

I'm not a bot



Don Juan, byGustave Courbet, 1830

The legendary Don Juan, upon whom the character Don Giovanni is based, is a figure whose exploits have provided inspiration for authors and artists for more than three centuries. The story of this free-thinking nobleman, who seduced women recklessly and dared to insult the dead before finally being condemned to hell, seems to find its origin in Spain. His archetype is believed to be a medieval man named Don Juan Tenorio who, after seducing the daughter of the commandant of Ulooa, killed the commandant and then was killed by avengers who claimed that he was carried off to hell by the statue of the commandant. The story of Don Juan received its first full dramatic setting on stage in the 1630 moralistic play *El Burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* (The Prankster of Seville and His Stone Guest) written by a Spanish monk who published under the pseudonym Tirso de Molina (1571-1641). El Burlador was brought to Italy, probably via strolling actors, and by 1652 was translated into Italian. An Italian troupe brought the story to France where it also found success. In 1665, the great French dramatist Molière wrote his own version of the Don Juan story in a play named *Don Juan, ou Le Festin de Pierre* (Don Juan, or the Feast of Stone). The Don Juan story was soon rewritten in many languages. It even found its way into the hands of puppeteers. Musical versions soon followed. The first seems to have been a Parisian comic opera, also with the title *Le Festin de Pierre*, composed in 1713 by Le Tellier. A Don Juan ballet by German composer Christoph W. Gluck was presented in Vienna in 1761. Vincenzo Righini composed a full-length Don Giovanni opera in 1777. Ten years later, in 1787, another Don Giovanni opera appeared with libretto by Giovanni Bertini and music by Giuseppe Gazzaniga. It was upon this version that librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte based the story and Mozart composed his masterful Don Giovanni. Although Mozart's Don Juan story is the greatest and most well known, many versions have followed including operas, musical numbers, and literary works. Some of the world's foremost poets and writers found inspiration in the Don Juan story including Alexander Dumas pre in France, George Gordon Lord Byron and George Bernard Shaw in England, and Aleksandr Pushkin in Russia. Why has the Don Juan story held such appeal? Perhaps the answer can be found in the manner in which the character is constantly changing conventional morality. During the Middle Ages, it was believed that all knowledge and power were not under human control but came from the Church. With the breakdown of the universal Church in the late Middle Ages, man began to question everything including belief in heaven and hell. Don Juan delights in these changing beliefs and unabashedly breaks all the rules. He indulges his every desire without inhibition, restraint, guilt, or concern for the impact of his actions. While we condemn him for the murder of the commandant, we are at the same time fascinated by his flamboyant escapades and the power he seems to hold. Don Juan can be likened to a more contemporary mythic figure James Bond, the famous Agent 007. He is the very intriguing international spy who has a limitless supply of charm and knowledge, not to mention all of the right tools and weapons, to get him out of any and every perilous predicament. His adventures usually involve a great many colorful characters and fantastic situations like the statue coming to life in the Don Juan story. Although Bond kills and seduces in his pursuit of justice, he always saves the day (and gets the girl!) and, in light of his victory, his sins become irrelevant. Because Agent 007 works to help virtuous countries (like ours!), he is not condemned to a gloomy demise. We owe a legacy of creative works to the Don Juan myth which continues to remain exciting and popular even today. For that, and, of course, Mozart's beautiful music, Don Giovanni continues to remain an audience favorite. Above photo: Don Giovanni, Cleveland Opera, 1983 By continuing to use this site, you consent to the terms of our cookie policy, which can be found in our Privacy Notice. Organization: Alexa Crawls Starting in 1996, Alexa Internet has been donating their crawl data to the Internet Archive. Flowing in every day, these data are added to the Wayback Machine after an embargo period. Share copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. 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Photos.com/upterimages Kept alive in plays, novels, and poems, the Don Juan legend centers around a fictitious character who is generally regarded as a symbol of libertinism. Libertinism is immoral behavior that is not restrained by conscience or conventions. The legend tells how Don Juan seduced a girl of noble family and then killed her father when he sought revenge. Later Don Juan saw a ghost of the father and flippantly invited it to dinner. The ghost arrived to foreshadow Don Juans own death. Don Juan was first given literary personality in the 1630 tragic drama *The Seducer of Seville* by the Spanish dramatist Tirso de Molina. In this version the drama is heightened by Don Juans attractive qualitieshis lively character, arrogant courage, and sense of humor. The dramas power comes from its rapid pace. There is growing tension as Don Juans enemies hold him self-destructive. He refuses to repent and falls to eternal damnation. Through a cross version, Don Juan became a universal figure, comparable to Hamlet and Don Quixote. In the 17th century the Don Juan story was incorporated into the repertoire of strolling Italian players who carried the legend to France. By the 19th century many of the worlds foremost poets and writers found inspiration in the Don Juan story including Alexander Dumas pre in France, George Gordon Lord Byron and George Bernard Shaw in England, and Aleksandr Pushkin in Russia. Some of these musical and literary works include Mozarts opera Don Giovanni, produced in 1787. Lord Byrons satiric poem Don Juan (1819-24), and George Bernard Shaws drama Man and Superman (performed in 1907), including the well-known third act. Don Juan in Hell. Choose a language from the menu above to view a computer-translated version of this page. Please note: Text within images is not translated, some features may not work properly after translation, and the translation may not accurately convey the intended meaning. Britannica does not review the converted text. After translating an article, all tools except font up/down will be disabled. To re-enable the tools or to convert back to English, click "view original" on the Google Translate toolbar. Fictional libertineFor other uses, see Don Juan (disambiguation).Don Juan in Mozart's opera Don Giovanni, a painting by Max SlevogtDon Juan (Spanish: [do xwan]), also known as Don Giovanni (Italian), is a legendary fictional Spanish libertine who devotes his life to seducing women. The original version of the story of Don Juan appears in the 1630 play *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* (The Trickster of Seville and the Stone Guest) by Tirso de Molina. The play includes most of the elements found and later adapted in subsequent works, including the setting (Seville), the characters (Don Juan, his servant, his love interest, and her father, whom he kills), moralistic themes (honor, violence and seduction, vice and retribution), and the dramatic ending in which Don Juan dines with and is then dragged down to hell by the stone statue of the father he had previously slain. Tirso de Molina's play was subsequently adapted into numerous plays and poems, of which the most famous include a 1665 play, *Don Juan*, by Molière; a 1787 opera, *Don Giovanni*, with music by Mozart and a libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte largely adapting Tirso de Molina's play; a satirical and epic poem, *Don Juan*, by Lord Byron; and *Don Juan Tenorio*, a romantic play by Jos Zorrilla. By linguistic extension, from the name of the character, "Don Juan" has become a generic expression for a womanizer, and stemming from this, Don Juanism is a non-clinical psychiatric descriptor. This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (December 2024) (Learn how and when to remove this message from Spanish. It is pronounced [doxwan]. The usual English pronunciation is /dɒnˈjuːn/, with two syllables and a silent 'j', but today, as more English-speakers are becoming influenced by Spanish, the pronunciation /dɒnˈhjuːn/ is becoming more common. However, in Lord Byron's version the name rhymes with ruin and true one, and traditionally the name was pronounced with three syllables, possibly /dɒnuːn/ or /dɒnduːn/, in England at the time and by later critics. This would have been characteristic of English literary precedent, where English pronunciations were often imposed on Spanish names, such as Don Quixote /dɒnkwɪts/. There have been many versions of the Don Juan story, but the basic outline remains the same: Don Juan is a wealthy Andalusian libertine who devotes his life to seducing women. He takes great pride in his ability to seduce women of all ages and stations in life, and he often disguises himself and assumes other identities in order to seduce women. The aphorism that Don Juan lives by is: "Tan largo me lo fiáis" (translated as "What a long term you are giving me!") [1]. This is his way of indicating that he is young and that death is still distant;he thinks he has plenty of time to repeat later for his sins.[2]His life is also punctuated with violence and gambling, and in most versions he kills a man: Don Gonzalo (the Commendatore), the father of Do Ana, a girl he has seduced. This murder leads to the famous "last supper" scene, where Don Juan invites a statue of Don Gonzalo to dinner. There are different versions of the outcome: in some versions Don Juan dies, having been denied salvation by God; in other versions he willingly goes to Hell, having refused to repent; in some versions Don Juan asks for and receives a divine pardon.The first written version of the Don Juan story was a play, *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* (The Trickster of Seville and the Stone Guest), published in Spain around 1630 by Tirso de Molina (pen name of Gabriel Tllez).[3]In Tirso de Molina's original version of the story, Don Juan is portrayed as an evil man who seduces women through his ability to manipulate language and disguise his appearance. This is a demonic attribute, since the devil is known for shape-shifting or taking other peoples' forms.[2] In fact Tirso's play has a clear moralizing intention. Tirso felt that young people were throwing their lives away, because they believed that as long as they made an Act of Contrition before they died, they would automatically receive God's forgiveness for all the wrongs they had done, and enter into heaven. Tirso's play argues in contrast that there is a penalty for sin, and there are even unforgivable sins. The devil himself, who is identified with Don Juan as a shape-shifter and a "man without a name", cannot escape eternal punishment for his unforgivable sins. As in a medieval *Dance Macabre*, death makes us all equal in that we all must face eternal judgment.[2]Tirso de Molina's theological perspective is quite apparent through the dreadful ending of his play.[2]Another aspect of Tirso's play is the cultural importance of honor in Spain of the golden age. This was particularly focused on women's sexual behavior, in that if a woman did not remain chaste until marriage, her whole family's honor would be devalued.[4]I2The original play was written in the Spanish Golden Age according to its beliefs and ideals. But as time passed, the story was translated into other languages, and it was adapted to accommodate cultural changes.[3]Other well-known versions of Don Juan are Molière's play *Don Juan ou le Festin de pierre* (1665), Antonio de Zamora's play *No hay plaza que no se cumpla, ni deuda que no se pague, y Convidado de piedra* (1722), Goldoni's play *Don Giovanni Tenorio* (1735), Jos de Espronceda's poem *El estudiante de Salamanca* (1840), and Jos Zorrilla's romantic play *Don Juan Tenorio* (1844). Don Juan Tenorio is still performed throughout the Spanish-speaking world on 2 November ("All Souls Day", the Day of the Dead).Mozart's opera Don Giovanni has been called "the opera of all operas"[5] First performed in Prague in 1787, it inspired works by E. T. A. Hoffmann, Alexander Pushkin, Sren Kierkegaard, George Bernard Shaw, and Albert Camus. The critic Charles Rosen analyzes the appeal of Mozart's opera in terms of "the seductive physical power" of a music linked with libertinism, political fervor, and incipient Romanticism.[6] After seeing a performance of Mozart's opera, Pushkin wrote in the form of a play, not intended for the stage, "The Stone Guest" () in a series "The Little Tragedies" (1830). Alexander Dargomyzhsky composed an opera using the exact text of Pushkin for the libretto (unfinished at the composer's death 1869, completed by Csar Cuk, 1872).The first English version of Don Juan was the *Libertine* (1676) by Thomas Shadwell. A revival of this play in 1692 included songs and dramatic scenes with music by Henry Purcell. Another well-known English version is Lord Byron's epic poem *Don Juan* (1821). Don Juans Ende, a play derived from an unfinished 1844 retelling of the tale by poet Nikolaus Lenau, inspired Richard Strauss's orchestral tone poem *Don Juan*.[7] This piece premiered on 11 November 1889, in Weimar, Germany, where Strauss served as Court Kapellmeister and conducted the orchestra of the Weimar Opera. In Lenau's version of the story, Don Juan's prom

