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Stephen Davies, Philosophy, University of Auckland

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Character and Character Swapping in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*.

We generally believe the vast majority of people to possess a distinctive individuality, personality, or character. A person would have to be extraordinarily colorless, shallow, predictable, and unmemorable not to qualify as possessing a character. Of course, with many people we are not aware of their distinctive personalities because we don't know enough about them. But we anticipate that, were we to learn of their beliefs, desires, values, tastes, knowledge, experiences, temperament, and histories, these would reveal them as characterful and distinctive individuals.

The situation is different sometimes with fictional characters. For example, in the opening, violent sequence of the next Bond movie, some nameless bad guys are likely to be blown away. It would be inappropriate to think that they might have proved to have interesting characters, if only we had had the opportunity to get to know them better. If we did think that way we might not be indifferent to their fate, whereas it is indifference that the movie requires. In effect, we are to assume that they have no dependents, lovers, or mothers and that their lives are worthless. We are expected to enjoy the excitement of the scene without being distracted by moral concern for or sympathy focused on bit players whose dramatic function is to serve as targets for the hero's shooting prowess. In the same way, we imagine of the world of the Western that people can have chairs and bottles broken over their heads, and be thrown through glass windows and wooden walls, without being seriously injured.

It's possible for a work to subvert the genre expectations it at first sets up. Suddenly the action stops and we turn to the grieving wife and the now destitute, fatherless children. A work in this vein is Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and*

Guildestern are Dead, which revisits the action of *Hamlet* from the perspective of these originally marginal characters. But in most cases the genre conventions hold, and the incidental dramatis personae are de-personalized and under-characterized, as is appropriate for their roles in the drama. The gardener, portrayed as a drunken Irishman, stands in for a type because that is all his part demands for the sake of the story.

So, in fiction we get what E. M. Forster termed *flat* and *round* characters. The standard view is that flat characters are two-dimensional, simple and unchanging throughout the work, whereas round characters are complex and liable to develop during the work's course. Typically, round characters have much more descriptive detail lavished on them and, as result, come alive as individuals with a distinctive personality. But as we have just seen, that a character is flat is not always to imply that he is weakly drawn or unfortunately under-characterized, because flat characters often play important facilitating functions in a story that they could not play if they were more rounded. They are there to be shot or spurned or defeated, or because the heroine shines the more through comparison with her dull companion, or because the upper class are to be caricatured as idiots, and so on. And as such they play an essential role in the story's overall trajectory.

While serious stories that expect to elicit heavy emotional engagement from the audience will inevitably require rounded characters, some genres offering undemanding entertainment would be handicapped by the inclusion of characterful personae. One such is farce. Farce relies on improbable coincidences, mistaken identities, and physical humor (such as pratfalls), and provides no scope for complex characters to undergo traumatic journeys of emotional discovery and change.

Mozart's opera *Così fan tutte*, subtitled the school for lovers,¹ has often been described as a farce on account of its apparently silly storyline and its symmetrically matched sets of characters: two pairs of lovers who interchange their partners and a philosopher and a maid who are like-minded in their cynicism about the other sex. So we should expect its characters to be flat rather

¹ On the naming of the opera, see Wolff 2012:39, 41.

than round, and this is how they have often been described. I will argue that this account badly misunderstands the opera and that, through Mozart's musical treatment, the plot is not so silly nor the characters so flat as is often assumed. As a result the opera is dramatically more complex and rewarding than its critics suppose.

Here's the opera's plot:

Two young soldiers, Ferrando and Gugliemo, are goaded by a cynical old philosopher, Don Alfonso, who questions whether their girlfriends, the sisters Dorabella and Fiordiligi respectively, would be faithful to them. Women's constancy is like the Arabian Phoenix, Alfonso suggests: everyone swears it exists but no one knows where. Though the young men would defend their ladies' honor with their swords, they are persuaded instead to make a wager. They must do what Alfonso commands for 24 hours and if the women remain faithful, they win the bet.

Dorabella and Fiordiligi, who have been expressing their profound love for their suitors and anticipating marriage proposals, are told by Alfonso that Ferrando and Gugliemo have been called to arms and distant service. With anguished passion the women bid them farewell and all protest their undying love. At first the abandoned women are inconsolable, though their maid, Despina, chides them for their innocence and predicts that their soldier boyfriends will be unfaithful. When Ferrando and Gugliemo return, now disguised as "Albanian" friends of Alfonso, they attempt to court their girlfriends and, much to their suppressed pleasure, are rebuffed. So far the men have treated their role in the imbroglio as something of a joke, but Alfonso reminds them of their commitment to obey him. Meanwhile, Despina agrees to assist Alfonso in his scheme. Because their offers of love have been spurned the men pretend to take arsenic in front of the horrified women. As Despina and Alfonso look for a doctor, the women comfort the apparently dying men. Despina, now disguised as a physician, applies magnetic forces to the men who revive and express their delight at finding themselves in the women's arms. Though the women show the first signs

of ambivalence and have commented that they find the men attractive, they are horrified when, as part of the "cure," it is recommended that they kiss the men. The usual end-of-act mayhem ensues.

Encouraged by Despina, Dorabella now entertains the idea of a harmless flirtation with the Albanians, though Fiordiligi is reluctant in agreeing to play along.² Alfonso and Despina facilitate a meeting between the couples. At this point Dorabella gives way to Gugliemo's seduction and declares her new love. Fiordiligi continues to remain steadfast, however, despite Ferrando's fervent exhortations. Alone, she expresses her anguish and determination to remain faithful, notwithstanding the attraction to her new suitor that she now admits to. Meanwhile, Ferrando is shocked and angered to learn of Dorabella's change of heart. Fiordiligi plans to flee, disguised as a soldier, but she is waylaid by Ferrando and finally can resist no longer. By now, both Ferrando and Gugliemo are distraught, but Alfonso reminds them that they still love the women and should accept them as they are. "Così fan tutte" (women are all the same) says Alfonso in a questioning phrase. Ferrando and Gugliemo repeat the words affirmatively.³

Arrangements are made for the marriage of the couples. Fiordiligi, Ferrando, and Dorabella drink to the drowning of their cares and memories, but Gugliemo remains quietly bitter at his betrayal. (Because each sings the same tune in turn, until it comes to Gugliemo, I refer to this as the canon quartet.) The notary for the marriage – again Despina in disguise – begins the service, which is interrupted by an off-stage military chorus heralding the return of the soldiers. Ferrando and Gugliemo slip out during the confusion and return in their former military attire. They get hold of the marriage contract that was signed by the women, who admit their guilt and beg for death. But the charade is abandoned and the women, recognizing that they have been deceived, blame Alfonso, who

² For insightful discussion of this duet, see Brown-Montesano 2007:232–4.

³ See Wolff 2012:40.

recommends peaceful acceptance of the outcome. All is resolved and the marriages go ahead (though it is not clearly indicated who marries whom).⁴

The critical response to the opera has been to see it as not only silly but immoral, insofar as the women's unfaithfulness goes unpunished.⁵ As Edward Dent (1960:190) observes: 'This libretto was denounced throughout the nineteenth century as being intolerably stupid, if not positively disgusting, and various attempts were made in Germany to "improve" it, or even to substitute an entirely fresh libretto on a totally different subject.' Joseph Kerman (1956:109) writes that 'Romantic critics considered [*Così* to be] outrageous, improbable, immoral, frivolous, unworthy of Mozart,' and he adds his own opinion, 'the last two charges are true enough.'

It seems to me, however, that the main barrier to taking the story seriously is the fact that the action is confined to a single day, between breakfast and a late supper.⁶ The idea that young women, abandoned by their potential partners, might in time fall for some other man is surely not absurd. After all, serial monogamy is the most common form of human relationship. Also plausible is the warning that pre-marital vows cannot always be trusted and the implication that, to be credible, commitment must be backed by a history of appropriate action. No less believable is the idea that a woman might love more than one man; at no stage do the women renounce their initial loves. *Fiordiligi*

⁴ In psychoanalytic mode, Brophy (1964:230, 288) here diagnoses Mozart's personal anxiety about choosing between the Weber sisters for his wife. See also Brown 1995:107.

⁵ For accounts of the opera's negative reception, see Blom 1952, Einstein 1966, Liebner 1972, Mann 1977, Braunbehrens 1991:337–8, Brown 1995:163–76, Hunter 2008:162–3, 168.

⁶ Dent (1960:192) notes the issue and suggests the unity of time heightens the artificiality of the plot, which adds to the work's charm.

says, for instance, "I'm in love and my love is not just for Gugliemo."⁷ If there is immorality here, it is not plain that it lies in the capacity for love as against what one does about it.

Admittedly, the women fail to resist the charms of the Albanians, but recall that the seductive power of the men is amplified immeasurably by the passion and beauty of the music Mozart gives them. Even Fiordiligi's steely resolve to stay true to Gugliemo cannot resist the power of the feelings Ferrando awakens in her. With this in mind, the moral philosopher Peter Goldie (2012:110–15) compares Don Alfonso's "experiment" with the notorious one conducted by Stanley Milgram (1974), in which participants felt compelled to obey orders to administer what they believed to be painful electric shocks to a person in another room.⁸ Milgram's experiment is often interpreted as showing that people are not as decent or virtuous as they seem. Goldie offers a more nuanced account. Those who later rationalized their weakness of will as somehow justified are to be condemned. But those who resisted as hard as they could, yet who had their resolve and will overcome, and who subsequently deeply regretted their weakness, are worthy of pardon. And Fiordiligi is shown in the opera to be such a person: 'Fiordiligi, dressed in soldier's uniform, desperately hoping to follow Gugliemo to battle, finally relents on the sudden and entirely unexpected appearance of Ferrando. We have something more like resignation to her fate, a kind of *giving way*, albeit a giving way that is chosen'

⁷ For an accurate English translation of the libretto, see <http://mrwolfgangamadeusmozart.blogspot.co.nz/2010/07/cosi-fan-tutte-libretto-english.html>

⁸ As Brown (1995:83) notes, Alfonso speaks of "proofs and experimentation." Braunbehrens (1991:338) says: 'the opera deals with an almost mathematical experiment to which the lovers' fidelity is sacrificed.' Hunter (2008:157): 'the opera plays out an experiment.' Cairns (2006:190) remarks that the opera 'has rightly been called "a deadly experiment in human nature".' Till (1992:236–7) calls it a "scientific test" and an "experiment in human behavior."

(2012:112).⁹ If Goldie is correct in this account, what is shown in the opera is not trivialized immorality but a fact of moral psychology: even those with virtuous character and determination can be overcome sometimes by force of circumstance. And when this happens they deserve pardon, as those who give way without struggle and later regret do not.

The comparison of Alfonso's scheme with Milgram's experiment is likely to come as a jolt. After all, the opera is undeniably light-hearted, with its reversals and disguises, whereas Goldie takes it very seriously indeed. I'll return to his views presently.

The opera is not trivially immoral. Even if there is a kind of infidelity, it is of a forgivable kind. And the lesson that Alfonso teaches – that we should recognize our differences and weaknesses and live in mutual acceptance – is not unreasonable. But there is another aspect of the opera that might alienate a modern audience: its sexism. It is women who are identified as capricious in their affections. And they are shown to be too much in love with love itself. But here it would be a mistake to overlook the extent to which the men are implicated. They are willing to put their relationships at risk for the sake of a bet. They are arrogantly over-confident. They lie to and deceive their girlfriends and attempt to win over each other's lover, causing great anxiety and stress to the women. And though they want and expect their girlfriends to be faithful, it is not at all apparent that it is only the women who develop new affections over the course of the wooing. The men, as much as the women, are shown to be vulnerable to the charms of the other sex. Besides, as Despina regularly reminds us, men are not noted for their fidelity. So, if all women are thus (*così fan tutte*), all men are so.¹⁰

⁹ For an interesting analysis of the tonal and melodic interplays in this duet, see Liebner 1972:204–6; also Ford 1991:200–9, Brown 1995:144–6, Brown-Montesano 2007:249–55, Ford 2012:166–71.

¹⁰ '*Così fan tutte*, which on the surface seems to support a... misogynistic view of women, surreptitiously does the opposite as it dismantles the symmetry that represents the status quo' (Schroeder 2003:58).

Undeniably there is much that is amusing and ridiculous in the opera. Still, Goldie's observations suggest that it is not an unalloyed farce. So we need to look more closely to discover if the *dramatis personae* have the flatness that is common in comic opera.

Several opera experts do maintain that this is the case. 'In Da Ponte's libretto everything goes in pairs ... Though the librettist makes an occasional attempt to differentiate psychologically between Dorabella and Fiordiligi, and again between Ferrando and Guglielmo, he often handles each pair as a unity in itself; Mozart has necessarily to follow his lead in this, with the result that on several occasions he has to give up the attempt at individual characterisation and fall back on a generalised kind of musical utterance for each couple' (Newman 1943:238). 'The four lovers are utterly unreal; they are more like marionettes than human beings' (Dent 1960:192).¹¹ According to Blom (1952:293), the world of *Così*, is 'only a show of marionettes. For nothing could be more ridiculous than to pretend that the preposterous people, the still more preposterous situations of this utterly artificial intrigue, were meant to be believed in.' '[*Così*'s] characters are too superficial to be called human' (Benn 1946:111). There is what Kerman calls a "neutrality of characterization." 'I am sure that [Mozart] adopted it primarily in order to show the lovers less as serious individuals than as anonymous representatives of their sexes' (Kerman 1956:113). The philosopher Peter Kivy goes so far as to declare the work a *sinfonia concertante* for voices, thereby trying to rescue the music from the drama. He writes: '[*Così*'s] "characters" therefore are not Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Guglielmo, Ferrando; they are *the* soprano, *the* mezzo-soprano, *the* heroic tenor, etc. They are instruments in a *sinfonia concertante*, instruments with proper names ... Like the characters of

¹¹ Contrast with Einstein (1966:445): 'They are not at all mere marionettes.' His argument is that Mozart's sympathy for his characters gives them an "operatic reality." Mann (1977:562) writes: 'I doubt that da Ponte thought of marionettes.'

opera seria, the characters of *Così fan tutte* are as close to being character types as they can be without ceasing to be characters at all' (1988:259).¹²

This judgment seems hasty. It does not explain, for example, why Guglielmo does not take his turn with the others in the canon quartet.¹³ Nor does it explain why Goldie rates Fiordiligi's behavior as forgivable but does not acknowledge Dorabella in the same way. In fact, I would argue that the subtle (and not so subtle) differences between the characters are essential to appreciating key aspects of the drama. Moreover, I suggest that much of the differentiation of the characters depends on Mozart's music (and that Newman's claim, quoted above, that Mozart cannot bring life to Da Ponte's libretto is far from the mark).

Consider the Act One finale that falls in the middle of the opera. Typically in *opera buffa*, which is *Così*'s formal type, at this point in the drama the protagonists are pitted against the antagonists and it is the latter who are in the ascendancy. Nothing like this happens at this stage of *Così*, which is where the Albanians have supposedly taken poison. Dorabella and Fiordiligi are conflicted between holding to their pledges and offering comfort to the attractive strangers. Guglielmo and Ferrando alternate between scarcely concealed amusement at the situation, confidence that their girlfriends will stay true, and histrionic love making to the women. Everyone is simultaneously protagonist and antagonist. Or to put the point differently, the enemy lies within. This indicates that what we should be looking for is a psychological drama of personal development and growing self-awareness. And in the later canon quartet, in which Guglielmo remains resolutely unreconciled, we see the theme of the opera written in microcosm: the inescapable autonomy of the individual set against the common need for mutual acceptance and recognition. Had Guglielmo's part been

¹² Interestingly, Mozart did write a satirical German-language operetta, *Der Schauspieldirektor* [*The Impresario*] with singing roles for Madame Herz (= heart), Mademoiselle Silberklang (= silver sound), Monsieur Vogelsang (= birdsong), and Buff (from *opera buffa* = comic opera).

¹³ I discuss this case in some detail in Davies 2008, in which I argue for the separateness of the characters in *Così*.

assimilated to the rest, such as might have occurred in a strict canon introduced later when he has come also to accept what has occurred, that message would have been lost.

One commentator to share this view is Braunbehrens (1991:339): 'Although the cast of characters appears to be a series of ordinary *buffo* figures, the action soon proves to be a *drama giocoso* involving six living personalities who come to know themselves through their relations with each other. At the end they are confused and full of ambivalent feelings, their inflated self-assurance has been shattered, but they are not disheartened and are prepared to begin the search for true self-knowledge, happiness, and wisdom—by no means a conventional happy ending.'¹⁴ And Mitchell (1956:xiv) correctly notes the psychological aspect of the drama: 'Mozart, as it were, omits the top level of characterization and plunges us into the tangle of motives which precipitate human action; and there is a further refinement, which corresponds most precisely to psychic truth, in that the motives revealed prove to be strictly two-faced. *Così*, in short, while pretending to test virtue, offers a commentary on the duplicity of human motives, not in any moralizing sense, but as established fact. One thought, that is, may often be accompanied by another, its contrary; one feeling, as genuine as we may wish, may be supplanted or given rise to by another, no less sincere, but its strict opposite.' Here is a nice summary: '*Così fan tutte* deals with human relationships sympathetically, even profoundly, though totally without sentimentality. It is as serious a comedy as *Figaro*, and Mozart wrote for it some of his most deeply moving music as well as some of his most delightful' (Osborne 1978:293).

In my opinion, the opera has the serious purpose of enhancing our moral knowledge by showing how complex and unstable the motives and feelings of human beings can be – and here we should recall the youth and sexual inexperience of the protagonists – thereby inviting a response that is sympathetic even if sometimes also appropriately judgmental. *Così* is also about

¹⁴ See also Till 1992:252, Cairns 2006:181, 187, Brown-Montesano 2007:258, Hunter 2008:165.

difference and similarity, individuality and community, and its overall moral is about the need for mutual forbearance.

The surface similarities between the various couples are essential to the dramatic structure, but these must be seen to paper over differences in personality. Dorabella is more infatuated with love than Fiordiligi. This makes her more adventurous, more flighty, more flirtatious, and more easily led. When Fiordiligi commits herself, she does so with a seriousness of which Dorabella is not capable. Of the men, Gugliemo is more arrogantly confident of his lovability and more reluctant to forgive. Ferrando is the more tender and lyrical. While Alfonso and Despina might both be cynics, Despina has a cheerful warm-heartedness that contrasts with Alfonso's world-weariness.¹⁵

All this and more is achieved primarily through Mozart's musical treatment, I claim. This emerges at all levels. Even in duets between the men or between the women there sometimes is a marked differentiation.¹⁶ But for the sake of brevity, I'll focus on their arias.

There is a plain contrast between the men's Act One arias. Gugliemo, in Albanian guise, invites the ladies to take stock of his and Ferrando's fine physical characteristics – eyes, feet, noses, moustaches. The tone is ironic and he comes close to giving the game away. Ferrando's aria is a romantic tribute to love, sung when the ladies are not present, and therefore showing his genuine sentiments. The first of his Act Two arias (which is sometimes cut) is addressed to Fiordiligi before she has given way and is cheerful in tone—the score instructs the singer to sing very cheerfully—even as he predicts he will die from unrequited love. A later cavatina, just after Dorabella has given Gugliemo her heart, is brief but

¹⁵ Hartz (1990) regards differences in the characters of the protagonists to be established early, both by the poet and the composer. See also Mann 1977, Cairns 2006, Brown-Montesano 2007. On evidence for this in the original manuscript, see Rice 2009:108–12. Till (1992:242) regards differences between the women as emerging only with the departure of the soldiers.

¹⁶ For discussion of the ensembles and of how these often distinguish the protagonists, see Liebner 1972, Brown 1995, Steptoe 1988, Brown-Montesano 2007.

intense. Ferrando there expresses his pain and anguish yet he also acknowledges his continuing love for Dorabella. Guglielmo's second act aria is a complaint against women's infidelity, offered as consolation to Ferrando but real enough in tone, though at this stage Fiordiligi has not succumbed to Ferrando. As emerges in a later exchange, Guglielmo is not surprised that Dorabella cannot resist him in the comparison with Ferrando and this same conceited self-assurance leads him to think Ferrando will fail with Fiordiligi, so he is more bitter and less reconciled than Ferrando when Ferrando later succeeds in his wooing.

Like Dorabella, Fiordiligi receives two arias, but hers have extraordinary depth and fire. Her Act One aria, *Come scoglio* (Like a rock), is at first stately and powerful, with large leaps and a span of more than two octaves. The aria gathers pace with two tempo changes and intersperses coloratura passages between slower-paced staunch affirmations. Her Act Two aria, *Per pietà* (For pity's sake), comes immediately before her capitulation and finds her exhorting herself to be faithful. It begins with a long *adagio* before moving to *allegro* and once again features a huge pitch range and some astonishing leaps (including a minor twelfth), indicative of the emotional extremes with which she is struggling.¹⁷ In comparison, Dorabella's arias are shorter, more restricted in compass, and the vocal line is controlled rather than fractured. In fact her Act Two aria, which already shows her fully reconciled to the idea of her new lover and as aping Despina's musical style, is not more than a cheerful ditty. Both women may be attracted to their new suitors and both may give way to them, but this is stressful and destructive for Fiordiligi as it is not for Dorabella.¹⁸

¹⁷ These arias invoke and perhaps also parody the style of *opera seria* – see Osborne 1978, Steptoe 1988, Hertz 1990, Till 1992, Brown 1995, Brown-Montesano 2007. Benn (1946:113) writes: 'The true view of *Così fan Tutte* must surely be that it is an artificial work, not a farce. In a sense it is a parody of grand opera.'

¹⁸ In comparing the two, Brophy (1964:37) writes: 'Fiordiligi, in fact has the greater compass: in music as in personality.' Benn (1946:116) observes: 'For Fiordiligi the struggle is terrific; after her first agreement to accept the suit of her "Albanian" admirer, she wildly regrets her decision. The realization that

It is precisely this difference that assumes importance in Goldie's assessment:

There are differences of character, even if they are not revealed in action. Fiordiligi, unlike Dorabella, struggles fiercely against her temptation, falls more desperately, and suffers remorse more agonizingly. The aria 'Come scoglio immoto resta' (as a rock remains unmoved) expresses a real and profound determination to resist. And later, when she feels herself beginning to fall in love with Ferrando, but before she has truly fallen, she reveals, in a recitative and a subsequent aria ('Per pietà'), first, the strength of her new passion, then recognition of her betrayal and weakness of will, then her need for forgiveness, and finally her determination never to reveal and always to withstand the temptation which she so strongly feels. (2012:112)

Braubehrens (1991:342) makes a similar point nicely: 'Fidelity is presented as a dam against a flood of ambivalent, irrepressible feelings and passions whose explosive force is as indisputable as their existence.'

It is the struggle that she puts up and the anguish that she feels that make Fiordiligi's weakness pardonable and Dorabella's not. We should distinguish Fiordiligi from Dorabella, just as we should distinguish those who gave the mock shocks in Milgram's experiment and lived on with feelings of guilt, shame, and remorse from those who gave the shocks and later convinced themselves that this was justified under the circumstances and that they acted rightly (Goldie 2000).

Don Alfonso and Despina are beautifully drawn characters, but they do not change or develop over the opera's course, and in that sense they are flat characters. Dorabella and Ferrando do not seem deeply altered or more self-

her fidelity could so easily be shaken is terrifying to her. Dorabella is more light-hearted, and her forwardness is set off against Fiordiligi's greater depth of character.'

aware, though perhaps they are more accepting of their own and others' weaknesses. But Gugliemo, to some extent, and Fiordiligi, certainly, have gone through self-revelatory experiences. If the others seem to end where they began, that cannot be the reality experienced by Fiordiligi or Gugliemo. And their journey of psychological and emotional discovery is what gives the opera its dramatic point and gravitas. They are characters in the fullest, roundest sense. Though this is all done with a degree of nuance and subtle irony that is unusual in opera, which perhaps explains why Mozart's achievement has sometimes been overlooked.

Dent (1960:212) writes: 'Whether the ladies pair off with their original lovers or their new ones is not clear from the libretto, but, as Don Alfonso says, it will not make any difference to speak of.'¹⁹ Now, I'm not sure Don Alfonso says exactly that at any point: it may be Dent's gloss on "Let's find a way of putting things together. Tonight I still want to see a double wedding." Or perhaps he is referring to the final moral, which is sung by all the characters. In brief it says that a man who looks on the bright side and is ruled by reason will find amusement and calm from the world's tribulations. And this means, I suppose, that if they adopt the appropriate attitude and allow reason to banish passion, the protagonists might achieve equanimity in any marriage. But even if true, that is far from insisting that it does not matter who marries whom.

A man would be a fool to opt for Dorabella ahead of Fiordiligi if he had the choice. The comparative desirability of the men as grooms is less clear-cut. Ferrando is initially more passionate and steadfast in his affections, but he adjusts quickly to the reversal of partners. Gugliemo falls further, being more arrogant, and is initially bitter. He has more to learn, but it is perhaps not clear by the opera's end if he is sufficiently sensitized to weaknesses in his character

¹⁹ Hertz (1990:241–2, 250) argues that, melodically, Fiordiligi is destined for Ferrando—see also Ford 1991:196, Brown 1995:123–4, Ford 2012:170–1. Cairns (2006:184) thinks that it must be that the "Albanian" pairs marry. Mann (1977:562) and Till (1992:238), Brown (1995:154–5), and Hunter (2008:165–6) think the original pairs marry, but speculate on how successful these marriages will be.

to have become both more reliable and tolerant in the future. The ending preserves the studied ambivalence maintained throughout the opera, but this surely does not mean it will make no difference to the quality of their future relationships as couples who marries whom.

Stephen Davies,
Department of Philosophy,
University of Auckland.

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