

Cosi: lewis changes by directing the play



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

How are ideas about betrayal and loyalty explored through the structure of the play-within-a-play? The most obvious structural feature is the 'play-within-a-play', which highlights the parallels between the characters and themes in Mozart's opera, and those in Nowra's play. Both the opera and play revolve around issues of loyalty, fidelity and betrayal. The backdrop of war is also a significant feature of both texts: the Vietnam War in the 1970s (in *Cosi*) and the Albanian battle for independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1790 (in *Cosi Fan Tutte*).

Wars also involve loyalties and betrayals, and their chaos on a grand scale underscores the chaos in the lives of the characters in the opera and the play. (Sue Sherman : English for Year 12) •According to Mozart's *Cosi Fan Tutte*, the issue of fidelity is depicted to be an ideal that is never achieved. •Since 'women are like that' - the interpretation of 'cosi fan tutte', Mozart encouraged the belief that men should simply accept women are indeed disloyal in relationships. Nowra illustrates this same idea about women and infidelity through Lewis and Lucy's relationship. While Lucy is 'sleeping' with Lewis, she is also 'having sex' with Nick.

When Lewis discovers Lucy's betrayal, she waves aside his shock, defending that 'it is not as if we're married.' The revelation does indeed prove that *Cosi Fan Tutte* is correct in stating that, 'woman's constancy is like the Arabian Phoenix. Everyone swears it exists, but no one has seen it.'

•Although the women in both *Cosi Fan Tutte* and *Cosi* are shown to be unfaithful, so are the men. While the men in *Cosi Fan Tutte* do not actively participate in adultery, they do fabricate their departure to the war and also disguise themselves as 'Albanians.' Their deception is also a betrayal to

their wives. Meanwhile, Don Alfonso manipulates everyone. As seen in *Cosi*, Lewis is unfaithful to Lucy as he kisses Julie during rehearsals. • Julie later reveals that she has a girlfriend who she would prefer to be with, confirming that both men and women are unfaithful in relationships. (source: VCE Study Guides) Quotes on Fidelity/Betrayal „ Women are never true.? „ Women like to pretend they don't play around, but they're just more secretive about it. They don't brag about it like men.? „ Women are flesh and blood too.? „ I don't like men's double standards.? “ Women's constancy is like the Phoenix of Arabia.

Everyone swears it exists, but no one has seen it.? Irony in the fact that Henry plays the part of Don Alfonso in *Cosi Fan Tutte* as Henry firmly believes in truth and fidelity whereas Don Alfonso is cynical about it. “ This *Cosi* condones the corruption of innocence. Women are told to be tramps. Free love. ” “ Whether women can remain true is a tragedy. ” “ Don't insult those pure men. They? re models of fidelity and perfect love. ” (*Cosi Fan Tutte*) “ Only mad people in this day and age would do a work about love and infidelity. ” Lewis and Julie kiss demonstrating that men too can be unfaithful.

In a way, Nick is also unfaithful in his friendship with Lewis. “ You have enemies for life, but never lovers. ” “ Everyone blames women, but I forgive them. If they change their love a thousand times a day, some call it sin, others a drug, but I think it's the necessity of women's hearts. ” “ That's how men want us to be - even though they're not true and faithful themselves. ” Wagner “ foreshadows what is going to happen to the couples in the future. A life of torment and adultery. ” Nick justifies his infidelity with “ we're

mates, aren't we? " Nick and Lucy „ didn't last long as both were not into love and fidelity.?