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The Framework And Humor In Moliere's Study Of Dom Juan

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Abstract

A lot of questions and disagreements exist in the Dom Juan scholarly work, both on literary and unrelated grounds. It appears that there has been no unambiguous consensus either way regarding the play among its knowledgeable critics. Its adversaries freely accord it a high level of superiority, even going so far as to label it an absolute masterpiece. Even though not every one of its friends concurs that it is such, they are all equally eager to criticize a lot of it. Whoever calls it a masterpiece doesn't specify what they mean, whether they are a friend or an enemy. Everyone appears to agree that such unevenness is caused by conditions other than artistic strain on the play's composition instead of any artistic goal (or lack of critical attention). As a result, Moliere wrote hastily and presumably while feeling enraged. Being severely excommunicated, he was either unable to distinguish between what was real and false in matters of morality and religion or, worse still, he was promoting libertine propaganda. Although there are still many unanswered concerns and differences of opinion regarding the idea of play, the approach that was given highlighted the structure and humor in Moliere's Study of Dom Juan.

1. Introduction

Comedy Don Juan is presented in five scenes. It was created by Molière and presented for the very first time in 1665 at the Playhouse du Palais-Royal. Sganarelle, Don Juan's butler and ethical guide, was performed by Moliere. The play was censored because the local religious authorities in Paris believed it insulted their faith. Whenever the

work was released, censors covered any passages in every copy that displeased them with strips of paper. The drama was then completely rebuilt and released in 1813¹.

Broadly, the behaviors of a libertine are depicted in the drama. Rich aristocrat Don Juan woos every attractive young woman he meets, no matter whether she is married. To entice them into his bed, he proposes to them and even goes so far as to propose to a different woman each month.

Don Juan is shown in Moliere's play as an atheist who makes fun of religion. A reclining statue of a man he murdered in a duel ultimately drags him into Hell. In 1665, following fifteen shows, the drama was taken off the stage. Critics claimed it violated their religious beliefs, accusing the king of exalting a rebel. The opponents interpreted it as a mocking of Catholicism rather than an attempt to illustrate the peril of "free-thinking. The play was finally staged in the 20th century, unedited, and was well appreciated by the critics.

Most people seem to agree that Dom Juan is, most likely, unevenly good and tasteful, poorly constructed and characterized, controversial, if not repugnant, in its theology, brilliant and mediocre, limpid and troublesome. Everyone appears to agree that such unevenness is caused by conditions other than artistic strain on the play's composition instead of any artistic goal (or lack of critical attention). As a result, Moliere wrote in a hurry and probably under the influence of rage due to Tartuffe's repression. He was a severely excommunicated guy who was either unable to tell what was genuine and untrue in moral and religious concerns, or worse, he was spreading libertine propaganda. However, there are still a lot of questions and disagreements about the theory of play; hence, the presented approach highlighted the framework and humors in Moliere's Study of Dom Juan.

The whole article has various sections. Section 1, introduction, gives brief facts about the Dom Juan art, including its origin, rebuilding and release, issues, etc. Section 2 is on the theme of the show. In the 3rd section, the structure and meaning in terms of the modern era of Moliere's Study of Dom Juan has been presented. Section 4th is on character evaluation of the shows.

2. Theme of Moliere's Study of Dom Juan

Despite the fact that Molière's Don Juan was composed in 1665, its main themes remain relevant today. In addition to Don Juan, Molière also builds fascinating personalities for his servant, wife, father, and other individuals that Don Juan meets throughout the play. In Don Juan, Molière invents a man who, through the arrogant abuse of power, moulds the world to match his own personal delusions. The capacity of Molière to construct characters that can interact with such a major character and attempt to, albeit unsuccessfully, oppose this misuse of power is even

¹ MOLIER, *Don Juan Summary*, *Book Reports*. Available at: https://www.bookreports.info/donjuan-summary/#google_vignette (Accessed: 06 September 2023).

greater. In this essay, I'll look at Don Juan's traits as well as how the other characters use their own particular strategies to try to win him over².

Don Juan, through its primary character, who performed profoundly and provocatively, purposefully misrepresents early modern views about religion as well as social connections and obligations. His views and actions open up discussions about emotional and romantic deception, religion (as well as irreligion), and the willful destruction of the established order (both social and moral). He has a highly destructive, profoundly predatory personality³.

The theme of the show can be seen in the following ways:

1. Emotional highlights show
2. Religious points of the show
3. Morality of the show
4. Youth and Innocence in the show

If manipulating it emotionally, the Don Juan is sexually predatory and highly deceptive. He is arguably best known for having a Casanova-like tendency to seduce several women at once, convince them to marry him, and then move on to another. Molière depicts the circumstances from all angles: Don Juan is the gratifying romantic predator, motivated by his personal hedonistic impulses; Elvire is a former lover who has been cast aside; and Charlotte and Mathurine are the two women who have fallen for his present-day seductions but are not aware of his ulterior motives.

In addition to this, Don Juan also has strong religious undertones, and a significant portion of the play is made up of talks in which religion and irreligion are pitted against each other. In fact, Don Juan is a profound atheist, which is said to be a major factor in his tendency towards Epicureanism. He will criticize individuals who have faith in God or moral lessons from religion, as seen in his interaction with a beggar, where he attempts to coerce the beggar into swearing. He does not believe in these things.

Meanwhile, he is surrounded by people who practice religion. While Elvire begs him to alter his ways out of concern for the future of his soul, Sganarelle, his servant, frequently begs him to stop blaspheming and behave more properly (even though one wonders if Sganarelle is really as religious as he states to be given his solely materialistic response

² Molières, *Molieres Don Juan essays*. Available at: <https://www.megaessays.com/viewpaper/56111.html> (Accessed: 06 September 2023).

³ *Don Juan enotes.com*. Available at: <https://www.enotes.com/topics/don-juan-jean-baptistepoquelin/themes> (Accessed: 07September 2023).

to his master's damnation)⁴. The fact that Don Juan intentionally impacts the religious views of others and dishonorably invokes God and religious principles whenever it serves his own interests makes his actions even more blasphemous. Don Juan's attitude towards religion goes beyond simply not believing in it.

In Don Juan, youth and innocence are shown as admirable qualities. When Donna Inez tries to keep her child's innocence for as long as she can, these themes come into play. During his formative years, Juan was shielded from any kind of controversy or negative experience. His mom is concerned that he will end up like his father, a philandering waste of a man. The woman spends so much time instilling in Juan the value of innocence that she transforms him into a lovely, kind young man. Donna Julia, a friend of hers, ends up falling in love with Juan as a result⁵.

Donna Inez accidentally cultivates a scandal in the process of trying to protect youth and innocence. She makes her kid too young and naive to the point where he is powerless to resist acting on his feelings and expressing his love for a woman who is going through a challenging time. Juan's purity is ephemeral, therefore Donna Inez's last resort is to board a ship and transfer her son away from the country. Juan's innocence is not preserved, despite Donna Inez's best efforts following the scandal. The relationship between Juan and Julia was scandalous, but the fatalities that followed the disaster represent a profound loss of innocence. Hurricane Irma's aftermath robs Juan of his youth and innocence. The murders of the crew and Juan's friends, the cannibalism, and the experience of almost passing out convince Juan that there is more to the world than his idyllic upbringing. The shipwreck represents the loss of Juan's innocence because it exposes him to a world of sorrow, but it also serves to highlight how pure of a character Juan will always be. Even if it means his survival, he won't eat his friend Pedrillo. Juan has certain limits he won't go beyond, as well as certain ways his innocence cannot be tainted. The shipwreck opens Juan's eyes to a new world and challenges him to mature, but it also confirms the pure, incorruptible nature that has been ingrained in him since childhood.

Further, Don Juan represents the collapse of the initial modern morality and social structure; he is a character who willfully violates ideals of honor and interpersonal loyalty in order to further his own self-interest. He is eventually a corrupting force who does great harm to everyone in his vicinity. Before the story had started, he assassinated the commander, and he dishonored Elvire and her family by putting them in disarray while setting her aside for future

⁴ *Don Juan enotes.com*. Available at: <https://www.enotes.com/topics/don-juan-jean-baptistepoquelin/themes> (Accessed: 07September 2023).

⁵ *Don Juan themes: Course hero* (no date) *Don Juan Themes | Course Hero*. Available at: <https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Don-Juan/themes/> (Accessed: 08 September 2023).

conquests. He is seen upsetting Charlotte and Pierrot's union. As he expresses contempt for his father over his father's back, we witness him purposefully manipulating and lying.

We see someone who is extremely poisonous to everyone around him and destructive to the moral and social fabric when we consider his influence on the lives of those around him. We observe someone who is extremely poisonous for all those around him and destructive to the ethical and social structure of his environment when we consider his effect on the lives of those around him. This emphasizes the significance of the play's ending. The final scene of Don Juan depicts the manifestation of divine justice. The social and moral orders are restored once the criminal is punished for his different misdeeds.

3. Structure and meaning of Moliere's Study of Dom Juan

3.1 Structure

The classic comedies of Molière has been structured as depictions of a struggle among the real world and a central figure that possesses one exaggerated quality. This complicated feature is the claim of unrestricted personal freedom in Dom Juan or the Festin of Pierre. ' The work's progression is influenced by the viewer's demand for individual liberty. Without demanding needs, a viewer could view the play as a study in folkloric themes.

Shows

Act1

Sganarelle's conversations

Liberty in love, also known as change- in love, unrestricted self-expression, and erotic conquest in terms of military conquest (Don Juan's creed)

Conflicts and their purpose

Elvire (woman to desert)

Act2

Charlotte (woman to seduce); Charlotte, Mathurine (women to leave)

Act3

Trust in both medicine and God

Act with Pauper (words-andswords conflict); scene with peers' thoughts (swords-andswords conflict); scene with

Act4

Statue (ambiguous restrictions on freedom):

Father, M. Dimanche, D.

Elvire, Statue

Act5

Hypocrisy as a prerequisite for freedom

The fundamental issue is that *Liere* often doesn't address this awful conflict tragically, which leads to challenging meaning and value issues.

Every episode in this serialised yet thematically structured play depicts a different facet of Don Juan's struggle for freedom and his escalating clash with society. To structure:

Both the exchanges in the column on the left and the conflicts in the right show different sides of a character. Act 2's sudden conquest of Charlotte by Don Juan is swiftly followed by a retreat. The don's audacious, unfettered invitation is transformed into flight by the statue's nod at the close of Act 3, but the pauper's "ego" doesn't seem to be "subjugated" at all. The unravelling of the relationship becomes less amusing and less enjoyable for the character and the audience, similarly with every visit in Act 4, which depicts Don Juan repelling a string of unwanted visitors who each attempt in vain to persuade him to accept the limits and duties of the ego by pointing out a sort of debt or bond that the Don denies or breaks. Last but not least, if in Act 5, Don Carlos does not trick the supernatural Father the way Don Juan did, and in the end, the Father brings the unrepentant Don burning to heaven.

3.2 Meaning in modern era

In order to know the meaning of Molière's humorous examination of liberty needed to be aware that a large portion of his contemporaries interpreted *Dom Juan* as a satire on the faith and a subtly disguised defense of free thought. Many contemporary critics have kept this perspective on the piece⁶.

Dom Juan, on the other hand, is a criticism of atheism, according to Jacques Scherer! There has been a growing push to portray Molière as a playwright mainly interested in humorous and aesthetic effects rather than any specific message. However, this is also a type of reductionism. A more fruitful strategy has previously been put forth: *Dom Juan*, *Le Misanthrope*, *Tartuffe*, and other problematic comedies may all be best seen as such.

A standard solution—the Don's ultimate punishment—is provided in the ambiguous drama *Dom Juan* for a situation that cannot be resolved conventionally due to its deep connections to emotional, intellectual, and historical forces. The play does not give us the impression that the framework it is embedded in has satisfactorily addressed the issue that was initially raised and communicated in the Don's tremendous speeches and spectacular scenes. However, it can be assured of one thing: the underlying issue is significant, complex, and challenging.

The same issue could have an easy solution or a well-organized analysis if it had been put forward in the abstract, as in Montesquieu's, Isaiah Berlin's, or Harold Laski's. However, the play's concrete context compels us to contemplate more deeply what liberty and constraint, need

⁶ 29/Among others, Roland Barthes, "Le Silence de Don Juan," *Les Lettres nouvelles* 2 (1954): 264-67; and Geoffrey Brereton, *French Comic Drama from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1977), pp. 125-28.

and order, independence and conformity, serve and obedience, lordship and submission mean. As a result, [Moliere] in this situation is unable to provide an answer that carries weight for our emotions⁶.

Moliere has enhanced our experience by letting loose on stage with his dazzling paradoxes. It has just taken a few hours to experience the complicated phenomenon of humor with all of its moral and political resonances, as Brecht once said regarding what happens when has been watch tragedy.

4. Character Evaluation

Don Juan:

The play's primary character is Don Juan. Don Juan is a renegade nobleman who enjoys enormous fortune under his father's rule. He has no qualms about wooing attractive women. He falls in love with every lady he sees right away, but after they are in his bed, he loses interest. Additionally, he marries many of the ladies before divorcing them. He rescues a woman from a convent in the drama. He marries her before abandoning her. The drama is primarily devoted to the brothers of the woman pursuing Don Juan and his aide. Don Juan continues to romance other ladies in spite of this.

In his own words, Don Juan won't "tie oneself down to the next pretty woman who strikes his fancy, forsake everything for her, and never glance at another. According to him, "fair women possess the right to charm us. He is therefore doing them all a favor by romancing them all. To commit to just one woman would be unfair to the others⁷.

He enjoys the quest and believes that when he has won a lady's heart, he gets bored until regaining interest when another attractive woman walks in. Don Juan is an atheist as well. He tries to trick everyone into believing he has changed in the end. He is ultimately transported to Hell because he still has his concerns about Heaven.

Sagnarelle

The valet for Don Juan is Sagnarelle. Don Juan's ethical guide is Sagnarelle. But because he is simply a servant, he is frequently compelled to concur with Don Juan even though he is doing wrong. Sagnarelle runs away as Don Juan goes into danger. He is devout and pragmatic. Some of the most sarcastic remarks are provided to his character as well.

⁶ Ball, D. and Ellis, F.H., 1983. Molière's "Dom Juan": Form, Meaning, Audience. *Modern Philology*, 81(2), pp.146-158.

⁷ *Book summaries Book Reports*. Available at:

https://www.bookreports.info/summaries/#google_vignette (Accessed: 09 September 2023).

For instance, he observes Don Juan getting ready for a different woman, whom Sganarelle refers to as a new victim. Don Juan asks Sganarelle for proof as he is trying to persuade her that he isn't the kind of man whom would adore her and then abandon her. He mockingly exclaims, "Oh, no! Ignore that thinking.

He observes Don Juan, for instance, getting ready for approaching another woman. Sganarelle refers to her as yet another victim. Don Juan asks Sganarelle for proof as he is trying to persuade her that he is not the kind of man who would love her and then abandon her.

He mockingly exclaims, "Oh, no! Ignore that thinking. Sganarelle ultimately fails to convince his master to change his ways and witnesses the statue escorting him to Hell. The primary issue for Sganarelle is his unpaid wages.

Elvira

She is in a convent until Don Juan spots her there and persuades her to escape and wed him. He starts dating fresh ladies right after the wedding.

She approaches him, but it has no effect. Her brothers are enlisted to help them find her husband, whether he is alive or not. She ultimately decides Don Juan was a mistake and returns to the convent after all. Don Juan gives her a frail nod as she leaves⁸.

Don Carlos

A brother of Elvira's. Don Carlos is extremely appreciative as a young guy saves him from several brigands who outnumbered him and who set upon him because he hadn't seen Don Juan.

Later, he tries to offer Don Juan the option of keeping his wedding vows or challenging him to a duel. Don Juan attempts to use double speak and decides on neither. Seeing through the trick, Don Carlos thinks Don Juan is a coward.

Statue of the Commander

Don Juan and Sganarelle go to the grave of the Commander, whom Don Juan murdered in a duel. In response to their inquiries, the statue of the man in the tomb nods at them. The statue eventually shows up for dinner at Don Juan's home and demands that Don Juan attend. At the play's conclusion, a statue drags Don Juan into Hell.

⁸ Book summaries Book Reports. Available at: https://www.bookreports.info/summaries/#google_vignette (Accessed: 09 September 2023).

5. Conclusion

The Dom Juan scholarly study raises several issues and points of contention, both on textual and unrelated grounds. Hence, in this article, brief facts about the Dom Juan art, including its origin, rebuilding and release, issues, etc., have been discussed that lead to the theme of the show. The structure and meaning in terms of the modern era of Moliere's Study of Dom Juan have also been presented in this article. The article has also described the character evaluation of the shows.

