

This study deals with the concept of man in the allegorical novel of Baltasar Gracián's *El Criticón*. It is divided into three parts. The first part tries to describe shortly the events in Europe in the 16. and 17. century and show how they could possibly affect Gracián's life (the Spanish crisis after the Thirty Years' War, the rebellion in Catalonia and Portugal). It also mentions some ideas that had an impact on his work, such as the idea of the heliocentric system, etc. The main importance is given to the foundation of the Jesuit Order, whose member Gracián was. In accordance with the moralistic character of Gracián's work I tried to sketch the outlines of the Jesuit morality, such as the free choice of every human and God's Grace; also I pointed out some ideas of Erasmus surviving in that period. Then I focused shortly on some of the baroque topoi, like the insanity of the world, life like a pilgrimage or the world upside down.