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GRADUATE COLLEGE

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TWENTIETH CENTURY INTERPRETATIONS OF THE DON JUAN THEME

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TWENTIETH CENTURY INTERPRETATIONS OF THE DON JUAN THEME

The treatment of the Don Juan theme in works by Azorín, Valle-Inclán, Unamuno, Ayala, Grau, and Torrente Ballester shows the individuality of their interpretations. The results manifest the influences of personal ideology and aesthetics, as each allows his imagination to transform or recreate the classical hero, but a concern for man's place in the cosmic order indicates an alignment with the shifting twentieth century perspectives. Azorín presents a new Don Juan who has matured spiritually and outgrown his former image. Instead of the sensual, rebellious Don Juan, he chooses decency, austerity, idealism, charity, and love as the criteria for his hero. With a minimum of essentials, Azorín creates a new character in his impressionistic novel Don Juan. This new creation, one more acceptable to the author, is a subtle negation of the sensuality in the traditional hero. However, Valle-Inclán's Don Juan, the Marqués de Bradomín, is a satanical libertine whose story is told in Sonatas. A predilection for the ornate aesthetics of Modernism and the decadence of Symbolism determine his interpretation of Don Juan and his conscious effort to create an alter ego.

Unamuno combines three themes in his play El Hermano Juan: the reality of a fictional character, the concept of the world as a theater, and the equation of life to a dream. Although he is sincere in his attacks on Tenorio, whom he calls an intercessor, Unamuno's primary preoccupation, man's immortality, overshadows other themes. Ayala also condemns Don Juan in his novels Tigre Juan and El curandero, declaring that the public is deceived in its adulation since the libertine is impotent and weak. The real hero is Tigre Juan, the antithesis of the popular concept, whereas Vespasiano is exposed as effeminate and ineffectual. Ayala uses irony and humor as he also attacks the antiquated concept of honor.

Grau's Don Juan de Carillana is a ridiculous aging figure while El burlador que no se burla shows Don Juan as a figure of animal instinct, unable to communicate or know God, who brings sorrow to others. Further existentialist ideas are used by Torrente Ballester as he attempts to bring Spanish literature into the twentieth century in Don Juan. The novel's theme is that Hell for the hero is himself.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
I. AZORÍN	6
II. VALLE-INCLÁN	19
III. UNAMUNO	42
IV. PEREZ DE AYALA	77
V. JACINTO GRAU	103
VI. GONZALO TORRENTE BALLESTER	124
CONCLUSION	139
BIBLIOGRAPHY	144

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I wish to dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my son
Major Allan L. Smith.

I wish to give my special thanks to the Chairman of my committee
Dr. James Abbott as well as the other members of my committee for their
help.

INTRODUCTION

Although the rebellious spirit of the twentieth century is early manifest in Spanish literary reactions to old values and forms, many of its authors evince a propensity for the traditional Don Juan theme. The universality of its appeal, its scope and plasticity afford a rich field for diversities of the various perspectives of these writers. In their quest for new paths, vigorous individuality asserts itself as each man interprets the Tenorian hero: Azorín (José Martínez Ruiz), Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Miguel de Unamuno, Ramón Pérez de Ayala, Jacinto Grau, Salvador de Madariaga, and Gonzalo Torrente Ballester. Azorín presents a new Don Juan who has matured spiritually and outgrown, with some effort, his former image. As a leader of the new generation, Azorín places more emphasis on original characteristics of decency, austerity, idealism, charity and other admirable qualities which he gives to his hero. Valle-Inclán indicates his preference for the elegant Marqués de Bradomín who, although endowed with traditional Don Juan charisma and audacity, is blemished by perversion and decadence. Unamuno declares that Don Juan's grandeur as the most imminently theatrical personage is a result of his rôle of always playing himself to himself. Unamuno strips away the glamour of the traditional and exposes Don Juan as an intermediary, un alcahuete. Pérez de Ayala believes that admiration for Don Juan is based on a popular misconception of his true nature: His masculinity is a fable;

despite his sexual involvement with numerous women, Don Juan fathers no progeny. Ayala condemns Tenorio as a frustrated impotent who rushes from woman to woman in a futile search for one who can rekindle his passions. Grau presents contrasting ages of the Don Juan character in two comedias: as a lascivious youthful protagonist he is indifferent to the tragedy he leaves behind, and only concerned with self-gratification; as an aging lover, he is subjected to a ridiculous rôle totally incompatible with the traditional Spanish concept. In both epochs, Grau's heroes are synthetic copies. Madariaga, unable to resist the polemic, compares six famous characters from the European stage by assembling them so that they may meet a mysterious veiled lady from the world of theater. She is given the authority to choose the true Don Juan, the only one who, for her, exists. The lady is emphatic in her choice of Zorrilla's hero over those created by Tirso, Molière, Byron, Mozart, and Pushkin. Dr. Gregorio Marañón carefully studies the Don Juan character, presenting a psychological analysis as well as a biological diagnosis. This prestigious man of science finds a feminine element in Don Juan caused by hormone factors. Other essayists of a literary nature are also donjuanistas: According to Maeztu, although a dozen talented writers have tried to place their stamp on the intrepid seductor, Don Juan is still in search of an author who can definitely crystallize his character; Bergamín, preferring Zorrilla's creation, compares it to El Greco's magnificent canvas Entierro del Conde de Orgaz, pointing out their mutual elements of religion, mystery, and fantasy. Ortega y Gasset uses Socrates and Don Juan in his discussion of ironies in human life in the two dimensions of culture and

spontaneity. Traditional themes are frequent among writers of the twentieth century and form one of the characteristics of the various generations. They are one aspect of the general re-evaluation of Spain's past and its values, often with the goal of changing the country's image. Spanish subjectivity tenaciously refuses to conform as each man deals with the controversial Don Juan theme. Some of these authors show that Don Juan is not a whole man, and they are trying to change the Spanish concept of machismo by exposing his lack of masculinity. They choose, in an eclectic manner, those elements from the original which appeal to them.

Tirso de Molina is the pseudonym of a Mercedarian monk in the seventeenth century who created the first dramatization of the Don Juan legend. Since his pen gave the world one of its greatest characters, Don Juan has made his way into virtually all literatures of Europe. Distinguished authors and musicians from widely-separated periods and diverse nationalities have adapted, interpreted, and defined this classical figure. A careful study of modern Spanish writers seems to indicate a marked preference for the Romantic version Don Juan Tenorio (1844) by José Zorrilla. Zorrilla's protagonist is a clear interpretation of the legendary Don Juan: a bold libertine who defies the laws of God, of man, and of society. The only reality for him is the unrestrained exercise of his monstrous will, which is devoted to erotic activity to the exclusion of all other. Created in the image of Tirso de Molina's original, he resorts to deceit and trickery, but seduction is the only particular form which his impulses take. Don Juan is the confident erotic hero endowed with an irresistible magnetism for women.

Don Juan, the quintessence of masculinity, is elemental, spontaneous, impatient, and violent. A man may be donjuanesco by having some, not necessarily all, of these essentials. Tirso de Molina's imagination conceived a male ego, a prototype with one consuming motivation. Although each age, each country, has recreated him in its own image, Don Juan remains Spanish, always identifiable with the Mercedarian original.

Madariaga joins the polemics concerning the true Don Juan in the prologue of his brief "capricho dramático", La Don-Juanía o Seis Don Juanes y una dama. He points out the common mistake often made by those who confuse Don Juan and donjuanismo:

Pero entonces, se me preguntará, ¿en qué quedamos? ¿Es Don Juan un hombre no sólo mujeriego sino amujerado, o es el prototipo y la quintaesencia de lo masculino? Todo está en convenir primero de qué se habla. Una cosa es Don Juan y otra cosa es el hombre donjuanesco. El uno es un potente símbolo literario, quizá el más potente de los símbolos de nuestro arte; el otro es ...¹

There is a marked difference between the terms donjuanesco and el hombre mujeriego. The mujeriego likes woman, all women, and enjoys their company, but Don Juan is not interested in woman per se; she is an object of possession for him, but his interest is gone once he has enjoyed her charms.

Another definition which needs to be made in order to clarify the preceding terms in the hombre macho. In his work Rómulo Gallegos, Lowell Dunham succinctly explains this term which he views as bordering the pathological, a semidiós:

El hombre macho es el "semidiós de bárbaras tierras".⁷⁵
Cuando la ley y el orden son meros conceptos y aun menos que

¹Salvador de Madariaga, Don Juan y la don Juanía (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1950), p. 12.

conceptos, palabras sin contenido, cualquier vestigio de organización social debe resultar necesariamente del arbitrio personal del hombre que, por ser el más fuerte, es capaz de imponer su voluntad. El hombre macho, por lo consiguiente, se encuentra a menudo convertido en protector de los seres pacíficos que viven en la región, siempre que "se les metieran bajo el ala".²

The misinterpretation of the terms Don Juan, donjuanismo and el hombre macho is prevalent among Spanish critics, and few non-Spaniards faithfully follow the basic characteristics set down by Tirso de Molina and adhered to by Zorrilla. The monk's purpose in producing the satanical hero is not to entertain but rather to use him as a moral lesson by condemning his arrogant sinner to eternal damnation. Zorrilla's popularity results from giving Don Juan the opportunity for salvation through repentance, divine grace, and the intercession of the woman who symbolizes the Romantic feminine ideal.

In the shifting of perspectives which has taken place in the twentieth century Spaniards maintain a nostalgic sentiment for the traditional Don Juan, regardless of personal tastes and viewpoints. Each author freely chooses his attributes and molds them in accordance with those tastes, interests and conceptions.

²Lowell Dunham, Rómulo Gallegos, Vida y obra (Mexico: Colección Studium, Vol. XV, 1957), p. 245.

TWENTIETH CENTURY INTERPRETATIONS OF THE DON JUAN THEME

CHAPTER I

AZORÍN

Azorín's predilection for simplicity is fundamental in his modification of the Don Juan of literary motif. His interest lies not in the spectacular, the ornate, but rather in the humble, the insignificant things, in lo cotidiano. The first wave of rebellion against the old forms began with his novels shortly after the turn of the century. He classifies his work Don Juan¹ as a novel; it contains, however, only thirty-nine brief chapters, with no plot in the true sense of its accepted meaning. As a creator of new manners of writing and of perceiving the ills of Spain, Azorín perhaps had the most influence upon contemporary letters. As one of the non-conformists in the youth of his time, he called his group the "generación del 98". His definition of his generation was primarily directed by social transcendence. Although each of these youthful writers developed his own positive personality, his own political and aesthetic orientation, they were characterized by their efforts to attain a non-materialistic ideal which would permit Spain to perfect art and politics.² In order to

¹Azorín, Don Juan (Madrid: Colección Austral, Sexta edición, 1962).

²Edward Inman Fox, Azorín as a Literary Critic (New York: Hispanic Institute in the United States, 1962), p. 45.

accomplish these goals, they began with a re-evaluation of Spanish literature of the past. Azorín's Don Juan is an indication of his attention to the authors of this early era.

Daily life in an ancient Castilian city, as it impassively endures the inexorable flow of time, is the setting for Azorín's unorthodox Don Juan, an older protagonist softened and mellowed by this eternal recurrence. The man changes, but the city (Spain) never changes or dies. In the epilogue Azorín transforms the former seducer of lovely ladies into "Hermano Juan", an aging hermit living in chastity with all thoughts of his past conquests buried deep within his memories. The author's version of the traditional figure is created in harmony with his vision of life as an endless repetition rather than drama. Tirso de Molina would perhaps not recognize his literary progeny in this sentimental religious person. Each age, however, has its own aesthetic norms, and Azorín explains his concept of el burlador as he thus defines the true Don Juan: "Yo soy, sin duda, el verdadero Tenorio. El otro era grosero y sensual ..."³ His aversion to el exceso will not permit him to conceive a sensual, gross hero. Later he amplifies his concept of "el verdadero Juan Tenorio":

Se me olvidaba decir a usted que nunca, en mis seducciones, traspasé los límites de lo más austero, lo más honesto, lo más idealista. De otro modo, con la sensualidad, no sería yo el verdadero Juan Tenorio.⁴

Instead of the sensual, rebellious Don Juan, Azorín chooses decency, austerity, idealism, charity, and love for all mankind as the

³Azorín, "El verdadero Don Juan", Obras completas, Tomo VIII (Madrid: Aguilar, 1948), p. 515.

⁴Ibid., p. 516.

criteria for his literary creation. These are the things he hopes Spaniards will admire, not the scandalous type of the traditional Don Juan. With a minimum of essentials, Azorín attains the desired impression of his principal character as he narrates a rapid succession of loosely connected happenings which constitute the action of his work. It is impossible to separate his unique style from any character delineation: the two components are a smoothly blended impressionistic entity. The structure of Azorín's work parallels impressionistic painting. In the same manner as the impressionistic painters apply to the canvas small daubs of pure color which, when viewed at a distance, are blended by the retina to form the picture, Azorín presents small episodes or vignettes which, when viewed from a distance, form Don Juan. A glorification of minute details creates the desired atmosphere as a basis for reality. Azorín's primary objective is to evoke ideas by leaving to the reader some opportunity to participate in the novel's creation by using his own imagination. The author does not endeavor to be vague but rather to voice ideas and express meanings more precise than effusion ordinarily can convey. Short staccatto sentences neatly sketch Don Juan: "No es alto ni bajo; ni delgado ni grueso. ... La ropa que viste es pulcra, rica, pero sin apariencias suntuosas. ... Habla con sencillez. ... Muchas veces se ingenia para que el socorrido no sepa que es él quien le socorre. Pone la amistad - flor suprema de la civilización - por encima de todo."⁵ Such a definite introduction prepares one for the sharp deviation from the confluence of the Don Juan motif.

⁵Azorín, Don Juan. pp. 17-18.

Azorín's model for the changes in the protagonist's traits is given in the prologue to Don Juan⁶ in which he indicates that it is based on a poem by the thirteenth century poet Gonzalo de Berceo. In Los milagros de Nuestra Señora (Milagro IV) Berceo relates the history of Don Juan del Parado y Ramos: "el caso de un monje sensual y mundano".⁷ Berceo's Don Juan devoted all of his thoughts and activity to "deleites terrenos":

Por salud de su cuerpo o por vevir más sano,
usaba lectuarios apriesa e cutiano,
en yvierno calientes, e fríos en verano,
debríe andar devoto, e andaba lozano.⁸

Berceo possesses a sense of humor rare in religious poetry of the Middle Ages, likewise, a trait not found in Azorín's adaptation of the metamorphosis of his character. But the erring Don Juan del Prado must atone for his sins, or repent, so a moral lesson is taught when the sinner turns to María, who intercedes for him. His pathetic and tender appeal for forgiveness cannot be denied: "Pero, al fin, vence Nuestra Señora." Don Juan del Prado y Ramos does not die but: "su espíritu salió de grave enfermedad profundamente transformado."⁹ Azorín's character is introduced as a new person, the metamorphosis already accomplished, as Don Juan emerges from the pages a quiet, refined, decent gentleman who believes that friendship is the supreme flower of civilization.

⁶Ibid., pp. 13-14.

⁷Ibid., p. 13.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 14.

The friends of the twentieth century Don Juan are from all social and economic levels: el obispo ciego, el aurífice, el doctor Quijano, el maestro, el presidente de la Audiencia, Don Leonardo (el roble centenario), el Maestre Don Gonzalo, and his aristocratic family. Don Juan moves confidently and serenely through the various walks of life in the old city, at home with the aristocracy, and equally comfortable in the rustic farm home of Don Gil. He is never too occupied to find time for a casual visit with the elderly bishop, the venerable centenarian, as well as with the new governor. Pleasant evenings in the Maestre's luxurious mansion, where family intimates gather to discuss topics ranging from Montesquieu to numismatics, afford Don Juan an opportunity to relax in a cultural atmosphere. There are frequent quotations in Latin and French while Jeannette, daughter of the Maestre, plays the piano and sings songs in French. Jeannette is a vivacious, somewhat flirtatious, eighteen year old: "La mirada quiere demostrar confianza, y dice recelo; quiere mostrar inocencia, y descubre malicia ..."¹⁰

Only three scenes subtly suggest sensuality in the entire novel. Angela, the Maestre's wife, has a sister who is the Abbess of San Pablo Convent. Sor Natividad is an unorthodox version of a nun. Azorín surprises the reader with his portrait of the Abbess as she prepares to retire:

Se esparce por la alcoba un vago y sensual aroma. Los movimientos de sor Natividad son lentos, pausados, sus manos blancas van, con suavidad, despojando el esbelto cuerpo de los hábitos exteriores. Un instante se detiene sor Natividad.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 109.

¿Ha contemplado su busto sólido, firme, en un espejo? La ropa de batista es sutil y blanquísima.¹¹

Such a picture seems incongruous with the aura of sanctity normally associated with her position of authority. Although Azorín asks: "¿Ha contemplado su busto sólido, firme, en un espejo?", he leaves the definite impression that the answer is, "¡Qué sí!"

The only true Don Juan scene in the traditional concept is found in the chapter "Una tentación celestial". Don Juan is invited by the Maestre to go to San Pablo to see the beautiful patio. Although Sor Natividad has been notified that they are coming, when they arrive she continues to cut flowers for her basket, appearing unaware of the men's presence; however, "en su faz se ha dibujado leve sonrisa." As she moves forward, her long flowing tunic gently outlines the soft feminine figure:

De cuando en cuando, sor Natividad se inclina o se ladea para coger una flor: bajo la blanca estameña se marca la curva elegante de la cadera, se acusa la rotundidad armoniosa del seno... Al avanzar un paso, la larga túnica se ha prendido entre el ramaje. Al descubierto han quedado las piernas. Ceñida por fina seda blanca, se veía iniciarse desde el tobillo el ensanche de la graciosa curva carnosa y llena. ¿Se ha dado cuenta de ello sor Natividad? Ha transcurrido un momento. Al cabo, con un movimiento tranquilo de la mano, sor Natividad ha bajado la túnica.¹²

In this incident Azorín answers his own question more plainly. There can be no doubts about the ensuing scene which transpires between Don Juan and Sor Natividad. While Don Gonzalo is preoccupied with admiration for the beauties of the stone arches, Don Juan's eyes are on Sor Natividad. The Maestre points his cane to the ornamental archi-

¹¹Ibid., p. 37.

¹²Ibid., p. 114.

ecture, saying: "Mire usted - mire usted qué bella tracería." Don Juan quickly looks at the decorative arches, then deliberately lowers his gaze to Sor Natividad:

—Hermosa —ha contestado don Juan, contemplando la delicada tracería de piedra.

Y luego, lentamente, bajando la vista y posándola en los ojos de sor Natividad:

—Verdaderamente... hermosa.

Dos rosas, tan rojas como las rosas del jardín, han surgido en la cara de sor Natividad. Ha tosido nerviosamente sor Natividad y se ha inclinado sobre un rosal.¹³

The tranquil hand, not a nervous tug by an embarrassed nun, betrays Sor Natividad's pleasure in Don Juan's flattery.

Flattery and coquetry are also traits of her niece. Jeannette is involved in the other sensual incident in the story. One night Don Juan is a guest at her home, and he plucks a rose from the patio, gives it to the young girl, saying, "A la rosa más rosa". Some time later Jeannette is a visitor shopping for antiques in the home where Don Juan lives. As they are being shown through the house, the owner points out his room. The withered red rose which he had given to Jeannette now adorns a picture in his bedroom, suggesting that Jeannette has brought la rosa there for a rendezvous. The girl's pleasure upon seeing that a sentimental Don Juan has preserved a token of their flirtation is obvious. Since the author gives no further explanation of how the gift which Don Juan so gallantly presented to her is now in his room, there is a strong suggestion that Jeannette did indeed manage to come secretly and bring it there. It is only a clue, a suggestion, but the core of the impressionistic structure.

¹³Ibid., p. 115.

Even though these three episodes suggest that Don Juan perhaps remembers his past, his actions indicate that he is no longer the rebellious character ruled by his senses and impulses. His emotional and spiritual maturity are evident in the remaining thirty six chapters of the work. Decency will not permit Azorín's Don Juan to take advantage of Sor Natividad or Jeannette. The impression of suppressed sensuality clearly emerges from his vignettes of Sor Natividad, but Don Juan does not attempt to seduce her. Nor does he respond to the obvious interest of her vivacious niece who takes delight in displaying her youthful charms as she runs and dances through the mansion. The girl teases Don Juan as often as she can, but he quietly ignores her advances:

Otras veces, Jeannette comienza a charlar volublemente con el caballero, en voz alta, con estrépito; poco a poco va bajando la voz; cada vez se inclina mas hacia don Juan; después acaba por decir suavemente, susurrando, una frase inocente, pero con una ligera entonación equívoca. Don Juan calla. Ahora Jeannette pone el libro que está leyendo en manos de don Juan y le dice, con un gesto de inocencia: "Señor caballero, explíqueme usted esta poesía de amor; yo no la entiendo."¹⁴

Austerity is another of Don Juan's new virtues. Although he is wealthy, he lives humbly in a rented room in an old house furnished with antiques. When Angela and Jeannette visit Doña María, she proudly points out her tenant's neat and orderly room. Don Juan's predilection for simplicity is also manifest in his appearance; meticulous in dress, he selects fine materials but avoids all ostentation, wears no jewelry, and uses only toiletries without perfumes. He finds his pleasures in books, art, music, and quiet visits with friends. Meditation is ex-

¹⁴Ibid., p. 111.

tremely important to Don Juan's spiritual life, and he enjoys alternating peaceful intervals of solitude with the unsophisticated social activities of the small village.

A strong sense of social justice for the impoverished farmers of a neighboring community manifests one aspect of Don Juan's idealism. When he sees the abject misery of those peasants, who lack even bread, as they till the barren depleted soil with primitive methods and implements, Don Juan is filled with compassion: "... ha puesto en el espíritu de Don Juan una sensación indefinible e idealidad."¹⁵ In another illustrative situation he goes with Pozas to talk with the new governor and ask for help in the plight of some prisoners, one a ragged boy, who arrived the previous day from Barcelona. Don Juan requests official assistance in obtaining railway passage for these people who have walked so far, but the governor refuses on the grounds that there is no legality for such expenditures on prisoners. Then Don Juan offers to pay the fares, but again the governor denies their petition.

Don Juan's idealism is substantiated by his modest charity. All of the village is talking about the mysterious incident which apparently caused a certain tía to move suddenly to lonely Cereros street. She maintains a stubborn silence to all curious questions, keeps the windows and doors tightly closed. Sometimes loud voices, screams and the sounds of blows fill the air. One afternoon Don Juan is strolling by when the door is quickly opened, and a pale young girl emerges carrying a suitcase and a bird cage. Dark circles under her swollen eyes reveal her unhappy state. As she sits on the suitcase, the girl

¹⁵Ibid., p. 59.

begins to sob. Don Juan slowly approaches; "Dejó caer en su falda unos papelitos azules y se alejó de prisa."¹⁶ A more generous example is shown in the story of the large gift sent from Madrid with instructions that the money is to be used for additional school buildings and for tuition for poor children in the village. No one knows anything about the benefactor, don Antonio Cano. When the first stone is laid to inaugurate the project, much praise is lavished on the unknown Cano, but Azorín indicates the true donor: "Confundido entre el público, don Juan sonríe."¹⁷

A tender love for all mankind motivates Don Juan's conduct throughout the novel. He visits people who need him, as in the case of the old blind bishop who longs to see once more only a bit of white wall covered by a patch of blue sky. Don Juan also accompanies his friend the good Dr. Quijano as he makes his rounds through the city barrios, rich and poor alike. After the death of frail little Carlitos, Don Juan comes to comfort the grieving mother and prays for her: "Señor: acoge en tu seno el alma dolorosa de una madre."¹⁸ The most poignant example of this gentle man's love for humanity is the story of the bare-foot boy on a mountain trail, his small body bent under the weight of a bundle of firewood. As Don Juan watches the slow painful steps of the pathetic child, he asks himself if this lad is condemned to bear the burden of all the sorrows of little children who suffer from the injustices of man. As the boy attempts to raise his head, Don Juan looks

¹⁶Ibid., p. 92.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 125.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 90.

at his blood-stained feet with compassion:

Don Juan ha cogido al niño y lo ha sentado en sus rodillas. Don Juan le va limpiando sus piecitos. El niño tenía al principio la actitud recelosa y encogida de un animalito montaraz caído en la trampa. Poco a poco se ha ido tranquilizando; entonces el niño le coge la mano a don Juan y se la va besando en silencio. ¿Qué le pasa al buen caballero que no puede hablar?¹⁹

In the epilogue, Don Juan, now called "Hermano Juan" because of his pious life, is a gentle old man with absolutely no interest in materialism. Curious rumours about his past persist in the quiet village, but Azorín gives no clue to the reason for Don Juan's choice of a solitary life. However, in another novel, Doña Inés, Azorín divulges the love between the aristocratic, beautiful Doña Inés and Don Juan, although Don Juan disappears before this novel actually begins. It is also based on the Don Juan theme. There is no suggestion of the true reason why Don Juan leaves his Doña Inés, but neither of them have another love affair. She spends her old age in Buenos Aires, where she founds a religious school for young girls, who call her "Mamá Inés". In the beginning of her story, Doña Inés is contemplating a letter on her dressing table, fearing to open it: "Una carta no es nada y lo es todo."²⁰ She wonders if she should toss a coin, hoping that this letter will not be as the others. When she finally reads it, the lady sinks into a chair, as if her body cannot support her sorrow and disappointment. After a long silence, she rises, takes the letter and tears it into a hundred pieces, then throws them from her balcony.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 122.

²⁰Azorín, Doña Inés (Madrid: Caro Reggio, 1925), p. 26.

Later the author reveals that a small gas light in Don Juan's house burned until daylight the night before Inés receives her letter. The night after its arrival, Don Juan's house is dark: "Durante mucho tiempo han de permanecer juntas las maderas de los balcones y de las puertas de esta casa."²¹ Doña Inés, deeply in love with Don Juan, is reluctant to open his letter since others have not brought good news, but she is not prepared to learn that he has abandoned her. Although Don Juan does not openly admit his guilt, he blames himself by implication; his self-punishment is a lonely existence which gradually becomes ascetic.

Azorín's hero attempts to correct injustices in his imperfect little world, and atone for his own, through courageous moral action. This admirable new creation, one more acceptable to the author, is a subtle negation of the traditional aspects of sensuality in the Don Juan character. As Don Juan's image is changed by placing emphasis on new idealistic values, so can the image of Spain be elevated when its pueblo realizes that the old scandalous Don Juan is not a true measure of manhood. Azorín retains, however, the religious element of eternal salvation through the magic of seduction. Dr. Marañón praises Azorín's Don Juan as one of the two great modern Spanish creations with a religious ending: " ... que tengo por la evocación moderna más penetrante y poética del burlador, y desde luego por uno de los libros más hermosos de nuestra literatura."²²

²¹Ibid., p. 34.

²²Gregorio Marañón, "Vejez y muerte de don Juan", Obras completas, IV (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1967), p. 1074.

Azorín's stylized work is a series of little occurrences and cuadros de costumbre strung together as beads on a rosary. The binding thread which loosely unites them is the protagonist. It seems that Azorín merely wishes to evoke memories of Spain's past glories by showing the old city, the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. It is in his metamorphosis of Don Juan that Azorín's deviation from the normal is obvious. Were it not for the few incidents with Sor Natividad and Jeannette, the question posed to "Hermano Juan" in the "Epílogo" would seem most anomalous:

—Hermano Juan: no me atrevo a decirlo; pero he oído contar que usted ha amado mucho y que todas las mujeres se le rendían.

—El amor que conozco ahora es el amor más alto. Es la piedad por todo.

(Una palomita blanca volaba por el azul.)²³

These incidents, so unlike Don Juan's other behavior, are given just enough significance in the story to subtly link Azorín's hero to his notorious ancestor, the Burlador de Sevilla.

²³Azorín, Don Juan., p. 152.

CHAPTER II

VALLE-INCLÁN

Valle-Inclán's predilection for the ornate aesthetics of Modernism and the decadence of Symbolism determine his treatment of the Don Juan theme. The history of a satanical libertine, the Marqués de Bradomín, is unveiled in his Memorias whose four Sonatas correspond the seasons and amorous periods of his life, each set in different geographical locations: Otoño (Galicia), 1902; Estío (Mexico), 1903; Primavera (Italy), 1904; and Invierno (Basque Provinces), 1905. The aristocratic Marqués is endowed with magnetic appeal for women, and other donjuanesco traits, but cursed by sensual passions which at times descend to latent incestuous and homosexual currents. In the Sonata de Invierno an aged aunt indulgently chides her nephew: "¡Calla!... Eres el más admirable de los Don Juanes: feo, católico y sentimental."¹ Bradomín's religion appears to be predominantly ritualism. Its source of attraction is the ceremonial Roman liturgy, but his actual doctrine is hedonism, which for the Marqués is sensual gratification. Nevertheless, he cannot eradicate the deeply-rooted Church dogma; this is clearly exposed in Bradomín's inability to carry Conch's dead body past the flame of a lamp which is always kept burning under a statue of Christ: "Allá, en el fondo de la antesala, brillaba la lámpara del Nazareno, y tuve

¹Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Sonatas: Memorias del Marqués de Bradomín (México: Populibros "La Prensa", 1959), p. 312.

miedo de cruzar ante la imagen desmelenada y lívida. ¡Tuve miedo de aquella mirada muerta! Volví atrás."² Thus it is clear that Valle-Inclán's aesthetic hero, who is sufficiently religious to experience a perverse joy in profanation, is fearful of the lifeless eyes in an image of the crucified Christ.

Ancestral ties with the Church, particularly those on his maternal side, lead to an appointment to the Pope's honor guard for the youthful Marqués. His Memorias of the springtime in his life begin when he is sent as a papal representative to the regal old castle of the Gaetani family. Princess Gaetani, a widow of Spanish descent, appeals to the Pope because the palacial prelate, Monseñor Gaetani, is dying, and she feels that he should have the spiritual comfort of someone from the Vatican. When the Marqués arrives, the Princess warmly welcomes him; she remembers young Xavier Bradomín because she is an old friend of his mother. The Princesa proudly presents her children: five innocent, charming girls, each bearing the name María. The oldest, María Rosario, is preparing to enter a convent as a novitiate. The Princess tells Xavier that she encouraged this step because her daughter will continue to live a serene sheltered life of devotion.

The innocence, freshness, and beauty of María Rosario are so appealing that Bradomín begins his first hours as a guest in the palace by pursuing the girl. At first she is bewildered, then embarrassed, by his behavior, which is most inappropriate for a papal envoy. Although the Princess is barely eighteen and has been carefully protected at all

²Ibid., pp. 224-225.

times, she senses his intentions and studiously avoids him. However, the Marqués surprises her lonely vigil beside the bed where the body of Monseñor Gaetani lies. An awesome sense of death permeates the castle; servants, guests, and members of the family move in respectful silence through the great halls. The only sounds in the massive cámara mortuoria are the cautious footsteps in the corridors and the whisperings of the white candles which cast their pale light upon the corpse, now rigid in the shroud of a Franciscan habit. The novitiate, suddenly aware of the funeral atmosphere, accepts gratefully Bradomín's offer to escort her back to the tertulia where her family sits. When the Marqués realizes that the hall is empty, he is dominated by his primitive instincts:

Salimos al corredor que estaba solo, y sin poder dominarme estreché una mano de María Rosario y quise besarla, pero ella la retiró con vivo enojo:
 —¿Que haceis?
 —¡Que os adoro! ¡Que os adoro!
 Asustada, huyó por el largo corredor. Yo la seguí:
 —¡Os adoro! ¡Os adoro!
 Ella suspiro con angustia:
 —¡Dejadme! ¡Por favor, dejadme!
 Y sin volver la cabeza, azorada, trémula, huía por el corredor. Sin aliento y sin fuerzas se detuvo en la puerta del salón. Yo todavía murmuré a su oído:
 —¡Os adoro! ¡Os adoro!³

Death, or its imminent presence, stimulates erotic desire, a perversion which reaches its lowest point in Otoño. His decadence follows Baudelaire's ideas on the corruption of matter and Nature's baseness.

María Rosario is so angered by his advances that she flees each time he approaches. The girl's rebuff stings his arrogant pride, and increases his lust for her. He is obsessed with curiosity, wondering

³Ibid., p. 29.

what she really feels: "¿Qué siente ella?... ¿Qué siente ella por mí?...".⁴ Later, the Marqués obeys what first seems to be an ardent impulse: as he crosses the dark terrace, a fitful breeze blows the curtains over María Rosario's window, exposing her pale figure inside the room:

No puedo decir lo que entonces pasó por mí. Creo que primero fue un impulso ardiente, y después una sacudida fría y cruel. La audacia que se admira en los labios y en los ojos de aquel retrato que del divino César Borgia pintó el divino Rafael de Sanzio. Me volví mirando en torno. Escuché un instante: En el jardín y en el Palacio todo era silencio. Llegué cauteloso a la ventana, y salté dentro. La Santa dio un grito: Se dobló blandamente como una flor cuando pasa el viento, y quedó tendida, desmayada, con el rostro pegado a la tierra. En mi memoria vive siempre el recuerdo de sus manos blancas y frías: ¡Manos diáfanos como la hostia!...

Al verla desmayada la cogí en brazos y la llevé a su lecho, que era como altar de lino albo y de rizado encaje.⁵

Ramón Sender believes that the author's comparison of Bradomín to Aretino, Borgia, or Casanova is incorrect in each case:

El donjuanismo del marqués de Bradomín es una mezcla del de Pietro Aretino el amigo de Tiziano, el viejo César Borgia y el ya moderno Casanova cuyo parecido físico con Rousseau en las estampas de la época a veces nos asombra. Pero todo eso no es en Bradomín sino sugestión libresca. Para ser Aretino le falta el don satírico y la villanía dorada y juglaresca. Para emparentarse con un Borgia le falta la soltura satánica con que éste desafiaba al destino en la capilla, en la alcoba y en el campo de batalla. En cuanto a Casanova el abate italiano es indigno del marqués de Bradomín y éste por una razón u otra lo habría hecho apalea un día en las escaleras de su palacio.⁶

⁴Ibid., p. 48.

⁵Ibid., pp. 49-50.

⁶Valle-Inclán, Memorias del Marqués de Bradomín, Estudio Preliminar de Ramón Sender (New York: Las Americas Publishing Company, 1961), p. xii.

Sender's criticism illustrates the diversity of interpretations in donjuanismo.

Bradomín is discreetly diverted from an attempt at seduction by one of the loyal servants in the palace, and when Bradomín follows this spy into the dark gardens, an unsuccessful attempt is made on his life. Suspicious eyes have been watching the bold visitor, whose unorthodox behavior is reported to the Princess. When his royal hostess asks Bradomín if he is not ready to return to Rome, he ignores her cold attitude, although his Don Juan pride pains him more than the physical wound to his arm. Neither mentions the incident in María Rosario's bedroom.

The novitiate comes to the naïve conclusion that the intruder is only a nightmare because she is beginning to respond to his persistence. It is evident that this rationalization is founded on a subconscious conflict of desires: María Rosario, in love with the Marqués without really being aware, finds herself ensnared in an inner conflict between religious conscience and natural emotions. She tries to deny these instincts by telling herself that it is a dream, thus giving herself an excuse for not telling her mother. María Rosario never reports any of Bradomín's improper advances since even a sheltered young princess enjoys passionate declarations of love. The ardent caballero quickly recognizes his success, and stubbornly stays on in spite of her mother's obvious disapproval. If he can win over the girl, he can reap vengeance for his injuries, as well as assuage his masculine Don Juan ego. Although he will not admit it, Xavier is truly hurt by the change in the Princess's behavior.

Princess Gaetani retains a more or less maternal love for Xavier when he arrives. She remembers cradling him in her arms years ago; therefore, she watches over him with the ambivalent devotion of one who could be his mother, until suddenly he becomes a threat to her daughter and to family honor. Sender sees the implications of this two-fold anxiety: "La consecuencia de esa doble alarma de madre es una puñalada que dan al marqués al cruzar un patio-jardín. ¿Quién sabe de dónde viene?" Sender then speculates that it can come from a rival in love with the Princess, or someone enamoured of the novitiate. His conclusion is that it comes from destiny, and as such is accepted by the stoic Marqués: "Porque el marqués tiene para esos hechos de sangre la resignación estoíca de un viejo romano."⁷ Bradomín's stoicism is another manifestation of an ingrained Christian belief that a sinner must accept the consequences of his sin.

Satanical traits in the Marqués are recognized by María Rosario, who tells him why she fears him: "—¡Porque sois el Demonio!"⁸ Nevertheless, he sees a timid look of love in her eyes, and that is all the encouragement he needs. The Marqués boasts throughout his Memorias of his satanical characteristics, but he is suddenly overcome with remorse and shame in Primavera when he hears the hysterical screams which shatter the cloistral tranquility of the palace, as María Rosario bends in anguish over the bloody and mangled body of her youngest sister, "—¡Fue Satanás!... ¡Fue Satanás!" These words will forever brand the Marqués, but this tragic end to his springtime love will not

⁷Ibid., p. xdi.

⁸Valle-Inclán, Sonatas, p. 70.

prevent him from finding new loves.

His song of summer has a warm fecund setting in tropical Mexico as Bradomín goes there to forget some unhappy romances, and to see about an inheritance from an adventurous ancestor. Xavier is now a man of experience who savors his ability to love all women: "Sin ser un donjuanista, he vivido una juventud amorosa y apasionada, pero de amor juvenil y bullente, de pasión equilibrada y sanguínea. Los decadentismos de la generación nueva no los he sentido todavía jamás."⁹ His implicit criticism of the new decadence appears dubious in the light of what follows in Mexico.

Bradomín meets his new love near the ruins of Tequil; the voluptuous criolla is called "La Niña Chole" by her retinue which joins passengers on the ship as it prepares to sail. The Marqués is already filled with lust for the haughty Mexican girl but he has mixed emotions as a result of the cruel scene in which she causes the death of a greedy diver. The greedy negro dives into the dark sea, knowing that it is filled with sharks, because la Niña Chole offers him a big sum. She watches impassively as he meets a bloody death, but Bradomín, horrified, is also fascinated by the handsome girl. She has never appeared so beautiful, nor more desirable, and Bradomín acknowledges that the death of the colossal diver becomes for him a subtle object of licentiousness and depravity.

The Marqués's deception of the Abbess provides an opportunity to seduce la Niña Chole in a cell of the convent. The criolla is fearful that her servants will tell General Diego Bermúdez, who is,

⁹Ibid., pp. 70-80.

she says, her jealous husband. So Bradomín tells the Spanish Abbess that his wife is afraid to be alone, and the embarrassed Abbess says that it is not for the convent to deny the holy state of matrimony. But la Niña Chole weeps when he forces his kisses on her, which insults Bradomín so that he pouts, staring into the darkness. The sobbing girl does not relent until the mournful tolling of the convent bells announce that some soul is suffering death-agony. The superstitious criolla clings to the Marqués in fright, as the signal of agony brings the specter of death again into their eroticism. She resists, however, until the bells suddenly cease. The Marqués seizes this moment, deeming it propitious:

Cesó el toque de agonía, y juzgando propicio el instante, besé a la Niña Chole. Ella parecía consentir, cuando de pronto, en medio del silencio, la campana dobló a muerto. La Niña Chole dio un grito y se estrechó a mi pecho: Palpitante de miedo, se refugiaba en mis brazos. Mis manos, distraídas y paternales, comenzaron a desflorar sus senos. Ella, suspirando, entornó los ojos, y celebramos nuestras bodas con siete copiosos sacrificios que ofrecimos a los dioses como el triunfo de la vida.¹⁰

Bradomín's reaction to her rejection is an indication of weakness, a feminine trait, in Valle-Inclán's character. The old Tenorio would never stand pouting while a woman whom he covets lies nearby in the intimacy of a secluded cell.

The Marqués augments his profanation by killing two men who interrupt the funeral mass for a dead nun. Bradomín, admiring the courage of a refugee with a price on his head who is outnumbered in the fight, jumps into the middle of the fracas. His bravery increases la Niña Chole's admiration for her Spanish lover, "¡Qué español tan

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 113-114.

loco! ¡Un león en pie!"¹¹ She has told the Marqués that she is the victim of the incestuous lust of General Bermúdez, her jealous father. Although she has had another lover in the past, Bradomín is the only man whom she truly loves.

The Marqués is not so faithful in his admiration for the young Mexican girl; on his way to the cell where she waits, he stops to consider momentarily an improper proposal to the Abbess, beautiful in her white robes: "La madre abadesa, con su hábito blanco, estaba muy bella, y como me parecía una gran dama capaz de comprender la vida y el amor, sentí la tentación de pedirle que me acogiese en su celda, pero fue sólo la tentación."¹² He feels a vague sense of sadness as her floating robes disappear in the darkness. The white vestments of nuns evoke an erotic response in Bradomín, a kind of perversion which increases with age.

The Marqués's latent homosexuality is disclosed in a scene on the boat with la Niña Chole, when she smiles at a handsome young blond youth who is in intimate conversation with a half nude mulatto. When Bradomín expresses jealousy of her smile at the stranger, she merely laughs, saying that Bradomín's smile would disturb the rubio more than hers. The Marqués is suddenly saddened, remembering his education at the seminary:

Leyendo a ese amable Petronio, he suspirado más de una vez lamentando que los siglos hayan hecho un pecado desconocido de las divinas fiestas voluptuosas. Hoy, solamente en el sagrado misterio vagan las sombras de algunos escogidos

¹¹Ibid., p. 119.

¹²Ibid., p. 111.

que hacen renacer el tiempo antiguo de griegos y romanos, cuando los efebos coronados de rosas sacrificaban en los altares de Afrodita. ¡Felices y aborrecidas sombras: Me llaman y no puedo seguir las! Aquel bello pecado, regalo de los dioses y tentación de los poetas, es para mí un fruto hermetico. El cielo, siempre enemigo, dispuso que solo las rosas de Venus floreciesen en mi alma y, a medida que envejezco, eso me desconsuela más. Presiento que debe ser grato, cuando la vida declina, poder penetrar en el jardín de los amores perversos. A mí, desgraciadamente, ni aun me queda la esperanza. Sobre mi alma ha pasado el aliento de Satanás encendiendo todos los pecados: Sobre mi alma ha pasado el suspiro del Arcángel encendiendo todas las Virtudes. He padecido todos los dolores, he gustado todas las alegrías: He apagado mi sed en todas las fuentes, he reposado mi cabeza en el polvo de todos los caminos: Un tiempo fui amado de las mujeres, sus voces me eran familiares: Solo dos cosas han permanecido siempre arcanas para mí: El amor de los efebos y la música de ese teutón que llaman Wagner.¹³

This shameless admission summarizes his insatiable instincts and shows the scope of perversions in his decadence.

In the Sonata de otoño the unwholesome nature of Bradomín's erotism becomes a little short of necrophilia.¹⁴ Concha, a former lover, writes to Xavier, asking him to come to her because she is critically ill. Realizing that now there can only be an ideal affection between them, Concha is unprepared for Bradomín's ardent love making. Her emaciated pathetic body excites him so that he insists on excessive indulgences which her ebbing strength cannot endure. The smell of impending death only serves to stimulate his desires.

Since Concha is too weak to dress herself, the Marqués wants to put her clothing on her. He makes a ritual of each step: "Yo la vestía con el cuidado religioso y amante que visten las señoras devotas

¹³Ibid., pp. 127-128.

¹⁴Sender, p. xxi.

a las imágenes de que son camaristas. Cuando mis manos trémulas anudaron bajo su barbeta delicada, redonda y pálida, los dos cordones de aquella túnica blanca que parecía un hábito monacal, Concha se puso en pie, apoyándose en mis hombros."¹⁵ His desecration is evident as he uses other terms to describe their "gloriosa exaltación de la carne": "la blancura eucarística de su tez"; "manos de Dolorosa"; and "el azote de Dios". The description of sensuous scenes in religious terminology is one of Valle-Inclán's artistic techniques. A combination of the religious with the profane is an integral part of Bradomín's character. Since he cannot reconcile his overwhelming sexual desires and traditional Catholic beliefs, Bradomín simply chooses that part of dogma which pleases him, and ignores the rest.

When the Marqués returns to Concha's mansion, he willfully disregards her pitiful physical condition because he finds erotic pleasure in her sad mouth, bloodless lips, and pale delicacy. Even when she cannot stand, he takes advantage of her love for him by continuing amorous advances. From their first passionate night together, it is as if Bradomín were making love to a corpse. In their last frenzied hours together, Bradomín again begs Concha to whip him with her long hair: "—¡Azótame, Concha! ¡Azótame como a un divino Nazareno! ¡Azótame hasta morir! ..."¹⁶ Concha, truly devout, is shocked by his sacrilege, and begs him to stop it. She says that even his voice changes so that it is as if "Satanás" is speaking. Her dying lips try to form a prayer as Bradomín, laughing all the while, stifles her last breath with kisses.

¹⁵Sonatas, p. 165.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 220.

But Concha cannot hear his satanical blasphemy: "—¡Amén! ... ¡Amén! ... ¡Amén! ..." The description of sensual scenes in religious terminology is a technique for the communication of experience.

The stark reality of Concha's cold body abruptly turns his passion to fear. Although he flees to Isabel's room seeking help, his excited nerves, vibrating from the presence of a cadaver in the palace, cause him to succumb once more to the temptation of the flesh: "Yo soy un santo que ama siempre que está triste."¹⁷ Sender interprets death's rôle as almost another hero: "Es la misma muerte que goza en ese momento de la vida para decirlo en términos líricos también."¹⁸ The Marqués admits that he is filled with diabolical impulses; his memories are as burning music: "Mis recuerdos, glorias del alma perdidas, son como una música lívida y ardiente, triste y cruel, a cuyo extraño son danza el fantasma lloroso de mis amores."¹⁹

Concha's death fills Bradomín with a depraved sadness since he fears that he will not find another princesa pálida who will admire and love him as much. His grief is motivated largely by a chilling reminder of approaching old age; he senses "un acabamiento de todas las ilusiones, un profundo desengaño de todas las cosas. Era el primer frío de la vejez, más triste que el de la muerte."²⁰ This realization that he is now in the decline of life does not make him any more willing to accept the limitations imposed by age.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 221.

¹⁸Sender, p. xxvii.

¹⁹Sonatas, p. 226.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 231-232.

The story of the Marqués's winter years is set in the Second Carlist Wars, where he is an officer fighting for the traditionalist cause. It is a world filled with soldiers, courtesans, immoral nobility, chaplains, and nuns inured to war. His affiliations with the carlistas take him to the headquarters of Don Carlos, where he seeks to renew relations with a former mistress, María Antonieta. She is in the palace as a companion to Doña Margarita, and Bradomín is able to arrange a rendezvous in her home since her husband is away in battle. They spend an evening in the antique matrimonial bed of walnut, and the aging lover is proud of being able to meet his Duchess's demands: "María Antonieta fue exigente como una dogaresa, pero yo fui sabio como un viejo cardinal que hubiese aprendido las artes secretas del amor en el confesionario y en una Corte del Renacimiento."²¹ Nevertheless, the aging lover sighs regretfully, remembering triumphant nights in the perfume-filled tropics with la Niña Chole. He resents María Antonieta's selfishness, and is jealous of her stronger sexual power.

Bradomín receives a much colder reception when he goes to see the Duchess de Uclés, another paramour of his more youthful days. She reproaches him for not inquiring about their daughter, but the Marqués has actually forgotten the child's existence. When the Duquesa tells him that she is "feúcha,"²² Bradomín laughs, and asks if the girl is really his. The angry mother replies that everyone knows that he is the father of the child, a fact which she has never hidden from anyone, not even her husband. The Duchess relishes her opportunity to tell the errant

²¹Ibid., p. 261.

²²Ibid., p. 271.

father about the Duke's love and care for their daughter, but Bradomín is unmoved by this news. He learns that the girl is now studying in a convent, and asks no more questions.

Later, after being wounded, the Marqués is in a convent hospital where a young girl helping Sor Simona reminds him of the Duchess's description of his daughter. This shy assistant, whose only beauty seems to be her velvet-like eyes, is most sympathetic because Bradomín must have an arm amputated. Since Sor Simona is an old friend, Bradomín asks about the girl and learns that her name is Maximina. Maximina is impressed by the patient's courage during the operation: "El gran orgullo, mi gran virtud, me sostenía. No exhalé una queja ni cuando me rajaron la carne, ni cuando serraron el hueso, ni cuando cosieron el muñón."²³ This stoic pride which the author gives to his hero is the result of Valle-Inclán's sensitivity over the less heroic circumstances when he lost the use of an arm in a cafe brawl.

Maximina, who is given the task of nursing the Marqués during convalescence, admires her patient more each day. Bradomín betrays Sor Simona's trust by an insidious campaign to win the innocent girl, who tells him that she is only a student in the convent. Despite an annoying persistence of the word "feúcha" in his memory, Bradomín is not deterred from his corrupt scheme. Finally he is bold enough to kiss Maximina on the lips:

-¿Serías capaz de quererme, con tu alma de niña?

-Sí... ¡Le quiero! ¡Le quiero!²⁴

²³Ibid., p. 284.

²⁴Ibid., p. 296.

Bradomín's behavior is unpardonable; he obviously knows who Maximina is, although he tries very hard to push the memory of the Duchess's words about their daughter from his mind. It is the scene which exposes the low state of his depravity.

Maximina confesses her love to Sor Simona, but the nun does not suspect Bradomín's incestuous tendency until he inadvertently murmurs, "--¡Pobre hija!" The nun's repugnance for the man is expressed in her face and voice as she cries, "¡Lo sabía usted!"²⁵ Since he is unable to deny this horrible accusation, Bradomín attempts, in his mind, to defend his behavior with the excuse that Maximina's eyes enticed him by evoking the mysterious melancholy of his youth: "¡Ojos queridos! Yo los había amado en ellos los suspiros románticos de mi juventud, las ansias sentimentales que al malograrse me dieron el escepticismo de todas las cosas, la perversión melancólica y donjuanesca que hace las víctimas y llora con ellas."²⁶ Narcissism is fundamental in the Marqués's incestuous admiration for Maximina; in addition to this pleasure of seeing reflected in her eyes his own youthful sentimentality, the father is gratified by her inheritance of his physical ugliness.

Valle-Inclán burdens his hero with contradictory qualities: he is sentimental and cynical at the same time. Although he wishes to blame the frustrations of his youthful sentiments, Bradomín manifests sentimentality throughout his Memorias: "Adora a las mujeres sin creer en ellas. No cree en su amor y tampoco en lo que la voluptuosidad pueda tener de promesa transcendente."²⁷ The Marqués admits that a

²⁵Ibid., p. 300.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Sender, p. xiii.

perverse instinct spurs him on in seeking victims for his insatiable appetites, while afterward his sentimental trait weeps in sympathy with these same victims. When the Marqués learns of Maximina's suicide, he is filled with a depraved sadness: "Era una tristeza depravada y sutil la que llenaba mi alma. Lujuria larvada de místico y de poeta."²⁸ He also experiences this same kind of melancholia when he remembers the tragedy in the Gaetani palace, the seductive Mexican girl, or his frenzied hours with the pathetic Concha; nevertheless, Bradomín enjoys reviving these memories of his victims because of this paradoxical temperament. Since the day when Tirso's pen created Don Juan, it is generally considered normal for this personality to supplant quickly a new love for the conquered woman, but Valle-Inclán's protagonist is given the ability to savour these loves longer, and to resuscitate sensual pleasure in his memories of them.

Although the Marqués fancies his erotism as cloaked with mystical qualities, Sender disagrees:

Dice en un lugar el marqués que su amor es como el misticismo erótico de San Juan de la Cruz. Es una de sus blasfemias menores, pero tal vez la más disparatada. El amor místico es una inefable proyección a lo absoluto y eterno. Y el de Bradomín es sexo, retórica y olvido. Sobre todo olvido. Parece como si tuviera prisa en hacer pasar las mujeres que ama al museo de sus recuerdos para darles un lugar en lo único que tiene Bradomín, el pasado, y sacarlas ocasionalmente de él para resucitar un momento la gala y la gloria de los antiguos idilios.²⁹

The dominant facet of decadence in the four sonatas is the

²⁸Valle-Inclán, p. 298.

²⁹Sender, p. xiii.

aphrodisiac association of love with death, not the abstraction or idea, but death's immediate presence. It is in the prelate's death chamber where Xavier is overwhelmed by desire for young María Rosario; la Niña Chole is seduced as the convent bells toll for a dying nun; Concha is half-dead when the Marqués arrives at her mansion to renew his ardent love, and he describes their last frenzied passion together as the best; and in Invierno Bradomín senses the impending threat of his own death, as he contemplates with lustful eyes the freshness and innocence of Maximina: "Era mi emoción como la del moribundo, que contempla los encendidos oros de la tarde y sabe que aquella tarde tan bella es la última."³⁰ Thus in all seasons of life, the Marqués de Bradomín is stimulated in an aphrodisiac manner by death:

Para Bradomín el olor del incienso o de los cirios en la cámara mortuoria, el de las flores funerales que comienzan a marchitarse, el mismo doblar de las campanas son elementos afrodisíacos. Ciertamente cuando la muerte anda cerca los hombres sentimos el imperativo de la especie que nos ordena "cumplir con nuestro deber" y dejar nuestra semilla en el surco de la germinación antes de irnos. Pero poner en esa circunstancia el regodeo y la fruición del marqués revelan una obsesión enfermiza y exaltarla rapsódicamente es un vicio.³¹

Unamuno also discusses the affinity between love and death in the prologue to his drama on the Don Juan theme: "El goce de reproducirse - carnal o espiritualmente, en hijos o en obras - es un éxtasis, un enajamiento y un goce de muerte. De muerte y de resurrección. ... Y don Juan, aun sin saberlo, se buscaba en sus víctimas. No quería morir sin más."³² Don Miguel agrees with Sender's theory of man's

³⁰Sonatas, p. 289.

³¹Sender, p. xvi.

³²Miguel de Unamuno, Prólogo a "Hermano Juan", Obras completas, V (Madrid: Escelicer, 1968), p. 725.

natural instinct for procreation but Unamuno says that Don Juan possesses this natural impulse without being aware. In the case of the Marqués, his instinct for propagation is also sub-conscious, and motivated by narcissism.

Joaquín Casaldüero advances the opinion that Valle-Inclán's narcissism is impressionism:

El narcisismo de Valle-Inclán, el narcisismo impresionista en general, como el satanismo, es a la vez expresión simbólica del deseo extremado de perfeccionamiento, de acicalamiento, de atildamiento y el dolor de estar solos. La soledad romántica es una rebeldía o un recogimiento de comunión; la soledad impresionista es el dolor de no encontrar compañía. Dondequiera que se vuelven los ojos no se ve nada más que fealdad moral y espiritual; el yo, como un cisne, pasea su blancura inmaculada, su grácil esbeltez, sintiendo agudamente la diferencia entre su aristocracia y cuanto le rodea.³³

Casaldüero believes that the youth of Valle-Inclán's epoch, disillusioned with the moral and spiritual ugliness of society, longed for a strong discipline, while at the same time they also sought affection and understanding. Casaldüero defines "el hombre impresionista": "El hombre impresionista, sostenido por el Espiritualismo, está escapando del materialismo naturalista, concibe el mundo como una conexión metafísica de sentimientos y sensaciones. La voluntad y la observación del Naturalismo han sido sustituidas por la inteligencia y la intuición. ... El intelectualismo impresionista hace al hombre extrasensible, tierno y, sobre todo, tímido."³⁴ Although the world seemed very fragile to the artists of the generation of "98", his own identity appeared even more fragile, says Casaldüero. He sees the Marqués as

³³Joaquín Casaldüero, Estudios de literatura española (2d. ed. rev.; Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1967), p. 274.

³⁴Ibid., p. 273.

the paladin of a lost cause because impresionismo is decadent: "su fruición nace no de la rebeldía, sino de la caída; se goza en todas las decadencias; por eso tuvo tal sensibilidad para el 98."³⁵ Casaldüero classifies Valle-Inclán as the writer at the turn of the century who expressed the most ornate historical being of man: "Entre los hombres de su generación quizá por eso fue Valle-Inclán el que expresó a comienzos de siglo con más fuerza decorativa el ser histórico del hombre."³⁶ Since Casaldüero's impressionism has a strictly human moral significance, it aspires to the revelation of a god who does not exist. In the character of Bradomín love and happiness are substituted by frenzy which consumes him. Casaldüero declares that Valle-Inclán's history of the Marqués is not a game between love and death; "No es un juego entre el amor y la muerte, entre las dos fuerzas en conflicto que constituyen la vida: es - según requiere el tema - una visión moral del hombre."³⁷ Valle-Inclán, despising the present, tries to create a refuge by surpassing reality with lavish and exotic adornments.

Bradomín's refined decadence follows Baudelaire's aesthetic doctrines concerning le dandy. This French symbolist declares that the elegant toilette perfection of the dandy is only a symbol of the aristocratic superiority of his spirit, which ardently desires to project an effect of originality, with nothing common or ordinary to mar it.

³⁵Ibid., p. 261.

³⁶Ibid., p. 262.

³⁷Ibid., p. 261.

Dandyism in some ways borders on spiritualism and stoicism, but the dandy seeks his happiness in others, usually in women.³⁸ Valle-Inclán feels a need to create for himself the image of a personality apart from the common run of men, an aristocratic spirit, which displays enough equivalence with his fictional creation. Therefore, he creates the sensual Marqués, endows him with pride, stoicism, and a religious feeling, and sets him in a richly-decorated background. He uses religious terminology to communicate his experiences, and monastic vestments become fetishism. It is not a question of Valle-Inclán's belief but rather an artistic technique to create art. Thus it is style which is paramount in his version of the Don Juan theme.

The Don Juan theme is shown through Bradomín's character in other works by Valle-Inclán. He used several of his stories as sources for the Sonatas: "Beatriz" in Corte de amor: Floregio de honestas y nobles damas for Primavera; "La Niña Chole" in Femininas for Estío; and "Eulalia" in Corte de amor for Otoño. Several of his other works either have Bradomín as the protagonist, or he appears in them in a lesser rôle.

El Marqués de Bradomín, which Valle-Inclán classifies as "Coloquios románticos," has the same main characters as Otoño, plus many repetitions from this sonata. In the former, it is Isabel who tells Bradomín that he is the most admirable of the Don Juans: "feo, sentimental y católico." Bradomín repeats his doctrine: "Toda mi doctrina

³⁸Charles Baudelaire, "Le Dandy," L'Art romantique, Œuvres complètes, MCMXXV (Paris: Louis Conard, 1917), pp. 87-92.

está en una sola frase: "«¡Viva la bagatela!»" ³⁹ By declaring his values bagatelles, the Marqués manifests scorn for those women whom he professes to love, and for his own code also. Bradomín blames Concha's husband for her infidelity; like too many husbands, he has neglected his wife's sexual needs. The Marqués boasts to Isabel that he has rejected some of these frustrated wives because he feels no love for them: "Yo he preferido siempre ser el marqués de Bradomín a ser ese divino marqués de Sade." ⁴⁰ Bradomín is serious in this compliment to the licentious Sade, an attribute of divinity to a symbol of debauchery.

La Corte de los milagros is a novel set during the time of Isabel II in which Bradomín is a melancholy old dandy. He is haunted by the ashes of lost illusions, past loves, and the infirmities of age. The Marqués is also an old white-bearded man in the novelette Una Tertulia de antaño. He evokes pity from his friends because he has lost an arm in battle, but the young people are annoyed by the afrancesado's attention to the girls. The beautiful Eulalia, young daughter of the Marqués de Galión, resents Bradomín's constant stares, and her escort is offended. The tertulia is in the home of a cousin of Bradomín, and one of the guests is called Juanito Valera. Valle-Inclán includes Valera, often called an elegant pagan, among his favorites, but Valera is a refined aesthete. Bradomín carries the Don Juan image into Luces de Bohemia, which the author calls an esperpento: "Los héroes clásicos reflejados en los espejos cóncavos dan el Esperpento."

³⁹Valle-Inclán, El Marqués de Bradomín, Obras completas de don Ramón del Valle-Inclán, I (Madrid: Editorial Plenitud, 1952), p. 73.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 93.

El sentido trágico de la vida española sólo puede darse con una estética sistemáticamente deformada."⁴¹ Valle-Inclán's definition of his esperpentos shows his love of Spain; because he recognizes its tragic state, he views it as a distortion. Papá Verlaine and Rubén Darío are guests at the tertulia; Rubén toasts Bradomín: "¡Bebamos a la salud de un exquisito pecador!"⁴² Later, at a funeral for a mutual friend, Bradomín confesses that he is nearing the century mark, and Rubén asks, "¿Es usted eterno, Marqués?"⁴³

Valle-Inclán's version of the Don Juan figure is consistent in all of the works in which he appears. Sender, who was a friend of Valle-Inclán, says that Bradomín is presented like the man the author would have liked to have been:

Se había presentado Valle-Inclán en la corte con un sombrero ancho y unas melenas merovingias como decían los modernistas e iba por la calle de Alcalá con un aire soberbio y retador acompañado de dos perros exóticos. La gente decía de él que era Julio Verne. Valle-Inclán fatigado de los malentendidos se presentó con Bradomín como el hombre que querría haber sido, lo que vale más que la hombría natural porque es la voluntad del ser esencial. Presentándonos su yo ideal en Bradomín o el superego que dicen los psiquiatras era como presentarse desnudo. Con sus atributos de ente moral, erótico, metafísico, de ciudadano (mal ciudadano, porque la ley de la urbe no era la suya sino la del castillo) y de miembro de una sociedad periclitada pero viva aún.⁴⁴

The Marqués moves through a world of palaces, elegant mansions,

⁴¹Valle-Inclán, Luces de Bohemia (Madrid: Espasa Calpa, S.A., Colección Austral, 1961), p. 106.

⁴²Ibid., p. 91.

⁴³Ibid., p. 129.

⁴⁴Sender, p. xii.

and religious ceremonies. The only link between the four sonatas, he possesses many of the traditional Don Juan characteristics: pride, audacity, a magnetic charm which lures women, impulsiveness, promiscuity, and defiance of religious-social-moral laws. Valle-Inclán stigmatizes his protagonist with perversions not associated with the classical literary symbol, and he also differs in the significantly smaller number of lovers. Although Brdomín truly believes that he loves these women in his life, they gratify his powerful erotic instincts. A selfish disregard for his paramours reaches its nadir in Brdomín's heartless treatment of the dying Concha; even his pride as an old lover is based on vanity. Furthermore, he idealizes pederasty and openly admires the incest of the fiery Mexican General Bermúdez. As an old man nearing the end of life, the Marqués laments more than ever being denied the pleasure of pederasty: "lamenté mas que nunca no poder gustar del bello pecado, regalo de los dioses y tentación de los poetas."⁴⁵ Brdomín's pursuit of erotic pleasure is his existence, with no restraint by moral ethics.

Valle-Inclán was a non-conformist who caused much comment with his long scraggly beard, flowing hair, eccentric dress, shell-rimmed glasses, and cape. His Sonatas emphasize sensuality, eroticism, and aesthetics, but he belongs to the Generation of 1898 in his reaction against literary traditions in Spain. His interpretation of the Don Juan character in the elegant and cynical marqués de Brdomín is a conscious effort to create a kind of alter ego.

⁴⁵Valle-Inclán, Sonatas, p. 293.

CHAPTER III

UNAMUNO

In the play El Hermano Juan Unamuno analyzes the inner conflict of the Don Juan character, shackled by the limitations inherent in his rôle, as Juan seeks to affirm his identity, even at the cost of destroying other personages around him, and eventually himself. Don Miguel manifests disdain for Zorrilla's Tenorio by changing the classical figure into an intercessor, an intermediate: "Y en último caso tal vez un medianero, un tercero, un celestino, o digámoslo con su nombre castizo: un alcahuete, de ordinario inconciente. Un alcahuete como esos abejorros - zánganos a su modo - que llevan de flor en flor el polen fecundante."¹ Unamuno clearly defines his hero in the prologue to the play; Juan is the actor condemned to play himself to himself: " ... es decir, representándose a sí mismo y no a sus queridas."² Don Miguel's emasculation of his protagonist results in Hermano Juan, not the kind of protagonist envisioned by Azorín, but an ineffectual man who attracts certain women because they pity him. Nevertheless, Unamuno scoffs at those who attach labels of perversion to the Don Juan figure:

Hanse apoderado de la figura histórica de Don Juan, y hasta han pretendido acotársela, los biólogos, los fisiólogos, los médicos —y hasta, entre éstos, los psiquiatras—, y hanse

¹Miguel de Unamuno, Prólogo a "El Hermano Juan", Obras completas, V (Madrid: Escelicer, 1968), p. 724.

²Ibid., p. 715.

dado a escudriñar, si es —no si era —un onanista, un eunocoide, un estéril —ya que no un impotente—, un homosexual, un esquizofrenico —¿qué es esto?—, acaso un suicida frustrado, un ex futuro suicida. A partir, en general, de que no busca sino el goce del momento. Ni siquiera conservarse, menos reproducirse, sino gozarse. Proceso catabólico, que diría un biólogo.³

After Unamuno attacks these judgments contrary to his own, he sets forth his interpretation of the genuine Don Juan: "El legítimo, el genuino, el castizo Don Juan parece no darse a la caza de hembras sino para contarle y para jactarse de ello."⁴ Although he criticizes others who alter the classical Don Juan figure, Unamuno paradoxically imposes his will on Juan. In Niebla, which he classifies as a nivola, the author asserts that every literary character has a life that is independent of its creator. Unamuno's distortion of el castizo Don Juan strips away the charisma which lures women and is the envy of men; this divestiture leaves Hermano Juan, condemned to be always the same, who can only be free to live in death: "Yo tengo también que vivir, pero en la muerte ..."⁵

It is significant that Juan is dressed in the "moda romántica de 1830, con capa," but the other characters are wearing twentieth century dress; Unamuno establishes from the beginning that his Juan is a myth who represents himself, the Don Juan image. In the first scene, Juan is trying to convince Inés that she should marry Benito: "Y oye, no me hagas maldito el caso, que todo se puede arreglar; no es menester que le dejes; ¡cásate con él!"⁶ Inés admits that she loves both men,

³Ibid., p. 715.

⁵Unamuno, El Hermano Juan, p. 808.

⁴Ibid., p. 716.

⁶Ibid., p. 734.

but wishes to marry Juan, who tells her that the love she bears for him is different: "Él sabrá hacerte mujer, y yo no; nací condenado a no poder hacer mujer a mujer alguna, ni a mí hombre ..."⁷ When Inés continues to take the initiative, Juan confesses that he does not know how to love, nor does he wish to: "No recuerdo ..., no puedo quererte ..., no sé querer ..., no quiero querer ..., no quiero a nadie y no debo seguir engañándote."⁸ His first answer; "No recuerdo", is one of the indications that Juan remembers vaguely that he is a legend who has lived in other times; other speeches later substantiate this former life, or lives. Zorrilla's Don Juan, if he were truthful, would also say that he does not wish to love until his author has him fall in love with Doña Inés's innocence and purity.

Unamuno calls Zorrilla's Inés an intercessor: "La redención final de Don Juan en el misterio - mística y simbólica - español de Zorrilla se acaba por la intersección de una medianera, de una intercesora: Doña Inés, la religiosa."⁹ Don Miguel then says that God will pardon her first, as Jesus did in the incident of the sinful woman who washed his feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. When the Pharisee rebuked Jesus for allowing the sinner to touch him, Jesus explained his actions with a parable; then, he told the woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." (St. Luke, VII, 50) Unamuno explains in detail in his Prólogo the relationship between the Biblical story and Zorrilla's characters:

⁷Ibid., p. 728.

⁸Ibid., p. 732.

⁹Prólogo, p. 718.

Pues así también a la pobre Inés, la religiosa de nuestro misterio español, el de Zorrilla, la enamorada religiosamente del Burlador, se le perdona porque amó mucho, porque se compadeció de Don Juan, ¡pobrecito!, y así pudo traspasarle su perdón y en nombre de Jesucristo perdonarle, pues llegaba el fin de la fianza, del "si tan largo me lo fiais" ... , llegaba el arrepentimiento. Y aquí hace Doña Inés no de novia, ni de prometida, ni de esposa, sino de hermana de la caridad. Hermana y de la caridad.¹⁰

Unamuno continues his theory by declaring that, since all of Don Juan's victims are "hermanas de la caridad", then it follows that he is their brother: " ... y él, Don Juan, el Hermano Juan. Y con ello medianero, intercesor."¹¹ Unamuno's intricate speculation appears self-contradictory, but since these ideas are basic to his treatment of the Don Juan theme, it is advantageous to review these paradoxical statements.

To equate Doña Inés, the symbol of virginity, purity, and youthful beauty, with the pathetic woman of low repute in the Biblical story is Unamuno's first questionable rationalization. One asks if the noted philosopher-author-rector is using his famous satire? If Unamuno were a traditional Catholic, he could accept the dogma which allows "un punto de contrición" to erase "treinta años malditos de crímenes y delitos!", but it would be more difficult to reconcile this equation between Inés and the prostitute. Unamuno himself has objected to being defined and classified: "Y yo no quiero dejarme encasillar, porque yo, Miguel de Unamuno, como cualquier otro hombre que aspire a consciencia plena, soy especie única."¹² He explains that his religion is a personal

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 719.

¹²Unamuno, "Mi religión," Nuevos Ensayos, Obras completas, III (Madrid: Escelicer, S.A., 1968), pp. 260-261, citando La Nación, Buenos Aires, (Dic. 9, 1907).

search for the truth, and defends his right to be paradoxical. In his subtle criticism of Don Juan Tenorio Unamuno contends that, since Doña Inés intercedes for Tenorio, and he is subsequently saved by her pure love, she is a Daughter of Charity: "Y he aquí por qué en esta mi reflexión del misterio de Don Juan, sus mujeres aparecen hermanas y él, Don Juan, el Hermano Juan."¹³

Unamuno's concept of Don Juan's misterio is contrasted with his opinion of Zorrilla's mystery: "Y Zorrilla, tradicionalmente español como Tirso, vió en la vida del Tenorio un misterio religioso que envuelve al meramente erótico. Don Juan quiere salvar el alma de la muerte. Y se la salva ella, Inés, su seducida, por el amor."¹⁴ After he defines Inés as an intercessor, Unamuno maintains that Zorrilla's drama has attained the status of a national Catholic cult:

Y este drama, tan hondamente sentido por Zorrilla como un misterio religioso, es, hoy todavía, en España, un acto de culto católico nacional. Y popular o laico. Cada año, por los días de la conmemoración de los difuntos, de las benditas Animas del Purgatorio, el pueblo acude, como a una misa, a una procesión, a un funeral, a ver y a oír y a admirar, a temer y a compadecer a Don Juan, y a ver y a oír y a compadecer y aun a adorar a Doña Inés —"Doña Inés del alma mía" —, maternal y virginal a la vez. Ya que toda verdadera madre es virgen y toda verdadera virgen es madre. Mujer y no hembra, mujer con nombre y con historia.¹⁵

Pedro Salinas notes the incompatibility of Unamuno's position with the traditional Spanish Catholicism of the age: "Y por aquí viene a tocar como él dice, este personaje nacido en el pueblo católico, en un siglo profundamente católico, con un mito pagano, el de Cupido. «Los

¹³Unamuno, Prólogo, pp. 718-719.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 717.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 717-718.

antiguos ... me llamaron Cúpidos.¹⁶ Salinas quotes a speech by Juan (III,9) as he defines his rôle: "Mi destino no fué robar amores, no, no lo fué, sino que fué encenderlos y atizarlos para que otros se calentaran a su brasa ..." This destiny is as old as the Ancients who worshipped the pagan god Cupid, a comparison not appreciated by Salinas, although he praises this new Don Juan: "un gran personaje unamunesco."¹⁷ It is Unamuno's liberty with traditionalism which annoys Salinas, especially his irreverence for Catholicism.

Unamuno's personality was essentially religious in the sense that the primary preoccupation of his life was eschatological, a constant agony over the question of immortality, anxiety concerning the existence of another world. In his study on Unamuno's faith, José Luis Aranguren asserts that Unamuno donned the mask of a lay clergyman to preach with passion a secular and civil Christianity that was of a much more Protestant than Catholic nature.¹⁸ Aranguren is not referring to adhesion to Protestant dogma but rather to the character or psychic disposition from which these sprang. Although Unamuno was a man of Protestant bent, in the core of his predominantly Protestant spirituality, he presented unequivocally Catholic traits of style. Don Miguel's reluctance to abandon Catholicism is basic in the implicit criticism of

¹⁶Pedro Salinas, "Don Juan frente a Miguel de Unamuno", Literatura española: Siglo veinte (segunda edición aumentada; México: Antiguo librería Robledo, 1949), p. 78.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁸José Luis Aranguren, "Unamuno in Person and in Faith," Texas Quarterly (Special Issue: Image of Spain; Austin: University of Texas Press, Spring, 1961), pp. 25-31.

the national Catholic cult which el pueblo has made of the annual presentation of Don Juan Tenorio. Hence, as Aranguren declares, Unamunian paradox is the literary expression of the equivocal, ambiguous, confusing, and divided truth of human existence.¹⁹ On the one hand, Unamuno attacks the exalted position which the Don Juan figure enjoys in Spanish culture, while in the substance of his religious character he manifests Catholic belief by declaring that Doña Inés saves Don Juan through love. Thus she is an intermediary with the power to intercede for a man's soul, a contradiction with Protestant beliefs.

Unamuno considers the various possibilities in physical relationships between Don Juan and his victims: Is Don Juan pure masculinity, the pure biological catabolism, with no true sense of paternity? Or, is he the drone of the beehive, "O no es, más bien, como el zángano de la colmena, que sólo siente la comezón - y hasta escozor - de acudir a fecundar a la reina, a la paridora, aunque no por estar sólo madre?"²⁰ There are many drones in the beehive for each reina. Or, does Don Juan represent the neuter sex: " ... - lo, género neutro - lo que precede a la diferenciación de los sexos? ... Ni ambiguo, ni epeceno, ni común de dos, sino neutro."²¹

The last case which Unamuno considers is the intermediary, "un alcahuete" : "De ellos, de los alcahuetes, dijo nuestro señor Don Quijote que era el suyo oficio de discretos y necesarísimo en la república - no dijo en el reino - bien ordenada, y que no le debía ejercer sino

¹⁹Ibid., p. 27.

²⁰Prólogo, p. 723.

²¹Ibid., p. 724.

gente muy bien nacida".²² This last is the doctrine which Unamuno chooses to sketch his play El Hermano Juan.

The role of an alcahuete is evident in Juan's early scenes in the play, as he refuses the overtures of Doña Inés, and advises her to accept her suitor Benito: "Tú eres como un botón de rosa bajo el rocío del alba aún no te has desplegado; aún no ha posado sobre ti, zumbando, el abejorro ...; eres pura; busca otro ángel ...; le tienes a él, a tu Benito, que colmará tu dicha, que fraguará tu ventura ... El te será hombre de su casa ... casero ...; modosito."²³ Inés, angry at his rejection, asks, "Y tú, el abejorro, ¿qué pintas aquí?" His reply shocks her, "Acaso..., quién sabe..., de galeoto o celestino ..."²⁴ Unamuno uses the same term for an intermediary as José Echegaray in his drama El gran Galeoto (1881), but in Echegaray's play it is slander, sometimes malicious, which drives Ernesto and Teodora into a guilty passion. In the finale Ernesto accepts the sentence imposed on them by this slander, «el gran Galeoto»,: "Lo quiso el mundo; yo su fallo acepto."²⁵

When Benito discovers Inés alone in the park with Juan, he insults him, causing a struggle between the two caballeros. Juan momentarily loses all self control and almost strangles Benito before he regains his composure. Then he implores Benito to take Inés away, "No, no te has de ir sin ella. ¡Llévatela! ¡Líbrame de ella! ¡Y ahora

²²Ibid., p. 724.

²³El hermano Juan, p. 733.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵José Echegaray, El gran Galeoto, Nineteenth Century Spanish Plays, ed. by Lewis E. Brett (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1935), p. 785.

pégame, abofetéame, castigame, y que lo vea!"²⁶ Juan explains to the incredulous Benito that he needs to be humiliated before Inés. Benito however, is still suspicious, and tells Inés to stay if she wishes, but he is through with her: "¡Conmigo acabaste, Inés!" The lady has changed her mind, and now she begs Benito to take her with him, but he replies that she will yield to temptation again, "Sí, siempre lo mismo y para volver a caer."²⁷ Juan strongly substantiates Inés's plea of innocence: "Tan sin mancha como antes. Ni resbaló siquiera."²⁸ His part of an intermediary is exemplified as he persuades the pair to reconcile and sends them on their way together.

Elvira, another girl who loves Juan, comes to rescue him, she says, but he is puzzled by her jealous words, "¿A rescatarme? ¿De qué? ¿De quién?". When Elvira answers, "¡De tí mismo!",²⁹ she does not realize that her evasive reply contains much truth; Don Juan does have a need to be rescued from himself. However, the girl is so infatuated with Juan that she persuades him to go with her to Renada where they stay in an old posada. This posada was formerly a private dwelling, Juan's ancestral home where he and Elvira played together from infancy through their childhood. She hopes that their reunion in the old family house will evoke memories and nostalgia which will result in a rekindling of his emotional responses. Even though Juan does not share her enthusiasm for such a revival of their former intimacy, Elvira continues to stifle him with caresses and endearments. When she scornfully boasts that she

²⁶Unamuno, El Hermano Juan, p. 737.

²⁷Ibid., p. 738.

²⁸Ibid., p. 739.

²⁹Ibid.

does not need Antonio, Juan praises this other man in her life," ¡Es tan caball!, ¡tan entero!, ¡tan generoso!, ¡tan hombre!". But Elvira insists that Antonio is only a man among many other men: "¿Hombre? ¡Como otros muchos! ¡Son montón! Hay tantos hombre cabales, enteros, generosos! No se enamora una de uno por éste ser hermoso, sino que al enamorarse de él le hermosea."³⁰ Then Elvira assures Juan that he is not like other men, and he answers, "Hay quien sospecha que no lo soy ..."³¹ Eventually Juan leaves her, but in her goodbye to him Elvira still praises his charms, "y adios, ángel de amor."³²

Juan becomes a friar and seeks refuge in a monastery where he soon gains fame as a counselor in the problems between lovers: "Ha cobrado ya tal renombre en la comarca. Nadie como él para concertar a desavenidos, urdir noviazgos y arreglar reyertas conyugales;".³³ Thus Juan, now called Hermano Juan, spends his last days as an intercessor, un celestino.

In the days when women fall in love with Juan, it is his weakness which attracts many of them. The disclosure of a maternal aspect in Inés's love occurs when, concerned about his restless emotional state, she asks, "¿Qué tienes, hijo?" Irritated by both her use of the word "hijo" and by her soothing maternal attitude, he rebukes Inés: "Hijo ..., hijo ... ¿Ahora me llamas hijo? ¡Mujer! ¡Madre ... ¡Ya sacaste a luz las entrañas! ¡Dios te lo pague!"³⁴ To be called hijo

³⁰Ibid., p. 762.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., p. 784.

³³Ibid., p. 788.

³⁴Ibid., p. 731.

by a woman who professes to love him so much that she abandons her fiancé and throws herself on Juan's mercy is a painful revelation of his true rôle in her life. It is not the normal sexual attraction which Inés feels, but rather a misguided maternal instinct. He is offended in the same manner by Elvira when she calls him Juanito: "No me llames Juanito; ya sabes que eso me hiere."³⁵ It is, however, more natural for Elvira to assume a maternal manner with Juan since in their childhood games she called him her niño: "Y ¿no te acuerdas?, ¿no te acuerdas cuando te agarraba y manoseaba, y te vestía y desnudaba, y te arreglaba los ricitos y te besuqueaba, así, así? (Le besa en las dos mejillas.)"³⁶ Elvira calls Juan capricious and regards him as a spoiled child long after he reaches the age of an adult because she desires to continue playing the maternal rôle. Compassion for the Don Juan figure causes women to fall in love with him, but Unamuno expresses himself with sharp forthrightness when he declares that this compassion is maternal:

¿Por qué se enamoran de Don Juan sus víctimas? ¿Es que, como sostienen ciertos autores, sienten la supuesta feminidad de él? ¿Acaso por una suerte de homosexualidad femenina? ¡Quia! Es que le compadecen. Le agradecen, ante todo, que se fije en ellas, que les reconozca personalidad, siquiera física, corporal. Y que las quiera —aun sin el propiamente quererlo— hacer madres. Hay vanidad en ello, regodeo de sentirse distinguida la preferida y de distinguirse así. Pero hay, además, y acaso sobre todo, compasión maternal. "¡Que no sufra el pobre por mí!" Alguna vez la víctima coje a Don Juan, se lo arrima a sus pechos, se lo apechuga, y acaso se los pone en la boca. ¡Pobre Don Juan!³⁷

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., p. 757.

³⁷Prólogo, p. 718.

Marañón's research on the women who succumb to the Don Juan charm finds a division into two classes; the true victims, and a particular type of abnormal sexual biology:

Con esto se señala otro aspecto fundamental para el estudio de nuestro problema: el de las mujeres de don Juan. Es evidente que sólo un grupo de mujeres de compleción sexual determinada se dejan arrastrar por el encanto donjuanesco: mujeres de una anormalidad biológica que puede estudiarse al detalle, y que encaja exactamente en el tipo de anormalidad del burlador. Sólo así se explica el fenómeno paradójico de ver a la mujer impulsado hacia un centro de atracción sexual notoriamente débil o francamente mixtificado, desdeñando, en cambio, los más específicamente viriles.³⁸

Dr. Marañón's extensive studies disclose that the actual position of Don Juan in the domain of love is far from the center of true virility. He places Don Juan in the group ruled by bestial passions:

Los tipos representativos de las diversas modalidades sexuales forman como dos grandes constelaciones paralelas, una para cada sexo. En los lugares extremos están los tipos en que la diferenciación sexual — la masculinidad y la feminidad — se marca con mayor vigor. En la línea de contacto están los tipos en que la sexualidad menos acusada, tiende a confundirse con el sexo contrario. Por otra parte, en cada uno de los sexos hay tres categorías de tipos representativos, según el predominio de cada uno de los tres componentes esenciales del amor sexual, a saber: el tipo intelectual, el tipo emotivo y el tipo instintivo. Por encima del tipo intelectual está la amistad pura y asexual; por debajo del tipo instintivo, la atracción dinámica de las bestias. Pues bien: don Juan está colocado en este último grupo predominantemente instintivo de la constelación masculina, y en su parte interna, en la que linda con el tipo homólogo de la constelación femenina.³⁹

Marañón contrasts Othello, whom he considers the most representative of maximum masculinity in his own instinctive group, with Don Juan:

³⁸Gregorio Marañón, Psicopatología del donjuanismo, Obras completas, III (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1967), p. 89.

³⁹Ibid., p. 79.

Don Juan es, punto por punto, lo contrario: de hermosura correcta y afeminada, incapaz para la lucha social, corre tan solo en la apariencia detrás de las mujeres, porque son éstas, en realidad, las que le siguen y se le entregan. El amor de Otelio es espontáneo e irreflexivo. El de don Juan es un amor meditado, frío y sin riesgos; pudiéramos decir que industrializado.⁴⁰

Marañón thus declares that the Othello type finds himself drawn, as if by a cosmic force, to the sweet dependent woman while Don Juan only appears to pursue women; actually, he is pursued by a particular aggressive kind of female. This point is one of Unamuno's basic ideas in El hermano Juan but he and Marañón disagree generally on the Don Juan figure.

Marañón points out that the Don Juans of literature each has, as those in life, his peculiar physiognomy within the immutable characteristics of the group. He says that it is useless to try to determine which of them is the true Don Juan, but Marañón prefers Zorrilla's protagonist: "Mas si hubiese que elegir entre ellos el más repleto de sustancia donjuanesca, yo estoy seguro que se cometería una injusticia flagrante si no era el designado el don Juan de Zorrilla."⁴¹ He makes this choice despite the years of invectives against Don Juan Tenorio: "Nuestro Ortega y Gasset pedía que los guardias se llevasen a la cárcel a este rufiano que nada tenía que ver con el don Juan verdadero. Y también Unamuno y A. Machado, y no sé si alguno más, le han tratado con un desprecio parecido."⁴²

Another admirer of Zorrilla's hero, Madariaga, believes that

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 80.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 86.

⁴²Ibid.

the true Don Juan is the quintessence of masculinity. He also recognizes the vast differences in the evaluations of this fertile literary theme:

No hay en toda la literatura occidental tema más fecunda que el de Don Juan. Así debe ser, a poco que se medite, ya que Don Juan es la quintaesencia de lo masculino. Bien que este aserto se da de bruces con la opinión, tan sutil como autorizada, de Gregorio Marañón, para quien hay en Don Juan un elemento femenino. Y claro está que, tratándose de cosas en tan estrecha relación con las hormonas, no va nadie a atreverse a discutir con el gran hormonista español. No yo, al menos. Tanto más porque, en efecto, es muy probable que Marañón esté en lo cierto a sugerir ... que el tipo de hombre donjuanesco, que revoltea de una mujer a otra, no suele ser hombre de carácter firme y termina siempre por caer en manos de una mujer fuerte y hasta viriloide, que lo domina, y bajo cuyo dominio logra al fin paz, equilibrio y estabilidad.⁴³

Madariaga defines the reasons for the immense popularity of Don Juan Tenorio, a work which millions of people in the hispanic world quote from memory: " ... se debe precisamente a que expresa con perfección lo específicamente español que hay en lo masculino; tanto en sus aspectos superficiales como en los más hondos."⁴⁴ Madariaga continues with his observation that the male Spaniard of the middle class, having lived an undisciplined life, free from all social or moral fetters, finds consolation in the idea that Don Juan is saved by repentance in the last moments before his death.⁴⁵ There is a refreshing candor in Madariaga's opinion concerning the popularity of Zorrilla's addition of salvation for Don Juan through Doña Inés's love:

Le agrada sobremanera además al español corriente

⁴³Madariaga, Don Juan y la don Juanía., p. 11.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 35.

⁴⁵Ibid.

que le arregle el asunto Doña Inés. Esto es quizá —en este terreno trivial en que también se vive (que no toda la vida es honda)—, esto es quizá lo más español de la obra zorrillesca; porque el español medio está acostumbrado a que la mujer le haga todo, desde cuidarle la ropa y educar a los chicos hasta llevarle las cuentas y hacerle las mudanzas — mientras él contribuye a salvar al país o a ganar la batalla de Mukden o de Sebastopol sobre el marmol de la mesa de café. De modo que cuando Zorrilla presenta una obra en la que la mujer se encarga hasta de arreglarle las cuentas con Dios —y sólo Dios sabe las trampas que llevan— el español medio aulla de placer.⁴⁶

Perhaps only a Spaniard of Madariaga's status would make such a frank criticism of so broad a section of Spanish males, but Madariaga's reputation as an interpreter of his country's culture is well established in the intellectual centers of the western world. Furthermore, with his cosmopolitan background of scholar, diplomat, critic, and statesman, his opinion that Don Juan, the true Don Juan, is the quintessence of masculinity is significant.

Unamuno, however, disdains this concept of masculinity as he brings forth a protagonist who flees from women and sends them back to other lovers. He does show the consequences of Juan's behavior before the play begins by relating the histories of some of his true victims. La Milagros becomes a prostitute, but Juan brushes this aside: "Nació predestinado a ello ... ¡La fuerza del sino!"⁴⁷ Another woman from his past is Encarnación, now widowed, who married another in spite because Juan left her. When Elvira accuses him of his guilt in this case, he says, "Me lavo la boca."⁴⁸ Then Elvira compares Juan to

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 35-36.

⁴⁷Unamuno, El hermano Juan, p. 761.

⁴⁸Ibid.

Pilate as he washes his hands in an attempt to demonstrate his own innocence in Christ's sentence to be crucified. The most tragic consequence of Juan's rôle as a burlador is the story of Matilde's suicide, which actually takes place before the play begins. Matilde's mother confronts Juan with a condemning letter found among her daughter's possessions, as she waves a handkerchief bearing Juan's marca before him. The handkerchief, once a cherished memento, is now stained with the dying suicide's blood. Doña Petra bitterly accuses Juan of being responsible for Matilde's death, but he declares his innocence; whereupon Doña Petra vows that her daughter confessed to her, naming Juan. Then she points to his marca on the handkerchief, crying, "Pero lleva otra y es la del martirio, la del tormento final de la desgraciada. En él se mezclaron, ¡mezcla horrenda!, vuestras sangres ..." ⁴⁹ Antonio, another person who was present when Matilde suffered her final agonies, will not disclose his patient's confidences, but his accusing words leave no doubt that he also blames Juan. Juan, appearing to awake suddenly from a dream, quotes these popular lines from Zorrilla's Don Juan Tenorio (IV, 10):

Llamé al cielo, y no me oyó,
y pues sus puertas me cierra,
de mis pasos en la tierra
responda el cielo y no yo.⁵⁰

However, these lines are so incompatible with Juan's customary speech that Antonio cannot conceal his surprise at the fluency with which they are delivered. Juan's spontaneous reply refers again to his other

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 767.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 770.

lives: "¡Lo hice tantas veces en mis otras vidas!"⁵¹ These other lives are, of course, his roles playing the Don Juan character. He reiterates his obligation to remain in that part: "En este teatro del mundo, cada cual nace condenado a un papel, y hay que llenarlo so pena de vida ..."⁵² Antonio warns Juan and Elvira that they are dramatizing a bad dream, a nightmare:

Los dos estáis soñando, ... Algo peor: representando una pesadilla ... Los dos estáis jugando al escondite, pero no como en vuestra niñez. Aquel juego era vida; éste es representación. Esto no es juego; es deporte. Y en este deporte vas, Juan, sembrando desdichas, acaso íntimas tragedias, por tu mundillo. Y tú, Elvira, estás también ...⁵³

Antonio urges Juan to remove his mask; the actor has a misconception of the true nature of his part, and is deceiving himself. Although Juan feels that he is manipulated like a puppet, the play must run until the final curtain: "Adelante, pues, con la comedia, que el toque está en matar un rato la vida mientras desfila la película. Y ahora a buscarme albergue de solitario errante, de caracol andariego."⁵⁴ He finds his shelter in the convent where his own life is hermetic, withdrawn, as he waits for the time to pass. His confusion and frustration concerning his true identity becomes agonizing:

¿Hasta ...? ¿Existo yo? ¿Existes tú, Inés? ¿Existes fuera del teatro? ¿No te has preguntado nunca esto? ¿Existes fuera de este teatro del mundo en que representas tu papel como yo el mío? ¿Existís, pobres palomillas? ¿Existes don Miguel de Unamuno? ¿No es todo esto un sueño de niebla? Sí, hermana, sí, no hay que preguntar si un per-

⁵¹Ibid., p. 771.

⁵²Ibid., p. 730.

⁵³Ibid., p. 775.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 785.

sonaje de leyenda existió, sino si existe, si obra. Y existe Don Juan y Don Quijote y don Miguel y Segismundo y Don Álvaro, y vosotras existís, y hasta existo yo ...,, es decir, lo sueño ... Y existen todos los que nos están aquí viendo y oyendo mientras lo estén, mientras nos sueñen ...⁵⁵

So Juan comes to the conclusion that he, as all other literary characters, exists in a dream, and all life is theater: "Vale decir que es comedia ... Vida ..., sueño ..., río ..."⁵⁶

The question of a literary character's independent reality, a theme of Niebla, places its protagonist in a comparable humiliating situation. Augusto thinks of committing suicide, but when Unamuno, his creator, announces to Augusto that he has decided to let him die, Augusto is terrified, "Quiero vivir, aunque vuelva a ser burlado, aunque otra Eugenia y otro Mauricio me desgaren el corazón. Quiero vivir, vivir, vivir ..."⁵⁷ Sherman Eoff summarizes Augusto's argument: "Since the whole idea of creation is enveloped in niebla, he argues, the author and his characters are of questionable reality and therefore need each other for their confirmation."⁵⁸ When the precariousness of his fictitious existence is revealed to Augusto, he challenges the real existence of Unamuno himself, "¿Conque he de morir ente de ficción? Pues bien, mi señor creador don Miguel, también usted se morirá, también usted, y se volverá a la nada de que salió ... ¡Dios dejará de soñarle!"⁵⁹

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 814.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Unamuno, Niebla (Nivola) (Madrid: Taurus, 1967), p. 173.

⁵⁸Sherman H. Eoff, The Modern Spanish Novel (New York University Press, 1967), p. 161.

⁵⁹Unamuno, Niebla., p. 174.

Although Unamuno does not relent in his decision to let Augusto die, the fictional being asserts his identity by appearing in a dream and declaring to the author:

Y aunque te parezca otra cosa, también yo, en aquella precaria existencia ficticia que me prestaste, aspire a la genialidad y me esforcé, a mi modo, por llegar a genio. Como eso fue precisamente mi muerte. Tuviste que matarme porque no encontrabas otro medio de darme genialidad. Creaste en vez de un hombre un homúnculo, y mi aspiración a la hombría, a la humanidad, fue el morirme.⁶⁰

Thus the fictional character tells his author that his own kind of being, dream or fiction though it may be, can never be duplicated, Unamuno invests the fictitious character (creature) with independence and places him in opposition to the author (creator) thus demonstrating the autonomous stature that an idea acquires once it is expressed by its author.⁶¹

Julían Marías defines the obvious ontological sketch drawn in the case of Augusto: the fictional being, inasmuch as he is a dream or narrative, is real. His life or existence is temporal in the same mode of being as the human one, but since he is an author's dream, he has no substance and appears as a being without foundation, who cannot stand by himself in existence and falls into the void. There is an analogous situation in the sphere of the reality of the real man of flesh and blood: if one imagines God's point of view, man also is without substance and depends on his Creator. Human reality also appears as a dream of divinity effected by essential mortality. There is an ontological hierarchy: God, man, the fictional character; they are three degrees of the personal being, with fiction and reality linked in a relation of subordination.⁶²

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 190.

⁶¹Eoff, p. 193.

⁶²Julían Marías, Miguel de Unamuno (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1943), p. 101.

Marías studies Unamuno's penchant for an arbitrary alignment on the same plane of both author and character: Cervantes and Don Quijote; Shakespeare and Hamlet; his characters Augusto Pérez or Abel Sánchez and himself. Although Unamuno himself did not take this arbitrary occurrence literally, Marías believes that the ultimate seriousness and consistency of Don Miguel's attitude have not received sufficient notice. Marías says, " ... la exageración hace resaltar y a la vez ocultar un núcleo de sentido, de verdad, que importa poner a una luz conveniente."⁶³ Marías reasons that Unamuno must have had some basis for this farfetched concept of reality which allowed him to confuse it arbitrarily and deliberately with fiction, since Unamuno's theme was man, for him the most important reality: "El hombre de carne y hueso, el que nace, sufre y muere— sobre todo muere—, el que come y bebe y juega y duerme y piensa y quiere, el hombre que se ve y a quien se oye, el hermano, el verdadero hermano."⁶⁴ Unamuno's anguish, the most significant aspect of his spiritual life, is his ceaseless struggle with the mystery of the soul's immortality:

¿Por qué quiero saber de dónde vengo y a dónde voy, de dónde viene y a donde va lo que me rodea, y qué significa todo esto? Porque no quiero morirme del todo, y quiero saber si he de morirme o no definitivamente. Y si no muero, ¿qué será de mí?; y si muero, ya nada tiene sentido. Y hay tres soluciones: a) o sé que me muero del todo, y entonces la desesperación irremediable, o b) sé que no muero del todo, y entonces la resignación, o c) no puedo saber ni una ni otra cosa, y entonces la resignación en la desesperación, o esta en aquella, una resignación desesperada, o una desesperación resignada, y la lucha.⁶⁵

⁶³Ibid., p. 29.

⁶⁴Unamuno, Del sentimiento trágico de la vida (New York: Las Americas Publishing Co., 1965), p. 7.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 30-31.

As Marías studies Unamuno's identification of the man of flesh and bones with the fictional character, he notes the frequent use of the metaphor of the dream. The dream, because it is unreal in the light of things, is the purest and most consummate example of that subtle mode of temporal reality, of novel or legend, of which man's life consists.⁶⁶ The reality of the fictional character coincides in this mode of being with man; the reality of the former resembles man's in that it is not finished, in that it keeps on forming, and can be narrated. Thus Marías arrives at the conclusion which he believes must be inferred from Unamuno's arbitrary identification: " ... es la reivindicación del modo de ser temporal y personal, consistente, por lo pronto, en historia, que es privativa del hombre, frente a las demás cosas del mundo."⁶⁷ Although the fictional characters are lives, they have a legend, and the character is a person conscious of the legend he is.

Juan's reiteration of his rôle as an actor condemned to play a part eventually includes Antonio, Benito, Elvira, and Inés: "¡Pero somos nada menos que todo un teatro! Literatura hecha carne."⁶⁸ An anguished Juan discusses the Don Juan figure with Padre Teófilo, declaring that only "¡Ella! ¡La Muerte!" can raise Don Juan from his fallen state.⁶⁹ Until Death releases Don Juan, he is condemned to be always the same: lonely, a bachelor, and narcissistic. Juan also comes to the conclusion that he can only live by dying: "¿Yo? Yo tengo

⁶⁶Marías, p. 30

⁶⁸Unamuno, *El Hermano Juan*, p. 811.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 31.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 794.

también que vivir, pero en la muerte... Os di mal ejemplo."⁷⁰ When Juan is finally dying, he tells his earthly friends who gather around that he is going to his wedding: "Y ahora a mi casa...; miento, a mi boda, mi primera noche de bodas..., ¡no!, la última, la que desde antes de nacer me estaba predestinada en esta casa... A mi hogar apagado..."⁷¹ Antonio, the man of science, explains Juan's use of the term "noche de bodas" to the mourners, "... su primera y última noche de bodas, como decía: la boda con la última verdad, con la verdadera.... La que no cambia...."⁷² But Inés refuses to accept Don Juan's death, declaring that he is immortal. Padre Teófilo's agreement, the last speech in the play, "¡Como el teatro!" reiterates the author's idea that the world is indeed a theater.

As the creator of Juan, Unamuno can cause his death, but what he wishes is to bring an end to the legend of the Spanish Don Juan Tenorio because he considers it dangerous to the Spanish people. Don Miguel is not flattered when critics conclude that Tenorio is genuinely Spanish: "De lo que yo, por mi parte, me siento, como español que soy, muy poco o nada halagado, ya que el tal Don Juan nunca fue santo de mi devoción."⁷³ In this same essay, Unamuno declares that, in all that has been said about the Spanish Don Juan, it would be difficult to discover anything more penetrating than the idea that Don Juan never denies the future life, but the remoteness of its justice banishes any such idea from his mind:

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 808.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 821.

⁷²Ibid., p. 823.

⁷³Unamuno, Ensayos Nuevos, "Sobre Don Juan Tenorio", p. 327.

El Don Juan del "¡tan largo me lo fiáis!", no es, en efecto, un incrédulo. Afronta a los fantasmas del otro mundo, pero es creyendo en él.

Y he aquí por qué Don Juan me es profundamente antipático y por qué lo creo pernicioso para nuestro pueblo. Es incalculable el daño que nos hacen los viejos Don Juanes arrepentidos.⁷⁴

Don Juan never questions the dogma of the church in which he was brought up, because he never seriously considers them. His occupation of chasing and seducing maidens never give time for such thoughts, or rather, his inability to think about these matters is what leads him to chase and seduce maidens.

Don Miguel wishes to destroy Don Juan's image as the fearless young nobleman who courageously challenges anyone in his path to a duel: "Don Juan tenía en sus mocedades un valor loco e irreflexivo; más que valor, aturdimiento."⁷⁵ It is not bravery which motivates young Tenorio, but rather brash impulse which makes him so eager to draw his sword. Duels are not mentioned in Unamuno's play, and when his protagonist is permitted to threaten another in momentary bursts of temper, the author always has Juan stop short of any physical damage to others. Don Miguel is convinced that restless modern Spanish Don Juans, following in the footsteps of the immortal Tenorio, dedicate themselves to the pursuit of maidens: "... se dedican a cazar doncellas para matar el tiempo y llenar un vacío de espíritu, ya que no encuentran otra manera de llamarlo. No son, como Werther, víctimas de los anhelos de su corazón, sino que lo son de la vaciedad de su inteligencia."⁷⁶ The

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 329.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 330.

implied social criticism here is basic in Unamuno's opinion that the interests of Spaniards will be best served by abandoning their casticismo, which he expounds in his essay "En torno al casticismo".

Unamuno continues his attack on Zorrilla's creation by questioning again the redemption of Tenorio through Doña Inés's intercession: "¿Cuándo preguntó doña Inés a Don Juan si creía en Dios o indagó de él la manera de su creencia? Aunque me lo aseguren, yo no lo creo."⁷⁷ He maintains his onslaught with the charge that, regardless of the opinions of other Spaniards, including Tirso and Zorrilla, "Y a larga, lo que resulta es que Don Juan queda esclavo del confesor de doña Inés, digan lo que quieran Tirso, Zamora y Zorrilla, para no hablar más que de los españoles."⁷⁸ Unamuno's entire work is enveloped in a religious atmosphere; any theme whatsoever in Unamuno's mind ends by showing its religious roots or culminates in an ultimate reference to God. However, fundamentally he is not interested in anything unless he can reduce it in some manner to be useful for his permanent preoccupation. When Don Miguel undertook a literary work, he was not concerned with aesthetics or artistic qualities but rather with man's immortality.⁷⁹ Unamuno sees this hunger for immortality as the origin for all religion and philosophy: " ... el ansia de no morir, el hambre de inmortalidad personal, el conato con que tendemos a persistir indefinidamente en nuestro ser propio, ... eso es la base afectiva de todo conocer y el íntimo punto de

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Marías, Miguel de Unamuno, p. 65.

partida de toda filosofía humana, ..."80 Unamuno's anxiety for immortality, which embraces all of man's being, nuestro ser propio, is his sentimiento trágico de la vida. Thus Don Miguel embraces man in his entirety: man as he goes from birth to death, with his flesh, his soul, his individuality, and, above all, his desire for immortality. The profound unity in all of Don Miguel's works is this one basic theme. "... por cualquier página que abramos un escrito suyo encontramos idéntico ambiente, una nota permanente e invariable, arrancada con igual pasión a los más diversos instrumentos: el poema, el drama, la novela, el ensayo, el comentario a un libro o a un hecho; ..."81 Mariás attributes this extraordinary unity to Unamuno's use of reiteration. Everything which Don Miguel writes tends to set forth and relive his sole question of death and immortality.

The terms personal and nuestro ser propio are fundamental in Unamuno's sentimiento trágico de la vida. Unamuno founds his individualism on a religious basis: the unresolved argument of eternity. Madariaga identifies the true Spanish flavor in Unamuno's refusal to surrender life to ideas: "Y es que Unamuno, como buen español, no entrega la vida a las ideas. Por eso evita las abstracciones, en las que sólo ve sudarios para pensamientos muertos."82 Madariaga admits that this position may be termed egotistical, but he points out that by penetrating deep into ourselves we find our brothers in us - branches

⁸⁰Unamuno, Del sentimiento trágico de la vida, p. 33.

⁸¹Mariás, p. 14.

⁸²Salvador de Madariaga, Semblanzas literarias contemporáneas (Barcelona: Editorial Cervantes, 1924), p. 136.

of the same trunk which can only touch each other by seeking their common origin. This searching within Unamuno is strengthened by that passion for life which burns in him, driving him fearlessly on without the suppression of the slightest thought or feeling for the sake of intellectual order. Unamuno's anguish is the dilemma of a whole man: "... sino un hombre entero, con todas sus afirmaciones y todas sus negaciones, todos los implacables pensamientos de un espíritu penetrante que niega y todas las desesperadas afirmaciones de un alma sedienta de vida eterna."⁸³

This yearning for eternal life by Unamuno, the man of flesh and bones, is reflected in Juan, the fictional reality, as he seeks his own identification. There is an obvious similarity to Pirandello's Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore which deals with an author's futile attempts to create from the commonplace and fearful materials of life. Pirandello's favorite themes are man's inability to distinguish between truth and illusions, but Unamuno and the Italian writer view fictional reality from different planes, as Jacinto Grau points out:

Las novelas y el teatro de Unamuno tienen una estrechísima relación. En sus personajes diversos (todos contemporáneos), a semejanza de Pirandello, mas desde un plano distinto, menos malabarista y mas grave de tono, Unamuno busca una cuarta dimensión, tratando de desplazar la realidad visible y la cronológica, en busca de una realidad esencial, resistente a la aparente ilusión de una verdad puramente formal.⁸⁴

Grau's pithy assertion that Unamuno is seeking a fourth dimension, as he tries to displace visible and chronological reality, in his search for an essential reality which is resistant to the apparent illusion

⁸³Ibid., p. 137.

⁸⁴Jacinto Grau, Unamuno; Su tiempo y su España (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Alda, 1946), p. 135.

of a purely formal truth, is more pertinent to an understanding of Don Miguel's agony.

Unamuno's anguish is linked to his admiration for the philosophy of Kierkegaard, declares Grau.⁸⁵ In an essay "Ibsen y Kierkegaard," Don Miguel expresses his thoughts concerning doctrines of the Danish philosopher-theologian:

En las doctrinas de Kierkegaard, respecto a la relación entre los dos sexos humanos, al amor y al matrimonio, tal como las expuso en su O lo uno o lo otro, y en sus Etapas del camino de la vida, está el germen de la manera como vió Ibsen esa relación en la realidad de la vida. Pues no sirve decir que en un drama no hay doctrina filosófica o religiosa. Podrá no haberla predicada y expuesta didácticamente, pero el autor vió la realidad que traslada a través de los cristales de una filosofía o de una religión, y si no la vió así, no vió nada que merezca perpetuarse.⁸⁶

Unamuno is contemptuous of sexual relationship in its coarsest manner, with the observation that the making of sexual love into life's most important occupation is the result less of sensuality than of the mental and spiritual limitations of the poor peoples who change the biblical temptation of the tree of knowledge into the temptation of the flesh.⁸⁷ In a discussion, "Sobre la lujuria", Don Miguel returns to a favorite target:

Tomad a Don Juan Tenorio, al fanfarrón de Don Juan Tenorio, y decidme si habéis encontrado en el mundo de la ficción un personaje más necio y que os suelte tantas tonterías como él. No hay reunión de hombres inteligentes y cultos en que se pueda soportar más de diez minutos a Don Juan Tenorio. Hay que echarle a puntapiés. Apesta con sus bravatas y sus aires de guapo.⁸⁸

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Unamuno, Nuevos Ensayos, Obras Completas, III (Madrid: Escelicer, S.A., 1968), p. 290.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid., "Sobre la lujuria", p. 317.

Although Unamuno's tone is light, he is serious in his declaration that the traditional Don Juan figure must be destroyed.

Antonio Sánchez Barbudo notes that since Unamuno had always detested Don Juan, it seems paradoxical that Don Miguel should praise the classic hero in his introduction to El Hermano Juan, and then proceed to attack other aspects of the literary figure:

Porque toda la grandeza ideal, toda la realidad universal y eterna, esto es: histórica, de Don Juan Tenorio consiste en que es el personaje más eminentemente teatral, representativo, histórico, en que está siempre representado, es decir, representándose a sí mismo y no a sus queridas.⁸⁹

Sánchez Barbudo bases his observation on the following sonnet, "Don Juan de las ideas", in which Unamuno identifies himself with his poetic hero:

Don Juan de las ideas que cortejas
todas las teorías, libertino
del pensamiento, eterno peregrino
del ansia de saber, sé que te quejas

de hastío de inquirir y que aconsejas
a los mozos que dejen el camino
de la ciencia y encierren su destino
de la santa ignorancia tras las rejas.

No amor a la verdad, sino lujuria
intelectual fué siempre el alimento
de tu mente, lo que te dió esa furia

de perseguir a la razón violento,
mas ella se vengó de tal injuria
haciendo estéril a tu pensamiento.⁹⁰

Sánchez Barbudo finds seemingly contradictory ideas in Unamuno's concept of Don Juan:

Pero en todo caso veamos que Unamuno, que siempre

⁸⁹Unamuno, El Hermano Juan, p. 714.

⁹⁰Unamuno, "Don Juan de las ideas", Rosario de sonetos líricos, Poesía, Obras completas, VI (Madrid: Escelicer, S.A., 1966), p. 400.

había detestado a Don Juan, ahora representa la razón de su grandeza en que sea "conscientemente teatral", es decir, en ser como Unamuno, quien, por cierto, muchos años antes, en el Rosario de sonetos, se había llamado ya a sí mismo, despreciándose, "Don Juan de las ideas".⁹¹

This sonnet, as Sánchez Barbudo points out, was written many years earlier, but he does not take into account the significance of the passing of these "muchos años" upon Unamuno's thought and philosophy. The youthful Don Miguel in Salamanca in 1910 would be unable to sense the changes which only maturity can bring. Since man is constantly changing with the flux of time, his finished personality is not seen until the riper years of maturity, and at this time, young Unamuno is just beginning an agonizing search for his own reality.

Unamuno's dramatic character is marred by human frailty, as Sánchez Barbudo notes in a critical analysis of El Hermano Juan:

Es decir, que el papel que hacemos es fatal, que nos movemos escuchando las palabras del apuntador.

Pero eso es una cosa, por triste que sea, y otra hacer teatro en ese teatro del mundo, inventar papeles, declamar fuera de tono para atraerse miradas y aplausos.⁹²

So Sánchez Barbudo says that Unamuno makes Juan too theatrical, that he invents roles in order to attract attention and applause.

Jacinto Grau also finds this same weakness, a thirst for glory and attention in Unamuno's vanity:

La vanidad de Unamuno: sed de gloria, ansia de fama, de ser citado, de suponer, confesada llanamente en varias épistolas, sobre todo en sus comienzos de publicista, es la general vanidad normal en todo hombre que se dirige al público, más o menos exacerabada, según el modo de dirigirse

⁹¹Antonio Sánchez Barbudo, Estudios sobre Unamuno y Machado (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1959), p. 135.

⁹²Ibid.

a las gentes: modo típico en el actor y el cantante de
opera.⁹³

Since it is, as Grau says, normal for the man constantly subjected to the scrutiny of the public to thirst for glory and acclaim, this criticism of Unamuno's vanity is softened by the critic's recognition of its normality.

In his candid campaign to annihilate the traditional Don Juan hero, Unamuno boldly combines three popular literary themes: the reality of a fictional character and the equally fictitious nature of human reality, the concept of the world as a theater, and the equation of life with a dream. In Unamuno's treatment of the first theme, there is the tie with Pirandello. However, in his handling of the latter themes, Unamuno is more deeply indebted to Calderón de la Barca; in the opening scene of the auto sacramental El gran teatro del mundo, Calderón defines man's role which he must play in the great theater of the world:

Si soy Autor y si la fiesta es mía,
por fuerza la ha de hacer mi compañía.
Y pues que yo escogí de los primeros
los hombres y ellos son mis compañeros,
ellos, en el teatro
del mundo, que contiene partes cuatro,
con estilo oportuno
han de representar. Yo a cada uno
el papel le daré que le convenga,
y porque en fiesta igual su parte tenga
el hermoso aparato
de apariencias, de trajes el ornato,
hoy prevenido quiero
que, alegre, liberal y lisonjero,
fabriques apariencias
que de dudas se pasen a evidencias.

⁹³Grau, p. 123.

Seremos, yo el Autor, en un instante,
tú el teatro, y el hombre el recitante.

The idea that Juan is condemned to play his rôle is basic to Unamuno's dramatic treatment of the Don Juan theme as the modern Basque playwright borrows Calderón's ideas for its development. Unamuno also takes the liberty of using another Calderón work as he incorporates the concept of the dream as a symbol of the illusory nature of materialism. In the celebrated philosophical drama La vida es sueño Calderón utilizes the nebulous quality of a dream in his development of the central theme of free will versus predestination. The unfortunate hero Segismundo expresses his frustration and despair in the following often-quoted lines (II,19):

¿Qué es la vida? Un frenesí.
¿Qué es la vida? Una ilusión,
una sombra, una ficción,
y el mayor bien es pequeño:
que toda la vida es sueño,
y los sueños sueños son.

Unamuno employs the dream to show the illusory nature of Juan's other lives, his rôles as a traditional character. Don Miguel's reckless combination of these three literary themes is subordinate to the one agonizing theme which permeates all of his writings. He is, as Mariás points out, not concerned with aesthetic or artistic nature but with the question of the immortality of man's soul. Although he is sincere in his desire to destroy the Spanish Don Juan since he feels that it is unworthy of its tremendous popularity, Unamuno's basic purpose is an elaboration of his fundamental frustrated metaphysics. The lack of self-sufficiency of both the fictional being and the real man leads Unamuno to God, but Unamuno then takes a step backward and proclaims

the equally fictitious nature of human reality.⁹⁴

The one inescapable fact about every human being is that he must die. The yearning for immortality by the man of flesh and bones is reflected in Juan, the fictional hero; he is confused by his own reality which periodically alternates between the present and other times. Juan, nevertheless, realizes that he can only live by dying: "¿Yo? Yo tengo también que vivir, pero en la muerte ..."⁹⁵ Unamuno does not speculate on his hero's life after death; after leading Juan to this conclusion, instead of finding the point of support which sustains all created reality in existence, Unamuno retreats and proclaims the equally fictitious nature of human reality, as Marías states. Don Miguel's ideas on this are best expressed in Del sentimiento trágico de la vida:

Por otra parte, ¿no cabe acaso imaginar que sea esta nuestra vida terrena respecto a la otra como es aquí el sueño para con la vigilia? ¿No será ensueño nuestra vida toda, y la muerte un despertar? Pero, ¿despertar a qué? ¿Y si todo esto no fuese sino un sueño de Dios, y Dios despertara un día? ¿Recordará su sueño?⁹⁶

Unamuno does not wish for an eternal life without the consciousness of self; for him, death cannot be overcome in an eternal sleep: "¿Es vencerla acaso errar así como sombras sin sentido?"⁹⁷ An essential aspect of Don Miguel's agony is a desire to save his own individual consciousness, an aspect which causes him to encounter more difficulties

⁹⁴Marías, p. 102.

⁹⁵Unamuno, El Hermano Juan, p. 808.

⁹⁶Unamuno, Del sentimiento trágico de la vida, p. 170.

⁹⁷Ibid.

than in his attempt to rationalize God:

Tengo que repetir una vez más que el anhelo de la inmortalidad del alma, de la permanencia, en una u otra forma, de nuestra conciencia personal e individual es tan de la esencia de la religión como el anhelo de que haya Dios. No se da el uno sin el otro, y es porque en el fondo, los dos son una sola y misma cosa. Mas desde el momento en que tratamos de concretar y racionalizar aquel primer anhelo, de definírnoslo a nosotros mismos, surgen más dificultades aún que surgieron al tratar de racionalizar a Dios.⁹⁸

Unamuno's philosophy which he calls the tragic sense of life carries with it a whole conception of life itself and of the universe, a whole philosophy more or less formulated, more or less conscious, which he summarizes in the chapter "El hombre de carne y hueso": "Hay algo que, a falta de otro nombre, llamaremos el sentido trágico de la vida, que lleva tras sí toda una concepción de la vida misma y del universo, toda una filosofía más o menos formulada, más o menos consciente."⁹⁹ This sense, declares Unamuno, is possessed not only by the individual man but by whole peoples.

Unamuno attempts to become a rational creature in his efforts to find God only to discover that reason has to be rooted in some ultimate assumptions of faith. When he cannot find faith because of the struggle between his intellect and his soul, he tries to establish reality by identifying the real with the fictional. But once again he comes to an impasse, and he cannot establish a fourth dimension. Again, it is the author himself who defines his position for the

⁹⁸Unamuno, Del sentimiento trágico de la vida, p. 162.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 189.

reader, realizing that many will call this theory untenable because of contradictions:

... Porque es la contradicción íntima precisamente lo que unifica mi vida, le da razón práctica de ser.

O más bien es el conflicto mismo, es la misma apasionada incertidumbre lo que unifica mi acción y me hace vivir y obrar.¹⁰¹

He is well aware that he will be considered indecisive, but his intimate contradictions give meaning to his existence.

Although Don Miguel spent his life in a struggle to determine the immortality of man's soul, he did not expect to find the answer. This was the challenge which kept him going; it was enough for him to know that he wanted to believe. When his nimble mind leaps from one idea to another the significance of his one basic theme overshadows all others causing digressions which detract from the aesthetic structure of his works. He is sincere in his attack on the traditional Don Juan theme, in his wish to expose its unmerited popularity in Spain, but he cannot resist any opportunity to explore new avenues in his efforts to rationalize immortality. All other problems pale into insignificance before his tragic sense of life, a Spanish sense:

Lo que llamo el sentimiento trágico de la vida en los hombres y en los pueblos es por lo menos nuestro sentimiento trágico de la vida, el de los españoles y el pueblo español, tal y como se refleja en mi conciencia, que es una conciencia española, hecha en España.¹⁰²

It is his desire to elevate Spanish moral values which motivates an onslaught on Don Juan, causing him to try to strip away the charisma

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 189.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 212.

which deceives the Spanish public. The saddest aspect of Unamuno's fictional hero is Juan's inability to love; the author clearly defines his ideas on this lack in Abel Sánchez: "Porque mira, Helena, no es lo peor no ser querido, no poder ser querido; lo peor es no poder querer."¹⁰³ Zorrilla's hero is saved by his love for Doña Inés, but Juan is cursed by not being able to love, is forced to play his rôle of an alcahuete, an emasculated Don Juan. He is subjected to the will of his author, an unbending Spanish will which is frustrated in turn by its ineffectiveness before a Superior Will.

¹⁰³Unamuno, Abel Sánchez (Madrid: Colección Austral (No. 112), 1967), p. 38.

CHAPTER IV

PÉREZ DE AYALA

In the novels Tigre Juan and its sequel El curandero de su honra (1926) Ramón Pérez de Ayala challenges the popularity of Don Juan, declaring that Tenorio's impotence and effeminacy have long been concealed under a cloud of glamour and false impressions. These two works develop ideas expressed earlier by Ayala in the essay collections Las máscaras, published in two volumes, 1917 and 1919. In the novels the author uses humor in his attacks on the Don Juan theme and the Spanish concept of honor in masculine-feminine relationships. Ayala's protagonist, Tigre Juan, a village curandero, is symbolic of the public which is deceived in its admiration for the classical literary figure. One of Tigre Juan's few friends in Vespasiano Cebón, a traveling salesman whose extravagant boasts of feminine conquests are so impressive that Vespasiano becomes the symbol of Tenorio for the curandero. Tigre Juan sees in the glib salesman a hope of vengeance for all men whom women have deceived. Although Tigre Juan sincerely believes that Vespasiano epitomizes noble Tenorian masculine ideals of virility, Ayala labels these concepts as mere myths attached to the Don Juan figure. He exposes Vespasiano as a weak, ineffectual person, the antithesis of the curandero's concept of honor. Tigre Juan is a simple man of fine character and high moral standards with strong convictions which are

the result of a cruel disillusionment in his youth. His long invectives against women are in truth the defense mechanism of a gentle and lonely man who suffers from frustration until he falls in love again. The metamorphosis of Tigre Juan is complete in the sequel where Ayala's principles concerning love, honor, and true virility are exemplified in his protagonist. The author's belief in strict adherence to high moral standards is expressed in long discussions between the protagonist and his foster son Colás, or with Doña Iluminada, a neighbor. These conversations turn frequently to the Don Juan theme, but Tigre Juan eventually recognizes the errors in his earlier evaluation of the literary figure, and he also realizes that his own concept of honor is narrow and dogmatic. Ayala attacks the unworthy aspects of Don Juan, and at the same time strikes a blow against dogmatism with the weapons of humor and satire.

Tigre Juan's name, Juan Guerra Madrigal, summarizes the paradoxical qualities in his character, while his nickname is the result of his fierce appearance, blunt mannerisms, and vociferous opinions concerning honor. Ayala gives Tigre Juan an authoritative position in the town called Pilares (Oviedo). His activities as a homeopathic doctor include: blood-letting; the gathering, prescribing, and sale of medicinal herbs; and free advice to a heterogeneous clientele. He also writes letters and wills, finds nursemaids or servants, and assists business men. Tigre Juan's shop is located in the center of the market, the hub for all village affairs, and his diverse activities give him an insight into all that occurs in Pilares. His little world is an old-fashioned one, reminiscent of Dickens or Pereda, but, in a more pro-

found sense, it is the expression of a world outlook which, from an intellectual viewpoint, seems to be receding further and further from contemporary man's grasp.¹ Thus, the old-fashioned ideas and philosophy expressed by Tigre Juan at times seem ridiculous, and he is sometimes called a caricature. However, Torrente Ballester disagrees with those who would classify Ayala's characters as caricatures:

Su visión del hombre-personaje no se produce en bloque, oscura y profunda, sino por partes, analítica y perfectamente clara. Construye a los personajes por agregación de elementos en torno a una idea primordial, no a una intuición. Pretende crear deliberadamente arquetipos, revistiéndolos luego de un disfraz de humanidad concreta y empírica.²

Thus Ayala attempts to create an archetype in Tigre Juan, a man whose moral life in Pilares is exemplary, but little is known about his past. Tigre Juan's reticence to discuss his life before coming to live in Pilares causes some to speculate and question the reasons for his apparent lack of interest in intimate relationships with women. His admiration for the salesman's boasting of feminine conquests seems normal to the other men in Pilares, but they do not realize that Tigre Juan sees Vespasiano as the redeemer for all men. Each time that he hears of another woman who has been deceived by Vespasiano, the curandero feels a personal joy and sense of vengeance. Since Vespasiano possesses a kind of crude charisma for women, Tigre Juan believes that his friend is endowed with all of those qualities which the curandero

¹Eoff, p. 21.

²G. Torrente Ballester, Literatura española contemporánea (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, S.L., 1969), p. 224.

admires in the Don Juan image. Ayala explains in Las Máscaras that most, if not all, Spaniards are wrong in their concepts of the classical figure:

Si hay una afirmación clara y concreta en materias teatrales que pueda ser aceptada una unanimidad, es esta: Don Juan Tenorio, drama de don José Zorrilla, es la obra más popular y conocida en España. Y, sin embargo, hay otra afirmación, no menos clara y concreta, que acaso no se haya formulado el lector; pero que, en conociéndola, espero que sea aceptada también unánimemente. Hela aquí: Don Juan Tenorio es la obra menos conocida en España. Menos conocida, porque el conocer con error, el tomar una cosa por lo que no es, es menos y peor que el completo ignorar. El origen primero de todo conocimiento es la experiencia personal del que conoce. Sin esta condición, es difícil alcanzar un conocimiento que sea de provecho.³

Ayala bases this theory on his fellow countrymen's preconceived judgments and premature opinions; since the Don Juan theme is so popular that from childhood, even before a Spaniard can read, the numerous allusions, jests, and paraphrases at the expense of Tenorio evoke varied and erroneous conceptions of the classical literary figure. Therefore, when each sees the drama for the first time, he finds in the hero those preconceived qualities he personally expects. In this manner, Tigre Juan has his own prejudices relating to Don Juan. Vespasiano is a familiar focus for Tigre Juan's admiration. He finds in Vespasiano those qualities which he believes Don Juan possesses because he wishes to see the embodiment of his own Don Juan myth. The disparity between the local Tenorio and the classical Spanish hero is evident to Colás and the widow Doña Iluminada, but Tigre Juan equates weak and effeminate Vespasiano with his dream of the legendary Don Juan.

³R. Pérez de Ayala, Las Máscaras, Obras completas, Tomo III (Madrid: Aguilar, 1966), pp. 170-171.

Ayala utilizes two antithetical symbols in his study of the Don Juan myths: Tigre Juan, an anti-Don Juan, virile and forceful, and Vespasiano, a local Tenorio who is exposed as weak and unworthy of admiration. Ayala's examination of the traditional concept of honor is essentially satirical and ironic as Tigre Juan faces the painful revelations of his Calderonian standards.

Ayala defines his ideas on irony and humor in the essay "Ironía y humorismo":

La ironía consiste en fingir que se toma en serio algo notoriamente indigno de ser tomado en serio. Consiste, en general, en decir justamente lo contrario de lo que se da a entender, sirviéndose de cierto énfasis retórico, burlesco y delator. ... El humorismo, por el contrario, no es que finja tomar en serio lo que unánimemente se reputa indigno de tal consideración, sino que, en efecto, y con toda sinceridad, lo toma en serio. ... Acaso el humorista trata a su persona irónicamente, en cuanto este personaje es sujeto pensante, pero a la vez lo trata humorísticamente: es decir, si por un lado finge tomarlo en serio, burlándose de él intelectualmente, por otro lado lo toma muy en serio, cordialmente en serio, con toda simpatía humana; trasciende así el humorista de su subjectividad (aunque sin perderla) y se infiltra en la intimidad individual (inteligencia, afectos, pasiones, unidad psíquica, en suma) del personaje.⁴

Ayala recalls the use of irony in ancient Greek classics, pointing out that humorismo, as he defines it, is a modern technique. He illustrates his theory with Cervantes's masterful combination of irony and humor in his creations of Don Quijote and Sancho.⁵ In the numerous interpretations of this greatest Spanish masterpiece, some see it as a comic work, while the more serious critic sees the profound truths in

⁴Ayala, "Ironía y humorismo", Amistades y recuerdos (Barcelona: Editorial Aedos, 1961), p. 270.

⁵Ibid.

the conflict between the ideal and the real. The paramount reason for Don Quijote's place in world literature is Cervantes's understanding and compassion for human weaknesses. In this respect, Ayala emulates Cervantes as he creates Tigre Juan; he laughs intellectually at his literary character's misplaced adulation and foolish values, but he always respects his protagonist's human frailty and treats him with tolerance and compassion. Just as Don Quijote must face the bitter realization of his illusions, so must Tigre Juan learn that his own concepts of Don Juan's manliness and Spanish honor are illusionary. Therefore the contradictions between dream and reality in Tigre Juan's existence share an affinity with the magnificent knight-errant.

Although Tigre Juan, a man of great moral strength and integrity, blames women for all the ills of the world, one of his best friends is the widow Doña Iluminada. While she is very much in love with her strong willed neighbor, Tigre Juan never thinks of her as a woman. As far as he is concerned, the widow buried her rights and desires for future marital happiness when her husband died years before. It is inconceivable that Doña Iluminada, whom he has elevated far above other women, would even consider another marriage. She intuitively senses that his bitterness toward women must be the result of some painful experience suffered because of love. She also realizes that Tigre Juan has a great need and capacity for feminine love and companionship. Since the two neighbors have built a strong friendship over the years, Doña Iluminada finally dares to tell Tigre Juan that he needs a wife. This provokes another verbal attack on the feminine sex. When the widow reminds him that she belongs to this group, Tigre Juan's

answer wounds her deeply:

—Usté, para mí, no es mujer de la pasta de las otras. No necesito disculparme.

—¡Qué lo he de ser!... No se equivoca. Si usté lo supiera bien... Por santa me tiene, y en eso va equivocado. A la fuerza ahorcan. A lo que estábamos. No hablaba por mí, sino en defensa de las demás mujeres. Hombres y mujeres están amasados del mismo barro frágil. Hay, sin embargo, una diferencia. Fíjese, camarada. Que el hombre no puede ser feliz sin la mujer, en tanto la mujer lo puede ser sin el hombre, aunque a causa del hombre. Porque eso de recrearse en la desgracia y bañarse de lleno, con deleite, en la propia tristeza, es ciencia infusa que el hombre por excepción aprende, y las mujeres nacemos ya aprendidas.⁶

Tigre Juan's frankness and bluntness cause the widow to realize the futility of her secret dreams of becoming his wife. She continues, however, to urge her old friend to seek a wife, pointing out that his foster son will soon be leaving to make a life of his own.

Tigre Juan has concentrated all of his love and affection on Colás, the waif whom he literally picked up in the street after some unknown girl abandoned her unwanted baby. Colás has filled a void in Tigre Juan's life, and he brought up the boy with affection and tenderness, but also with firmness and discipline. Colás, who calls Tigre Juan tío until he grows up, is obedient and respectful, but he disagrees with his foster father's esteem for Vespasiano and with his admiration for the traditional Don Juan figure. In their first conversation in the novel, Tigre Juan turns the subject to Don Juan qualities he admires in Vespasiano. He fails to notice the sarcasm in Colás's answers until the young man accuses Vespasiano of being effeminate:

—A mí, al menos, con aquellos ojos lánguidos, aque-

⁶Ayala, Tigre Juan (New York: Las Americas Publishing Company, 1964), p. 41.

llos labios colorados y húmedos, aquellos pantalones ceñidos, aquellos muslos gordos y aquel trasero saledizo, no puedo impedir que me parezca algo amaricado... Tiene anatomía de eunuco —declaró Colás, que no había levantado los ojos, a fin de representarse mejor en la memoria sensitiva la corporeidad ausente del aludido Vespasiano.⁷

Tigre Juan hears the charge in shocked disbelief. Then he becomes almost violent in his defense of the salesman. His praise of Don Juan is impassioned and fanatical:

Don Juan, por designio divino, es el vengador de todos los demás hombres infelices. Tentado estoy de sostener y pregonar a los cuatro vientos (y si hubiese herejía, en el tribunal de la penitencia me arrepentiré y sobre picota adjuraré mi error) que don Juan Tenorio es el segundo redentor de los hombres, guardadas las reverendas distancias pues el primero, Jesucristo, fué Dios tanto cuanto hombre; así como don Juan no es nada más que hombre; eso sí, hombre entero. Jesucristo nos redimió del pecado original, cometido por Eva, la primera mujer, y por culpa de ella hubo de bajar a la tierra a recibir muerte afrentosa de cruz. Don Juan nos redime de otro pecado sin cesar repetido por todas las posteriores mujeres, así como el de Eva fué el original; y este es el espantoso pecado de ridículo, que aunque ellas cometen el pecado, el ridículo cae de plano sobre nosotros. Gracias a don Juan, al cual nunca tributaremos las debidas alabanzas, el ridículo y la irrisión revuelven sobre la mujer, de donde proceden. Voy más lejos; tengo a don Juan por hombre que raya en santidad, pues todas sus aventuras, más se dijeran trabajos, que lleva a término, antes por caridad, penitencia y deber para con los demás hombres, que por afición.⁸

Ayala's use of hyperbole in exposing Tigre Juan's excessive admiration for Don Juan is, according to the author's definitions, a weapon to denounce the unworthiness of the Tenorian cult. Although Tigre Juan's diatribe may seem blasphemous, his traditional religious outlook constitutes a fundamental quality of his being; he is, however, limited

⁷Ibid., p. 32.

⁸Ibid., p. 28.

by his education and vocabulary, and the most forceful manner for personal expression is largely determined by the most powerful ideas in his experience, and these relate to the Church. Therefore, a basically traditionalist is at times led into the emotionalism of an evangelistic progressive; Tigre Juan's prejudices stem from the Don Juan theme and the Calderonian idea of honor. There is an obvious parallel here with Don Quijote's madness: the Knight of the Doleful Countenance is mad, but his madness is confined to one thing, the belief that the books of chivalry were true histories. Tigre Juan's obsessions do not reach a comparable degree of instability, but they do serve to pinpoint and undermine the Spanish adulation for the classical literary figure by exposing its ridiculous aspects.

Ayala's criticisms of the Don Juan hero are expressed by Colás as he tries to show his tío that his concept of Vespasiano as a Don Juan type is wrong, and, furthermore, any admiration for the Tenorian characteristics is unmerited. It seems incredible that a young, relatively inexperienced youth is capable of such mature judgment, but Ayala is chiefly concerned with his assault, and his themes take precedence over aesthetic values. Since he must use dialogue to present his views effectively, he has Colás attack, forcing Tigre Juan into the awkward position of defending logic with emotional outbursts.

Colás repeats opinions expressed by Ayala in Las máscaras as he criticizes the Don Juan hero. He points out that, despite his reputation as a lover, Don Juan has never had a son: "He leído bastantes libros que cuentan la vida de don Juan. En ninguno de ellos

se dice que haya tenido siquiera un hijo."⁹ Marañón discusses Don Juan's sterility in one of his studies:

Don Juan, cada noche, ciertamente no sueña, sino que ama, físicamente, a las mujeres de carne y hueso. Y, sin embargo, don Juan es invariablemente infecundo.

Repárese que, en efecto, don Juan no tiene hijos. Sus historiadores y los mismos donjuanes que han escrito sus confidencias, como el caballero Casanova, nos cuentan las complicaciones que les crea por donde pasan, su libertinaje y su violencia. Los padres o los maridos burlados le persiguen para lavar su honra. Ésta es una de las razones de que don Juan sea tan viajero. ... Pero ni una sola vez surge en la vida de don Juan el gran tropiezo que amarga las aventuras del varón vulgar, a saber, el hijo ilegítimo, acusador, que don Juan no ha conocido jamás.

Esta esterilidad de don Juan no sólo es genésica, sino mental y social. Ningún don Juan ha creado nada en el arte ni en la ciencia ni en la política. ... Los donjuanes de hoy no son poetas. Y los grandes poetas modernos, salvo lord Byron, tampoco han sido donjuanes.¹⁰

Marañón and Ayala are in general agreement concerning the Don Juan character, but Marañón conducts studies in all aspects of the literary figure. In this manner, he recognizes the sterility of Don Juan in a broader scope, encompassing the physical, cultural, and humanitarian facets. Ayala, speaking through Colás, is attacking the more common misconceptions.

Colás declares that Don Juan does not tire of women in five minutes and then abandon them; he escapes from them: "Sale escapando, eso sí, por dos razones; cuándo una, cuándo otra."¹¹ Colás charges that many times Don Juan flees because he has failed or because he fears that the woman will reject him. This psychological theory

⁹Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁰Marañón, "Don Quijote, Don Juan y Fausto" Obras Completas, III, p. 960.

¹¹Tigre Juan, p. 30.

includes some women who, fearing that they have not pleased the notorious lover, either keep silent, or falsely contribute to his reputation as a seducer. The second reason given by Colás is that Don Juan, frustrated by his inability to maintain sexual interest, must go from one woman to another: "... así como el hombre no muy hombre va de mujer en mujer, con la esperanza, siempre fallida, de que la siguiente será más de su gusto y le mantendrá encendido el deseo."¹² A medical opinion on the question of Don Juan's virility is presented by Dr.

Marañón:

... Pero ahora se nos presenta una cuestión de extrema delicadeza: la escasa virilidad de don Juan, ¿es puramente psicológica o alcanza también a su actividad primaria? Adelantemos que una mentalidad femenina o feminoide, y acompañada incluso de una morfología descaradamente equivoca, como acaece a muchos donjuanes, puede coexistir con una aptitud generatriz perfecta. En la patología se estudian — y yo lo he hecho con especial cuidado — numerosos tipos de estas que llamamos inversiones parciales . . .

Del mismo modo son posibles los donjuanes que de una parte se ajustan a la psicología y morfología virilmente borrosas y que de otra parte poseen energética actitud generadora, aunque no tanta como ellos dicen. Pero otras veces esa atenuación de los caracteres viriles alcanza a la totalidad de éstos, incluidos los primarios, y el don Juan, bajo su disfraz fachendoso, arrastra una vida sexual harto precaria. Pérez de Ayala anotaba la observación sospechosa de que la fauna donjuanesca de la literatura, con tanto prodigar su suspuesta masculinidad, rara vez dejaba en hijos de carne y hueso huellas tangibles de su poderío. Mis observaciones en los donjuanes de la vida real me han permitido comprobar estos indicios en confesiones sorprendentes de los mismos, a veces corroboradas por las de sus víctimas.¹³

Dr. Marañón includes these observations in his study of Don Juan's biology, pointing out the great fallacy of virility. He bases his

¹²Ibid., pp. 30-31.

¹³Marañón, Obras completas, IV, p. 90.

opinions on medical knowledge and case histories. It is true that not all Spaniards agree with the compatibility of scientific work and a purely literary figure,¹⁴ but his professional perspective of the Don Juan character is significant in a comprehensive study in the technological culture of the Twentieth Century. Dr. Marañón apologizes for his lack of skill in literary discussions, but he declares that, as a man of medicine, he feels impelled to discuss the biological problems of a Don Juan in language simple enough for the layman to understand. He explains his reason: "Ningún médico, en efecto, puede sustraerse a la preocupación del problema sexual, problema terrible que ninguna pedagogía ni religión han alcanzado a resolver en la práctica."¹⁵ Marañón points out that many people who suffer from physical and psychological illnesses have no suspicion that their particular sickness is caused by some sexual problem of a Freudian nature. Since the learned Spanish doctor and Ayala were friends, Ayala is familiar with these biological studies of Don Juan, and Colás expresses them in a simpler form. As a layman, Colás is incapable of understanding all the complexities in a person like Vespasiano, but he does see the obvious implications, implications which Tigre Juan chooses to ignore.

Tigre Juan has his own psychological problem: he suffers from an overpowering sense of guilt because of the death of Engracia, his first wife. This is the secret which he carefully hides from the people in Pilares. Engracia, to protect the unfaithful wife of Tigre

¹⁴Gonzalo Torrente Ballester, Panorama de la literatura española contemporánea (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1965), p. 321.

¹⁵Marañón, Obras completas, III, p. 76.

Juan's superior officer, allowed the Colonel's wife to hide her lover in Engracia's bedroom. Tigre Juan, believing that the man who jumped through their window and fled into the darkness was his wife's lover, began choking Engracia. He stopped suddenly because she had been vowing her innocence. Although Engracia was not killed by his hands, she fell ill from the attack, recovered, but died after a short time. Tigre Juan is left with a guilt complex; therefore, he builds up hatred for women so that he will be spared such pain in the future. It is significant that his hatred does not include Doña Iluminada, who, as Colás says, would be an ideal choice as a prospective wife for Tigre Juan. However, Tigre Juan's Calderonian sense of honor has elevated the widow to an idealistic position of sanctity which places her beyond the pale of temptations of the flesh. Therefore, she poses no threat to his fear of love and marriage. In the same manner, he maintains a close friendship with another shopkeeper, old Doña Marica, with whom he plays cards almost every night. Since Doña Marica's granddaughter lives with the old lady, Herminia is present for the customary games, but she chooses to remain inconspicuous, and Tigre Juan has never really noticed her. She is for him merely a well mannered young girl half-hidden in the dim lamplight. When Doña Iluminada tells Tigre Juan that Colás is in love with Herminia, he does not at first know to whom she refers. However, Herminia rejects Colás because she is frightened at the thought of having to live under the same roof with the fierce looking curandero:

Su pelambre era tupido, lanudo, entrecano, que casi le cubría frente y orejas, como montera pastoril de piel de borrego. Al hablar, que enarcaba o fruncía las cejas con metódico ritmo y rapidez, este recio capacete piloso resbalaba, de una pieza, hacia delante y hacia atrás, como

lubricado, sobre la gran bola del cráneo. También al hablar se le agitaban, en ocasiones, las orejas. En el pescuezo flaco, rugoso, curtido, avellanado y retráctil, tan pronto largo de un palmo como enchufado entre las clavículas (al encogerse de hombros suprimía el cuello), estaba espetada, afirmada, la testa con rara energía, mostrando, en una manera de altivez, el rostro cuadrado, obtuso, mongólico, con mejillas de juanete, ojos de gato montés y un mostacho, lustroso y compacto, como de ébano, que pendía buen trecho por entrambas extremidades. Su piel, así por la entonación como por la turgencia (piel jalde, tirante, bruñida), parecía de cobre pulimentado. Cuando una emoción fuerte o el humor de la cólera, que tal vez le domeñaba, se le subían a la cabeza, la dura cara de cobre se ponía bronceína, verde cardenillo, como si, de súbito, se oxidase con la acidez de los sentimientos. La faz, bárbara e ingenua, de Tigre Juan, guarda cierta semejanza con la de Atila.¹⁶

Thus, despite Tigre Juan's misogynic declarations, his small circle of friends includes two older women, and a young girl whom he has ignored for so long that he does not realize that Herminia has grown up. Since Doña Marica is his friend, he thinks of her granddaughter with the affection natural in considering a child in the family of an intimate. He has never regarded Herminia as a threat to his peace of mind since he still thinks of her as a child, never as a girl of marriageable age.

Herminia has another more important reason for rejecting Colás, and this is her attraction to Vespasiano. The naïve girl dreams of being loved by this Don Juan. Norma Urrutia classifies Vespasiano as a Don Juan because he possesses the following characteristics: "(44) He aquí algunas características donjuanescas de Vespasiano: mujeriego, hipócrita, cobarde, lúbrico, mentiroso, estratega, trotamundos, audaz,

¹⁶Tigre Juan, pp. 9-10.

inconstante. La actitud impía sólo se manifiesta con algunas irreverencias pasajeras."¹⁷ However, Norma Urrutia considers both Vespasiano and Tigre Juan caricatures:

Vespasiano es un Don Juan, como antes dijimos. Añadiríamos que es el Don Juan por excelencia (44) convertido como Tigre, en caricatura. Su admirador le concede toda clase de cualidades y virtudes en cuanto se trata de relacionarle con la mujer; aun más, le titula vengador de todos los hombres «al que nunca se tributarán las merecidas alabanzas» ya que devuelve «el ridículo y la irrisión a las mujeres, de donde proceden».¹⁸

Although Herminia seldom sees Vespasiano, since he only comes to Pilares several times during the year, she has fallen in love with him. She falls in love with his reputation as a Don Juan lover, and he excites her youthful imagination because he is the unknown, the forbidden fruit. But, Don Juan does not need to be seen clearly in order to attract women: in Zorrilla's Don Juan Tenorio, Doña Inés has seen Tenorio only once: "por entre unas celosías" (IV, 2), but she has heard much about the galán from her corrupt companion, Brígida. In the same manner, Herminia has heard of Vespasiano's exploits, and, as Norma Urrutia notes, Don Juan does not need to be seen:

Don Juan no necesita dejarse ver; su cómplice es, muchas veces, la tiniebla. Pero basta con su presencia imaginaria, pues se nos da a entender que es Eva quien lo lleva dentro. Por tal razón, durante la mitad de nuestra novela, Vespasiano existe sólo en la secreta y silenciosa mente de Herminia y en los gratuitos elogios que le brinda Tigre Juan, quien no cesa de expresar su admiración por el desconocido viajante, incitando de este modo al lector a entrar en contacto más directo con él.¹⁹

¹⁷Norma Urrutia, De Troteras a Don Juan (Madrid: Insula, 1960), p. 93.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 93-94.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 97-98.

As Urrutia says, Vespasiano exists in Herminia's mind, and the reader hears of him through Tigre Juan's praises, but the salesman does not appear personally in the novel Tigre Juan. This follows Ayala's theory that Don Juan is a myth, conceived in the minds of others. The perspective of the seductor from Herminia's mind is of more interest because it completes Ayala's theory.²⁰ Herminia also sees Vespasiano as a means of escape from the dull bonds of her daily existence to the freedom of the world outside of Pilares: "Para Herminia, Vespasiano era de consuno la nostalgia de lo desconocido y la tentación al extravío."²¹ In Vespasiano's case, however, the roles are reversed; while Colás and Tigre Juan take the initiative in their amorous relationships with Herminia, it is the girl who makes the first efforts to attract Vespasiano. She is fascinated by his reputation as a Don-Juan type: "Él la atraía y ella era quien le requería y le había solicitado, con largas miradas suplicantes. Él se dejaba querer."²² Herminia does not see the salesman as he is, but rather as her concept of a Don Juan.

Because Herminia rejects him, Colás leaves to join the military service for overseas duty. When Tigre Juan hears that Herminia is responsible for Colás's departure, he decides to seek vengeance against her. On his next visit to Doña Marica's tertulia, when, for the first time he looks carefully at the girl, Tigre Juan is so startled by her resemblance to Engracia that he faints. He believes that Herminia is

²⁰Ibid., p. 98.

²¹Tigre Juan, p. 118.

²²Ibid.

the resurrection of his long-dead wife: "- ¡La Apocalypsis! ¡La resurrección de la carne!"²³ Whether or not Herminia resembles Engracia, he sees enough youthful likeness that he faints because of guilty memories. Furthermore, since he is convinced that Herminia looks like his deceased wife, he falls in love with her. After this, Tigre Juan is a changed man. He discovers that his world is bright and beautiful again. He brings little gifts to Herminia, who begins to understand the significance in his change of attitude toward her. Although she admires his strength and power, she still fears Tigre Juan. She longs for Vespasiano's return to Pilares because she believes that he is her only hope for escape from a marriage with Tigre Juan. Ayala analyzes well her emotional and mental states, suggesting that what she considers hatred for Tigre Juan may be a misunderstood passion of love:

El odio a Tigre Juan, aunque de buena fe, ¿no sería mentido; más bien de pasión de amor, miedosa de sí misma, que se resiste a manifestarse? ¡Qué sabía ella lo que quería ni a quién quería!²⁴

Her problem involves three men, all very different, and she is a young, inexperienced girl; therefore it is natural that she really does not know her own sentiments at this time.

Tigre Juan is a silent but persistent suitor; although he never does ask Herminia to marry him, she finds herself officially engaged. When Vespasiano arrives shortly before the wedding date, Tigre Juan urges his friend to visit Herminia and tell her how much the curandero loves her. Vespasiano, pleased with his new advantages as a friend of

²³Ibid., p. 89.

²⁴Ibid., p. 119.

the groom, is unprepared for Herminia's request that he abduct her before the ceremony. He is already anticipating future privileges as a friend of the family, so he attempts to soothe Herminia by telling her that he will always carry her with him in his heart, but that is not satisfactory to the girl, who is still anxious to escape.

A few days before the wedding, Tigre Juan plays the leading rôle in Calderón's tragedy El médico de su honra in the local theater. In the play, Don Gutierre has his wife killed because circumstantial evidence strongly points to her guilt of infidelity. Even though Doña Mencía is innocent, her husband is determined to cleanse the stain from his honor with her blood. Tigre Juan, whose absurd ideas as to the proper costume for his part initially evoke derisive laughter from the audience, becomes so absorbed in his emotional portrayal of a dishonored husband that he receives a resounding ovation. Herminia is terrified, feeling as if many eyes are sending warnings to her. As she listens to Tigre Juan's enthusiastic performance, she becomes more determined than ever to escape with Vespasiano. She does not know that Tigre Juan's powerful portrayal is achieved because he is, subconsciously, defending his part in Engracia's death, but she has heard enough talk about his past that she intuitively senses some of the truth.

Ayala utilizes this Calderonian tragedy in developing his second theme, the Spanish concept of honor. He emphasizes the egoism in the traditional notion that blood must be spilled in order to erase stains from family honor. Tigre Juan clings to the exaggerated seventeenth century code in Spain when, to preserve his honra, a gentleman

might feel authorized to kill both his wife and the man he suspected of being her lover, whether he had proof of her infidelity or not. The extreme sensitiveness about the good name of a woman involved all male members of her family; therefore, the Don Juan theme and the concept of Spanish honor are linked by the mores of this time. Tigre Juan's attitude toward honor is fanatical; just like the Spaniards of the seventeenth century, he believes that honor is so fragile that the slightest breath of suspicion can sully it. This why he shows clearly his approval of the secret, premeditated murder in Calderón's tragedy. Since there was gossip, the husband was right in his defense.

The question of honor is dealt with in an episode in El curandero de su honra. The officer's wife whom Engracia had saved from dishonor years before in the Philippines arrives unexpectedly in Pilares. Now a widow, she attempts to blackmail Tigre Juan by alleging that he is the father of her twin daughters, born seven or eight months after he left. She has relied upon his past gullibility and fear of scandal, but Tigre Juan coolly faces the scheming woman, declaring that he has never seen her before. She becomes hysterical in her accusations, but he remains impassive despite the curiosity of people near enough to hear her charges. He suggests to Doña Iluminada that the woman is either drunk or under the influence of opium. Such aplomb in the delicate matter touching his own honor seems too improbable, but Ayala's explanation is also weak: "Tigre Juan decía la verdad. Su nueva vida era tan densa, que al pronto le tapaba el pasado. Su presente era un paraíso con altísimo cerco, cuya entrada

defendía una esfinge."²⁵ Nevertheless, the people in the market hereafter have a new epithet for him: "«el curandero de su honra»."²⁶ Since Tigre Juan has received a letter from this widow asking for money a few weeks earlier, it is unlikely that he does not know who she is when she comes to Pilares, especially since she tells him that the sum he sent was miserly.

The change in Tigre Juan's character is too abrupt because Ayala's primary concern is an exposé of false values in Spanish life. The novels suffer aesthetically because he is using fictional characters as weapons to attack the Don Juan theme and the Spanish concept of honor. César Barja summarizes the weakness of Ayala's personages: "No es que Tigre Juan y demás personajes sean falsos; es que son todavía demasiado símbolos, demasiado creaciones intelectuales, demasiado irreales, si se quiere."²⁷ Since Ayala has devoted the first half of these works to the portrayal of a bigoted man who regards a Calderonian sense of honor as the symbol of his pride and self-respect, Tigre Juan's reversal is too abrupt. It seems highly improbable that a middle-aged man with such strong convictions can change in such a brief time, even though he has found happiness in a new marriage. The incident which best illustrates this unrealistic transformation is his reaction when Herminia is brought back to Pilares after she left in pursuit of Vespasiano. Colas, accompanied by Carmina, the girl he now loves, brings Herminia home. Herminia was pregnant when she left, and

²⁵El curandero de su honra (New York: Las Americas Publishing Co., 1964), p. 141.

²⁶Ibid., 143.

²⁷César Barja, Libros y autores contemporáneos (New York: Stechert, 1935) p. 459.

now she is very ill. Colás assures Tigre Juan that his wife is innocent, but everyone is terrified because his ideas on the correct behavior of a dishonored husband are well known. To their great surprise, Tigre Juan can only stare at Herminia, unable to express his thoughts. He now believes that Herminia has not dishonored him, but the guilt lies within himself. He hopes that she can understand what is in his heart: " ... No me has deshonrado. El mundo entero no es capaz de deshonrarme. Yo me he deshonrado, egoísta y soberbioso, con pensamientos vengativos. ... "28 He does not know that Herminia is pregnant, but he feels that his pride and thoughts of vengeance place the guilt upon his shoulders. He is so convinced of this personal guilt that he attempts suicide by opening a vein. When Herminia and Colás break open the door, she realizes that her husband is dying. She takes him in her arms, praying aloud that his life will be spared. When he hears her declarations of love, Tigre Juan believes them and stops the hemorrhage. He wants to live because she loves him, and he is overjoyed at the prospect of being a father.

Although it is natural enough that Tigre Juan is a doting father, Ayala goes to the extreme of having him shamelessly change diapers and hold the baby's bottle, even when they are on a train on a trip to Madrid. Such behavior in conservative Spain invites ridicule and some scorn, but Tigre Juan is so proud of being a father that what the world thinks about his actions no longer worries him. This reversal of attitudes is so incredible that it damages the novel, but Ayala

²⁸El curandero de su honra, p. 220.

shows that Tigre Juan, a character of great moral strength, has been able to overcome his Calderonian notions and is able now to channel his passion into positive action. Formerly, when his life was motivated by egoism, he was incapable of fulfillment. As long as Vespasiano is idealized, Tigre Juan is unable to transcend his own nature.

Vespasiano, the Don Juan por excelencia converted into a caricature, is presented indirectly in the first novel, but his rôle is active in the sequel. When he comes to Pilares a few days before the wedding, Tigre Juan sends the salesman as his emissary to Herminia. Tigre Juan has never been able to express his love to the girl, but, of course, Vespasiano speaks for himself. He is unprepared for Herminia's proposal that he abduct her before the wedding can take place. Vespasiano attempts to dissuade her with sweet words but Herminia does not relinquish her plan to flee with him. It is the salesman who suddenly slips out of town after he witnesses Tigre Juan's terrifying theatrical performance, but he does not leave until he assures Herminia of his constant, insatiable love.

Vespasiano is often in Tigre Juan's thoughts as he faces the prospect of being alone with his bride; he envies his friend's melodious fluency: " -Si yo fuese Vespasiano... ¡Ah! Entonces..."²⁹ Herminia also thinks of Vespasiano; she refuses to permit this marriage to trap her. Therefore, upon Vespasiano's next trip to Pilares, she takes the initiative and tells him that she is his, and that she is going with him when he leaves. Vespasiano, who has been anticipating

²⁹Ibid., p. 146.

the privileges of visiting Tigre Juan's home for clandestine meetings with Herminia, attempts several subterfuges, but Herminia is no longer deceived by his lies. She follows him when he leaves for the station and boards the train at the last minute. Frightened by the thought of having to face Tigre Juan's wrath, Vespasiano tries to persuade her to return home before she is missed. When the extent of his cowardice is exposed by Vespasiano's refusal to assume any responsibility for her, Herminia pities him: " ... ¡Pobre Vespasiano! Te asusta el amor. Nunca has amado ni podrás amar. ¡Tu sino! Me das lástima."³⁰ Ayala is echoing the same idea that Unamuno expresses in Abel Sánchez, " ... lo peor es no poder querer."³¹ Herminia finds the saddest aspect of her Don-Juan symbol: Vespasiano is incapable of love.

Since Herminia now considers herself una perdida, she refuses to return home, although Vespasiano is now repulsive to her. When he realizes that she will not return to Pilares, he suggests that they find a room for her in some remote locale, but the woman's will is too strong for Vespasiano. She insists that she belongs with those of her kind, the prostitutes, and demands that he take her to a brothel. Since Vespasiano is familiar with an owner of such an establishment, he finally persuades this celestina to permit Herminia to rest there until he can make other arrangements. This familiarity with a house of prostitution is in itself a mockery of the Tenorian hero. When does a traditional Don Juan need to resort to payment for the favors of a

³⁰Ibid., p. 193.

³¹Unamuno, Abel Sánchez (Madrid: Colección Austral (No. 112), 1967), p. 38.

prostitute? The inclusion of this subtle episode is a prostitution of the Don Juan theme.

Herminia locks the door to her room and refuses to see Vespasiano when he returns. During the long, miserable hours while she is in the brothel, Herminia finally realizes that she is in love with her husband, but she is afraid to go home. One of the girls in the house helps her to escape, and they meet Colás and Carmina, who convince Herminia that she should return to Pilares. Thus it is Vespasiano who causes Herminia to discover her love for Tigre Juan: he awakens dormant desires by planting seeds of love, as Urrutia points out.³¹

When Vespasiano musters enough courage to face Tigre Juan again, he first sends an apologetic letter, saying that he tried to get Herminia to return home but she refused. Tigre Juan plans to treat him with scornful indifference, but he is unable to maintain such composure. When he crushes Vespasiano in an embrace, the salesman feels his ribs cracking and begs Tigre Juan to let him free: " ... No estruje más. Me ahoga. Escuche. Yo no le he robado a Herminia."³² But Tigre Juan presses harder and harder until Vespasiano is sobbing. When he releases Vespasiano, Tigre Juan invites him to his home to see Herminia. He wishes to let Vespasiano know that he does not consider him worthy as a rival, and, furthermore, he is not afraid for his wife to see the salesman again. But Vespasiano has had enough of Tigre Juan's reception, so he declines the invitation. Despite his efforts to display

³¹Urrutia, p. 109.

³²El curandero de su honra, p. 267.

his customary aplomb, Vespasiano is conscious that he will never again be able to dazzle the curandero with tales of his donjuanismo.

Pérez de Ayala's primary object in attacking donjuanismo is the opportunity to face the problems of the Spanish character. In his essay "Un poco de psicología" he says that principles of a personality are applicable to the personality of a people:

... Hay en él una memoria colectiva, compuesta de una memoria personal de los propios hechos pasados y de otra memoria erudita. La memoria personal es la tradición. La memoria erudita es la cultura. La educación de un pueblo depende del equilibrio volumen y recíproca armonía de ambas formas de la memoria. El último lindero adonde se extiende la memoria personal colectiva es identifica con el umbral de la ciencia histórica. Más allá de aquel límite yace la personalidad preconsciente, el temperamento heredado de una o varias razas, el cual luego perdura por bajo de la conciencia actual, coloreando de un tinte único la tradición y orientando por un derrotero característico la cultura; individualizando, en resolución, un pueblo entre la muchedumbre de los demás pueblos.³⁴

Ayala declares in another essay that responsible Spaniards are ashamed of the lowered standards in their land: "Las horas que señalan el curso de la vida española son cada vez más amargas, más contumeliosas. Los pocos, muy pocos españoles responsables se sientan más avergonzados de su tierra y de su pueblo."³⁵ It is true that this essay was a criticism of Benaventes's play La honra de los hombres, and Ayala caused controversy with his severe evaluations of the dramatist, but his statement is pertinent to the Don Juan theme. Ayala devotes two novels to an exposure of the false values attached to donjuanismo and the concept of

³⁴Ayala, Rincón Asturiano, Obras completas, I, (Madrid: Aguilar, 1964), pp. 1104-1105.

³⁵Ayala, Las Máscaras, Obras completas, p. 132.

honor. He shows that Tigre Juan, the antithesis of a Don Juan, is vigorous and virile whereas Vespasiano is exposed as a weak, pathetic man who is in truth incapable of love. Ayala attacks the antiquated concept of honor which has its roots in the bigoted seventeenth century. By using irony and humor he hopes that his pueblo will recognize that it is also as ridiculous as Tigre Juan, or as weak as Vespasiano, in its adulation for those false cultural aspects which they symbolize. Tigre Juan's philosophical conversations take him into an abstract world of ideas which manifests Pérez de Ayala's personal beliefs and philosophy.

CHAPTER V

JACINTO GRAU

Jacinto Grau develops the history of his dramatic version of the Don Juan character from pre-conception to death in El burlador que no se burla (1930); in Don Juan de Carillana (1913) he presents a middle-aged lover who flees because he cannot face the absurdity of reality. Since the universality of the Don Juan theme caused its diffusion to many lands, with varied and often distinct interpretations, Grau feels an obligation to present his personal vision:¹

El don Juan real, que yo he sacado al mundo, desenterrándolo del mito, es un insulto y un desafío a todo cobarde prudencia de una moral y cultura vieja, perezosa ante toda audacia. Pesan sobre esa moral y esa cultura demasiados años de cátedra, de convencionalismo y de tibio hedonismo. Y cuando no, un estéril escepticismo defensivo. Don Juan es antes que nada un magnífico instinto ciego, pero que sabe abrirse paso como los privados de la vista, por el tacto y el cayado. Como vive intensamente, no tiene necesidad de filosofar.²

Although Grau's first play deals with an aging Don Juan, his El burlador que no se burla begins before his parents have consummated their marriage, even though the ceremony took place a year earlier. Doña Laura has refused to see her husband since she caught him kissing an

¹Jacinto Grau, "Ante la figura de Don Juan," El burlador que no se burla (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, S. A., 1947), p. 18.

²Grau, "Apuntes para una autocrítica," El burlador que no se burla, p. 16.

English governess an hour after the wedding. From its beginning, Grau develops the idea that Laura, symbolic of all women, subconsciously desires male domination, since it is a vital part of nature. Doña Laura can never find fulfillment in her marriage because Don Álvaro is weak enough to permit such a ridiculous situation to continue until Laura's mother intervenes. The fruit of their marriage is Don Juan, who grows up to be an overpowering lover, charismatic but with unbridled eroticism. This concept of the Don Juan figure as a creature of animal instinct is basic in the protagonists of both of Grau's plays. For Don Juan the body is all important; mind nor spirit nor soul do not concern him. Don Juan is an integral part of Spanish culture, but his relations with others bring suffering and calamity. Grau embraces here the Existentialism theme that man suffers moral anguish and a sense of the absurd which may lead to the violence of senseless acts. Sartre defines angoisse:

... D'abord, qu'entend-on par angoisse? L'existentialiste déclare volontiers que l'homme est angoisse. Cela signifie ceci: l'homme qui s'engage et qui se rend compte qu'il est non seulement celui qu'il choisit d'être, mais encore un législateur choisissant en même temps que soi l'humanité entière, ne saurait échapper au sentiment de sa totale et profonde responsabilité.³

But Sartre recognizes that this existentialist anguish involves others: "Pour obtenir une vérité quelconque sur moi, il faut que je passe par l'autre. L'autre est indispensable à mon existence, aussi bien d'ailleurs qu'à la connaissance que j'ai de moi."⁴ Don Juan wishes to be

³Jean-Paul Sartre, L'Existentialisme est un humanisme (Paris: Les Éditions Nagel, 1968), pp. 27-28.

⁴Ibid., pp. 66-67.

identified with Adelia in El burlador que no se burla: "—Quisiera fundirme en ti. Ser tú. Ante ti, me siento incompleto. No ser yo, para ser tú, sin dejar de ser yo. Vivir contigo tu vida y la mía a un mismo tiempo."⁵ Grau's protagonist wishes to be identified with the object of his love, to absorb the Other, but at the same time he does not wish to lose his own identity. Another example which follows Sartre's contention is Don Juan de Carillana's frustration because he cannot possess his daughter. More important than the theme of possession are the basic existentialist postulates that man shapes his own existence and can become engagé by committing himself to positive action, despite the complex circumstances into which he is born. Doña María expresses man's sense of loneliness: "Desde que nacemos estamos en guerra con todo y con todos, empezando por nosotros mismos".⁶ If society, cultura, is stagnant, it is because of its laziness and apathy. Grau wishes to show that Don Juan is an anti-hero, a negative force in Spanish culture. He states in the introduction to El burlador que no se burla that this work is an attack against the present decadence: "es una reivindicación contra la decadencia presente, que no puede concebir ningún mito o fuerza vital, sin debilitarlos con sutilezas o análisis robados a la ciencia o afeminamientos originales, de una psicología de estufa."⁷ Since Grau rejects those who attempt to revamp the traditional Don Juan figure while clinging to the basic mold, he presents his original version. He declares that Don Juan has

⁵Grau, El burlador que no se burla, pp. 69-70.

⁶Ibid., pp. 32-33.

⁷Grau, "Apuntes para una autocrítica", El burlador que no se burla, p. 16.

two lives: "la propia y la que le cuelgan en sucesivos modos de verla."⁸ Grau, as most Spanish writers, feels that he has a legitimate and natural right to present his interpretation but he scorns those who reproach the author who has not merely painted another original: " ... pero me parece tonto y ocioso incurrir en el frecuente y feo vicio de reprochar al autor porque no ha pintado otro original del que escogió, creyéndolo el auténtico y real."⁹ Grau follows this concept as he develops his Don Juan character. Kessel Schwartz feels that Grau "missed being a first rate figure because his realizations could not match his aspirations."¹⁰ Although Schwartz is discussing Grau's theatrical production as a whole, this criticism is applicable to the two plays dealing with the Don Juan theme.

Grau's play begins when Doña María, Laura's mother, finally takes over and invites Álvaro to come to her home, but she prudently keeps this invitation a secret from her daughter. Furthermore, Álvaro, a proud and cynical libertine, is led to believe that his wife wishes to see him. When Álvaro arrives, Doña María maneuvers their meeting so that Laura flees to her bedroom, followed by her indignant husband. Then the resourceful Doña María locks the quarrelling couple inside Laura's bedroom, confident that a reconciliation will follow. Doña María kneels before a statue of the Virgin as she prays for a grandson:

⁸Grau, "Ante la figura de Don Juan", p. 23.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Kessel Schwartz, "Literary Criticism and the Spanish Civil War", Hispania (May, 1969), p. 210.

"¡Qué nazca un hombre, Virgen mía, un hombre digno de serlo al menos!"¹¹

In her prayer she says that she does not ask for a wise nor a talented heir; her only supplication is that he be endowed with masculinity:

"No importa que ese varón no llegue a ser santo, ni poeta, ni sabio, ni guerrero, con tal que sea algo ruidoso, famoso ... un varón, en fin que no sea una insignificante oveja más del rebaño humano ...,"¹² Some

twenty years later Doña María remembers with regret and sorrow this prayer of vanity as she kneels again before the Virgen de Zurbarán:

"¡Virgen mía, te pedí un nieto que fuese algo extraordinario, no hasta este extremo!"¹³ She feels that God's punishment for her foolish vanity is too severe.

Doña María's sorrowful prayer follows the suicide of young Gloria, a distant relative who has been living in the old mansion with her and Laura. Gloria kills herself because Juan, Laura and Álvaro's son, seduces her a few days after he returns from his school to the ancestral home. Don Álvaro was killed in an automobile accident some years before, and Laura feels that Juan has inherited his father's vices: "un perdido como su padre, al que hizo bien Dios en llevarse al otro mundo."¹⁴ Laura learns from an old servant that Juan was seen leaving Gloria's room at dawn, but she has no sympathy for the impressionable girl, and tells her mother that Gloria must be sent to a convent. Doña María, compassionate and sensible, feels that the two young

¹¹Grau, El burlador que no se burla, p. 44.

¹²Ibid., p. 43.

¹³Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 60.

people must marry if Juan has seduced Gloria. Doña María does not suspect the truth until it is too late, but Eugenio, the girl's fiance, realizes the danger which Juan's presence in the palace brings: "Ha venido al mundo trayendo a Cupido a sus órdenes, y donde hay mujer apetible, se le inflama el mirar, le acude la palabra hiriente y ligera como un dardo invisible ..."¹⁵ This invincible charisma, the one essential characteristic which a true Don Juan must possess, follows the traditional idea, although Grau's concept is deliberately revised.

Since Juan's mother recognizes traits of weaknesses inherited from Don Álvaro, it would seem logical that she would try to protect an innocent girl, but she harshly condemns Gloria: "Vete, desdichada, vete a llorar el decoro que has perdido."¹⁶ Laura is motivated more by memories of Álvaro's infidelities than by the behavior of Gloria or Juan. Marañón's studies of donjuanismo show that many well adjusted women, who would never succumb to a Don Juan, nourish a secret admiration for donjuanismo in their own family:

Es rara la madre, por equilibrada y justa que sea, que no experimente una secreta o mal disimulada complacencia cuando su hijo comete una fechoría donjuanesca, aunque sea notoriamente una canallada y un pecado. Sus mismas hermanas se enorgullecen del hermoso conquistador. Y si don Juan es casado, hasta la esposa escarnecida siente su humillación templada por un sentimiento inconfesado de vanidad.¹⁷

The danger in this indulgent pride is that it contributes to the Don Juan legend, as Marañón points out. This is the bitter truth which old Doña María reaps when Gloria commits suicide because of the grandson

¹⁵Ibid., p. 50.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁷Marañón, Obras completas, III, p. 92.

for whom she prayed years earlier. Laura, on the other hand, manifests no shame because of Juan's despicable actions. She boasts that, just as she had strength of character to cope with Álvaro, she can also correct their son. Doña María warns her daughter that young Juan is "un torbellino suelto".¹⁸ Because the Don Juan figure is an integral influence on Spanish society, Grau is signaling the danger inherent in false idealism as well as the threat to those who are apathetic or choose to ignore its potential consequences. He believes that many Spaniards of integrity are guilty of the same vanity as Doña María. Blind pride in their national literary hero refuses to acknowledge its coarseness and crudity.

Doña María recognizes the frustration and irreparable losses in every man's existence; this is her prayer's significant aspect in a profound sense: " ... Todo, Virgen mía, todo ... menos uno de esos seres vulgares, aburridos y anodinos, como el vivir vacío y gris de esta vieja provincia de España, tan dejadas una y otra, hace tiempo, de tu mano ... "¹⁹ The irony is that, although she senses the unique value of life, not in the life of the abstract, but life in her province, she asks God to endow her grandson with "algo ruidoso, famoso,".²⁰ But this notorious aspect which her grandson receives is more abhorrent to Doña María than the dull, common existence with which she equates provincial life in Spain. Grau expresses here the existentialist anguish of being. Since Doña María realizes that life is inexhaustible

¹⁸Grau, El burlador que no se burla, p. 61.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 44.

²⁰Ibid., p. 43.

in the present and must be lived with passionate enjoyment, she asks that her heir may be able to avoid a wrong attitude. She refuses to be imprisoned in her world, as Laura is, and she prays that her grandchild will be motivated to engage in a struggle against cosmic loneliness. This is not to say that Grau set out to write an existentialist play based on the Don Juan theme, but he does, nevertheless, manifest clearly these existentialist traits. It is a Christian Existentialism because Doña María does not believe that God is dead; she feels anguish because she believes that God is absent from Spain; that is, he is rationally incomprehensible and must be accepted in good faith. Her Catholic beliefs give Doña María faith that God will answer her prayer for a worthy grandson.

Juan, now the conde de Mayolas, follows the traditional Don Juan pattern of licentiousness through the succeeding stages of his life. In the opening scene of the third cuadro he slips into Adelia's bedroom when her mother and sister are at a ball. Since Adelia is mourning the recent death of her fiancé, she is disturbed by her reactions to the attentions of the conde de Mayolas. As she sits in her bedroom, Juan steps from the shadows and begins to speak of his love. Unable to resist him, Adelia is saved by the arrival of her sister Hortensia. Hortensia, however, is not concerned with Adelia's welfare; her angry accusations disclose that, although she is engaged to Captain Redondo, Hortensia is guilty of infidelity: "¡Tú con mi hermana, y hace apenas días me tenías en tus brazos y parecías morir de amor por mí!"²¹ Juan hides and returns to Adelia later, asking for a night of

²¹Ibid., p. 71.

love; Adelia, left to her own defense, becomes another victim of don-juanismo.

When Hortensia warns the Count that Captain Redondo has sworn to kill him to avenge her own honor, Juan arrogantly says that he is willing to meet him in a duel whenever Redondo chooses. In the subsequent confrontation, Redondo is killed. The inevitable consequences of donjuanismo in the Calderonian sense of honra is dueling, but Grau's twentieth century setting is incompatible with seventeenth century mores. Torrente Ballester believes that Grau's theater would be more successful if he did not forget the economical and social circumstances which compose the complex theatrical production; Grau composes his theater from a purely artistic viewpoint, ignoring theatrical conventions and the audience: "La construye y compone desde dentro, es decir, que su estructura y disposición de elementos obedecen a una ley interior de la pieza, independiente de su destino para la escena."²² In the same manner as a poet writes a sonnet, or a novelist creates, Grau treats the theater as an aesthetic experience: " ... ignora al intérprete y al público; no les hace concesiones, pero al mismo tiempo desdén las indispensables, ... "²³ Another opinion is expressed by Ezell in his discussion of Grau's extensive use and transformation of traditional plots and themes: "Basing his plays on such themes, Grau assumed that the spectators were familiar with them and used their familiarity to gain

²²Gonzalo Torrente Ballester, Panorama de la literatura española (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, S.L., 1965), pp. 255-256.

²³Ibid., p. 256.

acceptance for his version."²⁴ Ezell's view is that Grau uses the intellect as a means of involvement through communication, while Torrente Ballester sees the involvement as purely an artistic effort. Ironically, Grau's works suffer aesthetically because of his intellectualism.

In a study of Grau's philosophy, Kessel Schwartz declares: "he sees a humanity which cannot escape itself as he presents various aspects of the individual's struggle with the forces which hem him in and impel him to his fate."²⁵ Schwartz compares Grau's Existentialism to that of Ortega, Unamuno, and Sartre in one aspect: it is a personal drama. He points out, however, that Grau gives it a broader base and shows both existential anguish and optimism through human love.²⁶ In the introduction to The Meaning of Existence in Contemporary Hispanic Literature Schwartz gives a concise appraisal of Grau's preoccupation with existence:

Jacinto Grau's dramas, whatever their symbolic or allegorical framework, concern human passions and emotions, the power of love and the power of death. His protagonists exhibit a faith in human ability to save man from his own errors through affirmation and love, an insatiable appetite to know God and to seek resurrection and affirmation of their own being. In this existence the inability to communicate, to know God, to love humanity, and to have immortality leads to guilt and anguish, but one must try to use will to determine the future and strive constantly for an I-thou relationship. Man is responsible for his own actions.

²⁴Richard Lee Ezell, "The Theater of Jacinto Grau: A Depiction of Man" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Modern Languages, University of Oklahoma, 1971), p. 19.

²⁵Kessel Schwartz, "Jacinto Grau and the Meaning of Existence", Hispania, XLIV, No. 1 (March, 1961), p. 34.

²⁶Ibid.

At times, like the don Juan of El burlador que no se burla, he is a God who chooses for himself and for the moment, without belief in morality, in human values, or in transcendental concerns. He acts beyond good and evil.²⁷

Man has freedom of thought and choice but he must also become engaged actively, according to existentialist concepts. Although Grau does not contain a coherent system of thought in these plays, he does manifest clearly the influence of the broad current of this philosophy.

Grau expresses some of his ideas relating to Existentialism in the prologue to Los tres locos del mundo. He enumerates a few of the achievements of classical antiquity: the Parthenon, the sculpture of Phidias, celestial music, and the works of Plato. Then he declares that if these creations had not been achieved, human dignity would not have existed: " ... si no existiese continuamente enriquecido por la inspiración de nuevos creadores, un vario y magnífico mundo de fábula, la dignidad no sería una poderosa realidad moral y no existiría a pesar de todas las constituciones y magnas cartas habidas y por haber."²⁸ In a succeeding paragraph he says: "la vida para el hombre no es más que lo que éste quiere que sea."²⁹ Thus Grau shows his adherence to the principle advanced by Kierkegaard: man is responsible for what he does and makes himself to be. Since he believes that the Don Juan hero is unworthy of Spanish adulation, he exposes his shallow values in these brief plays of this study.

²⁷Kessel Schwartz, The Meaning of Existence in Contemporary Hispanic Literature, Hispanic-American Studies No. 23 (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1969), pp. 29-30.

²⁸Grau, Los tres locos del mundo (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, S.A., 1953), p. 12.

²⁹Ibid.

Grau continues his projection of Don Juan in the third cuadro where the conde de Mayolas has attracted so much notoriety that he is included in a discussion of the Don Juan theme. In this act, the Count is discussed by various segments of the public as they walk through a park on their way to hear a lecture by Dr. Ordóñez on the Don Juan theme. Grau designates the minor characters as : dos señoras aristocráticas de media edad, un caballero anciano, un señor alto, un señor bajo, una dama rubia. There are constant derogatory references linking Mayolas to the Don Juan lecture. Ezell points to the lack of comprehension of Grau's two Don Juan figures by the minor characters and the resulting damage to his protagonists; economic and moral impossibility prevent their comprehension of men who attempt to live in constant exhilaration by filling every hour with the active pursuit of love.³⁰ Grau does name famous fictitious writers who argue about the classical literary hero. Arriaza, one of these characters, declares that, despite the universal appeal of the Don Juan, his roots are essentially Spanish, going back to the Moorish invasion: "Creo que sólo un país como España, dominada por musulmanes varios siglos, puede producir el hombre que busca un gran harén en el mundo, en la calle ..."³¹ Although Arriaza admits his own promiscuity, he agrees that he is not a Don Juan: "Pero soy una conciencia, y veo que toda Europa es una porquería."³² Another writer in the discussion later says that Arriaza's attitude is an instinctive defense of his own weakness, and the moral weakness of Spanish intellec-

³⁰Ezell, p. 90.

³¹Grau, El burlador que no se burla, p. 85.

³²Ibid., p. 86.

tuals: "La debilidad es la característica de toda la actual intelectualidad española."³³ Thus as Ezell notes; Arriaza sees Don Juan as a symptom of decadence among Europeans who no longer fulfill moral obligations.

Ortega y Gasset disagrees with those Spaniards who are harsh in their appraisal of Don Juan. He discusses this resentment in an article from El Sol:

Cuando se hace balance resumido de la literatura donjuanesca, dos hechos parecen sobre todo destacarse, quedando frente a frente. Uno es el atractivo, el garbo de la fisonomía de Don Juan al través de sus equivocadas andanzas. Otro es que casi todos los que han hablado de él han hablado mal. Esta contradicción entre la gracia vital del personaje y la acritud de sus intérpretes constituye, por sí sola, un problema psicológico de alto rango. Las demás figuras simbólicas han pervivido sustentadas por el entusiasmo de los poetas, que hacían de ellas tema para su obra. Estaba reservado a Don Juan el insólito destino de ser elegido precisamente para ser atacado. Una y otra vez los poetas o los moralistas lo resucitan para vengar en su imaginaria persona no sabemos qué agravios secretos e hincan denodadamente en su carne indefensa las plumas hostiles.

Don Juan ha tenido siempre «mala prensa». Esto debe bastar para que sospechemos en él las más selectas calidades. Las masas humanas propenden a odiar las cosas egregias cuando no coinciden casualmente con su utilidad; pero en siglos como los dos últimos, dominados por la opinión pública, ha llegado a ser distintivo de todo lo excelente el rencor que en el vulgo provoca.³⁴

He thinks that resentment of Don Juan is based on envy and fear; men are envious and women are afraid to defend him. Ortega agrees that Spaniards should struggle to overcome their legacy of mental habits from the Middle Ages, but he also declares that it is urgent to acquire new

³³Ibid.

³⁴José Ortega y Gasset, "Don Juan y el resentimiento", Obras completas, Tomo VI, sexta edición, (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1941-1946), p. 132, citando El Sol (Madrid), Junio, 1921.

perspectives which are unprejudiced: "Miremos a Don Juan desde Don Juan, y no en su proyección sobre el alma de las viejas en la plazuela la historia de sus trastadas."³⁵

In Grau's play Ordóñez discusses his ideas on Don Juan as he walks to the lecture hall with friends. He calls Don Juan a crude bore and ridicules Mayolas. He says that his own wife agrees with his low estimation of Don Juan, and Ordóñez boasts that no intelligent woman can be seduced by any man of this character. Ironically, minutes later the attractive señora Ordóñez submits willingly to Mayolas in a secluded area of this same park. She has also underestimated the Don Juan charisma.

Like his ancestor Tenorio, the Count is indiscriminate in his tastes; his Tisbea is a beautiful, ragged girl from a squalid poverty-stricken, crime-infested neighborhood. Afra's lover attacks Mayolas with a knife, but even this tough macho is overcome by the reckless Count. Thus Mayolas goes from woman to woman until the time comes for his confrontation with the invincible foe, death. Lucifer immobilizes Don Juan late one evening in his study and tells him that, since his days of usefulness to the Devil have ended, Mayolas will no longer be permitted to remain on the earth. Lucifer censures Mayolas for challenging the dead in cemeteries as Tenorio did, but the offended Count denies this charge while he boasts arrogantly of his conquests of women. Before leaving, Lucifer warns Mayolas that he must this same night face three more fantasmas: "Ahora entiéndase usted con su destino, con su

³⁵Ibid., p. 136.

vida y con su muerte."³⁶ Three figures representing Don Juan's Destiny, Life, and Death appear suddenly in an aura of dim light, and each reviews his particular part of the Count's existence. Destiny reminds Mayolas of the many gifts and advantages he has been given; Life recalls that he has been strong and prodigal; Death then takes over, declaring that, despite all of these advantages, Juan de Mayolas has squandered his existence: "Podías haber hecho mucho más que lo hiciste."³⁷ Death tells the Count that he has never learned the secret of living: "En cada ser vivo hay un secreto profundo, que tú no has sabido advertir."³⁸ Mayolas dies without repenting his sterile, sinful, selfish life. In the "Epílogo" Grau shows lines of women before confessionals as they confess their grief and sins caused by the death of Don Juan. This adulation of a Don Juan is symbolic of the spiritual indifference and lack of moral responsibility which oppress the Spanish people. Grau's play reflects the author's aesthetic values and ideology:

La tragedia de Don Juan, para mí, no es que no puede amar, ya que ama a su modo. En ese modo esta toda su idiosincrasia. Su erotismo, de igual origen que el de todos los hombres de su raza, adquiere una exaltación y poderío infinito, de tal ardor que ninguno podría respirar su hora de fuego. La reacción es también mucho mayor, y sin necesidad de un incentivo nuevo que le vuelva a encender la imaginación y el apetito impetuoso, se vacía como se lleno, volviendo a arder ante los encantos de la mujer desconocida. El hastío inmediato, común a todos, es en el mucho mayor, y la capacidad de ilusión y fantasía alcanzan una pujanza renovadora extraordinaria. Es, pues, un gran iluso y un ávido insaciable, por esa misma facilidad de renovar sus

³⁶Grau, El burlador, p. 125.

³⁷Ibid., p. 129.

³⁸Ibid., p. 131.

ilusiones, y apetencias vehementes, sus amores de llama se extinguen, librándole de toda angustia y dolor.³⁹

These ideas are depicted in the illusory world which Mayolas creates in his efforts to quench an insatiable lust. His egoism is deaf to the suffering of others. Grau disagrees with those who believe that Don Juan's restless search for satisfaction is a subconscious pursuit of an ideal.

Ortega, one of Don Juan's most enthusiastic admirers, denies that Don Juan is a sensual egoist:

Ante todo, Don Juan no es un sensual egoísta. Síntoma inequívoco de ello es que Don Juan lleva siempre su vida en la palma de la mano, pronto a darla. Declaro que no conozco otro rasgo más certero para distinguir un hombre moral de un hombre frívolo que el ser capaz o no de dar su vida por algo. Ese esfuerzo, en que el hombre se toma a sí mismo en peso todo entero y se apresta a lanzar su existencia allende la muerte es lo que de un hombre hace un héroe. Esta vida que hace entrega de sí misma, que se supera y vence a sí misma, es el sacrificio —incompatible con el egoísmo.

No ha visto el verdadero Don Juan quien no ve junto a su bello perfil de galán andaluz la trágica silueta de la muerte, que le acompaña por dondequiera, que es su dramática sombra. Se desliza junto a él en el sarao; con él escala la [sic] celosías de amor; entra a su costado en la taberna, y en el borde del vaso que bebe Don Juan castañetea la boca esquelética del mudo personaje. Es la muerte el fondo esencial de la vida de Don Juan, contrapunto y resonancia de su aparente jovialidad, miel que sazona su alegría. Yo diría que es su suprema conquista, la amiga más fiel que pisa siempre en su huella.⁴⁰

Ortega continues his rationalization with the idea that this constant eminence of death consecrates Don Juan's adventures, giving them a fibre of morality. Then he defines el ideal:

³⁹Grau, "Ante la figura de Don Juan", p. 20.

⁴⁰Ortega y Gasset, "Don Juan, un héroe", Obras completas, VI, p. 136, citando El Sol (Madrid), Junio, 1921.

El hombre animoso está dispuesto a dar su vida por algo. Mas ¿por qué algo? ¡Paradójica naturaleza la nuestra! El hombre está dispuesto a derramar su vida precisamente por algo que sea capaz de llenarla. Esto es lo que llamamos el ideal. Más o menos, somos todos sobre el área de la vida cazadores de ideal. Para vivir con plenitud necesitamos un algo encantador y perfecto que llene exactamente el hueco de nuestro corazón. Cuando nos parece haberlo hallado, nuestro ser se siente tan irremediabilmente atraído por él, como la piedra por el centro de la tierra y la flecha por el blanco a que aspira. ...

Siglo tras siglo ha ido la humanidad ensayando un ideal tras otro; siglo tras siglo, con la aljaba al flanco, ha ido disparándose a sí misma hacia ilusorios horizontes. Un momento le parecía hallar en tal cosa, luego en tal otra, la fisonomía del ideal, de lo perfecto y suficiente, y apasionada se ponía a su servicio, pugnaba por realizarlo y, cuando era menester, sabía morir en el afán. ... Mas pasada la hora primera, la humanidad comprendía su error, notaba la insuficiencia del ideal propuesto y variando la ruta, incansable, ponía la proa hacia nueva costa imaginaria.⁴¹

Ortega y Gasset's personal interpretation of the Don Juan type as a hero is in marked contrast with the perspectives of Azorín, Unamuno, and Pérez de Ayala, but it substantiates Grau's opinion that the evaluation of the Don Juan figure is essentially subjective: "Cada cual tiene su Don Juan. Este suele dar a cada cual una intolerancia muy católica y muy española para el Don Juan ajeno."⁴² All writers portray the Don Juan figure in conformity with their general attitudes and viewpoints. Grau declares that his personal vision is clear in his Don Juan works: " ... me obliga a declarar de un modo sumario mi visión personal de personaje, que aunque está bien clara en la presente obra, que es donde debe estar, ... "⁴³

Grau's depiction of a Don Juan in Don Juan de Carillana is the fifty year old hero who refuses to face the reality of the passing

⁴¹Ibid., p. 137.

⁴²Grau, "Ante la figura de Don Juan", p. 20.

⁴³Ibid., p. 19.

of time and the inevitable effects of increasing age. Since he has a handsome youthful appearance, with only the wily eyes of experience to betray his years of licentiousness, Carillana continues to think of himself as a dashing young lover who can charm any girl. When a mysterious young woman, always veiled when she leaves her new home, moves into an old mansion near his ancestral home, Carillana attempts to overwhelm her with attentions. To the amusement of most villagers, the lady rebuffs his efforts, and Carillana becomes an object of ridicule. People in the Castilian village, formerly indulgent and secretly proud of their prodigal son, have been watching with curiosity his reestablishment in the old family home. They follow his frustrated pursuit of the strange lady with increased interest because of her reserve, seclusion, and entourage of foreign servants. Carillana, disdaining all furtive methods of traditional donjuanismo, pursues the veiled lady so openly that she finally sends him a curt note demanding that he cease his offensive behavior. Don Juan, insulted by her reference to him as "don Juan de secano",⁴⁴ cries out incredulously: " ... ¡Don Juan de secano! ¡En la cumbre de mi vida, triunfante, encontrarse con un caso semejante! ¡El mundo se acaba, Guadalupe! ¡El mundo se acaba!"⁴⁵ Guadalupe, an old family servant, is more concerned about scandal than with her master's wounded vanity.

Infuriated by her message, Carillana determines to force his way into the palace where the disdainful lady lives. In the ensuing scenes

⁴⁴Grau, Don Juan de Carillana (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, S.A., 1947), p. 175.

⁴⁵Ibid.

the author strips away human dignity from the middle aged Don Juan by placing him in a series of ridiculous situations: he stands in front of the lady's home, crying out loudly for admittance; he attempts to scale the walls and force his way into her home; he challenges a stranger who arrives at the gates with a retinue of servants; his efforts to prevent the entrance of this new arrival into the lady's home are ignored by the gentleman. Carillana is left standing awkwardly in the street where his cowardly servants have witnessed these humiliating events. Although his vanity is somewhat assuaged by the arrival of this gentleman at his home the next morning, Carillana is undaunted by the news that this man is the duque de Vendara, the husband of the lady in question. Finally, Vendara feels that it is necessary to tell the older man that his wife is Carillana's daughter, although she is unaware of this. Her mother was a young Austrian Princess whom Carillana had abandoned years ago. When Carillana hears the news, he knows that Vendara speaks the truth because he remembers well the Princess and her morganatic husband. Vendara's mother-in-law has confided in him because her daughter plans to establish an orphanage in the village with money Carillana gave the young Princess, but she believes it is only a legacy. Carillana is stunned by the information and vows to leave his ancestral home, never to return.

Carillana is fleeing from those who have witnessed his humiliation and his first failure to possess a woman he desires. He is shocked into the realization that other more ignominious experiences must follow with aging so he vows never again to allow himself to be subjected to such humiliations; he will, therefore, spend the remainder

of his life in sexual abstinence. The irony, he feels, is that his own daughter is the first woman he has truly loved. Grau shows here the nadir of Don Juan's egoism; he is in love with an extension of himself. Like Bradomín, but in this respect only, his narcissism leads him to fall in love with his own daughter. Carillana is filled with bitterness at the cruelty of fate: "¡Ah mundo, mundo misteriosa alma del mundo, cómo juegas con el azar y las criaturas! Ir tras del amor, entrever la mujer de ensueño, y encontrar en ella el fantasma del pasado en forma de hija ..."⁴⁶ He declares that he will forget deceiving human vanity and place his hopes on a better life in an eternal world. Man's worn out values will no longer be his guide because he will replace eroticism with love for all mankind.

Since all of Carillana's previous existence has evolved around physical prowess and vanity, his frustration becomes obsessive when he finds that he is trapped by the absurdity of his temporal reality. Because man is limited by his mortality, Carillana finally discovers that his values and endeavors are false. These changes in his philosophy are in accord with Grau's ideology and conform to his declaration that his works will be an exposure of the decadence in Spanish culture; in the same manner that a middle aged Don Juan loses dignity and becomes an object of ridicule by ignoring the changes wrought by time, so is Spain also out of the mainstream of life because her people cling to traditionalism, past glories, and out-moded values. Grau would like to see Spanish intellectuals set an example for the masses by raising their standards and, more importantly, by becoming involved in new,

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 204.

worthy endeavors. The young men must see the folly of wasted years and sterility because they follow unworthy models like the Don Juan figure.

Grau's treatment of the Don Juan theme manifests his belief that man bears responsibility for his actions and has freedom to make choices. His protagonist suffers existentialist anguish because of an inability to communicate and to know God. Grau presents the annihilating quality of sexual desire and the themes of possession and identification with the loved object.⁴⁷ These general existentialist principles are reflected in Grau's plays but the problem of man is central. There is no single existentialist philosophy, and no exact definition of it can be given. Its followers stress man's concrete existence, and Grau's primary interest is humanity. His works are rich in thought and manifest the Christian tendencies and high moral values of the author, although they suffer because of an emphasis on aesthetics.

⁴⁷Schwartz, The Meaning of Existence in Hispanic Literature, pp. 134-135.

CHAPTER VI

Gonzalo Torrente Ballester

In his novel Don Juan (1963) Gonzalo Torrente Ballester resurrects the ghosts of the seventeenth century burlador and his lackey Catalinón, and places them in the heart of Paris in the year 1962 where an anonymous narrator tells Don Juan's story, traditional in some respects, but manifesting a marked influence of existentialism. Although Torrente Ballester declares that his objective is merely literary, his affiliation with problems pertaining to man's cosmic position reflects the shifting of perspectives which are characteristic of twentieth century literature. Furthermore, the author recognizes the dichotomy in his personal viewpoint: despite his temperament and education which evidence a leaning to strict realism, Torrente Ballester admits that he is drawn irresistibly to fantasy. He realizes also that the two long digressions break the unity of his established plot,¹ the dilemma of Don Juan, but he is unable to delete these two bloques. Furthermore, there are numerous comparative references to literature covering a span of time from a confession by la Celestina in the

¹ Gonzalo Torrente Ballester, "Prólogo," Don Juan (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1963), p. 10.

archives of the Santa Inquisición to an analysis of Sartre's L'Être et le Néant, which detract from the aesthetic value of the work. Torrente Ballester takes liberties with Tirso's models, especially with the role of the servant; he prefers the name Leporello, a name widely known because of Mozart's opera Don Giovanni Tenorio (1787). Leporello, unlike the cowardly Catalinón, enjoys more authority. Long dialogues between Leporello and the narrator, a Spanish visitor in Paris, relate a new history of Tenorio. Torrente Ballester declares that, after removing what the author terms mamarracho, or, grotesque embellishments, he has insisted upon the remaining essential qualities of Tirso's original model. Since Don Juan died being Don Juan, he is condemned by Torrente Ballester to wander throughout Eternity donjuaneando.² For Don Juan Hell is within himself, not in others as Sartre's three characters learn in the play Huis-clos (1944). In Sartre's play when the door of the underworld is opened, the trio is unable to leave; Don Juan is wounded many times, but he is unable to escape his earthly Hell. Although Don Juan is an imaginary creation of fantasy without the least contact with reality, Torrente Ballester sees him as more of a creature of thought than of action: "... se me representaba más como figura pensante que activo."³ Both the burlador and his servant are endowed with supernatural powers which permit them to borrow other bodies at will; however, Torrente Ballester, an author from the space age, imposes a limitation on Don Juan's sexual powers. Since he is

²Torrente Ballester, Don Juan, p. 131.

³Torrente Ballester, "Prólogo," p. 10.

over three hundred and seventy years old, Don Juan is no longer able to achieve sexual fulfillment, despite his appearance of eternal youth and increasing charisma. Torrente Ballester makes no attempt to rationalize this disparity, which baffles his women characters who have been won by the old ghost. However, Leporello is quick to deny all rumors which accuse his master of impotency, recalling past triumphs in the long history of Don Juan. The contemporary version, however, is a history of frustration as a literary creature's dilemma is exposed. The novel ends with the desolate figures of Don Juan and Leporello standing in the middle of a group of people who wave to loved ones on a train as it leaves a Parisian station. The narrator catches a glimpse of this pair, but Don Juan does not wave to him; he tips his hat and smiles.

All of Torrente Ballester's story takes place shortly after the narrator returns to visit familiar haunts in the Saint Germain quarter. He learns that Leporello's master has been shot by Sonja, his latest infatuation. Sonja, who is in love with Don Juan, cannot understand why, after days of tender amorous attentions, Don Juan suddenly rejects her. Leporello explains the true situation:

Don Juan no puede acostarse con sus enamoradas. ¡No me mira de esa manera, no recuerda lo que ha leído acerca de su impotencia sexual! La explicación es más fácil: nació en Sevilla en 1599, hace algo más de trescientos setenta años.⁴

So, even though Torrente Ballester endows his protagonist with eternal charm and youthful appearance, he deprives Don Juan, and his feminine friends, of climax. Since his ladies cannot know of his debilitation,

⁴Torrente Ballester, Don Juan, p. 42.

Don Juan must suffer their wrath and frustration. Leporello says that some girls have committed suicide, but others, like Sonja, try to kill Don Juan. Actually, Leporello reveals, his master would welcome death and an end to his long sterile pilgrimage now that even momentary pleasure is denied him. However, Leporello is quick to boast that Don Juan has not always had to bear this humiliation of his pride in being a great lover:

--Como usted comprenderá-- seguía Leporello --, don Juan no se ha portado así. Antano ni una sola mujer pudo acusarle de fraude. Le llamaron, es cierto, Burlador, pero no por lo que hizo, sino por presentimiento de lo que había de hacer, porque nunca como ahora fue don Juan un verdadero burlador; nunca tampoco su especial y perfectísimo modo de amar ha llegado a los extremos a que ahora llega. El poder actual de don Juan para hacer feliz a una mujer es incomparable, sólo que, en cierto momento, esta felicidad exige la expresión carnal que afortunadamente don Juan no puede darles

... Se interrumpió, hizo un gesto ambiguo con las manos.⁵

The reason Leporello chooses the word afortunadamente is, he explains, that such happiness would bring death to the woman because human nature puts limits on the intensity of pleasure: "... y el que mi amo daría a las mujeres sería irresistible, sería la muerte."⁶ Despite his sincere manner, Leporello laughs softly after issuing this prophecy, as if the thought of such a death gives him a diabolical pleasure. The narrator senses some sinister quality in the Italian servant's behavior, but he is, nevertheless, anxious to learn more about him.

Later Leporello takes the narrator to Don Juan's apartment, mentioning casually that these rooms were once occupied by a friend of

⁵Ibid., pp. 42-43.

⁶Ibid., p. 43.

Don Juan, some poet named Baudelaire. When the Spaniard looks curiously about the ornately furnished rooms, he feels as if countless women whom Don Juan has deceived are watching him with sorrowful eyes. Leporello has an important reason for bringing a stranger to Don Juan's retreat; he needs to send a pistol and Sonja's handkerchief to the lady before the police discover this evidence. It is always Leporello who must take charge of all practical matters involving his master. Torrente Ballester has changed the role so that Leporello is more aggressive than Catalinón, who serves as a foil for Tenorio. Catalinón, a model gracioso, repeatedly warns his master that he must pay for his transgressions, while Leporello's advice is motivated by a vicarious delight in debauchery and evil.

Leporello telephones Sonja to prepare her for the narrator's visit, but she still believes that she has killed Don Juan. She tells the narrator that she has no desire for any sexual relations, whether in marriage or out. After consultations with a psychoanalyst, Sonja is convinced that she is a frigid woman. She is content with her preparations for a career until she meets Don Juan, who mesmerizes her so that she acts with no will of her own. The day she shoots him she is overcome by a new emotion as she listens to the seductive music when he plays the piano. Sonja removes her clothing, walks behind the piano, and beckons for Don Juan to follow her into his bedroom. He orders her to get dressed again, but she stands staring incredulously at him until she hears him say in the same cold voice, " Ahí junto a tu mano está la pistola. "⁷ Then she realizes that she is nothing to

⁷Ibid., p. 59.

this man whom she worships. The narrator says that, as a devout Catholic, he believes that a woman should save her body for her husband. Sonja, an atheist, defends her ideas:

... Para usted, Dios es evidente; para mí, lo es Don Juan. Reconozco que la fe de usted es mas meritoria que la mía, Porque usted nunca ha visto a Dios, y yo he estado desnuda en presencia de Don Juan.⁸

Sonja's idealistic concept of Don Juan, an echo of Calisto's pagan creed in which he calls himself Melibeian, shocks the narrator. In the prologue Torrente Ballester denies that the narrator is the author, but he admits that many of the ideas expressed by the narrator are his own. The argument with Sonja over her Neoplatonic attitude leads to a discussion concerning Eternidad and la Nada. The narrator believes in the freedom of man to make a choice: "Yo creo en la libertad, no en el Destino."⁹ Sonja's belief in Destino is substantiated when the narrator tells her that the Don Juan who seduced her is el verdadero Don Juan; when she is convinced that she is not the victim of a common seducer, Sonja expresses her gratitude: "Le aseguro que todo me parece necesario, que tenía que ser así."¹⁰ She says that she feels as if a child has been planted within her body:

--No sé. Pero al revelarme el nombre de Don Juan fue como si hubieran sembrado un niño en mis entrañas. Ahora lo siento palpar dentro de mí; crecerá, me llenará enteramente, será¹¹ uno conmigo, y así permaneceremos unidos hasta la Eternidad.

⁸Ibid., p. 110.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 111.

¹¹Ibid., p. 112.

The narrator is not sure if she does not hear, or chooses to ignore, his ironic retort, "--Hasta la Nada, querrá usted decir."¹² Her ecstatic glow produces an uneasy thought of blasphemy in the narrator. He experiences similar apprehension when Leporello is sacréligious and when Sonja declares that she is an atheist.

The pessimistic form of atheistic existentialism began with the philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre, whose complex ideas have spread beyond the philosophic world to a wide public of literature and theater. The postulate shared by all forms of existentialism is that existence precedes essence, for man exists only in so far as he shapes his own existence. This is the basis for the doctrine of the liberty of man. In L'Être et le Néant (1943), a major philosophical work which had tremendous influence on French thought, Sartre is apparently motivated by the conviction that if individual human consciousness has any validity it must be made to prove it without recourse to arguments about causality and origin. This conclusion by Sherman Eoff in his study of the challenge of absurdité conforms with ideas expressed by Torrente Ballester's narrator. Eoff points out that Sartre maintains that the temporalization of consciousness is a flat movement, not a vertical progress toward a cause: "Origin and destiny, therefore, cannot be dignified as meaning or purposeful direction."¹³

¹²Ibid.

¹³Sherman H. Eoff, "The Challenge to Absurdity," The Modern Spanish Novel, p. 214.

Sartre's concise summary of current philosophical thought on Existentialism gives his more mature viewpoint:

L'existentialisme n'est pas tellement un athéisme au sens où il s'épuiserait à démontrer que Dieu n'existe pas. Il déclare plutôt: même si Dieu existait, ça ne changerait rien; voilà notre point de vue. Non pas que nous croyions que Dieu existe, mais nous pensons que le problème n'est pas celui de son existence; il faut que l'homme se retrouve lui-même, fût-ce une preuve valable de l'existence de Dieu. En ce sens, l'existentialisme est un optimisme, une doctrine d'action, et c'est seulement par mauvaise foi que, confondant leur propre désespoir avec le nôtre, les chrétiens peuvent nous appeler désespérés.¹⁴

Sartre declares that Existentialism is an optimist doctrine because it, unlike Christianity, does not seek to plunge man into despair. If existence precedes essence, Sartre declares, then it follows that Existentialism assumes greater responsibility since it involves all of humanity.¹⁵ Despite the validity and power of some of Sartre's premises, it is significant that his philosophy does not bring out its metaphysical evidence.

Although Sonja agrees with Sartrean atheistic existentialist principles, she misinterprets Don Juan's statement that he is a Catholic so she tries to change her own viewpoints to conform with Catholicism. In their first meetings, Don Juan often questions her about her atheism, although such a subject may not always follow the trend of their conversations. She is puzzled until he questions her at length about her beliefs relating to her life, life in general, and ontology. At first she thinks that he is trying to convert her to Catholicism, but he

¹⁴Jean-Paul Sartre, L'Existentialisme (Paris: Les Editions Nagel, 1968), p. 95.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 26.

begins to explain the significance of la Nada: "Por el contrario, comenzó a explicarme lo que eran la Nada y la Materia, y a preguntarme si creía que la Materia saliese de la Nada para volver a ella, o si, por el contrario, pensaba que fuese eterna."¹⁶ Sonja relates this conversation to the narrator, admitting that she is confused because, although she has studied Metaphysics at the Sorbonne, Don Juan's persuasive manner causes her to long for la Nada: "... sino que me hacía apetecer ansiosamente la Eternidad de la Nada y mi propia eternidad y mi propia nada."¹⁷ She recalls that Don Juan begins to overwhelm her with tenderness and so much attention that she feels as if he is making her the center of everything, a source of life, but at the same time subjected to what he is discovering in her. He is creating in her a religion of la Nada. He tells her that one cannot stop at atheism itself because one also arrives at Eternity by way of atheism: "Es tan incomprensible decir de Dios que es eterno como decirlo de la Nada, porque lo incomprensible no son Dios y la Nada, sino la Eternidad y la Infinitud de Dios o de la Nada."¹⁸ Sonja becomes furious when the narrator says that what Don Juan is trying to teach her is a form of Hindu mysticism. Even though she attributes mystical tendencies to their relationship, she admits between sobs that she is only trying to deceive herself: "¡Todo fue un enorme engaño! ¡Lo que yo deseaba no

¹⁶Torrente Ballester, Don Juan, p. 56.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 56.

era unirme al cosmo ni nada parecido, sino acostarme con él, como cualquier chica con su amante!"¹⁹ This unexpected confession is provoked by a sense of guilt caused by her desire for a normal sexual relationship, plus the humiliation of being rejected. Her candor embarrasses the narrator, especially since she is a naïve attractive young woman with a history of emotional problems, but she must discuss her experiences with someone who sympathizes.

The narrator, a writer by profession, is annoyed by the thought that he too is the victim of some ridiculous farce. Even though he has never accepted Leporello's absurd declarations as true, he finds himself becoming more involved in something mysterious which intrigues his imagination. When he finally tells Leporello that it is a stupidity for him to insist that his master is the Tenorio born in the seventeenth century, the servant laughs, asking who he himself is supposed to be. Once the narrator insinuates to Leporello that he is el diablo; now the Italian replies, bowing in mock reverence, "--Ahora le aseguro que lo soy."²⁰ Then Leporello takes him to a cafe where he reveals what he terms the true history of Don Juan. This lengthy digression introduces new biographical deviations; it begins in Juan's adolescence, later, as a youth he marries Mariana, a prostitute, whom he deserts, although he loves her. The remainder of his life follows a traditional pattern of licentiousness. Torrenteallester injects the note of fantasy by depicting Don Juan and Leporello as ghosts. The end of

¹⁹Ibid., p. 57.

²⁰Ibid., p. 67.

Leporello's narration is presented in a Parisian theater where the anonymous narrator sees Leporello and Don Juan in La muerte de Don Juan. The ghost of Don Juan's father speaks for the Tenorio family when he delivers their judgment, reminding Don Juan that he has broken all the laws of God and man. Then Don Juan laughs bitterly because he has broken God's law through respect for the Tenorio lineage, swears that he will never again accept the name Tenorio as his, and rushes off the stage, boasting that he knows the way to Hell. Leporello cries out for his master to wait for him, as the curtain falls on this strange version of Don Juan.

Although the narrator has always told Leporello that he does not believe his fanciful story, several mysterious events perplex him. At first the narrator is convinced that Leporello's assertion concerning his master's identity is a stupid farce, but when he sees Don Juan for the first time he is lying unconscious with a bullet through his chest. When he finds a weak pulse, the narrator insists that a doctor be called immediately, but Leporello says that bullets will not kill his master, and keeps talking casually about Sonja. Sonja's reaction to the news that the man she loves is really Don Juan does not alarm the narrator because he knows of her emotional problems. However, when he cannot locate Don Juan's home for her, despite his certainty that he has returned to the house where Leporello took him, the narrator is disturbed. Furthermore, there is no stairway from the patio, and inquiries of all the neighbors find no one who has even seen such a man in the vicinity.

The narrator is worried about Sonja because she is apparently the victim of an unscrupulous pair, but since he is concerned about his own involvement, he decides to leave Paris without telling anyone of his plans. The Spaniard reflects on past events when he has acted as if he has no will of his own. Strange ideas enter his mind; he feels as if he has lived in another age: "Todo el mundo ha tenido alguna vez esa clase de experiencias y probablemente en ellas se apoyó Platón para afirmar que nuestras almas emigran."²¹ As he sleeps he has strange dreams in which he contemplates memories which do not belong to him. The next morning Lisette, the maid, seems spellbound and flirts so openly that the narrator is surprised because this is a new experience for him. What puzzles him more, however, is his confidence and expertise in handling the situation. It is as if another person is in command of his words and behavior. Leporello arrives later to inform the Spaniard that Don Juan's soul left his body twice during the night: "El alma de mi amo ha emigrado, esta noche, un par de veces de su cuerpo."²² When Leporello is unable to get the narrator to admit that he and his master are, respectively, Don Juan and the Devil, he explains:

... Mi amo y yo, para creer que somos, respectivamente, Don Juan y el diablo, intentamos que alguien lo crea. Y para que alguien lo crea, él se porta como Don Juan y yo como el diablo.²³

Even though the narrator assures Leporello that they play their roles well, he does not admit how close they come to success. Then Leporello

²¹Ibid., p. 117.

²²Ibid., p. 125.

²³Ibid., p. 130.

assumes a threatening manner and accuses the narrator of not believing in the Devil either, or that Don Juan is condemned to be the same always.

Torrente Ballester's emphasis on the supernatural in the narration of that part of the story set in the age of Tirso seems more acceptable than eerie episodes in the space age where Leporello compares the movement of los Serafines in the dance to Esther Williams' aquatic grace.²⁴ The author, however, is convincing enough to shake the narrator's common sense; although his intellect tells him that such phenomenon as transmigration of the soul are not possible, the power of suggestion is so strong that, in view of numerous incidents, the Spaniard is nagged by doubts. An accumulation of strange circumstances has an undeniable effect on his viewpoint and emotional state, but he is able to conceal it from the clever Leporello. Actually, even after Leporello admits that he and his master are deceivers, the narrator is surprised at the end of the play, which he considers a mockery of good theater, to know for the first time that the unscrupulous pair are actors.

In retrospect, it is evident that all the narrator knows about Don Juan was told to him by either Leporello or Sonja since the only personal contact he has had with Don Juan was when he saw him lying covered with blood on the floor of his apartment. The next time he sees the man is at the little theater when he plays the leading rôle in La muerte de Don Juan. Thus Torrente Ballester synthesized fantasy

²⁴Ibid., p. 279.

and realism as he states in the prologue, but the dominant note is the supernatural, especially in the narration of Don Juan's history.

In the prologue Torrente Ballester states his intention to write his Don Juan, a composite of other Don Juan's, but one that is his own. The obvious changes in Don Juan's origin are numerous: he marries a prostitute, whom he thinks he truly loves; his companion is a demon called Leporello; he seduces Comendador's mistress for revenge, but refrains from taking advantage of the virgin Elvira; he thinks he is avenging the Tenorio name with licentiousness. But the incestuous love of the Comendador for Elvira is an aspect not found in other works of this study; the incest of the Marqués de Bradomín involves the sinful protagonist who is an example of donjuanismo, and has no direct connection with Tirso's Comendador. Torrente Ballester's work as a critic has tempted him to try to encompass too much in one novel. He seems to acknowledge this error in his prologue, where he indicates that he should have shortened his digressions, and also he says that his work is not a novel, but una historia.

There is little question that the author had existentialist ideas in mind when he depicts Don Juan's Hell within himself. Since he cannot die, he has no escape from his own suffering in his Hell on earth. Sartre's influence is manifest in the portrait of a disoriented and rebellious ego seeking its identity outside deeply entrenched social and religious mores, with no exit except death, which is denied him. Don Juan's entrapment in his situation, which is a void, condemns him to loneliness, but man cannot exist alone. As he becomes aware of his

situation, he suffers anguish, and a sense of absurdity and despair lead him to a senseless revolt against God and the laws of man. This follows Sartrean philosophy, but Don Juan is not given a chance to make a choice and thus shape his own existence. As Torrente Ballester points out in the prologue, he belongs to the writers who believe in the philosophy that man should be involved in life, engagé: "Yo lo soy, evidentemente, pero no con un grupo o una escuela. Lo soy al modo del guerrillero y no del soldado regular."²⁵ Torrente Ballester attempts to establish a relationship between the Don Juan legend and Existentialism, thus bringing a Spanish myth into contemporary philosophical currents. This is also a reinterpretation of the legend, more philosophical than psychological. His contribution to the Don Juan theme is bringing a traditional literary work into the twentieth century.

²⁵"Prólogo," p. 11.

CONCLUSION

In their interpretations of the Don Juan theme Spanish writers manifest the despair of introspective dissatisfaction with society and the intellectual consequences of decadence and apathy which disturb other writers of the twentieth century. Aware of the needs for reforms and changes in their country, they are, however, reluctant to abandon national traditional literary themes. Consequently, they adopt a familiar subject like the Don Juan theme and allow their imaginations to transform, define, or recreate the classical hero. The results manifest the differences in the opinions and beliefs of respective individuals, but most of these writers attempt to explain the metaphysical inquietude of modern intellectualism. Man's sense of impotence and insignificance fill him with despair; struggling for individuality in a materialistic world, he feels that he is alone, standing on the edge of a void. He desires a personal and sympathetic relationship with a Supreme Being, but an inner conflict between intellectual thought and traditional theology produces a pessimistic attitude, or anguish. Thoughtful writers believe that, since man can, with effort, give a shape to human existence and confer meaning and purpose to his world by involvement, he should discard false values and out-moded

ideas. The criticism of old values began with the writers of the Generation of "98," and with the shifting of perspectives as the century progressed existentialist tendencies became more significant. Their works on the Don Juan theme show that they are characterized by their efforts to attain a non-political ideal which would permit Spain to perfect art and politics.

Azorín's pride in Spain's noble past and his love for her picturesque countryside motivate his desire to find methods for improvements in his homeland. His most obvious literary contribution to the reaction against techniques of the past is Azorín's highly impressionistic style. A preference for simplicity is fundamental in this style as his poetic vision concentrates on the humble daily happenings of life. Therefore, his version of Don Juan is a subtle negation of the aspects of sensuality and glamour in the classical figure. Azorín's new creation, true to the author's ideology, attempts to correct injustices in his imperfect little world by courageous moral action. By placing emphasis on new idealistic values and a love for humanity Azorín changes the hero's image in his novel Don Juan.

In contrast to Azorín's concept, Valle-Inclán creates a satanical Don Juan in the sensuous, refined decadence of the Marqués de Bradomín. Valle-Inclán's predilection for the ornate aesthetics of Modernism and the decadence of Symbolism determine his treatment of the Don Juan theme. His musical prose, careful diction, and emphasis on aesthetics create art for art's sake. Valle-Inclán's interpretation of the Don Juan figure is a conscious effort to create a kind of alter ego.

Despising the present, Valle-Inclán tries to create a refuge by surpassing reality with lavish, exotic adornments.

Worldly pleasures do not interest Unamuno, who spent his entire life agonizing over the question of the immortality of man's soul. His primary purpose in attacking the Don Juan figure is an opportunity for an elaboration of his fundamental frustrated metaphysics. Unamuno is, however, sincere in his efforts to destroy the Spanish Don Juan because he believes that it is endowed with vulgar, corrupting characteristics. It is his desire to elevate Spain's moral values which motivates his interpretation of Don Juan, whose charisma he strips away, hoping that the public will become aware of their misplaced adulation. Unamuno's one basic theme, the question of man's immortality, however, overshadows all others, and its reiteration in numerous digressions detracts from the aesthetic structure of his work.

Ayala's Tigre Juan also engages in philosophical conversations that take him into an abstract world of ideas which manifests the author's ideology and viewpoints. His hero, the antithesis of the classical Don Juan, is vigorous and masculine whereas Vespasiano is exposed as a weak ineffective man incapable of love. By using irony and humor to expose the false cultural aspects which Vespasiano symbolizes Ayala hopes that Spaniards will recognize the analogy. Since he believes that the principles of a personality are applicable to principles of a people, he attacks donjuanismo so that Spaniards will become aware of their lowered moral standards.

Grau, another intellectual writer, declares in his *Don Juan* plays that young Spaniards must see the folly of wasted years and sterility because they attempt to emulate unworthy models. Grau manifests his belief that man bears responsibility for his existence and has freedom to make choices. His characters suffer existential anguish caused by an inability to communicate and to know God. Grau exposes the destructive force of excessive sexual desire, and develops the themes of possession and identification with the loved one. Although existentialist principles are evident in his plays, the problem of man is central. Rich in thought, Grau's works indicate the Christian tendencies of the author.

Torrente Ballester's pronounced affiliation with existentialist ideas is seen in his version of *Don Juan* in contemporary Paris. Sartrean influence is evident in his theme that Hell for *Don Juan* is within himself. Since death is denied him, there is no escape from his situation; consequently he suffers anguish and despair which lead him to commit a senseless revolt against God and the laws of man. Although Torrente Ballester's portrait of a disoriented and rebellious ego seeking its identity outside the deeply entrenched religious mores is pessimistic, morally his suffering for evil deeds conforms to the Christian concept of sin and retribution. The originality of his *Don Juan* lies in his attention to periods of the character's life not previously depicted in Spanish literature, his adolescence and youth. The structure of the novel is weakened by the author's inclusion of two long digressions which, although they relate to his story, tend

to leave the reader at times in a labyrinth of genealogy and literary references. Torrente Ballester attempts to bring the Don Juan theme, and Spanish literature, into the twentieth century by following existentialist ideas.

The Don Juan theme in the twentieth century indicates that Spanish writers share the rebellious spirit predominant in Western culture. In their search for deeper significance in human life there is conflict between the Spaniard's Catholic viewpoint and his intellectual heritage which results in varied and diverse philosophies of the individual authors. Although twentieth century Spanish writers may vary in their aesthetics and ideology, they believe that there is a need for a re-examination of traditional values. Their treatment of the Don Juan theme provides a clear and concise insight into the changing perspectives of twentieth century literary currents in Spain.

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