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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

IRONY IN THE POETRY OF JOSE DE ESPRONCEDA

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By
STEPHEN C. PALLADY
Norman, Oklahoma
1972

IRONY IN THE POETRY OF JOSE DE ESPRONCEDA

A DISSERTATION

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. VERBAL IRONY	8
A. Praise-to-blame	
B. Pretended encouragement, sympathy, or advice	
C. Pretended ignorance	
D. Pretended omission of censure	
E. Fallacious reasoning	
F. Self-disparaging or Socratic irony	
III. DRAMATIZED IRONY	33
A. Dramatic irony in its most general usage with some examples involving <u>double</u> <u>entendre</u>	
B. Ironical presentiment	
C. Irony of self-betrayal	
D. Irony of dilemma	
IV. IRONIC SITUATIONS	52
A. Irony of incongruity	
B. Situational irony	
C. Irony of events	
D. Irony of fate	
V. GENERAL IRONY	105
A. General dramatic irony	
B. General situational irony	
C. General irony of events	
D. General irony of fate	
VI. ROMANTIC IRONY	158
A. Espronceda as contradictorily both a romantic ironist and an anti-romantic ironist in regard to the ideology of romantic irony	
B. Proto-romantic irony	
VII. CONCLUSION	185
BIBLIOGRAPHY	187

IRONY IN THE POETRY OF JOSE DE ESPRONCEDA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

That irony is an undisputed and integral element of the romantic temperament of the nineteenth century is well substantiated by various critics. The romantic, as an individual of great perception and emotional sensitivity, was in an ideal position to see the world's harshness in conflict with man's idealistic aspirations. As the century progressed and positivism and scientism increased, this realization was made gradually more evident. Muecke comments:

. . . in the Romantic and post-Romantic period irony becomes the expression of an attitude to life or more accurately a way of organizing one's response to and coming to terms with a world that seems to be fundamentally at odds with mankind. . . . The increasingly 'philosophical' use of irony is intimately related to the growth of scepticism, relativism, liberalism, and to the emergence of the scientific attitude and its (in part) complementary opposite, romanticism.¹

Thompson remarks:

The man of genuinely ironic disposition [such as the romantic]
. . . is to some extent split-souled, and his irony is both an

¹D. C. Muecke, The Compass of Irony (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1969), p. 14.

expression of his inner strife and a defense against it. . . . Anyone with philosophical and religious intelligence is likely to suffer it /this inner conflict/, for a clash between aspiration and reality is a necessary condition of life.¹

The poetic works of José de Espronceda provide an excellent way to express the ironic spirit of the nineteenth century, since this writer is widely recognized as one of the finest Spanish poets of this century. As Northup declares:

The study of Espronceda, Spain's greatest Romantic poet, offers the best possible approach to the whole subject of Romanticism. He is Spain's 'representative man' in that movement.²

There is much one can say about irony as a generic literary phenomenon. By its very nature, it is a nebulous term. The practice of indirectly expressing the reverse of what is apparently stated is for Muecke like "gathering the mist."³ The problem is complicated by the confusion of irony with sarcasm: for Thrall and Hibbard the former is "usually lighter, less harsh in its wording though in effect probably more cutting because of its indirectness."⁴ Elements of satire further compound the concept, as they often creep into certain types of irony. Thompson says, "Irony is so often used as a satirical weapon that casual speakers tend to confuse the terms."⁵

It is appropriate that irony as a word has its origin in the Greek eiron, which means dissimilator, as all definitions emphasize the dissimilar

¹Alan Reynolds Thompson, The Dry Mock (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1948), p. 131.

²José de Espronceda, El Estudiante de Salamanca and Other Selections, ed. by George Tyler Northup (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1919), p. v.

³Muecke, op. cit., p. 3.

⁴William Flint Hall and Addison Hibbard, A Handbook to Literature (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., 1936), p. 248.

⁵Thompson, op. cit., p. 5.

nature of the two levels of reality inherent in any irony. Muecke¹ comments that the lower level is the situation as it ostensibly exists, and the upper level, the true state which must be divined by the reader. Similarly, Sharpe mentions that "all ironic feeling is the result of a perception of two or more contrasting or contradictory levels of truth simultaneously presented". . . ."²

Besides this duality or opposition of terms, the element of innocence or "confident unawareness"³ must exist. That is, the victim of the irony, whether reader, observer, or literary character, must be assuredly unaware of the true state of affairs and fully accept reality on the merits of its superficially visible characteristics, so that when the truth becomes evident, he will be caught unprepared.

Most basically, irony requires an observer or reader with a sense for discernment beyond the most recognizable aspects of a situation. This implies that for an irony to be complete, it must elicit an emotional response from its perceiver. A certain objectivity is required to comprehend it, but the emotive reaction each reader makes is quite a subjective one and therefore potentially variant among many observers. Thompson aptly remarks:

Irony can be viewed either as a special combination of things in the external world or our feelings on seeing that combination. It can be viewed, in other words, as an objective cause or as subjective effect. . . . An ironic expression is richly if not

¹Muecke, op. cit., p. 19.

²Robert Boies Sharpe, Irony in the Drama (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), p. 42.

³Muecke, op. cit., p. 30.

elegantly emotive. . . . The peculiar quality of the ironic contradiction indeed lies in its capacity to rouse a special sort of emotional response. . . . To perceive it, one must be detached and cool; to feel it, one must be pained for a person or ideal gone amiss. Laughter rises but is withered on the lips. Something or someone we cherish is cruelly made game of; we see the joke but are hurt by it. . . . To the observer, irony is recognized as an emotional dissonance.¹

He points out also that this dissonance arises from a conflict within the author which can range from "a superficial discord or a profound strife of the spirit against itself and the world."²

Poetry is one of the best genres in which to investigate the irony of Romanticism, since it is one of the most effective of this century's literary expressions. And because ". . . , criticism is unanimous in considering him [Espronceda] Spain's greatest lyric poet of the nineteenth century,"³ as Northup puts it, this writer is a good choice for such a study.

Furthermore, it is logical to treat just the poetry of Espronceda in such a literary investigation, for his other works seem mediocre at best. As the above critic asserts, "In considering Espronceda's writings in detail, we need concern ourselves little with his dramatic and prose writings," for as he later points out, "Espronceda shows true greatness only as a lyric poet."⁴

His only novel is a tiring six volume historical work in imitation of Walter Scott called Sancho Saldaña detailing the disputes of Alfonso el Sabio and his son Sancho el Bravo. He wrote it while in exile in

¹Thompson, op. cit., p. 3.

²Ibid., p. 131.

³Espronceda, ed. by Northup, p. xxxiii.

⁴Ibid., pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

Cuéllar simply to parallel the vogue set by Larra's Doncel de Don Enrique el Doliente. As Northup says, "To employ the enforced leisure of political exile in writing an historical novel was quite the proper thing to do."¹

And the novel is clearly of little value:

The romance contains many tiresome descriptions of scenery, and drags along tediously as most old-fashioned novels did. But Espronceda had none of Sir Walter's archaeological erudition, none of his ability to seize the characteristics of an epoch, and above all none of his skill as a creator of interesting characters.²

Besides a political work created to criticize the very liberal Mendizábal, "El Ministerio Mendizábal," a short prose selection called "Un Recuerdo" written during a period of exile, and a humorous prose work describing his voyage from Gibraltar to Lisbon, his only other literary ventures aside from poetry were three plays. The first two of them, "Ni el Tío ni el sobrino" and "Amor venga sus agravios," were not even Espronceda's sole creation but rather were written in collaboration with other dramatists. The first lacked organization, the second met with little success, and the third, "Blanca de Borbón," was never even presented on stage.

Espronceda's life-style reflects irony, and it is only natural that his works would echo the same quality, for as Price asserts,

No man is capable of entirely separating the way he lives from the way he thinks, and we seldom react to even the possibility of irony without some curiosity about the author, his personal convictions, his way of life, or his attitude toward other human beings and human institutions.³

¹Ibid., p. xxvi.

²Ibid., p. xxxvi.

³John Valdimir Price, The Ironic Hume (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), p. 73.

His behaviour was always inconsistent and incongruous; his political ideals, ill-defined and compromising. This unpredictable nature has its literary counterpart most obviously in the capricious nature of his versification and his vacillating ideology, which for the most part reflects inactive disillusionment but which alternately manifests at times a positive, active desire for political reform.

Like Baudelaire, he tried to create the impression that he was the epitome of vice but was in fact hardly a real scoundrel. His outlook was sometimes enthusiastic and uninhibited, as exemplified by the many humorous antics of his youth such as his painting the Duque de Alba's coach red so that he did not recognize it. Antithetically, he was at other times depressed and hopeless, particularly in the later years of his life when he perceived the unfortunate end of all his aspirations, both amorous and political. This progress toward disenchantment with life is mirrored in the theme of the irony of events so frequently found in his works: The inevitable dolor awaiting one who begins life with hopes too lavish. The supreme expression of his ironic inconstancy is revealed by his statement in "El Diablo mundo": "Siempre el juguete fui de mis pasiones!!!"¹

Consequently, it is ironic that no critic has before attempted a detailed study of the ironical facets of Espronceda's works, since for the discerning reader they are such a prominent aspect. Many of his poetic works, especially the longer narrative ones, are intensely ironic; most have at least one or two ironic aspects, while very few have none at all. Furthermore, quite the gamut of ironical types exists among these

¹José de Espronceda, El Diablo mundo, ed. by J. Moreno Villa (Madrid: Ediciones de la Lectura, 1923), p. 61.

works. Many examples illustrate the presence of many specific varieties of verbal, dramatic, situational, general, and romantic irony throughout the poetry, and their relationship to the author's ideology.

CHAPTER II

VERBAL IRONY

Although verbal irony is the most common of all types throughout literature in general, in Espronceda's works it is not the most frequent. There are, however, examples of several specific classes of verbal irony.

Verbal and situational irony are two basic classifications for all ironies. The former implies the recognizable presence of the author who is clearly using a technique, while the latter implies merely a state of affairs or final consequence of a series of events which the reader interprets as ironic. Muecke makes the distinction most directly by saying that a reader might comment about a verbal irony, "He is being ironical in declaring . . ."; and concerning a situational irony he may say, "'It is ironic that . . .'"¹ That is, there is a very personal quality in verbal irony but a notable impersonality in that of situation.

Thompson calls verbal irony 'irony of speech' and says of it:

The implication of what is said is in painfully comic contrast to its literal meaning. This irony ranges from crude sarcasm to profound philosophical observation or tragic utterance.²

¹Muecke, op. cit., p. 42.

²Thompson, op. cit., p. 5.

Price, in fact, calls it "philosophical irony" and proclaims that it seeks "to deride, if not to discourage, a certain philosophy, or a certain habit of mind."¹

One of the most common types is the dichotomy "praise-by-blame" and "blame-by-praise." This author uses only the latter in several examples. Knox aptly defines this technique by saying:

Ordinarily, . . . irony as blame-by-praise referred to a limited piece of discourse or action which conveys a critical attack under the guise of ostensible praise. The ironist intends his audience to understand his real intention--to be deceived only fleetingly--and the relationship is of rebuker and rebuked, perhaps surrounded by amused onlookers. If the rebuked does not realize his predicament, the reason is not that he has not been offered the handle to it by the ironist, but that he is ridiculously obtuse. Of course, the ironist may count on this density to make game for himself and the onlookers, but deception for a practical purpose is not his intent.²

In "Himno al Sol," Espronceda begins by praising the sun's impressive magnificence and apparent protection from the transience and strife that characterize everything worldly:

De los dorados límites de Oriente
que ciñe el rico en perlas Océano
al término sombroso de Occidente,
las orlas de tu ardiente vestidura
tiendes en pompa, augusto soberano,
y el Mundo bañas en tu lumbre pura,
vívido lanzas de tu frente el día,
y, alma y vida del Mundo,
tu disco en pas majestuoso envía
plácido ardor fecundo
y te elevas triunfante,
corona de los orbes centelleante.
.

¹Price, op. cit., p. 25.

²Norman Knox, The Word Irony and its Context (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1961), pp. 59-60.

¡Cuántos siglos sin fin, cuántos has visto
 en tu abismo insondable desplomarse!
 ¡Cuánta pompa, grandeza y poderío
 de imperios populosos disiparse!

 ... tú, como señor del mundo,
 sobre la tempestad tu trono alzas,
 vestido de tinieblas,
 y tu faz engreías,
 y a otros mundos en paz resplandecías.
 Y otra vez nuevos siglos
 viste llegar, huir, desvanecerse
 en remolino eterno, ...;
 mientras, inmutable, tú, solo y radiante,
 ¡oh sol!, siempre te elevas
 y edades mil y mil huellas triunfante.¹

His real intent is to blame or criticize anything represented by the sun that is arrogant and complacent, as nothing can forever be free of the "cólera divina"² that eventually will destroy all, including the seemingly immutable sun. By reminding the sun of its future decline and advising it to enjoy its present though disappearing greatness, he creates an effective irony:

¡oh, Sol!, que cuando el pavoroso día
 llegue que el orbe estalle y se desprenda
 de la potente mano
 del Padre soberano,
 y allá a la eternidad también descienda
deshecho en mil pedazos, destrozado
y en piélagos de fuego
envuelto para siempre y sepultado.³ (Italics mine.)

The rhetorical question in which he sarcastically casts doubt on the sun's immortality and its definitive reply which suggests that it too will meet inevitable destruction echo the same sentiment:

¹José de Espronceda, Obras poéticas completas de Espronceda, ed. by Juan José Domenchina (Madrid: M. Aguilar, 1936), pp. 237-39.

²Ibid., p. 238.

³Ibid., p. 240.

¿Y habrás de ser eterno, inextinguible,
sin que nunca jamás tu inmensa hoguera
pierda su resplandor, siempre incansable,
audaz siguiendo tu inmortal carrera,
hundirse las edades contemplando,
y solo, eterno, perennal, sublime,
monarca poderoso, dominando?
No.¹

He casts further uncertainty upon the logic of anyone's delusions of superiority by asking this additional question:

¿Quién sabe si tal vez pobre destello
eres tú de otro sol que otro universo
mayor que el nuestro un día
con doble resplandor ~~es~~arecía!!!²

"A Don Diego de Alvear" is a poem which personifies death as a vicious entity intent on destroying all human enterprise and tender family relationships and creating only "tormento," "dolor," "pena," and "llanto."³ There are only two stanzas in which Espronceda ironically praises death as being a pleasurable experience, clearly to mock it more bitinglly:

Nuevo y dulce placer, más dulce nudo,
grata le guarda su feliz ventura
cuando más de favor se cree desnudo.

¡Cuánto gozo sin fin!, ¡cuánta ternura
probó en los brazos de su nueva esposa /la muerte/
el beso al recibir de su dulzura!⁴

"El Diablo mundo" is Espronceda's most ambitious and last literary venture. In five cantos, it narrates the events surrounding the life of the protagonist who represents all mankind. He is introduced as a viejo who is thoroughly disenchanted with life, as his youth and illusions

¹Ibid., p. 239.

²Ibid., p. 240.

³Ibid., p. 315.

⁴Ibid., p. 318.

have vanished. Depressing pronouncements on life by mysterious voices, choruses, and the devil, precede the old man's expression of similar sentiments. A feminine spirit whom Northup calls "the Goddess of Life"¹ grants him renewed innocence, hope, and youth. In his joy at having been reborn, the "nuevo Adán," as he is then called, dances nude in the streets, thus arouses public anger, and is stoned and later jailed. Tío Lucas, one of the inmates, instructs him in the cruelties of life. He meets further disillusion in his association with the manola Salada, the evil group of thieves who entice him to help them rob the home of the Condesa de Alcira, and finally, with an old woman, María, who is lamenting the premature death of her daughter Lucía.

Therefore, Espronceda illustrates the saga of the eventual disillusionment of every man who begins life an innocent and dreams of wondrous objectives in a world which will not permit their realization. Such a theme is the subject of countless ironies, many of which surround Adán's experiences as an everyman symbol and some of which concern Espronceda's remarks about his own life or life in general. For example, toward the end of "Canto IV" of the work, there is an example of inappropriate praise and praising to blame. Espronceda is supposedly thankful for his experience and its accompanying disillusionment for bringing him a clearer reality and greater maturity, but actually he is blaming them for having cruelly torn away the beauty of his former illusion:

¡Oh! ¡bendita mil veces la experiencia
Y benditos también los desengaños!
Piérdese en ilusión, gánase en ciencia,

¹Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. xxxviii.

Gastas la juventud, maduras años,
 Tanta profundidad, tanta sentencia,
 Tantos remedios contra tantos daños,
 ¿A qué los debes mundo, en tanta copia
 Sino a la edad y a la experiencia propia?¹

In apparently praising the intrigue of science and denouncing the value of illusory happiness, he is actually saying that he realizes the fleeting quality of such contentment but at the same time recognizes it as the only potential for joy, as indicated by the following rhetorical questions:

¿Y habrá tal vez alguno que sostenga
 Que no vale la ciencia para nada?
 ¿Y habrá menguado que a probar nos venga
 Que está la dicha en la ilusión cifrada?
 ¿Pues hay cosa que más nos entretenga
 Que medir de los astros la jornada
 Y saber que la luna es cuerpo oscuro,
 Y aire ese cielo al parecer tan puro?²

The proof of the real import of this statement lies in the advice to Salada and Adán, who have just entered the first delight of their love. The implication is that pleasure, though brief, should be enjoyed to the fullest:

Y entretanto vosotros los que ahora
 Pinté embriagados de placer y amores,
 Gozad en tanto vuestras almas dora
 La primera ilusión con sus colores:
 Gozad, que os brinda la primera aurora
 Con el jardín de sus primeras flores,
 Coged de amor las rosas y azucenas
 De granos de oro y de perfumes llenas.³

Another frequent device of verbal irony is the expression of pretended encouragement, sympathy, or advice to the reader of a work or to

¹Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 187.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 188.

one of its characters. A mocking, satirical attitude is actually intended. In "El Canto del cosaco" Espronceda apparently predicts triumphant victory and even future supremacy for his cosacos whom he is encouraging to battles in which they will supposedly and perhaps symbolically destroy the weak and luxurious societies of Europe of which the author so much disapproved:

¡Hurra, cosacos del desierto! ¡Hurra!
 La Europa os brinda espléndido botín:
 sangrienta charca sus campiñas sean
 de los grajos su ejército festín.
 ¡Hurra! ¡A caballo, hijos de la niebla!
 Suelta la rienda, a combatir volad.
 ¿Veis esas tierras fértiles? Las puebla
 gente opulenta, afeminada ya.¹

As Northup says, "He [Espronceda] had praised the destructive power of the Cossacks who swept away decadent government."²

This is the only interpretation that is usually ascribed to this work, but a further ironic one is certainly possible. There is an implied element of possible misfortune in the Cossacks' enterprises within the reference to the miserable fall of Poland:

Escudo de esas míseras naciones
 era ese muro que abatido fué:
 la gloria de Polonia y sus blasones
 en humo y sangre convertidos ved.
 ¡Hurra, cosacos del desierto ...

¿Quién en dolor trocó sus alegrías?
 ¿Quién sus hijos triunfante encadenó?
 ¿Quién puso fin a sus gloriosos días?
 ¿Quién en su propia sangre los ahogó?³

Here the author exists as an impersonal observer who advises with ironically pretended encouragement those who, like the Cossacks, would conquer others.

¹Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 251.

²Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. xxix.

³Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 254.

In citing the fall of Poland, the ironic rhetorical questions serve apparently to stimulate the Cossacks on to victory by showing them an example of a people who were easily vanquished like the people of Poland. But on a more subtle level of comprehension, one perceives that the real intention is to show that any people, even the Cossacks, can eventually fall. Thus, the author's encouragement to the Cossacks' enduring military success is merely a foil to complete the deception of the failure that will eventually befall them. That is, they, like all conquering heroes, will ultimately become the conquered.

"Oscar y Malvina" provides a good example of pretended sympathy. This poem is a brief narration in imitation of ancient chivalric tales in which Oscar goes off to fight the Moors and successfully vanquishes Cairvar, his major Moorish opponent. But he is killed as well, and Malvina is left disconsolate. Within the apparent sympathy the author offers to her, there is actually a mocking attitude:

... ¡triste Malvina!

Siempre sola estarás: si entre las selvas
 pirámide de hielo
 reverbera la luna,
 en tu ilusión dichosa
 figurarás tu amante,
 pensando ver su cota fulgorosa;
 pasara tu delirio,
y verterás el llanto de amargura
sola y desconsolada ...¹ (Italics mine.)

The second part of "El Estudiante de Salamanca" yields an effective example of pretended authorial sympathy. This rather lengthy narrative poem is written in four distinct parts. The first recalls the

¹Ibid., p. 234.

don Juan legend as it introduces the egotistical, epicurean figure of don Félix de Montemar against the typically romantic backdrop of shadowy mystery. The feminine protagonist Elvira also is presented here. Her purity, beauty, and trusting nature characterize her as neoplatonic and thus a complete contrast with Félix, with whom she is desperately in love.

Part Two concerns Elvira's torment after her evil lover has brutally abandoned her. Just before her death, effected by overwhelming frustrations, she writes Félix a letter in which she appears to forgive him but in reality severely reprimands his vicious behavior.

Part Three is a more dramatic portrayal of a card game (*lansquenet* or *parar*) involving four gamblers identified by only jugador primero, segundo, tercero, and Félix. At first the latter's luck is poor, and he loses all his money. Now that Elvira means nothing to him, he carelessly gambles away her picture and humorously condemns himself to the devil's care. Miraculously, his luck changes; but just as he begins to win, Diego de Pastrana, Elvira's brother, appears and proclaims his desire to avenge her in a duel.

Part Four reveals Félix as the victor in this contest. He forges forward with even an increased sense of self-importance as he begins to follow a vague, ghostly spirit who leads him through an extensive labyrinth of streets in Salamanca. His curiosity as to her destination and identity motivate his following her. He experiences only momentary fright at the numerous horrifying supernatural visions and sounds which the devil, who is embodied in the spectre, devises to torment him. Even the sight of his own corpse along with Diego's in a funeral cortege is not enough to disturb him notably. Finally, however, he is embraced in a death struggle by the

ghost who is actually Elvira's skeleton. Not even Félix can endure such anguish and he dies. This portion of the tale is much like episodes in the legend of Miguel Mañara.

The author pretends to be sympathetic to Elvira. He is mocking her suffering, but apparently he encourages her by seeming sympathetic:

¡Ah! llora, sí, ¡pobre Elvira!
¡Triste amante abandonada!
 Esas hojas de esas flores
 Que distraída tú arrancas,

¿Sabes adónde, infeliz,
 El viento las arrebató?
 Donde fueron tus amores,
 Tu ilusión y tu esperanza.

Deshojadas y marchitas,
¡Pobres flores de tu alma!

.

Mas ¡ay! que se disipó
 Tu pureza virginal,
 Tu encanto el aire llevó
 Cual la ventura ideal
 Que el amor te prometió.¹ (Italics mine.)

Further, he falsely advises her that she may find pleasure in her misfortune and even that a brighter day lies ahead; both are clearly impossibilities in her present hopeless situation.

Blanca nube de la aurora,
 Teñida de ópalo y grana,
 Naciente luz te colora,
 Refulgente precursora
 De la cándida mañana.

.

Mas ¡ay! dichosa tú, Elvira,
En tu misma desventura,
 Que aun deleites te procura,
 Cuando tu pecho suspira,
 Tu misteriosa locura.² (Italics mine.)

¹Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. 12.

²Ibid., pp. 12-13.

By commanding the reader to watch Elvira in her pathetic delirium, half imagining Félix to be near, and engaged in absurd activities like wearing a garland of flowers, he is seemingly empathetic but actually is ridiculing her:

Vedla, postrada su piedad implora
Cual si presente le mirara allí
Vedla, que sola se contempla y llora,
Miradla delirante sonreír.

.
Y vedla cuidadosa escoger flores,
 Y las lleva mezcladas en la falda,
 Y, corona nupcial de sus amores,
 Se entretiene en tejer una guirnalda.

Y en medio de su dulce desvarío
 Triste recuerdo el alma le importuna,
 Y al margen va del argentado río,
 Y allí las flores echa de una en una;¹ (*Italics mine.*)

The second canto of "El Diablo mundo," "Canto a Teresa," is related in theme but not in narration to the other parts of the work. It consists of one of the sincerest expressions of Espronceda's emotion: He reveals profound disillusion over the depressing way his affair with Teresa Mancha has ended. Northup² reveals that she deserted her husband, Gregorio de Bayo, and son and followed Espronceda to Spain in 1833 where they had a daughter Blanca. But within a year she abandoned this second family and eventually died destitute in 1839. Like the other cantos in the work, the greatest irony here is in one of events, but there are other types as well. For example, Espronceda's emotional reaction to Teresa is another example of pretended sympathy. He is outwardly sympathetic with her misfortune, that is, her eventual poverty and ignoble death not

¹Ibid., p. 14.

²Ibid., p. xxiii.

directly referred to here:

Tu corazón secaron las pasiones,
Tus hijos ¡ay! de ti se avergonzaron.
Y hasta el nombre de madre te negaron.

Los ojos escaldados de tu llanto,
Tu rostro cadavérico y hundido,
Unico desahogo en tu quebranto,
El histérico ¡ay! de tu gemido:
¿Quién, quién, pudiera en infortunio tanto,
Envolver tu desdicha en el olvido.¹

But in reality he shows how her misery cannot be compared to that of the children she abandoned, not to mention Espronceda's sadness:

Si en tu penosa y última agonía
Volviste a lo pasado el pensamiento,
Si comparaste a tu existencia un día
Tu triste soledad y tu aislamiento:
Si arrojó a tu dolor tu fantasía
Tus hijos ¡ay! en tu postrer momento,
A otra mujer tal vez acariciando,
Madre tal vez a otra mujer llamando:²

Further, he illustrates her indifference and lack of conscience toward the wrongs she has perpetrated:

Si el cuadro de tus breves glorias viste
Pasar como fantástica quimera,
Y si la voz de tu conciencia oíste
Dentro de ti gritándote severa;
Si en fin entonces tú llorar quisiste,
Y no brotó una lágrima siquiera
Tu seco corazón, y a Dios llamaste,³
Y no te escuchó Dios, y blasfemaste;

Hence, the ironic nature of his final reference to her is evident. That is, since she is without conscience, she experiences no martyrdom as he ironically proclaims here; and because she had no affection for her

¹Espronceda (ed. by Moreno-Villa), op. cit., p. 101.

²Ibid., p. 103.

³Ibid.

children, she hardly manifested the tender feelings indicated by the last two versos:

¡Oh! ¡cruel! ¡muy cruel! ¡martirio horrendo!
 ¡Espantosa expiación de tu pecado!
 ¡Sobre un lecho de espinas maldiciendo,
 Morir el corazón desesperado!
 Tus mismas manos de dolor mordiendo,
 Presente a tu conciencia lo pasado,
 Buscando en vano con los ojos fijos
 Y extendiendo tus brazos a tus hijos!!¹

Espronceda creates a bitingly sarcastic example of pretended advice in "Al dos de mayo." This is a poem written during the author's later life in which he expresses disappointment over the unfortunate decline of political liberalism begun by the War of Independence of 1808. Realizing the impossibility of reviving in his present generation the aristocratic and courageous spirit of such Spaniards as those who fought in this war, he gives the false impression of advising the people merely to lament their situation, as their apathy seems to present any constructive avenue of action:

Verted, juntando las dolientes manos,
 lágrimas, ¡ay!, que escalden la mejilla;
 mares de eterno llanto, castellanos,
 no bastan a borrar vuestra mancilla.

Llorad como mujeres; vuestra lengua
 no osa lanzar el grito de venganza;
 apáticos vivís en tanta mengua,
 y os cansa el brazo el peso de la lanza.²

One finds an excellent example of pretended advice in "Canto I" of "El Diablo mundo." Espronceda seems to recommend to educators and parents that they educate their children extensively in the positivistic

¹Ibid.

²Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 360.

ways of scientific teachings so that they can enter respectable professions and thus avoid his own early disillusion:

Mis estudios dejé a los quince años,
Y me entregué del mundo a los engaños!

¡O padres! ¡O tutores! ¡O maestros,
Los que educáis la juventud sencilla!
Sigan senda mejor los hijos vuestros
Donde la antorcha de las ciencias brilla:
Tenderos ricos, abogados diestros,
Del foro y de la bolsa maravilla,
Pueden ser, y si no, sean diputados¹
Graves, serios, rabiosos, moderados.¹

Of course, since Espronceda is a typical romantic and thus favors the subjective and emotional, this recommendation to train for sterile, objective business or political posts can hardly be believed. Furthermore, throughout his life he always regarded people in such positions as ineffectually conservative and in fact never accepted a job of this type until shortly before his death when he served briefly as deputy of Almería.

Later in the canto he uses rhetorical questions to continue this falsely praiseworthy feeling toward science in querying scientific teaching as to the mysteries and doubt surrounding the eventual fate of the soul:

¿Será que el alma su inmortal esencia
Entre sueños revela, y desatada
Del tiempo y la medida su existencia,
La eternidad formula a la espantada
Mente oscura del hombre? ¡Oh ciencia! ¡Oh ciencia
Tan grave, tan profunda y estirada!
Vergüenza ten y permanece muda.
¿Puedes tú acaso resolver mi duda?²

¹Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 61.

²Ibid., p. 62.

The tone of the interrogation is clearly ironic, for the author realizes the folly of any man's ever reaching any absolute abstract truth. And even if such were possible, certainly Espronceda would not select such a positivistic and neoclassic avenue as science to attain it.

Echoing the same deceptively positive feelings for science at the end of "Canto IV," he advises the reader's engulfing himself in scientific studies:

Viva la ciencia, viva, y si en el mundo
Perdiste ya del alma la energía
Y en ella guardas con dolor profundo
Algún recuerdo de un dichoso día,
Con viva aplicación, meditabudno
Engólfate en los libros a porfía,
Que aunque ellos nunca calmarán tu pena,
Al menos te dirán qué es luna llena.¹

The ironic tone of the last two lines, of course, illustrates his true feeling for the matter: that is, science can give one only objective data about observable phenomena, represented by "la luna," and can never soothe psychological anxiety, "nunca calmarán tu pena." Casaldueiro aptly says that this statement ends this canto with "la misma nota de amarga ironía"² as the others.

Pretended ignorance is an occasional device of verbal irony. Here the author presents the impression of being uninformed on a point he really understands only too well. One encounters an example at the end of "Canto III" of "El Diablo mundo" when the author naively suggests that God surely must have some purpose in mind for our worldly existence: "Que para algo Dios nos echa al mundo."³ The disheartened tone of this work

¹Ibid., p. 187.

²Joaquín Casaldueiro, Forma y visión de El Diablo mundo (Madrid: Insula, 1951), p. 122.

³Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 146.

implies that there is probably no reason at all for our mundane strivings and therefore the alleged conjecture is ironically negated. The introduction to the work provides proof of this opinion when Espronceda makes various guesses about the nature of God and his possible unconcern or ineptitude in governing the world:

Embebido en su inmenso poderío,
¿Es Dios el Dios que goza en su hermosura,
Que arrojó el universo en el vacío,
Leyes le dió y abandonó su hechura?¹

At the end of the work the protagonist remains in complete confusion and depression, having accomplished virtually nothing, thus further illustrating the purposelessness of life.

The letter which Elvira sends to Félix shortly before her death in the second part of "El Estudiante de Salamanca" is an excellent example of pretended omission of censure in which the author, through the character Elvira, feigns a conciliatory attitude but actually intends criticism. Outwardly, she tells that although she is about to die because of her frustrated love, she has no feeling of rancor toward him. She feels grateful for the little happiness he has given her and is not embittered by the fact that it is now gone; for its memories soothe her present distress:

Yo las bendigo, sí, felices horas,
Presentes siempre en la memoria mía,
Imágenes de amor encantadoras
Que aun vienen a halagarme en mi agonía.²

She is apparently so altruistic as to express the hope that his life will

¹Ibid., p. 42.

²Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. 17.

be replete with future pleasures and that he will not be disturbed by any remorse he might feel toward her death:

Y jamás turbe mi infeliz memoria
 Con amargos recuerdos tus placeres;
 Goces te dé el vivir, triunfos la gloria,
 Dichas el mundo, amor otras mujeres;
 Y si tal vez mi lamentable historia
 A tu memoria con dolor trajeres,
 Llórame, sí; pero palpita exento
 Tu pecho de roedor remordimiento.¹

In saying these things, she is ironically reminding Félix that it was he who ended her contentment. She hopes, perhaps even subconsciously, that he will be filled with guilt upon realizing his crime and that his guilt will be the greater since she has reminded him in a tactful rather than critical manner. The seemingly soft tone clearly disguises the real denunciation of the statement:

¡Ah! para siempre adiós. Por ti mi vida
 Dichosa un tiempo resbalar sentí,
 Y la palabra de tu boca oída
 Éxtasis celestial fué para mí.
 Mi mente aun goza en la ilusión querida
 Que para siempre ¡miseria! perdí ...
 ¡Ya todo huyó, desapareció contigo!²

The humble, pathetic sense of the last lines is especially effective:

¡Oh muerte, mi inquietud! ... ¡Sola ... espirante! ...
 Amame; no, perdona; ¡inútil ruego!
 Adiós, adiós, ¡tu corazón perdí!
 --¡Todo acabó en el mundo para mí! 3

In only one instance does her guise fall away to expose her profound suffering:

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 16.

³Ibid., p. 17.

Y tú, Don Félix, si te causa enojos
 Que te recuerde yo mi desventura,
 Piensa están hartos de llorar mis ojos
 Lágrimas silenciosas de amargura.¹

With this comment she makes sure that Félix realizes her real feelings if he should miss the veiled illusions. Yet even here the mood is softened and uncritical, simply more direct.

Assuming the pose of the emotionally-oriented romantic in the same work, Espronceda extols the value of illusion and idealism as opposed to a more reasoned, calculated view of life. He argues that such a point of view gives a more attractive perception of life, while objective analysis can only torture the spirit:

Distante un bosque sombrío,
 El sol cayendo en la mar,
 En la playa un aduar,
 Y a lo lejos un navío,
 Viento en popa navegar,

Optico vidrio presenta
 En fantástica ilusión,
 Y al ojo encantado ostenta
 Gratas visiones que aumenta
 Rica la imaginación.

.
 Que es la razón un tormento,
 Y vale más delirar
 Sin juicio, que el sentimiento
 Cuerdamente analizar,
 Fijo en él el pensamiento.²

Obviously, Espronceda is consciously creating a verbal irony through fallacious reasoning, as Elvira's tragic end is the very result of having viewed life in an emotional manner. If she had assumed a more objective attitude toward Félix, she could have seen into his inner evil nature and thus avoided destruction.

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 13.

In self-disparaging irony, verbal irony assumes a slightly different direction. Instead of existing as just an impersonal voice in presenting an irony, the author becomes more obvious as an individual with definite characteristics. These qualities show him to be self-effacing, modest, to some extent ignorant, and, particularly in Espronceda's case, too naive and trusting. Consequently, the writer takes a step in the direction of dramatic irony. Knox calls this irony of manner and defines it thus:

In this sense irony refers to an expression of personality, a manner of speech and action which conveys to the observer a distinct image of character. That character is one of great modesty and self-effacement. . . .¹

Muecke mentions that this type is often termed "Socratic irony" as well, since "Plato presents Socrates as confessing ignorance, not as pretending to be ignorant."² Therefore, this classification differs from irony of pretended ignorance, because as the same critic says,

. . . his [the author's] disguise is meant to be penetrated and our judgment is directed not against the ignorance or naivety of the speaker but against the object of the irony.³

In "A una Estrella" and "A Jarifa en una orgía," there is a sense of self-disparaging irony as Espronceda reveals the innocent naiveté of his early life, in believing that his happiness would be eternal. In essence, he condemns himself to a life "sin esperanza ya"⁴ and a future of only bitterness. In "A una Estrella," he says:

¹Knox, op. cit., p. 45.

²Muecke, op. cit., p. 87.

³Ibid.

⁴Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 303.

A mí tan sólo penas y amargura
me quedan en el valle de la vida;
como un sueño pasó mi infancia pura,
se agosta ya mi juventud florida.¹

He virtually seals his fate by abandoning himself to fortune's caprice,
for a life without objective can result in only misery:

Yo indiferente sigo mi camino
a merced de los vientos y la mar,
y entregado en los brazos del destino,
no me importa salvarme o zozobrar.²

Another instance of this irony is evident in Espronceda's attitude in "II--Entrada del invierno en Londres." This poem expresses his feelings after his enforced departure from Portugal and during his entrance into England amid the depressing weather of late fall. Since he was only nineteen when he wrote this work, his immaturity and the intensity of his homesickness no doubt clouded his judgment. He preposterously assumes that all the native residents of London are complacent and comfortable simply because they have not had to leave their "hogar paterno;"³

Todos ven sus hogares,
dicha, tranquilidad, gozo y fortuna
reina en sus quietos lares.
Y entre los hielos, al rayar la luna,
ve callada la choza:
callado el muro donde el rico goza.⁴

His naiveté prevents his seeing the folly of his limited perception: that obviously happiness derives from many sources other than simply not having departed from one's homeland. Immaturely, he can think only of the past

¹Ibid., p. 307.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 396.

⁴Ibid., p. 395.

contentment he has experienced at home in Spain and does not look at the new area, as he should, as a potential for adventure and fulfillment:

Ay!, yo en el suelo de la Patria mía
 gocé también la paz: de mi cabaña
 orné los juncos de galanas flores;
 del Manzanares en la selva umbría
 coronado de yedras y espadana
 en mi lira entoné cantos de amores
 en la estación vernosa.
 Con cuentos mil al lado de la hoguera,
 la noche perezosa
 pasaba entre las pláticas ligera,
 y la naciente aurora
 era de nuevas dichas precursora.

Allí gocé de plácido contento
 de un tierno corazón amable prenda
 y del primer amor sentí la llama.
 Ya fogoso voló mi pensamiento
 de la alta gloria a la sublime senda
 y de mi Patria celebré la fama.¹

The unsophisticated mind-set that Espronceda adopts in "IV--Salve, tranquila plateada luna" reveals a certain Socratic quality. He is so overwhelmed by the misfortune of his failure to achieve a lasting relationship with Teresa Mancha, no doubt the identity of "mi dulce amada,"² that he searches for emotional release from the "lánguida luna," obviously a most ridiculous source of consolation. He personifies it to the extent that it can hear and soften the effect of his sorrow:

Lánguida luna que mis tristes quejas
 dulce recoges, con amable rostro,
 si te enternece mi desdicha amarga,
 llora conmigo.³

He even commands it to convey to Teresa his profound desire for her to

¹Ibid., p. 397.

²Ibid., p. 402.

³Ibid.

return to him:

Dile a mi vida que su amado ausente
mísero muere si en desdicha tanta
a este repuesto sosegado bosque
dulce no vuelve.¹

Apparently, the intensity of Espronceda's emotional disappointment over this situation has motivated him to a very naive and desperate search for comfort, even in the most unlikely things, consequently heightening the implied self-denunciating quality of the statements.

A very clear case of Socratic irony is apparent in "VI--Cuando la vez primera de mis ojos." The author refers to the extreme naiveté of his youth when his heart was filled with eagerness and when he innocently believed that his high-flown aspirations were attainable:

Cuando la vez primera de mis ojos
llenaste, ¡oh mar!, el ambicioso anhelo
era tan niño que creí que el cielo
estaba de mis plantas al nivel.² (*Italics mine.*)

His simplicity was so great that he believed the entrance to such an ideal world was easy:

y alegre al ver sin puertas la morada
de que sabía maravillas tantas.³ (*Italics mine.*)

And his lack of sophistication, emphasized here by the adjective sencillas, erroneously led him to the conclusion that the effort required to achieve such a goal would be small indeed:

quise, moviendo mis sencillas plantas,
al cielo entrar para quedarme en él.⁴ (*Italics mine.*)

¹Ibid., p. 403.

²Ibid., p. 406.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

Espronceda enters into the realm of self-disparagement also in "Canto a Teresa" when he reveals the former innocence of his nature which deceptively made him proudly love and idealize a world which would later only disappoint him:

Mi vida entonces cual guerrera nave
Que el puerto deja por la vez primera,
Y al soplo de los céfiros suave,
Orgullosa despliega su bandera,
.
Yo amaba todo: un noble sentimiento
Exaltaba mi ánimo, y sentía
En mi pecho un secreto movimiento,
De grandes hechos generoso guía:
La libertad con su inmortal aliento,
Santa diosa mi espíritu encendía,
Contino imaginando en mi fe pura
Sueños de gloria al mundo y de ventura.¹

This naive reaction to life made him hope for too much in his relationship with Teresa; hence, his expectations were dashed:

Yo inocente: ... ¡oh! ¡cuán ufana
Al porvenir mi mente sonreía,
Y en alas de mi amor con cuánto anhelo
Pensé contigo remontarme al cielo!²

Several examples of self-disparaging irony seem evident in "El Diablo mundo." But here Espronceda does not reveal his ignorance; rather, he falsely degrades himself by referring to a nonexistent lack of intelligence. His purpose is to feign modesty so that the reader will attribute to him greater intellect than perhaps he really possesses. For example, after the viejo's melancholy remarks about the fugacity of life, the author comments that he doubts that the capricious assertions he makes in

¹Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., pp. 92-93.

²Ibid., p. 102.

this work will serve to advance the world:

Que yo bien sé que el mundo no adelanta
Un paso más en su inmortal carrera,
Cuando algún escritor como yo canta
Lo primero que salta en su mollera;¹

Of course, he is actually calling attention this way to the value of his material with pretended humility.

After discussing the vagueness of life and the unreality of the world's pleasures, he apologizes for the hackneyed quality of the theme:

Siento no sea nuevo lo que digo,
Que el tema es viejo y la palabra rancia,
Y es trillado sendero el que ahora sigo,
Y caminar por él ya es arronganía.²

He realizes that his subject is doubtless time-worn and wants to anticipate such a criticism by the reader; thus, the denunciating remark is made.

He defends himself by recalling the ancient truth that everything has been previously said and that no writer, including himself, would be foolish enough to believe he could express something entirely new:

Nihil novem sub sole, dijo el sabio,
Nada hay nuevo en el mundo: harto lo siento,
Que, como dicen vulgarmente, rabio
Yo por probar un nuevo sentimiento:
Palabras nuevas pronunciar mi labio,
Renovado sentir mi pensamiento,
Ansio, y girando en dulce desvarío,
Ver nuevo siempre el mundo en torno mío.³

A particularly apt example occurs after a discussion in "Canto III" on the evanescent quality of all worldly accomplishments. He has waxed rather philosophical and then suddenly declares that he is quite

¹Ibid., p. 59.

²Ibid., p. 82.

³Ibid.

inadequate intellectually for such statements:

Cuanto diciendo voy se me figura
Metafísica pura,
Puro disparatar, y ya no entiendo,
Lector, te juro, lo que voy diciendo.¹

But the reader easily detects the absurdity and irony of such a comment, for perhaps few others in the nineteenth century could have been better qualified for ramblings of this nature.

The author plays the primary role as the ironic vehicle in all the types of verbal irony. Because he is so obvious as the conveyor of this sort of irony, it is more overt and therefore more easily detectible. There are subtleties in Espronceda's use of verbal irony, but not to the same degree that would typify an irony discernible only in the characters' dramatic predicament or merely in a situation where nothing assists in its presentation. These classifications thus require greater alertness on the part of the reader to aid in their detection.

The author's more active participation in communicating a verbal irony possibly takes greater advantage of his omniscient control of the work and accounts for the far more notable variety of ironic techniques found within this category, as contrasted with the more limited span of variation typical of dramatic, situational, and romantic ironies. Espronceda, as a man of notable dramatic and narrative skill, excels to a greater degree as a dramatic or situational ironist; nonetheless, throughout his poetic works he displays an expert use of verbal irony.

¹Ibid., pp. 110-11.

CHAPTER III

DRAMATIC IRONY

Dramatic irony, which Knox terms also "tragic" or "Sophoclean,"¹ is basically a dramatized form of verbal irony. That is, the voice of the author as an ironist does not appear even impersonally. Rather, the characters reveal themselves in an ironic predicament or perplexity of their own creation or that of fate's. Worcester aptly says of this type of irony:

In dramatic irony, the ringmaster disappears. There is no signpost, not even a misleading one, to inform the spectators that irony is present. All the work of detection and interpretation is left to them. There is no obligation to explore beneath the surface level of the narrative. As a result, everyone who does so is translated into a ringmaster on his own account. To detect for oneself the freakish operations of chance in human life, the opportunities missed by a hair, the warnings ignored, the prayers that, granted, bring destruction, is to be the omniscient author to look down from a great height, and to feel a complete detachment from human affairs.²

And Sharpe, in defining this irony, adds that the characters must not be aware of their quandary:

¹Knox, op. cit., p. 19.

²David Worcester, The Art of Satire, (Cambridge, Mass.: no pub. co., 1940), pp. 119-20.

We may define dramatic irony as both the device and the feeling produced when the audience /or reader/ is let in on something in the stage situation /or narration/ of which one or more of the characters are not yet aware.¹

Thompson emphasizes that this irony is ineffective without a feeling of realism in the dramatic presentation:

It is essential to the emotional force of genuine dramatic irony that we feel the illusion of the characters' reality within the fictive world of the dramatic action.²

The feminine protagonist in "A una dama burlada" well exemplifies a dramatic irony. She is under the arrogant but mistaken impression that her beauty is all that is necessary to enslave her pretendientes whenever she likes:

Dueña de rubios cabellos,
tan altiva,
que creéis que basta el vello
para que un amante viva
preso en ellos
el tiempo que vos queréis.³

She is deceptive and cunning in her wiles:

¡De cuántas mañas usabas
diligente!
Ya tu voz al viento dabas,
ya mirabas dulcemente,
o ya hablabas
de amor, o dabas enojos;⁴

And she is successful for a time in winning three hearts:

viste a tus pies tres galanes,
y diste, al verlos rendidos,
por cumplidos
tus afanes.⁵

¹Sharpe, op. cit., p. 42.

²Thompson, op. cit., p. 51.

³Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 218.

⁴Ibid., p. 219.

⁵Ibid.

But eventually, unknown to the dama, her three suiters discern her deception and are then in a position to mock her:

a un tiempo los tres galanes,
sin saberlo tú, leían
que mentían
tus afanes.

Ellos de ti se burlaban;¹

Thus, she becomes the victim of her cunning and hence creates a dramatic irony, for she exposes herself in her ironic difficulty. The irony here is more effective because of the double entendre, since she is unaware that her lovers have discovered the falseness of her love:

ellos a ti te engañaban,
y tú, mintiendo, creías
que te amaban.²

Appropriately, Muecke comments:

Dramatic irony becomes even more effective when accompanied by double entendre, the victim saying quite innocently or accepting in all innocence something which is true in another sense than he imagines.³

The rhetorical questions within the last strophe place yet further stress on the unfortunate result of her romantic enterprise:

... ¿quién aquí engañó?
Quién aquí ganó o perdió?
Sus deseos tus galanes
al fin miraron cumplidos;
tú, fallidos
tus afanes.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 219.

²Ibid., p. 219.

³Muecke, op. cit., p. 105.

⁴Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 220.

A number of ironies, some of them dramatic in nature, typify the content of "El Pelayo," a lengthy narrative poem which combines history and legend to produce what Espronceda calls an "ensayo épico."¹ Perhaps because it is one of the author's first works, written at the age of sixteen, it is confusing and poorly organized. As Domenchina mentions:

El poema ... se amazacota: sus octavos reales son grumos sin leudar, ázimamente sentados e indigestos. ¿Cómo se lee hoy 'El Pelayo'? Con premiosidad heróica. La lectura de "El Pelayo" presupone un indiscutible coraje de lector.²

Presented in six fragments, this unfinished work narrates the general historical background of the Moorish overthrow of the Visigoths in the battle of Guadalete in 711. The specific characterizations center around Rodrigo. His lascivious seduction of Florinda, daughter of the Visigothic general Julián, who, according to legend, in retaliation, assists the Moors in their invasion of Spain, is well detailed, as well as his eventual fall in battle with his more valorous son Sancho. There are several battle scenes presented, such as Sancho's valorous encounter with the Moor Teudis, as well as various hypothetical situations that may have existed in the Christian and Moorish battle campsites. Costumbrismo perhaps is evident in the scene describing the Moorish seraglio which contrasts so notably with the poverty and suffering of the Christian areas.

During the evening following a day of the battle of Guadalete the people in the Visigothic camp express contentment because of their recent success in battle:

¹Ibid., p. 146.

²Ibid., p. 80.

El campo todo venturoso ríe:
 allí la virgen tímida y atenta
 la vista esparce, y el mancebo engríe
 su noble pecho y animarla intenta.
 El padre anciano con placer sonríe
 si el ternezuelo infante, cuando ostenta
 a sus ojos las armas, temeroso
 se abriga al seno de su madre ansioso.¹

They do not realize that the Moors will later win this battle and that they will be subdued for centuries. Thus, they create a dramatic irony by demonstrating a comfortable unawareness of the unpleasant fate awaiting them.

The fourth portion of "El Estudiante de Salamanca" offers an extensively developed dramatic irony. Essentially, Félix finds himself plunged into a situation whose true import he does not understand. He forges ahead, blindly heading toward damnation, never realizing what is to be his end until he meets it. As Domenchina says, Félix considers the experience an unchallenging one and rarely loses his defiant viewpoint: "Una aventura fácil? Así lo imagina Don Félix La indignación no reconoce límites."² Northup calls him "superhumanly brave."³

Félix's accustomed pride and excessive self-confidence have never before been really challenged, for his life to this point has been very successful. He has been able to lead a sinful, egotistical existence, as in spoiling Elvira. And when it seemed that retribution was imminent, upon Diego de Pastrana's demand for vengeance, the foe was easily disposed of. Therefore, it is logical that he would feel invincibly confident.

¹Ibid., p. 187.

²Ibid., pp. 110; 112.

³Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. xli.

About him Domenchina says,

Don Félix juega e insulta. Don Félix se jacta de su bellaquería.
Don Félix hace befa del furor vindicativo de Don Diego, que
vuelve por el honor de su hermana.¹

But divine vengeance is to be achieved, and like Tirso de Molina's don Juan, Félix cannot imagine the advent of a day of castigation. His ironic blasphemy in Part Three, in which he condemns himself to the devil's care, actually serves as the basis for the ironic predicament in which Félix finds himself in the next part. For now the devil feels invited to wreak this mortal's punishment, and does so disguised as Elvira's corpse, as the last versos reveal:

¡Que era pública voz, que llanto arranca
Del pecho pecador y empedernido,
Que en forma de mujer y en una blanca
Túnica misteriosa revestido.
Aquella noche el diablo a Salamanca
Había, en fin, por Montemar venido!!...²

Consequently, Félix does not react with fear toward his overwhelming odds but rather feels only irritation and boredom, proclaiming to the spirit:

Seguid, señora, y adelante vamos:
.....
Y acábase por fin tanto embolismo.
.....
Que de tanto sermón, de farsa tanta,
Juro, pardiez, que fatigado estoy:
Nada mi firme voluntad quebranta:
Sabed, en fin, que, donde vayáis, voy.³

He exhibits a hardened tranquility and indomitable confidence toward the

¹Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 107.

²Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. 69.

³Ibid., p. 52.

most threatening aspects of this situation, for even though he is momentarily surprised by seeing his and Diego's corpses in the funeral procession, he very quickly regains his composure.

His arrogance leads him to curiosity about the nature of the spectre's destination and reason for existence. This leads him to his destruction, since if he reacted with normal fear, he would flee rather than pursue the spirit and perhaps avoid the horror of his end. Instead, he forges on, intent on satisfying his curiosity, no matter how great the danger. He defiantly proclaims to the phantom:

En vano, dueña, es callar,
Ni hacerme señas que no;
He resuelto que sí yo,
Y os tengo de acompañar.

Y he de saber dónde vais¹

He senses to some extent the powerful nature of the situation but has no fear:

Que un poder aquí supremo,
Invisible se ha mezclado,
Poder que siento y no temo,
A lleva determinado
Esta aventura al extremo.²

Also consistent with his audacious attitude is Félix's determined refusal to heed the spirit's warning of the danger he faces. Although she cautions him:

--Hay riesgo en seguirme. --Mirad ¡qué reparo!
· · · · ·
--Ofendéis al cielo. --Del diablo me amparo.
--Idos, caballero, no tentéis a Dios.
· · · · ·

¹Ibid., p. 38.

²Ibid., p. 58.

--¡Vuestra última hora quizá ésta será! ...
 Dejad ya, Don Félix, delirios mundanos.
 --Hola, me conoce! --¡Ay! ¡temblad por vos!
 ¡Temblad no se truequen deleites livianos
 En penas eternas!¹

Still he replies:

La vida es la vida: cuando ella se acaba,
 Acaba con ella también el placer.
 ¿De inciertos pesares por qué hacerla esclava?
 Para mí no hay nunca mañana ni ayer.
 Si mañana muero, que sea en mal hora
 O en buena, cual dicen, ¿qué me importa a mí?

Goce yo el presente, disfrute yo ahora,²
 Y el diablo me lleve siquiera al morir.²

This entire dramatic irony is augmented by a sense of double entendre. Part of Félix's excessive confidence derives from his imperception of the supernatural nature of the phenomena surrounding him. Therefore, he believes that the defenses, such as his sword, which have helped him in the past to emerge victor, as against Diego, will be equally effective here. And even when his defenses seem fruitless against the enemy, he proceeds with the same unconcern.

The best proof that Félix does not perceive the supernatural quality of the spirits is that he seeks absurdly to explain the circumstances in rational terms. After he has witnessed the passage of his dead body on the funeral bier, he tries to use reason to explain the phenomenon:

--Pues decidme a mí quién soy,
 Si gustáis, porque no acierto
 Cómo a un mismo tiempo estoy
 Aquí vivo y allí muerto.³

¹Ibid., pp. 42-43.

²Ibid., p. 43.

³Ibid., pp. 49-50.

A more subtle variation of dramatic irony is that of presentiment: the characters either erroneously predict their own future success or failure or that of others, or they do not heed predictive images or allusions as to imminent peril. Rodrigo's situation in "El Pelayo" represents this type of irony. After his sadistic seduction of Florinda, daughter of Julián, various omens predict a disagreeable fate. The turbulence of nature indicates how Rodrigo's current sensual pleasures will soon be unpleasantly altered by divine decree:

... al ronco trueno, al eco tremebundo
de los opuestos vientos que pelean.
se oye la vez de la celeste saña:
"¡Ay, Rodrigo infeliz! ¡Ay, triste España!"
.....
la música, el banquete, los favores
dulces de amor, las danzas animadas,
el canto de las damas y galanes
trocados miro en lágrimas y afanes.¹

His nightmare involving the horrifying supernatural appearance of death accompanied by mysterious frightening sounds is an additional device of prediction. A further threatening element within the dream is the vision of Julián's strangling him. He is visibly shaken by these apparitions, but since he has disregarded the warnings of nature and is disturbed only momentarily by the dream, the predictions have been of little benefit in successfully alerting him:

En vano con prodigios espantosos
el justo cielo le anunció su ruina,²

Thus, because he is not aware of God's wrath toward him, he does not take steps, such as asking for forgiveness, to avoid it. He simply

¹Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., pp. 153-54.

²Ibid., p. 159.

continues his regular life-style, preparing as he normally would to enter the battle. His efforts are in vain for, without realizing it, he plunges himself into a situation in which he will be destroyed:

¡Mísero!, en vano el corazón alienta;
no ve sobre él, oh, Dios omnipotente!
 tu diestra levantada; arder no mira
 tu rayo a la palabra de tu ira.¹ (Italics mine.)

The pity and further irony are that, because of his dissolute life and half-hearted efforts in battle, he brings destruction not only to himself but to his people as well:

Despareció del godo /Rodrigo/ la osadía
 y el antiguo valor: las armas ora,
 noble ejercicio de su esfuerzo un día,
 cansado blande, y los deleites llora,

 ... los vicios de un rey vician su gente.²

Legend presents various possibilities as to how divine vengeance forces Rodrigo to atone for his sin, but in this work he is destined to die in battle against the Moors: "... halla en el pecho la imprevista punta."³

Another ironical presage is illustrated by the emotions existent in the Moorish camp during an intermission in the battle of Guadalete in the same work. Greater happiness is exhibited here than in even the Christian camp referred to earlier:

Tremolan desplegadas las banderas
 guerreros nuestros en el campo moro,
 y relumbran llagardas las cimbras,
 y armas, y petos inmoldados de oro;
 suenan confusas voces placenteras,
 himnos alza tal vez juvenil coro,⁴

¹Ibid., p. 162.

²Ibid., pp. 162; 161.

³Ibid., p. 211.

⁴Ibid., p. 187.

The Moors derive their elation from the belief that they are capable of vanquishing their Christian foe. They are correct in this assumption, but they are unaware of the eventual and far more grandiose defeat and enslavement they will experience at the end of the Reconquest. Therefore, the carefree high spirits they illustrate now are in effect an ironic omen of their inevitable surrender to Christian victors:

y fiesta, y triunfo, y algazara, y canto
presagios son de esclavitud y llanto.¹

The third part of "El Estudiante de Salamanca" includes two examples of ironic presentiment. During the game of parar, the jugador segundo confidently asserts that since Félix has been successful in love, his skill in gambling will be understandably bad. Although this is true in the first part of the game, his luck changes after he proclaims an ironic blasphemy to reverse a statement by the jugador primero who says, "... a Dios le ruego por Don Félix."² Félix then in effect invokes the devil's help:

Encomendadme otra vez,
Don Juan, al diablo; no sea
Que si os oye Dios, me vea
Cautivo y esclavo en Fez.³

He subsequently experiences much better luck in the game and thus ironically reverses the prediction made by the jugador segundo.

¹Ibid.

²Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. 25.

³Ibid., p. 26.

Later in the same portion of this work, Don Diego, Elvira's brother, has determined so strongly that he shall destroy Félix, who has abandoned Elvira, that he boldly predicts the inevitability of Félix's death:

Que estoy resuelto a mataros,
Y no alcanzara a libraros
La misma Virgen María.
Y es tan cierta mi intención,
Tan resuelta está mi alma,
Que hasta mi cólera calma
Mi firme resolución.
Venid conmigo.
.
¿Os reís?
Pensad que a morir venís.¹

The irony of Diego's prediction is that an unexpected reversal occurs, and Félix becomes the victor. Thus, Diego in a sense has unwittingly predicted his own death. Espronceda summarizes the outcome:

Vedle, Don Félix es, espada en mano,
Serenó el rostro, firme el corazón;
También de Elvira el vengativo hermano
Sin piedad a sus pies muerto cayó.²

In Part Four another irony of presentiment is discerned. There are many allusions to the impending death that faces Félix, principally the funeral bier that carries his and Diego's corpses:

Llegó de Don Félix luego a los oídos,
Y luego cien luces a lo lejos vió,
Y luego en hileras largas divididos,
Vió que murmurando con lúgubre voz

Enlutados bultos andando venían;
Y luego más cerca con asombro ve
Que un féretro en medio y en hombros traían
Y dos cuerpos muertos tendidos en él.

¹Ibid., pp. 31; 33.

²Ibid., p. 34.

Las luces, la hora, la noche, profundo,
 Infernal arcano parece encubrir.
 Cuando en hondo sueño yace muerto el mundo,
 Cuando todo anuncia que habrá de morir¹

Yet, ironically, he reacts with indifference and calm to a truthfully prophetic situation, taking no heed of his present and future danger:

Calado el sombrero y en pie, indiferente
 El féretro mira Don Félix pasar,
 Y al paso pregunta con su aire insolente
 Los nombres de aquellos que al sepulcro van.²

Another variety of dramatic irony is irony of self-betrayal.

Muecke asserts that "It is exemplified whenever someone in a character in the narration³, by what he says or does (not by what happens to him) exposes unawares his own ignorance, weaknesses, errors, or follies: ..."³

"Imitación del Cantar de los Cantares," a love poem describing a poor shepherd girl's infatuation for a king, provides the basis for an example of this irony. The pastora is aware both of her humble station in life and of the exalted one held by the young man she loves:

Aunque mi zagal pulido
 es rey grande y yo pastora,
 él allá en su corte mora,⁴
 y yo en el campo florido;

However, she naively deceives herself into supposing that he could love her and that her lowly position could somehow be equated to his:

¹Ibid., p. 48.

²Ibid., p. 49.

³Muecke, op. cit., p. 107.

⁴Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 381.

supuesto que quiso amarme
y consigo desposarme,
yo soy de casta real.¹

In her absurd fantasy, she envisions that the obvious class barrier would disappear, and that instead of being a common nardo in contrast to his aristocratic existence as an azucena, she would become his equal in adequacy and activity:

él es bello y yo soy bella,
él mi sol, yo soy su estrella,
él cielo y yo celestial.
.
y oro peino si oro peina.²

But their only real compatibility is mutual love and devotion:

El es mío y suya soy,
dame el alma y se la doy,
pagándole por igual.³

Such is a pleasant dream but hardly a possibility in a day when class inequalities were such overpowering impediments to marriage. Hence, the girl reveals herself in an ironic self-deception.

This irony could be called ingenu also because it is often the character's naiveté which motivates him to reveal his ignorance, as manifested in ineffective patterns of behavior.

Similarly, Elvira, in the second portion of "El Estudiante de Salamanca," is portrayed as a sincere ingenue. She is so trusting and imperceptive of evil that she places all her hopes for amorous happiness in Félix, completely idealizing and devoting herself to him:

¹Ibid., p. 381.

²Ibid., pp. 381-382.

³Ibid., p. 382.

Cifró en Don Félix la infeliz doncella
 Toda su dicha, de su amor perdida;
 Fueron sus ojos a los ojos de ella
 Astros de gloria, manantial de vida.
 Cuando sus labios con sus labios sella,
 Cuando su voz escucha embebecida,
 Embriagada del dios que la enamora,
 Dulce le mira, extática le adora.¹

She is so short-sighted and inexperienced that she believes her romantic satisfaction with Félix will be eternal:

Dulces caricias, lánguidos abrazos,
 Placeres ¡ay! que duran un instante,
 Que habrán de ser eternos imagina
 La triste Elvira en su ilusión divina.²

Elvira's naive nature is her ironic undoing, for later she is disillusioned by what she so totally believes. Thus, her emotional recovery is impossible and her dying of a broken heart is inevitable.

Adán's actions during the first hours of his youthful rebirth in "Canto III" of "El Diablo mundo" create another irony of self-betrayal in much the same vein. His behavior is so naive and uninhibited that he unwittingly adopts ill-advised actions foreign to civilized society, as exemplified by his nude dance in the streets, and thus labels himself an ingenu. Moreno Villa³ mentions that he parallels the ingenu in Voltaire's work. Espronceda comments that Adán is just a:

Pobre, inocente alma que entretiene
 El mundo, y le divierte cual gracioso
 juguete,

 /and an/ Alma llena de fe, cándida ave,
 Que dulces trinos en el bosque entona.⁴

¹Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. 9.

²Ibid., p. 8.

³Espronceda (ed. by Moreno-Villa), op. cit., p. 12.

⁴Ibid., p. 141-42.

His excessive faith in a world he does not yet recognize as cruel motivates limitless happiness:

Desnudo en tanto el nuevo mozo vuela,
Párase, corre, alborozado grita,
Mira alegre en redor, nada recela,
Cuanto le cerca su entusiasmo excita:
Palpar, gritar, examinar anhela
Cuanto mira y en torno de él se agita
Como al amo del maternal cariño
Mira la luz embelesado el niño.¹

Therefore, his actions are heedless of the danger of physical and emotional hurt that await him:

... Así el mancebo,
Hombre en el cuerpo, y en el alma niño,
Todo a sus ojos reluciente y nuevo,
Todo adornado con gentil aliño:
Del falso mundo al engañoso cebo
Corre y brinda bondad, brinda cariño,
Y el mundo que al placer falaz provoca,
Dolor da en cambio al alma que lo toca.²

His injury resulting from touching a bayonet held by one of the guards who take him to jail particularly illustrates his innocence of the world's perils:

Y de una bayoneta lo primero,
Al mirarla tan tersa y reluciente,
Tocó la punta en su delirio insano,
Y en su inocente afán se hirió una mano.³

His simplicity is again evident in his idealistic view of the criminal, of whom Espronceda says, "no hay cárcel ni ... ciudad que no atestigüe de sus mañas,"⁴ but whom Adán sees only as the "honrado padre de su amada

¹Ibid., pp. 140-41.

²Ibid., p. 145.

³Ibid., p. 146.

⁴Ibid., p. 166.

prenda."¹ Northup appropriately comments that Adán "...has the physical and mental characteristics of an adult joined to the naiveté of a child."²

A final classification of dramatic irony is irony of dilemma; here a character finds himself in a conflictive situation, either positive-positive, negative-negative, or positive-negative, in which it is very difficult or impossible for him to reach a decision. The conflict is ironic because it is virtually unresolvable.

The poem "Despedida del Patriota griego de la hija del apóstata" narrates a scene of farewell between the daughter of a traitor and her very patriotic suitor. The girl's father has defected his national loyalty from Spain to Moorish countries. Within this work there is an excellent development of the irony of dilemma. The protagonist, a young Greek patriot, is desperately in love with the beautiful daughter of the apóstata, a man who has sold "su patria a las riquezas turcas."³ The young man is quite the chauvenist and can never allow himself to show loyalty to a foreign power as the father commands:

él nos ordena ante el sultán odioso
humilde miedo y obediencia muda.⁴

Instead, he feels that his own people will never submit to the Turkish power and that with them he will gain freedom or die in the attempt:

"Marcha y dile por mí que hay mil valientes,
y yo uno de ellos, que animosos juran
morir cual héroes or romper el cetro
a cuya sombra el pérfido se escuda.
"Que aunque marcados con la vil cadena,
no han sido esclavas nuestras almas nunca;⁵

¹Ibid., p. 180.

²Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. xxxviii.

³Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 285.

⁴Ibid., p. 286.

⁵Ibid., p. 287.

The girl's father has created the positive-negative conflict or dilemma for the young man by using his daughter as the supreme temptation to destroy his nationalistic loyalty:

"Tu padre, ¡oh Dios!, como engañoso amigo,
 cuando la Grecia la servil coyunda
 intrépida rompió, cuando mi pecho
 respiraba gozoso el aura pura
 "de la alma libertad, pensó el inicuo
 seducirme tal vez con tu hermosura,
 y en premio vil me prometió tu mano
 sin ser secuaz de su traición inmundada,
 "y desolar mi patria me ofrecía.
 ¡Esclavo yo de la insolente turba
 de esclavos del sultán! Antes el cielo
 mis yertos miembros insepulto cubra,
 "que goce yo de ignominiosa vida
 ni en el seno feliz de tu dulzura.¹

He is extremely desirous for her, but he realizes that there is only one answer: to remain loyal to his country and leave her in spite of the intensity of his conflict.

In much the same fashion, Salada finds herself in an ironic dilemma in "Canto V" of "El Diablo mundo." She is the victim of Adán's waning affection, since her love for him has not diminished as his has. Like the typically frustrated girl, she reacts with bitterness and is torn between loving him and wanting to destroy him:

¡Ah! ¡Déjame que te ame
 Toda mi vida, y me muera,
 Mi bien, así, contemplándote!
 Pero ¿por qué esta zozobra
 Con que el corazón me late?
 ¿Por qué de súbito siento
 Ira y locura, y matarle,
 A veces cuando le miro,
 Quisiera, y luego matarme
 A mí también?

¹Ibid., p. 288.

.
 ¡Oh! El corazón se me parte
 De sólo dudarlo! entonces ...
 ¡Triste la que me arrebate
 Su corazón! ¡Oh! ¡morir
 Sólo me queda en tal trance!¹

But her positive-negative conflict is relatively short-lived, for she never brings herself to harm him and he shortly abandons her. Casaldueiro's sensible remark on the relative importance of love in the life of man as opposed to woman lends additional understanding to the divergence of emotion between Salada and Adán, the genesis of the former's dilemma:

El amor es el espíritu, es la vida de la mujer, y lo es exclusivamente; en el hombre el amor no puede ser otra cosa que la forma momentánea del primer deseo.²

The greater impersonality created by the substitution of characters instead of the author as the ironic spokesman makes dramatic irony more difficult to perceive but also more intriguing, as it can be so cleverly interwoven into a narration. The basic varieties are more limited than in verbal irony, but conversely the personalities of the characters who convey the irony can be so much more divergent than the unchanging nature of the author as ironic vehicle.

Espronceda's ability to intertwine dramatic ironies within his longer narrative poems can hardly be disputed, for many varied characters subtly expose themselves throughout these works in a wide diversity of ironic circumstances.

¹Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 213.

²Casaldueiro, op. cit., pp. 134-35.

CHAPTER IV

IRONIC SITUATIONS

When the author disappears as a recognizable entity from an ironic presentation, as in verbal irony, and when the characters do not create their own ironic involvement, as in dramatic irony, the only basic possibility that remains is for a situation to be ironic in itself. That is, the reader must use a greater degree of perspicacity to discern an irony which does not utilize the author or a character as its conveyance; thus, this ironic classification of ironic situations is one of the most subtle. As Muecke comments, "We are now . . . looking at irony from the observer's, not the ironist's point of view" ¹

When the situation is expanded into a series of events, the eventual result of which is unexpected, normally unexpectedly disagreeable, an irony of events exists. If the element of fate is implied as having a part in sadistically bringing about this turn of events, in spite of the characters' efforts, it is irony of fate.

The fundamental type of all ironic situations is irony of incongruity. This form, like situational, eventful, and fateful, requires no

¹Muecke, op. cit., p. 99.

one to communicate it directly and therefore depends wholly for its existence on the reader's interpretation, which as a result may be more subjective than in verbal or dramatic irony.

Irony of incongruity occurs whenever two normally discordant objects, personalities, events, or ideas are placed together in the same setting or time period. The irony results here from the surprise the reader feels upon noting this unexpected incongruity. Many times a complete antithesis may be created between the two factors, and the dissimilar quality is even more outstanding. Muecke calls irony of incongruity a minimal one and continues to describe it as:

. . . irony in its barest and simplest terms uncomplicated by the presentation of action or character or the victim's imperception (though, of course, there is an imperception to be inferred).¹

It is natural that Espronceda would include many incongruities in his works, for this quality seems an integral part of the romantic mentality. As Casaldueiro appropriately says:

... uno de los motivos centrales del alma romántica es el de la simultaneidad--tristeza en la alegría, luz en la oscuridad--, que obliga al poeta a recurrir constantemente a la antítesis,² (Italics mine.)

This type of incongruity revolves about the character of Rodrigo in "El Pelayo." Overwhelmed by guilt over his forced seduction of Florinda and vaguely disturbed by the omens that have predicted disaster for him, his accustomed courage and dauntless fury in battle disappear when he enters the Guadalete struggle. He makes an attempt to seem as

¹Ibid., p. 100.

²Casaldueiro, op. cit., p. 26.

glorious as ever but his real feelings are of cowardice. Therefore, they are strikingly inconsistent with his impressive external appearance:

Rodrigo en carro de marfil ostenta
corona de oro y perlas en su frente:
la regia pompa y galas aparenta
que en los banquetes le adornó luciente.

.
Triste Rodrigo su carroza guía
ligera entre sus fuertes escuadrones:
radiante en vano su corona envía
el antiguo esplendor. ¡Ah! Sus bridones
¡cuán otro rige ya de aquel que un día
Toledo vió entre nobles campeones,
augusto vencedor en los torneos.
coronada su frente de trofeos!

Hoy al peligro puesto el pecho esquivo,
el corazón anima, y su flaqueza
esconde ante su ejército, y altivo
muestra en su acento bélica fiereza.¹ (Italics mine.)

The same disparity between outward appearance or reputation and inner feelings is emphasized by a later episode. Following one of the military engagements with the Moors, Rodrigo compliments his men on their valor. In return, one of the soldiers expresses rather impassioned praise for Rodrigo, stressing the immortal historical legacy of courage he will leave behind:

"Y tú, augusto monarca, el pecho inflama
y el lauro ciñe de inmortal victoria;
goza, heredada al contemplar la llama
que hará a tu hijo fatigar la historia;
por cuanto ardiente el sol su luz derrama
himnos alzando en tu alabanza y gloria,
de siglo en siglo esparcirá tu nombre
la fama en voz que al universo asombre."²

¹Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., pp. 162;165.

²Ibid., p. 180.

It is true that his past military performance deserved such praise, but he was not truly courageous in the Guadalete battle and therefore such a statement is now undeserved. Clearly his guise of apparent emotional fortitude has been successful, and no one except the reader is allowed to perceive it.

Still later in "El Pelayo," there is an excellent example of the irony of incongruity in the descriptions of a Moorish and Christian setting. The tone, emotions, and material aspects of the two are completely divergent, yet the author presents them as existing simultaneously. First he describes a Moorish harem where all is resplendently luxurious, peaceful, and even pleasantly aromatic. The Moorish king is relaxing here and portrays a casual unconcern with basic need satisfaction:

De mágicos jardines rodeado,
se alza un rico salón, donde descansa
el moro rey, ...

.
Allí, cercado del amable coro
que el de las hurís célicas no iguala,
quemada en pipa de ámbar y de oro,
planta aromosa el gusto le regala;
y mientras en hombros de su amada el moro
la sienta reclina, de su labio exhala
humo suave, que en fragante nube
en leves ondas a perderse sube.¹

The scenes Espronceda paints of the Christian realm are an absolute antithesis, as the serenity here is not one of voluptuous repose but rather of utmost sadness, resulting from the desperate hunger that plagues all, preoccupying their lives like some sort of devastating monster:

Las calles en silencio sepultadas
sólo ocupan algunos moribundos,

¹Ibid., pp. 194-95.

las manos reciamente enclavijadas
despidiendo tal vez ayes profundos:
laten en torno entrañas destrozadas
y miembros de cadáveres inmundos,
que, forzado del hambre asoladora,
cuál como grato pasto los devora.¹

To accentuate their suffering, they can recall far better days of great plenty:

Para mayor martirio, les presenta
con recuerdo fatal su fantasía
los manjares tal vez de la opulenta
mesa que desdeñaron algún día:...²

The intensity of their deprivation is further illustrated by two portrayals of more specific personal tragedy resulting from the ubiquitous hunger.

First, he presents a pitifully starving mother and her child:

busca en la madre cariñoso halago
tierno infante que en su amor confía,
seco el pecho encontrando: ella le mira,³

Then, in much more detail, he gives an account of a pathetic old man who has seen most of his family die of starvation and who now faces the same fate. Espronceda enters the realm of the grotesque when he shows how the man's son tries to nourish him and particularly when he narrates the horrendous mortal struggle into which this withered figure enters with a vulture:

Gime el anciano en lecho de tormento,
y, ya sintiendo la cercana muerte,
al hijo tiende el brazo amarillento,
y árido llanto al abrazarlo vierte,
Quien, con hórridas muestras de contento,
feliz creyendo su infelice suerte,

¹Ibid., p. 199.

²Ibid., p. 200.

³Ibid., p. 197.

a su padre su misma sangre lleva
para que de ella se alimente y beba.
.

Cuál al lanzar el postrimer aliento,
ve feroz buitre que sobre él se arroja,
y en la angustia del último momento
lucha con él en su mortal congoja:
los dedos hinca con furor violento
en la entraña del pájaro, que, roja
la corva garra en sangre, aleteando,
va con su pico el pecho barrenando.

El moribundo, lívido el semblante,
los ojos vuelve en blanco en su agonía,
mientras tenaz el buitre devorante
ahonda el pico con mayor profía:
mas el hombre le aprieta a cada instante;
el ave más profundizar ansía,
hasta que así, y el uno al otro junto,
muertos al fin quedaron en un punto.¹

A similar type of incongruity forms the core of a young man's emotional experiences in "El reo de muerte." First, it describes the agonizing depression and agitation of a young condemned prisoner during the evening prior to his execution:

Reclinado sobre el suelo,
con lenta amarga agonía
pensando en el triste día
que pronto amanecerá

en silencio gime el reo,
y el fatal momento espera
en que el sol por vez postrara
en su frente lucirá.
.

Loca y confusa la encendida mente,
sueños de angustia y fiebre y devaneo,
el alma envuelve del confuso reo,
que inclina al pecho la abatida frente.²

The memory of the sweetness of his past maternal and romantic loves serves

¹Ibid., p. 198; 200-01.

²Ibid., pp. 262; 267.

to accentuate his present misery:

¡Ay! ¡A aumentar su tristura
vino un recuerdo quizá!

.
el recuerdo es de la infancia,
y su madre que le llora,
para morir así ahora
con tanto amor le crío!

.
y oye de amor que suspira
la mujer que a un tiempo amó,
bella y dulce cual solía,
tierna flor de primavera,¹

In direct and surprising contrast to the melancholy of the reo are the emotions of the judge who sentenced him and who now sleeps peacefully, and the hangman who will execute the prisoner and who is now only materialistically concerned. Both are tranquilly unaware of and unconcerned with their victim's desperation:

¡Y el juez ... en su lecho
duerme en paz! ¡y su dinero
el verdugo, placentero,
entre sueños cuenta ya!²

Particularly incongruous with the prisoner's situation is the bacchanalian confusion of the festival whose clamour he hears unendingly:

...¿qué rumor a deshora
rompe el silencio? Resuena
una alegre cantilena
y una guitarra a la par,
y gritos y de botellas
que se chocan el sonido,
y el amoroso estallido
de los besos y el danzar.

.
Y la voz de los borrachos,
y sus brindis, sus quimeras,

¹Ibid., pp. 263; 268.

²Ibid., p. 267.

y el cantar de las rameras,
y el desorden bacanal
en la lúgubre capilla
penetran, y carcajadas,
cual de lejos arrojadas,
de la mansión infernal.¹

The members of this group continue unfettered their risqué lives while another must pay for his indiscretion. Their festivity seems to echo a half-imagined refrain that mocks the reo for being so drastically punished for an act perhaps not nearly so heedless and immoral as the mansión infernal that characterizes their gathering:

¡Para hacer bien por el alma
del que van a ajusticiar!²

Of the negative effect this uninhibited concourse has on the prisoner's emotional outlook, Casaldueiro comments:

Espronceda confronta la muerte o los momentos que la preceden con el impulso de la vida en su forma más baja y grosera. Borrachos y rameras--un infierno moderno--que con sus carcajadas atormentan los últimos momentos del hombre y le introducen a la desesperación.³

Another incongruity is shown in "A Jarifa en una orgía," a poem depicting Espronceda's profound amorous frustration. A certain incongruity is noted in the author's attitude toward Jarifa. Since she represents for him the failure of his romantic hopes, as she is imperfect like all the other "necias mujeres"⁴ who have disillusioned him, he is repulsed by her and symbolically commands her to leave him:

¹Ibid., p. 264-65.

²Ibid., p. 264.

³Joaquín Casaldueiro, Espronceda (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1961), pp. 165-66.

⁴Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 309.

Huye, mujer; te detesto;
 siento tu mano en la mía,
 y tu mano siento fría,¹
 y tus besos hielo son.¹

On the other hand, her very imperfection parallels his own and he feels consolation in calling her to him so that they can suffer in unison:

Ven, Jarifa; tú has sufrido
 como yo; tú nunca lloras;
 mas, ¡ay triste!, que no ignoras
 cuán amarga es mi aficción.
 Una misma es nuestra pena;
 en vano el llanto contienes ...
 Tú también, como yo, tienes
 desgarrado el corazón.²

"A Matilde," typical of the romantic tendency to idealize a feminine love object, provides yet another example of incongruity. The major portion of the poem is devoted to sketching the angelic beauty and perfect, modest composure of a girl so flawless that she is compared to an "aromosa blanca viola"³ and praised in the following elaborate fashion:

Y su imagen mira en ella
 la doncella con rubor,
 que es la viola pudorosa
 flor hermosa del candor.

Tal, Matilde, brilla pura
 tu hermosura celestial,
 y es más plácida tu risa
 que la brisa matinal.

Nunca turbe con enojos
 los tus ojos el amor;
 siempre anada tu alegría
 lozanía a tu esplendor.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 309.

²Ibid., p. 313.

³Ibid., p. 324.

⁴Ibid., p. 325.

Espronceda refers to himself, in contrast, with just one nominalized adjective, infeliz, and thereby shows quite succinctly that he desperately needs the comfort and pity that this peerless girl can give him:

Mas si gala al bosque umbrío
el rocío suele dar,
porque aumente así tu encanto,
vierte el llanto de piedad.

Y, venida tú del cielo
por consuelo al infeliz,
brillarás modesta y sola
cual la viola del abril.¹ (Italics mine.)

This comparison in personal adequacy is an irony of incongruity, particularly when one considers that the weak member of the pair is unexpectedly masculine. Of course, in all probability the difference between them could not possibly be so great as the author purports it to be; that is, he is unrealistically exalting this girl and thereby creates an ironic disparity.

Although irony of incongruity is usually limited to situations within one poem, it can also be drawn between two poems such as "A Matilde" and "A un ruiseñor" which stress Espronceda's need for consolation from a feminine companion for his depression and unhappiness. Still another type of antithesis is noted in "A una ciega" where Espronceda is the stronger member of the masculine-feminine relationship and is the one who provides compassionate understanding for a blind girl:

¿Lloras? ¿Lloras? El gozo te arrebató.
¡Gracias! ¡Gracias, gran Dios! ¡mi amada ve!

¿Me dices que estoy pálido? No, hermosa,
no te contriste mi amarilla faz;
tus ojos, tú, la teñiréis de rosa,
color de vida, de placer y paz.

¹Ibid., p. 325-26.

Llamas bello al jardín: está bien, velo;
bello será...,¹

Similarly in "V--Suave es tu sonrisa, amada mía," Espronceda provides consolation for his idealized loved one when circumstances sadden her:

Yo enjugo el llanto que en tus bellos ojos
brotó acaso el pesar; yo las alegrías
trueco tristes enojos.²

Another example of incongruity exists in "Romance--Raya la naciente luna." This poem concerns the military confrontation of two soldiers, one Spanish, the other Moorish. The equally splendid attire of each soldier is an external illustration of the pride of each:

Del Jordán al paso,
siguiendo el curso tal vez
ricamente enjaezado
su gallardo palafrén.

En tanto, a su encuentro sale
un árabe en su corcel,
con lanza corta y alfanje
y reluciente pavés.³

The Spaniard is portrayed as an arrogant "paladín,"⁴ while the prideful Moor is "ganoso de gloria y prez."⁵ The irony is most evident in the following strophe which reveals the ultimate conflict of the two soldiers, each unwilling to yield to the other. The personal pride of each serves as an ironic foil or antithesis for that of the other:

¹Ibid., p. 349.

²Ibid., p. 405.

³Ibid., p. 329.

⁴Ibid., p. 330.

⁵Ibid.

"Ríndete, moro, le grita,
tu recio furor detén,
yo soy Ricardo." "¿Qué importa,
si yo soy Abenamet?"¹

The outcome of their struggle, the Spaniard's victory, is merely an example of Espronceda's nationalism and has no bearing on the irony.

Several ironies of incongruity are noted in "El Estudiante de Salamanca." Most prominent is the complete antithesis between the protagonists Félix and Elvira. Their dissimilarity is ironic because it is difficult to imagine a relationship between two such divergent people. Félix could hardly be more exploitative, self-centered, arrogant, or wicked:

Segundo Don Juan Tenorio,
Alma fiera e insolente,
Irreligioso y valiente,
Altanero y reñidor:
Siempre el insulto en los ojos,
En los labios la ironía,
.

Fueros le da su osadía,
Le disculpa su riqueza,
.

... su arrogancia y sus vivios,
.
Ninguno alcanza a igualar;²

Elvira, in contrast, is the epitome of feminine innocence, modesty, and trust:

Bella y más pura que el azul del cielo,
Con dulces ojos lánguidos y hermosos,
Conde acaso el amor brilló entre el velo
Del pudor que los cubre candorosos;
Tímida estrella que refleja al suelo
Rayos de luz brillantes y dudosos,

¹Ibid.

²Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., pp. 6-7.

Ángel puro de amor que amor inspira,
Fué la inocente y desdichada Elvira.¹

Obviously it is Elvira's unspoiled beauty which attracts Félix, but it is more difficult to ascertain the reason for Elvira's attraction for him. His virile attractiveness and courageousness may entice a girl whose delicacy would be complemented by such qualities:

Su hermosura varonil.

 Caballeresca apostura,
 Agilidad y bravura

 Que hasta en sus crímenes mismos,
 En su impiedad y altiveza,
 Pone un sello de grandeza
 Don Félix de Montemar.

 Como al rayo del sol rosa temprana,
 Del fingido amador que la mentía
 La miel falaz que de sus labios mana
 Bebe en su ardiente sed, el pecho ajeno
 De que oculto en la miel hierve el veneno.²

During the game of parar in Part Three in which Félix gambles his picture of Elvira when his funds are exhausted, he makes a surprising criticism of one of his fellow gamblers. Although he has by this time cruelly abandoned Elvira, feeling no compunction, he reacts very protectively toward her when the "jugador tercero" makes a slightly disparaging comment about her:

Vos habláis con demasiada
 Altivez e irreverencia
 De una mujer ... ¡y si no ...!³

As Northup appropriately comments:

¹Ibid., p. 8.

²Ibid., pp. 7-8.

³Ibid., p. 27.

Don Félix's perverted sense of honor will not brook the most trivial verbal slight to Elvira on the part of another, although he has cruelly wronged her himself by his deeds.¹

Espronceda attributes incongruous qualities to the sounds that accompany the strange, intangible entities mysteriously surrounding Félix as he follows the enshrouded Elvira to his unpleasant end. These sounds are, antithetically, both soothing and threatening to the protagonist:

Música triste
Lánguida y vaga,
Que a par lastima
Y el alma halaga;
Dulce armonía
Que inspira al pecho
Melancolía,
Como el murmullo
De algún recuerdo
De antiguo amor,
A un tiempo arrullo
Y amarga pena
Del corazón.² (Italics mine.)

One finds several incongruities in "El Diablo mundo." Espronceda creates a humorous incongruity in commenting on the strangeness of the supernatural transformation of the viejo into the young Adán in a positivistic age when all is normally explained by objectively observable data:

Y era el año cuarenta en que yo escribo
De este siglo que llaman positivo:
Cuando el que viejo fué, por la mañana
En vez de hallarse la cabeza cana
Y arrugada la frente,
Se encontró de repente
Joven al despertar, fuerte y brioso:³ (Italics mine.)

¹Ibid., p. 104.

²Ibid., p. 59.

³Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 108.

Since the protagonist represents the typical romantic temperament, he illustrates the incongruity that may exist between the orientation of reason and imagination:

Vuelve a leer, y en tanto que obediente
Se somete su vista a su porfía,
Lánzase a otra región su fantasía.¹

His emotions and reason are in conflict because he tries to ignore the influence of reason in planning his actions:

Baste saber que nuestro héroe existe
Sin entrarse a indagar arcano tanto,
Que tiene para estar alegre o triste
Risa en los labios y en sus ojos llanto:
Que come, bebe, duerme, calza y viste,
.
Ni leyes sabe, ni conoce el mundo,
Sólo a su instinto generoso atiende,²

This is ironically incongruous since even in his youthful rebirth he has been granted reasoning power:

Y de juicio y razón Dios le ha dotado
Para que juzgue el mal que le ha tocado.³

However, as one faces reality more frankly, he is forced into abandoning the uninhibited emotion of youth and must depend more on the power or reason, for "... que paso a paso a la razón seguimos!"⁴

There is still another incongruity in the statements of the spirit prior to the old man's transformation. Amid the limitless promises she makes is a warning which he unwittingly ignores. Its foreboding of eventual disappointment makes it the only truth in the spectre's declarations and thus quite antithetical to the other comments:

¹Ibid., p. 59.

²Ibid., pp. 153; 159.

³Ibid., p. 145.

⁴Ibid., p. 112.

No doy placer ni alegría:
Mas es eterno mi amor.¹

It is incongruous also that Adán would be accepted so readily into the brotherhood of criminals in the jail in "Canto IV" and particularly by the evil Lucas when he is still relatively uncorrupted. Similarly, it is ironic that Salada would find such a man attractive, as her class could not be lower, and equally odd that the group of thieves would invite an individual of such inexperience to accompany them on their excursion to rob the Condesa de Alcira.

The figure of the cura amid the low classed society of manolos, Salada's world, is quite discordant, as one would hardly expect to find such a generic type among these people. His lack of grooming and skill with the guitar accentuate the incongruity:

Un hombre con traje mitad seglar, mitad eclesiástico, flaco, ruin de estatura, chato, lampiño y el pellejo arrugado, pelo pobre y rojizo, chisgaravis repugnante, toca la guitarra.²

His manner and speech are undignified and flippant, and he even helps to plan the robbery--indeed surprising behavior for someone in the clergy.

A final incongruity is created at the end of the work where Espronceda refers to the beauty and harmony of all non-human creations in nature in contrast to the imbalance and imperfection in man. This concept is ironic since it is strange that only one of nature's works would be in such disharmony with all the others:

Y aquí renegar quiero
De la literatura
Y de aquellos que buscan proporciones

¹Ibid., p. 64.

²Ibid., p. 189.

En la humana figura
Y miden a compás sus perfecciones.

¿La música no oís y la armonía
Del mundo, donde al apacible ruido
Del viento entre los árboles y flores,
Se oye la voz del agua y melodía,
Y del grillo y las ranas el chirrido
Y al dulce ruiseñor cantando amores:¹

When the elements in an ironic situation reach beyond a simple antithesis or incongruity and form an entire set of circumstances which are ironic, they create a situational irony. The number of specific ironies of this type is rather limited, but there are a sufficient number to exemplify adequately the classification.

A situational irony is evident in "El Verdugo." In this poem, the hangman, as narrator, presents the societal truism that the executioner is a figure to be disparaged by the rest of mankind as one in whom all the world's evil and hate are personified:

"Que nuestra vergüenza común caiga en él;
se marque en su frente nuestra maldición;
.
Que de los hombres
toda la ira,
todo el rencor;
la crueldad de sus almas impía,²

By so blaming this figure they can avoid hatred among themselves:

De los hombres lanzado al desprecio,
de su crimen la víctima fuí,
y se evitan de odiarse a sí mismos,
fulminando sus odios en mí,³

They shun him and show him no sympathy:

¹Ibid., p. 270.

²Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., pp. 270; 272.

³Ibid., p. 270.

¡Y de mí huyeron,
de sus culpas el manto me echaron,
y mi llanto y mi voz, escucharon
sin piedad!!!¹

About the verdugo Casaldueño comments:

...; del verdugo ha hecho Espronceda «un monumento» de la maldad humana. ... Es la más despreciable forma de la explotación del hombre por el hombre, de la explotación del hombre por la sociedad.²

It is ironic that people feel this way about such a person, since an arbitrary division between good and evil is unjustified and he is their equal in goodness:

Y ellos no ven
que yo soy de la imagen divina
copia también
.
Y ellos son justos,
yo soy maldito;
yo sin delito
soy criminal.
Mirad al hombre
que me paga una muerte; el dinero
me echa al suelo con rostro altanero,
a mí, su igual!³ (Italics mine.)

The verdugo, in fact, is a very unique person since he is a living monument to history's sadism and punishment:

En mí vive la historia del mundo
que el destino consangre escribió,
y en sus páginas rojas Dios mismo
mi figura imponente grabó.
Y la maldad
su monumento
en mí todavía contempla existir;
y en vano es que el hombre do brota la luz
con viento de orgullo pretenda subir;

¹Ibid.

²Casaldueño, Espronceda, op. cit., pp. 168-69.

³Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 271.

¡preside el verdugo los siglos aún!

 Y yo aún existo,
 fiel recuerdo de edades pasadas,¹

Considering the troubled nature of Espronceda's love life, the situational irony of "Las Quejas de su amor" is understandable. Even though the poem is not in first person, it seems clearly autobiographical.

In three strophes Espronceda, through a union of forma and fondo, created by their parallel structure, expresses the same theme three times. In each stanza, he sketches a pleasant situation. In the first, he proposes the beauty of a "gallarda flor" on its "vástago;" in the second, he alludes to the sweet sounds of the "trovador" as he is accompanied by the "lira;" and in the third, he illustrates the admiration of the "caminante" as he views the "resplandor" "del alba radiante."²

With each of these agreeable potential realities he compares the yet greater pleasure of hearing the passionate complaints of his adorada. In each strophe, the theme is reiterated by the refrain "las quejas de su amor," which is intensified by the title.

The irony of this situation is simply that Espronceda does not compare the expected blissful sensual attitude of his loved one to the beautiful April flower, the pleasant music of the traveling minstrel and the splendorous dawn; but rather he presents her in a negative, complaining attitude. That is, the author, in his desire for romantic success,

¹Ibid., pp. 273-4.

²Ibid., pp. 350-51. (This note refers to all citations from "Quejas de su amor" within this paragraph.)

is willing to accept even the grieving attention of his "virgen ruborosa"¹ and in fact finds it more desirable than realities that for others would be far more pleasing than a grumbling girl.

The situational ironies in "El Estudiante de Salamanca" are mainly confined to the fact that nature is often not in sympathy with the anxiety of the protagonists. This is rather surprising in a romantic work wherein one would anticipate the pathetic fallacy. For example when Elvira is suffering so profoundly in Part Two from Félix's abandonment, nature antithetically reflects tranquility, pleasantness, and luxuriant beauty:

Está la noche serena
De luceros coronada,
Terso el azul de los cielos
Como trasparente gasa.

.
Y el horizonte ilumina.
Pura virgen solitaria,
Y en su blanca luz suave
El cielo y la tierra baña.

Deslízase el arroyuelo.
Fúlgida cinta de plata,
Al resplandor de la luna,
Entre franjas de esmeralda.

Argentadas chispas brillan
Entre las espesas ramas,
Y en el seno de las flores
Tal vez aduermen las auras.²

Nature is as oblivious to her discomfort as it was to her former happiness:

Esa noche y esa luna
Las mismas son que miraran
Indiferentes tu dicha,
Cual ora ven tu desgracia.³

¹Ibid., p. 350.

²Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., pp. 9-10.

³Ibid., p. 11.

She defiantly criticizes it since its peacefulness in no way helps to soften the blow of her fate:

<<¿Qué me valen tu calma y tu terneza,
Tranquila noche, solitaria luna,
Si no calmáis del hado la crudeza,
Ni me dais esperanza de fortuna?
¿Qué me valen la gracia y la belleza,
Y amar como jamás amó ninguna,
Si la pasión que el alma me devora,
La desconoce aquél que me enamora?>>¹

This indifference is extended to include the human world as well in regard to Félix's distress in part four:

Miró sus suspiros llevarlos el viento,
Sus lágrimas tristes perderse en el mar,
Sin nadie que acuda ni entienda su acento,
Insensible el cielo y el mundo a su mal!

Y ha visto la luna brillar en el cielo
Serena y en calma mientras él lloró,
Y ha visto los hombres pasar en el suelo
Y nadie a sus quejas los ojos volvió!²

Particularly ironic is the extreme beauty of nature subsequent to the horrible supernatural experience he has undergone:

En tanto en nubes de carmín y grana
Su luz el alba arrebolada envía,
Y alegre regocija y engalana
Las altas torres el naciente día:
Serenos el cielo, calma la mañana,
Blanda la brisa, trasparente y fría,
Vierte a la tierra el sol con su hermosura
Rayos de paz y celestial ventura.³

Much as in "El Estudiante de Salamanca," the pathetic fallacy is not reflected as would be expected in the similarly romantic work "El Diablo mundo." In fact, in most instances nature is quite out of sympathy

¹Ibid., p. 15.

²Ibid., pp. 39-40.

³Ibid., p. 69.

with the existent emotional tenor or the protagonist's emotionality. For example, subsequent to the depressing observations on man's pathetic earthly state made by the various supernatural entities in the introduction, the dawn ironically could not be more beautiful or pleasant:

Mas ya del primer albor
La luz pura tiñe el cielo,
Y al naciente resplandor,
Naturaleza su velo
Pinta con vario color.

Y se esparce por el mundo
Un armonioso contento,¹

Nature is equally oblivious to the profound mental suffering experienced by the viejo prior to his conversion, for his anguish is in no way reflected by this pacific, harmonious panorama of the dawn:

Coloraba en Oriente
El sol resplandeciente
Los campos de zafir con rayos de oro,
Y su rico tesoro
De faldellín de plata derramaba
La aurora y esmaltaba
La esmeralda del prado con mil flores,
Brotando aromas y vertiendo amores,
Y llenaban el mundo de armonía,
La mar serena y la arboleda umbría
Rizando aquella sus lascivas olas,
Y ésta las verdas copas ondeando,
Coronados de vagas aureolas
A los rayos del sol que se va alzando.²

Similarly, another beautiful description of the dawn opens "Canto IV" to reveal a hopeless Adán in prison, again creating a divergence with his feelings:

En campos de aire el pajarillo esmalta:
Alzase lejos nebulosa bruma,
.

¹Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., pp. 53-54.

²Ibid., pp. 107-8.

Allá en la enhiesta vaporosa cumbre
 Su manto en Oriente el alba tienda,
 Y blanca, y pura, y regalada lumbre
 De su frente de nácares desprende:

.

Y tras la densa y fúnebre cortina
 Del hondo mar sobre la rubia espalda
 Ráfagas dando de su luz divina
 Mécese el sol en lechos de esmeralda:¹

Furthermore, that nature is so fecund and prosperous contrasts
 so markedly with the protagonist's situation:

Y en monte, y valle, y en la selva amena
 Y en la de flores mil fértil llanura,
 Y en el seno del agua que serena
 Se desliza entre franjas de verdura,
 El ruido alegre y bullicioso suena
 De seres mil que cantan su ventura,
 Prestando su algazara y movimiento
 Voz a las flores, y palabra al viento.

.

Que este segundo Adán no verá el día
 Nacer en los pensiles del Edén,
 Sino en la cárcel lóbrega y sombría,²

Another situational irony surrounds Adán while he is in prison.
 Although his swashbuckling conduct and vulgar language may indicate that
 he is evidently corrupted, in reality his innocence is still ironically
 somewhat intact:

Y aunque es su lengua rústica y profana
 Y es su ademán de jaque y pendenciero,
 Pura se guarda aun su alma temprana
 Como la luz del matinal lucero;

.
 Y puro es si criminal se ostenta.³

Teresa Mancha's death alluded to in the second canto of "El
 Diablo mundo" affords yet another example of situational irony. Espronceda,

¹Ibid., pp. 149-50.

²Ibid., pp. 150-51.

³Ibid., p. 159.

the one who has suffered far more from their ill-fated relationship, still grieves and can only anticipate the relief of death. Teresa, who suffered less and whose cruelty created Espronceda's misery, has already found the consolation of death and in it has perhaps regained the purity of his first evaluation of her:

... al recordarte siento
 Un pesar tan intenso...! Embarga impío
 Mi quebrantada voz mi sentimiento,
 Y suspira tu nombre el labio mío:
 Pára allí su carrera el pensamiento,
 Hiela mi corazon punzante frío,
 Ante mis ojos la funesta losa,
 Donde vil polvo tu beldad reposa.
 Y tú feliz, que hallastes en la muerte
 Sombra a que descansar en tu camino,

 ¡Feliz! la muerte te arrancó del suelo,
 Y otra vez ángel te volviste al cielo.¹

Notable subtlety characterizes these two most essential types of situational irony, ironies of incongruity and situation. Neither the author nor the characters can now assist in their presentation. Hence, the reader must assume a more commanding role in interpretation. Ironies of events and fate manifest a similar level of ingenuity but are more intriguing because of their more elaborate structure and import.

A situational irony may become an irony of events when a succession of occurrences leads to a completely unexpected result. Thompson comments that in this irony ". . . the author . . . makes the outcome incongruous to the expectation, with painfully comic effect."² Knox says:

¹Ibid., p. 100.

²Thompson, op. cit., p. 9.

Relying on their "knowledge of life," their assumption that in a particular situation certain facts and principles are dependable guides, men proceed to act on them in the expectation that foreseeable and desirable results will follow. Regrettably, what follows is often exactly the consequence they did not foresee and least desire.¹

And Muecke says:

We say it is ironic when, after we have more or less explicitly or confidently expressed reliance in the way things go, some subsequent unforeseen turn of events reverses and frustrates our expectations or designs. It is ironic when we meet what we set out to avoid, especially when the means we take to avoid something turn out to be the very means of bringing about what we sought to avoid. It is ironic when we get at last what we no longer desire.

For these kinds of irony I have chosen to use the term Irony of Events . . .²

An irony of events, therefore, necessitates the existence of a victim who does perceive his unpleasant predicament, unlike dramatic irony, for as the above critic further states:

. . . we distinguish between Irony of Events, which needs to be completed by the disclosure of the victim, and Dramatic Irony, which is immediately ironical and not dependent upon any subsequent 'reading of the results.'³

Irony of events is the most frequent type of irony found in Espronceda's poetry. This irony is most often built around the concept that life's initial promise of fulfillment eventually ends in despair and depression, but there are other types as well. It may seem that such an irony, if repeated often, would become tiresome or ineffective. But this is not the case with Espronceda, for the irony is presented in a variety of ways. At times, it is associated with a political situation; in other instances, it is cleverly woven into a narrative tale; and most often, it is communicated with autobiographical significance.

¹Knox, op. cit., p. 18.

²Muecke, op. cit., p. 102.

³Ibid., pp. 104-105.

This irony of events is apparent in "A la Patria." In spite of the unexcelled greatness of Spain in former times, there are now only disillusionment and nothingness:

¡Cuán solitaria la nación que un día
poblara inmensa gente!
¡La nación cuyo imperio se extendía
del ocaso al oriente!
.
.
.
Un tiempo España fué: cien héroes fueron
en tiempos de ventura,
y las naciones tímidas la vieron
vistosa en hermosura.
.
.
.
Mas ora, como piedra en el desierto,
yaces desamparada,
y el justo desgraciado yaga incierto
allá en tierra apartada.
Cubren su antigua pompa y poderío
pobre hierba y arena,
y el enemigo que tembló a su brío
burla y goza en su pena.¹

The irony is that Spain's present degraded situation is such an anticlimax to its former grandiosity; this is an unexpected deterioration when viewed from the point of view of its magnificent past. Yet more unfortunate is that he sees no hope for its future, implied by the improbability of consolation for its degeneration:

¡Lágrimas viertes, infeliz ahora,
soberana del mundo,
y nadie de tu faz encantadora
borra el dolor profundo!
.
.
.
¿Quién calmará, ¡oh España!, tus pesares?
¿Quién secará tu llanto?²

One sees a tragic sense of irony of events in "Al Dos de mayo." Northup explains the historical background and the aptly resultant

¹Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., pp. 294; 296.

²Ibid.

motivation for Espronceda's writing this poem:

The year 1823 is famous in Spanish history for the crushing out of liberalism. This was effected by means of the Holy Alliance, an infamous association of tyrants whose main object was to restore absolutism. Louis XVIII, the Bourbon king of France, sent a force of one hundred thousand men under the Duke of Angoulême who met with little resistance, and in short order nullified all that had been accomplished by the Spanish liberals. . . . Espronceda, the son of a hero of the War of Liberation, felt that the work of the men of 1808 had been undone. They had exchanged a foreign for a domestic tyrant. What his feelings were we may gather from his ode in commemoration of the uprising of the Madrid populace against the troops of Murat, "Al Dos de Mayo":¹

The author is disgusted by the memory of the weak, treacherous Spaniards who were so easily led into French domination during the period following the famous struggle of May 2, 1808. He brands them as cowardly canalla and criticizes them as destroying the country's unity:

¡Canalla!, sí, ¡vosotros los traidores,
los que negáis al entusiasmo ardiente
su gloria, y nunca vistéis los fulgores
con que ilumina la inspirada frente!

¡Canalla!, sí, ¡los que en la lid alarde
hicieron de su infame villanía,
disfrazando su espíritu cobarde
con la sana razón segura y fría!²

Conversely, he appropriately praises those valiant Spanish souls who fought the difficult War of Independence from 1808 to 1812, attempting to extirpate the unwanted French forces:

Héroes de Mayo, levantad las frentes;
sonó la hora, y la venganza espera;
¡id, y hartad vuestra sed en los torrentes
de sangre de Bailén y Talavera.

¡Id, saludad los héroes de Gerona,
alzáed con ellos el radiante vuelo,

¹Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. xiii.

²Espronceda, (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., pp. 355-56.

y a los de Zaragoza alta corona
ceñid, que aumente el esplendor del cielo.¹

Yet, ironically, in spite of all these valorous efforts, the resulting political situation under Fernando VII "El deseado," successor to the incompetent Carlos IV, was not appreciably better:

Mas ¡ay!, ¿por qué, cuando los ojos brotan
lágrimas de entusiasmo y alegría,
y el alma, atropellados, alborotan
tantos recuerdos de honra y valentía,

negra nube en el alma se levanta,
que turba y oscurece los sentidos;
fiero dolor el corazón quebranta,
y se ahoga la voz entre gemidos?

El trono que erigió vuestra bravura,
sobre huesos de héroes cimentado,
un rey ingrato, de memoria impura,
con eterno baldón dejó manchado.²

With the following ironic question he further stresses the uselessness of all their military labors:

¡Ay! ¿Cuál fué el galardón de vuestro celo,
de tanta sangre y bárbaro quebranto,
de tan heroica lucha y tanto anhelo,
tanta virtud y sacrificio tanto?³

Indeed in Espronceda's day, there ironically remains nothing of the courage the revolutionary fighters demonstrated:

Tumba vosotros sois de nuestra gloria,
de la antigua hidalguía,
del castellano honor, que en la memoria
sólo no queda hoy día.⁴

¹Ibid., pp. 356-57.

²Ibid., pp. 357-58.

³Ibid., p. 358.

⁴Ibid., p. 359.

Among the ironies of events in the narrations, four are rather outstanding. Although the major irony in "A una Dama burlada" is dramatic, an irony of events also is evident here. The feminine protagonist believes her deception to be unfailing; that is, she believes she can successfully attract three men at the same time. Certainly not within her expectation is their discovery of her deceitful ways. But the irony is more an implied one, as she has not yet, but doubtless soon will, discern that she is the taunted one and not at all in command of her amorous life, as she still believes.

In the pseudo-chivalric tale presented in the poem "Oscar y Malvina," there is an irony of events. Malvina does suspect the possibility of Oscar's death as he sallies forth to do battle with the Moors. As she says when she tells him of her anguish:

"¿En dónde está mi Oscar?" a los guerreros
preguntaré anhelante;
y ellos, pasando junto a mí ligeros,
responderán: ¡Murió!" Dice, y expira
en sollozos su acento,¹

But one assumes this tension is without foundation since usually in a tale of the chivalric type, the hero is always successful in vanquishing his foe and living on to return to his loved one. Oscar's answer to Malvina's worry indeed helps to assure the reader that this will be the result here as well:

"Destierra ese temor, Malvina mía
--Oscar responde con fingido aliento--;²

One is likely to ignore the use of fingido, but it is a clue to the

¹Ibid., p. 231.

²Ibid.

eventual resolution of the narration: Oscar successfully vanquishes Cairvar but also, unexpectedly, dies:

Cayó Cairvar como robusto tronco
que tumba el leñador al golpe rudo
de hendiente hacha pesada,
y cayó derribada
su soberbia fiereza,
y su insolente orgullo y aspereza.
Mas, ¡ay!, que moribundo
Oscar yace también:¹

Recalling the tale of "El Cautivo" in Don Quixote, Espronceda's "La Cautiva" portrays the romantic disillusionment of a young Moorish girl, Zoraida, like the girl in Cervantes' work. Formerly, she was loving and demure in her adoration for a Spaniard:

Supe amar como ninguna,
supe amor correspondida;
... ..
... del castellano
la sumida enamorada:²

But now her imprisonment in Christian lands and condemnation to death have embittered what was once so sweet:

Mas, ¡ay triste!, yo cautiva,
huérfana y sola suspiro,
en clima extraño respiro
y amo a un extraño también.
no hallan mis ojos mi patria;
humo han sido mis amores;
nadie calma mis dolores,
y en celos me siento arder.
... ..
despreciada, aborrecida,
¿no sabré también odiar?
¡Adiós, patria! ¡Adiós, amores!
La infeliz Zoraida ahora
sólo venganzas implora,
ya condenada a morir,

¹Ibid., p. 234.

²Ibid., p. 245.

.
 soy la cautiva cansada
 ya de dejarse oprimir.¹

Her depression is so great that unlike the usual romantic character she finds no consolation in her suffering:

¡Ah! ¿Llorar? ¿Llorar? ... No puedo,
 ni ceder a mi tristura,
 ni consuelo en mi amargura
 podré jamás encontrar.²

An irony of events is implied by the last portion of "El Verdugo" when the author suggests that someone who at present is but an innocent child may someday become as wicked as the despicable hangman:

¡Piensa que un día
 al que hoy miras jugar inocente
 maldecido cual yo y delincuente
 también verás !!!!!³

This irony is created to illustrate that people other than the hangman are nefarious and, therefore, that his reputation as the personification of evil is undeserved.

There are several ironies of events in "El Estudiante de Salamanca." Underlying the basic irony in Elvira's life is the destruction of hope in her love for Felix. As the author says, her illusion and hope are now "deshojadas y marchitas."⁴ This situation also implies the intervention of fate, another form of irony.

Yet there is a further irony of events existent in this circumstance. Elvira finds a brief respite from the suffering brought on by

¹Ibid., pp. 244-45.

²Ibid., p. 244.

³Ibid., p. 275.

⁴Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. 12.

the first irony of events in a world of fantasy in which she finds vicarious enjoyment of pleasures now forever past:

... sueña en su locura
 Presente el bien que para siempre huyó;
 Dulces palabras con amor murmura,
 Piensa que escucha el pérfido que amó.

Y su frente en revuelto remolino
 Ha enturbiado su loco pensamiento,
 Como nublo que en negro torbellino
 Encubre el cielo y amontona el viento;¹

But this relief is soon gone, for shortly before she writes the letter to Félix, she awakens from her locura and again realizes the full impact of her desperation.

The sadness which would have been easier to bear had it been continuous, undergoes a reawakening to cause even greater psychological pain.

Mas despertó también de su locura
 Al término postrero de su vida,
 Y al abrirse a sus pies la sepultura,
 Volvió a su mente la razón perdida.

!La razón fría! !la verdad amarga!
 !El bien pasado y el dolor presente! ...
 !Ella feliz! !que de tan dura carga
 Sintió el peso al morir únicamente!²

Thus, the temporary postponement of her anguish has been ironically no real help.

Although the most notable irony associated with nature's ignorance of Elvira's anguish is situational, there is a complementary irony of events. After her death, nature is contrarily so very sympathetic and protective, when it can now be of no benefit to her. Perhaps nature

¹Ibid., p. 14.

²Ibid., p. 16.

is either mocking the indignity of her fate or compensating for its previous lack of compassion:

Y huyó su alma a la mansión dichosa
De los ángeles moran. ...Tristes flores
Brotó la tierra en torno de su losa;
El céfiro lamenta sus amores.

Sobre ella un sauce su ramaje inclina,
Sombra le presta en lánguido desmayo,
Y allá en la tarde, cuando el sol declina,
Baña su tumba en paz su último rayo.¹

A final irony concerning Elvira typifies the physical transformation she undergoes in moving from her beautiful human state to her hideous supernatural condition when her identity is finally revealed to Félix:

Y ella entonces gritó: ¡Mi esposo!! ¡Y era
(¡Desengaño fatal! ¡triste verdad!)
Una sórdida, horrible calavera,
La blanca dama del gallardo andar!...²

There are similarly a number of ironies of events associated with the masculine protagonist Félix. His orientation changes abruptly in Part Three. He is finished with love involvement and now quite materialistic. As he says,

Necesito ahora dinero.
Y estoy hastiado de amores.³

His sale of Elvira's picture proves how little he values something which formerly was so important to him. In selling just the picture frame, he declares:

Que os juego más todavía,
Y en cien onzas hago el trato,
Y os lleváis este retrato
Con marco de pedrería.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 18.

²Ibid., p. 63.

³Ibid., p. 22.

⁴Ibid., pp. 23-24.

Félix's transformed attitude creates an irony of events around Elvira's impassioned letter, itself a type of verbal irony. This letter was a final effort on her part to create a feeling of regret in him for his sensual exploitation, yet Part Three reveals that it ironically had no effect on the self-oriented Félix.

The most noteworthy irony of events concerning Félix is the recompense he is forced to pay and the degraded condition to which he is reduced in Part Four. This is indeed ironic for one whose egotism and arrogance indicated that he felt his good fortune would be everlasting. Although he does create the façade of continued confidence despite the threats surrounding him and does not realize their full import until the end, there are moments when he realizes that he has been reduced to a state of empty suffering. Even though it is the same condition that characterized Elvira shortly before her death, he does not make the connection, thereby unfortunately reducing his sense of retribution. The spectre thus reminds him of the ironic end of his past happiness:

Gemido de amargo recuerdo pasado,
De pena presente, de incierto pesar,
Mortífero aliento, veneno exhalado
Del que encubre el alma ponzoñoso mar.¹

The following description illustrates that Félix begins to make this realization rendering his outward arrogance somewhat ill-founded, at least in part:

Y solo y llevando consigo en su pecho,
Compañero eterno su dolor cruel,
El mágico encanto del alma deshecho,
Su pena, su amigo y su amante más fiel;
.....

¹Ibid., p. 39.

Y él mismo, la befa del mundo temblando,
 Su pena en su pecho profunda escondió,
 Y dentro en su alma su llanto tragando
 Con falsa sonrisa su labio vistió!....

¡Ay! quien ha contado las horas que fueron,
 Horas otro tiempo que abrevió el placer,
 Y hoy solo y llorando piensa como huyeron,¹
 Con ellas por siempre las dichas de ayer;

He does vacillate repeatedly between moments of fear and more lengthy periods of confidence until his phenomenal psychological strength succumbs in the embrace with the ghost, finally avenging Elvira's ill-treatment. He struggles bravely, but even the most invincible cannot compete with a supernatural enemy:

Y él, envuelto en sus secas coyunturas,
 Aun más sus nudos que se aprietan siente,
 Baña un mar de sudor su ardida frente,
 Y crece en su impotencia su furor.
 Pugna con ansia a desasirse en vano,
 Y cuanto más airado forcejea,
 Tanto más se le junta y le desea
 El rudo espectro que le inspira horror.

.

A tan tremenda lid,
 Entre los brazos lúbricos
 Que aprémianle sujeto
 Del hórrido esqueleto,
 Entre caricias mil,

Jamás vencido el ánimo,
 Su cuerpo ya rendido
 Sintió desfallecido
 Faltarle Montemar;
 Y a par que más su espíritu
 Desmiente su miseria,
 La flaca, vil materia
 Comienza a desmayar.²

¹Ibid., pp. 39-40.

²Ibid., pp. 65; 67.

And finally:

Y siente luego
 Su pecho ahogado
 Y desmayado,
 Turbios sus ojos,
 Sus graves párpados,
 Flojos caer;
 La frente inclina
 Sobre su pecho,
 Y, a su despecho,
 Siente sus brazos
 Lánguidos, débiles
 Desfallecer.¹

It is ironic, too, that the world should return to a daily routine after the exoticism of the events surrounding Félix's damnation:

Y huyó la noche y con la noche huían
 Sus sombras y quiméricas mujeres,
 Y a su silencio y calma sucedían
 El bullicio y rumor de los talleres;
 Y a su trabajo y a su afán volvían
 Los hombres y a sus frívolos placeres,
 Algunos hoy volviendo a su faena
 De zozobra y temor el alma llena;²

A large number of poems autobiographically illustrate this unfulfilling irony of events. For example, in "Soneto--Marchitas ya las juveniles flores," Espronceda pictures his present disillusioned state resultant from the withering of his youth and its accompanying hopelessness:

Marchitas ya las juveniles flores,
 nublado el sol de la esperanza mía
 hora tras hora cuento, y mi agonía
 crece con mi ansiedad y mis dolores.³

His attempt to regain a bit of his former happiness is in vain and, as in

¹Ibid., p. 68.

²Ibid., p. 69.

³Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 143.

situational irony, nature is oblivious to his problem:

Sobre terso cristal ricos colores
pinta alegre tal vez mi fantasía
cuando la triste realidad sombría
mancha el cristal y empaña sus fulgores.¹

He hints that frustrated love, no doubt an allusion to the Teresa Mancha affair, is the cause of at least a portion of his depression:

A ti las quejas de mi amor profundo,
hermosa sin ventura, yo te envío:
mis versos son tu corazón y el mío.²

In "Soneto--Fresca, lozana, pura y olorosa," the same irony is again succinctly expressed through an interesting parallelism. He first shows how the fragrant beauty of a garden eventually loses its freshness:

Fresca, lozana, pura y olorosa,
gala y adorno del pensil florido,
gallarda puesta sobre el ramo erguido,
fragancia esparce la naciente rose;
mas si el ardiente sol lumbre enojosa
.
el dulce aroma y el color perdido,
sus hojas lleva el aura presurosa.³

He then parallels to this phenomenon the transience of his own life's good fortune and happiness, again suggesting amorous frustration:

Así brilló un momento mi ventura
en alas del amor, ...
... ¡ay!, que el bien trocóse en amargura,⁴

The hopelessness he now feels makes him realize the folly of his previous joie de vivre:

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 301.

⁴Ibid.

... y hermosa nube
finjé tal vez de gloria y de alegría;

 ... deshojada por los aires sube
 la dulce flor de la esperanza mía.¹ (Italics mine.)

"Soledad del alma" presents an irony of events which continues the theme of the "Sonetos." Espronceda is again lamenting the depression and loneliness he feels because his hopes for a happy and fulfilled life have been destroyed:

Mi alma yace en soledad profunda
 árida, ardiente, en inquietud continua,
 cual la abrasada arena del desierto
 que el seco viento de la Libia agita.²

His romantic outcry "¡Triste de mí!"³ amply summarizes his feelings.

In contrast to his current unhappy state, he presents the joy that typified his more youthful days when his heart was "abierta a la esperanza y las delicias":

... De regalada sombra,
 de dulces aguas, de templada brisa,
 en fértil campo de verdura y flores,
 con grata calma disfruté yo un día;⁴

Now he believes that his search for such pleasures is fruitless:

En vano busco la floresta umbrosa
 o el manantial del agua cristalina;⁵ (Italics mine.)

In fact, he feels that the personified images of these now unattainable glories are far from his grasp, yet he senses that they deceptively appear to him, tempting and mocking:

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 379.

³Ibid., p. 380.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 379.

el bosque umbrío, la apacible fuente
 lejos de mí, burlando mi fatiga,
 huyen y aumentan mi fatal tormento
 falaces presentándose a mi vista.¹

In "A una estrella" the irony of events in the poems entitled "Soneto" is continued but is more extensively developed and presented with some differences. Again the poet sketches a parallelism between his own unfortunate condition and that of an aspect of nature, this time a faded star. Unlike the second "Soneto," he uses apostrophe in addressing the star and thus creates a type of pathetic fallacy.

He suggests to the star that its present weakness is perhaps the "recuerdo triste de otro antiguo perdido resplandor,"² just as the author's current disillusionment is the aftermath of great exuberance for life, now gone forever:

Tan alegres fantasías,

 Huyeron con mi ilusión
 para nunca más tornar,

 y sólo en mi corazón
 recuerdos, llanto y pesar,
 ¡ay!, dejaron.³

The rapidity of such a change, that is, the impermanence of life's happiness, is stressed as in the "Sonetos":

Mas, ¡ay!, que leugo el bien y la alegría
 en llanto y desventura se trocó:⁴

Unlike the "Sonetos," however, there is emphasis on the fact that both the star and the poet are more ironically victims of their

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 302.

³Ibid., p. 305.

⁴Ibid., p. 303.

desengaño because they dared to believe in the eternity of their happiness:

.... engañado como yo, creíste
eterna tu ventura que pasó?¹

In fact, the star's seemingly unending brilliance encouraged Espronceda in this erroneous belief:

Y era tu luz voluptuosa y tierna
la que entre flores resbalando allí
inspiraba en el alma un ansia eterna
de amor perpetuo y de placer sin fin.

.

Tu faz entonces lucía
con más brillante fulgor,
mientras yo me prometía
que jamás se apagaría
para mí tu resplandor.²

Also, unlike the "Sonetos," the author is more overtly ironic in questioning who the instigator of such disillusionment might have been and in proposing the medieval interrogation ubi sunt:

¿Quién aquel brillo radiante,
¡oh lucero!, te robó,
que oscureció tu semblante
y a mi pecho arrebató
la dicha de aquel instante?

.

.
tantos mágicos ensueños
¿dónde fueron?
Tan alegres fantasías,
deleites tan halagüeños
¿qué se hicieron?³

¹Ibid., p. 302.

²Ibid., p. 303.

³Ibid., pp. 304-5.

In "A Jarifa en una orgía" Espronceda creates a more specific and somewhat different kind of irony of events. Here the author is experiencing an unexpected disillusionment resulting from frustration of his amorous hopes, not as in the "Sonetos" or "A una Estrella" where in he has encountered a disagreeable end to a brief but definite state of happiness. That is, in the other two poems, Espronceda has experienced some satisfaction and fulfillment but suffers because of their rapid disappearance, but in "A Jarifa" he has only aspired toward the attainment of happiness, in this case, of an amorous nature, and has found it impossible to gain:

Mujeres vi de virginal limpieza
entre albas nubes de celeste lumbre;
yo las toqué, y en humo su pureza
trocarce vi, y en lodo y podredumbre,

Y encontré mi ilusión desvanecida
y eterno e insaciable mi deseo;
palpé la realidad y odié la vida:¹

The author realizes the improbable nature of his objectives, but the strength of his desire to attain them has blinded him:

Yo quiero amor, quiero gloria,
quiero un deleite divino,
como en mi mente imagino,
como en el mundo no hay;
Y es la luz de aquel lucero
que engañó mi fantasía,
fuego fatuo, falso guía
que errante y ciego me tray.²

But whether it is frustration of idealistic objectives or of brief contentment, the result is the same irony of events: bitter

¹Ibid., p. 311.

²Ibid., pp. 309-10.

disappointment subsequent to high hopes. The irony seems more striking in light of the tremendous effort Espronceda exerted to accomplish his purpose:

Yo me arrojé, cual rápido cometa,
en alas de mi ardiente fantasía:
doquier mi arrebatada mente inquieta
dichas y triunfos encontrar creía.

Yo me lancé con atrevido vuelo
fuera del mundo, en la región etérea,¹

This spirit of wild abandon which he adopted in trying to realize his elevated objectives could hardly have been successful:

Luego, en la tierra la virtud, la gloria,
busqué con ansia y delirante amor,
y hediondo polvo y deleznable escoria
mi fatigado espíritu encontró.²

Finally in the poem he condemns himself, perhaps because of his disgust with his unrealistic goals, to a life of unending aspiration and resulting internal conflict, since such expectation can never meet with fulfillment. As an "acento pavoroso"³ says to him:

"Muere, infeliz: la vida es un tormento,
un engaño el placer; no hay en la tierra
paz para ti, ni dicha, ni contento, ⁴
sino eterna ambición y eterna guerra.

The most expansively developed specific irony of events is that which Espronceda constructs in "Canto a Teresa" around the disenchantment he suffered in his relationship with Teresa Mancha. It is similar, but more personalized, than the one in "A Jarifa."

¹Ibid., p. 311.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 312.

⁴Ibid.

His initial emphasis is upon the short period of their youthful happiness together:

¿Dónde volaron ¡ay! aquellas horas
De juventud, de amor y de ventura,
Regaladas de músicas sonoras,
Adornadas de luz y de hermosura?
.

¡Oh mujer! que en imagen ilusoria
Tan pura, tan feliz, tan placentera,
Brindó el amor a mi ilusión primera ...!

Y aquellas horas dulces que pasaron
Tan breves ...
Horas de confianza y de delicias,
De abandono, y de amor, y de caricias.

Que así las horas rápidas pasaban,
Y pasaba a la par nuestra ventura;
.
Tú embriagada en mi amor, yo en tu hermosura:
Las horas ¡ay! huyendo nos miraban.¹

But now she is gone and instead of his former fulfillment, there remains only anguish:

¡Huyes y dejas llanto y desconsuelo!
.

Ahogar me siento en infernal tortura!
Retuércese entre nudos dolorosos
Mi corazón gimiendo de amargura! ...²

The irony of this alarming transformation becomes evident upon noting how unexpected it was for the author:

¿Quién pensara jamás, Teresa mía,
Que fuera eterno manantial de llanto,
Tanto inocente amor, tanta alegría,
Tantas delicias y delirio tanto?

¹Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., pp. 92; 96; 98.

²Ibid., p. 97.

¿Quién pensara jamás llegase un día,
En que perdido el celestial encanto,
Y caida la venda de los ojos,
Cuanto diera placer causara enojos?¹

In an indirect fashion, he alludes to the cause for his disillusionment: His romantically idealized view of a girl all too common could not endure the test of reality and crumbled to reveal an ignoble creature:

Mujer que amor en su ilusión figura,
.....
Ensueño de suavísima ternura,
.....
De amor la llama generosa y pura,
Los goces dulces del placer cumplidos.
Que engalana la rica fantasía,
Goces que avaro el corazón ansía;

¡Ay! aquella mujer, tan solo aquella
Tanto delirio a realizar alcanza,
Y esa mujer tan cándida y tan bella,
Es mentida ilusión de la esperanza:
Es el alma que vívida destella
Su luz al mundo cuando en él se lanza,
Y el mundo con su magia y galanura,
Es espejo no más de su hermosura:

.....

... ¡Oh! ¿quién impío
¡Ay! agostó la flor de tu pureza?
Tú fuiste un tiempo cristalino río,
Manantial de purísima limpieza;
Después torrente de color sombrío,
Rompiendo entre peñascos y maleza,
Y estanque en fin de aguas corrompidas,
Entre fétido fango detenidas.

¿Cómo caíste despeñado al suelo,
Astro de la mañana luminoso?² (*Italics mine.*)

As Casaldueiro says, "Hay un choque, un contraste entre realidad y fantasía; esta antítesis es característica del Romanticismo."³

¹*Ibid.*, p. 97.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 95-96; 98-99.

³Casaldueiro, *Forma y Visión de El Diablo mundo*, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

Thus, Espronceda demonstrates as in "A Jarifa" that from excessive expectation, the inevitable result is disappointment:

Los años ¡ay! de la ilusión pasaron;
Las dulces esperanzas que trajeron,
Con sus blancos ensueños se llevaron,
Y el porvenir de oscuridad vistieron:
Las rosas del amor se marchitaron,
Las flores en abrojos convirtieron,
Y de afán tanto y tan soñada gloria,
Sólo quedó una tumba, una memoria.¹

He finds this realization so intolerable that he forces himself to forget Teresa:

... ¡ay! huid: el corazón ardiente
Que el agua clara por beber se afana,
Lágrimas verterá de duelo eterno,
Que su raudal lo envenenó el infierno.

... Teresa! al recordarte siento
Un pesar tan intenso ...!²

Of Espronceda's frustrated love life, Casaldueño comments:

Amor atormentado, amor imaginario, buscando incesantemente el sueño irrealizable, creyendo haberlo alcanzado para caer en la desilusión.³

His remarks on the unfulfilling nature of amorous relationships conceived in idealism aptly parallel Espronceda's own experience:

El encuentro soñado y necesario del hombre con la mujer, manantial posible de toda la alegría de la vida, es la fuente de donde brota todo el dolor. ... El mundo y la mujer concebidos en la ilusión de la pureza primera se quedan reducidos a las cenizas amargas del cinismo. La lección cristiana de desengaño se rechaza, su lugar lo ocupa la caraajada cínica de la ironía desesperada.⁴

And Thompson contributes this statement:

¹Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 100.

²Ibid., pp. 99-100.

³Casaldueño, Espronceda, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴Casaldueño, Forma y Visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., p. 83.

Arcadian dreams cannot endure the harsh daylight of actuality; hence the Romantics were constantly suffering from disillusionment. The idealized maiden, won and married, turns out to be just an ordinary woman.¹

Espronceda's ability to create ironies of events is thus well substantiated by many highly varied examples. Clearly a dimension of interest is added in this ironic category above the potential offered by ironies of incongruity or situation, as the result of a series of events is stressed, not simply an existent situation. Progressing one step further, yet another aspect is generated by emphasis on the working of fate in bringing about an unfortunante turn of events.

Irony of fate differs from irony of events only in the metaphysical implication as to the role of some cruel supernatural power that gains enjoyment from frustrating man's undertakings, making them result quite contrary to his anticipation. There is the further idea that man cannot avoid his fate, regardless of the strength of his efforts. Defining this type of irony, Muecke says:

Irony of Fate, . . . , implies a belief, . . . , in a relentless, unavoidable series of events or 'final' event. A man is a victim of the Irony of Fate when the steps he takes to avoid his fate are either simply in vain or precisely the steps which lead him to his fate. In so far as Fate is thought of as a supernatural or quasi-divine agency he is a victim /therefore/ not of an ironic situation or event²

In classifying this irony as also irony of life, he mentions that it implies "a belief in a semi-personified force that takes a delight in designing ironic reversals."³

¹Thompson, op. cit., p. 70.

²Muecke, op. cit., pp. 102-3.

³Ibid.

Sharpe adds the term poetic justice in defining irony of fate and further comments:

. . . /In this irony/ the higher powers reverse man's intentions and cause his purposeful acts to sweep back like a boomerang at his own head.¹

Although there are not a great number of examples of irony of fate, there are several others of a generalized type.

Espronceda uses several ironies of fate in "El Pelayo." First, Rodrigo's desperate attraction for Florinda, which results in seduction and subsequent Divine punishment, seems guided by a force he cannot deny:

Allí Rodrigo con incierta huella
lascivo sigue a la fatal Florinda;
ciego, arrastrado de ominosa estrella,
intenta audaz que a su furor se rinda.
No oye, ¡infeliz!, su mísera querella;
la ve humilde a sus pies, la ve más linda;
y con lascivos ojos, con desdoro,
mancha la hermosa flor de su decoro.² (Italics mine.)

That Divine vengeance will be satisfied for this crime of passion is made altogether clear. Rodrigo's present lustful pleasure will soon be disagreeably altered, despite any effort he might put forth:

En tanto encubre pavorosa nube
el cielo enantes transparente y terso,
y relumbra la espada del querube,
ministro del Señor del universo;
que ya la voz de la inocencia sube
que en llanto el gozo trocará al perverso,
y a la luz del relámpago se muestra
del rayo armada la divina diestra.

.

Todo desapareció: lóbrego luto
reina y silencio do el placer ardía,

¹Sharpe, op. cit., p. 42.

²Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 151.

do el mísero monarca disoluto
 en vil torpeza y embriaguez yacía.
 Buerra y desolación el triste fruto
 al fin será de la lascivia impía,
 y horrenda esclavitud: Rodrigo, en tanto,
 verterá entre sus hembras débil llanto.¹

The defeat of the Christians by the Moors in the Battle of Guadalete seems equally fated. It is alluded to after an arrogant speech Sancho makes to his soldiers in which he rejects the possibility of truce, proclaims that the struggle will be one to the death, and foolishly believes that luck is on his side:

"¿Tregua? ¡Jamás! O vencimiento o muerte,
 que nunca fatigó ni impuso miedo
 continua guerra al corazón del fuerte,
 ni abatió de su espíritu el denuedo.
Quien ora intente abandonar la suerte,
que ofrece a nuestras armas rostro ledo,
 es un cobarde y vil, y de ahora digo
 que ya me cuenta a mí por enemigo."² (Italics mine.)

This irony is continued in a statement made subsequent to a boastful declaration by the Moorish king as to his supremacy over the Christians after the finish of the Guadalete encounter. Just as his subjects demonstrate complete subservience to the haughty Moorish ruler, the Spaniards, symbolized by the labrador medroso, also will realize the fateful inevitability of submitting to him:

Dijo, y del trono aurífero descende
 con lento paso y ceño majestuoso,
 y a un lado y otro del salón se extiende
 y ante él se postra el séquito humilde.
 Tal si en ignota soledad sorprende
 obscura noche al labrador medroso,
si de repente ve fada divina,
en mudo pasmo la rodilla inclina.³ (Italics mine.)

¹Ibid., pp. 152-53.

²Ibid., p. 178.

³Ibid.

The pitiful situation of the prisoner in "El Reo de muerte" implies a fated circumstance. Since the crime for which he is convicted is not even defined, it is implied that it was something incidental and insignificant. Thus, fate, not his actions, has brought an end to the hopeful future and highly motivated outlook that characterized him before his imprisonment:

Es un joven, y la vida
llena de sueños de oro,
pasó ya, cuando aún el lloro
de la niñez no enjugó;¹

Such an optimistic and constructive attitude would have meant a positive contribution to the world, but instead the unjust sentence has completely and understandably embittered him:

.
el sentenciado maldijo
la madre que como a hijo
a sus pechos le crió;
y maldijo su suerte impía,
maldijo el aciago día
y la hora en que nació.²

Fatefully ironic, too, is the fact that this bright young man so full of potential will be survived by the aged friar who prays for him:

Y junto al mísero reo.
medio encubierto el semblante,
se oye al fraile agonizante
en son confuso rezar.³

There is an irony of fate woven into the events surrounding the tragic separation of the young couple in "Despedida del patriota griego de la hija del apóstata." The young man believes that his destiny has

¹Ibid., p. 263.

²Ibid., p. 265.

³Ibid., pp. 284-5.

saved him from many dangers in life only to bring him to the bitter necessity of leaving the one he loves:

...; sí, mi sentencia
para siempre selló la suerte injusta,
.....
para siempre selló la suerte injusta,
.....
y salvo he sido de mortales riesgos
para vivir penando en amargura?¹

And, paradoxically, the same fate has predestined **that** the couple be dedicated to each other from birth:

"¿Por qué yo fuí por mi fatal destino
unido a ti desde la tierna cuna?
.....
"¿Por qué mi infancia en inocentes juegos
brilló contigo, y con delicia mutua
ambos tejimos el infausto lazo
que nuestras almas míseras anuda?"²

Rightly, he feels he can do nothing against such a fate:

"¿Qué puede el infeliz contra el destino?"³

Fortune has been indeed efficient in transforming a potentially happy relationship into a nightmare:

...: vano es ahora
acariciar memorias de ventura;
voló ya la ilusión de la esperanza,
y es vano amar sin esperanza alguna.⁴

The young man perhaps foolishly believes that time and forgetfulness will eventually soften this blow of fate:

"¡Ojalá para siempre que el olvido,
suavizando el rigor de la fortuna,

¹Ibid., pp. 284-5.

²Ibid., p. 285.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

la imagen, ¡ay!, de las pasadas glorias
bajo sus alas lóbregas encubra!¹

Nonetheless, both lovers end their lives in misery:

...: A esperar consuelo
la hija del Apóstata en la tumba;
él batallando pereció en las lides,
y ella víctima fué de su amargura.²

Only one specific irony of fate seems evident in "El Estudiante de Salamanca." The second portion reveals how cruelly the circumstances, i.e., fate, surrounding Elvira have destroyed the love fulfillment she so desperately sought. The personification of the elements "el dolor," "el aura," and "la tierra," plus the action of "el hombre" in the following citation increase the feeling that a sadistic fate has destroyed her beyond her control:

Murió de amor la desdichada Elvira,
Cándida rosa que agostó el dolor,
Suave aroma que el viajero aspira
Y sus alas el aura arrebató.

Vaso de bendición, ricos colores
Reflejó en su cristal la luz del día,
Mas la tierra empañó sus resplandores,
Y el hombre lo rompió con mano impía.³ (Italics mine.)

This is particularly ironic because her entire life could be totally fulfilled only by achieving a successful love and marriage. She was born to be loved as the following lines point out:

Una ilusión acarició su mente,
Alma celeste para amar nacida,
Era el amor de su vivir la fuente,
Estaba junta a su ilusión su vida.⁴ (Italics mine.)

¹Ibid., p. 284.

²Ibid., p. 289.

³Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. 15.

⁴Ibid., p. 15.

But, as grim fate would have it, the frustration of her one greatest need shattered her life, so that her tremendous potential for love was never realized:

Amada de Señor, flor venturosa,
Llena de amor murió y de juventud;
Despertó alegre una alborada hermosa,
Y a la tarde durmió en el ataúd.¹

Associated with the irony of events in "Canto II" of "El Diablo mundo," there is a certain irony of fate. Teresa's fall from the beautiful and upright girl Espronceda idealized her into being to the miserable, immoral wretch she eventually became, abandoning Espronceda and dying in the gutter, certainly implies the hand of fate:

Mas ¡ay! que es la mujer ángel caído
O mujer nada más y lodo inmundo,
Hermoso ser para llorar nacido,
.....

Y era llorar tu único destino:
Cuando en tu frente la implacable suerte
Grababa de los réprobos el sino ...!
.....

Roida de recuerdos de amargura,
Arido el corazón sin ilusiones,
La delicada flor de tu hermosura
Afaron del dolor los aguilonas:
.....

¡Y tan joven, y ya tan desgraciada!
Espíritu indomable, alma violenta,
En ti, mezquina sociedad, lanzada
A romper tus barreras turbulenta.
Nave contra las rocas quebrantada,
Allá vaga, a merced de la tormenta,² (Italics mine.)

¹Ibid., p. 15.

²Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., pp. 99-101.

Although examples which illustrate irony of fate are rather scarce in Espronceda's poetry, a sufficient number exists to demonstrate adequately his cleverness in weaving the cruel workings of destiny into a series of events.

Without doubt, his ironic skills are more evident as a situational ironist than as a verbal or dramatic one. The intriguing subtlety of the many incongruities and situational ironies as well as the emotional force and variant presentation of the countless ironies of events and fate throughout his poetic works are ample proof of his skill in handling this aspect of irony.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL IRONY

A significant number of the ironies in Espronceda's poetry exhibit a generalized quality, quite in contrast to the more specific nature of the other types of irony in his poetry. That is, in certain dramatic, situational, eventful, and fateful ironies, an everyman application is evident.

In general dramatic irony the author describes a predicament applicable not only to the character involved but to all mankind as well. Muecke distinguishes this kind of irony from specific dramatic irony by saying:

We call it Dramatic Irony when we see a man acting in complacent ignorance of the real state of affairs, especially when the situation as he sees it is the contrary of the real situation. To see man as always and necessarily ignorant of the real state of affairs or obliged to act as if he were ignorant is to see him as a victim of a General Dramatic Irony.¹

Espronceda depicts this type of irony as seen in "Despedida del patriota griego de la hija del apóstata" when he implies that love for the protagonists is a blind inevitability whose sweetness has been

¹Muecke, op. cit., p. 137.

destroyed by the demands of the girl's father. Thus, love is a negative force which can lead man to misery and unpleasantness. As the poet Blake once said:

Love seeketh only Self to please,
To bind another to its delight,
Joys in another's loss of ease,
And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite.¹

A further general dramatic irony in "Despedida" is a psychological one. The young man's superego cannot allow him to sacrifice his cherished national loyalty to the sensual pleasures of his love for the daughter of the apostate. Hence, his dilemma represents a general one to which any man may fall victim. As Muecke comments:

. . . , we can look upon the Ego as being in an ironic predicament, caught between the amoral, irresponsible, nonconforming Id and the moral, responsible conforming Super-ego,²
The irony lies in the contradictory opposition of values:²

The ineffectual lives the two lovers lead after their separation, her eventual death from bitterness and his senseless extinction on the battlefield, illustrates, as the same critic says, that "life and morality are incompatible" and that "to be good and yet to live"³ is quite impossible.

"Himno al sol" expresses a general dramatic irony. The unfounded nature of the sun's arrogance about its seemingly eternal existence exemplifies the unawareness that typifies anyone who cannot see the

¹William Blake, The Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. by David V. Erdman (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1965), p. 19.

²Muecke, op. cit., p. 143.

³Ibid., pp. 144-45.

eventual fall of his greatness. That is, every entity must at last become extinct for death exempts no one:

...; que también la muerte,
si de lejos te sigue,
no menos anhelante te persigue.¹

The author seems to enjoy declaring the transience of nature's every creation, for as Domenchina points out:

En el "Himno al Sol" fruye, con solapada y morosa delectación
antivital y destructiva, el acabamiento de todo lo creado:
celebra, al saberse finito, la caducidad, más o menos remota,
del esplendor con que la Naturaleza le ofende. Se colma de
júbilo--de un júbilo de mala índole--al considerar que todo
es perecedero.²

In "Canto del cruzado" Espronceda creates an unusual general dramatic irony by means of contradiction and comparison. The poem deals principally with a tale called "La Vuelta del cruzado" recited by a trovador; it concerns a crusading soldier who searched the world over for ways to gain fame, all of which he gladly and absurdly gave to his idealized amante:

Y buscando dónde ir
a hacer su nombre famoso,
vuelve a sus pies venturoso
sus laureles a rendir.³

After the listeners have heard the story, one comments:

... son muy leales esclavos de amor
los bravos guerreros del templo sagrado,
según en sus versos pintó el trovador.⁴

¹Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 239.

²Ibid., pp. 85-6.

³Ibid., p. 372.

⁴Ibid., p. 373.

The tale and this generalization prompt each of the other present to refer to the girl he believes to be the most beautiful:

"Que dicen hermosas que son las mujeres
que adornan las tierras do se alza Lalén,
y ofrece el Oriente gustosos placeres,
y todos los miran con tibio desdén."

--No brillan mujeres allá en Palestina
--responde un guerrero--cual brillan aquí;
yo pongo que nunca mujer más divina
se vió la hermosa que adora el Zegrí.

--Ximena es más bella--repuso un mancebo,
moviendo los ojos con fiero mirar--;
yo rompo una lanza por ella, y lo pruebo,
cualquiera en su contra se muestre a lidiar.

El conde, al momento: --Más bella es mi esposa,
la reina en las justas de amor y beldad;
yo pongo que es ella más noble y hermosa,
y acepto en la arena probar la verdad.¹

The obviously contradictory nature of these commentaries illustrates that it is absurd to select any one being as the apex of beauty, hence, the irony of physical beauty. Each man, in so dogmatically believing his feminine preference to be the most perfect, reveals himself as victim of his own personal ironic predicament: his excessive concern with the carnal and his inability to perceive that a concept of beauty varies with the individual's conception, as an elderly man in the group points out. He states that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and that one's opinion that another is attractive is based on the need fulfillment which that individual can provide for the first, specifically, the admiration or flattery the girl might feel for her man:

--Cualquiera que vanza será venturoso
--repuso un anciano--.....

¹Ibid.

empero el semblante hará más hermoso
de aquella que adora su noble valor.¹

Therefore, there can be no universally recognized apotheosis of feminine beauty.

The old man continues the irony by advising his friends that the strife created by love and jealousy of a girl is not a desirable or worthwhile action and can result only in "penosos recuerdos, /and/ eterno tormento":²

"Vosotros, hermanos en armas, y amigos,
de España esperanza, mancebos de pro,
¡oh!, no querrá el cielo lidiéis enemigos
por causa tan leve /el amor por la belleza/ ...³

Indeed, his own experience has shown him that such feelings can turn friend against friend:

que así por mi dama vibrando mi espada
en negra contienda de honrar la beldad,
tendido a mis plantas de fiera estocada,
mi amigo más caro probó mi crueldad.⁴

Herein lies the greatest specificity in the dramatic situation.

Mueck's comment on the dramatic irony of beauty and its idealization and, by extension, love, is particularly apropos:

. . . we see the blindness of love not as a corrigible fault but as something inevitable in human nature, as an instance of General Irony /of a dramatic variety/. The beauty of a beloved is then an illusion of biological origin. One may go even farther and see the refinement of love itself with all its refinements and accompaniments of fidelity, chastity, chivalry, devotion, even virginity, as biological mechanisms. . . .⁵

¹Ibid., p. 374.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 374.

⁵Muecke, op. cit., p. 140.

Musil expresses a similar sentiment in referring to:

. . . scientific thinking's curious preference for mechanical, statistical, /and/ material explanations that have, as it were, the heart cut out of them. Regarding goodness as only a particular form of egoism; relating emotions to internal secretions; . . .; reducing beauty to a matter of good digestion and well-developed fat-tissue; --such ideas, which, in a manner of speaking, lay bare the sleight of hand in the conjuring-trick of human illusion, always meet with something like a prejudice in their favour, which allows them to pass as particularly scientific. Admittedly, it is truth that one so loves here. But all round this shining love is a partiality for disillusion, compulsion, inexorability, cold intimidation and dry reproof, . . .¹ (Italics mine.)

In spite of the scarcity of examples involving general dramatic irony, the few that do exist are quite varied and present some fascinating concepts, particularly the irony of physical beauty revealed by "Canto del cruzado." When the characters as ironic vehicles are removed from a general dramatic situation, the irony becomes a situational one and is then classified as general situational irony. Its application is universal as with general dramatic irony, but just as with specific situational irony, greater reader perception is required since there is more indirectness in its presentation.

"Canción del pirata," regarded as a classic expression of romantic freedom and defiance of social restriction and convention, is subject for a general situational irony. The pirate exemplifies Espronceda's rebellious political nature and his admiration for one of a similar type by repeatedly expressing this defiant refrain:

Que es mi barco mi tesoro,
que es mi Dios la libertad;

¹Robert Musil, The Man without Qualities, ed. by Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser (London: Coward-McCann, 1961), pp. 361-62.

mi ley, la fuerza del viento,
mi única patria, la mar.¹

Consistent with this idea, he presents the irony that many people who adhere closely to society's rules, represented by the reyes in this poem, exert tremendous effort to accomplish little, "un palmo más de tierra," while those free souls like the pirate have so much at their disposal simply because they are unfettered by social regulations:

Allá muevan feroz guerra
ciegos reyes
por un palmo más de tierra,
que yo tengo aquí por mío
cuanto abarca el mar bravío,
a quien nadie impuso leyes.
Y no hay playa,
sea cualquiera,
ni bandera
de esplendor
que no sienta
mi derecho
y dé pecho
a mi valor.
Que es mi barco mi tesoro ...²

The kings are blind, according to Espronceda, because they do not recognize the fulfilling life they could have as a pirate.

Ironical, too, is the fact that even someone like the pirate is not completely self-sufficient. He is evidently independent of a need for human association and organized society, but he does admit a certain dependence on Divine or fateful guidance by expressing the indirect command:

No me abandone la suerte,³

¹Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 247.

²Ibid., pp. 247-48.

³Ibid., p. 249.

Similarly, "El Mendigo" expresses several general situational ironies. This character is representative of any generic type like the pirate who takes from society all he can, without contributing useful activity himself; that is, once again, Espronceda portrays the uninhibited romantic temperament. One would normally expect of someone like a beggar a contrite attitude resulting from the embarrassment he must feel for his useless life, but the true nature of Espronceda's character is one of arrogance and not the feigned humility of his outward appearance:

Mío es el mundo: como el aire libre,
 otros trabajan por que coma yo;
 todos se ablandan si doliente pido
 una limosna por amor de Dios.¹

That is, his external demeanor belies an inner pride deriving from his easy exploitation of a society which cannot interpret his real feelings.

He is so successful in his begging because the very materialism which most of society is desperate to attain is not considered admirable, while poverty is almost a holy state:

Y es pecado
 la riqueza:
 la pobreza,
 santidad.²

Therefore, those who are materialistic feel a degree of guilt about their possessions and an obligation to contribute to the beggar's support, taking pity on his pathetic appearance and ironically never realizing how he is exploiting them:

Yo soy pobre y se lastiman
 todos al verme plañir,

¹Ibid., p. 256.

²Ibid., p. 258.

sin ver son más sus riquezas todas
que mina inagotable es el pedir.¹

His presence amid material success serves to remind one of the startling propinquity of wealth with its attendant joys and poverty with its accompanying suffering:

Y las fiestas
y el contento
con mi acento
turbo yo,
y en la bulla
y la alegría
interrumpen
la armonía
mis harapos
y mi voz,
mostrando cuán cerca habitan
el gozo y el padecer,
que no hay placer sin lágrimas, ni pena
que no traspire en medio del placer.²

Consequently, unlike the rest of the world with its frantic materialistic strivings, the beggar, or anyone like him, merely dismisses social consciousness and lives free of care because he demands and expects nothing of life; he is willing to accept whatever it brings him:

Y para mí no hay mañana
ni hay ayer;
olvido el bien como el mal,
nada me aflige ni afana,
me es igual para mañana
un palacio, un hospital.
Vivo ajeno
de memorias,
de cuidados
libre estoy;
busquen otros
oro y glorias,
yo no pienso
sino en hoy.³

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., pp. 259-60.

³Ibid., p. 260.

Casaldüero characterizes the beggar as "el hombre libre, sin necesidades, mientras a su alrededor todos se afanan."¹

Espronceda again relies on general situational irony in "El Estudiante de Salamanca" which Muecke calls the "opposition between science and humanities."² That is, whatever interests the emotions or the humanities is doubted by reason or science. Hence an impasse often exists between these intellectual phenomena:

También la esperanza blanca y vaporosa
Así ante nosotros pasa en ilusión,
Y el alma conmueve con ansia medrosa
Mientras la rechaza la ajusta razón.³

Espronceda creates many situational ironies in "El Diablo mundo"; most are generic because the author generalizes on a specific situation to create a truth for all mankind. For example, commenting on Adán's new-found happiness after his conversion, Espronceda speaks of the deception of appearances: specifically, that contentment may exist where it is least expected:

¡Oh mundo encubriaor, mundo embustero!
¡Quién en la calle de Alcalá creyera
Tanta felicidad que se escondiera
Y en un piso tercero!⁴

Yet, conversely, he continues, imperfection may be found in the most outwardly perfect thing. Therefore, something that delights with its apparent perfection must not be examined too carefully:

¹Casaldüero, Forma y visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., p. 162.

²Muecke, op. cit., p. 131.

³Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. 37.

⁴Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 115.

Mas es fuerza mirarlo así de lleno,
 El cielo, el campo, el mar, la gente, el río,
 Sin entrarse jamás en pormenores
 Ni detenerse a examinar despacio,
 Que espinas llevan las lozanas flores,
 Y el mas blanco y diáfano topacio
 Y la perla mas fina
 Manchas descubrirá se se examina.¹

This observation is made to remind the reader that Adán's present cheerfulness may have a flaw, that is, Espronceda subtly suggests his future sadness.

Upon Adán's entrance into Madrid society, Espronceda takes the opportunity to describe several persons amid the group that surrounds him. As Casaldueiro says, "dibuja irónica y satíricamente los tipos sociales que rodean el prodigio de la vida nueva."²

The life of a poor painter, a sensitive soul who has come to Madrid full of knowledge and ability but who is unable to compete in a deceptive, materialistic world, creates a situational irony. A gambler, who personifies exploitation and materialism, deceitfully wins the painter's money and thus prevents his buying the necessary tools for his trade:

Un pintor joven cuya mala estrella
 Trajo a Madrid con más saber que Apeles,
 Mas no llegó a pintar porque el dinero
 A su llegada le ganó un fullero
 Y no compró ni lienzo ni pinceles,³

The author concludes that regardless of the extent of one's artistic inspiration and talent, he cannot subsist on them in a deceitful, money-oriented society:

¹Ibid., p. 116.

²Casaldueiro, Forma y visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., p. 100.

³Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., pp. 122-23.

Mas tanto genio por causa tan fútil
 Estéril es, la inspiración inútil.
 ¡Y oh prosa! ¡oh mundo vil! no inspiraciones
 Pide el pintor a Dios sino doblones.¹

The people's changing reaction to Adán when he appears nude before them inspires two more ironies. The young man's physical attractiveness initially inspires admiration, but this sensation quickly becomes one of fear:

Miran al loco todos entretanto,
 Que por tal al momento le tuvieron,
 Y tal belleza y desenfado tanto
 Confiesan entre sí que nunca vieron:
 Viéranlo con deleite si el espanto
 Que al encontrarlo súbito sintieron
 Les dejara admirarle, pero el susto
 Hasta a la dueña le acibara el gusto.²

This is further exemplified by his attempt to make a friendly gesture toward a man in the crowd who reacts fearfully:

Con benévola risa cariñoso
 Señalando al patrón que está delante.
 Y festejar queriéndole amoroso
 Fija la vista en él, y al mismo instante
 La mano alarga y el patrón la evita,
 Se echa hacia atrás amedrentado y grita.³

Espronceda is showing that what man can admire in one sphere of life inspires threat in another. That is, a beautiful body can inspire delight in an artistic medium but hardly in everyday life. Casaldueiro very aptly says:

El poeta presenta una de tantas paradojas del hombre, quien puede admirar el cuerpo humano en el lienzo o en una escultura, pero

¹Ibid., p. 123.

²Ibid., p. 129.

³Ibid.

no en la vida social,, sino con el propósito de que veamos que esa paradoja--admirar en el lienzo lo que ocultamos en la realidad--.... ...: el hombre, incapaz de ver la belleza natural, inventa el ridículo artificio social, ...: lo que admiramos en un medio, lo rechazamos en otro.¹

In addition, the author is illustrating that what is unfamiliar, although of great beauty or good, may inspire fear. Out of fear there often arises the desire to destroy the threatening object; hence, the people's frantic sadism in regard to Adán, stoning him and sending him to jail.

Another irony surrounding Adán is the contrast of his physical fortitude and attractiveness with his emotional frailty. Espronceda implies that regardless of one's physical attributes, and hence resistance to bodily harm, the emotions are never so adequately protected from injury, as illustrated by his progressive deterioration resulting from emotional disillusionment.

The magistrate's fruitless attempt to convince the crowd of the truth of Adán's supernatural transformation proposes another ironic human truth that an unprecedented assertion is often viewed as a foundationless conjecture:

Es pues el caso, el regidor decía,
Que este viejo es un loco huesped mío,
Trocado en joven de la noche al día.
--Mirad que estáis diciendo un desvarío.
--Yo cuento la verdad. --¡Necia porfía!
Está loco. --Señores, no me río.
Yo no discurro nunca a troche y moche,
Era un viejo a las doce de la noche.

--Vamos, el regidor perdió un sentido,
--Si eso no puede ser. ...²

¹Casaldueiro, Forma y vision de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., p. 97.

²Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 140.

The situation of the Condesa de Alcira and her wealth exemplifies yet another paradox. She is so accustomed to the luxury surrounding her that it bores her, while the covetous thieves are desperate to attain what they have never experienced:

Los trajes, bandas y aromosas flores,
 Aquellos oros por allí esparcidos,

Viólos apenas y arrojólos luego
 Acá y allá lanzados con desdén;¹

That is to say, what one can easily scorn because familiarity has destroyed its attraction can nonetheless prove immensely intriguing to others for whom it would be a new experience.

In two instances, Espronceda in a purely generic fashion presents situational ironies in "El Diablo mundo." Among the devil's statements to mortal man is the declaration that although the satonic figure is the personification of all of man's suffering, he is also born out of human anguish. This is a clever manner of saying that man is ironically the genesis, at least partially, of his own misfortune. As he proclaims to man:

Tú me engendraste, mortal,
 Y hasta me distes un nombre,
 Pusiste en mí tus tormentos,
 En mi alma tus rencores,
 En mi mente tu ansiedad,
 En mi pecho tus furores,
 En mi labio tus blasfemias
 E impotentes maldiciones,
 Me erigiste en tu verdugo,
 Me tributaste temores,²

¹Ibid., p. 245.

²Ibid., p. 45.

Even further ironic is that the same source is indicated for man's idealistic aspirations for which he paradoxically strives with inadequate tools at his disposal, mezquindades. That is, man is hardly equipped to achieve the exalted objectives he erroneously envisions within his attainment:

Y yo soy parte de ti,
Soy ese espíritu insomne
Que te excita y te levanta
De tu nada a otras regiones,
Con pensamientos de ángel,
Con mezquindades de hombre.¹

Espronceda continues this latter irony in "Canto III" when he departs from his description of the crowd surrounding and pursuing Adán to comment on the ineffectiveness of man's efforts to make worldly achievements. He indicates that man has no clearly defined, even if high-flown, objectives in spite of his fervid activities:

Cuando apenas alcanza nuestro vuelo
A elevarnos un palmo de la tierra,
Miserables enanos,
Y con voces hacer mezquina guerra
Y levantar las impotentes manos,
Es ridículo asaz y harto indiscreto:
Vamos andando pues y haciendo ruido, . . .
Llevando por el mundo el esqueleto
De carne y nervios y de piel vestido.
.
Vamos andando sin saber adonde.²

"Canción del pirata" and "El Mendigo" provide excellent examples of general situational ironies since these two characters are widely recognized as representative of certain aspects of mankind. However, it is appropriate that one finds most instances of this type of irony within "El Diablo

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., pp. 116-17.

mundo," particularly as they are woven about Adán, since the entirety of this work is more generic in application than any other of Espronceda's works.

Just as with specific irony of events, when a general situational irony is amplified into a succession of occurrences, a general irony of events is created. Associated with this irony is the concept that the future is represented as an inevitable frustration of man's desires and aspirations. Again, Muecke provides the key to the underlying principle for this ironic category: ". . . the future is essentially unknowable or inescapable and therefore . . . there can be no confident anticipations."¹ Thus, the term "vanity of human wishes"² could be an appropriate designation for this irony.

The two "Sonetos," "A una Estrella," and "A Jarifa en una orgía" represent this irony beyond the individual situations. In these works, the future is seen as so indefinite and filled with potential disillusionment that one dare not and indeed must not hold any pleasant hopes about it.

Generalizing on the tragic end that is about to befall Félix in "El Estudiante de Salamanca" after his life of arrogant success, Espronceda points to the irony of events that characterizes the life of anyone who sees no potential end to his good fortune. Such a person is certain to meet disaster:

¹Muecke, op. cit., p. 134.

²Ibid.

¡Ay! el que vió acaso perdida en un día
 La dicha que eterna creyó el corazón
 Y en noche de nieblas y en honda agonía
 En un mar sin playas muriendo quedó!...¹

Even more ironic, a person of this type will think sadly of his pleasures when they are past, never able to reconstruct them; and escape from his present unhappy world is impossible:

Y aquellos placeres, que el triste ha perdido,
 No huyeron del mundo, que en el mundo están;
 Y él vive en el mundo do siempre ha vivido,
 Y aquellos placeres para él no son ya!²

Doubtless, the most extensively developed irony of any kind in Espronceda's work is the irony of events surrounding the protagonist Adán. He is presented first in old age, completely disenchanted with life and wishing for the return of youthful hopes and energy. He is granted this desire by supernatural means, and although happy for brief periods, every enterprise he undertakes and each renewed idealism meets eventual disappointment. In the end he is more seriously disillusioned than as an old man, for Espronceda says,

Y la extraña visión volviendo ahora
 Que al triste viejo apareció en su sueño
 (Que algunas veces cuando el alma llora,
 La mente en consolarnos pone empeño,
 Y bienes y delirios atesora
 Que hacen más duro, al despertar, el ceño
 De la suerte fatal que en esta vida
 Nos persigue con alma empedernida),³

Casaldiero succinctly summarizes this entire irony by saying,

¹Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. 39.

²Ibid., p. 40.

³Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 58.

Ilusión primera, goce presente, desengaño, desilusión, recuerdos y para pasar del primer momento al último la ironía desgarradora y cínica al comparar lo que se quiso hacer con lo que se hizo, lo que se soñó con la realidad.¹

Clearly Adán is a representation of all humanity in its fruitless struggle toward aims that are doomed to ill fortune from the start; the fact that he is unnamed as a viejo and given only the symbolic name Adán after his transformation into a joven increases the generic quality of this character. Moreno Villa cites Espronceda's statement that his work is "de nuestro mundo y sociedad emblema"² as proof of this. And Casaldüero remarks:

Este viejo, del cual aun ignoramos el nombre, es el hombre, cifra y compendio de la humanidad, Espronceda con su héroe vive los nudos esenciales del destino de la humanidad.³

Consequently, it is more logical to classify this irony as general rather than specific.

In the introduction to the work, Espronceda presents various disillusioned statements made by supernatural choruses and voices as well as the devil, all of which represent the destructive forces of man and nature, to provide a background for the old man's similar declarations in the first canto. For example, the voices illustrate that man's efforts always meet catastrophe just before achievement and that there is no consolation for this grim reality:

Yo levantaré un palacio
Que oro y perlas orarán,
Príncipes serán mis siervos,

¹Casaldüero, Forma y visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., p. 135.

²Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 9.

³Casaldüero, Forma y Visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., pp. 89; 107.

El pueblo, Dios me creará.

.

Venid, empujadme,
La cima toqué,

.

¡Ay! yo caí de la elevada cumbre
En honda sima que a mis pies se abrió:
¡Grande es mi pena, larga mi agonía!...
¡Una mano! ¡ayudadme! ¡compasión!

.

¿Quién calmará mi dolor?
¿Quién enjugará mi llanto?
¿Nadie escucha mi clamor?¹

Representing the powers that destroy all of man's hopes for beauty and good, they proclaim this ability to bring an end to illusion, confuse truth and deception, dissipate youthful beauty, and dominate man with evil emotions:

Yo turbaré sus amores,
Disiparé su ilusión,
Atizaré sus rencores,

.

Yo confundiré a sus ojos
La mentira y la verdad,
Y la ciencia y los sucesos
Su mente confundirán.

.

La avaricia del hombre
la adorará:
Viles pasiones
Gobernarán tan sólo
Sus corazones.

Genios /term for destructive powers/, venid, venid
Nuestro mal con el hombre á repartir.²

The choirs declare that man's only recompense for last hopes is his memories:

Ya la esperanza a los hombres
Para siempre abandonó,

¹Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., pp. 35; 37.

²Ibid., pp. 49; 50.

Los recuerdos son tan sólo
 Pasto de su corazón.¹

The devil appears as a "negra figura"² to say he, too, represents the
 disillusion of man's life:

Voz de amargo placer, voz dolorosa,
 Incomprensible mágico portento,
 Voz que recuerda al alma conmovida
 El bien pasado y la ilusión perdida.

 Yo siempre marchó contigo:

 El ángel de los dolores
 El rey del mal, y mi infierno
 Es el corazón del hombre.³

He comments, too, on the deceptive nature of man's pleasures and illusions,
 and he names misery as his only reality:

Y huyen de él sus ilusiones,
 Delirio son engañoso
 Sus placeres, sus amores,
 Es su ciencia vanidad,
 Y mentira son sus goces:
 ¡Solo verdad su impotencia,
 Su amargura y sus dolores!⁴

His final conjecture that perhaps even in death man finds no relief is
 especially hopeless:

Y al fin la materia muere;
 Pero el espíritu ¿adónde
 Volará? ¿Quién sabe? Acaso
 Jamás sus cadenas rompe!!!⁵

While the protagonist is still an old man, he makes several
 declarations not unlike those made by the coros and the devil, as he has

¹Ibid., p. 48.

²Ibid., p. 39.

³Ibid., p. 47.

⁴Ibid., pp. 44; 45.

⁵Ibid., p. 48.

come to the end of a lifetime he realizes has been fruitless. Musing on the brevity of youth, the uselessness of man's efforts, and the imminence of death, he says:

¡Ay! para siempre, dijo, la ufanía
 Pasó ya de la hermosa juventud,
 La música del alma y melodía
 Los sueños de entusiasmo y de virtud!...
 Pasaron ¡ay! las horas de alegría,
 Y abre su seno hambriento el ataúd,
 Y único porvenir, sola esperanza,
 La muerte, a pasos de gigante avanza.

 Muerte es el porvenir, lo que fué, un cuento! ...

Los siglos a los siglos se atropellan;
 Los hombres a los hombres se suceden,
 En la vejez sus cálculos se estrellan.
 Su pompa y glorias a la muerte ceden:

 ¡Todo es mentira y vanidad, locura!

 ¿No ves que todo es humo, y polvo, y viento?

 Sueños son los deleites, los amores,
 La juventud, la gloria y la hermosura,
 Sueños las dichas son, sueños las flores,
 La esperanza, el dolor, la desventura:¹

He mentions also the difficulties encountered by man's aspirations and the little that remains of his accomplishments; just the names live on to remind one of past splendor:

Y un sueño a la verdad pasa la vida,
 Sueño al principio de dorada lumbre,
 Senda de flores mil, fácil subida
 Que a un monte lleva de lozana cumbre;
 Después vereda áspera y torcida,
 Monte de insuperable pesadumbre,
 Donde cansada de una en otra breña,
 Lloro la vida y lo pasado sueña.

¹Ibid., pp. 56-57; 81.

El despacho, el placer, las ilusiones
 De cien generaciones
 Que su historia acabaron
 Y cuyos nombres sólo nos quedaron.
 Clavo de donde cuelgan nuestras vidas
 En mil jirones pálidos rompidas,
 Que traen a la memoria
 Cual rota ensena la pasada gloria:¹

He feels it is absurd to try to find solace for these horrors
 of reality:

Vano es llorar la juventud perdida,
 Vano buscar remedio a nuestros daños;²

But still he expresses the wish that man could regain the beautiful
 idealism of youth and make it eternal:

¡Oh! si el hombre tal vez lograr pudiera
 Ser para siempre joven e inmortal,
 Y de la vida el sol le sonriera,
 Eterno de la vida el manantial!
 ¡Oh! cómo entonces venturoso fuera
 Roto un cristal, alzarse otro cristal
 De ilusiones sin fin, contemplaría,
 Claro y eterno sol de un bello día! ...

 En un mundo infeliz, perecedero,
 Vivir eterno mientras todo muere ...³

Then magically a supernatural figure appears to him, offering eternal
 shelter from his mental torments:

De vagos contornos confusa figura,
 Cual bello cadáver, se alzó una mujer:

 Débil mortal, ...

 Un término a su pesar.
 Yo compasiva le ofrezco
 Lejos del mundo un asilo,

¹Ibid., pp. 81; 110.

²Ibid., p. 56.

³Ibid., p. 57.

Donde a mi sombra tranquilo
Para siempre duerma en paz,

Isla yo soy de reposo
En medio el mar de la vida,
.
Deja que inquieten al hombre,
Que loco al mundo se lanza,
Mentiras de la esperanza,
Recuerdos del bien que huyó:
Mentira son sus amores,
Mentira son sus victorias,
Y son mentira sus glorias,
Y mentira su ilusión.
.
Yo calmaré tu quebranto
Y tus dolientes gemidos,¹

Her promises of unending triumph and happiness are limitless:

Eterno amor, inmarcesibles glorias,
Armas, coronas de oro y de laurel,
Triunfos, placeres, esplendor, victorias,
Ilusiones, riquezas y poder.

Eterna vida, eterno movimiento,
Los sueños de la dulce poesía,
El sonoro y quimérico contento
De la rica extasiada fantasía:
.
... tuyo el mundo será,²

But they are ironic because they are not lasting.

The viejo gladly accepts what she offers and is shortly reborn,
robust and hopeful again just as in his youth:

Y el antes fatigoso
Del triste corazón flaco latido
En vigoroso golpe convertido,
Y palpitantes conteniendo apenas
La hirviente sangre las hinchadas venas,
Y sintió nueva fuerza en los nervudos
Músculos antes de calor desnudos,

¹Ibid., pp. 63;65.

²Ibid., pp. 69-70; 80.

Mientras en su agitada fantasía
 Volando con locura el pensamiento,
 En vaga tropa imágenes sin cuento
 De oro y azul el porvenir traía.

 Y libre de recuerdos la memoria,
 Y el alma y todo nuevo,
 Todo esperanzas el feliz mancebo.¹

Since he is free of all memories of his unhappy past, his transformation differs from that of Faust, for as Moreno Villa says, "Si Adán, su héroe, es un fante al principio, es porque Espronceda vacila entre Fausto y el Ingenio."²

Fulfilling his role as an innocent soul, the nuevo Adán reacts with great happiness and uninhibited behavior:

El hombre en fin se levantó del lecho
 Mancebo ardiente y vigoroso hecho,
 Fuera de sí de esfuerzo y de alegría,³

His nude flight through the streets of Madrid attracts much attention:

Por la calle la faz alborozada,
 El loco va con regocijo tanto,
 Que causa gusto el verle tan esbelto
 Andando a brincos tan airoso y suelto.

Pero la gente viendo la figura
 Desnuda de aquel hombre que corría
 Rápido como el viento, y la premura,
 De la turba que ansiosa le seguía,⁴

The people react to him with fear and cruelty since his nudity and boundless happiness are foreign to them. They chase him, label him a thief, and try to subdue him. Their viciousness increases as they begin slowly

¹Ibid., pp. 108-109.

²Ibid., p. 11.

³Ibid., p. 114.

⁴Ibid., p. 139.

to destroy the initial happiness Adán has felt:

Y andando así la gente ya le acosa,

 Y arrojándole piedras con denosa
 Burla por gusto e intención villana
 Le hizo el dolor sentir para que sepa
 Que no hay placer donde el dolor no quepa.¹

Finally, he is taken to prison:

¿Y adónde va? a la cárcel prisionero,
 Que andar desnudo es ser ya delincuente:²

Thus, this "hombre romántico en el mundo"³ as Casaldueño describes him,
 begins to encounter the conflict with his idealism and hopeful felicity:

Que entró en el mundo nuestro mozo apenas
 Y su dicha y el mundo bendecía,
 E inocentes miradas y serenas
 Vertiendo en torno afable sonreía:
 Cuando la bruta gente a manos llenas
 Lanzaba en él cuanto dolor podía,
 Que en traspasar disfrutaban los humanos
 Su dolor en el alma a sus hermanos.

Sintió el dolor y el rostro placentero
 Súbito coloró de azul la ira,
 Y ya el semblante demudado y fiero
 Con ojos torvos a la gente mira:

.
 Grave dolor el del mancebo ha sido,
 Grave dolor, porque de aquella gente
 La injusticia y crueldad ha comprendido
 Con que paga su amor tan inocente:⁴

Emphasizing the irony of events associated with this situation,
 Espronceda generalizes on the inevitable loss of idealism due to life's
 miseries, the necessity to accustom oneself to them, and their unexpected
 quality:

¹Ibid., p. 143.

²Ibid., p. 146.

³Casaldueño, Forma y Visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., p. 102.

⁴Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., pp. 144-145.

¿Quién de nosotros la ilusión primera
 Recuerda acaso en su niñez perdida?
 ¿Cuál fué el primer dolor, la mano fiera
 Que abrió en el alma la primera herida?
 ¡Ay! desde entonces sin dejar siquiera
 Un solo día, siempre combatida
 El alma de encontrados sentimientos,

Cuando inocente el corazón desnudo,
 En el primer columpio de la cuna,
 Se abre al amor en su ilusión divina,
Y en él se clava inesperada espina.¹ (Italics mine.)

Casaldüero comments:

El hombre fuerte, bello, inocente, desnudo no ha tenido que sopor-
 tar la mirada de Dios, se ha encontrado con la sociedad mezquina
 y estúpida. ...

La inocencia, la ilusión, la alegría y confianza primeras ...
 sienten inmediatamente la crueldad y la injusticia que rodean al
 hombre, obra del hombre mismo.²

And Northup says:

. . . the innocent Adam who is hostile to nobody, and in whom
 the brilliant spectacle of nature produces nothing but
 rejoicing, receives blows, stonings, and imprisonment from
 his neighbors.³

In jail Adán's nudity surprisingly does not inspire fear in any-
 one ("andar allí desnudo a nadie espanta")⁴, and his physical beauty
 earns him real respect, quite in contrast to the reaction of respectable
 society:

Y su hercúlea simpática figura
 Del ajeno respeto le asegura.⁵

Thus, he finds a certain shelter here perhaps because a subsocial group

¹Ibid.

²Casaldüero, Forma y Visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., pp. 1
 104; 107.

³Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. xxxviii.

⁴Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 156.

⁵Ibid., p. 157.

like this more willingly accepts a nonconformist. In fact, one of the most evil of the inmates, tío Lucas, gives protection and instruction to the still innocent Adán, whom he admires for the courage he demonstrates:

..., con afecto raro
Dando a su mudo protección y amparo,

Y como luego el inocente diera
Pruebas de su vigor y valentía,
Y abriera a uno en desigual quimera
Contra las piedras la cabeza un día,
Tanto amor le cogió que la severa
Faz desplando que jamás reía,¹

Lucas' advisements bring him progressively closer to disillusionment, as the boy is so trusting of the only person who has ever shown him any real affection:

Que en las cosas del mundo el viejo es ducho
Y el candoroso Adán le tiene en mucho.

Su observación profunda y su experiencia
Ha reducido a máximas la vida,
Es cada frase suya una sentencia,
Cada palabra una ilusión perdida
Torpe y lento en hablar, vierte su ciencia
En truncados períodos sin medida,² (*Italics mine.*)

Specifically, Lucas' teachings refer to the senseless repetition of life as an unending cycle, the danger of trusting anyone, the friendless nature of society, the dangers of immoral women, and the necessity of avoiding life's entanglements:

Yo soy punta y tú eres mango;
Este mundo es un fandango,
Tú vienes y yo me voy.

Mira, de nadie te fíes,
Hijo Adán, vive en acecho,

¹Ibid., p. 167.

²Ibid., p. 168.

Lo que guardes en tu pecho
Ni aun a ti mismo confíes.

.

Las mujeres ... la mejor
Es una lumia: en el suelo
El diablo no tiene anzuelo
Más seguro ni peor.

Ellas te chupan el jugo,
Y te espantan los parnés;
Cuando carne comer crees
Estás comiendo besugo.

El hombre aquí ha de enredar
Sin que le enrede el enredo;
Tú no te chupes el dedo,
Que no hay que pestañear.¹

In summation, he says,

Esto es negro para ti,
Pero ya lo entenderás,²

Northup comments of Adán, "He was born for good; society instructs him
in evil."³

Understandably, Adán then begins to question his idealism and to
suspect the evil that lurks in a world he thought was kind and good:

Un mundo que una luz pura ilumina,
Que viste y cubre un tan hermoso cielo,
¿Mansión habrá de ser donde camina
El hombre siempre con mortal recelo?
¿Y será la mujer, creación divina,
Vida del alma y generoso anhelo,
Brillante de placer y de hermosura,
Enemiga también, también impura ...?

¿Será del hombre el hombre el enemigo,
Y en medio de los hombres solitario,
El su sola esperanza y solo amigo
Verá en su hermano su mayor contrario?

¹Ibid., pp. 169-70.

²Ibid., p. 171.

³Espronceda (ed. by Northup), loc. cit.

¿Grillos, cadenas, hambre y desabrigo
Siempre serán el lúgubre sudario
Que vista al entregarle a su abandono
El hombre al hombre en su implacable encono?

¿Será tal vez que en bandos dividida,
Lucha furiosa en obstinada guerra,
La raza de los hombre fratricida
Alternando el reposo de la tierra?¹

Casaldiero remarks:

...; es la tristeza desesperada del Romanticismo: que la seducción del mundo, la belleza y bondad de la mujer, ..., sean causa de la desgracia y el dolor.²

Hence, Adán's original enthusiasm changes to confusion and questioning, and he is already recalling with nostalgia the first sweetness of his new life:

Estas y otras reflexiones rudas
Hierven en su ofuscada fantasía,
.....
Turbio su juicio, amontonando dudas,
Sin fórmula vagando en la sombría
Nube de que su mente está cubierta,
Ni acierta a hablar, ni a preguntar acierta.³

But even after these disillusioning warnings, he clings to an idealization of the girl he has met, la Salada, daughter of Lucas. She is for him:

Grata visión que venturosa, calma
Su loco enajenado pensamiento,
Que trae regalo y esperanza al alma,
Ignorado deleite y sentimiento.
.....
Alma joven y pura ...⁴

¹Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., pp. 171-2.

²Casaldiero, Forma y Visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., p. 116.

³Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 172.

⁴Ibid., pp. 176-77.

Although she is but a "prostituta, hija de un criminal,"¹ as Casaldueiro calls her, because of Adán's idealized opinion of her, she becomes another respite from the harsh realities which Lucas has already described and which he will subsequently face with increasing intensity. As the same critic remarks, together they form:

... la pareja, ..., gracias a la cual se hace posible vivir de nuevo la pureza. En medio de la sociedad se encuentra la libertad y el sentido prístino del amor.²

But, Salada is in love with Adán and has done her best to disguise her common nature:

Porque es a un tiempo la manola airosa,
Gachona y blanda como altiva y fiera,
Y sabe con su Adán ser amorosa,
Y esquivá con los otros y altanera:
Paloma fiel, cordera cariñosa,
Aunque de rompe y rasga, y de quimera,
Y mal hablada, y de apostura maja,
Y que lleva en la liga la navaja.³

Thus, she creates Adán's first experience with deception. He first encounters frustration of a desired goal also with her, as the reja of the jail prevents his reaching her. In addition, this is the first time he accepts the fact that a goal cannot be attained immediately:

Y ora a su amada palpitante llama,
Ora busca en su cólera violento,
.....

Así el mancebo en derredor revuelve
La vista en ansia de feroz pelea,
De nuevo a sacudir la reja vuelve,
Que trémula a su empuje titubea;
Calmarse, en fin, a su pesar resuelve,
Siente que en vano lucha y forcejea,⁴

¹Casaldueiro, Forma y Visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., p. 119.

²Ibid.

³Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., pp. 164-65.

⁴Ibid., p. 164.

Adán's idealization of her provides a temporary respite for his progressive disillusion:

Que hay en el alma, cuando nueva agita
Sus áreas alas, una fuente pura,
Que alegre riega la ilusión marchita
Y renueva su fuerza y su hermosura:¹

But it is only a deceptive one and eventually:

... en vez de la ilusión se alza la pena
Que el manantial purísimo envenena.²

Again Adán is happy when he is released from prison through Salada's efforts:

¡Cuánto júbilo al alma y alborozo,
Cuánto loco placer, cuánta alegría,
Sintió alterado el indomable mozo
Libre al mirarse y a la luz del día!
Las arterias palpítanle de gozo,
Baña la luz su audaz fisonomía,
Y de contento el corazón deshecho
Sueña a sus golpes conmovido el pecho.³

But, of course, these feelings of elation are only a brief postponement from later unhappiness.

Upon his departure from prison, the couple goes to Salada's humble home. At first Adán's idealization of her and his love for her convert her "morada acaso triste, acaso impía" into a "templo santo,"⁴ and he enjoys all to the fullest, without dependence on reason or objectivity:

él, ignorante en su delirio insano,
Respondiendo latidos a latidos,

¹Ibid., p. 177.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 181.

⁴Ibid., p. 182.

Al corazón la aprieta, el juicio pierde,
La besa hambriento y con placer la muerde.

Y una nube quimérica ya vela
Sus sentidos, y vaga y vaporosa,
Placer, deleites y delirios cela
Y confunde su dicha vagarosa;
Y la hermosura disipada vuela
De la mujer que espárcese amorosa,
Y donde quiera él gusta, toca y mira,
Dicha, hermosura e ilusión respira.

Aire que con riquísimos olores
Baña su negra cabellera riza,
Luz vagarosa y blanda que de amores
En los húmedos ojos se desliza,
Voluptuosa niebla de colores¹

But all too soon and unaware to Adán, this too will end and amorous
illusions will disappear:

Y amor en voluntad se desvanece
Y va a perderse en el remoto cielo,
Que hasta allí disipándose parece
Que elevan sus espíritus su vuelo;²

Espronceda generalizes on man's ignorance of the fugacity of love:

Que en el primer placer /de amor/ el alma pura
Llueve desde su cielo de ilusiones:
Inmenso amor, riquísima ventura
Que ignoran los mortales corazones
Que el varonil aún no han sentido
Y está el candor de su niñez perdido.³

Adán's and Salada's happiness soon degenerates into conflict
as the former's romantic aspiration for an uninhibited enjoyment of every-
thing life can offer him, "el tema de la ventana /libertad/,"⁴ as
Casalduero calls it, becomes stronger than his love. After referring to

¹Ibid., p. 183.

²Ibid., p. 184.

³Ibid., p. 185.

⁴Casalduero, Forma y Visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., p. 132.

a gold fish that is unhappily imprisoned in an aquarium he creates a clever metaphor comparing himself thus to the fish:

Que los ojos le fascina:
Pues así yo, dueño mío,
La tierra, la luz el cielo,
Disfrutar con loco anhelo,
Y sin saber cómo, ansío.¹

Adán regrets the unexpected cooling of his passion and here nostalgically recalls the intensity of his former love:

Más placer, más luz, más vida,
Más amor vierte a torrentes
Ese estrépito de gentes
Que en multitud confundida
Ayer vi cuando a tu lado,
Con tanto afán, tanto gozo,
Tanta gala y alborozo,² (*Italics mine.*)

Casaldüero helps to explain this disparity in their respective feelings by saying,

El amor es el espíritu, es la vida de la mujer, y lo es exclusivamente; en el hombre el amor no puede ser otra cosa que la forma momentánea del primer deseo.³

Her murder of an old lover who teasingly approaches her illustrates her complete devotion to Adán, but he interprets it as only a further deterioration of his idealization of her:

No sé por qué no me gusta
Ver esas manos con sangre:
¡Son tan lindas! llevar flores
Mejor que un punal les cae.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 195.

²Ibid., p. 196.

³Casaldüero, Forma y Visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., p. 135.

⁴Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 207.

Despreciable mujer, juguete vil,
Arrojada en el mundo una mañana
Cuando la luz entre miserias vi.
Cuando entre bosques que el viajante ignora
Mi madre moribunda me parió.

²Ibid., p. 197.

Nacida al mundo en maldecida hora,
Fruto podrido, hija de un ladrón!

¿Sabes, Adán, lo que le guarda el mundo
A la que nace como yo nací?
En una cárcel un rincón inmundo,
Y un hospital quizá donde morir:

Una belleza, infame mercancía,
Que una pobre mujer por oro trueca,¹

This is all that is necessary to complete Adán's more realistic view of her, and the invitation from the band of thieves to become part of the robbery of the Condesa de Alcira's luxurious home is exactly the motivation he needs to leave Salada behind and work toward more genteel and more material goals. Like the typical romantic soul seeking freedom, he proclaims:

Yo allá voy: cualquiera sea
El hecho, dicha o desdicha
Nos traiga, yo he de seguir
La inspiración que me anima.
.....
Glorias y triunfo me pinta
Mi deseo: la fortuna
A mi anhelo campo brinda
Donde cumplirlo: ...²

One may say also that the lure of materialism which he has never before experienced has awakened in him yet another negative worldly emotion--that of greed. Thus, another step has been accomplished in his progression toward complete corruption. The final persuasion to motivate Adán to leave Salada is delivered by the evil priest, one of the thieves:

Nuestra condesa de Alcira,
Nos aguarda con sus coches,

¹Ibid., pp. 196; 218-19.

²Ibid., p. 237.

Su palacio y joyerías.
Nosotros vamos allá.¹

Salada most aptly illustrates the change in Adán's orientation, that is, his elevated level of aspiration, engendered by avarice, and his renewed idealistic hopes. She represents the common life in which he has met only disappointments; and the countess, the better, higher life he hopes to attain. She says defiantly to him:

... ¿tú olvidas
Que yo te amo y te finges
Ilusiones y alegrías
En otra parte, sin mí,
Con otra mujer? ¿La hija
Del ladrón cambiar presumes
Con desprecio por la altiva
Condesa, por la señora
Que arrastra coche?²

Hence, even though Adán has experienced a great measure of vain expectations, his idealism is not yet completely crushed, especially when he sees the possibility of renewing it. As Espronceda says of the apparently quixotic attractions of life and the enthusiastic manner in which the still vigorous young man seeks them:

Inmenso mar que brinda al navegante
Con mansas olas y sereno viento
Y una playa riquísima y distante
Que ilumina a su gusto el pensamiento,
Y una luz que se pierde rutilante
Y brilla con inquieto movimiento,
Glorias, tesoros, la esperanza ofrece
A su ambición que en su delirio crece.

¡Cuánto en la juventud la vida es bella!
Con músicas regala nuestro oído,

¹Ibid., p. 239.

²Ibid., p. 235.

Los ojos guía reluciente estrella,
 Brinda la flor aromas al sentido:
 Lánzase el hombre con ardor tras ella,
 Como al dejar el águila su nido,
 Buscando al sol, y con seguro vuelo
 Volando a hallarle en el remoto cielo.¹

Indeed no woman can hope to impede such a man:

¿Quién parará su rápida carrera?
 ¿Quién pondrá coto a su afanar ardiente?

 Arrebata tal vez en su primera
 Locura al que se opuso, indiferente
 Lo abandona después, ¡Ay! ¡desdichada
 La mujer que se oponga a su pasada!²

Though he may stumble along the way, symbolized by Adán's already noteworthy disappointments, he is compelled to follow the seductive objectives luring him:

Y él allá va, y ardiente se abalanza,
 Cayendo y despeñado, y tropezando,
 A merced de su propia fantasía,
 Tras la engañosa estrella que le guía.³

With the subtle inclusion of engañosa here, Espronceda cleverly indicates the inevitable destruction of youthful hopes.

Upon entering the countess' home with the band of thieves who intend to loot it, Adán is at first hopeful of advancing himself within this world of unprecedented luxury:

... un palacio, alcázar opulento

 Lámparas de oro, espejos venecianos,
 Aureos sofás de blanco terciopelo,
 Sillas de nácar y márfil indianos

¹Ibid., p. 204.

²Ibid., p. 205.

³Ibid.

Los pabellones del color del cielo,
 Caprichos raros de la industria humana,
 Relieves y elegantes doraduras,¹

But his happiness is short-lived, for soon he senses dissatisfaction in comparing his own poor clothes, which he sees reflected in a mirror, with those of a figure in a painting:

Y alegre el corazón miróse al punto
 De sí agrado y reparó en su traje,
 Y volviendo al retrato cejiunto
 Luego lo comparó con su ropaje;

Y parecióle que mejor creyera
 Aquel vestido en él que el que tenía,
 Y mejor que su daga considera
 Aquella larga espada que ceñía.²

And again the cruelty and self-orientation of man are obvious to him as the vicious thieves bind and gag the countess whose beauty has already begun to inspire love in him:

Que al corazón de Adán lanza el amor:³

The real intent of the venture has not until now been clear to him as he himself proclaimed earlier,

..., no sé
 Si la acción que se medita
 Es buena o mala, ni entiendo
 Qué es mal ni bien todavía:

Niño inocente que encantado vaga
 En medio al crimen que acompaña ciego,⁴

¹Ibid., p. 242.

²Ibid., p. 249.

³Ibid., p. 252.

⁴Ibid., pp. 237; 250.

He reacts with violence, injuring his companions, protecting the countess and thus successfully striking out against another of life's negative aspects which to some degree have by now corrupted his nature.

Adán's final encounter is with a pitiful viejecita, doña María, who is mourning the premature death of her daughter Lucía. His innate kindness motivates him to express condolence to her, and in doing so he learns more of life's bitter realities. The thoughtlessness and lack of compassion in human nature are evident to him when he notices the uninhibited bacchanalian festival in progress in close proximity to Lucía, who antithetically is overwhelmed by distress. They not only do not sympathize with her but in fact mock her:

Una mujer la vela,
Vieja la pobre, y llora dolorida
Junto al cadáver y volverle anhela
Con besos a la vida:
Y ora llorando olvida
Hasta el estruendo y fiesta bulliciosa
Que a alterar de la estancia dolorosa
La lúgubre paz viene,
Y en darla dulces nombres cariñosa
Y en besar a la muerta se entretiene;
Y a veces abren súbito la puerta
Que adentro lleva adonde suena danza,
Y sin respeto y de tropel se lanza
Un escuadrón de mozos que la muerta
Con impureza loca contemplando
Búrlanse de la vieja, profanando
Con tropes agudezas la sombría
Mísera imagen de la muerte fría.

.
Y el baile y la alegría
De la cercana estancia le admiraba,
Y el bullicioso y placentero ruido
Que confuse llegaba
A mezclarse a deshora su gemido.¹ (*Italics mine.*)

¹Ibid., pp. 259-60.

Adán is amazed and asks her why she would idly allow such disrespect. Her reply teaches him another unpleasant truth: that egocentrism is an undeniable human trait and that one must bear his personal tragedies in lonely solitude:

-- ¡Ay, respondió la vieja desolada,
Vivo de eso, señor: no tienen nada
Que hacer esos señores
Conmigo y mis dolores!
Vivan ellos allá con sus placeres,
Y mientras besan el ardiente seno
De esas locas mujeres,
Yo con el corazón de angustias lleno
Beso aquí solitaria en mi agonía
La boca de mi hija muda y fría.¹

The final lesson in life's miseries for him regards death. He freely admits his ignorance on this subject by saying:

-- Yo, buena madre, ignoro,
Nuevo en el mundo aún, lo que es la muerte,²

Then he proceeds in his compassion and naiveté to suggest that perhaps by some means Lucía could be revived. He even volunteers altruistically to go to any length to return her to life:

No hay otra luz que renovarla pueda?
¿Acaso inmóvil para siempre y fría
Con el aliento de la muerte queda?
Vos sois pobre tal vez... ¡ah! con dinero
Quizá se compre; débil y afligida,
Los muchos años vuestro ardor primero
Gastaron ya, y el elixir de vida
Se halla lejos de aquí... decidme donde,
Decidme do se esconde,
Y yo allá volaré, sí, yo un tesoro
Robaré al mundo y compraré la vida,
Y la apagada luz, luego encendida,

¹Ibid., pp. 263-64.

²Ibid., p. 264.

Veréis brillar, y enjugaré ese lloro,
Volviendo al mundo la que os fué querida.¹

Dona María responds by convincing him of the finality of death and that she would do anything to return Lucía to life if such were possible:

¿Qué puedes figurarte que no haría?
¿Qué crimen, qué castigo
Por recobrarla yo no arrostraría
Y otra vez verla palpar conmigo?²

But instead she shows him in one remark that man must accept the inalterable nature of death and recognize it as the irrefutable if unjust will of God:

--¡El Señor me la dió y él me la quita!³

As Casaldueiro says, "La experiencia sabe que lo único que se puede hacer es someterse."⁴

Adán is horrified by the capricious nature of a God who unpredictably dispenses felicity and sorrow, represented by the unnecessary death, to his creations:

El Dios ese que habita,
Omnipotente en la región del cielo,
¿Quién es que inunda a veces de alegría,
Y otras veces cruel con mano impía
Llena de angustia y de dolor el suelo?⁵

But Espronceda, in showing the vainness of human attempts to understand such abstract matters, portrays Adán in a quandary to explain this mystery:

¹Ibid., p. 265.

²Ibid., p. 266.

³Ibid.

⁴Casaldueiro, Forma y visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., p. 152.

⁵Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 267.

Que en vano ansioso comprender desea,¹ (*Italics mine.*)

And finally, he expresses anxiety and confusion:

Adán súbito siente
Volar queriendo, sin saber adónde,
Del corazón ardiente
La perpetua ansiedad que en él se esconde.²

But María and Adán are left at the work's end in a confused genuflection:

Quizá sordas palabras maldicientes,
O quizá una oración; ...³

Northup mentions that "the poem ends where Adam has become thoroughly sophisticated. He is now like any other man."⁴

With this the total disillusionment of all of man's bright hopes of youth and the inept, useless nature of his efforts to achieve idealistic goals are made altogether evident. Therefore, Espronceda achieves the perfect termination for this most elaborately constructed irony of events, which so poignantly illustrates how dolor is the ironic ultimate outcome of a life style beginning with pleasant expectations. As Bonilla y San Martín remarks:

El dolor es la única Verdad. Todo lo demás, placeres, riquezas, gloria, es pura ilusión y fantasmagoría, y hasta la misma ilusión es ficticia:⁵

Yet more intensely ironic is the fact that even the supernatural could not delay the inevitable disillusion of life, for none of the promises made by the feminine spirit prior to Adán's conversion enjoyed a lasting actualization.

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 268.

⁴Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. xxxix.

⁵Adolfo Bonilla y San Martín, "El Pensamiento de Espronceda," España moderna, 1908, p. 85.

Many of the specific ironies of events and most of the more general yet parallel ones, particularly in "El Diablo mundo", aptly illustrate the basis of Espronceda's ideology. In the many facets of these ironies, he has portrayed a romantically idealistic soul, represented by himself in the autobiographical poems and by Adán in "El Diablo mundo," filled with bright hopes for elevated accomplishments. His idealism and unrealistic aspirations, often of an amorous nature, make him vulnerable to the hostility, cruelty, and exploitation that are, ironically, products of man's own self-orientation. That is, man tries to ascribe the origin of his worldly evils to a supernatural entity, the devil, never realizing that he is the creator of his own destruction.

As the romantic continues his voyage through life, his quest for fulfillment of his high objectives is so strong that he inadvertently and erroneously at times believes he has reached fulfillment, as in Espronceda's brief happiness with Teresa, Adán's satisfaction with Salada, and his uninhibited joy on being reborn. There is real pleasure at these times in life, and although very brief and nebulous they represent the only happiness man can ever hope to find. For shortly, the harsh realities of the world force one of romantic temperament to see the incorrect interpretation he has made of the people in his life. Adán's gestures of sincere emotion are rejected, and he is gradually indoctrinated by cruel experience into a knowledge that only egocentrism, not sympathy, motivates mankind. At this point, the romantic choque is complete, and the sufferer has only the consolation of recalling the transient pleasures of yesterday, groveling in his own misery and anticipating death as the only release for

his torment. There is a certain element of blame, too, as he wonders why he could not have been more aware of their vicissitudinous quality and thus enjoyed them all the more fully. Bonilla y San Martín cleverly summarizes these ideas by saying:

He ahí, según yo alcanzo á resumirle el pensamiento de Espronceda, pensamiento melancólico, pensamiento lúgubre si queréis, pero sugestivo, profundo y verdadero. ... ¡De la misma suerte que acabó el día, acabará nuestra corta vida y la exigua duración de los seres que nos rodean! Entonces el hombre comprende lo transitorio de sus dichas y lo irrealizable de sus anhelos, despertando a la reflexión, como despierta Adán en el último canto de El Diablo mundo al contemplar atento, con angustia y dolor indefinibles, el cadáver de la pobre Lucía.¹

Thompson aptly remarks:

. . . experience is always defeating romantic dreams, and disillusion follows illusion. The swift transition from the mood of sentiment to the mood of self-mockery is a natural consequence. It is evidence of the Romantic's centerlessness and the essence of his peculiar irony.²

And, finally, as Casaldüero says:

...; el romántico vive carcomiéndose, desesperado al contemplar que todo cuanto toca, todo cuanto sueña se convierte en amargura y podredumbre. ... En el Romanticismo, la realidad comienza por coincidir exactamente con la ilusión, vivir no es otra cosa que ese ir desprendiéndose la realidad del ideal, ese irse realizando, materializándose el ensueño, proceso que va acompañado de una disminución de la ilusión. A medida que la realidad va aumentando, la ilusión va disminuyendo, esos dos ritmos conducen a la desesperación, a la pérdida de toda esperanza.³

There is a special category of general irony of events which Muecke calls "irony of inevitable ignorance." As he says:

In the field of human knowledge there is wide scope for general irony since there is an opposition . . . between the

¹Bonilla y San Martín, op. cit., p. 88.

²Thompson, op. cit., p. 66.

³Casaldüero, Forma y visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., pp. 83-4.

obstacles to knowledge and the impulse, desire, and self-imposed obligation to know It becomes ironic . . . when we recognize in what various ways our knowledge and understanding is necessarily limited and at the same time feel that it ought not to be limited, that we ought to know everything.¹

Bronowski similarly states:

It is not possible for the brain to arrive at certain knowledge. . . . No knowledge can be certain that continues to expand with us as we live inside the growing flesh of our experience. In this nexus, we cannot reach certainty because it is not there to be reached . . . and the certain answers ironically are the wrong answers.²

Espronceda creates a good example of this type of irony when he generalizes on Félix's desperate craving to know the explanation for all the supernatural visions by which he is tormented in the fourth part of "El Estudiante de Salamanca":

El hombre, en fin, que en su ansiedad quebranta
Su límite a la cárcel de la vida,
Y a Dios llama ante él a darle cuenta,
Y descubrir su inmensidad intenta.³

Of course, any such revelation is denied him and he is left in the same confusion.

The mysterious voices and the devil who appear in the introduction to "El Diablo mundo" express the desperate anxiety man has always felt to divine the secrets of existence yet the impossibility of doing so:

Venid, levantemos
Segunda Babel,
El velo arranquemos

¹Muecke, op. cit., p. 151.

²J. Bronowski, "The Machinery of Nature," Encounter, (November, 1965), pp. 48-9.

³Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. 54.

Que esconde al saber.

Verdad, te buscamos:

Osamos subir

Al último cielo

Volando tras ti,

Con noble avaricia

Y en ansia sin fin

De ver cuanto ha sido

Y está por venir.

.

¿Será en vano que tu mente

A otras esferas remontes,

Sin que los negros arcanos

De vida y de muerte ahondes?

No hay hondo abismo ni cielo

Que a descubrir no te arrojes!!

¡Pobre ciega!, loca errante,

Aquí sagaz, allí torpe,

Tú misma para tí misma

Toda arcano y confusiones.¹

Certainly general irony of events is the most impressive expression of Espronceda's ironic ability. Just as with general situational irony, "El Diablo mundo" is the best vehicle for it since the work has such a great significance for mankind. It provides a perfect revelation of the author's ideology: that the indefinite future is filled with inevitable disillusionment for any man who dares to hope that he will find happiness in life. Irony of inevitable ignorance continues this embittered philosophy by stressing that man's desperate search for truth and certainty will never find fulfillment with definitive answers about the mysteries of life.

If great emphasis is placed upon the intransigence and sadism of a cruel fate against whose will man's greatest efforts have no effect to change the inevitable events awaiting him, then an ironist has created

¹Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., pp. 34; 46-47.

a general irony of fate. It is therefore distinguished from specific irony of fate in the more notable stress given to portraying the inalterable brutality of fortune in setting forth certain disagreeable occurrences in the life of man, contrary to his anticipation. Knox remarks that:

. . . in everyday life a man may feel that some omniscient Fate has been cleverly misleading him toward an unexpected event.¹

Hegel emphasizes that man's actions are simply the actualization of those predestined by an implacable destiny:

. . . , divine Providence may be said to stand to the world and its process in the relation of absolute cunning. God lets men do as they please with their particular passions and interests: but the result is the accomplishment of--not their plans but his, and these differ decidedly from the ends primarily sought by these whom he employs.²

"Revoluciones del globo" provides an excellent example of a general irony of fate; for it indicates the inevitable destruction and disappearance of all the world's productivity. In spite of all of man's fecundity throughout the ages, he is fearfully aware of its eventual deterioration into nothingness:

Mil siglos han rodado
en columnas de fuego sobre el mundo,
y el mundo amedrentado
ha visto, presagiando su caída,
de la nada en el piélago profundo
Media creación hundida.³

¹Knox, op. cit., p. 19.

²Geoffrey Reginald Gilchrist Mure, A Study of Hegel's Logic (London, New York: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1950), p. 257.

³Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 377.

The existence of a vicious, all powerful, yet perhaps incompetent fate, or creator, is implied by these lines:

Cimbráronse los polos
bajo la inmensa mano
del gigante huracán, ...¹

The use of Atlantis as an example of a bygone human creation is very apropos, as particularly in the nineteenth century it was regarded as something lost forever:

¿Dónde estuvo la Atlántida? Buscadla
en el fondo del férvido Océano,
sin norte los navíos
que en sus playas recóntidas surgieron,
.
y entre escombros de Atlántida se hundieron
y en las torres de Atlántida clavarón.²

The verb clavarón symbolically links more common forms of men's creativity, as represented by the navíos, to Atlantis to characterize their equal impossibility of restoration.

Indeed, the glorious creations of the past are often so completely destroyed that even assiduous effort cannot restore them:

..., ya en vano
el escombros del Etna pulveriza
para hallar entre pálida ceniza
el mosaico fulgente de Herculano.³

In "Don Diego de Alvear" Espronceda explores the general irony of fate associated with life's tragic end in death. He portrays life as a rather hopeless proceeding with few moments of lightness or happiness:

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., pp. 377-78.

³Ibid., p. 377.

¿Qué es la vida? ¡Gran Dios! Plácida aurora;
cándida ríe entre arreboles cuando
brillante apenas esclarece un /sic/ hora;

pálida luz y trémula oscilando,¹

Death is viewed as a vicious process which quickly destroys the little vigour, courage, and freshness that may have been a part of early life, leaving nothing in their place:

baja al silencio de la tumba fría,
del pasado esplendor nada quedando.

Allí la palma del valor, sombría,
marchítase, y allí rosa pura
pierde el color y fresca lozanía:
.

Fuente a eterno llorar abrió tu dura
mano, y tu sana y cólera cebaste
a un tiempo en la inocencia y la hermosura.²

In spite of man's accomplishments or station during life, all are ironically viewed equally by death, here aptly characterized by the phrase "Mísero Albino" who "doloroso vierte lágrimas de amargura":³

no alcanza allí jamás de la ternura
el mísero gemido ni el lamento,
ni poder, ni riqueza, ni hermosura.

Sobre yertos cadáveres su asiento
elige, y huella la implacable muerte
armas, arados, púrpuras sin cuento.⁴

Indeed, death steals away with all its victims who have contributed so many admirable undertakings to life and to their country, symbolized in the following quotation by efímeros despojos, leaving history to retain

¹Ibid., p. 314.

²Ibid., pp. 314; 319.

³Ibid., p. 315.

⁴Ibid., pp. 314-15.

all the glory that many fine individuals have achieved in life:

... la parca injusta

roba tan sólo efímeros despojos,
 y alta y triunfante la alcanzada gloria
 guarda en eternos mármoles la historia.¹

The irony of fate in this concept of death is clearly the near personification of death as an entity that delights in destroying those who have gained some distinction and pride in life through their achievements, as symbolized specifically by Diego de Alvear's valourous military deeds.

In "El Estudiante de Salamanca" Espronceda alludes to the delight of fate, represented in these examples by el viento and una voz triste, in putting man at its mercy as he flees from the misery of his existence.

Al hombre que loco la recia tormenta
 Corrió de la vida, del viento a merced,²

Its sadistic quality is even heightened by its pleasure in robbing the beauty of man's wondrous creations:

Cuando una voz triste las horas le cuenta,
 Y en lodo sus pompas convertidas ve,³

In the following well-known lines from the same work, Espronceda illustrates how fate plays carelessly with man's idealistic aspirations, often ending them in a disillusioned manner. The capriciousness of destiny, emphasized again by the symbolic viento, in regard to matters of such import to man implies the cruelty typical of the usual irony of fate:

Hojas del árbol caídas
 Juguete del viento son;

¹Ibid., p. 320.

²Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. 48.

³Ibid.

Las ilusiones perdidas
 ¡Ay! son hojas desprendidas
 Del árbol del corazón!¹

"El Diablo mundo" yields many examples which refer to different aspects of a general irony of fate. In one quotation, the voices indicate the inalterable nature of fate's direction in man's life. Aside from destino, the words aura and Aquilón poetically symbolize fate; and nave represents man's transient movement through life:

... el destino
 Su rumbo marcó.
 ¿Quién nunca sus leyes
 Mudar alcanzó?
 Allá va la nave;

 Ya el aura la arrule,
 Ya silbe Aquilón.²

The viejo defiantly soliloquizes about the brutal way in which fate, here indicated by tiempo and fatalidad, robs the treasures of youth, totally oblivious of human complaint, only to bring man to the threshold of death:

«¡Cuán fugaces los años
 ¡Ay! se deslizan, Póstumo!>> gritaba
 El lírico latino /el viejo/ que sentía
 Cómo el tiempo cruel le envejecía,
 Y el ánimo y las fuerzas le robaba.
 Y es triste a la verdad ver como huyen
 Para siempre las horas y con ellas
 Las dulces esperanzas que destruyen
Sin escuchar jamás nuestras querellas;
 ¡Fatalidad! ¡fatalidad impía!
 Pasa la juventud, la vejez viene,
 Y nuestro pie que nunca se detiene
 Recto camina hacia la tumba fría!³ (Italics mine.)

¹Ibid., p. 12.

²Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., pp. 33-4.

³Ibid., p. 105.

As Bonilla y San Martín comments: "Un destino, una fatalidad ineluctable nos encadena en la vida. La muerte es la única solución de nuestros males: ..." ¹ He dares even to query the reason for this human injustice:

Y la razón averiguar quisiera
Que en este nuestro mundo misterioso
Sin encontrar reposo
Nos obliga a viajar de esta manera.²

The devil, too, expresses a similar sentiment when he comments on the uselessness of man's attempts to request a respite from fate's direction in his existence and the eventual decay into which all his efforts fall:

Mas tú como yo impulsada
Por una mano de bronce,
Allá vas, y en vano, en vano
Descanso pides a voces;
Los siglos se precipitan,
Se hunden cien generaciones,
Piérdense imperios y pueblos,
Y el olvido los esconde;³

He emphasizes life's futility by alluding to the endless repetition of human actions: that is, man is led to follow the same avenues of enterprise as his ancestors, creating nothing unprecedented:

Y ya por senda trazada
Viejes sometida y dócil,
Y sigas crédula en paz
Las huellas de tus mayores,⁴

Adán, as a representation of every trusting youth who views life as a brilliant adventure, never suspecting the eventual disenchantment awaiting him, seems guided toward his destruction by a fateful force:

Movido por recóndito portento
Ve el mundo cual magnífico escenario:⁵

¹Bonilla y San Martín, op. cit., p. 86.

²Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 106.

³Ibid., p. 46.

⁴Ibid., p. 47.

⁵Ibid., p. 142.

Espronceda has again exhibited noteworthy ability in yet another ironic category: general irony. His ironic facility seems virtually limitless when one considers the numerous classifications of irony in his works. His ingenuity in creating ironies of a generic nature thus expands the scope of the more common specific ironies and creates a more fascinating application to mankind in general.

The characters in the examples of general dramatic irony reveal some intriguing truths about human nature and man's industry such as the incompatibility of life and morality, the boundless arrogance of those who believe their good fortune to be unending, and the eventual ruin that awaits all human enterprise. The various general situational ironies present similar views on humanity such as the surprising closeness of wealth and poverty, the deceptive quality of all worldly perfection and the threat that beautiful though unfamiliar things may generate. The general ironies of events, particularly the one developed around the character of Adán in "El Diablo mundo," most aptly point out Espronceda's ideology of disillusionment, while the examples of general irony of fate accentuate this unpleasant view of life by stressing the interaction of an implacable fate that is intent on frustrating man's every attempt at worldly achievement.

CHAPTER VI

ROMANTIC IRONY

According to Muecke,¹ the world view that the romantic ironist accepts is that of the complicated and ambiguous nature of reality. He believes that man is confronted with enigma of which he can have at best only a finite understanding. His judgment indicates that although he must admit and even express man's finite predicament, he must also try to give such a world meaning and value and thus rise above man's condition, at least abstractly.

It is perhaps a situational irony that this more philosophical form of romantic irony has nothing whatever to do with romanticism. Since Espronceda is the apotheosis of the romantic mentality, it is then appropriate and ironic that he not be for the most part ostensibly a romantic ironist. Hence, as will be shown, although Espronceda at times expresses man's pitiable condition like the romantic ironist, he does not usually make any attempt to find a solution for man's problems or to give meaning to an unjust and involved world, unlike the romantic ironist. Like the typical romantic, he simply flees from reality, feeling the only avenue

¹Muecke, op. cit., pp. 159-215.

of consolation is a retreat into pathological self-pity, forgetfulness, and solitude wherein he sometimes finds a certain masochistic pleasure.

In "A Don Diego de Alvear," for example, Espronceda proclaims that only the unnatural satisfaction he gains from the free and cathartic expression of his melancholy brings him relief from the torment caused by Don Diego's death by the realization that death destroys all of life's accomplishments:

Lágrimas sólo el áspera dureza
calman del infortunio: ellas la herida
bálsamo son que cura y su crudeza,

¡Cuánto sería mísera la vida
si, envuelta con el llanto, la amargura
no brotara del alma dolorida!

Trocada en melancólica dulzura,
sólo queda después tierna memoria,
y aun halla el pecho gozo en su tristura.¹

Likewise, in "A la noche," he perceives the solitude and darkness of the night as a consolation for his melancholy:

Salve, oh tú, noche serena,
que el mundo velas augusta
y los pesares de un triste
con tu oscuridad endulzas.

.

Todos suave reposo
en tu calma, ¡oh noche!, buscan,
y aun las lágrimas tus sueños
al desventurado enjugan.

¡Oh qué silencio, oh qué grata
oscuridad y tristura!
¡Cómo el alma contemplaros
en sí recogida gusta!²

In "Canto a Teresa," he expresses a desire to hide his misery from society, yet introspectively enjoying his anguish:

¹Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 316.

²Ibid., pp. 221-22.

¡Oh! ¡cruel! ¡muy cruel! ... ¡Ay! yo ení etanto
 Dentro del pecho mi dolor oculto,
 Enjugo de mis párpados el llanto
 Y doy al mundo el exigido culto:

 ... me divierto en arrancar del pecho
 mi mismo corazón pedazos hecho,¹

As Casaldüero remarks:

Pero Espronceda tiene que sepultar su dolor en sí mismo, tiene que hacer de su corazón una sepultura, y ha de vivir en el mundo, en la realidad de los hombres y el mundo como una sombra.²

And Thompson believes that " ... the romantic /is one/ whose preoccupation is listening to the discords of his soul."³ Contradictorily, in "El Estudiante de Salamanca," Espronceda generalizes on the misfortune of one who finds satisfaction in thinking only of the past or in his sorrow:

¡Ay de aquel que vive sólo en lo pasado!
 ¡Ay del que su alma nutre en su pesar!⁴

At times, a girl, possibly an idealization of Teresa Mancha or Bernarda Beruete, helps him to find relief. In "A un Ruiseñor," she serves to help him forget his troubles by providing a "dulcísimo desmayo":

Y vertiendo dulcísimo desmayo,
 cual bálsamo suave en mis pesares,
 endulzará tu acento el labio mío.⁵

Similarly, in "El Pescador" he invites a beautiful girl to give him consolation for his unfulfilled life:

Ven, ¡ay!, a mi barquilla.
 Completa mi fortuna:

¹Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., pp. 103-04.

²Casaldüero, Forma y visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., p. 82.

³Thompson, op. cit., p. 83.

⁴Espronceda (ed. by Northup, op. cit., p. 40.

⁵Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 328.

.
 ven, ¡ay!, mi dulce Elisa,
 mi pecho a consolar.¹

He sometimes seeks emotional alleviation in a world of pleasant fantasy wherein he dreams of places where happiness exists perpetually and where his spirit can soar unfettered. A quotation from "Soneto: Marchitas ya las juveniles flores" aptly illustrates this:

Sobre terso cristal ricos colores
 pinta alegre tal vez mi fantasía,
 cuando la triste realidad sombría
 mancha el cristal y empaña sus fulgores.²

Similarly, in "Romances: Ya el férvido trono," he says:

Entonces con dulces
 imágenes vivas
 y mágicos cuadros,
 mi mente se agita
 y vuela arrobada

Y pienso que en otros
 apartados climas,
 moradas felices
 de perpetua dicha,
 en ricas mansiones
 de variada vista,
 que allá entre jardines
 nacaradas brillan,
 corriendo discurro
 con planta atrevida,³

He invites the reader, who is perhaps troubled like him, to come to a "pacífico asilo" to enjoy the refreshing memories of a more glorious era and to find here a lasting happiness, if only a deceptive one, as in the implication:

¹Ibid., p. 227.

²Ibid., p. 143.

³Ibid., p. 384.

¡Ay!, ven al campestre
 pacífico asilo;
 y allá entre las nubes
 gozoso imagino
 divisar las sombras
 de heroicos caudillos
 que en nobles combates
 vieran otros siglos,
 blasón de la patria.
 terror de enemigos,
 que hueste sangrienta
 de Pelayo mismo,

 y también del fiero
 Guzmán, el cuchillo
 brillar sobre el cuello
 del mísero niño,

 veré por las ninfas
 del plácido río,
 y tuya mi gloria,
 será mi destino
 dichoso por siempre
 viviendo contigo /el asilo/.¹

In "Fragmento," Espronceda, in the guise of a sailor wandering along the seashore, gains vicarious pleasure in the memory of pleasant love affairs now past, in an attempt to soften his present sadness:

y el pensamiento detenido el vuelo
 allí ddone encontró la fantasía
 ciertas las dichas que soñó algún día.
 Y respirar su perfumado aliento,
 y al rumor palpitar de sus vestidos,
 penetrar su amoroso pensamiento
 y contar de su pecho los latidos,
 exhalar de infinito sentimiento
 tiernos suspiros, lánguidos gemidos
 mientras a libar sus néctares provoca
 blanda sonrisa en la entreabierta boca.²

One of the most severely saddening events in Espronceda's life was his affair with Teresa Mancha which Northup calls a "sordid romance."³

¹Ibid., pp. 386-87; 388.

²Ibid., pp. 341-42.

³Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. xxiii.

In "IV-Salve, tranquila, plateada luna," one notes again the author's existence in a world of subjective suffering following the loss of the "gratas delicias" of his "dulce amada"¹:

... ora gimo e incesante lloro
vierte, escuchando el agorero acento
del buho triste, que en algún sepulcro
mísero canta.²

However, like the romantic ironist, Espronceda at times expresses on an individually representative basis, usually autobiographically, the hopeless and desperate condition of man's existence. That is, as an extension of his disillusionment over the failure of romantic, political, and military aspirations of his own and of fabricated characters, one perceives the expression of man's pathetic condition in a general sense. As Northup puts it:

. . . in his writings he appears as one who has been completely disillusionized by literature, love, politics, and every experience of life.³

And as Thompson states:

The difficulties of maintaining Romantic attitudes became greater and greater as the nineteenth century wore on. Nature could seem genuinely Arcadian and benevolent to Wordsworth. After it had been put through the scientific laboratory, to hold seriously such views as his became impossible. As a consequence, the disillusionment expressed by Romantics in the 'nineties was more than the expression of personal disappointments; it was rather dismay at a mechanical cosmos empty of spirit.⁴

In "Oscar y Malvina," Espronceda presents the misfortune of the impermanence and eventual meaninglessness of man's military endeavours by

¹Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 402.

²Ibid.

³Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. xxxiv.

⁴Thompson, op. cit., p. 70.

picturing a previous scene of glorious battle, now forgotten and in ruin:

La lira de Osían resonó un día
 en tu breñosa cumbre:
 tierna melancolía
 vertió en la soledad,

 El eco de su voz clamando "guerra,"
 al rumor del torrente parecía,
 que en silencio retumba.

 ¿Dónde estás, Osían? ¿En los palacios
 de las nubes agitas la tormenta,
 o en el collado gira allá en la noche
 vagarosa tu sombra macilenta?

 Miro el alcázar de Fingal cubierto
 de innoble musgo y yerba,
 y en silencio profundo sepultado
 como la noche el mar, el viento en calma.
 ¿Dó las armas están? ¿Dónde el sonido
 del escudo batido?¹

"Al Dos de Mayo" illustrates the degrading end that many political enterprises meet, as exemplified by the failure of the 1808 War of Independence which ended in French domination:

cayó el trono español, pedazos hecho;
 por precio vil a extraños nos vendían²

Similarly, "Revoluciones del globo" stresses the unavoidable deterioration of all worldly enterprises, as all in the end becomes "escombros."³

In "Al Sol," he illustrates the inevitable disappearance of all greatness, even the so apparently enduring grandiosity of the sun. "La Cautiva," the "Sonetos," "A una Estrella," "A Don Diego de Alvear," and "Soledad del Alma" all show the bitter ending of all happiness in early

¹Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., pp. 228-29.

²Ibid., p. 354.

³Ibid., p. 377.

life; while "A Jarifa," "Serenata," "IV-Salve, tranquila plateada luna," and "Canto II" of "El Diablo mundo" sketch the disillusionment that follows all initially fulfilling love experiences.

Conversely, there are occasions when Espronceda reverses his ideas and takes on the crusading viewpoint of the true romantic ironist who is attempting to create a meaningful existence in a world filled with ambiguous and ill-fated values.

In "A la degradación de Europa," Espronceda first portrays Europe as a place where materialism and greed rule:

Miseria y avidez, dinero y prosa,
en vil mercado convertido el mundo,
.
centro es tu corazón de podredumbre,
.
arrastrando en el lodo tu materia,
sólo abiertos al lucro tus sentidos,¹

He feels that the fine values of the past have been discarded:

muerto tu antiguo lustre y tu decoro,
.
cuando la voz en ti ya no retumba,
vieja Europa, del héroe ni el profeta,
ni en ti refleja su encantada lumbre
del audaz entusiasmo del poeta,
yerta tu alma y sordos tus oídos,
con prosaico afanar en tu miseria,²

In poems such as this, Espronceda does not adopt the attitude of self-pity, depression, hopelessness, and escape from reality typical of such works as "A la noche" and "Canto a Teresa." But, in fact, he scorns the idea of retreating into solitude, here, to lament the degraded condition of Europe. As he says:

¹Ibid., pp. 343-44.

²Ibid.

¡Ah! ¡solitario, entre cenizas frías,
 mudas ruinas, aras profanadas
 y antiguos derruidos monumentos,
 me sentaré, segundo Jeremías,
 mis mejillas con lágrimas bañadas,
 y romperé en estériles lamentos?
No, que la inútil soledad dejando,¹ (Italics mine.)

Instead, he will attempt to awaken the people from their lethargy and help them find the values of which they have lost sight:

con férrea voz recorreré cantando
 y agitará la gente temerosa,²

He is, in fact, optimistically certain of the people's participation and acceptance of his project:

No; yo alzaré la voz de los profetas;
 tras mí la alborotada muchedumbre,
 sonarán en mi acento las trompetas
 que derriben la inmensa pesadumbre
 del regio torreón que al vicio esconde,
 y el mundo me dirá en dónde
 el precio vil de infame mercancía
 del agiotista en la podrida boca
 avaricioso oía.

yo cantaré: la humanidad me escucha:³ (Italics mine.)

And, contrary to his usual self-concern, Espronceda seems on the verge of self-sacrifice to accomplish his aim:

¿Qué importa, si prevoca
 mi voz la befa de las almas viles?
 ¿Morir qué importa en tan gloriosa lucha?⁴

The enthusiasm he evinces is quite different from his usual defeated viewpoint toward the world's problems and injustices:

¹Ibid., p. 344.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 344-45.

⁴Ibid., p. 345.

"¡Oh avergonzados!, gritaré a la gente,
¡oh de los hombres despreciable escoria,
venid, doblad la envilecida frente:
un cadáver no más es vuestra gloria!"¹

In a similar vein of positive social consciousness are several other works. In "Canción del pirata" and "El Mendigo" the protagonists boldly defy an absolutist society of which Espronceda disapproved. In "El Canto del Cosaco" he shows approval toward a group that is audacious enough to destroy undesirably weakened and materialistic governments. As Northup comments about Espronceda's political concern:

First of all he interests as the poet of democracy
Espronceda's hatred for absolutism was so intense that in moments of excitement he became almost anti-social. The pirate, the beggar, the Cossack, were his heroes. The love of this dandy for the lower classes cannot be dismissed as mere pose. . . . Liberty and democracy are his chief desires.²

And, according to Casaldueiro: "Completamente desinteresada, sincera y seria su vida política, desde los quince años hasta que murió."³

"El Reo de Muerte" reveals Espronceda's disgust over the unjust governmental execution of victims condemned for insufficient reason. He regrets the loss of young people like the reo who are full of promise and whose lives are destroyed by the whim of a dictatorial government.

The author shows a strong nationalistic fervor in several works. In "A la muerte de Joaquín de Pablo," he mourns the loss of this glorious revolutionary leader and his followers who fell at the Battle of Chapalanga:

¹Ibid.

²Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. xxxiii.

³Casaldueiro, Espronceda, op. cit., p. 10.

Llorad, vírgenes tristes de Iberia,
nuestros héroes en fúnebre lloro;
dad al viento las trenzas de oro
y los cantos de muerte entonad.

.
séños astro de triunfo y de honor,
tú /Joaquín de Pablo/, que siempre a los déspotas fuiste
como a negras tormentas el sol.¹

He simultaneously expresses hate for the despotic government of Fernando VII;

Y vosotros, ¡oh nobles guerreros,
de la patria sostén y esperanza!,
abrasados en sed de venganza,
odio eterno al tirano jurad.²

After depicting the cruelty of the Madrid society toward the newly reborn Adán in "El Diablo mundo," he generalizes on the horror of the broken, anarchical government in Spain at this time and of which this type of sadism is often the product:

Rota la sociedad, minado el trono,
Y a los cuatro malévolos de horrendas
Miras, mandando y destrozando haciendas.

¡Oh cuadro horrible! ¡pavoroso cuadro!
Pintado tantas veces y a porfía
Al sonar el horrísono baladro
Del monstruo que han llamado la anarquía.³

Another example of constructive governmental criticism in this work is Espronceda's comment about the incompetent system of judicial prosecution in nineteenth-century Spain. He declares that Adán would be altogether forgotten in jail were it not for the efforts of Salada to have him released:

¹Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., pp. 281; 283.

²Ibid., p. 281.

³Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 132.

Y un año largo de prisión corría
 Y nadie de él se acuerda: y un verano,
 Y otro pasara, y ciento, y pasaría
 Un siglo entero, y mil, y todo en vano;
 Situación en las cárceles no extraña,
 Gracias al modo de enjuiciar de España.

Cuando la hermosa que al mancebo adora,

 Logró de la pereza vencedora
 Del juez que diese a Adán por inocente.¹

In "Guerra" he proclaims a fervid desire for a return to liberty for his beloved country from the conservative Carlist forces that opposed the liberality which Espronceda applauded. He does not hesitate to advocate armed revolt to achieve this end:

Al grito de la patria
 volemós, compañeros;
 blandamos los aceros
 que intrépida nos da.
 A par de nuestros brazos
 ufanos la ensalcemos
 y al mundo proclamemos:
 "España es libre ya."

 ¡Oh siempre dulce patria,
 al alma generosa!
 ¡Oh siempre portentosa
 magia de libertad!

 ¡Al arma, al arma! ¡Mueran los carlistas!
 Y al mar se lancen con bramido horrendo
 de la infiel sangre caudalosos ríos,
 y atónito contemple el Océano
 sus olas combatidas
 con la traidora sangre enrojecidas.

 Truene el cañón: el cántico de guerra,
 pueblos ya libres, con placer alzá.
 Ved: ya desciende a la oprimida tierra,
 los hierros a romper, la libertad.²

¹Ibid., pp. 178-79.

²Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., pp. 291-93.

The "Soneto a Guardia" praises the hero Guardia, an important figure in the "Milicia national de Madrid," who fell in the anti-revolutionary movement of 1841:

Astro de libertad brilla en el cielo
y aumenta el lustre a la española gloria,
tú que de esta morada transitoria
a morada mejor alzaste el vuelo,
.
tú, cuyo nombre vivirá en la historia,
timbre y honor del madrileño suelo.
Descansa, ¡oh Guardia!, en paz; la tiranía
cayó vencida en la inmortal refriega,
e imitar tu valor ansiamos fieles;¹

And the famous "Al dos de mayo" praises the valour of the loyal Spaniards who dared to try to resist the French invasion in the uprising of 1808 despite their lack of preparation and arms.

Espronceda's impressive contributions to military enterprises during his life are quite consistent with all these works. Northup's biography² of Espronceda discusses his formation of the youthful political organization, "La Sociedad de los Numantinos," his serving under de Pablo in the Battle of Chapalangarra, his joining the Guardia de Corps, his writing for the radical magazine El Siglo, his being an officer in the National Militia and as such his participation in several revolutionary activities in Andalucía, and his brief appointments as secretary to the Spanish legation at the Hague and deputy of Almería. Domenchina alludes to Espronceda's humanitarian spirit by citing his altruism during an epidemic in Madrid:

¹Ibid., p. 352.

²Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., pp. ix-xxxii.

..., fué Espronceda de los que más se distinguieron por su heroísmo y asiduidad en la asistencia a los enfermos de las clases pobres;¹

His father's success in many military campaigns, Bailén, Chiclana, and Talavera, was no doubt a stimulus for Espronceda's fervor.

However, in a digression in the first canto of "El Diablo mundo," Espronceda presents a different view of military enterprise. Here he shows in a more sardonic vein that the fervid activity and abundant literature surrounding military service seduce men into seeking the fame and vain glory they feel they will find there:

Animas a dictar páginas llenas
De verso y prosa en abundante sarta:
Político profundo en sus faenas,
Folletos traza, artículos ensarta,
Suda y trabaja, y en manchar se emplea
Resmas para envolver alcarabea.

Otros ¡oh gloria! sin aliento vagan
Solícitos huyendo acá y allá
Suponen clubs, ...
.....

Otros te siguen, engañosa gloria,
Que allá en sus pueblos son pozos de ciencia,
Que creyéndose dignos de la historia,
Varones de gobierno y experiencia
Ansiosos de alcanzar alta memoria,
Y abusos corregir con su elocuencia,
.....
A todos, gloria, tu pendón nos guía,
Y a todos nos excita tu desea:²

But, quite in accord with the disillusioned vein of all of "El Diablo mundo," he shows that those who seek prideful fulfillment in this field are often only exiled and forgotten:

¹Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 63.

²Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., pp. 86-7.

A estos si los destierran, ...
 Nadie en ellos pensó ni pensará,
 Y andan ocultos y mudando trajes,
 Creyéndose terribles personajes.¹

Or perhaps they are named to meaningless political posts where they become blind, ineffectual government officials and are ignored by the public:

Diputados al fin se hacen nombrar,
 Tontos de buena fe para callar.

Estos viven después desesperados,
 Del ministro además desatendidos,
 En el mundo político ignorados,
 Y del pueblo también desconocidos:
 Andan en la cuestión extraviados,
 Siempre sin tino, torpes los sentidos;
 Dando a saber con pruebas tan acerbadas,
 Que pierden fuerzas en mudando yerbas.²

It is understandable that Espronceda would reflect such a disillusioned attitude in the work since it was written at the end of his life when he was no doubt musing over the misfortunes of his past political ventures. As Northup's biography³ reveals, he was exiled twice, once to a monastery in 1823 for his activities in the youthful political organization "La Sociedad de los numantinos," and another time to Cuéllar in 1834 for reading a satirical poem in public. Furthermore, he probably regarded the time he spent as deputy of Almería as an inactive disappointment compared to his previously very active role in Spanish affairs.

Also, Espronceda's personality was one of vivacity, energy, and violence, the perfect combination of qualities to create the turbulent

¹Ibid., p. 86.

²Ibid., p. 87.

³Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., pp. xv-xxvii.

revolutionary he proved himself to be. As Domenchina says of him:

..., de temperamento sanguíneo y a la violencia propenso; de ánimo audaz hasta frisar en lo temerario, y de carácter, petulante, alegre, y más inclinado a los ejercicios del cuerpo que al sedentario del estudio.¹

In youth, as Northup reveals, "He soon gained the nickname buscarruidos, and attracted the notice of police and night watchmen."²

Considering the author's nature, his father's military involvement and Espronceda's own exploits in political and military ventures, can one place credence in the sincerity of the escapist, disillusioned attitude he so often expresses? Perhaps at least in a few works of amorous orientation such as "Canto a Teresa" and "A Jarifa," which Domenchina calls "... una de las composiciones más personales de Espronceda,"³ the reader can believe his intensity of suffering and desire for escape from reality, for as the same critic says of his nature: :...; tenía un corazón de sobra predispuesto al amor,"⁴ and "Indudablemente, el juvenil D. José fué amante proceloso,"⁵ In other poems which reveal a similar attitude, such an evaluation becomes more opinionated, for as Northup says:

It is often impossible to say how much of his suffering is a mere Byronic pose, and how much comes from the reaction of an intensely sensitive nature to the hard facts of existence.⁶

¹Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p.18.

²Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., p. xii.

³Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 87.

⁴Ibid., p. 18.

⁵Ibid., p. 59.

⁶Espronceda (ed. by Northup), op. cit., pp. xxxiii-xxiv.

This obvious antithesis between the self-centered, emotional outpourings of most of his poems and the reality of his patriotic and other-oriented life and works creates an intriguing irony of incongruity.

Casaldüero helps to explain this disparity by stressing that both directions in his works were equally valid, though admittedly mutually exclusive, and that both stem from his romantic desire for freedom of expression. He also tends to soften the usual criticism of his political activities as ineffectual or childish:

... Espronceda comi todo romántico se mueve por dos fuerzas--el amor a la patria, el amor a la mujer--que en realidad no son nada más que las dos facetas de un mismo deseo: el de libertad. Y antes que el amor a la mujer se despertó en el amor a la patria. En lugar de hacer observar que esa actividad política infantil tiene un aire juvenil, lo que creo que hay que notar, por lo menos lo que noto yo, es la seriedad de ese muchacho que exalta la Justicia y la Libertad, y que, desde su tierna juventud, se pone a su servicio, sin que se desmienta ni una vez, ni con hechos ni con palabras, su lealtad.¹ (*Italics mine.*)

And further to stress the concept that such incongruous directions of expression could sincerely exist in the same author, he comments:

...; su vida moral se presentaría como una paradoja: cínico ataque social en contraste con un corazón rebosando caridad y amor. Pero su actividad política, ... es un sentimiento esencial de su alma; su amor es una pasión trágica que tiene toda la desesperación moral del Romanticismo; y su cinismo, en lugar de ser una máscara caprichosa e inconsecuente, es la forma que adopta su desdén hacia una sociedad incapaz de elevarse al alto nivel de caridad que exige el poeta.²

Consequently, it is clear that in the field of romantic irony, Espronceda's writings exhibit two opposing propensities. The more numerous works which display emotional outpourings illustrate his tendency toward

¹Casaldüero, Forma y visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., p. 11.

²Ibid., p. 17.

being the true romantic and thus anti-romantic ironist, while the more occasional poems which reveal social consciousness indicate that he can at times manifest the crusading spirit of the genuine romantic ironist. Both directions are equally genuine and simply reflect differing moods of an ironically and romantically incongruous temperament.

Beyond the philosophical realm of romantic irony, Espronceda ventures also into the lighter phenomenon of proto-romantic irony. In this more common and more superficial type of romantic irony, the artist is aware of the irony of art itself: that it is composed at the same time of two levels of existence, both the reality of the work as a poem, painting or sculpture and its reality as an imaginative or representative entity. In this type of irony, the author temporarily destroys the illusory nature of his work and subtly or quite directly reminds the reader of the fabricated nature of the artistic work. As Thompson comments in describing this type of irony:

Romantic irony, in its simplest meaning, is the name given the willful destruction of illusion in works of fiction and drama, as practiced by certain members of the Romantic School
 . . . It is but one manifestation of the Romantic temperament.¹

Muecke defines this type of romantic irony and differentiates it from more complex forms:

The sophisticated or self-conscious artist who is aware of the contradictions implicit in the double nature of art will sometimes bring into his work at the imaginative level some aspects of its existence at the 'ordinary world' level as a work that is being composed, and composed to be seen, performed, or read. That is to say he will break into the artistic illusion with a reminder to his public (not necessarily an explicit one) that what they have before them is only a painting, a play, or a

¹Thompson, op. cit., pp. 51; 65.

novel and not the reality it purports to be. This sort of thing has been called Romantic Irony, but it is only one aspect of it and it might be useful to distinguish it by a different name. The term 'proto-Romantic Irony' is intended also to suggest an historical development. The so-called destruction of artistic illusion or the entrance of an author into his work even when it is done ironically is only a step in the direction of Romantic Irony, but the artistic attitude and awareness that make such a step possible are also a prerequisite of Romantic Irony.¹

In "A una Ciega," Espronceda makes of himself a demigod, one who can fashion worlds of intriguing wonders through his literary talent--similar to God's ability to create in actuality the world's phenomena. Thompson mentions this omniscient quality of romantic irony by saying:

To combine extreme objectivity and immanence . . . is to resemble God. And this state of godlike self-division and self-consciousness is Romantic irony.²

First, he portrays God's omnipotent powers:

Sobre inmensa montaña de vapores
hay, hermosa, un gigante bienhechor,
que rige mundos, y que inspira amores,
y pisa estrellas, de la luz señor.

Cíñele un cielo la encendida frente;
nubes le dan espléndido festín,
y en él, dormido entre fulgor candente,
gózase Dios.

Campos colora al derramarse en oro,
oro del mante del excelso Dios.³

Next, he compares his own literary ability to fabricate similar creations in a symbolic way. It is here that the proto-romantic irony is noted, for the illusion of his creativity is removed:

¹Muecke, op. cit., pp. 164-65.

²Thompson, op. cit., p. 64.

³Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 346.

Yo sobre el mundo, sobre el mar y el viento,
sobre los cielos y la tierra estoy;
mundos y cielos sin cesar invento,
porque hacia el mundo de los vates voy.¹ (*Italics mine.*)

His intent in this enterprise is to console and compensate a girl for her blindness:

No llores, no, hermosa mía,
porque no ves ora el día,
.
¡No llores, no mujer, ángel del cielo,
mientras pueda mi lira hacerse oír,
porque cubra a tus ojos denso velo
de negras sombras su oriental záfir.²

Continuing the proto-romantic feeling, Espronceda asks the girl what wonders she would like to see through his poetry:

¿Quieres ver, al fulgor de ardiente rayo,
lucir el sol, dormir la tempestad,
zumar el trueno y florecer a mayo,
todo a un tiempo radiante de verdad?

¿O quieres ver en el dormido espacio,
sólo, deidad, para servirte a ti,
de cristal y de mármol un palacio
coronado de záfiro por mí?³

He promises her the spectrum of emotional experience and explanation of natural phenomena by means of his creative skill:

¡Todo a tus pies!; ...
.
Hermosa ciega, con tu fiel poeta
ven en valle magnífico a habitar;
valle que el gozo y el dolor respeta,
¡donde puedes reír! ... ¡puedes llorar! ...

¹Ibid., p. 348.

²Ibid., pp. 347-48.

³Espronceda (ed. by Domenchina), op. cit., p. 348.

Yo te diré cuándo al nacer la aurora
 derrama por el campo su fulgor;
 yo te diré cuándo la noche llora
 lágrimas de tinieblas y de horror.¹

"El Diablo mundo" is the only one of Espronceda's works to offer a host of examples of proto-romantic irony. Most are of a rather playful nature and tend to reduce the gravity of the overall pessimistic theme.

Following the heavily negative tone of the viejo's musings on the transience of youth, Espronceda brings the subject to a close by apologizing for his verbosity:

Yo, por no ser prolijo ni cansado
 (Que ya impaciente a mi lector barrunto),
 Diré que al cabo, de pensar rendido,
 Tendióse el viejo y se quedó dormido.²

Congruent with the romantic desire for complete freedom of expression, the author declares that he writes without formal, neoclassic intent or rule but rather according to his whim of the moment. Indirectly, he is saying, too, that he uses not his reason but his emotions as an inspirational guideline:

Terco escribo en mi loco desvarío
 Sin ton ni són, y para gusto mío.

La zozobra del alma enamorada,
 La dulce vaguedad del sentimiento,
 La esperanza, de nubes rodeada,
 De la memoria el dolorido acento,
 Los sueños de la mente arrebatada,
 La fábrica del mundo y su portento,
 Sin regla ni compás canta mi lira:
 Sólo mi ardiente corazón me inspira!³

¹Ibid., pp. 348-49.

²Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., p. 58.

³Ibid., p. 59.

And another time, he says:

En varias formas, con diverso estilo,
En diferentes géneros, calzando
Ora el coturno trágico de Esquilo,
Ora la trompa épica sonando:
Ora cantando plácido y tranquilo,
Ora en trivial lenguaje, ora burlando,
Conforme esté mi humor, porque a él me ajusto,
Y allá versos donde va mi gusto.¹

According to Casaldüero, the objective of these lines is:

... para afirmar irónicamente su personalidad contra la cultura clásica y la época del Neoclasicismo: la época del << hombre justo que sirve a su razón.>> ²

On one occasion, he refers to the gamut of offerings that his work holds and its existence as a representation of man's life as a search for an unrealizable dream, "la quimera." His intention to include philosophical reflection within the lighter discussions creates a medieval feeling when one recalls the arte docente or utile dulce concept:

Nada menos te ofrezco que un poema
Con lances raros y revuelto asunto,
.....
Que hemos de recorrer punto por punto:
Si logro yo desenvolver mi tema,
Fiel traslado ha de ser, cierto trasunto
De la vida del hombre y la quimera
Tras de que va la humanidad entera.

Batallas, tempestades, amoríos,
Por mar y tierra, lances, descripciones
De campos y ciudades, desafíos,
Y el desastre y furor de las pasiones,
Goces, dichas, aciertos, desvaríos,
Con algunas morales reflexiones
Acerca de la vida y de la muerte.
De mi propia cosecha, que es mi fuerte.³

¹Ibid., p. 84.

²Casaldüero, Forma y visión de El Diablo mundo, op. cit., p. 57.

³Espronceda (ed. by Moreno Villa), op. cit., pp. 83-4.

He is bold enough to express a desire to gain fame via his work:

Y yo ipobre de mí! sigo tu lumbre,
También ¡oh gloria! en busca de renombre,
Tregar ansiando al templo de tu cumbre,
Donde mi fama al universo asombre:
Quiere que de tu rayo a la vislumbre
Brille grabado en mármoles mi nombre
Y espero que mi busto adorne un día
Algún salón, café, o peluquería.¹

And he facetiously destroys artistic illusion by soliciting public support for the poem, particularly of a financial nature:

¡O caro comprador! que con zozobra
Imploro en mi favor, comprar mi obra?
.....

... oh público severo,
Y muéstrame la cara lisonjera;
Esto le pido a Dios, y algún dinero,
Mientras sigo en el mundo mi carrera;
Y porque fatigarte más no quiero,
Caro lector, al otro canto espera,
El cual sin falta seguirá, se entiende
Si este te gusta y la edición se vende.²

On several instances the author interrupts the narration by starting to predict what will eventually occur in a certain situation. For example, shortly after the viejo has accepted the offer to undergo transformation into a young man, Espronceda teasingly begins to reveal that his new-found happiness will soon turn to bitterness. But he suddenly decides it is best to follow a normal revelation of events, since he hesitates to let the reader expect too much:

Verás, lector, a nuestro humilde anciano,
Que inmortal de su lecho se levanta,
Lanzarse al mundo de su dicha ufano,

¹Ibid., p. 88.

²Ibid., pp. 83; 89.

Rico de la esperanza que le encanta:
 Verás luego también ... pero ¿a qué en vano
 Me canso en ofrecerte empresa tanta,
 Si hasta que el uno al otro nos cansemos,
 Tú y yo en compañía caminando iremos?

Más vale prometerte poco ahora,
 Y algo después cumplirte, lector mío,¹

On two other occasions, he begins to predict events surrounding the viejo's conversion but again hesitates to continue, certainly a playful technique to maintain suspense in a rather puerile fashion:

...--Y aquí yo arriesgo
 Por seguir en octavas este canto
 Débilmente cantar dénouement tanto.

 Mas la verdad (si la verdad se puede
 En materia decir tan espinosa)
 Es (y perdón la pido si se excede
 Mi pluma en lo demás tan respetuosa)
 (Y esto ¡oh lector! entre nosotros quede)
 Mas no le he de decir, que es un secreto
 Y siempre me hepreciado de discreto.²

Perhaps "El Diablo mundo" would not be an entirely romantic work if it did not include many digressions. They are excellent for creating greater variety and remind the reader that Espronceda is both a good narrator and a philosopher to some extent as well. One of the cleverest tangents is created just after the old man is reborn. The author humorously refers to the good fortune that made him Espronceda and not the Adam of the garden of Eden so that he can entertain himself with the writing of this work:

Y ... Pero, pluma, queda ...
 ¿A qué vuelve otra vez al Paraíso
 Cuando la suerte quiso

¹Ibid., p. 84.

²Ibid., pp. 126; 128-29.

Que no fuera yo Adán, sino Espronceda?
 Ni el primer hombre, ni el varón segundo,

 ... me entretengo
 En este mundo tan alegre y vario
 Como en jaula de alambres el canario,
 Divertido en cantar mi Diablo Mundo
 Grandilocuo poema y elocuente,
 En vez de hablar allí con la serpiente ...¹

But, feeling that the reader may tire of such lengthy departures from the theme, he begs his patience and proclaims that they are inserted for a didactic purpose:

Y dejando también mis digresiones,
 Más largas cada vez, más enojosas
 Que para mí son tachas y borrones
 De las mejores obras, fastidiosas
 Haciéndolas, llevando al pacienzudo
 Lector confuso siempre, aunque es defecto
 De escritor concienzudo
 Que perdona el efecto,
 Con la intención de mejorar conciencias
 Con sus disertaciones y advertencias,²

The fourth canto begins with an elaborate description of the dawn only to be ended by this surprisingly humorous passage which lightly satirizes the preceding baroque section:

Y resonando ... etcétera; que creo
 Basta para contar que ha amanecido,
 Y tanta frase inútil y rodea,
 A mí corto entender no es más que ruido:
 Pero también a mí entra deseo
 De echarla de poeta y el oído,
 Palabra tras palabra colocada,
 Con versos regalar sin decir nada.

Quiero decir, lector, que amanecía,³

¹Ibid., p. 113.

²Ibid., pp. 113-114.

³Ibid., pp. 150-51.

At several points he suspects that the reader may doubt the veracity of his tale, particularly the magical conversion of the viejo. Consequently, he uses the time-worn technique of declaring that he is only retelling objectively what he has heard from another source. By suggesting that it is difficult for him also to believe, and that he is almost ashamed to bring it to the public's attention, he cleverly increases the story's credibility:

Mas yo como escritor muy concienzudo,
 Incapaz de forjar una mentira,
 Confesaré al lector que mucho dudo
 De la verdad del caso que le admira:
 Contaré el cuento con mi estilo rudo
 Al bronco són de mi cansada lira,
 Y el hecho a otros afirmar les dejo,
 De haberse el mozo convertido en viejo.
Como me lo contaron te lo cuento

.
 Que no cabe en el más rudo intelecto
 Que se convierta un viejo en mozalbete:

 Y yo quedé de entonces convencido
 Casi de que era mentiroso el cuento,
 Aunque siempre mis dudas he tenido,
 Que es muy dado a dudar mi entendimiento:

 Ni lo afirmo, oh lector, ni lo desmiento,

 Y casi casi arrepentido estoy
 De haber tomado tan dudoso asunto,
 Y de a pública luz sacarlo hoy
 Que la incredulidad llega a tal punto;¹

Espronceda interrupts his description of the amorous happiness of Adán and Salada after the former's release from prison to illustrate his own life as an example of a disillusioned love experience, referring to his unfortunate experience with Teresa Mancha.

¹Ibid., pp. 152-53; 155.

This is an indirect way of predicting the end of these characters' compatibility:

Y ahora que así las almas considero
 Prestándose placer, gloria y ternura,
 Pararme un punto y lastimarme quiero
 De mi propio disgusto y desventura;
 Que ya gastado de mi ardor primero
 El tesoro riquísimo se apura,
 Y en mi amargo dolor continuo lloro
 Perdido malamente aquel tesoro.¹

The final example of proto-romantic irony occurs at the work's end. It is a childish way to end the poem, since his expression of boredom concerning the philosophical aspects tends to negate their value:

Mas juro, vive Dios, que estoy cansado
 Ya de seguir a un pensamiento atado
 Y referir mi historia de seguida,
 Sin darme a mis queridas digresiones,
 Y sabias reflexiones
 Verter de cuando en cuando, y estoy harto
 De tanta gravedad, lisura y tino
 Con que mi historia ensarto.

Y de este canto y de su historia salgo.²

In the field of romantic irony, Espronceda again exhibits his unpredictable nature. To be alternately a romantic escapist and a man sincerely desiring to better social ills is an incongruity typical of one as completely representative of the romantic temperament as he. His success in the area of proto-romantic irony illustrates his ability to destroy artistic illusion with humorous effect, thus lightening the philosophical discussions.

¹Ibid., p. 186.

²Ibid., pp. 270-71.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The complete appropriateness of Espronceda for a discussion of irony is clearly evident in the numerous examples scattered throughout his poetic works. His capacity for variety is pointed up by the many ironic categories of verbal irony, and his dramatic and narrative abilities become apparent in the many variations of dramatic irony. His greatest ironic skill is demonstrated by the ironies of incongruity, situation, events, and fate which are almost limitless and highly varied.

The many general ironies most effectively present the author's ideology, as they possess a more metaphysical tone than is obvious in other forms of irony because of their more universal flavor. Espronceda portrays himself as a figure of contradiction in regard to the philosophy of romantic irony and illustrates his ingenuity by successfully exploring the irony of art itself in the unique area of proto-romantic irony.

After such an extensive exploration into the remarkably diversified world of ironies, one is certain to become aware of the presence of irony in all the world's events and existent situations. From such a stance, one must consider life as an interminable series of ironic

predicaments and fatefully wrought series of events. Espronceda's ideological concepts reveal a deft manner of stripping away the foolish idealism and ostensibly elevated concepts that create a fabricated façade for a world that is in reality for him egotistical, cruel, exploitative, and above all, disagreeably contrary to every hopeful anticipation of ingenuous youth.

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