

Don Juan Canto-I Themes

Writer: Lord Byron | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Love and Marriage: One of the main targets of Byron's satire in *Canto I* is marriage. He presents marriage as something that often brings unhappiness rather than love and harmony. Don Juan's parents, Don José and Donna Inez, are a mismatched couple. Donna Inez is virtuous and intelligent, while Don José is carefree and has a wandering eye. Their constant fights reveal the problems in their relationship. Donna Inez even tries to prove that her husband is mad and wants to get rid of him. She even keeps a journal to note her husband's faults:

"She kept a journal, where his faults were noted."

Another unhappy marriage is between Donna Julia and Don Alfonso. Julia is much younger than Alfonso. Their marriage lacks love. Alfonso is jealous and suspicious. Julia falls in love with the young and innocent Don Juan. Byron uses these two marriages to show how love and understanding are often missing in marriages. In that society, most husbands and wives keep illicit affairs. For this reason, it becomes natural for husbands to be suspicious. As the narrator notes:

"A real husband always is suspicious."

Hypocrisy in Society:

In Canto I of Don Juan, Lord Byron shows that society is full of hypocrisy. One example is Donna Julia. She acts like a good and faithful wife in public. Everyone thinks she is pure and religious. But in private, she falls in love with young Don Juan, even though she is married to Don Alfonso. Another example is Don Alfonso. He pretends to be a good and loving husband. But he comes with a group of people at night to catch his wife doing wrong.

Again, men like Don Alfonso freely have affairs, but when women do the same, society punishes them harshly. Men are forgiven, but women are shamed. We see that Donna Julia is being sent to a convent for her affair with Juan. This shows an unfair rule: one rule for men, a harsher rule for women.