THE TREATMENT OF THE DON JUAN THEME AS SEEN IN THE PLAYS OF MOLIÈRE, EDMOND ROSTAND AND ANDRÉ OBÉY

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY
JEAN SHIPP WILLIAMS

DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
AUGUST 1969
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE ........................................ iii

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION ......................................... 1

II. DOM JUAN BY MOLIÈRE ............................... 8

III. LA DERNIÈRE NUIT DE DON JUAN BY
     EDMOND ROSTAND .................................. 24

IV. DON JUAN BY ANDRÉ OBEY .......................... 35

CONCLUSION ............................................ 49

BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................................... 53
This study deals with the treatment of the Don Juan theme as seen in Dom Juan by Molière, La Dernière nuit de Don Juan by Edmond Rostand, and Don Juan by André Obey. The Don Juan legend as we know it began in Spain with Tirso de Molina. Since its inception, the legend has undergone significant changes. The purpose of this study is to show the Don Juan of the seventeenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries and the changes he undergoes.

The author wishes to acknowledge with deepest gratitude and appreciation her indebtedness to Dr. Earle D. Clowney who served as her thesis advisor and who was instrumental in providing biographical material on André Obey.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The exact origin of the Don Juan legend remains a mystery. However, among the many theories presented, there are two which are most frequently advanced. The first is the historical theory proposed by Louis Viardot who claims that the legend is based on an historical event found in the chronicles of Seville. According to Viardot's version, Don Juan Tenorio, a member of a distinguished family of Seville, kills Commander Ulloa and abducts his daughter. Later a group of powerful monks lure Don Juan into a church and kill him. They in turn spread the rumor that Don Juan has been cast into hell by the statue of the Commander. Investigations reveal that there is no such record of the story. Another theory proposes the idea that elements of the legend were already found in the Ateista fulminato, a religious play presented in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It tells of the adventures of Count Aurelio who abducts Leonora from a convent and disguises himself as a hermit to escape his pursuers. His punishment comes when the parents of Leonora, whom he has insulted, drag him to hell.\footnote{Leo Weinstein, The Metamorphoses of Don Juan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp. 8-9.}
Another source may be found in the medieval folklore of many nations as:

... the theme of the dead man who, upon being invited by a carefree young madcap, makes an appearance. ... Usually the invitation is extended to a skull and the young man who has kicked and mocked it either gets off with a severe admonition thanks to some relic he is wearing or else he has to pay with his life.2

The legend was introduced into formal literature in Spain by Gabriel Tellez, better known as Tirso de Molina, who is considered one of the best playwrights of Spain's Golden Age of literature. He was the first to combine the various versions into a coherent play, thus creating the character of Don Juan as we know it today. Tirso's play, El Burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra (The Jester of Seville and the Stone Guest), is believed to have been written in the early seventeenth century. The play is typical of the Spanish tragicomedy of the Golden Age characterized by seductions, disguises, mistaken identities, theme of honor, a humorous servant, and pastoral episodes.3 In Tirso's play Don Juan seduces four women, two ladies of high rank, Isabella and Anna and two lower-classed women, Tisbea and Aminta. He kills Anna's father, the Commander, and is finally punished for his deeds by the statue of the Commander.

---

2Ibid., p. 9.
The play of Tirso de Molina was written in the seventeenth century at a time when contact between men and women was limited to "fiery but hidden glances during promenades, and where duennas watched over their charges; where balconies have to be climbed on silk ladders and where black veils blend mysteriously with the dark of night." For this reason a character such as Don Juan was admired and feared because he dared to overcome all obstacles to reach his goal. What distinguished Tirso's play is the scene concerning the statue, which gives a supernatural and dramatic effect in bringing about the punishment of Don Juan. This feature appeals to the public and demonstrates the moral of the play as well.

The Don Juan of Tirso de Molina is an interesting character. He is a young libertine who derives satisfaction from tricking women. Because he never becomes emotionally involved with any of the women whom he seduces, he remains a heartless lover. In order to seduce these women he uses different techniques. For instance, with Tisbea and Aminta, he begins by declaring his love, thus eliminating all arguments of social inequality, and finally promises marriage. On the other hand, Anna and Isabella are tricked by disguises in which Don Juan appears to be their lovers. Despite his evil ways, Don Juan is not an atheist because just before his death he instinctively asks for a priest in order to make his final

\[4\] Weinstein, op. cit., p. 37.
confession. This is the famous lover who will serve as a model for future generations.

Don Juan as a famous lover has undergone significant changes since his inception as a frivolous libertine. As far as climate is concerned, the eighteenth century was more favorable to Don Juan than the seventeenth century because religious authority was being attacked, morals were more flexible and women were no longer subjected to grave restriction of conduct. The following passage describes the extent of the freedom of women and the need for a new type of seducer.

The eighteenth-century woman achieved a freedom that has rarely been equaled in history, woman suffrage notwithstanding. In that age the woman, if only in self-defense, had to learn quickly how to take care of herself in society and in her relations with men. She had to know how to judge the real value of gallant declarations, how to be coquettish without making a bad impression, how to use her fan, above all, in order to encourage or discourage a man, express boredom or, if need be, tap on the fingers of an overly forward suitor. Her important task was to avoid scandals—almost everything else was permissible, but she did not rush blindly into her adventures: contrary to the pale romantic ingenue of the following century, she knew that loves come to an end and that men can be treacherous.... It was this clear-sightedness which, while removing almost completely all surface drama from love affairs, established relations between the sexes on the basis of a game between two nearly equal parties.

There were no significant works done in the eighteenth century on Don Juan until 1787 when Mozart created Don Giovanni, an opera in two acts with a libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte.

---

5 Ibid., p. 38.
Through his musical genius and skill in creating highly complicated characters, Mozart has produced what is called the greatest opera ever written.

The nineteenth-century was fertile in literature treating the Don Juan legend for Don Juan was representative of the attitudes of the romanticists. An important influence in the nineteenth-century interpretation of Don Juan was the work of E. T. A. Hoffman who wrote a story inspired by Mozart's Don Giovanni. In his version Hoffman introduces a description of Don Juan, his education and what makes him the way he is. As far as characters are concerned, Hoffman deals primarily with the relationship between Don Juan and Anna. Some other well known interpretations of Don Juan in the nineteenth-century include: Don Juan by Lord Byron, which has little relationship to the actual legend and depicts Don Juan as being pursued by women; Namouna by Alfred de Musset, a commentary and expansion of Hoffman's interpretation, presented with a lighthearted surface and melancholy undertones; The Stone Guest by Alexander Pushkin in which there is a more plausible explanation of the relationship between Don Juan and Anna; and Don Juan and Faust by Christian Brabbe which presents dynamic pessimism.

Near the middle of the nineteenth century, the story of Miguel Mañara was revealed. He is sometimes called the real Don Juan because he was a contemporary of Tirso de Molina and lived in the town of Seville. More important is the fact that he is credited with living a life similar to that of the legendary hero. However, Tirso's version was already finished a
few years before the birth of Mañara. Unlike the legendary hero, Miguel is saved and spends the rest of his life in service to the church. In the latter part of the nineteenth century appeared the popular version of Jose Zorrilla which features the dramatic salvation of Don Juan. Zorrilla's play is performed on All Soul's Day in Spain and Latin America. It is considered more like an opera than a play.  

By the time the Don Juan legend reached the twentieth century it had been dissected to such a point that it was difficult to distinguish the original hero. His behavior undergoes psychoanalysis and in fact, Don Juan ceases to enjoy himself, becoming a philosopher, an existentialist, and an ideal seeker. Some adaptations of the legend include: Juan de Mañara by Manuel Machado y Ruiz in which the hero is an ideal-seeker; Echec a Don Juan by Claude-André Puget in which there is a contest between two powerful antagonists who try to outwit each other; Le Mythe de Sisyphe by Albert Camus and the Ornifle ou Le Courant d'air of Jean Anouilh both of which treat the absurdity of the hero; Don Juan of Henry de Motherlant which presents the hero as an old man; and George Bernard Shaw's Man and Superman which shows the hero as "one concerned for the future of the race and for the freedom of his own instincts." 

Thus, Don Juan as a legendary figure has run the gamut

---

6 Ibid., pp. 196-119.

from a libertine to a philosopher. In no case has Don Juan created a climate. He has merely adapted himself to the period in which he found himself created. Whether he be libertine, atheist, hypocrite, or murderer, the distinguishing characteristic of Don Juan as a legendary figure lies in the fact that he was a great lover of women.

Chapter II begins the study of the Don Juan theme in seventeenth-century France. Since Molière was among the first to popularize the theme in France, the author has decided to begin with his play. This chapter, as with Chapters III and IV, follows this plan: a brief biographical sketch of the playwright's life and period in which he lived; a résumé of the play by acts; the development of major and minor characters; and the philosophy of each playwright. The final chapter will be the conclusions of the author as a result of this study.
CHAPTER II

DOM JUAN BY MOLIÈRE

Before beginning the analysis of Molière's play *Dom Juan*, the author wishes to present a brief sketch of Molière's life and the period in which he lived. Molière, the pseudonym for Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, was the son of Jean Poquelin and Marie Cressé. He was born on January 16, 1662, the eldest of six children and the only one to reach the age of fifty. His father and mother came from a long line of ancestors who practiced the upholstery profession. When Molière was nine years old, his father succeeded his uncle as valet tapissier de chambre du roi. Since the title was hereditary, it was the intention of Jean Poquelin that Molière continue the family tradition.

Molière received his formal education at Clermont, a Jesuit college in Paris, where he studied philosophy, mathematics and the theater. Terence is said to have been his favorite dramatist and Lucretius was his chosen philosopher. It is rumored that Molière, along with Chapelle and Cyrano de Bergerac, studied Epicureanism under Gassendi. Later, Molière studied law at Orleans and was admitted to the bar in 1641.

It is difficult to say exactly what made Molière choose the acting profession over a stable career in upholstery.
However, it is known that Molière's paternal grandfather, Louis Cressé, often took him to the Hôtel de Bourgogne to see the farces presented by the Comédiens Italiens and the tragedies presented by the Grands Comédiens. Molière's direct contact with the theater begins with his association with the Béjart family. The Béjarts were a large Bohemian family interested in the theater. It was rumored that Molière and Madeleine Béjart were lovers. In a final effort to prevent Molière from becoming an actor and continuing his relationship with Madeleine, Jean Poquelin arranged for him to accompany the royal household to Narbonne as valet tapissier. A year later, in 1642, Molière abandoned his father's business and began his theatrical career. Using the money that he secured from the sale of his father's title, Molière, along with the Béjarts, founded in 1643 the Illustre Théâtre. The repertoire of the group consisted mainly of tragedies performed on the public tennis courts. The company was forever in debt. Several times Molière was imprisoned for debts incurred by the company.¹

Having failed in the environs of Paris, Molière and his troupe decided to go into the provinces. This marks the second stage in his theatrical career. For the next thirteen years, he was to wander from place to place in the southern provinces of France. These were years of observation and preparation for his career as a playwright.

¹Georges Mongrédien, La Vie Privée de Molière (Paris: Hachette, 1950), pp. 34-68.
As was typical of the seventeenth century writers, Molière had a series of protectors. The Duc d'Epernon, governor of Guienne, was among the first to recognize and encourage the genius of Molière. During the provincial tours, Molière's company was in the service of the duke. In 1653, the Prince of Conti, who had been Molière's classmate, became his protector. It was during the provincial tours that Molière began his career as a playwright. In 1655, he produced L'Etourdi, the first of his authentic plays.

It is not certain who gave Molière his introduction at the court. Nevertheless, in the spring of 1658, under the protection of the Duc d'Orléans, Molière and his troupe appeared before the king in Corneille's Nicomède followed by a presentation of one of his own plays which brought him fame during the provincial tours. By this presentation Molière gained the admiration and favor of Louis XIV. It was at this same performance that the rivalry between Molière and the royal tragedians began.

In 1662, Molière married Armande Béjart. It is rumored that she was either Molière's daughter by Madeleine Béjart or Madeleine's sister. Conflicting documents leave some doubt about the exact relationship between Armande and Madeleine.³

¹Karl Mantzius, Molière: les théâtres, le public et les comédiens de son temps (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1908), pp.48-49.
The marriage was unfortunate. One factor was the difference in ages. Molière was forty and Armande was twenty. Another problem was the fact that Armande was rather promiscuous. There were many estrangements and reconciliations during the marriage. Three children were born of the marriage but only one survived to maturity. In 1673, after the presentation of *Le Malade imaginaire*, Molière, suffering from a chronic illness, collapsed and died. It was through the intervention of Armande, who appealed to Louis XIV, that the decision of the archbishop of Paris to deny a Christian burial to Molière because of his profession was compromised. Molière had an ecclesiastical burial, without ceremony, in the cemetery of Saint Eustache. It is interesting to note that at this time, the acting profession was considered infamous. Actors had to renounce their profession in order to be admitted to the sacraments or to Christian burial.

In his plays Molière expresses his philosophy about certain questions of his time. He was against preciosity and excesses in all things. He believed that women should not be kept ignorant but that their role in society as women should dominate their desire to become physicians, poets, and philosophers. The bonds of marriage, based on mutual love, were sacred to Molière. In regards to religion, Molière was against hypocrisy and excessive devotion. According to him, the principal aim of literature was to please the public. He also believed that the material for comedy should be taken from
human nature as observed in a contemporary setting. The most famous of Molière's comedies are: **Les Précieuses ridicules** (1659), **L'Ecole des maris** (1661), **L'Ecole des femmes** (1662), **Tartuffe** (1664), **Dom Juan** (1665), **Le Misanthrope** (1666), **Le Médecin malgré lui** (1666), **L'Avare** (1668), **Le Bourgeois gentilhomme** (1670), **Les Femmes savantes** (1672), **Le Malade imaginaire** (1673).

Molière wrote during one of the greatest periods of French literature and history. The seventeenth century has been called the age of classicism, the golden age of French literature, and the century of Louis XIV. The author would like to point out a few trends of the seventeenth century as they relate to Molière. The seventeenth century witnessed the formation of the aristocracy into societies called salons in order to combat the vulgar manners which existed at the court. The tastes of most of these salons influenced, to a great extent, the manners, ways of speech, and dress for all French society. In addition to cultivating good taste, the members of the salon were interested in literature. Frequently, works of contemporary writers were discussed and from time to time, members of the society would read their own compositions for comment and criticism. These salons had a great influence on the success and failure of the dramatists, actors, and poets. Their influence can be seen in the boycotts instigated against certain playwrights. Molière was a victim of the cabale with his **Dom Juan**, **Les Précieuses ridicules**, and **Tartuffe**. Among the most famous salons of the seventeenth century were: the Hôtel...
de Rambouillet where Mme de Rambouillet entertained in her famous chambre bleue, the salons of Mme de Sable, Mlle de Pensier, and Mlle de Scudery.

In the course of the century, there was a reaction against this attempt for refinement. This reaction manifested itself in preciosity and mannerisms. Often it was the bourgeois and peasant provincials who attempted to imitate the members of high Parisian society. Molière's Les Précieuses ridicules was a satire on the subject. In addition, the idea of the honnête homme grew up in the atmosphere of the court and in the salons. The honnête homme was cultivated, distinguished, discreet, and believed in a disciplined society. The social status of the honnête homme was of little importance because true nobility existed in the heart.

The spirit of classicism with its ideals of order and discipline penetrated the literature of the seventeenth century and there was some attempt to give order and discipline to the French language and literature. Surpassing the work of the Pléiade, writers such as François Malherbe, Guez de Balzac, and Vaugelas helped to give order to French poetry, prose and language. The founding of the French Academy was also instrumental in this endeavor. The influence of classicism was particularly seen in the classical tragedy, where the playwright was obliged to follow certain rules based on Aristotle.

Absolutism was an integral part of the seventeenth century. Before the reign of Louis XIV, there was laxity in government. Vice and civil disorder flourished whenever there was an
ineffective regent or a weak king. Ambitious ministers like Mazarin and Richelieu undermined the power of the monarchy for their personal gain. It took Louis XIV to affirm the royal prerogative and to place the monarchy in its proper perspective. Despite the absolutism of Louis XIV, France saw under his reign expansion of French territory and cultivation of the fine arts.

The seventeenth century was characterized by other currents. These include the supremacy of reason and the concern for human nature with specific ideas as to man's relationship to the universe and to God. Descartes and Pascal were leaders in this area. The quarrel between the Jansénistes and Jésuites was the major religious quarrel. Pessimism in regard to human nature is seen in the works of Molière and La Fontaine. La Fontaine shows that the strongest reasoning, not so much the best reasoning, always dominates. At the end of Molière's plays, the ridiculed persons do not change their mode of living.

***

The first Don Juan play was introduced in France by the Italians players at the Petit-Bourbon Théâtre. Afterwards, several French companies imitated it. The early French Don Juan plays were done by Dorimon and Villiers. According to Oscar Mandel, author of The Theater of Don Juan, Villiers and Dorimon were obscure actors and poetasters who survive only as sources of Molière. The version of Villiers was hastily
composed and was merely a translation of the Italian. His main purpose was to gain money for his troupe. Mandel gives a summary of the play by Dorimon and presents some interesting similarities between the two plays.

In this version (Dorimon's) Don Juan is rather soft-hearted. His misdeeds are all given to us by report out of the past. His murder of the Commander is unpunished, and he is generally courteous. Furthermore, the hero begins to reason. In a remarkable soliloquy, Don Juan decides to meet the Statue because he has seen everything on earth — Les Esprits fors, les Grands, les Scavons, et la Guerre — and now divine curiosity leads him to desire an interview with the dead. . . . In both Dorimon's and Villiers' plays a new episode occurs: Don Juan meets a Pilgrim or a Hermit, and forces him to exchange clothes. When Octavio arrives looking for his enemy, Don Juan, disguised as the holy man, easily disarms him and kills him. . . . The Villiers and Dorimon plays bear identical titles: Le Festin de Pierre ou le Fils Criminal (Peter's Banquet or the Criminal Son). The subtitle is sensational rather than accurate. Don Juan merely strikes his father, who later dies of grief. As for the main title, it results for a mis-translation of the Italian pietra, meaning stone. Perhaps Dorimon in his haste, and not caring much one way or the other, decided that the Commander's name must be Peter.  

Molière's Dom Juan or Festin de Pierre was first performed on February 15, 1665 at the Palais-Royal. The success of the play was rivaled only by that of Tartuffe. As with Tartuffe, there was serious opposition to it because certain scenes and passages criticized too sharply social and re-


2 Ibid., pp. 105-106.
religious institutions. The most adamant of the critics were the religious devotees who reproached Molière for having supported libertine and atheistic ideas and for having a simple valet as Sganarelle defend the cause of God and religion. The scene in which Don Juan tempts the beggar was equally offensive. In fact, after the second performance certain scenes were deleted. The play was performed fifteen times before Molière was forced to renounce it. This he did under the influence of Louis XIV with the promise of a pension. Afterwards, Molière’s play literally disappeared. Oscar Mandel reports that in 1684 Dutch booksellers were selling Dorimont’s version as Molière’s. There appeared a rhymed version by Thomas Corneille which was supposed to have been made in collaboration with Molière. This version was performed until the nineteenth century. Nine years after the death of Molière, there appeared a badly censored text of his play. Finally in 1683, a Dutch edition of the uncensored play was discovered and in 1841 the real Don Juan of Molière was restored to the theater. 5

Molière’s Dom Juan is a comedy composed of five acts. The first act finds Don Juan breaking off with his latest wife, Elvire. Elvire’s servant Gusman comes to ascertain why Don Juan had a sudden change of heart. Sganarelle, Don Juan’s valet, tells him what a scoundrel Don Juan really is. In

5 Ibid., pp. 113-114.
scene iii, Elvire appears and learns the truth from Don Juan. After some hesitation, Don Juan says rather bluntly that he is tired of her. In Act II Don Juan and Sganarelle, who have been shipwrecked, encounter the country peasants Pierrot, Charlotte and Mathurine. Don Juan, in keeping with tradition, tries to seduce both women. After having proposed marriage to Charlotte, Don Juan is surprised by Mathurine who arrives and catches him in the act.Realizing that he is in a most precarious situation, Don Juan makes the most of it. In an amusing scene (iv), Don Juan whispers to each woman conflicting statements, which makes each woman think that he is in love with her. At the end of the act, Don Juan learns that he is being pursued by a posse and must leave immediately.

Act III takes place in a forest where Don Juan and Sganarelle are disguised in order to hide their identities. Don Juan wears a country outfit and Sganarelle is dressed as a doctor. It is in this act that Don Juan ridicules the medical profession by saying that the success of doctors is based on pure accident. Don Juan also expounds his atheistic ideas by asserting his belief in the concrete world and not in the abstractions of heaven and hell. In scene ii, Don Juan tempts a beggar to curse in exchange for alms. Amazingly enough, Don Juan next performs an act of heroism by saving Elvire's brother Don Carlos from thieves. In Act IV, Don Juan uses flattery to avoid paying a debt to M. Dimanche. Don Louis, Don Juan's father, comes in vain to ask Don Juan to change his life. After his father leaves, Don Juan wishes him dead.
Elvire reappears and begs Don Juan to repent. At dinner, the statue of the commander, whom Don Juan killed in a duel, comes and invites Don Juan to supper. He accepts.

Act V shows Don Juan as a hypocrite. He tells his father that he is going to change his life. In reality he wants to appear as having changed his ways while continuing his usual mode of living. He meets Don Carlos whom he does not deceive. A ghost appears and tells Don Juan that he only has a short while in which to repent. Don Juan refuses. In the final scene, the statue appears, reminds him of his promise, and tells him he is to be punished for his wickedness. Thunder and lightning strike and Don Juan is swallowed up by the earth.

Molière's Don Juan identifies with the legendary Don Juan of Tirso de Molina as well as the Don Juan of Villiers and Dorimont in that he is wicked and impious. He rejects his wife, Elvire, attempts to steal a girl from her fiance, tries to seduce some peasant girls, flatters to avoid paying a debt, deceives his father, tries to make a hermit swear, and becomes a hypocrite. Despite the wicked aspects of Don Juan's nature, Molière makes him somewhat likeable. For instance, one almost admires Don Juan for his honesty in telling Elvire that he no longer loves her. In Act II scene ii, Don Juan tempts the beggar but gives him the alms anyway for the sake of humanity. In scene ii of the same act, Don Juan comes to the aid of Don Carlos who was being attacked by thieves.

Moreover, Molière makes Don Juan a libertine in the
broadest sense of the word—and more particularly—libertine of the seventeenth century. The seventeenth century was the century of conformism to traditional views. Don Juan disregards conjugal fidelity because his amorous exploits are more important to him. He ignores his father who begs him to remember his class and family status. Above all, Don Juan is an atheist who does not believe in traditional religious doctrine.

The master–valet couple is typical of the seventeenth century theater. In the relationship, the valet acts in instances where the master cannot. In the case of Don Juan and Sganarelle, Sganarelle, knowing that Don Juan is incapable of adhering to the established system, resembles his master's conscience. In a way Sganarelle is almost his opposite in that he adheres to the established system. In his own way, Sganarelle defends, rather weakly, the status quo.

On the other hand, Elvire is the femme méprisée. She cannot accept the fact that Don Juan no longer loves her. She has violated her religious vows to become Don Juan's wife. If Don Juan leaves her, this will bring disgrace upon her family. Her brothers, Don Carlos and Don Alonso, will be obliged to defend their family honor. Don Louis appeals to Don Juan as a member of the nobility wishing to protect his family honor. He reminds Don Juan of his obligation to his social status and the glory of his ancestors who were honorable men.

The roles of Gusman and the country peasants Pierrot,
Charlotte, and Mathurine are interesting and cannot be neglected. At the beginning of the play, Gusman is trying to find out why Don Juan has left his mistress. By his being a servant and Don Juan a nobleman, Gusman can neither understand nor really believe that Don Juan is a scoundrel.

Je ne sais pas, de vrai, quel homme il peut être, s'il faut qu'il nous ait fait cette perfidie; et je ne comprends point comment après tant d'amour et tant d'impatience témoignée, tant d'hommages pressants, de voeux, de soupirs et de larmes, tant de lettres passionnées, de protestations ardentes et de serments réitérés, tant de transport enfin et tant d'emportements qu'il a fait paraître, jusqu'à forcer, dans sa passion, l'obstacle sacré d'un couvent, pour mettre Done Elvire en sa puissance, je ne comprends pas, dis-je, comme, après tout cela, il aurait le coeur de pouvoir manquer à sa parole.\(^4\)

Mathurine, Charlotte, and Pierrot are the country peasants who meet Don Juan. Don Juan causes strife between Charlotte and Pierrot. Despite his gifts to Charlotte, Pierrot has not been able to extract any positive love responses from her. Charlotte, however, is intrigued by the attention of Don Juan, which makes Pierrot jealous. Being the lover that he is, Don Juan tries to make love to both Charlotte and Mathurine.

Unlike the other characters in the play, the beggar is a man who has retired from society and has chosen to live as a hermit begging alms in order to live. One cannot help noticing

\(^4\)Molière, \textit{Dom Juan} (Act I scene ii).
his temperament which remains calm but firm as he talks to Don Juan concerning faith. His simple but strong faith allows him to resist the temptation of Don Juan to curse in exchange for a gold piece.

As with the anterior versions of the Don Juan theme, Molière makes use of the supernatural to bring about Don Juan's punishment. In the first place, he makes us believe that the statue and ghost are alive by having them speak. Then he uses thunder and lightning and the opening of the earth as instruments of Divine Will in bringing about Don Juan's destruction.

One of the greatest criticisms of Molière's Dom Juan is that it lacks unity. In comparison to the classical rules of the seventeenth-century theater, Molière violates the unities of time, place, and action. For example, throughout the play, the scene moves from Don Juan's apartment to the countryside, then to a forest, again to Don Juan's apartment, and finally back to the country. In order to keep Don Juan the legendary figure that he is, Molière has to keep him constantly on the move.

James Doolittle, author of an article titled: "The Humanity of Molière's Dom Juan," gives an interesting view of a unifying theme in the play. He asserts that Don Juan's effect on all the characters of the play strips them from the conventions which rob them of their individuality. These characters are enslaved by social institutions. Sganarelle is a valet, therefore socially unequal to Don Juan. He owes loyalty to
Don Juan and depends on him for the material necessities of life. Even though Sganarelle professes the traditional religious beliefs, he actually fears Don Juan more than God for the simple reason that Don Juan is closer and can provide material things. At the end of the play, Sganarelle cries for his wages.

Elvire has allowed herself to be taken from the convent and no longer has the piety or virtue or security she once had. When she comes back to Don Juan, she is a representative of the church. Her flamme has been purified. Still not sure of her emotions, she rushes off when Don Juan invites her to spend the night. The brothers of Elvire are motivated by tradition. Don Carlos is even reluctant to kill Don Juan because he owes his life to him. Don Louis, who speaks in an aristocratic manner, invokes divine punishment against Don Juan rather than take the matter into his own hands—again a recourse to the traditional method. Pierrot, like Sganarèlle, believes in the concrete world. Despite his gifts to Charlotte, Pierrot receives from her no outward signs of love. When Don Juan tries to woo her, Pierrot relies on the fact that Charlotte has already been promised to him. Of all the characters, the beggar alone does not allow Don Juan to dominate him. He is the only character who is completely at peace with humanity and the social institutions. Doolittle finally concludes that these characters, unlike Don Juan, are bound to social institutions which keep them from becoming real individuals. On
the other hand, social and religious institutions are necessary because they provide order and respectability within the framework of society.  

Molière's philosophy in Dom Juan is not complicated. The dramatist is simply saying that those who dare to defy God are punished. However, it cannot be overlooked that the punishment of Don Juan satisfies a twofold purpose in that it rectifies the wrongs done to the people whom Don Juan hurts and it justifies God's vengeance on those who refuse to repent of their sins.

---

CHAPTER III

LA DERNIÈRE NUIT DE DON JUAN

BY EDMOND ROSTAND

Because Edmond Rostand was born in the latter part of the nineteenth century and his literary works reflect romantic elements, the author has chosen to consider him as a romantic playwright.

Rostand was born April 1, 1868 at Marseille, France of a family of established merchants and bankers who had a liking for art and music. Rostand attended the lycée of Marseille and later matriculated at the College Stanislaus at Paris where he studied law. In 1890 he married the poetess Rosemand Gérard; she gave him a son named Maurice, who collaborated with his mother to write plays.

Rostand began writing at the age of eight and became prominent as an author in 1888 when his Le Gant Rouge, a vaudeville sketch, was produced in Paris. The following year he published his first volume of verse, Les Musardises. Les Romanesques (1894) was his first comedy. This play was followed by La Princesse Lointaine (1895) La Samaritaine (1897) and Cyrano de Bergerac (1898). Cyrano de Bergerac is considered his masterpiece. It consists of a five-act drama written in verse. It was presented five hundred times
consecutively and was produced in the United States by Richard Mansfield and in France by Coquelin. Rostand's other plays include: L'Aiglon (1900) Chantecler (1910) and La Dernière nuit de Don Juan (1921).¹

On May 30, 1901, Rostand was elected to the French Academy. He was the youngest ever to be admitted. After having received the rank of commander in the Legion of Honor, Rostand was awarded a diploma for having written Chantecler. He died December 2, 1918.

Historically, Rostand was born two years before the disaster of 1870 when France lost Alsace-Lorraine as well as five billion francs in gold as war indemnity. The general morale of the French people was low. As pessimism increased science and art began to be neglected and the concern shifted to the problem of the day. French leaders had to consider the problem of reconstruction as well as improving the outlook of Frenchmen. The literature of the period was influenced to a great extent by historical events. For example, the novels of Paul Bourget grew out of the tension of 1870. Maurice Barrès's nationalism was born out of the Boulanger and Panama Affairs. Charles Maurras and his Action Française and Anatole France's four volumes of Contemporary History were concerned with the Dreyfus Affair. There were some philosophers and writers who

helped to bolster the morale of the French people. Henri Bergson helped to free the mind from matter and insisted on creative power. Charles Péguy was a poet and dramatist who, through his litanies, hymns, and soliloquies, aroused Frenchmen who were in search of a new ideal. Romain Rolland appealed to the aesthetic nature.²

As far as the theater was concerned, the bourgeois drama was still in vogue. Plays which followed the romantic tradition continued to be produced, especially by Edmond Rostand, who revived the romantic drama at a time when it was almost extinct. Cyrano de Bergerac, his most famous work, definitely shows the traits of romanticism. Among these traits are: local color which evokes the spirit of the atmosphere of the nineteenth century; the mingling of the sublime and grotesque and the tragic and the comic; and the use of lyrical elements for dramatic effect. One critic has said that "the appeal of Cyrano . . . is honor, bravery, romance and sentiment, admirably blended with a spice of comedy and humor and touched only with the sadness of realism."³

Rostand's La Dernière nuit de Don Juan was published posthumously in 1921. The play was never completely finished.


The text used by the author is an English version by Delores Bagley found in the *Theater of Don Juan* by Oscar Mandel. To Rostand's original manuscript, stage directions and descriptions were added. The play consists of a prologue and parts one and two.

In the prologue Don Juan is being carried to hell by the statue of the Commander. With each step, Don Juan recites the name of a former love. He hears his dog which he says is mourning for him and Sganarelle who is screaming for his wages. Don Juan pauses, gives Sganarelle a kick in payment for his wages, and continues on his way. Because of his courage, Don Juan receives the pardon of the Commander. Afterwards the Devil seizes him. It is only through reasoning that Don Juan persuades the Devil to give him a ten-year lease on life.

As part one opens, the ten years have passed. Don Juan has spent them enlarging his conquests which number 1,003. Sganarelle tells him that his time is up, but Don Juan replies that the Devil has probably forgotten them. Them meaning that even though Sganarelle has no part in the sins of Don Juan, he is his only heir. Don Juan goes on to say that because Sganarelle has served him, men and women will seek him to learn the secret of his master.

Meanwhile, the puppeteer Punchinello appears with his puppet show. Don Juan seems to have seen the show when

---

he was a child. In the show, two puppets are killed. Don Juan and Punchinello talk of Henri Beyle, the doubter who even doubted the beauty of Helen of Troy. A doll representing Helen of Troy appears. Upon seeing the doll, Don Juan becomes overcome with passion. He asks Punchinello to make love to her, but Punchinello, who has not the skill of Don Juan, abuses the doll until she dies. Don Juan then wants the puppeteer to arrange the show according to his wishes. Punchinello refuses, rings a bell and the Devil appears. Punchinello strikes the Devil who is about to take him away. As they leave Don Juan says that it is funny how Punchinello fights trying to resist the Devil. As for Don Juan himself, he vows to make the Devil suffer by coming along quietly when his time comes. The Devil decides to let Punchinello go and takes Don Juan up on the matter. Don Juan makes a pact with the Devil that when the Devil makes him afraid he will gladly go away with him. After the Devil leaves, Don Juan seems to be in a stupor. He rebukes himself for having talked too much.

The Devil, who is really Punchinello, reappears and demands the soul of Don Juan. He wants Don Juan to climb into a sack with some others whom he has managed to catch. Don Juan prefers to walk, admitting that his only fear is age. The Devil's coming will save him from senility. To stall for time, Don Juan invites the Devil to supper and shows off his taste for wines, tapestry, food, and colors.
According to Don Juan, these things please women and they set the stage for adultery. Don Juan alludes to the story of the original sin, stating that he himself was Adam and the Devil tempted him with an apple containing a worm. The worm represented erotic love. After Adam bit the apple, he and Eve became lovers in the physical sense. Don Juan claims that he would gladly renounce heaven for a woman and declares that every man envies him secretly. In fact, even virtue jealously detests him. Saying good-bye to the world, Don Juan gives a ruby to Sganarelle.

The Devil and Don Juan have a discussion over the word possessed. Don Juan claims that he has possessed all the women whom he knew. The Devil tells Don Juan to tear up his list of conquests because he is about to die. The list is torn into bits of paper while the Devil produces a violin. As he plays, the bits of paper begin to move and fly into the air, becoming a fleet of gondolas, each representing a former love of Don Juan. The ghosts appear in white masks and white slippers. The Devil instructs Don Juan that he is not to touch the ghosts, but each ghost will whisper a phrase which will reveal her identity. If Don Juan can recall her name, the mask will fall.

In part two, Don Juan has not been able to identify a single ghost. Trying to defend himself, Don Juan claims that he has corrupted these women. The ghosts reply that they had desire in their hearts long before they saw him. It was only after they persuaded him that the affairs
began. Don Juan tries again to maintain his honor. He asserts that he has his courage. The Devil accuses him of being a coward by running away from love, thus showing his fear of stopping the way he lives. The Ghosts join in the accusations of the Devil.

Don Juan, whose pride is wearing thin, claims that there is no lover who can equal him. Half of the Ghosts shout that Romeo was the greatest lover. The other half shout that it was Tristan. Romeo and Tristan were passionate men who knew the women they loved. Don Juan did not. Even when Don Juan says that at least he made them suffer, the Ghosts reply that he understood nothing of their suffering.

The tears of each Ghost are gathered in order to find out if a sincere tear has been shed for Don Juan. The Devil begins to separate the real ones from the false ones, showing that each tear has been shed for petty things—not for Don Juan. Finally the Devil finds a secret tear which was shed by the White Ghost for the agony of Don Juan. Don Juan cannot recall who she is even after she tells him her name. He searches his list and finds that her name is not there. Then he realizes that the Ideal Woman has eluded his charms. Why should he worry? One out of 1,004 is not bad. The White Ghost disappears in the crowd, murmuring that Don Juan might have discovered her in any of the women he loved. Don Juan could have aroused this nature in women if he had
only tried.

As the Devil is about to take Don Juan away, the White Ghost intervenes in his behalf. She wants Don Juan to have the opportunity to search for true love even if it only lasts momentarily. Don Juan repeats after the White Ghost saying that he belongs to love and that he is a faithful lover. Afterwards, all the Ghosts' masks fall. Upon seeing the Ghosts unmasked, Don Juan immediately decides that each must be seduced again. In a new surge of hope, he declares that he has only used these women for his selfish gain. If he had found joy in one of them, he would have soon become bored. His aim was the pleasure of searching for new exploits. Women were only his tool.

The Ghosts ask Don Juan what he has to show as a result of his exploits. Don Juan replies that only his list remains and he regrets having missed the opportunity of loving. Don Juan still has not been conquered, but as a last resort, he claims that he has performed at least one famous deed. He has given a gold coin to a beggar for the sake of humanity. The beggar appears, tosses the coin at Don Juan and tries to choke him. The White Ghost intervenes saying that Don Juan still has the chance to find true love. Don Juan realizes the futility of his efforts and begs to die. Deep within, however, Don Juan cannot bear to let the Devil have the last word. The White Ghost
reappears and tells Don Juan that his pride alone makes him conceal his true feelings. Since he could not love himself, his self-respect depended on the love of others. The Devil decides that Don Juan's hell will be a puppet acting out adultery forever.

The Don Juan of Rostand is an ego-centric lover who is fast approaching old age. At the beginning of the play, he is on the way to hell, feeling no remorse whatsoever for his sins and regretting the fact that he can no longer do any more evil. What he values most is his reputation as a scoundrel. For this reason, he kicks Sganarelle in payment for his wages. He really does not need any one to bolster his ego because he does it himself. He even imagines that his dog is mourning for him. Because he demonstrates such courage to the end, he wins a pardon from the Commander, who even urges him to try to escape from the Devil. Don Juan shows his shrewdness by telling the Devil that since the Commander pardoned him, he can at least do the same. As a result, Don Juan gets a ten-year lease on life, which he spends traveling and increasing his number of conquests.

Don Juan resembles an old man, who, near the end of his life, searches to find something of lasting value which will serve as a memento of his having lived. On his last night on earth, Don Juan discovers that throughout all his exploits nothing remains except a long list of meaningless conquests. He also learns some truths which he cannot face.
He has not possessed any woman. He has only possessed her body and not her heart. Women possessed desire long before they saw Don Juan, therefore he did not corrupt them. Women sought him for different reasons, many of which were insignificant and had nothing to do with his reputation. An even harder blow to his ego is the fact that he never really loved himself. For this reason Don Juan has searched endlessly to find love in others.

Yet, in spite of all of these facts, a ray of hope appears in the form of the White Ghost. Don Juan will have the opportunity to find true love. Because his reputation is more important to him, however, Don Juan alludes to his former glory and remains the legendary hero. In fact, he appears even more noble as he asks for his hell in which he expects to be tortured. Ironically, Don Juan's hell will be a puppet theater where he will perform adultery eternally.

Don Juan is truly the romantic hero of the nineteenth century by his sentimentality and naïveté. His sentimentality is shown in the extent to which he values his exploits and in the fact that he recalls them with a deep sense of pride. He is naive enough to think that the world will miss him after he is gone. Don Juan is also a romantic in that he places all of his longings, hopes, and ideals into fulfilling tradition even though it leads to destruction.

The philosophy of Rostand in *La Dernière nuit de Don Juan* is rather pessimistic because Don Juan does not
really face reality. His nothingness is not merely suggested but demonstrated rather bluntly. Everything he tries to hold on to vanishes. He has nothing left but pleasant memories. Don Juan is a sad old man who has never loved and who will never truly love. Eternally he will act out the adulterous acts which meant so much to him. At the most, Rostand leaves Don Juan the legendary hero, but an enlightened one.
CHAPTER IV

DON JUAN BY ANDRÉ OBEY

André Obey is a twentieth-century playwright, born on May 8, 1892 at Douai, France. He did his early studies at the lycée at Douai and later entered the University of Lille where he became licensed in letters and law. In 1919, he married Jeanne Moreau-Dupuy. The following year a daughter named Nicole was born to them. During World War I, Obey was injured twice while serving his country. In 1921 he met Jacques Copeau, founder of Le Vieux-Colombier. Their friendship was a determining factor in Obey's literary career, for it was Copeau who taught him how to design scenery and to make use of scenic space. Obey submitted his manuscripts to Copeau until the death of the latter. For three years, Obey was the head dramatist for Jacques Copeau's company at Lyon, called the Compagnie des Quinze, for which group Obey created the following plays written in 1931: Noé, Le Viol de Lucrèce, and La Bataille de la Marne.

The first play of Obey, La Souriante Madame Beudet (1921), was done in collaboration with Denys Amiel. His other plays include: Vénus et Adonis (1932), Loire (1933), Don Juan 1934, Le Trompeur de Séville (1937), Ultimatum (1938), Revenu de l'Etoile (1939), La Nuit des temps (1940),
Introduction au Cid (1940), Huit cent mètres (1941), Maria (1946), L'Homme de cendres (1949), Lazare (1951), Une Fille pour du vent (1953), Les Trois coups de minuit (1958), La Fenêtre (1958). In addition, Obey translated Goethe, Euripides, Aeschylus, and later Shakespeare. He adapted in French Richard III and Henri IV of Shakespeare, Oedipe Roi of Sophocles, and the famous Flemish play, Les Gueux au paradis. Obey is also a novelist and essayist. Some of his works include: L'Enfant inquiet (1923), Sacre-Vainqueur (1924), L'Orgue du stade (1925), and L'Apprenti sorcier (1926).

Obey's accomplishments include: the Prix Théophraste Renaudot for the autobiographical novel, Le Joueur de triangle (1938); director of the dramatic and literary broadcasts of the French Radiodiffusion (1944-45); director of spectacles to the director-general of the Comédie-Française; and of l'Odéon (1946-47); the Grand Prix Pierre de Coubertin for the play Huit cent mètres¹ and the Eugène Brieux prize for La Bataille de la Marne (1932).²

The French literary scene after World War I was influenced by social, material, and intellectual incertitudes which were manifest in the exploration of the profoundness of the human soul and of the universe. There was no more belief


in the absolute power of passion, in unlimited progress, or in the utopias of the past century. Since no literary movement breaks entirely from the one which precedes it, elements from the latter part of the nineteenth century were present. Some of the best qualities were carried over as: generous enthusiasm from romanticism; taste for scientific observation and recording of facts from realism; intuition of profound reality from symbolism; and from neo-classicism, the sense of ideal beauty.³

There were other currents in twentieth-century French literature. For instance, the move towards intellectualism was a reaction against the intuitive philosophy of Bergson. Negatively, nationalism was the cause of the war and therefore considered a delicate topic. Positively, European nationalism was to be preserved because of its intellectual culture and the fact that there was a Europe to be reconstructed. The great histories which represented an entire literary and academic career were out of vogue. Collected works of writers in the form of manuals and anthologies witnessed great prosperity. There was a new interest in the politics and biographies of writers of the nineteenth century. The theater was supported by financiers and foreigners who were enriched by the war. Therefore, the theater reflected their tastes. The sincere dramas were presented at the

Vieux-Colombier. The contemporary public, somewhat more passive, was interested in the comedy of private life. Hence comedy concerning the family and couples became popular. From Romanticism to World War I, there was a relationship between the theater, poetry and morals. Poetry was the genre used and the purpose of the theater was to moralize. After World War I, there was concern for the relationship of the theater to literature and the cinema.

********

Don Juan by André Obey is a drama composed of a prologue and four acts. It was written in 1934 and marks the first of three plays in which Obey treats the Don Juan theme. The other two plays are: Le Trompeur de Séville (1937) and L'Homme de cendres (1949). In the prologue, we learn that there is something strange troubling the city of Seville. The king of Seville gives an explanation: Each time a boat arrives from the New World something overcomes the inhabitants of Seville and causes them to behave strangely. The town crier announces the hours and periodically implores those who are asleep to sleep in peace and those who are awake to pray for the sinners. There are two women who seem to be waiting for something. Each of them expresses ambivalent sentiments; one feels like crying and the other feels like laughing. Three men approach: an old man, a mature man and a young man. They have experienced
something strange. Earlier in the evening they were laughing and having a good time. Suddenly everything changed.

An interesting conversation takes place between a couple. The woman wants to take a walk. The man objects and accuses her of no longer loving him. She tells him that she is not only tired of him but of all men. The other women join her and say that their ideal man is coming. They describe him as being young, strong, and courageous. The men accuse him of being common, shrewd, and despicable. The old man says that if the women have attracted this man to Seville, the men will defend themselves with their religion. In the meantime, the town crier reappears, announces the birth of Don Juan Tenorio and asks those who are awake to pray for the child.

Act I is presented in a setting where there are five small chapels arranged in a semi-circle. The chapels represent the houses of Elvire, Don Juan, the king, Mme Tenorio, Don Juan's mother, and the Commander and his daughter Anna. The town crier announces the noon hour and talks about the season. While walking across the stage he announces the next hour, proceeds to recite the months and the seasons, and asks the people to pray for the sinners. For the first time some knowledge is revealed about Don Juan. He has been taught to swim and to ride horses and often accompanies his father, Don Jorge, on hunting trips. An old man has a complaint against Don Juan because he forced the old man off
the sidewalk and challenged him to a fight. Later, Don Juan decides to leave his mother's household and establish his own.

Catalinon, later to become Don Juan's valet, arrives in Seville seeking the famous lover. The valet tells of the reputation that Don Juan has in Spain. On the way to Don Juan's house, Catalinon meets a woman who has just been tossed aside by Don Juan. This indicates Don Juan's callousness in dealing with women after he has used them. In another scene, Don Juan fights a duel with a man in which the latter is killed.

Finally, these crimes along with some others are reported to the king who is Don Juan's godfather. The king does not take Don Juan's acts seriously and passes them off as childish pranks. Nevertheless, the king is forced to call in Don Juan because he is pressured by the prosecutor. It is the opinion of the prosecutor that Don Juan is a menace to Spain because he incarnates the new spirit which manifests itself in thirst for change, passion for adventure, love of power, incertitude, and daydreaming. These new ideas are attributed to the influence of the New World.

As the Commander and Alvar go away to war, the crowds cheer. Unfortunately, Don Juan does not go because they do not ask him. In one scene, Concepcion, the harlot, teases Don Juan about not going to war. Afterwards, an interesting conversation takes place between Don Juan and Concepcion. Don Juan wants to make love to her. Concepcion refuses and
proceeds to tell him off. Through the entire ordeal Don Juan says nothing. Finally, Concepcion admits that Don Juan frightens her because she has not met a man such as he. Somewhat disturbed by the silence of Don Juan, Concepcion asks him to defend himself. Ironically, he does not, but he does succeed in getting Concepcion to yield to his wishes.

Act II finds Don Juan and Concepcion in a romantic mood. Concepcion wishes that she were not a prostitute even though Don Juan says he prefers her as she is. She asks him if he is happy, to which he replies that she should not worry about his happiness because he does not meddle in hers. He claims that happiness is something that one searches for alone. For joy he is her man, but for happiness he is his own man. Concepcion confesses her love for Don Juan, and when she does he says that she is like all the other women. He thought that she was different because when he met her she was bitter, alone, and a free woman. Then Don Juan begins to talk about life in abstract terms. According to him, everything follows a pattern of forgetfulness. Therefore, nothing lasts. He is like the rest of the world. With this remark, he bids Concepcion goodbye.

The town crier announces the hour and warns that the best acts of the day have begun to perish. He praises those who are already dead and says that death is the only thing that lasts. In another scene, Don Juan sees Elvire and her servant approaching. Elvire's servant warns her to beware
of Don Juan. However, Elvire is curious and decides to talk to Don Juan anyway. Both of them say they have always wanted to see each other close up. For a moment they stare at each other as Don Juan admires the greatness of Elvire's soul and tells her it is a rare thing that she possesses. Elvire tells Don Juan that he has no soul and asks whether living without one is difficult. Don Juan replies that it is, but those who have no souls do not need them. He then ventures to ask Elvire why he does not have a soul. To this Elvire replies that there is a certain finality that Don Juan lacks, coupled with an air of being forever lost.

In another scene, Don Juan announces that he is going to bed. Catalinon tells the audience that it is not good when Don Juan tries to sleep because he is never able to sleep. He falls into bed wearing his boots and sword, and looks as if he were dead. When Don Juan stops thinking, boredom comes. After this, a voyage always takes place. Catalinon goes to pack the trunks.

The Commander and Alvar return from the war. The king and the townspeople welcome them. After the Commander tells the king how brave Alvar has been in war, the king grants him a reward. When Don Juan arrives, however, the crowd disappears. Later Don Juan meets Alvar, and from their manner of speech, the two men seem to be good friends. Strangely enough, Don Juan advises Alvar to kill himself as soon as possible. Alvar says he will not because he is very
happy. Don Juan then asks him what makes him happy, and he replies that he loves and is loved. Don Juan says that he loves too. Alvar maintains that there is a difference. For some reason, Don Juan feels that Alvar might have the key to happiness. Alvar reassures him that he has no secret other than the fact that he loves a woman and she loves him. This arouses Don Juan's curiosity to the extent that he wants to know the identity of the woman. Embarrassed by the way Don Juan makes fun of love, Alvar leaves.

Later that evening, Don Juan is sitting and talking to himself when he suddenly sees the lights in Anna's bedroom. When Anna appears on the balcony, Don Juan calls out to her. Anna immediately asks if he is Alvar. To expedite matters Don Juan says he is Alvar. Then he tells her that she is not happy because she does not have what she wants. Anna makes Don Juan angry by calling him her "little Alvar" and by telling him to go to bed. Don Juan retorts that he is not her "little Alvar!" Anna begs him not to be brutal with her even though she knows that he has had a rough time at war. Don Juan capitalizes on this and uses it to woo her. He then gives her a violent embrace. Anna apologizes for being so weak. When he asks her to be alone with him, she is reluctant. As she hesitates, Don Juan reminds her that time is passing and they must take advantage of it. Anna throws herself into his arms but pulls away suddenly when she discovers that it is not Alvar. Then she changes her mind.
adding that it is too bad that it is not Alvar. After Don Juan seduces Anna, he finds that she is not the key to happiness.

In Act III, a stranger, passing through the town of Seville, notices that the town is sad. An old man tells him why. Three years ago, Don Juan killed the Commander in a fight. No one knows what happened to Don Juan or what became of Anna. Anna's fiancé was killed in battle. The king reappears and seems to be worried that something might happen because a boat has just arrived. He orders that inventory be taken and that nothing be sold until then. A wild animal breaks loose and terrorizes the town. In the meantime, Don Juan and Catalinon have arrived in Seville. Fearing for the life of Don Juan, Catalinon advises him to put himself under the protection of Elvire. Instead, Don Juan goes to the king's palace and demands to see him.

The fact that Don Juan comes to the palace forces the king to do his duty. The king asks him if he is crazy. Don Juan replies that he is. Finally, Don Juan tells the king why he has come back. He has searched everywhere and has not been able to find a reason for living. The king reminds him that he left a bloody trail in Seville. Don Juan claims that he merely defended himself and tells his side of the story. The Commander surprised him in Anna's bedroom and took him for a thief. It was Anna who told Don Juan to defend himself. In fact the Commander had the advantage.
When the prosecutor comes, Don Juan says it is no use because no one will believe his story. The prosecutor accuses him of committing rape, murder, and treason. The king, who is trying to save Don Juan, asks him why he has not spoken up before. Don Juan replied that he thought he loved Anna but has discovered he did not. The prosecutor then accuses Don Juan of being insensitive. It is at this point that Don Juan launches his attack on religion. He tells the prosecutor that he does not know anything about life because he has not lived. His religion is responsible for this because it emphasizes the weaknesses of man and does not consider the total nature of man. The king cautions him to hold his tongue. Don Juan replies that he has lost everything and that he is not afraid of anything on heaven or earth. The prosecutor recommends that Don Juan be bound over to the tribunal.

Meanwhile, the crowd demands the death of Don Juan. Catalinon, who is afraid to go to the aid of his master, asks Elvire to plead for Don Juan. Elvire, pushing her way through the crowd, speaks in behalf of Don Juan. By appealing to the emotions of the crowd and of the prosecutor, Elvire wins the freedom of Don Juan, who will become her husband.

In act IV, the atmosphere is calm. Don Juan and Elvire are together and talk about love. Don Juan only wants to make love. Elvire tells him that there are other things to do. When he makes some silly statements, Elvire tells him that she does not want to start scolding him as if he were a
Later, Elvire finds Don Juan innocently embracing her servant Maria. Instead of getting mad, Elvire tells Don Juan she will always be near to help him to fight these urges for other women. At this point, Don Juan feels unworthy of Elvire. He tells her that he thought that in marrying her, his search would be finished. Now he knows that it is not. Elvire tells him that he is free to do as he pleases. In a profoundly disturbed state, Don Juan feels that he is not free.

While walking, Don Juan meets Concepcion who curses him and later bursts into tears. After they talk for a while, Don Juan persuades her to go with him in order to try to renew their love. Don Juan is profoundly disturbed. He even tells Concepcion that he is going away to a place which he does not know. Meanwhile, Catalinon searches for Don Juan because he is to attend the wedding reception being held that night. The reception begins without Don Juan. As a toast is about to be made, Don Juan comes in and begins a long speech proclaiming the nothingness of the world and the futility of man's efforts in living. Concepcion appears and tells how Don Juan has stabbed himself. Don Juan refuses help and continues to talk. Sensing that Don Juan is dying, an old man reassures him that he is the blood, strength and life of Spain. The king tells Don Juan that someone is coming. Anna appears and gives Don Juan her pardon. Shortly thereafter while talking to Elvire, Don Juan dies.
The Don Juan of Obey is similar yet different from the legendary hero. He is similar in that he commits acts such as seducing women, insulting an old man, killing two men in duels, and expressing unorthodox religious views. He is different in several ways. First of all, he is a troubled man filled with inner conflicts. Secondly, he is a thinker because he considers some of the deeper problems of man—such as life, love, death and existence—for which there are no absolutes. Thirdly, he is a seeker because he searches endlessly to resolve the insoluble.

The other characters in the play are more like types rather than individuals. El Sereno, the town crier, announces the passage of time and serves as a source of information. He is a typical character of the Spanish town. Elvire is the symbol of the virtuous woman. Anna is the woman who finds in another man what she could not find in her fiancé. Alvar is a happy man because he is satisfied with future prospects. Don Juan's mother is the typical mother who loves her son in spite of what he does. Concepcion is the town prostitute scorned by the respectable people. On the other hand, Catalinon and the king of Seville are not character types. Catalinon is a realist because he realizes his limitations. When Don Juan is in trouble he says that he knows that duty requires him to go to his master's aid but his own safety comes first. The king of Seville is torn between love for Don Juan and duty to his people. Despite pressures
to condemn Don Juan, the king remains loyal to the end.

Obey's Don Juan is a typical twentieth-century man in search of truth and purpose. Perhaps Obey is trying to say that we must make our own happiness. If we become too preoccupied with searching, we may find that everything is absurd and therefore meaningless. We then become miserable creatures in search of our own inevitable death. In order to live we must accept social institutions and traditional beliefs to help us find purpose in life.
CONCLUSION

After having examined three plays treating the Don Juan theme, the author has noted several innovations in relations to the original legendary hero. The legendary Don Juan of Tirso de Molina is essentially a trickster who gains his fame by seducing women. During one of his seductions he kills the woman's father who surprises him. As far as repentance is concerned, Tirso's Don Juan believes that his reckoning day will come, but he prefers not to think about it. With Molière, who treats Don Juan as a seventeenth-century figure, we have Don Juan as the libertine, the atheist, and the hypocrite. That Molière's Don Juan is a libertine cannot be doubted because he possesses libertine ideas at a time when strict adherence to tradition was mandatory. Molière adds atheism and hypocrisy as two new characteristics of the legendary hero. Unlike the Don Juan of Tirso de Molina, Molière's Don Juan is a staunch atheist to the end. Although given several opportunities to repent, Don Juan refuses each time. The hypocrisy of Molière's Don Juan lies in the fact that he wants to pretend to be sincere while continuing to live a life of debauchery.

The Don Juan of Rostand is a Don Juan unmasked. He is definitely the ego-centric romantic hero who believes that
he is the greatest lover of all times. Rostand chooses as his point of departure the moment where Molière's play ends—that is, Rostand's play opens with Don Juan on his way to hell. After Don Juan gets his new lease on life, the Devil proceeds to strip him of his unmerited pride. As a result, Don Juan is an old man disillusioned by the discovery that his conquests have been due more to the desire of the women than to any special charms which he believes he possesses. Unlike the Don Juans of Tirso de Molina and Moliere, Rostand's Don Juan finds punishment by being transformed into a puppet condemned to act out eternally the drama of adultery.

André Obey presents the twentieth-century Don Juan plagued by inner conflicts. He makes him more of a person rather than a legendary figure in that Obey's character is a thinking man and a seeker. When he becomes very disillusioned with the world, he takes the easy way out by committing suicide. This is very unlike what the legendary figure would do. Unlike the other Don Juans, Obey's creation has been pardoned by society. It is his inner conflicts which force him to renounce life in this world by his own hands. He does, however, identify with the legendary figure in that he commits the same crimes.

There are some other points of interest in the three plays. For instance, Don Juan is actually presented in different stages of physical and psychological growth.
Molière presents him as a young, energetic and unstable lover. As the play progresses he ages and becomes insensitive. Rostand's Don Juan is an egotistical old man who sees himself as the world's greatest lover. After he has become unmasked, he remains the same. The Don Juan of Obey is presented from birth to adolescence, to maturity. From birth to adolescence he is becoming the legendary figure. In maturity he has arrived but becomes anguished because of the incertitudes of life. Tirso's play has no beggar scene. However, in the plays of Molière and Rostand, the beggar appears. In Rostand's play the beggar returns the gold coin that he received from Don Juan in Molière's play. Even though the valets have the same role, Molière and Rostand chose to call theirs Sganarelle. Obey calls his Catalinon, the same as Tirso's valet. Obey introduces El Sereno, a typical figure in Spanish towns whose role is synonymous with that of a night watchman or town crier. Tirso's Don Juan has four particular women with whom he becomes involved. Molière concentrates on Elvire because she pursues Don Juan and has the courage to rise above her indignation to pray for the salvation of Don Juan. Rostand makes the White Ghost his ideal woman who might be another Elvire. Obey makes Elvire the symbol of virtue and the only woman who really loves Don Juan.

The legend of Don Juan no doubt intrigued Molière, Rostand and Obey because of its universal appeal. As in the
words of Rostand's Don Juan:

Virtue detests me, with such gleam in her eye!
Every boorish lout prays for the power
To act as I do, if only for an hour.
Professors poke their analytic noses
Into each of my alluring poses.
Secretly they all admire me
For daring the kiss they are too cowardly.
To dare. I represent the thing they miss.
There is no work—despite your adder's hiss—
No virtue, science, or faith that cannot be
Reduced to this, the wish to be like me.¹

For this reason, Don Juan as a legendary figure will continue
to be a subject of interest in world literature.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


