her aria, “Per pietà, ben mio.” The Adagio first section of the aria opens immediately with the voice progressing downwards in dotted figures. In the second measure, the violas and low strings enter on beat three, just after the voice has sung a strong V to I (B - E). These two factors combine to disrupt the meter by half a measure; beat three seems to be the bar line. This disruption continues for quite some time in the Adagio, with many entrances occurring on beat three. The regular bar line is finally re-asserted in measure 11. (See Example No. 24.)

This is exactly the same kind of metric disruption that is effected in the men’s opening number, “La mia Dorabella.” In that instance, it is meant to indicate the irregularity and irrationality of the men, and its function in “Per pietà” is much the same. At this point, Fiordiligi has insufficient fortitude to resist much longer. She begs for forgiveness: “perdona / all’ error d’un’ alma amante” (“forgive the misdeed of a loving soul”), but the weakness inherent in her music indicates that her fall is not far away. The men and women have virtually exchanged places at this point. Whereas the men begin the opera in weakened positions, subjugated by their excessive desires, the women end it in such a fashion.

Fiordiligi’s final fall occurs in her duet with Ferrando, “Fra gli amplessi.” She seems relatively stable until Ferrando enters at measure fifteen. After he cadences on E minor, Fiordiligi enters in a heightened state with a B-diminished chord, descending from a high F, to the text, “Cosa
veggio" ("What do I see!"). Fiordiligi's hysterics rise even more with "Son tradita," beginning on a G. At the end of this phrase, Fiordiligi cadences on C. Thus, in the space of three measures, she has achieved a modulation from E minor to C major. At this point, Fiordiligi is grasping at anything she can to avoid Ferrando, sensing her own weakness. (See Example No. 25.)

The next development occurs at measure 43, when Ferrando comments first, "Ah, che omai la sua costanza," and Fiordiligi imitates him almost identically. Ferrando sings the phrase in C major, beginning on a G, while Fiordiligi sings it in G major, beginning on G. The subsequent text of this section is as follows: "A quei sguardi, a quel che dice, incomincia a vacillar!" ("[Ah, now her/my constancy] begins to falter between these looks and these words"). It is significant that Ferrando introduces this material and that Fiordiligi repeats the text, following his musical line so closely. (See Example No. 26.) In this section, Fiordiligi betrays her growing reliance on Ferrando for musical and textual inspiration, losing her own character in the process.

Fiordiligi's final capitulation occurs in the moving Larghetto section. Ferrando's text at this point blatantly panders to female pity, as he says, "Volgi a me pietoso il ciglio" ("turn a merciful eye on me"). His reliance on this emotion here is particularly ironic, since he has repeatedly ignored Fiordiligi's own frantic pleas for pity. Fiordiligi finally begins to break down at measure 91, with rising cries of "Giusto ciel." After a sustained statement of "Crudel" on a high A, Ferrando interrupts with "idol mio." Fiordiligi
responds with a halting “hai vinto,” and in measure 100, “Fa’ di me quel che ti par” (“do with me what you will”). As she succumbs to Ferrando’s insistent desire and sacrifices her autonomy, she brings the section to close with a quiet cadence on A. (See Example No. 27.)

Over the course of the opera, Mozart sets up a fairly rigid framework of gender characteristics. Through differing uses of meter disruption, abrupt contrasts, excessive repetition and ornamentation, avoidance of tonic, modulation, and cadence, and similarity between vocal lines, he establishes typical and weakened states of man and woman. While the men progress from infirmity to an ideal state, the women move in the opposite direction. The necessity of the seductions is set up from the very beginning of the opera as a requirement for male enlightenment, for a move from their weak state to one of awareness. These seductions are achieved through the manipulation of female nature and desires as represented in the early numbers of the opera. 

*Cosi fan tutte* sets up roles for its men and women only to disrupt them.
Chapter Five:

Conclusion: Tragedies and Ambiguities
In a study of *Cosi fan tutte*, one of the most provocative issues that arises is the question of the women’s outcome. Why is such an ambiguous dénouement necessary, and what are the forces that contribute to it? Exactly the same issues arise when considering the outcomes of Rousseau’s heroines. Therefore, *Cosi* may benefit from a re-evaluation of the women’s plight from a Rousseauist standpoint.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella suffer from the same kind of sexual conflict as Sophie and Julie. On the one hand, they must be scrupulously chaste and reserved, and on the other, they must be alluring, sensuous, and passionate. Nature calls them to love intensely while simultaneously prohibiting them free exercise of that sentiment. Although they all stem from “nature,” these conflicting demands are not reconcilable. Ultimately they lead to the tragedies of all four women. In effect, the women have to choose between two different moralities: one based on their consciences, and the other based on conventional wisdom or instinct. These moralities are at direct odds with each other, and choosing one at the exclusion of the other would induce negative consequences.

The men too experience conflict, but its repercussions result less in personal tragedy than in an amalgamation with society or a personal enlightenment. This is as true in Mozart as it is in Rousseau. Faced with the breakup of his family, Émile sets off alone to become a totally independent and self-sufficient citizen, the equal of any other. He is not paralyzed by his loss, nor is he brought to total ruin as Sophie is. In reality, it is his very loss of
family that allows him the liberty to become a completely independent man. In this manner, Sophie's ruin is a prerequisite of Émile's ultimate success. Likewise, Ferrando and Guglielmo are not personally shattered by their women's infidelities, but come to a higher realization about the nature of women, endowing them with a greater reason and wisdom than would be possible if Fiordiligi and Dorabella had not fallen in the first place.

The importance of these failures has much to do with the particular forms of narrative used in the works. In both Émile and La Nouvelle Héloïse, as well as Cosi fan tutte, the dénouements are not presented as merely the unfortunate outcomes of fictional beings, but the accounts of men and women who are ideals of their respective sexes. These works all have strong didactic purposes, and the women’s falls are included in this education. Fiordiligi and Dorabella are presented at the onset of the opera as possessing all the qualities that are appropriate for women, and their lovers likewise are completely smitten by them. The men are led to believe that if even these female paragons can be led into shame, then typical women are even more amenable to corruption, which will likewise occur much more frequently. Therefore, it is wiser for men to conduct themselves in love with a disinterested awareness, with the knowledge that women are fickle. Succumbing to women's charms too wholeheartedly prevents one from being able to attend to more important matters, and is in fact feminizing and unbecoming for man.
Such an interpretation is highly critical of women, and indeed, all of these works have strongly misogynistic undertones. However, it is easy to take this view too far. As Trouille states with regard to Rousseau, “There is a tendency to cull anti-feminist remarks ... in order to conjure up an ominous, yet entertaining portrait of Rousseau the reactionary misogynist, whom our enlightened twentieth-century minds enjoy ridiculing.”148 As a man of his time, Rousseau had many negative and ill-willed views of women, true, but he also placed them at the center of his theories of salvation. Women are crucial to the development of the male citizen, helping him to achieve political autonomy and personal balance.149 This hypothesis is borne out in Cosi as well, for without the women, Ferrando and Guglielmo would never find the higher level of reason and temperance they come to at the end of the opera. Their marriages would have been plagued with excessive passion, and they would have been both too soft-hearted and too self-absorbed and competitive to be effective members of society.

If there are misogynistic strands present in Rousseau’s works and in Cosi fan tutte, there are certainly other strands as well. The sexual politics in these works are far too complex to warrant a reduction to a single system. Trouille states of Rousseau, “To fully grasp the richness and complexity of his views on women, one must resist the desire to systematize what is not systematic, to simplify what is not simple; more importantly, one must resist the urge to resolve or efface tensions and contradictions that are deeply rooted

148 Trouille, 13.
in, even constitutive of, Rousseau’s thought and the thought of his period.”

These contradictions reside at the heart of Cosi and provide the foundation for much of its action. The opera has given rise to such divergent explanations for the falls of its women that its internal contradictions are brought to the fore. If the desired goal of Cosi is a kind of enlightenment, which is presented as a good in and of itself, why does it end in such misery? And if Ferrando and Guglielmo have indeed achieved this good, why does the ending still seem incomplete? Perhaps it is this very uncertainty that generates the energy of the opera. Both the men and the women are spurred on in a search for something inconstant, be it love, desire, education, or victory in a petty bet. It is possible that Mozart and da Ponte knew that they were building on such shaky ground; Rousseau certainly did. He wrote in Émile, “Readers, forgive my paradoxes. Anyone engaged in serious reflection is bound to produce them.” [IV: 323] Trouille sees this ready acceptance of contradictions as a demonstration of the Enlightenment’s reflective consciousness, and to ignore it is to run the risk of misreading. Along the same lines, DeJean likens Rousseau’s discourse to an irrational rationality or an illogical logic.

Other strands present in these works include possible feminist or reformist tendencies, as well as those of the pseudo-feminist variety. There

149 Morgenstern, 1.
150 Trouille, 14.
151 Ibid.
152 DeJean, 114.
are several “pro-woman” undercurrents in Rousseau’s works. In one letter to Saint-Preux, Rousseau has Julie lament the confinements imposed on women, including suitable, demure behavior and loveless arranged marriages. She writes,

Forced to feign indifference when under the full sway of her passions, ... constrained by duty to deceive and by modesty to lie: this is the usual situation of any girl my age. In this way, we spend our youth governed by the tyranny of decorum, which our parents only make worse by forcing us into an ill-assorted marriage. But our inclinations are thwarted in vain, for the heart makes its own laws and escapes bondage by giving itself freely... And so the wretched victim is forced to sin by having to chose between two equally sacred bonds of fidelity. [II: 212]

These passionate words of resistance should have encouraged female identification with the work and positioned Rousseau in a different, much more sympathetic light.

Cosi fan tutte seems to display several pro-woman sentiments as well. Over the course of the opera, the women come to a greater understanding of sexual love and desire, a development that appeals to many present-day readers. However, sexual knowledge was not a quality prized in women in the Enlightenment, and any glorification of it that occurs in the opera is the result of pseudo-feministic endeavors. In these undertakings, statements appear under the guise of a feminist tone but later betray a traditionalist or misogynistic intent in a direct self-contradiction. Rousseau often adopts a pseudo-feminist tone in order to increase the dramatic impact of his assertions. He expends great effort in appearing sympathetic towards women’s plight, although he ultimately advocates conservative societal
hierarchies. Marriages were not to be based on passion, but on companionship; women were to be restricted to the domestic sphere, where they would have a greater influence in raising their children. Trouille states, "It is a bitter, pessimistic view that contrasts sharply with the seemingly optimistic, idealized portrayal of women... Yet, beneath the idyllic surface of La Nouvelle Héloïse lies a deep ambivalence toward women and toward their power over men. Each of the feminist or 'pro-woman' currents in the novel...is counterbalanced, even negated, by a traditionalist or anti-feminist countercurrent."\(^{153}\)

In Cosi, a subversion of much the same type occurs. If the women are encouraged to embrace their sensuality and to shirk their previous attachments and responsibilities, they eventually are made to pay for it dearly. They lose their "Albanian" lovers, cause their original lovers' passion to wane, and presumably will marry these newly stoic citizens, although their own passion has only been inflamed.

Making sense of these contradictions of intent and outcome proves to be a perplexing matter indeed. Morgenstern suggests that, in the case of Rousseau, the heroines' fall from grace is a far more complex matter than the inevitable outcome of female victims in a patriarchal society. She writes, "To make sense of the denouements of Rousseau's literary works in the light of the theoretical background against which they are written, one must ask: why does Rousseau have his heroines die? Why does the author of idealized

\(^{153}\) Trouille, 64.
systems ensure that these structures self-destruct in the pages of the works that give them life? ... one must inquire why the family, an avowedly 'natural' structure founded on love, leaves such terror and bloodshed in its wake."^{154}

These internal dissonances attest neither to a pernicious despair that seeks to ruin love, nor to a selfish misogynism. Rather, Rousseau's contradictions indicate that life's variety and complexity must be accepted if humans are to live in positive and harmonious ways.^{155} His theories of love are not a sham, but take into account the difficulty in working out practical applications of them. Émile and La Nouvelle Héloïse explore the problems of the idealization of the male/female relationship, the creation of perfect mates for one another, and the difficulties of self-individuation while seeking union with the Other.^{156} Così fan tutte concerns itself with many of the same weighty issues: the men must progress from a state of duplication to individuation and from an impassioned weakness to stoic reason. They cease to idealize their lovers, seeing them not as paragons of their sex, but as typical women, characteristically susceptible to seduction and the demands made by their natures.

Ultimately, Così fan tutte offers no real solutions to the vexed problems it addresses in the case of the women. Their natural state is one of conflict, with opposing claims set by traditional morality and their inherent

^{154} Morgenstern, 4.
^{155} Morgenstern, 4-5.
^{156} Morgenstern, 94.
desires. Through the course of the opera, they fall in a downward spiral through weaker and weaker musical realms. When they finally give in to the insistent courtship of their disguised lovers, they act both in accordance with and in opposition to their natures, and it is this inner antagonism that compels their loss of self.

As for the men, they grow in fortitude over the course of the opera, in agreement with the educational program established by Don Alfonso at the onset. At the beginning, they are pawns at the hands of their lovers; they lapse into bouts of competition and comparison, are too quick to anger and insult, and are utterly incapacitated by the thought of leaving their lovers, even fictionally. Over the course of the opera, however, they establish themselves in the positions of power, eventually controlling the women’s emotions and responses just as adroitly as the women had controlled theirs.

At the end of the opera, the men are suitably prepared for a marriage not disrupted by the distraction of passion. Reason has triumphed over maudlin expressiveness, and the men emerge as rehabilitated citizens, ready to exist in society as independent, self-sufficient beings. While the women’s only place is as a complement to their lovers, the men need such a crutch much less insistently. They are able to derive identity from their place in society and the outside world, while the women derive theirs only from their domestic roles. At the end of the opera, when their original lovers return, they lose all of the identity they had gained in submitting themselves to love, and are thus robbed of a greater part of their selves.
The tragedy of Cosi stems from this contrast. The men are the recipients of educational enlightenment, prepared to enter society as full citizens, while the women can only look forward to tempered marriages of unequal love. But if Cosi’s ending is ambivalent and disturbing, its music is also extraordinarily beautiful. This beauty is the provocative by-product of Mozart’s awareness that he was treating profound and weighty topics. These topics --the nature of men and women, their enlightenment and seduction-- call forth music of compassionate hope and autumnal regret.
Music Example No.1

Andante
bel la il cielo la fe', fe del quanto
Music Example No. 4

No, no le vo-

Tai pro - ve la - scia - mo

No, no le vo-
gliamo: o fuori la spada, o fuori la
spa - da, o fuo - ri la spa - da, rompiam l'a - mi

spa - da, o fuo - ri la spa - da, rompiam l'a - mi
O pazz'zo desire!
Music Example No. 5

Allegro

D.A.

1

Es la fe de della

p

femminì come l'arabà fermine: che vi
sia ciascun lo dice, ciascun lo dice, dove sia

dove sia
Music Example No. 6

La fé - ni - ce e Do - ra -
La fennice: Fior di lì gi! La fennice: Fior di lì gi!

La fennice: Fior di lì gi! La fennice: Fior di lì gi!
Music Example No. 7

Non è questa, non è

quel-la, non fu mai, non vi sarà, non vi sa-

D.A

\[\text{Non è questa, non è}\

\[\text{quel-la, non fu mai, non vi sarà, non vi sa-}\

\[\text{\textbf{p}}\]
rà, non vi sarà!
Music Example No. 8

E che brindisi replica ti far vo

f

f

f

f

f
gliamo al dio d'a
Music Example No. 9

Fe.

D.A.

G.

far vogliamo di Dio d'amor, var vo...
glia - moal dio d'a mor, far vo
Music Example No. 10

Andante

Fior.

Ah guar da so

rel la, ah guar da so rel la,
Music Example No. 11

Dor.

\[\begin{align*}
33 & \\
\text{Os - ser - va tuun} & \\
\text{po - co,} & \\
\text{O ser - va, che} & \\
\end{align*}\]
fo - coha ne' sguar - di! Se fiam - ma, se

dar - di non sem - bran sco - car. Se

fiam - ma, se - dar - di non sem - bran sco -
Music Example No. 12
bian te, guer rie ro, ed a -

man te.

Se ve deu na
Music Example No. 13

G.

Sen - too -

f

p

di - o
che que - sto pie - de
è resto nel girlevan-te.
Music Example No. 14

Nei momenti più terribili sua virtù l'eroe palese
Music Example No. 15

Fior.

Or cheab-biam la nuo-vain te-sa.

Dor.
or calibam la nuov-te-sa, a voi re-staa fa-reil
me-no. Fa-te-co-re, fa-te-co-re: aen-tram bein
se no immerge te ci l'acciari, immer-
ge te ci l'acciari.
Music Example No. 16

Fior.

Dor.

Fe.

D.A.

G.

\[ \text{\textcopyright mai \pounds mai pu\`o } \]

\[ \text{\textcopyright mai pu\`o } \]

\[ \text{\textcopyright mai pu\`o } \]

\[ \text{\textcopyright mai pu\`o } \]
vi - taa mar! Ah chi mai

vi - taa mar! Chi mai può, chi mai
Music Example No. 17

Andante

Fer.

G.
legge que gli occhi vezzosi; A-

morli protegge, né i loro ri-

sf

p
possible bar bar rest le ar

s f  p  f  p

discon tur bar.


Music Example No. 17.5
Music Example No. 18

Andante
ve sial ven to, tranquila
l'onda, ed ognie men to be
Musical Example No. 19

Andante maestoso

Fior.
Musical Example No. 20

e po-trà la mor-te

so-la, la mor-te-so-la
Music Example No. 21

Come scoglio

Mo to restà contrastai
venti, e la tempesta
Musical Example No. 22

Andante grazioso

Il core vi
do - no, bel' l'i - do - lo mi - o; mail

vo - stro vo' an - ch'io, via da - te loa
de - te, più me - co ei non è.

me - tu - lo da - i che mai bal - za
Music Example No. 22

Allegretto

Ah lo vegio, quel l'anima bel la al mio piantore si ster non sa; non è
fatta per esser bella agli affetti di amica pie

ta non è fatta per esser bella, ru-

bella agli affetti di amica pie
Music Example No. 23

Ah cessate, speranze fai la ci! La crude mi condannaa morta la cru

s fp

s fp
del mi con dan naa mor ir, la cru del mi con dan naa mor ir. la cru del mi con dan naa mor ir. la cru del mi con dan naa mor ir.
dan naa morir.
Musical Example No. 24

Adagio

Per pietà ben mio, per

p

don na al l'error d'un al man man-te; fra que-
st'ombre, e queste piante, sempre scosso, oh dio da-
ra, sempre scosso, a-

sco - so, oh dio sa - ra
Music Example No. 25

Co - sa veg - gio!
Son tradita!
Music Example No. 26

Ah che omai la sua costanza
mai la mia costanza
Music Example No. 27

Giusti cie! Giusto

Spo so
ciel! Giusto ciel! Cru-del a-mante, e più se vuoi hai vinto i-do mio più non tar-
fa’ di me quel che ti par.
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