THE BYRONIC HERO AND THE RENAISSANCE HERO-VILLAIN:
ANALOGUES AND PROTOTYPES

APPROVED:

Graduate Committee:

Major Professor

Minor Professor

Committee Member

Committee Member

Chairman of Graduate Studies in English

Dean of the Graduate School
The purpose of this study is to suggest the influence of certain characters in eighteen works by English Renaissance authors upon the Byronic Hero, that composite figure which emerges from Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, the Oriental Tales, the dramas, and some of the shorter poems. Chapter I presents an expanded statement of the overall aim of this entire work and a preliminary projection of the problems to be considered in the succeeding chapters.

Prerequisite to the thesis of this study is the assumption that Byron was familiar with the English Renaissance authors. Chapter II is an inquiry into the nature of Byron's reading through an examination of the extant catalogues of the books Byron owned, his statements regarding the books he had read, the references to Renaissance literature in his poetry and in his conversations, letters, and journal entries, and the recorded comments by his contemporaries on the nature and extent of Byron's reading. It is possible to conclude from this investigation that Byron's knowledge of these Renaissance works was considerable.
Chapter III is a discussion of the nature of Byron's literary borrowings and includes a consideration of nineteenth- and twentieth-century comments on this subject. There are in Byron's work many influences from other writers, which may be explained in part by Byron's remarkable memory and natural imitativeness and in part by Byron's extreme susceptibility to the ideas of others, either in books or in real life. However, the Byronic style is so distinctive that such influences are completely adapted by Byron's creativity and cannot be regarded as either direct plagiaries or imitations.

Chapter IV, a survey of critical commentary on the Byronic Hero from 1812 to the present, indicates, among other things, that the widespread tendency to regard the Byronic Hero as a literary extension of Byron has never been unanimous among critics. A strictly biographical interpretation also ignores the many emphatic denials by Byron that he was the hero of his poetry. The Byronic Hero is assuredly unique in that he was colored by Byron's personality and the spirit of the age, but the many ambivalent traits commingled in the Byronic Hero are not in themselves unique, for similar comminglings are found in many characters in Renaissance literature.

In Chapter V, a comparative analysis of the appearance of Byron's heroes and of a number of Renaissance characters indicates that Byron, in the delineation of his melancholy,
passion-driven heroes, frequently adopted the Renaissance writers' technique of emphasizing a character's dominant passions--such as hatred, vengeance, remorse, love, and ambitions--by the character's physical appearance.

Chapter VI, an analysis of the Gothic elements in Byron's work and in Renaissance tragedy, suggests that the influence upon Byron's work of eighteenth-century Gothic fiction was immediate but comparatively superficial. For the basic ingredients of Gothicism in his poetry, Byron turned to the Renaissance dramatists, finding in their works Gothic elements which became a part of the Byronic Hero and his environment.

Chapter VII examines the Promethean and Luciferian elements in Byron's heroes and in a number of Renaissance characters. These elements represent respectively the indomitable will and the defiant spirit of each of these types of heroes.

Chapter VIII presents a brief summary of the findings of the preceding chapters and suggests in conclusion that the analyses in this study should provide additional insight into the nature of the Byronic Hero which might be significant in the study of many characters in nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature.
THE BYRONIC HERO AND THE RENAISSANCE HERO-VILLAIN:

ANALOGUES AND PROTOTYPES

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North Texas State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Ida Beth Howard, B.A., M.A.
Denton, Texas
August, 1973
To

Laurel and her Great-Grandfather
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE NATURE OF BYRON'S READING</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE NATURE OF BYRON'S LITERARY BORROWINGS</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE BYRONIC HERO AND BYRON HIMSELF</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE BYRONIC HERO AND HIS OUTWARD MANIFESTATIONS OF CHARACTER</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE BYRONIC HERO AND HIS GOTHIC ANCESTRY</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. THE NATURE OF THE BYRONIC HERO'S WILL</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this study is to establish the influence of certain Renaissance dramatic heroes upon the Byronic Hero, that composite figure which emerges from Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, the Oriental Tales, the dramas, and some of Byron's shorter poems. The Oriental Tales and dramas are now read less frequently than Byron's satires, but they constitute a significant portion of Byron's canon and have never been totally ignored by scholars. While Byron's heroes are assuredly unique in that they were colored by the poet's own personality and the spirit of his age, the commingling of ambivalent traits in the Byronic Hero--heroic valor and rebellious nonconformity, tenderness and vengeful cruelty, brooding self-absorption and innate human compassion, philosophical thoughtfulness and near-deliration, triumphant personal integrity and ineluctable doom--is not in itself unique, for similar blendings are found in certain characters in Renaissance literature.

There is no book-length work devoted to a consideration of the influence upon the Byronic Hero of the heroes of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton, and other Renaissance writers. Samuel C. Chew, an outstanding Byron scholar in the first
quarter of this century, provides in his *The Dramas of Lord Byron* perceptive and thorough analyses of the characters in Byron's dramas.\(^1\) His study, however, excludes the Oriental Tales, and these must certainly be taken fully into account in an examination of the Byronic Hero and his literary ancestors. *The Byronic Hero*, by Peter L. Thorslev, Jr., is an excellent historical study of origins and developments of pre-Romantic and Romantic hero-types related to and culminating in Byron's heroes.\(^2\) Thorslev's major concern is with universal hero-types as reflected in the Byronic Hero rather than with specific characters as progenitors, and, except for a brief discussion of the significance of Milton's Satan, he touches but negligibly upon the contributions of other Renaissance heroes. In *Byron and Shakespeare* (1966), G. Wilson Knight traces and analyzes similarities, both general and detailed, between Shakespeare and Byron.\(^3\) Knight's emphasis on the Shakespearean influence as reflected in the Byronic Hero, however, is only incidental to his discussion of the correspondences between Shakespeare and Byron, and he is not concerned about the possible influence of


\(^2\) Peter L. Thorslev, Jr., *The Byronic Hero* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1962).

other Elizabethan dramatists. Although this present study is limited to pre-Restoration figures who are reflected in the Byronic Hero, it should be noted that Laura B. Kennelly, in an unpublished thesis (1969), discusses the parallels between the heroes of Byron and Dryden. 4 Among the numerous shorter studies of Byron's dramas and Oriental Tales, none is concerned chiefly with the literary influence of Renaissance heroes upon the Byronic Hero.

The Byronic Hero's lasting influence upon literature and the other arts is noted by Jacques Barzun, who says that "From Goethe, Pushkin, Stendhal, Heine, Balzac, Scott, Carlyle, Mazzini, Leopardi, Berlioz, George Sand, and Delacroix down to Flaubert, Tennyson, Ruskin, the Brontës, Baudelaire, Becque, Nietzsche, Wilde, and Strindberg, one can scarcely name a writer who did not come under the spell of Byronism and turn it to some use in his own life or work." 5 Thorslev extends the list to include Melville's Ahab, 6 and William R. Harvey argues that James Steerforth, Sidney Carton, and Eugene Wrayburn display Charles Dickens' most


6 Thorslev, p. 3.
successful attempts at Byronism. In view of this general acknowledgment of a "vast post-Byron literary and cultural influence," any work that illuminates another facet of the most seminal product of Byronism—the Byronic Hero—has a significance beyond the study of the poet himself. For this reason particularly, an investigation of the Byronic Hero's sixteenth- and seventeenth-century forebears seems long overdue.

Although he was doubtless a highly subjective artist, creating to a great extent from within the vortex of his own personality, Byron was intensely aware of the social, cultural, political, and religious milieu of nineteenth-century Europe. Moreover, his correspondence and journals, as well as his poetry, reveal that he was acutely interested in and sensitive to human passions as the impelling and directive force of man's overt actions. Finally, and more to the point of this work, Byron was from early boyhood an avid reader with remarkable powers of memory, both quantitative and conceptual, as well as of assimilation. Byron's own statements regarding the amazing scope and quantity of his reading, including the extensive enumeration from memory of

---

7William R. Harvey, "Charles Dickens and the Byronic Hero," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 24 (Dec. 1969), 312. Harvey states that although none of these is a complete Byronic Hero, Dickens deliberately emulated Byron's heroes in an effort to synthesize good and evil in a single character (p. 306).

8Thorslev, p. 4.
his reading before the age of fifteen, may indeed tend to give rise to a degree of skepticism today. Similar accounts by his associates, however, such as Dr. Glennie's assertion that the poet had once read an entire set of volumes containing works of the English poets from Chaucer to Churchill, indicate that Byron was relatively familiar with at least the outstanding works of most British writers of the preceding periods. Because he was unquestionably as susceptible to the world of emotions and ideas as to the world of physical and political activities, Byron's creative genius was deeply affected by all he perceived, both in real life and in books. The first major question to be considered, therefore, is whether Byron's exposure to England's "old ruffiani, the old dramatists" was sufficient to influence substantially his own writings.

An attempt to establish literary influence without the help of strong external evidence is always undertaken with a degree of trepidation. Nonetheless, because of the thorough and careful work of Byron's editors and critics, it is in the present instance a project from which many hazards have


10Ibid., p. 15.

been eliminated. For instance, it is unnecessary in this study to conjecture about whether Byron knew the work of Milton and Shakespeare; both internal and external evidences prove a close and long-standing knowledge of their writings. It is therefore logical to assume from what is known of the poet and his poetry that Coriolanus, as well as other Shakespearean characters, and Lucifer appealed to that same side of Byron's nature that was in thralldom to Napoleon Bonaparte and Aeschylus' Prometheus. In a similar fashion, whereas the poet's admiration for Robert Burton's essays is well-documented, the aura of melancholy surrounding the Byronic Hero is unmistakably similar to that of the late Renaissance as revealed in portions of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Although there is less positive evidence regarding the extent of Byron's knowledge of Kyd, Marlowe, Chapman, Marston, Webster, Tourneur, Massinger, and Ford, there are external indications that he knew some of their work. Even without this assurance, however, it seems evident that certain aspects of the Byronic Hero bear more than an accidental resemblance to such figures of the Renaissance stage as Hieronimo, Tamburlaine, Bussy d'Ambois, and even the Duchess of Malfi.

Closely related to a consideration of the extent of Byron's knowledge of specific sixteenth- and seventeenth-century dramatists is the matter of plagiarism, either deliberate or otherwise, in his own works. In a conversation
with Lady Blessington, Byron stated, "... I have no faith in innate ideas, whatever I may have of predispositions." In speaking with Medwin about Goethe, whom Byron admired, he commented that "as to originality, Goethe has too much sense to pretend that he is not under obligations to authors, ancient and modern;--who is not?" On another occasion, he pointed out to Medwin various passages in one of Scott's new novels which were borrowed, though "new moulded," from other authors. When Medwin commented, "I should not like to have you for a critic," Byron candidly replied, "Set a thief to catch a thief." Moore, in his account of a visit with Byron in Italy, told of observing in his friend's gondola a book containing "a number of paper marks between the pages." In reply to Moore's query of what book it was, Byron answered, "Only a book from which I am trying to crib, as I do wherever I can." In sharp contrast to this candor regarding "premeditated plagiarism," however, was the poet's heated rejoinder in a letter to Murray regarding charges of plagiarism in Don Juan: "I laugh at such charges, convinced that no writer ever borrowed less, or made his materials more his own." Also in a letter to Murray concerning Hobhouse's

13 Medwin, p. 142.
14 Ibid., p. 200.
15 Moore, p. 420.
16 Ibid.
17 Barzun, p. 211.
remark that George Ticknor, an American recently arrived from Germany, had commented "that Manfred was taken from Goethe's Faust," Byron wrote testily, "The devil may take both the Faustuses, German and English,—I have taken neither."\textsuperscript{18}

Regardless of whether one accepts at face value the poet's explicit disavowals of literary borrowings or is troubled by his ambivalence on the subject, Byron's incredible memory and its role in his creations cannot be disregarded on this score. Dr. Julius Millingen remarked that "so highly was he gifted with memory, that every word he heard that struck, or every passage he read that pleased him, left an indelible impression. Not only could he repeat the finest passages of our classics, but also the most ludicrous of Bombastes Furioso; and we found it difficult, after repeated trials, to cite a line from any poet, he had attentively perused, without his being able to add the lines that followed."\textsuperscript{19} And the Countess of Blessington, commenting on the same subject, noted that "His [Byron's] memory is extraordinary, for he can repeat lines from every author whose works have pleased him; and in reciting passages that have called

\textsuperscript{18}Moore, p. 369. Letter of 23 October 1817.

forth his censure or ridicule, it is no less tenacious."

In suggesting that his friend Scott was perhaps unaware of using passages from other authors, Byron seemed to be including himself in the remark that "It is a bad thing to have too good a memory." Also, in his assertion to Lady Blessington "that Montaigne was the greatest plagiarist that ever existed, and certainly had turned his reading to the most account," Byron was obviously explaining the importance of memory in his own writing: "... if one has read much, it is difficult, if not impossible, to avoid adopting, not only the thoughts, but the expressions of others, which, after they have been some time stored in our minds, appear to us to come forth already formed, like Minerva from the brain of Jupiter, and we fancy them our own progeny, instead of being those of adoption." Attempting to describe to her his imagistic concept of memory as a repository in which assimilation and re-creation take place, Byron told Lady Blessington that he thought of memory as "the mirror which affliction dashes to the earth, and looking down upon the fragments, only beholds the reflection multiplied," an idea which he had earlier used in an elegiac reminiscence of Lord Howard in the third canto of Childe Harold: "E'en as a

20 Blessington, pp. 148-49.  
21 Medwin, p. 200.  
22 Blessington, p. 342.  
23 Ibid., p. 184.
broken mirror which the glass / In every fragment multiplies;
and makes / A thousand images of one that was" (III.xxxiii.
289-91). 24

A third prerequisite to the conclusions of this study is an examination of the Byronic Hero as he actually appears in the Tales and dramas and a reconsideration of critical statements regarding his complex characteristics and their origins. Since the first appearance of Childe Harold in March 1812, the sensational aspects of the poet's life have tempted many readers to view Byron's brooding, adventurous heroes as slightly disguised projections of Lord Byron himself or, perhaps, of Byron as he fancied himself. The preface to the first and second cantos of Childe Harold contains the poet's pointed disclaimer: "It has been suggested to me by friends, on whose opinions I set a high value, that in this fictitious character, Childe Harold, I may incur the suspicion of having intended some real personage: this I beg leave, once for all to disclaim—Harold is the child of imagination. . . ." 25 His friend Moore, however, writing of Byron's popularity in London in 1813,


25 Ibid., p. 2.
noted that to "strangers, and such as were out of this immediate circle . . . the fierce gloom and sternness of his imaginary personages were, by the greatest number of them, supposed to belong, not only as regarded mind, but manners, to himself." In a letter to Moore from Pisa on 4 March, 1822, ten years after the Childe first greeted the reading public, Byron was still declaring that he should not be identified with his own hero: "My ideas of a character may run away with me: like all imaginative men, I, of course, embody myself with the character while I draw it, but not a moment after the pen is from the paper." It is apparent that the asperity with which he said to Dallas in 1812, "I by no means intend to identify myself with Harold, but to deny all connections with him. . . . I would not be such a fellow as I have made my hero for all the world" had become weary ruefulness when he spoke on this same topic to Lady Blessington in 1823. "It is no wonder that I am considered a demon, when people have taken it into their heads that I am the hero of all my own tales in verse. They fancy one can only describe what has actually occurred to one's self, and forget the power that persons of any imagination possess of identifying themselves, for the time being, with the creations of their fancy. This is a peculiar distinction

26 Moore, p. 179.  
27 Ibid., p. 552.  
conferred on me, for I have heard of no other poet who has been identified with his works." \(^{29}\) Byron doubtless overstated his case, for clearly there are autobiographical elements in his hero; on the other hand, he was right in refusing to be identified with Harold. This re-evaluation of various critical assessments deriving from the long-popular autobiographical bias of scholars toward the Byronic Hero is undertaken in order to arrive at a valid stance or perspective from which to project the chapters which follow.

The major portion of this work is a concomitant examination of various aspects of the Byronic Hero, principally as he emerges from Byron's Oriental Tales and dramas, and a number of Renaissance dramatic characters with whom he shares certain distinguishing traits. The first area of exploration is logically that of the Byronic Hero's general characteristics, those obvious properties which the reader immediately perceives upon reading *The Giaour* or *Lara*, for instance. His proud bearing is that of an aristocrat and a natural leader of men; yet his past is mysterious, and his solitariness is darkened by brooding melancholy. Although his face seldom betrays the surging passions which his fiercely strong will struggles to control, he has as great a capacity for love and compassion as for cruelty, hate, and vengeance. On the surface and singly, these attributes seem

\(^{29}\)Blessington, p. 316.
hardly unique to either Byron's creations or those of any period. It is when they are coupled with an aspiring, and at times heroic, determination which can be defeated but never conquered that they begin to become the particular properties of the Byronic Hero. But this is still little more than his silhouette. The essence of his character must be searched out from within the peculiar nature of his aspiration and of his failure--both of which are the inevitable result of his essentially bifurcated being.

Each of Byron's heroes is motivated by an aspiration that is all-consuming and ultimately destructive. The primal components of this obsessive determination are love and hate, mutually inclusive and fatally ambivalent. Stemming from these and intrinsic to them are other basic emotions such as revenge, pride, ambition, remorse, and defiance. The catalysis of this paradoxical catena of ingredients is the Byronic Hero's volition, indivertible and unvanquishable. Conrad's love for Medora and his concern for his band of corsairs war with, yet never displace or deflect, his defiant hatred of Seyd. Informed by reason and intuition, both bred in experience, that his vengeful raid on the Pacha's heavily manned stronghold is doubtful of success from the beginning, Conrad still hazards love, friendship, and life in the abortive venture. Yet it could not be otherwise because of the nature of his aspiration. Although the Giaour, Conrad, Lara, Manfred, Cain, and Marino Faliero
bear the hallmark of their creator, the particularities of their aspiration are discernible in earlier characters such as Marlowe's Tamburlaine and Faustus; Shakespeare's Coriolanus and Brutus; Chapman's Bussy d'Ambois; Ford's Giovanni and Perkin Warbeck; Tourneur's Vindice and, more faintly, Charlemont; Webster's Duchess of Malfi and Vittoria Corombona; Marston's Antonio and Altofronto; Massinger's Malefort junior; and Milton's Satan and Samson Agonistes. Certainly none of these is an exact counterpart to the Byronic Hero—such a claim would be absurd in view of Byron's intensely personalized method of characterization—yet their influence on the nature of the Byronic Hero's aspiration as well as on the nature of his failure is suggested by pervasive similarities.

An analysis of this failure requires two gauges—that of convention and that of the character's nature. By convention's norms, he inevitably falls short of his goal: the Giaour fails to save Leila; Conrad does not defeat Seyd; Selim neither escapes Giaffir's cruelty, obtains Zuleika for his own, nor triumphantly leads his pirate crew against avarice and tyranny; Lara's rebel army of serfs refuses Lara's integrating discipline, thus precluding victory against Otho's aristocratic forces, and Lara himself is killed as he attempts to direct his peasants in a final stand against the enemy; Cain, striving against God's tyranny and the constant fear of mortality, introduces pain
and death into the Garden, which he would keep undefiled by either; Marino Faliero, seeking only an equitable justice, is executed as a traitor to the Venice he has lovingly served as Doge for many years; and Sardanapalus, a devotee at the altars of peace and beauty, dies in a bloody fray that rapes both ideals. Thus when the achievement of the Byronic Hero is weighed against the world's standards for success, it must be adjudged failure. As the aspiration of each protagonist hurls him against an insuperable force, he courts disaster not only for himself but also for those who love and depend upon him. His ensuing remorse and guilt result from the same paradox which gave rise to Paul's statement of his own dilemma to the Romans: "... I do that which I would not" and again "... for the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do."30

Convention's yardsticks, however, are inadequate for a measurement of the final result of the Byronic Hero's achievement. Men who may be defeated but never conquered cannot be defined and delimited by the world's complacent assessment. The same unremitting and implacable defiance exhibited by Tamburlaine, Coriolanus, Bussy d'Ambois, and Satan is reflected in Byron's heroes as they scornfully face the destiny which, in each case, they have chosen.

30 Romans 7:15, 19.
Death is but what the haughty brave,
The weak must bear, the wretch must crave;
Then let Life go to him who gave:
I have not quail'd to danger's brow
When high and happy—need I now? (G, 1024-1028)

The words are those of Byron's Giaour, but the attitude had been enfleshed by British dramatists over three centuries earlier. The Duchess of Malfi, calmly magnificent in the face of Bosola's taunting cruelty and his promise of death, states simply, "I am Duchess of Malfy still" (IV. ii.139). Byron's old Doge, stripped of his office and awaiting execution, says with a kindred dignity undergirded by defiance, "So now the Doge is nothing, and at last / I am again Marino Faliero" (MF, iii. 698-99). As Perkin Warbeck and his followers, with halters about their necks, await the execution ordered by King Henry, Warbeck chides his men to face death resolutely:

Death? pish! 'tis but a sound; a name of air;
A minute's storm, or not so much:
... the pain is past
Ere sensibly 'tis felt. Be men of spirit!

Works, p. 320.


Works, p. 548.
Spurn coward passion! so illustrious mention
Shall blaze our names, and style us kings o'er Death.
(V.iii.216-221)34

This defiance which transforms physical defeat into moral or spiritual victory springs from a contralateral action of Luciferian and Promethean qualities. That is, each of these characters, those of Byron and of the earlier dramatists, draws inspiration from the archetypal forms of both Prometheus and Lucifer for his challenging, though ultimately futile, stance against tyranny, as well as his haughty disdain of death, tyranny's ineluctable companion. His humanitarian impulses are Promethean, and these provide the hillocks by which he is often tripped in the fiery surge of his heroic but ruthless aspiration. Had Conrad, for example, not commanded his men to save the harem women and so diverted their efforts from the battle with Seyd's forces, the impetus gained by the advantage of surprise might have resulted in a pirate victory. Instead, the respite provided by Conrad's humane gesture allowed Seyd to regroup his own senses and recoup his losses, thereby routing the invaders. The Corsair's narrator, however, notes that Conrad "was a

villain" (305)\textsuperscript{35} and says that "within that murkiness of mind / Work'd feelings fearful and undefined" (211-12),\textsuperscript{36} although "the outward signs of evil thought" are betrayed "no further than the bitter smile" (227, 230)\textsuperscript{37}--all of which indicate the Luciferian presence with the Promethean in Conrad's character. Luciferian traits combined with Promethean impulses are also apparent in Coriolanus. His Luciferian hatred for Rome decrees her destruction, along with that of family, friends, estates, and a lifetime's memory; yet his adamantine resolve yields to Volumnia's anguished appeal to the humanitarian side of his nature. Had Coriolanus been totally Luciferian, Rome's devastation had been accomplished. In him, however, as in Conrad, "There is a war, a chaos of the mind, / When all its elements convulsed, combined, / Lie dark and jarring with perturbed force" (C.II.x.326-28).\textsuperscript{38} Consequently, Coriolanus' Promethean impulses eventuate in his defeat and death. And so it is with each of these characters: his failure, if indeed it is failure, is conditioned by the nature of his aspiration and is largely the result of the bifurcation of his impulses toward good and evil.

In order to have been influenced in the creation of his heroes by certain Renaissance dramatic characters, Byron

\textsuperscript{35} Works, p. 342.  
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p. 208.  
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p. 341.  
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p. 352.
would of necessity have been familiar with much of the dramatic literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The following preliminary examination of his reading—how he read, what he read, when he read, and his deliberate as well as casual reactions to what he read—should reveal something of the extent of his general knowledge of these earlier writers. 39

39See Appendix A for a chronological listing of Byron's Oriental Tales and dramas which are included in this study and Appendix B for a similar listing of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century works included herein.
CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF BYRON'S READING

Byron's approach to reading was like his approach to everything that interested him—unprescribed, enthusiastic, and unpredictable. At an age when most British children were exposed to carefully metered doses of Mrs. Anna Letitia Barbauld's Hymns in Prose and Charles and Mary Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare, Byron had read most of the books of the Bible. In a letter to John Murray in 1801, Byron said that he was "a great reader and admirer of those books, and had read them through and through before I was eight years old,—that is to say, the Old Testament, for the New struck me as a task, but the other as a pleasure."¹ Reading was always important to Byron, and, as Elizabeth French Boyd points out, it is somewhat remarkable that the significance of Byron's literary background is so frequently underemphasized by his critics and biographers.² Thomas Moore, commenting on Byron's delight in new books during his Harrow days, said that "every novelty, whether serious or light, whether lofty

¹Moore, p. 536. Letter of 9 October 1821.
or ludicrous, found a welcome and an echo." 3 Certainly the small boy who, under the erratic guidance of Agnes and May Gray and Catherine Gordon, devoured the dark tales of Satan's expulsion, Adam's transgression, and Cain's heinous crime is easily discernible in the youth who bought a copy of Mother Goose's tales from a hawker one morning and gleefully read it for the first time while he dined. 4 Before he left the grammar school in Aberdeen in 1798, however, the scope of Byron's reading had widened. Marchand notes that there were in Aberdeen two book shops and a circulating library which Mrs. Byron might have patronized. 5 Marginal notes Byron made in his copy of Isaac D'Israeli's The Literary Character help complete the picture of his childhood reading: "Knolles, Centemir, De Tott, Lady M. W. Montague, Hawkin's Translation from Mignot's History of the Turks, the Arabian Nights, all travels, or histories, or books upon the East I could meet with, I had read, as well as Ricaut, before I was ten years old." 6 And shortly before he died, Byron recalled that Knolles's Turkish History was "one of the first books that gave me pleasure when a child; and I believe it had much influence on my subsequent wishes to visit the Levant, and gave, perhaps, the oriental colouring which is observed

3 Moore, p. 46.  
4 Ibid.  
5 Marchand, I, 38.  
6 Ibid.
in my poetry." He also mentioned that, after the Arabian Nights and the histories and travels, he "preferred the history of naval actions, Don Quixote and Smollett's novels, particularly Roderick Random, and I was passionate for the Roman History. When a boy, I could never bear to read any Poetry whatever without disgust and reluctance."  

In September 1799, after the move from Aberdeen to London, Mrs. Gordon placed her son in Dr. Glennie's small boarding school at Dulwich, a quiet suburb a few miles from the center of London, where Byron lived and studied from 1799 to 1801. Contradicting later reports of Byron's desultory scholarship, Dr. Glennie commented that Byron entered "upon his tasks with alacrity and success" and that his reading in history and poetry was far beyond the usual standards of his age, and in my study he found many books open to him, both to please his taste and gratify his curiosity; among others a set of our poets from Chaucer to Churchill, which I am almost tempted to say he had more than once perused from beginning to end. He showed at this age an intimate acquaintance with the historical parts of the Holy Scriptures, upon which he seemed delighted to converse with me, especially after our religious exercises of a Sunday evening. . . .  

Dr. Glennie's statement is important for two reasons: it adds support to Byron's own account of his early reading, and it also indicates that the poet had read voluntarily in his schoolmaster's set of one hundred and nine volumes a

7 Marchand, I, 38.  
8 Ibid.  
9 Moore, p. 15.
large portion of England's poetry by the time he was twelve years old, despite his later claim of disliking in boyhood "any Poetry whatever."

In ascertaining the extent of Byron's knowledge of the earlier writers, it is as imperative to listen to what Byron had to say, both casually and for deliberate effect, as to what those who knew him had to say on the same subject. The result is sometimes disharmonious in detail, but the overall view, as it finally emerges from his poetry, is seldom inconsistent. Moore, for example, gave the list of books which Byron "hastily and promiscuously scribbled out" from memory in a memorandum-book begun in 1807.\textsuperscript{10} The list contained over fifty different authors and was subdivided into historical writings, law, philosophy, geography, biography, poetry, eloquence, divinity, and miscellanies.\textsuperscript{11} At the conclusion of the staggering list, Byron added off-handedly, "All the books here enumerated I have taken down from memory. I recollect reading them, and can quote passages from any mentioned. I have, of course, omitted several in my catalogue; but the greater part of the above I perused before the age of fifteen."\textsuperscript{12} He further claimed to have read above four thousand novels, including the works of Cervantes, Fielding, Smollet, Richardson,

\textsuperscript{10} Moore, p. 46. See Appendix C for this reading list.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., pp. 46-47.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 47.
Mackenzie, Sterne, Rabelais, and Rousseau, etc. etc. The book, in my opinion, most useful to a man who wishes to acquire the reputation of being well read, with the least trouble, is "Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy," the most amusing and instructive medley of quotations and classical anecdotes I ever perused. If, however, he has the patience to go through his volumes, he will be more improved for literary conversation than by the perusal of any twenty other works with which I am acquainted,—at least in the English language.13

Byron pontifically concluded by stating that

In my list of English I have merely mentioned the greatest;--to enumerate the minor poets would be useless, as well as tedious. Perhaps Gray, Goldsmith, and Collins, might have been added, as worthy of mention, in a cosmopolite account. But as for the others, from Chaucer down to Churchill, they are "voces et praeterea nihil";—sometimes spoken of, rarely read, and never with advantage. Chaucer, notwithstanding the praises bestowed on him, I think obscene and contemptible;—he owes his celebrity merely to his antiquity, which he does not deserve so well as Pierce Plowman, or Thomas of Ercildoune. English living poets I have avoided mentioning;—we have none who will survive their productions. Taste is over with us; and another century will sweep our empire, our literature, and our name, from all but a place in the annals of mankind.14

Byron's statements about his youthful readings are, unfortunately, too generalized to be really helpful. He asserted that, besides the twenty-five biographical works included, he had read "thousands not to be detailed," and, in the poetry section, he claimed to have read "all the British classics as before detailed, with most of the living poets. . . .

13Moore, p. 48.
14Ibid., p. 49. Letter of 30 November 1807.
Some French, in the original, of which the Cid is my favourite. --Little Italian. --Greek and Latin without number." The "British classics as before detailed" fail to appear in the catalogue, unless Byron was referring to Johnson and Anderson's lives of the British poets in his biography section, and it is singular that such a comprehensive list omitted all mention of dramatic works, either British or Continental. Moore's comment that the record "is such as almost to startle belief,--comprising, as it does, a range and variety of study, which might make much older helluones librorum hide their heads" is echoed and enlarged upon with lifted eyebrow by Clement Tyson Goode's remark that "The only adequate commentary indeed at such an array of reading matter is mirabile dictu! --at the impossible amount, except for genius, if true; at the poet's presumptuous imagination, if not." John Cam Hobhouse, whose friendship with Byron was more intimate and of longer standing than that of Moore, made this significant marginal note in his copy of Moore's work: "Certainly he [Byron] did not read these books." He later qualified this first judgment, however, by remarking that "As Lord Byron says he read these volumes I am inclined to believe the fact, but it is

15 Moore, pp. 46-47.  
16 Ibid., p. 30.  
certain he never gave any sign of this knowledge afterward."\(^{18}\)

In a letter to R. C. Dallas in 1808, Byron reported on his reading with an air of studied insouciance:

> As to my reading, I believe I may aver, without hyperbole, it has been tolerably extensive in the historical department; so that few nations exist, or have existed, with whose records I am not in some degree acquainted, from Herodotus down to Gibbon. Of the classics, I know about as much as most schoolboys after a discipline of thirteen years; of the law of the land as much as enables me to keep "within the statute"—to use the poacher's vocabulary. I did study the "Spirit of Laws" and the Law of Nations; but when I saw the latter violated every month, I gave up my attempts at so useless an accomplishment:—of geography, I have seen more land on maps than I should wish to traverse on foot;—of mathematics, enough to give me the headache without clearing the part affected;—of philosophy, astronomy, and metaphysics, more than I can comprehend; and of common sense so little, that I mean to leave a Byronian prize at each of our "Almae Matres" for the first discovery,—though I rather fear that of the longitude will precede it.\(^{19}\)

Byron's reading in these formative years was a restive foraging—rapid, omnivorous, and undisciplined. He "abhorr'd / Too much, to conquer for the poet's sake / The drilled dull lesson, forced down word by word / In my repugnant youth" (CH.IV.lxxv.672-75).\(^{20}\) Moore mentioned this aversion to systematic scholarship but also described his friend's obsessive and self-directed reading: "I have already adverted to

---

\(^{18}\) Marchand, I, 85.

\(^{19}\) Moore, p. 64. Letter of 21 January 1808.

\(^{20}\) Works, p. 66.
the exceeding eagerness with which, while at Harrow, he [Byron] devoured all sorts of learning,—excepting only that which, by the regimen of the school, was prescribed for him. The same rapid and multifarious course of study he pursued during the holidays; and, in order to deduct as little as possible from his hours of exercise, he had given himself the habit, while at home, of reading all dinner-time."\(^{21}\)

Byron's later musings on his youthful reading prowess corroborate Moore's account: "At School, I was . . . remarked for the extent and readiness of my general information; but in all other respects idle; capable of great sudden exertions . . . but of few continuous drudgeries."\(^{22}\) During the years at Harrow, he continued, "my general information was so great on modern topics, as to induce a suspicion that I could only collect so much information from reviews, because I was never seen reading, but always idle and in mischief, or at play. The truth is that I read eating, read in bed, read when no one else reads; and had read all sorts of reading since I was five years old, and yet never met with a review, which is the only reason that I know of why I should not have read them."\(^{23}\)

\(^{21}\)Moore, p. 46.


\(^{23}\)Ibid.
Marchand suggests that Byron's reading habits were like those of Dr. Johnson—both "tore the heart out of a book."\textsuperscript{24} Certainly there is a vast difference in studiously perusing a book's every word and page and in voraciously snatching its major ideas and images in order to sweep through the next volume; it seems unlikely, in view of the formidable list he compiled at the age of seventeen, that Byron could have practiced the former method. The fact, however, that Byron had read widely, if not deeply, by the beginning of his Cambridge period, and it is "to this early and extensive study of English writers" that Moore attributed "that mastery over the resources of his own language with which Lord Byron came furnished into the field of literature, and which enabled him, as fast as his youthful fancies sprung up, to clothe them with a diction worthy of their strength and beauty."\textsuperscript{25}

Although Byron was an avid reader throughout his life, the warp of his literary background was constituted prior to 1805; the weft was added during the next nineteen years. Even in the fast-paced days at Cambridge, he made time for reading. He discovered Walter Scott's poetry for the first time in the Trinity College rooms of William Bankes, variously referred to later as "collegiate pastor and master, and

\textsuperscript{24}Marchand, I, 84.\hspace{2cm}\textsuperscript{25}Moore, p. 48.
patron" as well as "father of all mischiefs" at Trinity.  

Byron became, from this time on, a devoted admirer of Scott's writings. When he fled from the social whirl into which he had plunged after the phenomenal success of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold* and the earliest Oriental Tales, it was to his "utterly confused and tumbled-over library," a growing collection which had its beginnings in his small room at Harrow.  

During the winter of 1814, he had read "Machiavelli in Italian, parts of Chardin's *Voyages en Perse*, Sismondi's *De la littérature du Midi*, and the tales of Bandello." Declining a dinner invitation at Holland House on 27 February 1814, Byron wrote in his journal that Hobhouse "says I am growing a loup garou, a solitary hobgoblin . . . If I could always read, I should never feel the want of society. . . ." Two years later, finding that his "mind wanted something craggy to break upon" in the last months of 1816, Byron turned to the library of an Armenian monastery in Venice, daily studying there, "by way of divertisement," the Armenian language and examining the monastery's collection of manuscripts and books. He wrote to Hobhouse on 31 March 1817, shortly before leaving Venice, that he had

---

26 Marchand, I, 104.  
28 Marchand, I, 443.  
29 Ibid., p. 437.  
30 Moore, p. 329. Letter of 5 December 1816.
recently bought a ninety-two-volume set of Voltaire's works which he was reading with amusement and delight, although Voltaire was "dreadfully inaccurate frequently."\(^{31}\)

As the expressions of need for solitude became more pronounced in Byron's journal entries, so did the references to his reading. Several entries for January 1821 indicate the vital role of reading during this phase of his life, as well as something of the nature of his reading. On 8 January, he read a history of Greece and Scott's *Rob Roy*; the next day, he read Johnson's "The Vanity of Human Wishes," noting that "'tis a grand poem--and so true .... The infinite variety of lives conduct but to death, and the infinity of wishes lead but to disappointment."\(^{32}\) In an entry for 10 January marked "midnight," he wrote that he had been turning over different lives of the poets,\(^{33}\) and on 12 January, he read the English poets in Campbell's *Specimens*.\(^{34}\) On 14 January, he "turned over Seneca's tragedies" and, later the same day, "read Diodorus Siculus--turned over Seneca, and some other books."\(^{35}\) He read Friedrich Schlegel's criticism of Dante and Goldsmith on 29 January, recording

\(^{31}\)Marchand, II, 687. \(^{32}\)Quennell, p. 758.

\(^{33}\)Moore, p. 476. This may refer solely to Thomas Campbell's *Specimens of the British Poets*, which Byron was editing at the time, but, as he had been reading Johnson earlier, the reference is probably to Johnson's *Lives*.

\(^{34}\)Ibid. \(^{35}\)Ibid., p. 478.
his own heavily italicized commentary on what he considered Schlegel's flawed critical judgment. 36

According to accounts by James Hamilton Browne and John Edward Trelawny, Byron spent the daylight hours aboard the Hercules on the first lap of the voyage from Italy to Greece in 1823 reading Scott's Life of Swift, Col. Hippesley's Expedition to South America, Grimm's Correspondence, Voltaire, and La Rochefoucauld. 37 We are indebted to Dr. Julius Millingen, a young English doctor who offered his medical services to the Greeks, for one of the last accounts of Byron's reading during the final months of his life. 38 Millingen joined Byron in Metaxata in early November 1823 before moving on to Missolonghi on 8 December. 39 Of the poet's days in Metaxata, Millingen wrote that the portion of his time, which was not employed in correspondence with the different chiefs in Greece, and his friends in England, was devoted to reading. Novels, from his earliest youth, were the works in which he delighted most. So prodigious was the number which he had perused, and so strong was the impression they had left on his memory, that he frequently defied us to mention one, however indifferent, that he had not read, and of which he could not give some account. Sir Walter Scott's were his favourites. . . . Passing in review the rest of the poets, he gave to each, without exception, a

36 Quennell, p. 778.
37 Marchand, III, 1089, 1095.
38 Ibid., p. 1132. 39 Ibid., p. 1139.
few lashes of that playful but often caustic satire which inevitably enlivened his conversation, and rendered it so piquant. 40

There was, perhaps, as little unanimity among Byron's contemporaries as among modern scholars regarding his literary accomplishments, but the loudest disavowals from among Byron's acquaintances of his reading were those of Sir Walter Scott and Leigh Hunt. Scott commented to Moore in 1815 that "Lord Byron's reading did not seem to me to have been very extensive either in poetry or history. Having the advantage of him in that respect, and possessing a good competent share of such reading as is little read, I was sometimes able to put under his eye objects which had for him the interest of novelty." 41 Boyd interprets this comment as simply what "an expert older reader with a library of 15,000 to 20,000 volumes would think of a younger man equipped with a much smaller, though compact and rich collection of books." 42 While this interpretation may explain Scott's kindly condescension toward Byron's library, it fails to justify Scott's denigration of Byron's reading. Boyd's suggestion that "Byron seldom made an effort to appear bookish or well-read" is true only to a point; his conversations, letters, and journal entries are studded with literary references. These frequent allusions to poetry, drama, and other works are, for the most part, as unstudied and organic in his remarks as the

40 Lovell, p. 467. 41 Moore, p. 280. 42 Boyd, p. 93.
very language with which he expresses himself; and his affectation of "the dilettantism of the noble and the dandy" seems rarely to have precluded the intrinsic literary flavor of his conversation or writings. But we shall return to this point later.

The churlishness of Hunt's well-known remarks on Byron's reading is, of course, attributable to the circumstances of his writing *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries*, but the doubtful validity of his conclusions is not in keeping with Hunt's frequently sound critical acumen. "Lord Byron's collection of books was poor and consisted chiefly of new ones," Hunt wrote of Byron's Pisan library that had recently been moved from Ravenna. This was, at best, only superficially true: Hunt ignored the necessary reductions entailed in any major domestic move, the facts of Byron's

Ibid.

*Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries* (Philadelphia: Carey, 1828), p. 44. At Shelley's invitation, Hunt had come to Pisa in the summer of 1822 to assist Byron and Shelley in the publication of The Liberal. Installed in the ground-floor apartments of Casa Lanfranchi, Hunt and his family were totally dependent upon Byron, and the situation soon became mutually intolerable. Byron lost interest in the periodical after Shelley's death, although three issues were published, but he continued to feel responsible for the Hunts, who persisted in remaining in Italy. Byron finally disengaged himself from the obligation which Hunt claimed by forgiving certain debts and by financing the Hunts' journey to Florence. Hunt, however, felt that he had been ill-used and that Byron had been grudging, parsimonious, and condescending in their relationship. It was in this bitter frame of mind that he wrote *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries* on his return to England in 1823. See Marchand, II, 927-28; III, 1008, 1012-14, 1040, 1048, 1052-53, 1081-82.
economizing in 1822 and 1823 which involved the sale of
books as well as furniture, and the significance of the
Greek expedition which Byron was then considering seriously.
Hunt continued: "Spenser he could not read; at least he
said so. I lent him a volume of the 'Fairy Queen,' and he
said he would try to like it. Next day he brought it to my
study-window, and said, 'Here Hunt, here is your Spenser. I
cannot see anything in him'; and he seemed anxious that I
should take it out of his hands. . . ." This is amazing
criticism indeed in view of Byron's having written Childe
Harold's Pilgrimage in the Spenserian stanza. One of the
books Byron took on the Grand Tour in 1809 was an anthology
of English poetry called Elegant Selections, and it con-
tained a portion of The Faerie Queene. Spenser's stanza
and metre apparently suited Byron's purposes, and the first
two cantos were published while Hunt was an established and
active member of London's literary community. While Hunt
was luxuriating in Surrey Gaol in 1813, Byron visited him,
and the two talked mainly of books during dinner on that
occasion. Byron had a splendid library during this period,
a fact of which Hunt was surely aware. The two writers were
subsequently in communication at least through 1815 because,
when the Hunts moved to Hampstead in the late summer or early

45 Boyd, p. 99.  46 Hunt, p. 44.
47 Marchand, I, 212.  48 Ibid., p. 388.
fall of that year, Byron and Hunt exchanged notes and gifts of books. Considering Byron's pride in his library and Hunt's natural inquisitiveness, it is impossible to believe that Hunt was ignorant of Byron's fine collection of books. Hunt concludes his assessment of Byron's reading with a comment on Byron's admiration for Scott's writing: "His liking for such of the modern authors as he preferred in general, was not founded in a compliment to them; but Walter Scott, with his novels, his fashionable repute, and his ill opinion of the world whom he fell in with, enabled him to enter heartily into his merits; and he read him over and over again with unaffected delight." That Scott's works were among Byron's favorites is indisputable, but Hunt again misses his critical mark through the peevishness of his aim. If Scott had "an ill opinion of the world," it has been well-concealed by his biographers and in his own works, and the only totally admissible portion of Hunt's criticism is contained in the final clause of his last syntactically convoluted sentence.

The fact of Byron's extensive reading does not, of course, insure his having read the works of England's "old dramatists." However, a survey of the books he owned is possible through three itemized sale catalogues, prepared in 1813, 1816, and 1827, for the disposal of his library.

49 Marchand, I, 549.  
50 Hunt, p. 46.
Although a book's presence in a library does not necessarily mean that the book is read, in Byron's case it is logical to assume that he was familiar with the volumes which he moved about with him and with which he parted so reluctantly when he left England in 1816.51

Because of the critical state of his finances in 1812, Byron accepted on 15 August Thomas Claughton's offer of 140,000 pounds for the entire estate of Newstead Abbey, including the furnishings and the timbers on its 3,200 acres. Claughton agreed to a deposit of 25,000 pounds and to a three-year interest-paying mortgage of 60,000 pounds, with the balance to be paid 25 December 1812.52 Byron's creditors, aware that the estate had been sold, were pressing for payment, but Claughton persistently equivocated in honoring the sale agreement. He had not made the first payment by 19 October, claiming, among other things, that the title to Newstead was not clear.53 Byron was torn between holding Claughton to his bargain and hoping he would finally default so that Newstead might be sold to a more reliable purchaser, but Byron's legal adviser, John Hanson, was doubtful that a second sale would bring so good a price and dissuaded Byron from legal action against Claughton.54 Claughton paid 5,000 pounds of the deposit money on 5 November 1812 and another

51 Marchand, II, 548. 52 Ibid., I, 362.
53 Ibid., p. 382. 54 Ibid., p. 383.
5,000 in December, but these token payments were immediately absorbed by Byron's swarming creditors.\textsuperscript{55} Harassed by debts and dissatisfied with life in England, Byron had planned as early as February 1812 to go abroad in the spring of 1813, or as soon as his muddled financial affairs could be settled.\textsuperscript{56} On 3 June 1813, having postponed his departure to July, he authorized the sale of everything at Newstead not specifically included in his contract with Claughton.\textsuperscript{57} During this period of acute economic pressures, Byron moved his residence from No. 8, St. James Street\textsuperscript{58} to Blatt's Hotel in Dover Street,\textsuperscript{59} and then to a small apartment at 4 Bennet Street.\textsuperscript{60} Planning to sell his library at auction, Byron sent the books from Newstead along with his London collection to John Murray, his publisher and friend, to be processed for the sale. A catalogue was prepared in 1813; but, after Claughton agreed to sacrifice all but 3,000 pounds of the 28,000 he had finally paid by the summer of 1814 and to return Newstead to Byron, the library was not sold at this time.\textsuperscript{61}

Although the three extant sale catalogues describing the contents of his library in 1813, 1817, and 1827 may not

\textsuperscript{55}Marchand, I, 377.
\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., pp. 317-18.
\textsuperscript{57}Ibid., p. 391.
\textsuperscript{58}Ibid., p. 355.
\textsuperscript{59}Ibid., p. 377.
\textsuperscript{60}Ibid., p. 381.
\textsuperscript{61}Ibid., p. 466.
represent all the books Byron owned, they provide significant indications of the general trend of his reading. It is interesting to note in passing that most of the volumes in the first two catalogues may be categorized according to Byron's early survey of his reading before the age of fifteen. For example, there are numerous historical works, memoirs, biographies, essays, travel books, geographies, and novels. It is impossible to estimate exactly all the individual titles and the total number of books included in any of the three catalogues because the description of a number of items concludes with such vague terms as "and seven others," "and five more," or "and twelve others." Among the thirty-nine listings of classical works in the 1813 Sale Catalogue, some items include several separate books by various writers and others are multivolumed editions. Also the first two items in the 1816 Sale Catalogue are "A Lot of Pamphlets" and "A Collection of odd Volumes," and the 1827 Catalogue lists separately a "Lot of Odd Volumes" and a "Lot of Odd Old Volumes."

The 1813 Sale Catalogue's 303 items comprise over 1,230 volumes which represent over 375 different works. The

---

62 A Catalogue of books, the property of a nobleman about to leave England on a tour to the Morea. To which are added a silver sepulchral urn, containing relics brought from Athens, in 1811; and a silver cup, the property of the same noble person; which will be sold by auction by R. H. Evans, at his house, No. 26, Pall Mall, on Thursday, July 8th, and the following day . . . . Printed by W. Bulmer, and Co., Cleveland-Row, St. James's, 1813.
largest block is English literature, and it is with these books we are chiefly concerned. Regardless of Byron's youthful protestation against reading poetry and his frequently iterated disdain of England's old dramatists, this catalogue definitely establishes that at this period Byron owned a substantial number of poetry collections and dramatic works by the earlier poets. Later in this study, evidence will be offered that he not only owned but read these works. The poetry includes anthologies such as *Flowers of Literature* in eight volumes; two editions of *Elegant Extracts in Verse*, one published in two volumes in 1800 and another in 1805; an eleven-volume set of the * Beauties of England and Wales*; and Anderson's fourteen volumes of *British Poets*. The sixty-one volumes of Bagster's 1807 edition of *Poets of Great Britain from the Time of Chaucer to Sir William Jones* are described as bound in Russia leather and in a travelling case. There is a copy of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and an 1804 edition of Shakespeare's *Poems* in two volumes. Closely related to these are an 1806 edition in three volumes of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, also bound in Russia, and the 1806 edition of Chalmers' nine-volume *Biographical Dictionary*. The 1807 edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles* in six volumes, a two-volume set of the 1806 edition of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* in Russia, and a seven-volume set of Milton's *Prose Works* represent Byron's interest in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century prose.
His general interest in English drama is reflected in the possession of Mrs. Inchbald's 1808 edition of *British Theatre* in twenty-five volumes and her seven-volume *Collection of Farces* published in 1809, as well as an untitled "Volume of Plays." A specific acquaintance with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British dramatic works, moreover, is indicated by the presence in the catalogue of *Ancient British Drama* in three volumes (1810), a two-volume edition of Ford's *Dramatic Works* (1807), two four-volume editions by Gifford of Massinger's *Plays* (1805 and 1813), Bell's 1788 edition of Shakespeare's *Plays* in twenty volumes, and two volumes in an imperial folio bound in red morocco of Boydell's *Shakespeare* with the large plates.

By 1814, Byron's financial difficulties were temporarily relieved, and he had given up any immediate plans for going abroad. Settled in the spacious apartment at the Albany which he subleased from Lord Althorp,\(^63\) Byron retrieved his books from Murray in May.\(^64\) After his marriage to Annabella Milbanke, Byron and his bride moved into No. 13, Piccadilly Terrace, the Duchess of Devonshire's former home, in late March or early April 1815.\(^65\) Claughton's forfeiture was long since spent, and Byron was again engulfed in debts. As early as November 1815, a bailiff moved into the house to assure

\(^{63}\) Marchand, I, 443. \(^{64}\) Boyd, p. 88.  
\(^{65}\) Marchand, II, 527.
the creditors' claims, and Byron knew that his library must be sold. When Murray learned that Byron had gone so far as to have his books appraised by another book-dealer, the publisher sent Byron a check for 1,500 pounds and assured him that an equal amount would be provided in a few weeks. Byron returned the check, however, explaining that the circumstances requiring the sale of his books were "not immediately pressing." By March 1816, the inevitable could be postponed no longer. His wife had demanded and obtained a legal separation, and his financial state seemed as hopeless as a reconciliation with Lady Byron. Bitterly resigned to leaving England forever, Byron arranged for the library's sale by public auction. He proofread the catalogue drawn up for the sale, which was held by R. H. Evans at No. 26, Pall-Mall on 5 and 6 April 1816.

The library described in the 1813 sale catalogue is, of course, the nucleus of the library offered in 1816, but there were several interesting additions in the 1816 catalogue. To his previous collections of poetry, he had added Jane's * Beauties of the Poets* (1800), Tyrwhitt's two-volume edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1798), an 1813 edition of Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* in three volumes, and a three-volume edition of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* published in 1755. Although Byron apparently acquired no more English Renaissance prose works, his interest in Italian Renaissance literature seems to have intensified. There are in addition to the two editions of Tasso's *Jerusalem Liberated* in the first catalogue three others listed in 1816, as well as three editions of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and a thirteen-volume set of Machiavelli's works. An 1804 edition of *British Drama* in five volumes and Beaumont and Fletcher's *Works*, with notes by Weber, in fourteen volumes (1813), are the only new dramatic items. The complete listing of 383 items in the 1816 sale catalogue includes over 1700 volumes representing over 500 works. A continuing interest in classical works is indicated by a greater number of such books in the second catalogue, and Byron's literary vagaries are obvious in such curious titles as *Dictionary of Cant and Flash Language* (1795), *Art of Tormenting* (1806), *Flim Flams* (1805), Meiner's four-volume *History of the Female Sex* (1808), and the novels *Miseries of*
Human Life (1807) in two volumes. It seems likely that in writing the Oriental Tales Byron may have referred to such books as Costume of Turkey (1802), Hope's Costume of the Ancients (1809), Hunter's edition of Lavater's Physiognomy (1789), and Tales of the East (1812).

A comparison of the 1813 sale catalogue with that of 1816 indicates that Byron withheld very few books from the 1816 sale, although there is evidence that he may have retained several. Just before his departure from England, for instance, Byron sent a book as a memorial to Miss Mercer Elphinstone, a wealthy beauty who had been playfully flirtatious with him since the summer of 1812; this book seems to have been a remnant from his then-dispersed library.70 In August 1816, only four months after the sale, Byron visited Brussels on his way to Italy and called on Pryse Lockhart Gordon, whom Byron had not seen since he was at Harrow. Major Lockhart's well-known description of Byron's huge travelling coach, copied from one of Napoleon's but "with additions," suggests that the poet was probably not totally without books at this time: "Besides a lit de repos, it contained a library, a plate-chest, and every apparatus for dining."71

70 Marchand, II, 599.

71 Personal Memoirs; or Reminiscences of Men and Manners at Home and Abroad, During the Last Half Century (London: Colburn and Bentley, 1830), II, 328.
As soon as he was on the Continent, Byron began rebuilding a library. He ordered books from England and rummaged through bookstores in Switzerland and throughout Italy. By 1820, however, Byron was becoming increasingly critical of the books Murray sent him. For example, writing to Murray from Ravenna on 12 October, Byron said,

> By land and sea carriage a considerable quantity of books have arrived; and I am obliged and grateful: but Medio de fonte leporum, surgit amari aliquid, etc. etc.; which being interpreted, means, I'm thankful for your books, dear Murray; But why not send Scott's Monastery? the only book in four living volumes I would give a baioccolo to see—'bating the rest of the same author, and an occasional Edinburgh and Quarterly, as brief chroniclers of the times... Crayon is very good; Hogg's Tales rough, but racy, and welcome. . . . Books of travels are expensive, and I don't want them, having travelled already; besides, they lie. Thank the author of "The Profligate, a Comedy," for his (or her) present. Pray send me no more poetry but what is rare and decidedly good. There is such a trash of Keats and the like upon my tables, that I am ashamed to look at them... but all prose ('bating travels and not by Scott) is welcome. . . . 72

Even more exacting was his request to Murray of 25 September 1821 that

> you shall not send me any modern, or (as they are called) new publications, in English whatsoever, save and excepting any writing, prose or verse, of (or reasonably presumed to be of) Walter Scott, Crabbe, Moore, Campbell, Rogers, Gifford, Joanne Baillie, Irving (the American), Wilson (Isle of Palms man), or any especial single work of fancy which is thought to be of considerable merit; Voyages and Travels,

72 Moore, p. 458.
provided that they are neither in Greece, Spain, Asia Minor, Albania, nor Italy, will be welcome. . . . No other English works whatsoever."

On 9 October, Byron sent Murray an abrupt and arbitrary order for "Faber's Treatise on the Cabiri. . . . Sainte Croix's Mystères du Paganisme. . . . A common Bible, of a good legible print (bound in Russia). . . . Any novels of Scott, or poetry of the same. Ditto of Crabbe, Moore and the Elect; but none of your curst commonplace trash. . . ."\textsuperscript{74}

During his seven years in Italy, Byron moved his residence and his steadily growing collection of books from one place to another many times. Long before the move from Ravenna late in 1821, he was referring to this collection as his library. A letter to Scott written 12 January 1822 is a moving tribute to the older writer's Scottish novels as well as an indication of the importance of books to the self-exiled Byron: "To me those novels have so much of 'Auld lang syne' (I was bred a canny Scot till ten years old), that I never move without them; and when I removed from Ravenna to Pisa the other day, and sent on my library before, they were the only books that I kept by me, although I already have them by heart."\textsuperscript{75} A few months after he moved his household into the Casa Saluzzo at Genoa near the end of 1822, Byron was seriously economizing, with the primary

\textsuperscript{73} Moore, p. 532. \quad \textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p. 536. \\
\textsuperscript{75} Marchand, III, 960.
purpose of channeling his resources into aid for the Greek cause. When he sailed for Cephalonia on 15 July 1823, he had sold most of his possessions, including many of the books. There is, unfortunately, no complete or accurate description of Byron's library before he left for Greece. After his death on 19 April 1824, the books he had with him in Missolonghi and those he had left at Argostoli were inventoried in Zante. Others may have been left in Cephalonia and in various places in Italy. On 5 July, the Florida moved quietly up the Thames, returning Lord Byron and his possessions to London. Gilbert H. Doane, in his prefatory essay to the privately printed edition of the 1827 sale catalogue, suggests that the sale of the books was delayed until Byron's "effects were finally gathered together from various corners of Europe and England," at which time "the remainder of his library (he reserved some of the books in the first sale) and those he accumulated between 1816 and 1824 were sold by Evans" on 6 July 1827. Boyd says that the books and papers shipped home with Byron's body in 1824 were not sorted until the spring of 1827. At this time, the executors and Murray carefully went through all the documents.

76 Marchand, III, 1062.  
77 Boyd, p. 99.  
78 Marchand, III, 1234.  
79 Ibid., p. 1254.  
80 Catalogue of the Library of the Late Lord Byron, Which Will be Sold at Auction by Mr. Evans at his House, No. 93, Pall Mall on Friday, July 6, 1827, reprinted with an introductory essay by Gilbert H. Doane, 1929.
for Moore's proposed edition of Byron's *Life, Letters and Journals*, and the books were then consigned to Evans' auction rooms at No. 93, Pall-Mall.\(^{81}\) Considered jointly, both suggestions seem logical reasons for the delay in disposing of the books.

The 1827 sale catalogue is disappointing and seems to justify Hunt's remark that Byron "was anxious to show you that he possessed no Shakespeare or Milton" during these later years,\(^{82}\) although there is a copy of Hayley's *Life of Milton* (1799). It lists only two anthologies of English poetry, *Beauties of English Poetry* (1818) and *Poetic Mirror* (1816), David Lindsey's poems entitled *Dramas of the Ancient World*,\(^{83}\) and much contemporary poetry, but there is no English Renaissance poetry, prose, or drama. Classical works are fairly well-represented, and, according to the catalogue description, Byron "occasionally pencilled some of the most striking passages" in the seven volumes of *Greek Tragic Theatre* (1779). Moore noted, after viewing the books on 11 July 1827, that Byron also made pencil marks on the

\(^{81}\)Boyd, p. 100. \(^{82}\)Hunt, p. 45.

\(^{83}\)In a letter to Thomas Medwin 12 April 1822, Mary Shelley wrote from Pisa that Byron had just received from England "a volume of poems entitled 'Dramas of the Ancient World'--and by a strange coincidence, the author (one David Lindsey) has chosen three subjects treated by Lord Byron; Cain, the Deluge and Sardanapalus. The first two are treated quite differently. Cain begins after the death of Abel & is entitled the Destiny & death of Cain." The Letters of Mary Shelley, ed. Frederick L. Jones (Norman, Oklahoma: Univ. of Okla. Press, 1944), I, 167.
copy of Aeschylus' *Prometheus*. Byron's journal entries for 1821 indicate his familiarity with the 1589 edition of *Senecae Tragoedie* listed, but there is little else to distinguish the eight classical items in the catalogue. The 233 items include over 800 volumes representing some 315 different works. But these books, unlike those in the 1816 sale, do not seem to comprise a library. Volumes are missing from sets; a number of books are described as damaged; and there is no balance or pattern among the various types of works. In fact, Boyd's remark that the "whole collection looks like the remnants of a library" is a tactfully kind appraisal of this tatterdemalion assortment of reading material.

The evidence examined thus far—that of letters, journal entries, records of conversations, and book lists—admits of several conclusions pertinent to this study. First, Byron was an avid reader from an early age and had access to the works of a sizable number of Renaissance writers before his eleventh birthday. Since the poet's reading was consistently informed by curiosity, Dr. Glennie's assertions, as well as those of Byron in later years, that the boy read widely in the books in the Dulwich study appear


85 Boyd, p. 100.
credible. In addition, Byron owned, prior to 1813, a substantial number of volumes containing works by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British authors, and the fact that he had procured more books of the poetry and drama of this period by 1816 suggests the possibility of a growing interest in and a deepening knowledge of English Renaissance literature. Although the conspicuous absence of such works in the library sold after his death may well be accounted for by the assumption that this 1827 collection of books does not actually represent Byron's last library, there is another explanation that seems more in keeping with what we know of Byron's reading. His childhood familiarity with England's old dramatists continued, as indicated by the first two catalogues, at least until 1816. It therefore seems logical to assume that in the first twenty-seven years of his life a great portion of this literature had become intrinsically a part of Byron's basic mental equipment, assimilated and integrated through the function of memory until it formed an indelible background to his thought processes. To have read a book is not necessarily to know that book; if, however, ideas, images, and characters appear to move without volition from the book's pages into the reader's written and spoken thoughts, to affirm that the book has become a part of the reader's essential thinking does not strain credulity.

And this is precisely the manner in which Byron's unfeigned knowledge of early British literature is manifested.
Throughout his life, for example, Byron's conversations and writings, even the most casual, were studded with lines and phrases from the earlier writers. In order to show Byron's continuous use of such references, I am including here only those to Shakespeare. An early instance of this occurred when he was only ten years old and newly installed with his mother at Newstead Abbey. Mary Chaworth came over from the neighboring estate of Annesley Hall to dine one day, and John Hanson, Mrs. Byron's legal adviser, was present. Aware of Byron's studious indifference to the twelve-year-old visitor, Hanson said jokingly to the boy, "Here is a pretty young lady—you had better marry her." Byron replied, "What, Mr. Hanson, the Capulets and Montagues intermarry?" The boy's quick rejoinder was, of course, an oblique allusion to the famous duel in which the fifth Lord Byron killed William Chaworth, as well as to the immediate occasion. In a letter to Moore on 6 January 1814, just after The Corsair went to press, Byron referred to a recent period of creative lethargy which he hoped had been dispelled: "Any thing is better than stagnation; and now, in the interregnum of my autumn . . . the antithetical state of my lucubrations makes me alive, and Macbeth can 'sleep no more':--he was lucky in getting rid of the drowsy sensation of waking again." When The Corsair was published 1 February 1814, there was a

---

86 Marchand, I, 50. 87 Moore, p. 236.
furious outcry from the Tory press over eight lines which Byron had unaccountably appended in this first edition to the poem's opening. Upon hearing of the hostile political reaction to the so-called "Lines to a Lady Weeping," Byron wrote to Murray on 7 February: "I see all the papers in a sad commotion with those eight lines; and the Morning Post, in particular, has found out that I am a sort of Richard III. --deformed in mind and body. The last piece of information is not very new to a man who passed five years at a public school." Writing to Murray on 7 June 1819 from Bologna, Byron told of visiting the beautiful cemetery beyond the city walls where he found "an original of a Custode, who reminded me of the grave-digger in Hamlet. He has a collection of Capuchins' skulls, labelled on the forehead, and taking down one of them, said, 'This was Brother Desidero

Weep, daughter of a royal line,
A Sire's disgrace, a realm's decay;
Ah! happy if each tear of thine
Could wash a father's fault away.

Weep—for thy tears are Virtue's tears—
Auspicious to those suffering isles;
And be each drop in future years
Repaid thee by thy people's smiles! (Works, p. 268)

More explains that these seemingly innocuous lines, composed 7 March 1812, were occasioned by a rumor "that the Princess Charlotte of Wales burst into tears on hearing that the Whigs had found it impossible to put together a cabinet, at the period of Mr. Perceval's death" (Works, p. 1012). Murray, sensitive to the "eruption of righteous indignation in the Tory Press" over the lines in the first edition of The Corsair, removed them from the poem's second edition, but Byron insisted they be replaced in the third edition. See Marchand, I, 434.
Berro, who died at forty—one of my best friends."

Emphasizing in this same letter a desire to be buried in Italy, Byron moved from the bitterly facetious statement that "I am sure my bones would not rest in an English grave, or my clay mix with the earth of that country. . . . I would not even feed your worms, if I could help it," to a typically appropriate quotation from Shakespeare's *Richard II*:

> So, as Shakespeare says of Mowbray, the banished Duke of Norfolk, who died at Venice, that he, after fighting . . . retired himself
> To Italy, and there, at Venice, gave
> His body to that _pleasant_ country's earth

(IV.i.95-100).

From Ravenna on 1 June 1820, Byron explained to Moore something of his role in the Countess Guiccioli's separation proceedings, concluding with "If the man has me taken off, like Polonius 'say, he made a good end'. . . ." And in a diary entry dated 19 January 1821, Byron noted: "Winter's wind somewhat more unkind than ingratitude itself, though Shakespeare says otherwise. At least, I am so much more accustomed to meet with ingratitude than the north wind, that I thought the latter the sharper of the two." In a stinging attack upon a section of the Rev. W. L. Bowles'  

89 Moore, p. 398.


91 Moore, p. 447.

92 Quennell, p. 767.
"Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope" in which Bowles seemed to revile the moral content of Pope's work, Byron remarked to Murray on 25 March 1821 in a second letter on this subject that "the seduction of a woman's mind as well as person is not, perhaps, the least heinous sin of the two in morality. . . . Othello would not 'kill Desdemona's soul.'" As wearily impatient with the many well-meaning words and gestures of friends as with the barbed comments of enemies on the subject of his estrangement from Lady Byron, Byron wrote to Lady Blessington from Albaro on 6 May 1823 that "it is difficult for me to withstand the thousand provocations on that subject, which both friends and foes have for seven years been throwing in the way of a man whose feelings were once quick, and whose temper was never patient. But 'returning were as tedious as go o'er.' I feel this as much as ever Macbeth did; and it is a dreary sensation. . . ." In a conversation with Lady Blessington this same year, Byron revealed a sensitivity to the opinions of others that was usually well-visored by indifference or sarcasm: "Shakespeare says, that 'it is a bitter thing to look into happiness through another man's eyes'; and this must he do who has lost his reputation. Nay, rendered nervously sensitive by the falseness of his position, he sees, or fancies he sees, scorn or avoidance in the eyes of all he encounters; and, as

93Moore, p. 706.  
94Ibid., p. 581.
it is well known that we are never so jealous of the respect of others as when we have forfeited our own, every mark of coldness or disrespect he meets with arouses a host of angry feelings, that prey upon his peace." Thomas Smith, an Englishman who in August 1823 joined Byron's party in a visit to several Greek islands, recounted an incident that is at once playful and macabre but which illustrates how completely Byron's mind was permeated with Shakespeare's work. Arriving at Santa Euphemia early in the afternoon, the group was directed by the area's quarantine officer to a monastery in which quarters had been provided. It was dark by the time Byron and his friends had climbed the steep hill to the monastery walls, but Count Gamba, Smith, and Byron were interested in examining some open sarcophagi near the monastery. As the three were "speculating philosophically" on the sarcophagi's "quondam contents," Byron suddenly "clambered over into the deepest, and lay in the bottom at full length, muttering some English lines" that Smith recognized as being from "the scene in 'Hamlet,' where he moralises with Horatio on the skull."  

The same skillful ease by which allusion seems casually married to idea is observable in much of Byron's poetry. In the early poem "To a Lady," published in Hours of Idleness in 1807, the young poet says, "For gardens seem, by one

95Blessington, P. 357. 96Marchand, III, 1111.
consent / (Since Shakespeare set the precedent, / Since Juliet first declared her passion) / To form the place of assignation" (17-20). Referring to Venetian women in particular and all women in general, Byron noted in "Beppo," written in the autumn of 1817, that "Shakespeare described the sex in Desdemona / As very fair, but yet suspect in fame" (xvii.129-30). And he scornfully asserted in "Epilogue" (1819) that Wordsworth "deems himself of Shake-speare's peers." In "Hints from Horace," written in 1811 but not published until 1820, Byron says that "our Shake-speare limits verse to kings, / When common prose will serve for common things; / And lively Hal resigns heroic ire, / To 'hollowing Hotspur' and his sceptred sire" (133-136). Among the many allusions of this casual type in Don Juan are the lines describing the perfection of Haidée's beauty which needs no cosmetic assistance: "But Shakespeare also says, 'tis very silly /'To gild refined gold, or paint the lily'" (III.lxxvi.607-08); those referring to Wellington's victory at Waterloo: "You are 'the best of cut-throats':--
do not start; / The phrase is Shakespeare's, and not mis-
102 applied" (IX.iv.25-28); and those included in the poet's
own commentary on the frightful uncertainty which results
from war's senseless toll of human life: "'To be, or not to
be? that is the question,' / Says Shakespeare, who just now
is much in fashion" (IX.xiv.105-06). 103

Byron's well-documented dislike of most contemporary
writers, such as the acidulous remark in a letter to Murray
from Ravenna 12 September 1820 that he had "no patience with
the sort of trash you send me out by way of books; except
Scott's novels. . . . Campbell is lecturing--Moore idling--
Southey twaddling--Wordsworth drivelling--Coleridge muddling--
Joanna Baillie piddling--Bowles quibbling, squabbling, and
snivelling" 104 was rivaled only by his frequently stated
aversion to England's "old dramatists, with their tiresome
conceits, their jingling rhymes, and endless play upon
words." 105 However, it is essential to remember in consider-
ing Byron's critical comments, particularly those which seem
delivered for effect, that one of his traits was his strong
desire to avoid any appearance of conformity or truckling to
convention's demands. Thus, if it were the current literary
vogue to praise a certain author, Byron's inclination would
likely dictate a denial of all merit in that author. Hazlitt,

102 Works, p. 896. 103 Ibid., p. 898.
104 Moore, p. 592. 105 Medwin, p. 93.
in his lectures on Elizabethan literature in 1820, noted that it was "the present fashion to speak with veneration of old English literature," although his adulation was little more than lip-service. "Though we seem disposed to think highly of" these early English writers, he continued, "and to give them every credit for a masculine and original vein of thought, as a matter of literary courtesy and enlargement of taste, we are afraid of coming to the proof, as too great a trial of our candor and patience."\textsuperscript{106} Byron's attitude and practice were exactly the opposite of those described by Hazlitt.

Although Byron frequently disparaged England's earlier writers, this was fundamentally a contrapuntal element in his overall critical regard, an explicit depreciation that may be, and often is, contravened by other critical comments as well as by an effortless blending of lines and thoughts from these writers into his own ideas. An accurate evaluation is possible only when the apparent dissimilitude of the point and counterpoint are reconciled within the composite. An example of this is his attitude toward Milton. Byron said to Dr. James Kennedy in 1823, "I do not so greatly admire Milton myself. . . ."\textsuperscript{107} Yet, in the latter part of his


\textsuperscript{107} Lovell, p. 440.
life, he wrote in a journal that one of Milton's poems had recently recalled one of the happiest times he had known:

"How strange are my thoughts!—The reading of the song of Milton, 'Sabrina fair,' has brought back upon me--I know not how or why--the happiest, perhaps days of my life . . . when living at Cambridge with Edward Noel Long, afterwards of the Guards,--who . . . was drowned early in 1809, on his passage to Lisbon. . . . The description of Sabrina's seat reminds me of our rival feats in diving."  

Byron's affirmation that he was not a great admirer of Milton is thus invalid as a final critical concept because it is incomplete. His actual evaluation is inherent in the total evidence of his familiarity with Milton's life and work. The third canto of Don Juan contains a passage that is a significant qualifying statement to Byron's words to Kennedy:

Milton's the prince of poets--so we say;  
A little heavy, but no less divine;  
An independent being in his day--  
Learn'd, pious, temperate in love and wine;  
But, his life falling into Johnson's way,  
We're told this great high priest of all the Nine  
Was whipt at college--a harsh sire--odd spouse,  
For the first Mrs. Milton left his house.  

(III.xci.817-24)  

Two further examples of Byron's knowledgeable range and perceptive analysis of Milton's writings and life are sufficient.
to justify the critical import of his statement in the preface to Cain that "since I was twenty I have never read Milton; but I had read him so frequently before, that this may make little difference."\textsuperscript{110} In one of his salvos against the Rev. Bowles' "Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope," Byron discussed at some length the absurdity of Milton's use of "cannon against the angels of God,"\textsuperscript{111} and, in discussing \textit{Paradise Lost} with Medwin, Byron expounded upon Milton's commingling of mythical allusion and Biblical text, his sympathetic treatment of Satan, and the absence of doctrinal creed and the "too great familiarity with Heaven" by which he shocked "the severe apprehensions of the Catholics, as he did those of the divines of his day."\textsuperscript{112} Therefore, to take at face value a single reference to one of England's earlier writers is to ignore the contextual whole that emerges from Byron's conversations, letters, journals, and poetry.

In a conversation with Thomas Medwin at Pisa in 1821, for instance, Byron said, "It is but lately that people have been satisfied that Shakespeare was not a god, nor stood alone in the age in which he lived; and yet how few of the plays, even of that boasted time, have survived! and fewer still are now acted. Let us count them. Only one of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{110}Works, p. 627.
  \item \textsuperscript{111}Moore, p. 696.
  \item \textsuperscript{112}Medwin, p. 77.
\end{itemize}
Massinger's, one of Ford's, one of Ben Jonson's, and half-a-dozen of Shakespeare's. . . . Shakespeare's Comedies are quite out of date; many of them are insufferable to read, much more to see. . . . One can hardly find ten lines together without some gross violation of taste or decency. What do you think of Bottom in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream'? or of Troilus and Cressida passim? When Medwin replied that these two plays, "with all their faults contain some of the finest poetry," Byron promptly quoted fourteen lines from Troilus and Cressida, beginning with "Prophet may you be! / If I be false, or swerve a hair from truth" and dramatically concluding with "Yea, let them say, to stick the heart of falsehood-- / As false as Cressid!" (III.iii. 190-203). At this point in the conversation, Medwin recalled that Byron "handed me a prospectus of a new translation of Shakespeare into French prose, and read part of the first scene in 'The Tempest,' laughing inwardly, as he was used to do. . . ." Samuel Rogers wrote of having dinner at the Casa Lanfranchi with Byron, Shelley, and Trelawny in the spring of 1822 during which "Byron chose to run down Shakespeare (for whom he . . . either had, or pretended to have, little admiration.)" Rogers' perceptive aside is

113 Medwin, p. 93.
114 Ibid., pp. 93-94; Shakespeare, p. 997.
115 Medwin, p. 95.
116 Marchand, III, 990.
sound: Byron took delight (as he frequently did) in shocking his guest, especially Shelley, whose admiration of Shakespeare was well-known to Byron. He remarked to Lady Blessington in 1823 that Shakespeare "owed one half of his popularity to his low origin, which, like charity, covereth a multitude of sins with the multitude, and the other half, to the remoteness of the time at which he wrote from our own days. . . . for who goes to see his plays, and who, except country parsons, or mouthing, stage-struck theatrical amateurs, read them?"117 He knew, of course, that the Countess was a great admirer of Shakespeare. Her assessment of the poet's words is a discerning diagnosis:

My conviction is, that, in spite of his declarations to the contrary, he admires Shakespeare as much as most of his countrymen do; but that, unlike the generality of them, he sees the blemishes that the freedom of the times in which the great poet lived led him to indulge in his writings. . . . I have rarely met with a person more conversant with the works of Shakespeare than was Byron. I have heard him quote passages from them repeatedly; and in a tone that marked how well he appreciated their beauty. . . . Could there be a less equivocal proof of his admiration of our immortal bard than the tenacity with which his memory retained the finest passages of all his works? When I made this observation to him he smiled . . . but . . . I persevered in affirming what I have never ceased to believe, that, in despite of his professions to the reverse, Byron was in his heart a warm admirer of Shakespeare.118

117 Blessington, p. 335. 118 Ibid., pp. 337-38.
Byron's deliberate attempts to annoy or outrage friends with derogative remarks about the old authors; his many casual references to these writers in his poetry, conversations, letters, and journal entries; and his serious critical comments on and genuine tributes to them must all be recognized as aspects of the same basic attitude. They are, in fact, the three major manifestations of Byron's wide and long-standing knowledge of and his genuine regard for England's "old ruffiani." He wrote glibly enough to Shelley that "I am not an admirer of our old dramatists as models. I deny that the English have hitherto had a drama at all,"\(^{119}\) and to Murray that "the old dramatists . . . are full of gross faults, pardoned only for the beauty of their language,"\(^{120}\) just as he rhetorically asked the Countess of Blessington "who goes to see" Shakespeare's plays and "who . . . read[s] them?" But these examples are correlative to others that, on the surface, appear completely different. For instance, Byron chose a passage from *King Lear* to declaim on Speech Day at Harrow in July 1805 and was so caught up in the emotional delivery of the lines that he was forced to leave the room.\(^{121}\) This incident appears in a poem he wrote the next year, "On a Distant View of the Village and School


\(^{120}\) Ibid., p. 492. Letter of 4 May 1821.

\(^{121}\) Marchand, I, 97.
of Harrow on the Hill," in which he said,

... as Lear, I pour'd forth the deep imprecation,
By my daughters of kingdom and reason deprived;
Till, fired by loud plaudits and self-adulation,
I regarded myself as Garrick revived. (21-24)\textsuperscript{122}

The last two lines are but a thinly applied youthful veneer of pride designed to veil and protect emotion. And in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," published in 1809, Byron demanded to know whether the great plays of "Shakespeare, Otway, Massinger, forgot, / On stalls must moulder, or in closet rot" while the "sapient managers" of London's theatres continued to produce the dismal offerings of "Cherry, Skeffington, and Mother Goose."\textsuperscript{123} On 14 December 1811, Byron attended a performance by the great actor Kemble as Coriolanus and wrote enthusiastically that "he was glorious, and exerted himself wonderfully."\textsuperscript{124} This enthusiasm is somewhat muted in the fourth canto of Childe Harold, where the poet says, "And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakespeare's art, / Had stamped her image in me," but the acknowledgment is significant (CH.IV.xviii.158-59).\textsuperscript{125} Byron asks in the poetic address he wrote for the opening of the newly rebuilt Drury Lane Theatre on 10 October 1812 if "this new, nor less

\textsuperscript{122} Works, p. 96. \textsuperscript{123} Ibid., p. 249.
\textsuperscript{124} Moore, p. 148. Letter of 15 December 1811.
\textsuperscript{125} Works, p. 58.
"aspiring pile" will be, as the old theatre had been, a shrine worthy of Shakespeare. 126

When Byron asked Dr. Kennedy in 1823 whether he admired Shakespeare, the reply was, "By no means to that extent which is generally done," and Byron promptly agreed, "Neither do I." 127 But before the end of 1813, Byron had seen The Merry Wives of Windsor, Antony and Cleopatra, which he termed "a salad of Shakespeare and Dryden," 128 Richard III, and Coriolanus. 129 He saw Othello on 7 May and 19 May 1814, 130 and it is probable that he saw the play again on 25 May. 131 Byron even instigated plans for a performance of Othello at the Casa Lanfranchi in 1822, and Medwin recorded that "Lord Byron was to be Iago. Orders were to be given for the fitting up of the stage, preparing the dresses, etc., and rehearsals of a few scenes took place." 132 Although an actual production never materialized, Medwin noted that "perhaps Lord Byron would have made the finest actor in the world. His voice had a flexibility, a variety in its tones, a power and pathos beyond any I ever heard; and his countenance was


129. Chew, note p. 32.


capable of expressing the tenderest, as well as the strongest emotions. I shall never forget his reading Iago's part in the handkerchief-scene."\(^{133}\)

There are also several instances of Byron's occasionally making a straightforward comment on the old dramatists that, atypically, may be taken as a direct indication of his familiarity with Renaissance literature. In a letter to Lord Holland in 1812, Byron wrote that he considered "a prologue of old Coleman's to Beaumont and Fletcher's Philaster" one of the best prologues in the language.\(^{134}\)

Arguing in 1819 that the first canto of Don Juan should be printed in its entirety, except for the lines on Castlereagh, Byron wrote to Murray from Venice: "If the poem has poetry, it would stand; if not, fall: the rest is 'leather and prunella,' and has never affected any human production 'pro or con.' Dulness is the only annihilator in such cases. As to the cant of the day, I despise it, as I have ever done all its other finical fashions. . . . If you admit this prudery, you must omit half Ariosto, La Fontaine, Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Massinger, Ford, all the Charles Second writers; in short, something of most who have written before Pope and are worth reading. . . ."\(^{135}\)

Byron pointed out to Medwin in 1822 that a number of tragedies were too horrible

\(^{133}\)Medwin, p. 132.  \(^{134}\)Barzun, p. 48.

for presentation on the British stage. After noting that Horace Walpole's The Mysterious Mother "has never been acted," he added, "nor Massinger's 'Brother and Sister.' Webster's 'Duchess of Malfy' would be too harrowing: her madness, the dungeon-scene, and her grim talk with her keepers and coffin-bearers, could not be borne. . . ."136 The two notes on Byron's reference to Massinger in Medwin's book reveal an interesting conflict regarding Byron's reading. The one by William Harness, who had been one of Byron's closest friends since their years at Harrow,137 states that, as there was no such play by Massinger, Byron probably meant 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, by Ford—a masterpiece of its kind, and of which my late noble school-fellow entertained the highest regard." Medwin's own note asserts that "What play Lord Byron meant is not clear. The Noble Poet was not very well read in the Old Plays—and for my part, I neither knew, know, nor desire to know anything about them."138 Of the two statements, that by Harness seems obviously the more reliable in view of his long acquaintance with Byron, whereas the other appears to be simply a reflection of the contumelious air that Byron often assumed toward the old dramatists in his conversations with Medwin and other of his friends in later years.

136 Medwin, p. 97. 137 Marchand, I, 70. 138 Medwin, p. 97.
It is possible, of course, to cite numerous other illustrations relative to Byron's reading—what he read, how he read, and his use of this reading. However, the evidence from the foregoing analysis seems to establish that Byron's knowledge of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British writers was sufficient in both quantity and quality to have influenced his own writing. The next consideration is that of the nature of literary influence in Byron's poetry. Only if a writer's work is totally original in thought and execution can he be considered completely independent of previous literary models and modes, and Byron would be the first to note the absurdity of such a possibility.
CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF BYRON'S LITERARY BORROWINGS

In the course of a conversation on contemporary writers, Washington Irving once remarked to old Isaac D'Israeli that "no stream of literature is stagnant, no water undisturbed . . . no track unemployed."\(^1\) This statement by one of the few living authors for whom Byron manifested admiration is singularly applicable to Byron's use of his extensive reading. The frequent reflections of other authors in Byron's work have called forth charges of plagiarism, and some of these must be considered, of course. However, most of the accusations of deliberate literary plundering which were made against Byron were too often tinged with malicious subjectivism to make for critical accuracy.

Some of the most vehement examples of such critical attacks were contained in six issues of the \textit{Literary Gazette}, a Tory journal, published during February and March 1821. The first five articles, a series entitled "Lord Byron's Plagiarisms," are essentially the comments of Alaric A. Watts, which the anonymous reviewer incorporated into his own appraisal of what he considered Byron's piratical appropriations.

of "the language and ideas of others beyond all precedent." Watts, who had been one of Byron's most ardent admirers prior to the publication of the first two cantos of Don Juan, had become one of the poet's leading detractors by 1820, and the manuscript upon which the Literary Gazette based its series was a painstaking effort by Watts to impugn Byron's literary reputation on the grounds of flagrant plagiarisms. In his introduction, the reviewer asserted that his "exposition" was aimed at doing "strict literary justice" and that the reader must decide for himself whether Byron was "an authorized spoliator of other men's goods" or "a culpable borrower," a "royal fowl or the daw in borrowed plumes." He then analyzed several of Byron's characters, having concluded at the onset that all the "dramatis personae (and especially such as appear in prominent parts) are mostly the property of other exhibitors" and have been merely refurnished with "sable hair," "uneathly scowls," and other "improvements as he may consider necessary in order to enable them to make their appearance with satisfaction to himself." The Giaour, he continued, was an unceremonious theft of

2"Lord Byron's Plagiarisms," Literary Gazette, 21 (24 February 1821), 121.


4Literary Gazette, 21 (24 February 1821), 121.

5Ibid., p. 122.
Mrs. Radcliffe's Schedoni, Count Marinelli, and Count di Bruno; Manfred was copied from Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, Schiller's Moor, and Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore; and the rose in The Bride of Abydos had been transplanted directly from the old romance of Sir Tristram. The review further alleged that the Corsair was a reincarnation of Massinger's Malefort junior in The Unnatural Combat and that Gulnare was a copy of Sotheby's Amanda in his translation of Oberon. In fact, the reviewer continued, most of The Corsair's scenes between the pirate chieftain and Gulnare were "gross and open plagiarism from Mr. Sotheby, whom Lord Byron has plundered most unmercifully."\(^6\) He then cited numerous parallel passages from Byron's poetry and the works of other authors to substantiate his claim of Byron's wholesale plagiaries. Among those from which he asserted that Byron had deliberately stolen were Madam de Staël's Corinne, Torquato Tassos's Jerusalem Delivered, Voltaire's La Henriade, Sir William Jones' essay on Arabic poetry, Beaumont and Fletcher's Noble Kinsmen, Edmund Waller's poems, Edward Sexby's Killing No Murder, Coleridge's Remorse, Shakespeare's Hamlet and Othello, Milton's Paradise Lost, Thomas Moore's Odes and Epistles, John Wilson's "The City of the Plague" and

\(^6\)Literary Gazette, 21 (24 February 1821), 122.
"The Isle of Palms," and Richard Savage's "The Wanderer" and "To Aaron Hill." 

The next three articles in this series consist almost solely of a continuum, seemingly ad infinitum, of lines cited from Byron along with those from which the reviewer accused Byron of plagiarizing. The writer introduced a lengthy section devoted to Byron's borrowings from Edward Young with these accusations:

There are few writers to whom Lord Byron is under such extensive obligations as he is to Dr. Young. Besides innumerable imitations of the style and diction of this poet, his Lordship has frequently transferred whole lines into his productions, from the "Night Thoughts," "The Revenge," and "The Brothers," and it is well worthy of remark, that, although he quotes Young on one or two unimportant occasions, he is inflexibly silent when his own credit would seem to demand an acknowledgement of the source of plagiarisms, numerous and palpable beyond all precedent, from the same author.

He followed this with a number of examples which actually serve to prove little except that a determined literary detractor can usually find textual support for his biases. For instance, he declared that Byron was indebted to Young's "Of a woman's face / On which the dazzled eye can find no rest, / But drunk with beauty, wanders up and down" ("Revenge," ii) for his lines on the Venus d'Medici in the fourth canto of Childe Harold, "We gaze and turn away, and

8 "Lord Byron's Plagiarisms," Literary Gazette, 21 (3 March 1821), 137.
know not where, / Dazzled and drunk with beauty" (CH,IV.1. 442-43). Both poets have employed the words dazzled and drunk with beauty in their references to the stunning experience of looking upon a beautiful woman, but surely Young had no exclusive option on such relatively common poetic terms. Again, the reviewer alleged that Byron's "the opening sepulchre--the naked heart" in The Corsair (ii.x.355) was a plagiarism of Young's "That hideous sight--a naked heart" from Night Thoughts, although the notion that there may be unexposed horrors lurking in the hidden recesses of a human heart could hardly have been unique to either poet. He also stated that Byron's "When heart meets heart again in dreams Elysian" (BA,I.vi.164) was an appropriation of Young's "When heart meets heart reciprocally soft," also from Night Thoughts, and that Byron's "the vacant bosom's wilderness / Might thank the pang that made it less" (G,939-40) was stolen from Young's "To surfeit on the same (our pleasures) / And yawn our joys--or thank a misery / For change tho' sad" (Night Thoughts,iii). After listing many more parallel lines from the two poets, the reviewer stated that Byron's "galaxy of vivid expressions" must thus be
"compared to a rich mosaic work, rather than to the golden ore of original inspiration."\(^{14}\) Throughout his extensive charges of Byron's plagiarizing, however, the reviewer consistently ignored the fact that all writers are exposed to and draw from various common sources for their ideas and imagery. For example, in making the claim that Young's "Knowing is suffering" (Night Thoughts, vii) was the origin of Manfred's words "Sorrow is knowledge," (M, I. i. 10) he might have pointed out that both writers were probably echoing Ecclesiastes 1:18—"For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow"—because the concept was fairly current in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British literature and also occurs in classical literature.\(^{15}\)

That this method of proving literary theft often gives rise to fallacious conclusions may be illustrated by a chorus of conflicting remarks aimed at a single line in The Bride of Abydos. As Zuleika attempts to comprehend the import of Selim's disclosures—the truth of his parentage and of their actual kinship, the nature of his love for her, and his involvement with the pirate crew—the solitude of their trysting place is shattered. The silent approach of Giaffir and his men is suddenly heralded by a blazing torch nearby--

\(^{14}\)Ibid., p. 138. \(^{15}\)Works, p. 478.
and "Another--and another--and another--" (BA,xxii.501). In referring to these five words, the Edinburgh Review suggested that Byron had been ill-advised in copying "the dangerous simplicity and daring pathos" of Campbell's "Another--and another--and another." The Monthly Reviewer's later commendation of the lines "as a specimen of the daring simplicity of Lord Byron" was sneered at by the Literary Gazette's critic, who claimed that Byron had taken the words from the fourth act of Young's Revenge: "Nothing can be simpler and less complex than the process of thus plundering whole lines, word for word, without the remotest acknowledgment; and certainly few examples of literary piracy can be more daring. . . ." Such furor over a remarkably ordinary grouping of words smacks far more of tempest-in-a-teapot critical fustian than of genuine literary criticism and probably should be treated as such.

The third essay in the Literary Gazette's series was concentrated on passages from the authors whom Byron had satirized but from whose "poetical edifices" he was said to have taken not merely "an occasional brick" but frequently "huge fragments of their buildings, cement and all, pillars

16 Works, p. 334.
17 [Review of Lord Byron's Corsair and Bride of Abydos], Edinburgh Review, 46 (1 April 1814), 229.
18 Literary Gazette, 21 (3 March 1821), 138.
and cornices; and on one or two occasions an entire wing."¹⁹

The fourth began with an extravagant tribute to the unquestioned originality of Scott and Wordsworth, from which the reviewer launched a continuation of his attack upon Byron. Every aspect of Parisina, he stated, "is undoubtedly derived from Marmion," and the first twenty lines of The Bride of Abydos were "almost literally translated from the German of Lessing."²⁰ The last article of the series dealt with Byron's style and diction, with those "glowing expressions and epithets" which other critics of the day "have been pleased to entitle Byronisms."²¹ Not satisfied with imitating and appropriating the phraseology of other writers, the critic concluded, Byron had artificially concocted the nervous energy of his style by "ingeniously transplanting" numerous "forcible turns of expression" or epithets, and "it is the constant and systematic recurrence of these unacknowledged appropriations in every half dozen lines of his poetry, which (super-added to his incontrovertible plagiarism of thoughts,) conduces to place it in so doubtful a light."²²

¹⁹"Lord Byron's Plagiarisms," Literary Gazette, 21 (10 March 1821), 152.
²²Ibid.
This volume of the Literary Gazette also carried another caustic assault upon Byron's alleged plagiaries in the form of a review of Marino Faliero. Marino Faliero, the writer asserted, "is neither more nor less than a remodification of Venice Preserved. The action, the characters, the catastrophe, are nearly the same." In fact, he continued, it would require more "talent and skill" than he possessed to render any portion of Byron's story distinct from Otway's; Byron, however, seemed oblivious to Otway's prior claim, having thought complacently that a simple "transposition of eras" would result in his being called original and "Otway a borrower." As a final slap before beginning a lengthy comparison of passages, the reviewer declared that "The resemblances, or rather . . . the copy and adaptation, are so strong throughout, that we only wonder how it happens that Otway's is so interesting and Byron's so dull a play." 23

Truman Guy Steffan, in Lord Byron's Cain, notes that after the publication of Cain in December 1821 a number of periodicals, including the Monthly Magazine and the Literary Gazette, embarked upon tiresome cataloguings of borrowed lines. 24 Reviewing Byron's Heaven and Hell, Hazlitt flicked a critical pen at Byron's repudiating in the preface to Cain

23 [Review of Lord Byron's Marino Faliero], Literary Gazette, 21 (28 April 1821), 260.
an indebtedness to Milton, Gessner, and Alfieri. "We are aware," Hazlitt wrote, "that it is hazardous and idle to accuse Lord Byron of plagiarism. He will swear that he never saw the picture [one by Poussin], or that it is so long ago that he has quite forgot it." In The Spirit of the Age, which first appeared in 1824 in the New Monthly Magazine, Hazlitt again rapped at what he considered Byron's borrowings by stating that Byron chiefly thinks how he can display his own power, or vent his spleen, or astonish the reader either by expressing old [ideas] in a more striking and emphatic manner than they have been expressed before. He cares little what it is he says, so that he can say it differently from others. This may account for the charges of plagiarism which have been repeatedly brought against the Noble Poet—if he can borrow an image or sentiment from another, and heighten it by an epithet or an allusion of greater force and beauty than is to be found in the original passage, he thinks he shows his superiority of execution in this in a more marked manner than if the first suggestion had been his own. . . . He therefore takes the thoughts of others (whether contemporaries or not) out of their mouths, and is content to make them his own, to set his stamp upon them, by imparting to them a more meretricious gloss, a higher relief, a greater loftiness of tone, and a characteristic inveteracy of purpose.

There were friendly reviewers, on the other hand, who took exception to the charges of unoriginality. In reply to a statement in a June 1817 issue of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine that Byron's Manfred was copied from Marlowe's

26 Hazlitt, IV, 254.
Dr. Faustus, Francis Jeffrey, the leading critic for the Edinburgh Review, wrote on 28 August 1817 that he disagreed with the claim "that the general conception of this piece, and much of what is excellent in the manner of its execution have been borrowed" from Marlowe. Although there were certain resemblances, he said, these "prove nothing . . . against the originality of Manfred; for there is nothing to be found there of the pride, the abstraction, and the heart-rooted misery in which that originality consists. . . . The style, too, of Marlow, though elegant and scholarlike, is weak and childish compared with the depth and force of much of" Byron's poem, and "the tone and pitch of the composition" as well as "the character of the diction of the more solemn parts" of Byron's Manfred reminded Jeffrey "much more of the Prometheus of Aeschylus, than of any more modern performance." And even Byron, sensitive as he usually was to charges of plagiarism, was content to be thought in the debt of Aeschylus, removed as the Greek dramatist was by the distance of centuries and the remoteness of veneration. To Murray, Byron wrote that he had been "passionately fond as a boy" of Aeschylus' Prometheus, but he insisted that he had "never read, never saw, nor heard of" Marlowe's Dr. Faustus--

27 [Review of Manfred; a Dramatic Poem by Lord Byron], Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1 (June 1817), 295.

"at least," he added, had never "thought of it." But Prometheus was quite another matter, Byron continued: "The Prometheus, if not exactly in my plan, has always been so much in my head, that I can easily conceive its influence over all or any thing that I have written;--but I deny Marlow and his progeny, and beg that you will do the same."  

In an 1814 issue, the Edinburgh Review had called attention to Byron's "various imitations of living authors" in The Corsair and The Bride of Abydos, but the reviewer's only critical comment on these imitations was that "all that we object to, however, is, that he sometimes imitates what had better be let alone."  

There was a similar absence of stridency in an anonymously published book in 1825 under the title of The Life, Writings, Opinions and Times of . . . George Gordon Noel, Lord Byron in which the author suggested that Otway's Don Carlos "is the very counterpart" of Parisina, that The Bride of Abydos "bears so near a  

---

29 Moore, p. 368. Letter of 12 October 1821.  
30 Edinburgh Review, 46 (April 1814), 229.  
31 The Life, Writings, Opinions, and Times of the Right Hon. George Gordon Noel Byron, Lord Byron; Including, In Its Most Extensive Biography, Anecdotes, and Memoirs of the Lives of the Most Eminent and Eccentric, Public and Noble Characters and Courtiers of the Present Polished and Enlightened Age and Court of His Majesty King George the Fourth. In the course of the Biography is also separately given, Copious Recollections of the Lately Destroyed MS. originally intended for posthumous publication, and entitled Memoirs of My Own Life and Times By The Right Hon. Lord Byron. By an English Gentleman, in the Greek Military Service, and Comrade of his Lordship. Compiled from authentic
resemblance to . . . Hamlet, that the reader will not fail to be struck by it," and that Gulnare's character in The Corsair "seems drawn after the model of Lady Macbeth." This author then undertook a spirited defense against current charges of plagiarism against Byron by saying that

Homer is said to have formed the master-piece of the world from the legendary tales of his day. Virgil followed the example. Ariosto, Tasso, Dante, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare: all converted the nursery tales of preceding days into sterling gold; and Milton's great work is founded on scripture story; if, therefore, Lord Byron be a plagiary, what writer ever was otherwise? The man who finds a prose narrative, and converts it into a poetical one, with the embellishments of his own genius, effectively makes it his own, and it is so to be deemed an original, since all our ideas must inevitably flow from our own experience of what we have seen of others, or what others have seen and communicated to us. If no man be original, but one who communicates what no other person has ever seen or known, there never was, nor never will be an original, save and except the goblin-mongers of the German school, who, indeed, give us beings that never existed "in the Heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth;"--beings, the sole creation of their own muddied imaginations, which had better be exorcised, and laid quietly with the spirits in the Red Sea. Byron has given us nature; and the poet of nature will ever please every man who is not--a natural!  

Documents and from long personal Acquaintance. (London: M. Iley, 1825), p. 213. Authorship has been ascribed alternately to Matthew Iley, the work's publisher, and to Dr. J. M. Millingen. J. J. Wise, in his bibliography of Byron, says that Iley is probably the author. This work is hereafter cited as Iley.

32 Ibid., p. 191.  
33 Ibid., p. 193.  
34 Ibid., p. 361.
Goethe, in a critique of Manfred which Moore reproduced under the date of 1820, seemed pleased to acknowledge that Byron has taken my Faustus to himself, and extracted from it the strongest nourishment for his hypochondriac humour. He has made use of the impelling principles in his own way, for his own purposes, so that no one of them remains the same; and it is particularly on this account that I cannot enough admire his genius. The whole is in this way so completely formed anew, that it would be an interesting task for the critic to point out not only the alterations he has made, but their degree of resemblance with, or dissimilarity to, the original. . . .35

After summing up the story of Pausanias, to which Byron alludes in Manfred's soliloquy beginning "We are the fools of time and terror: Days / Steal on us and steal from us; yet we live, / Loathing our life, and dreading still to die," Goethe remarked, with continued approbation, that the entire soliloquy was but an improved version of Hamlet's soliloquy (M,II.ii.258-98).36 The similarity to Hamlet, he further explained, was in the soliloquy's overlay of "gloom and weariness of life" that resulted from the "lacerated heart" of the poet "who selects such a scene from antiquity, appropriates it to himself, and burdens his tragic image with it."37

35Moore, p. 448.  
36Works, p. 487.  
37Moore, p. 449.
Moore also sought to justify Byron's use of other authors' work. Referring to "charges of plagiarism brought against him by some scribblers of the day" which were founded on similarities in accounts of actual shipwrecks and Byron's description of the shipwreck in the second canto of Don Juan, Moore first pointed out that Byron had readily admitted the major sources "out of which he worked his own powerful description." If this may be accounted plagiarism, Moore then suggested, even Tasso must be considered a plagiarist:

With as much justice might the Italian author (Galeani, if I recollect right), who wrote a Discourse on the Military Science displayed by Tasso in his Battles, have reproached that poet with the sources from which he drew his knowledge:--with as much justice might Puysegur and Segrais, who have pointed out the same merit in Homer and Virgil, have withheld their praise because the science on which this merit was founded must have been derived by the skill and industry of these poets from others. So little was Tasso ashamed of those casual imitations of other poets which are so often branded as plagiarism, that, in his Commentary on his right he takes pains to point out and avow whatever coincidences of this kind occur in his own verses. 38

Byron was usually extremely sensitive to charges of unoriginality in his poetry, and Murray received much of the brunt of Byron's resentment at being labeled unoriginal. After reading the British Review's comments on The Giaour in 1813, Byron wrote his publisher that the reviewer was "in

38 Moore, p. 525.
most points very right" but that the "only mortifying thing
is the accusation of imitation. Crabbe's passage I never
saw; and Scott I no further meant to follow than in his
lyric measure, which is Gray's, Milton's, and any one's who
likes it."\footnote{Moore, p. 191. Letter of 12 October 1813. The
reviewer claimed that Byron's "The rugged metal of the mine /
Must burn before its surface shine, / But plunged within the
furnace-flame, / It bends and melts--though still the same"
(G,922-25; Works, p. 319) was imitated from the following
passage in Crabbe's poem "Resentment": "Those are like wax--
apply them to the fire, / Melting, they take th' impressions
you desire: / Easy to mould and fashion as you please, / And
again moulded with an equal ease: / Like smelted iron these
the forms retain; / But, once impress'd, will never melt
again."}

Stung by a similar review in 1814, Byron wrote
irritably to Murray: "What do they mean by Childe Harold
resembling Marmion? and the next two, Giaour and Bride, not
resembling Scott? I never intended to copy him; but if there
be any copyism, it must be in the two poems, where the same
versification is adopted. However, they exempt The Corsair
from all resemblance to any thing, though I rather wonder at
his escape. If ever I did any thing original, it was in
Childe Harold, which I prefer to other things always, after
the first week."\footnote{Moore, p. 250. Letter of 26 April 1814.}

Rendered touchy by the many charges of
plagiarism in periodicals, Byron began to anticipate the
hostile reviewers in counterattacks of his own. For instance,
after reading a new poem by Sotheby in 1814 and noting a
similarity between it and a section of The Corsair, Byron
wrote to Sotheby that "I have a charge against you. As the
great Mr. Dennis roared out on a similar occasion—'By G—d that is my thunder!' so do I exclaim, 'This is my lightning!' I allude to a speech of Ivan's, in the scene with Petrowna and the Empress, where the thought and almost expression are similar to Conrad's in the 3rd canto of 'The Corsair.' I, however, do not say this to accuse you, but to exempt myself from suspicion, as there is a priority of six months' publication, on my part, between the appearance of that composition, and of your tragedies. In a note to this letter, Moore commented that Byron's precautions proved futile, however, and that "the coincidence in question was, but a few years after, triumphantly cited in support of the sweeping charge of plagiarism brought against him by some scribblers." The addition which Moore later made to this note is especially interesting in view of his fairly consistent defense of Byron's originality. "I have since been

41Ibid., p. 285. Letter of 25 September 1815. Sotheby's lines to which Byron referred are:
And I have leapt
In transport from my flinty couch, to welcome
The thunder as it burst upon my roof,
And beckon'd to the lightning, as it flash'd
And sparkled on these fetters.
Compare with Byron's:
Loud sung the wind above; and, doubly loud,
Shook o' er his turret cell the thunder-cloud;
And flash'd the lightning by the latticed bar,
To him more genial than the midnight star:
Close to the glimmering grate he dragg'd his chain,
And hoped that peril might not prove in vain.
He raised his iron hand to Heaven, and pray'd
One pitying flash to mar the form it made.
(C,III.vii.258-65; Works, p. 359)
informed by Mr. Sotheby," Moore carefully noted, "that, though not published, these lines had been written long before the appearance of Lord Byron's poems." 42

Byron's indignation at being thought to have taken his Manfred from Marlowe or Goethe remained unallayed from the publication of the drama in 1817 until the poet's death. Byron wrote to Moore three months before Manfred was published that "I wrote a sort of mad Drama, for the sake of introducing the Alpine scenery in description: and this I sent lately to Murray. Almost all the dram. pers. are spirits, ghosts, or magicians, and the scene is in the Alps and the other world, so you may suppose what a Bedlam tragedy it must be: make him show it you." 43 In a letter the next month to Samuel Rogers, Byron mentioned that Matthew Gregory Lewis had "translated 'Goethe's Faust' to me by word of mouth" at Diodati the previous fall. 44 Writing to Murray four months after Manfred appeared, Byron said that "the germs of Manfred . . . may be found in the Journal which I sent to Mrs. Leigh (part of which you saw) when I went over first the Dent de Jamont [sic], and then the Wengeren [sic] or Wengeberg Alp and Sheideck and made the giro of the Jungfrau, Shreckhorn, etc., etc., shortly before I left

42 Moore, p. 285.
44 Ibid., p. 349. Letter of 4 April 1817.
Switzerland. I have the whole scene of Manfred before me, as if it was but yesterday, and could point it out, spot by spot, torrent and all."45 And later the same month, he stormed at Murray, as previously noted, that the "devil may take both the Faustuses" because he had "taken neither." Still nettled and defensive in 1820 over recurring charges of imitation against Manfred, Byron triumphantly wrote Murray that he was enclosing "something that will interest you, to wit, the opinion of the greatest man of Germany--perhaps Europe--upon one of the great men of your advertisements . . . in short, a critique of Goethe's upon Manfred. There is the original, an English translation, and an Italian one; keep them all in your archives,--for the opinions of such a man as Goethe, whether favourable or not, are always interesting--and this is more so, as favourable." The letter's next sentence would have been quite familiar to Murray by this time, for Byron again said, "His Faust I never read, for I don't know German; but Matthew Monk Lewis, in 1816, at Coligny, translated most of it to me vivâ voce, and I was naturally much struck with it; but it was the Staubach and the Jungfrau, and something else, much more than Faustus, that made me write Manfred." The "something else" in this sentence is a significant allusion to which I will refer later in a consideration of Byron's use of experience as

source material for his poetry. He then grudgingly admitted to Murray that the first scene of Manfred "and that of Faustus are very similar"—which is quite a concession for Byron to have made. Medwin recorded that in 1821 Byron was still truculently affirming the originality of the basic ideas in Manfred. "The Germans," Byron commented, "and I believe Goethe himself, consider that I have taken great liberties with 'Faust.'" He then characteristically launched into an analysis of Goethe's obligation to other authors by proclaiming that "Goethe has too much sense to pretend that he is not under obligations to authors, ancient and modern;—who is not?" Referring to a previous statement by Medwin about Goethe's work, Byron continued:

You tell me the plot is almost entirely Calderon's. The fêre, the scholar, the argument about the Logos, the selling himself to the fiend, and afterwards denying his power; his disguise of the plumed cavalier; the enchanted mirror,—are all from Cyprian. That Magico Prodigioso must be worth reading, and nobody seems to know anything about it but you and Shelley. Then the vision is not unlike that of Marlowe's, in his "Faustus." The bed-scene is from "Cymbeline;" the song or serenade, a translation of Ophelia's, in "Hamlet;" and, more than all, the prologue is from Job, which is the first drama in the world, and perhaps the oldest poem. I had an idea of writing a "Job," but I found it too sublime. There is no poetry to be compared with it.47

46 Moore, p. 447. Letter of 7 June 1820.
47 Medwin, p. 141.
When Medwin suggested that "Japhet's soliloquy in 'Heaven and Earth,' an address to the mountains of Caucasus, strongly resembled Faust's," Byron abruptly terminated the conversation by saying, "I shall have commentators enough by and by to dissect my thoughts, and find owners for them."^48

The quickness with which Byron took offense at being thought to imitate the ideas of another is further instanced by Medwin's account of a conversation between Byron and Shelley. Handing Shelley a portion of The Deformed Transformed, Byron said, "Tell me what you think of it." When Shelley, after reading it carefully, replied that "it is a bad imitation of 'Faust'; and besides, there are two entire lines of Southey's in it," Medwin noted that "Lord Byron changed colour immediately, and asked hastily what lines?" Shelley repeated the lines "And water shall see thee, / And fear thee, and flee thee." Medwin recalled that Byron, "without making a single observation, instantly threw the poem into the fire."^49 Although this reveals Medwin's occasional inexactness in that the lines from the second canto of Southey's Curse of Kehama to which Shelley referred are reflected in Byron's Cain rather than in The Deformed

Transformed, it is a further indication of Byron's lifelong sensitivity to suggestions of plagiarism in his poetry.  

There were times, however, when Byron reacted quite differently to the subject of literary borrowings, both his own and those of others, as when he remarked to Medwin, "How difficult it is to say anything new! Who was that voluptuary of antiquity, who offered a reward for a new pleasure? Perhaps all nature and art could not supply a new idea." That Byron was objectively aware of the importance of literary sources is obvious in a conversation he had with the Countess of Blessington: "... who is the author," Byron asked, "that is not, intentionally or unintentionally, a plagiarist?" Answering his own question, he continued, "Many more, I am persuaded, are the latter than the former. . . . I am accused of plagiarism, as I see by the newspapers. If I am guilty, I have many partners in the crime; for I assure you I scarcely know a living author who might not have a similar charge brought against him, and whose thoughts I have not occasionally found in the works of others; so that this consoles me."  

50 Compare Eve's curse in Cain, III.i.419-43, especially lines 432-34 (Works, p. 652), with the following lines by Southey: "And Water shall hear me, / And know thee and fly thee; / And the Winds shall not touch thee / When they pass by thee . . . / And thou shalt seek Death / To release thee in vain."

51 Medwin, p. 199.

52 Blessington, pp. 342-43.
Byron's critical admonitions to these "partners in crime" reveal much about his attitude toward such practices. For example, after requesting Murray to point out to Thomas Campbell that there were several inaccuracies in Campbell's Specimens of the English Poets, including a misquoted passage from Shakespeare, Byron added the following cautionary note which he seemed to be directing to himself as well as to Campbell: "A great poet quoting another should be correct: he should also be accurate when he accuses a Parnassian brother of that dangerous charge 'borrowing.' A poet had better borrow any thing (excepting money) than the thoughts of another--they are always sure to be reclaimed; but it is very hard, having been the lender, to be denounced as the debtor... As there is 'honour amongst thieves' let there be some amongst poets, and give each his due." 53

Although Byron occasionally alluded to his use of other authors as deliberate borrowing--as in his previously quoted remark to Moore about a book from which he was "trying to crib, as I do whenever I can" or in his assertions to Medwin that "I am not very scrupulous, I own, when I have a good idea, how I came into possession of it" 54 and that he intended "to borrow someday" Lord Thurlow's line "And all that glorious company of clouds" 55--such statements seem designed

54 Medwin, p. 140.
55 Ibid., p. 238.
more for effect than for literal pronouncement of policy. Byron was, in reality, always genuinely concerned with being thought to imitate, even unconsciously. After completing Parisina, for example, it occurred to him that there was a possible resemblance between the scene in which Parisina "stood . . . all pale and still / The living cause of Hugo's ill. / Her eyes unmoved, but full and wide, / Not once had turn'd to either side" and a description in Scott's Marmion (P,xiv.326-29). In returning Murray's copy of Marmion which he had borrowed in order to reread Scott's passage beginning "Her look composed, and steady eye, / Bespoke a matchless constancy; / And there she stood so calm and pale," Byron wrote Murray that there was a definite parallel between the two scenes, "though I never thought of it before, and could hardly wish to imitate that which is inimitable. . . . I had completed the story on the passage from Gibbon, which in fact leads to a like scene naturally, without a thought of the kind; but it comes upon me not very comfortably." Medwin also recorded an instance of Byron's unconscious borrowings in the account of the poet's reaction to Charles Lamb's Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Contemporary with Shakespeare. Although Lamb's work was published in 1808,

56 Works, p. 399.
57 Moore, p. 301. Letter of 3 February 1816.
Byron seems not to have read it until 1822, after which he made the following comment:

I have just been reading Lamb's Specimens, and am surprised to find in the extracts from the old dramatists so many ideas that I thought exclusively my own. Here is a passage, for instance, from "The Duchess of Malfy," astonishingly like one in "Don Juan." "The leprosy of lust" I discover, too, is not mine. "Thou tremblest," --- "'Tis with age then," which I am accused of borrowing from Otway was taken from the Old Bailey proceedings. Some judge observed to the witness, "Thou tremblest;" --- "'Tis with cold then," was the reply. I am taxed with being a plagiarist, when I am least conscious of being one. . . . How can we tell to what extent Shakespeare is indebted to his contemporaries, whose works are now lost? . . . The invocation of the witches was, we know, a servile plagiarism from Middleton. Authors were not so squeamish about borrowing from one another in those days. If it be a fault, I do not pretend to be immaculate.

While indeed not "immaculate" on this score, Byron was never a servile imitator, and the nature of his borrowings must be examined from several points of view. His early poems indicate, first of all, that he was naturally adept at copying the metrics of other poets. One day in 1805, he and Elizabeth Pigot were reading Robert Burns' "Farewell to Ayreshire." Byron, pleased with Burns' metre, said, "Let me try it," and he immediately wrote two quatrains in imitation of Burns' trochaic tetrameter. During this same period at Southwell, he wrote numerous verses in imitation of Camoëns

58 Medwin, p. 139.

59 Marchand, I, 100. Letter of Mrs. Byron to Hanson, 26 September 1805. See Works, p. 95.
and Thomas Moore, his favorite poets at the time, which Miss Pigot copied for him.\footnote{Marchand, I, 120.} Regarding the poems in \textit{Hours of Idleness}, published in 1807, Marchand says that while Byron "knew his poems were imitative, there was no intentional plagiarism."\footnote{Ibid., p. 134.} Although poetry was not yet for Byron in this early period his "primary vocation" but rather was seized upon "to divert the dull moments of indisposition or the monotony of a vacant hour,"\footnote{Ibid.} these youthful efforts are indicative of a fine poetic curiosity that could be satisfied only by prosodic experimenting after the fashion of other poets. Byron's satire \textit{English Bards and Scotch Reviewers}, published in March 1809, was molded on Pope's satire, but, as Marchand points out further, "despite the imitativeness of the poem, Byron's originality often transcended the limitations of his model."\footnote{Ibid., p. 172.} And it was in part to this restless creative questing, by which Byron also adopted and improved upon Scott's metre and made Spenser's stanza peculiarly his own, that Mary Shelley alluded in her comment on \textit{The Deformed Transformed} that "I delight in your new style more than in your former glorious one"\footnote{Mary Shelley, \textit{The Letters of}, ed. Frederick L. Jones (Norman, Okla.: Univ. of Okla. Press, 1944), I, 202. Letter of 9 November 1822.} and that Paul West refers in his comment that Byron was always "a
serious inquirer into poetics—not a Keats, but a student of entertainment."  

Somewhat related to Byron's interest in reproducing rhythms, metrics, and stanzaic forms that appealed to him was a characteristic mobilité, which he explained as his extreme susceptibility of immediate impressions.  

Moore perceptively noted in 1812 the remarkable degree to which Byron was "sensitive to the kindness or displeasure of those he lived with," whose "frown or smile could rule him." Marchand describes this quality as "an almost feminine sensitivity to the nuances of sympathetic feeling and an uncanny capacity for displaying that part of his personality which would most engage the person with whom he was talking." In his first meetings with Annabella Milbanke, for example, Byron exhibited the qualities which she expected to encounter in the creator of Childe Harold, as Miss Milbanke's "Character" of the poet in 1812 revealed. Although Byron had been guided by his passions since childhood, Miss Milbanke wrote, his "love of goodness in its chastest form and his abhorrence of all that degrades human nature, prove the uncorrupted purity of his moral sense." She then stated that Byron was chivalrously generous "in his ideas of love

66 Blessington, p. 128.  
67 Moore, p. 161.  
68 Marchand, I, 336.
and friendship," totally unselfish, and secretly "the zealous friend of all human feelings" but that he tried "to disguise the best points of his character" because of "the strangest perversion that pride ever created." Consequently, he was "continually making the most sudden transitions—from good to evil—from evil to good." And yet, she concluded, he was "inclined to open his heart unreservedly to those whom he believes good," and he was, in her opinion at this time, "extremely humble toward persons he respected." Both the American artist William Edward West and the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorwaldsen were struck by physical manifestations of this plasticity in Byron's nature. Thorwaldsen recalled that when Byron first sat to him for a bust in 1817, the poet "at once began to put on a quite different expression from that usual to him." In response to Thorwaldsen's suggestion that "you need not assume that look," Byron retorted, "That is my expression." Thorwaldsen said that "I then represented him as I wished" and that the completed bust "was universally admitted to be an excellent likeness." Byron, however, felt that it was quite unlike him, saying, "My expression is much more unhappy." When West arrived in Leghorn and began a portrait of Byron in June 1822, he found Byron a difficult sitter: "He talked all the time, and asked a multitude of questions. . . . When he was silent

69 Marchand, I, 369.  
70 Ibid., II, 693.
he assumed a countenance that did not belong to him, as though he were thinking of a frontispiece for Childe Harold."

Because of this mobilité, Byron was extremely susceptible to the influence of ideas that came to him indirectly from the reading of other persons, especially those with whom he was on intimate terms. Typical of this influence, which is traceable in his poetry, is the Calvinistic interpretation of the Scriptures, especially the Old Testament, which Byron absorbed in childhood from his Scotch Presbyterian nurse and the "rigid Presbyterian" tutor, Joseph Paterson, whom Catherine Gordon hired in 1794. Byron's rationalistic reactions against the dogmas of divine vengeance and predestination impelled his rhetorical disputations with such piously orthodox friends as R. C. Dallas and Francis Hodgson. It seems that although he apparently managed to escape rationally from the fear-oriented theology of his youth, he was never emotionally free of the scarring effect of those early teachings. In working out the motivation of Cain's insurgence, therefore, Byron assigned as a major source of his hero's frustrations man's inescapable subservience and doom at the hands of an implacable deity.

According to Truman Guy Steffan, while Byron's mind repudiated

71Marchand, III, 1005.  
72Ibid., I, 35.  
73Ibid., II, 917.
"the popular distortions of Augustinian and Calvinistic theology" to which he had been exposed, he was ambivalently driven to prove in Cain that man is arbitrarily thrust "into wretched desperation, from which there was no escape" and to demonstrate psychologically "how these doctrines could drive man to despair, madness, and crime."74

The frequently discussed Wordsworthian overtones in a portion of the third canto of Childe Harold provide another example of Byron's vulnerability to literary ideas which he absorbed from someone else's interpretation. Wordsworth's accusation that Byron had taken from him the concepts of nature exhibited in such lines as "I live not in myself, but I become / Portion of that around me;--and to me / High mountains are a feeling" (CH,III.lxxii.680-82) is extant in at least three forms.75 In a journal entry for 27 October 1820, Moore recorded Wordsworth's charge of Byron's theft of the older poet's expressed "feeling of natural objects"; on 26 December 1823, Wordsworth wrote to Henry Taylor that Byron's "tone . . . of enthusiastic admiration of Nature, and a sensibility of her influences" was "assumed rather than natural"; and George Ticknor wrote that in early 1819 Wordsworth expressed bitterness against Byron's "having taken something of his own lakish manner lately, and what is worse,

74 Steffan, p. 43. 75 Works, p. 46.
borrowed some of his thoughts."\(^{76}\) Byron admitted to Medwin the possibility of Wordsworthian influence in the third canto of *Childe Harold* by explaining that "Shelley, when I was in Switzerland, used to dose me with Wordsworthian physic even to nausea; and I do remember reading some things of his with pleasure. He had once a feeling of Nature, which he carried almost to a deification of it:--that's why Shelley liked his poetry."\(^{77}\) Under the dual spell in 1816 of Shelley's eloquence and the natural magnificence of Lac Leman against the backdrop of snow-peaked mountains, Byron may have come naturally to feel something of Wordsworth's pantheistic attitude toward nature. But regardless of how appealing Shelley and the setting made Wordsworth's philosophy, as Marchand points out, Byron's poetry "usually ended in a basis of tangible reality, however much he might let his fancy play."\(^{78}\) Ernest J. Lovell says that Byron's "remarkable chameleon-like ability to assume at once the color of his environment . . . explains the presence of the Wordsworthian note" in Byron's poetry at this time. However, Lovell weakens the accuracy of his overall evaluation by adding that this same mobilité was also responsible for Byron's "failure to discover any deeply satisfying emotional


\(^{77}\)Medwin, p. 194.

\(^{78}\)Marchand, II, 624.
or spiritual experience in his communion with nature."  

The following lines may well be regarded as a Byronic adaptation of a Shelleyan interpretation of Wordsworth's nature sentiment:

When Elements to Elements conform,  
And dust is as it should be, shall I not  
Feel all I see, less dazzling but more warm?  
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each spot?  
Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?  
(CH,III.lxxiv.702-06)

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part  
Of me and of my Soul, as I of them?  
Is not the love of these deep in my heart?  
With a pure passion?  
(CH,III.lxxv.707-10)

But the same canto contains other nature poetry that is an equally beautiful expression, uncolored by either Shelley or Wordsworth, of Byron's genuine reaction to his surroundings:

The sky is changed!—and such a change! Oh night,  
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,  
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light  
Of a dark eye in woman!  
(CH,III.xcii.860-63)

Most glorious night!  
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be  
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,  
A portion of the tempest and of thee!  
(CH,III.xciii.869-72)

One more example of this aspect of Byron's borrowings will suffice. Both Byron's "Prometheus" and the first two acts of Manfred, with its Promethean concepts, were written in Switzerland during 1816. Although Byron had become familiar

80 Works, p. 46.  
81 Ibid., p. 47.  
82 Ibid., p. 49.  
83 Ibid.
with Aeschylus' plays at Harrow, his depiction of Prometheus is nearer that of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* than that of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Vinctus*. Shelley's drama was not composed until 1819, but the ideas for it were gathering momentum and substance as early as 1816. The *Prometheus* of Aeschylus was listed by Mary Shelley among Shelley's readings for 1816, and the Shelleyan influence on Byron's ode and play is established by Byron's statement to Medwin that "Shelley, when I was in Switzerland, translated the 'Prometheus' [of Aeschylus] to me before I wrote my ode, but I never open a Greek book." The initial source, thus, was Aeschylus, but Shelley's reflection of Aeschylus' Prometheus was the immediate influence upon Byron's defiant Titan, whose "Godlike crime was to be kind, / To render with thy precepts less / The sum of human wretchedness, / And strengthen Man with his own mind" (35-38); upon Manfred's vow that "The mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark, / The lightning of my being, is as bright, / Pervading, and far darting as your own, / And shall not yield to yours, though coop'd in clay!" (M,I.i.154-57); and, later, upon Lucifer's reference to "Souls who dare use their immortality-- / Souls

85 Medwin, p. 156.
86 Works, p. 191.
87 Ibid., p. 480.
who dare look the Omnipotent tyrant in / His everlasting face, and tell him that / His evil is not good!" (Ca, I. i. 137-40).

A third component of Byron's literary borrowing, along with his stylistic ability to imitate and adapt and his literary susceptibility to ideas received indirectly through the reading of others, is the important role of memory and its associational function. So much has been written on Byron's amazingly retentive memory that little need be added here. Byron's statement to Scott in 1822 that he had "by heart" all Scott's Scotch novels and Medwin's opinion that Byron "could have quoted almost every line" of poetry that he had ever written were probably not outrageous exaggerations. The selective and associative processes of his memory, however, merit further examination. Byron wrote to Moore in 1817 that he was unable to describe just then the wonders of ancient and modern Rome which he was witnessing because "my first impressions are always strong and confused." Continuing, he explained that his "memory selects, and reduces" these first impressions "to order, like distance in the landscape, and blends them better, although they may be less distinct." In an explicit commentary on his method

88 Works, p. 629.
89 Marchand, III, 960; Medwin, p. 155.
of assimilation and its use in his writing, Byron explained that he first "laid in a tolerable stock of ideas for thinking"; then, after giving his "mind time to digest it, and . . . turn it all well over by thought and reflection" in order to make "the knowledge acquired our own," he allowed his originality to "build a superstructure" which memory embellished by drawing necessary details from its organized "stock of ideas." This unique ability of memory to sift through, select, and organize its copious store of impressions goes far in explaining some of Byron's otherwise unaccountable borrowings. The circumstances of the appearance in The Siege of Corinth of a passage that is notably similar to one in Coleridge's "Christabel" illustrates the unconscious assimilative power of Byron's memory. During a luncheon with Byron in 1815, Scott quoted a fragment of "Christabel" which he had heard John Stoddart, a close friend of Coleridge, read from manuscript thirteen years before. Later in 1815, Byron wrote to Coleridge, complimenting him on the lines which he had heard. Coleridge responded by sending Byron a copy of "Christabel." When Byron read over the entire poem, he discovered that his yet-unpublished The Siege of Corinth contained a passage that was so like one of Coleridge's that he must have unconsciously plagiarized from his memory of Scott's recital of a portion of "Christabel."

\[91\] Blessington, p. 343.
Although Byron wrote Coleridge, offering "to cut out the passage, and do as well as I can without--or what you please," the lines were published in The Siege of Corinth with a note that does little to explain what Byron termed "the unintentional resemblance." The Countess of Blessington recalled that Byron once told her that The Deformed Transformed was largely autobiographical, that "his position" had led to its composition, whereupon she "ventured to remind him that, in the advertisement to that drama, he had stated it to have been founded on the novel of 'The Three


The night is chill; the forest bare;  
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?  
There is not wind enough in the air  
To move away the ringlet curl  
From the lovely lady's cheek--  
There is not wind enough to twirl  
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,  
That dances as often as dance it can,  
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,  
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky. (11.43-52)

The corresponding lines in Byron's The Siege of Corinth are:

Was it the wind, through some hollow stone,  
Sent that soft and tender moan?  
He lifted his head, and he look'd on the sea,  
But it was unrippled as glass may be;  
He look'd on the long grass--it waved not a blade;  
How was that gentle sound convey'd?  
He look'd to the banners--each flag lay still,  
So did the leaves on Cithaeron's hill,  
And he felt not a breath come over his cheek;  
What did that sudden sound bespeak?  
He turn'd to the left--is he sure of sight?  
There sate a lady, youthful and bright!  
(xix.521-32; Works, p. 390)
Brothers.' He said that both statements were correct, and then changed the subject, without giving me an opportunity of questioning him on the unacknowledged, but visible, resemblances between other of his works and that extraordinary production."\(^93\) From this instance, as well as others, of Byron's associational selectivity of impressions from life as well as from literature, Lady Blessington drew a conclusion which seems fundamentally sound:

> It is possible that he is unconscious of the plagiarism of ideas he has committed; for his reading is so desultory, that he seizes thoughts which in passing through the glowing alembic of his mind, become so embellished as to lose all identity with the original crude embryos he had adopted. This was proved to me in another instance, when a book that he was constantly in the habit of looking over fell into my hands, and I traced various passages marked by his pencil or by his notes; which gave me the idea of having led to certain trains of thought in his works. He told me that he rarely ever read a page that did not give rise to chains of thought, the first idea serving as the original link on which the others were formed. . . . I have observed, that, in conversation, some trifling remark has often led him into long disquisitions, evidently elicited by it; and so prolific is his imagination, that the slightest spark can warm it.\(^94\)

Manfred is another example of the complicated process by which memory contributed to Byron's originality. The drama's framework was probably the unconscious result of Byron's unacknowledged awareness of Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* and of Lewis's verbal translation of Goethe's *Faust*. The immediate

\(^93\) Blessington, p. 145. \(^94\) Ibid.
inspiration of the work was the wild mountain scenery of the Staubach and the Jungfrau, and the secondary theme or "the something else" that Byron mentioned to Moore in 1820 was the controversial relationship with his sister, Augusta Leigh, in 1814. A similar procedure is observable in most of Byron's poetry. Upon The Giaour's superstructure of originality, Byron imposed his knowledge of Eastern scenery and customs as well as a "real incident," to which he made frequent veiled allusions to Moore and other of his friends. According to a series of journal entries in 1813, Byron began The Bride of Abydos at a time when his heart was full of that "Dear sacred name, rest ever unreaveal'd" (a misquotation of Pope's line in Eloisa to Abelard: "Dear fatal name! rest ever unrevealed"), and his head was full of "orientalities." As the tale progressed, reality merged with imagination, and the poet's "vivid recollections" moved from "selfish regrets" to reminiscences of "a country replete with the brightest and darkest, but always most lively colours of my memory." Byron wrote to Moore from Venice that the third canto of Childe Harold was the result of his being "half mad during the time of its composition between

95 Moore, p. 447. See Marchand, I, 430-76.
96 See Moore, p. 545, Letter of 12 December 1821; West, p. 38; and Marchand, I, 237, 408.
97 Marchand, I, 421 and note p. 39.
98 Moore, p. 211.
99 Ibid.
metaphysics, mountains, lakes, love unextinguishable, thoughts unutterable, and the nightmare of my own delinquentiations.\textsuperscript{100} "The Lament of Tasso" also reveals a compound of literary and personal association that was acted upon by the catalyst of Byron's poetic creativity after a visit to Tasso's cell at Ferrar in 1817 and an examination of Tasso's personal correspondence.\textsuperscript{101} Byron's identification with the sixteenth-century poet and his "Long years of outrage--calumny--and wrong; / Imputed madness, prisoned solitude" is unmistakable in the lines: "For I have anguish to bear--and how? / I know not that--but in the innate force / Of my own spirit shall be found resource" (3-4; 44-46).\textsuperscript{102}

Byron's work is filled with similar evidence of his reliance, both conscious and unconscious, upon impressions from literature and life that were garnered by his memory and then selectively seized upon by his creative genius and incorporated into his poetry. However, these few examples establish that this aspect of Byron's borrowing is too significant ever to be ignored in a consideration of influences upon his poetry. Moore neatly summarized this aspect of Byron's borrowings by pointing out that it was Byron's "practice, when engaged in the composition of any work, to excite thus his vein by the perusal of others, on the same

\textsuperscript{100}Moore, p. 338. Letter of 28 January 1817.
\textsuperscript{101}Marchand, II, 689.
\textsuperscript{102}Works, pp. 436, 437.
subject or plan, from which the slightest hint caught by his imagination, as he read, was sufficient to kindle there such a train of thought as, but for that spark, had never been awakened, and of which he himself soon forgot the source. 103

An examination of Byron's use of literature as source material is another element that must be included in an investigation of the nature of his literary borrowing. Boyd points out that Byron's use of quotation is usually a stylistic device that indicates the impressionability of his mind to various writers rather than deliberate plagiarism, and this is an accurate and well-reasoned observation. 104

Byron's use of other authors for background and enrichment material, however, is a far more important principle in his writing. He had a penchant for accuracy of historical fact as well as of local color and costume, and, in the prefaces and notes to his poetry and in his letters, he was often scrupulous in acknowledging an indebtedness and its source. Murray was the frequent recipient of letters in which Byron included textual notes to be appended to his poetry. During the publication of The Bride of Abydos in 1813, for instance, Byron wrote Murray that "I send you a note for the ignorant, but I really wonder at finding you among them. I don't care one lump of sugar for my poetry; but for my costume, and

correctness on those points (of which I think the funeral was a proof), I will combat lustily."105 This "note for the ignorant" is a detailed justification of Byron's use of the phrase "the nephew of Cain" in a non-Christian tale.106 The next month, Byron wrote Edward Daniel Clarke, Professor of Mineralogy at Cambridge, who had recently returned from travels in Greece: "You are one of the very few men who can pronounce how far my costume (to use an affected but expressive word) is correct. As to poesy, that is, as 'men, gods, and columns,' please to decide upon it; but I am sure that I am anxious to have an observer's, particularly a famous observer's, testimony on the fidelity of my manners and dresses; and, as far as memory and an oriental twist in my imagination have permitted, it has been my endeavour to present to the Franks, a sketch of that of which you have and will present them a complete picture."107

Byron cited as the major corroborative authorities for his Eastern information Sir William Jones' Works, William Beckford's Vathek, Barthelemi D'Herbelot's Bibliothèque Orientale, and introductory essays for the Koran and Arabian Nights. Along with an examination of the influence of these


107 Barzun, p. 68. Letter of 15 December 1813.
Byron became increasingly conscientious about documenting his sources after the early charges of plagiarism, and Ernest Hartley Coleridge's editorial comments on Byron's annotations make Coleridge's edition of Byron's works a valuable mine of information for those Byron scholars particularly interested in the poet's sources. *Marino Faliero* serves as a good example of Byron's concern with historical accuracy, although *Sardanapalus* and *The Two Foscari* would do equally well. Shortly before sending the manuscript to London, Byron wrote Murray that Dr. John Moore's account of Marino Faliero's conspiracy and execution was false and unreliable and that

None of the Chronicles (and I have consulted Sanuto, Sandi, Navagero, and an anonymous Siege of Zara, besides the histories of Laugier, Darù, Sismondi, etc.) state, or even hint, that he begged his life; they merely say that he did not deny the conspiracy. . . . I don't know what your parlour boarders will think of the drama I have founded upon this extraordinary event: the only similar one in history is the story of Agis, King of Sparta, a prince with the Commons against the aristocracy, and losing his life therefor; but it shall be sent when copied.  

Byron prefaced this drama with a brief historical account of Doge Marino Faliero, pointing out that the story was available in all the chronicles of Venice but was "particularly

\[110\] Wiener, p. 129.  
\[111\] Chew, pp. 87-88.
works which Byron specified as direct sources of the Oriental Tales, Harold S. L. Wiener also reviews several other books which he regards as probable background reading for Byron's general knowledge of Eastern life and manners, such as Memoir of the Baron de Tott, on the Turks and the Tartars, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Works, and Vincent Mignot's The History of the Turkish, or Ottoman Empire. By analyzing the notes to the Oriental Tales in conjunction with cross-references to the various sources, Wiener has come to several interesting conclusions. Byron had unconsciously absorbed most of his Oriental information through his early reading and his travel experiences, and the supplementary documentation, in Wiener's opinion, was mainly the result of a desire to be faithful to the details of Oriental life.\(^{108}\) Byron's use of these books, which he acknowledged, was as reference books rather than as direct sources of inspiration for his poems; their importance, therefore, was at best secondary.\(^{109}\) Wiener suggests that this is at least a partial explanation of the fact that Byron's Oriental Tales were strikingly more marketable than those of Southey and Moore. All three authors relied on secondhand information to some extent; the difference was that Byron, unlike the other two, was writing


\(^{109}\) Ibid., p. 129.
detailed in the Lives of the Doges, by Marin Sanuto, which is given in the Appendix.\textsuperscript{112} After referring his readers to the more recent histories by Darà, Sismondi, and Laugier, which "nearly agree with the ancient chroniclers," Byron noted that the only English work on this subject of which he was aware was Dr. Moore's \textit{A View of the Society and Manners in Italy}. Dr. Moore's account, however, "is false and flippant, full of stale jests about old men and young wives, and wondering at so great an effect from so slight a cause."\textsuperscript{113}

In his edition, E. H. Coleridge collated Byron's notes with his own and included Byron's appendix, which contains Francis Cohen's translation of the story of Marino Faliero from Marin Sanudo's \textit{Vite dei Doge}, an extract from Petrarch's letters entitled "Petrarch on the Conspiracy of Marino Faliero," and a section describing Venetian society and manners.\textsuperscript{114} During the time that \textit{Marino Faliero} was going through the press, Murray received a number of authorized additions to the drama's editorial machinery, such as the following instructions from Byron:

In the notes to \textit{Marino Faliero}, it may be as well to say that 'Benintende' was not really of the Ten, but merely Grand Chancellor, a separate office (although important): it was an arbitrary alteration of mine. The Doges too were all buried in St. Mark's before Faliero. It is singular that when his predecessor, Andrea Dandolo, died, the Ten made a law that

\textsuperscript{112} Works, p. 491. \hspace{2cm} \textsuperscript{113} Ibid., pp. 497-98. \hspace{2cm} \textsuperscript{114} E. H. Coleridge, ed., IV, 462-72.
all the future Doges should be buried with their families, in their own churches,—one would think by a kind of presentiment. So that all that is said of his ancestral Doges, as buried at St. John's and Paul's, is altered from the fact, they being in St. Mark's. Make a note of this, and put editor as the subscription.

As I make such pretensions to accuracy, I should not like to be twitted even with such trifles on that score. Of the play they may say what they please, but not so of my costume and dram. pers., they having been real existencies.115

Far more subtle and significant than this use of other authors' works as background material, however, was the influence exerted on Byron's poetry of works which he had read, admired, and assimilated unconsciously into the very essence of his thinking. Although this type of influence was to a great extent unacknowledged, it must be regarded as the single most important facet of his borrowing. This pervasive and indelible impact upon Byron's poetry of certain literature may be explained by his imitativeness, his far-ranging intellectual curiosity, his vast reading, his mobilité, and the action and interaction of his memory and its associational prowess. One of the earliest studies in our century of this type of influence is contained in Samuel S. Chew's analysis of Byron's dramas, especially in the section devoted to Marino Faliero. The most direct influence, Chew notes, was Otway's Venice Preserved, although Byron, in a note and in two letters to Murray, attempted to

explain away similarities as accidental coincidences. In the conclusion to this part of his study, Chew states that the nature of Otway's influence is most apparent in the differences between the two plays. This paradoxical suggestion of influence being discernible in differences is particularly applicable to the findings of an examination of literary influence in Byron's writings. With regard to mood and tone, Chew says that Byron's sympathy is obviously with the conspirators, whereas Otway considers the fate of Jaffier and Pierre as fully justified though awful examples of lawful retribution for rebellion. Byron's drama is a reflection of the actual "ferment and excitement of Italy," while Otway's is a lightly disguised satire on contemporary English politics. The seriousness of Byron's play is evident in the total absence of comedy or wit, but "Otway's is disfigured by scenes of gross comedy," especially the satirical episodes involving the old Senator Antonio, which are directed toward the Earl of Shaftesbury. Otway's play is almost entirely devoid of the strongly subjective element present in Byron's.

116 Chew, p. 88. See E. H. Coleridge, ed., IV, 454, n. 2, containing Byron's reference to the line by One of the Ten: "Thou tremblest, Faliero!" to which the Doge replies, "'Tis with age then" (MF, V.iii.7-8). Byron says, in part, that "I find in reading over (since the completion of this tragedy), for the first time these six years, 'Venice Preserved,' a similar reply on a different occasion by Renault, and other coincidences arising from the subject. I need hardly remind the gentlest reader, that such coincidences must be accidental, from the very facility of their detection by reference to so popular a play on the stage and in the closet as Otway's chef-d'oeuvre."
And, finally, Chew states, Byron's exacting references to specific places, people, customs, and fashions—his costume—are quite unlike Otway's "vague and conventional allusions" to the Ducal Palace, St. Mark's, and the Rialto. Chew is also interested in *Marino Faliero*'s indebtedness to Shakespeare and notes that this drama, more than any of Byron's work, "betrays" Byron's unquestionably thorough knowledge of Shakespeare's plays. And in an appendix, Chew presents parallel passages from *Marino Faliero* and various Shakespearean dramas to substantiate his textual conclusions.

The limitations of space dictate the inclusion of only a few of the findings of other Byron scholars who have been impressed by evidences in the poetry of Byron's having assimilated and adapted, perhaps unconsciously in most cases, the ideas of other writers. William Jonathan Calvert, for one, agrees with Chew's observations that Byron's *Manfred* reflects the influence of the Faust legend, Chateaubriand's René, Goethe's Werther, Shelley's *St. Irvyne* and *Queen Mab*, Walpole's *Mysterious Mother*, Coleridge's *Remorse*, Maturin's *Bertram*, Lewis's *Monk*, and Beckford's *Vathek*. Calvert further concludes that these influences, though perceptible,

117 Chew, p. 91.  
118 Ibid., p. 88.  
119 Ibid., pp. 179-81.  
entered so thoroughly into the poet's thinking that Manfred "was at bottom Byron. His sufferings, his regrets, his doubts, and his questioning are those in the main of his creator." 121 Although Bertrand Evans concurs that Manfred was indebted to some of the sources listed by Calvert and Chew, he suggests that Sotheby's Alfonso in Julian and Agnes may have been the most direct influence on Byron's drawing of his protagonist. 122 Arthur D. Kahn, after acknowledging that the historical framework of Sardanapalus came from Diodorus Siculus' Bibliotheca and the characterization of Sardanapalus from William Mitford's History of Greece, discusses E. H. Coleridge's notes on the text. In these notes, Kahn says, Coleridge carefully distinguished as sources of various quotations and allusions in Sardanapalus Shakespeare, Juvenal, Plutarch, the Old Testament, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley. Kahn then expresses surprise that so erudite an editor as Coleridge "failed to note that Seneca actually provided the chief model and source for Byron's play and that Seneca's influence pervades every page of Sardanapalus." 123 Of greater importance than Byron's numerous textual borrowings from Seneca, Kahn asserts, "are the commonplaces, a

121 Calvert, p. 141.
hallmark of Senecan drama, which Byron assumed wholesale from his mentor.124 Chief among these are three commonplace about kingship, which Seneca treated most comprehensively in the Octavia and which Byron incorporated into his dramatic portrait of Sardanapalus: "the king's greatest virtue is to save his citizens . . . he must abstain from bloodshed with the oppressed but protect himself when necessary by the sword . . . he must allow himself no license."125 Kahn also states that the plot of Sardanapalus is deliberately modeled after the Octavia and that Byron adopted in his play, either consciously or otherwise, Seneca's forensic display of glittering "silver Latin with the figures of rhetoric and learned allusions that appealed to an aristocratic audience."126 But Byron's use of Seneca, as with his use of Otway, was not a simple copying or even a sophisticated borrowing; it was, rather, a matter of first adopting, then adapting, and finally completely re-creating his source.127 The result in Sardanapalus, as in Marino Faliero, is a decisive change in tone and a fresh work of art.

In Byron: The Record of a Quest, Ernest J. Lovell endeavors to prove that the Zeluco theme—that of a self-torturing, misanthropic, guilt-laden protagonist who is part-hero and part-villain—as it appeared in works by various

124 Kahn, p. 667.
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid., p. 669.
authors, was the strongest literary influence on Byron's heroes. Byron knew Dr. John Moore's novel *Zeluco*, of course, but Lovell suggests as equally influential on Byron's poetry the *Zeluco* theme as it appeared in Lewis's *Monk*, Goethe's *Werther*, William Godwin's *St. Leon* and *Fleetwood*, Chateaubriand's *René*, Maturin's *Bertram* and *Manuel*, Shelley's *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne*, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. In the 1813 addition to the preface of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, Byron stated that his original plan was to draw a poetical "sketch of a modern Timon, perhaps a poetical Zeluco." In Lovell's opinion, Byron identified so fully with the gloomy, introspective, self-tormenting Zeluco-type in literature and his mind was so permeated with the Zeluco theme that he transferred the characteristics to his own heroes and worked the theme into *Childe Harold*, the Oriental Tales, the dramas, and a number of his shorter poems.

Any consideration of the nature of Byron's use of literature must be based on some degree of understanding of what Hazlitt calls the "intensity of conception and expression."

129 Ibid., p. 144.
130 Ibid., pp. 154, 146.
131 Ibid., pp. 161-62.
132 Ibid., p. 165.
133 Ibid., p. 168.
134 Ibid., p. 170.
135 Ibid., p. 170.
136 Lovell, p. 140.
in Byron's poetry. Although he was generally a good literary craftsman and could on occasion even create somewhat mechanically, Byron wrenched his most authentic poetry from the inner core of his oversensitive being, and it burned its way through to the outer levels of consciousness from whence it could be consigned to paper. His attitude toward his sources was complex. At times, he exhibited a genuine distress at charges of plagiarism and a meticulous concern over exact documentation; yet at other times, he displayed an insouciant disregard of textual indebtedness. Occasionally, he made blatantly dishonest claims of originality, such as those regarding Manfred and the two Faust works; and, in the latter period of his life especially, he often assumed a shoulder-shrugging attitude toward charges of borrowing and imitation.

The reasons for his reluctance to admit to the influence of the early English writers are equally complex and open to conjecture. G. Wilson Knight believes that Byron pointedly refused Shakespeare as a literary model, despite an undeniably deep knowledge of Shakespeare's plays, because he "had so much of Shakespearian and other drama in him as a man that he regarded Shakespeare as a danger." This may also help explain Byron's attitude toward the other Renaissance dramatists whose influence in Byron's work this study

\[137^{137}\text{Hazlitt, V, 378.}\]  
\[138^{138}\text{Knight, p. 9.}\]
is directed toward establishing. André Maurois states that "Byron lived Shakespeare" and that for Byron in the winter of 1814 "life itself was Shakesperian";\textsuperscript{139} Knight echoes and enlarges upon this idea by saying that "it was not only in 1814 that Byron lived Shakespeare. He was always doing it."\textsuperscript{140} My conclusions on this score stop short of those of Maurois and Knight; however, it is possible to suggest, on the basis of what we know of his extreme susceptibility to the appeal of ideas and individuals, that Byron well may have been so attracted to the early writers as to have felt that his originality was threatened and so retreated behind the psychological protection of loud disavowals and vociferous derogations. Isaac D'Israeli, who had a penetrating insight into the workings of Byron's mind, once remarked to his son that "what is called originality is little understood. New sentiments, thoughts, images seem each day more difficult. Byron was always haunted with the fear and the necessity of plagiarism. He need not have been alarmed. He is one of the most original of writers. . . . A new style, based on truth, must carry everything before it."\textsuperscript{141} And this provocative phrase of D'Israeli--"the fear and the necessity of plagiarism"--is probably an incisive assessment of Byron's

\textsuperscript{139} André Maurois, \textit{Byron} (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930), p. 198.

\textsuperscript{140} Knight, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{141} Cline, p. 140.
attitude toward the literature which genuinely influenced him and thereby found its way into his own poetry.
CHAPTER IV

THE BYRONIC HERO AND BYRON HIMSELF

The tendency to identify Byron with his heroes has persisted from the publication of the first two cantos of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage in March 1812 to the present. For most critics, as Paul West points out, the remarkable facts of Byron's life make an unprejudiced analysis of the poetry impossible.\(^1\) If the Byronic Hero is merely a literary projection of Byron, as many readers believe, an attempt to establish the fact that Byron's heroes were influenced by their creator's long familiarity with the old English dramatists, "those turbid mountebanks,"\(^2\) must be little more than an exercise in futility. If, on the other hand, we can validly assess Byron's reflection in his protagonists as but a single, though undeniably significant, element in their characterization, there seems little more reason to say that Lara, the Giaour, and Conrad are Byron's literary equivalents than to say that Hamlet is Shakespeare. In any event, the statements by Byron regarding his relationship to his heroes must first be taken into careful account.

\(^1\)West, p. 11.

\(^2\)Moore, p. 492. Letter of 4 January 1821.
in this reassessment of commentary on the autobiographical bias of the Byronic Hero.

From his first emphatic denial in the preface to *Childe Harold* in 1812 that Harold was "intended" as "some real personage" until his avowal to Dr. James Kennedy in Cephalonia in 1823 that he could not "conceive why people will always mix up my own character and opinions with those of the imaginary beings which, as a poet, I have the right and liberty to draw," Byron steadfastly declared that his heroes were fictional and, as such, to be considered as separate from their creator. In the preface originally intended for the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, he advised his readers to observe "that when the author speaks in his own person, he assumes a very different tone from that of" Harold. Reminiscing on his early years of fame in London, Byron remarked to Medwin that after the second canto of *Childe Harold* was published, "the impersonation of myself, which, in spite of all I could say, the world would discover in that poem, made every one curious to know me, and to


4James Kennedy, *Conversations on Religion, with Lord Byron and Others, Held in Cephalonia, a Short Time Previous to his Lordship's Death* (London: John Murray, 1830), p. 162.

5R. C. Dallas, Esq., *Recollections of the Life of Lord Byron, from the Year 1808 to the End of 1814* (London: Charles Knight, 1824), p. 155.
When the first edition of *The Giaour* was published in June 1812, the reading public again identified Byron with his lonely, guilt-haunted hero. Byron immediately took steps to counter a widely circulating rumor that he actually had been involved with a Turkish girl in an incident similar to that in his poem. His consternation at being thought to portray himself in his poetry is still evident in a prefatory letter to Thomas Moore attached to *The Corsair* in 1814, although Byron appears to have become somewhat hardened to the situation by this time:

> With regard to my story, and stories in general, I should have been glad to have rendered my personages more perfect and amiable, if possible, inasmuch as I have been sometimes criticised, and considered no less responsible for their deeds and qualities than if all had been personal. Be it so—if I have deviated into the gloomy vanity of "drawing from self," the pictures are probably like, since they are unfavourable; and if not, those who know me are undeceived, and those who do not, I have little interest in undeceiving. I have no particular desire that any but my acquaintance should think the author better than the beings of his imagining; but I cannot help a little surprise, and perhaps amusement, at some odd critical exceptions in the present instance, when I see several bards (far more deserving, I allow) in a very reputable plight, and quite exempted from all participation in the faults of those heroes, who, nevertheless, might be found with little more morality than the Giaour, and perhaps—but not—I must admit Childe Harold to be a very repulsive personage; and as to his identity, those who like it must give him whatever "alias" they please.  

---

6 Medwin, p. 214.  
7 Marchand, I, 409.  
8 Works, pp. 337-38.
Byron's habitual use of mysterious, unexplained allusions in his conversations, letters, and journals was, of course, partially responsible for his being identified with such characters as Conrad. In a journal entry for 10 March 1814, for instance, he wrote of hearing from Hobhouse "an odd report,—that I am the actual Conrad, the veritable Corsair, and that part of my travels are supposed to have passed in privacy [sic] [piracy?]! Um!—people sometimes hit near the truth; but never the whole truth. H. don't know what I was about the year after he left the Levant; nor does any one—nor—nor—nor—however, it is a lie—but, 'I doubt the equivocation of the fiend that lies like truth!'

And on 15 March of the same year, he recorded that he had written "to * * the Corsair report. She says she don't wonder, since 'Conrad is so like.' It is odd that one, who knows me so thoroughly, should tell me this to my face. However, if she don't know, nobody can."

In spite of his habits of self-dramatization, however, Byron persisted in his claims that he was not the hero of his poetry. In reply to charges of irreverence which followed the publication of Werner, Byron wrote to Moore in 1822 that "with respect to 'Religion,' can I never convince you that I have no such opinions as the characters in that drama, which seems to have frightened every body? Yet they are

9Moore, p. 231.  
10Ibid.
nothing to the expressions in Goethe's Faust (which are ten
time hardier), and not a whit more bold than those of
Milton's Satan." He then made the previously quoted state-
ment in which he asserted that he did "embody" himself with
the character while he was drawing it, "but not a moment
after the pen is from the paper."\footnote{Ibid., p. 552. Letter of 4 March 1822. Quoted on
p. 11 of this study.} And in 1823, he told
the Countess of Blessington that "it is no wonder that I am
considered a demon, when people have taken it into their
heads that I am the hero of all my own tales in verse. They
fancy one can only describe what has actually occurred to
one's self, and forget the power that persons of any imagina-
tion possess of identifying themselves, for the time being,
with the creations of their fancy. This is a peculiar dis-
tinction conferred on me, for I have heard of no other poet
who has been identified with his works."\footnote{Blessington, p. 316.}

R. C. Dallas' account of the "great difficulty" with
which he finally dissuaded Byron from publishing the first
two cantos of \textit{Childe Harold} anonymously contains what has
turned out to be a remarkably prescient statement. In a
portion of an undated letter which he sent to Byron along
with the first proof of the poem, Dallas wrote, "I am glad
you have agreed to appear on the title page. It is impos-
sible to remain an instant unknown as the author, or to
separate the Pilgrim from the Traveller." A survey of contemporary criticism indicates that this was the general attitude toward not only the "Traveller" and his "Pilgrim," but toward Byron and all his heroes. In a review of the seventh edition of The Giaour, the Quarterly Review commented that Byron had included in the Giaour's character "some unnecessary shades of what we should be disposed to call arrogance and selfishness. It is surely not quite consistent with his feelings of remorse, that he should boast of his inability 'to obtain or die,' and consequently to risk the life of Leila for his own gratification; and that he should justify her murder, by the avowal that he, himself, would have acted like Hassan under a similar provocation." Though not directly indicting Byron as the real-life counterpart of the Giaour, the reviewer rebuked the poet for his character's shortcomings, with the implication that the Giaour's unpleasing character traits were refractions of like qualities in his creator. In October 1816, the same periodical carried a review of the third canto of Childe Harold, which asserted that the poem contained "so many direct allusions to the author's personal feelings and private history, that it becomes impossible for us to divide Lord

13 Dallas, p. 156.

Byron from his poetry, or to offer our criticism upon the continuation of Childe Harold, without reverting to the circumstances in which the commencement of that singular and original work first appeared. The reviewer next observed the marked degree to which "all, or almost all" of Byron's heroes resembled one another and seemed patterned after Childe Harold, and so after Byron, in that they "have minds which seem at variance with their fortunes, and exhibit high and poignant feelings of pain and pleasure; a keen sense of what is noble and honourable, and an equally keen susceptibility of injustice or injury, under the garb of stoicism or contempt of mankind. The strength of early passion, and the glow of youthful feeling, are uniformly painted as chilled or subdued by a train of early imprudences or of darker guilt, and the sense of enjoyment tarnished by too intimate and experienced an acquaintance with the vanity of human wishes." After referring to Byron's protestations against the public's obstinancy "in declaring that in these leading traits of character Lord Byron copied from the individual features reflected in his own mirror," the writer pointed out that "even in the features of Conrad, those who have looked on Lord Byron will recognize some likeness"; that "the ascetic regimen which the noble author

15 [Review of Childe Harold, Canto III—and other Poems], Quarterly Review, 16 (October 1816), 172.
16 Ibid., p. 183.
himself observe, was no less marked in the description of Conrad's fare"; and that the manner in which "Lara suddenly and unexpectedly returned from distant travels" and re-assumed "his station in the society of his own country, has in like manner strong points of resemblance to the part where the author himself seemed occasionally to bear amid the scenes where the great mingle with the fair." He concluded by stating that "we are not writing Lord Byron's private history, though from the connection already stated between his poetry and his character, we feel ourselves forced upon considering his literary life, his deportment, and even his personal appearance."\textsuperscript{17}

Murray, always anxious about the public's reaction, had been particularly apprehensive over the discovery of possible autobiographical elements in \textit{Manfred}, and the reviewer for the London newspaper \textit{The Day and New Times} did nothing to allay the publisher's fears.\textsuperscript{18} Byron had written and sent to London the first two acts of the drama in 1816 while he was living in Switzerland, and he added the third act in Venice, posting it to Murray on 9 March 1817. However, William Gifford, Murray's chief adviser, reacted so unfavorably to the final act that Byron practically rewrote it before \textit{Manfred}'s publication on 16 June 1817.\textsuperscript{19} \textit{The Day and Quarterly Review}, 16 (October 1816), 183-85. \textsuperscript{17} \textit{Marchand}, II, 699. \textsuperscript{18} \textit{Works}, p. 477. \textsuperscript{19}
New Times review appeared a week later, containing a vigorous attack on the poem's theme of incest, as well as a pointed reference to Manfred's autobiographical parallels: "Manfred [sic] has exiled himself from society, and what is to be the ground of our compassion for the exile? Simply the commission of one of the most revolting of crimes. He has committed incest! Lord Byron has coloured Manfred into his own personal features."²⁰ In May 1818, Blackwood's Magazine carried a review of the fourth canto of Childe Harold, which had been published the preceding January, that stated unequivocally that the "popular belief" that Byron's "heroes are himself, is a true belief; and the world has at last convinced the poet of that which he had at first but indistinctly understood, and imperfectly believed. His heroes are himself--that is, either what he is, or has been, or what he would wish or fear to be. Whatever may have been his intention, there is in his mind a predominant consciousness of himself, which determines the character he draws. This appears most in the first two Cantos of Childe Harold [sic], where his mind seems so enslaved to itself, that it cannot escape even from a direct journal of his own travels. But much more than his characters are drawn from himself. Almost every feeling, passion, thought, or image, or represented object in his poetry, has magnitude and interest

²⁰ Marchand, II, 699.
assigned to it, not in proportion to its plan in the poem, but to its direct interest to his own mind,—and not to his imagination, but to his passions, and his life of passion."²¹ On 24 February 1821, the Literary Gazette's reviewer wrote that in The Corsair "Lord Byron . . . as in most of his pieces . . . masquerades himself as the hero of the actions" and that this "identification of his own character with that of his hero . . . is obvious in almost all his poems."²² In much the same vein was Hazlitt's well-known remark in The Spirit of the Age that "Lord Byron makes man after his own image, woman after his own heart",²³ as well as Hazlitt's comments that Byron "himself is never absent from our minds" when we are reading his works²⁴ and that "Manfred is merely himself, with a fancy-drapery on."²⁵

Moore, as friend and editor, was concerned with the widespread practice of viewing Byron's heroes as mirror-images of Byron. He prefaced his reproduction of Goethe's critique on Manfred with a brief essay on this "disposition so prevalent throughout Europe, to picture Byron as a man of marvels and mysteries, as well in his life as in his poetry," of which Goethe's article was an "amusing instance." With

²²Literary Gazette, 21 (1821), 123.
²³Hazlitt, IV, 255.
²⁴Ibid., p. 256.
²⁵Ibid., p. 258.
uncharacteristic warmth, Moore continued as follows:

To these exaggerated, or wholly false notions of him, the numerous fictions palmed upon the world of his romantic tours and wonderful adventures in places he never saw, and with persons that never existed, have no doubt, considerably contributed; and the consequence is, so utterly out of truth and nature are the representations of his life and character long current upon the Continent, that it may be questioned whether the real "flesh and blood" hero of these pages—the social, practical-minded, and, with all his faults and eccentricities, English Lord Byron,—may not, to the over-exalted imaginations of most of his foreign admirers, appear but an ordinary, unromantic, and prosaic personage.26

And in a note that seems but a spillway for the overflow of his foregoing argument, Moore added the following comments:

Of this kind are the accounts, filled with all sorts of circumstantial wonders, of his residence in the island of Mytilene;—his voyages to Sicily,—to Ithaca, with the Countess Guiccioli, &c. &c. But the most absurd, perhaps, of all these fabrications, are the stores told by Pouqueville, of the poet's religious conferences in the cell of Father Paul, at Athens; and the still more unconscionable fiction in which Rizo has indulged, in giving the details of a pretended theatrical scene, got up (according to this poetical historian) between Lord Byron and the Archbishop of Arta, at the tomb of Botzaris, in Missolonghi.27

Moore's own opinion of Byron's characterization was quite different from that of most of his contemporaries:

This strange propensity with which the man was, as it were, inoculated by the poet, re-acted back again upon his poetry, so as to produce, in some of his delineations of character, that inconsistency which has not unfrequently been noticed by his critics,—namely, the junction

26 Moore, p. 448.
27 Ibid., note 6.
of one or two lofty and shining virtues with "a thousand crimes" altogether incompatible with them; this anomaly being, in fact, accounted for by the two different sorts of ambition that actuated him,—the natural one, of infusing into his personages those high and kindly qualities he felt conscious of within himself; and the artificial one, of investing them with those crimes which he so boyishly wished imputed to him by the world.  

Although the intention here evidently was to repudiate, or at least qualify, the exaggerated, or wholly false notions that Byron's heroes were self-portraits of Byron, Moore's arguments are decidedly ambiguous and inconclusive. Moore seems first to deny that Byron was his own hero but then to explain why Byron drew so much of himself in his characters.

The anonymous author of The Life, Writings, Opinions, and Times of the Right Hon. George Gordon Noel Byron displayed a similar ambiguity in his remarks on Byron's first hero:

The poet may or may not have been the hero of his own tale; that is rather a matter of curiosity than of real concern. . . . We rather give credence to his Lordship's assertions, that he did not intend to pourtray [sic] himself in the hero of his piece; but imagine that he so far entered into the spirit of the composition, as almost to embody and identify himself with him. This . . . should rather give an additional interest to the piece, than be considered a drawback from its merit. The portrait of a man of genius, drawn by himself, must be more valuable and genuine than one drawn by any other person, however great a master of his art; and Lord Byron and Childe Harold will go down, hand in hand together, to the latest posterity.  

28 Moore, p. 648.  
29 Iley, p. 341.
The same writer, continuing his discussion of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, said that the poem traced Byron's "own wanderings, step by step" and that "this coincidence, combined with several other relations in the work, seemed so clearly to point out his Lordship as the hero of the piece, that the public could scarcely fail of making the application, in spite of the assurances of his Lordship that the character was merely a fictitious one."\(^{30}\)

Francis Jeffrey, in his critical essay on Byron in 1816, commended the poet's originality—his "perpetual stream of thick-coming fancies" and his "eternal spring of fresh-blown images."\(^{31}\) However, in discussing the third canto of *Childe Harold*, Jeffrey noted that it was "no longer possible to ascribe" the "sentiments and opinions" contained in the poem "to the ideal person whose name it bears, or to any other than the author himself."\(^{32}\) After referring to Byron's complaints against "those who identified him with his hero," Jeffrey said that it was "really impractical to distinguish" between Byron and Harold, because "not only do the author and his hero travel and reflect together, but in truth, we

\(^{30}\)Iley, p. 170.


\(^{32}\)Ibid., p. 469.
scarcely ever have any distinct intimation to which of them the sentiments so energetically expressed are to be ascribed; and in those which are unequivocally given as those of the noble author himself, there is the very same tone of misanthropy, sadness, and scorn, which we were formerly willing to regard as a part of the assumed costume of the Childe."33

On the other hand, although Jeffrey recognized that there were similarities between Byron and his heroes, he frequently appraised the characters as literary productions, separate from their author. After remarking that Byron's characterization "is frequently abrupt and careless, and obscure," Jeffrey deplored Byron's "delineation of a certain morbid exaltation of character and of feeling, a sort of demoniacal sublimity, not without some traits of the ruined Archangel."34

In spite of his disapproval of the Byronic Hero's moral lapses and the monotony with which each poem was "filled by one character," Jeffrey stated that "it is impossible to represent such a character better than Lord Byron has done . . . or indeed to represent anything more terrible in its anger or more attractive in its relenting."35 Reviewing the fourth canto of Childe Harold in 1818, Jeffrey mentioned Byron's "strange and unsated desire of depicting himself, throughout all the changes of his being. His wild temper

33Jeffrey, p. 470.  
34Ibid., p. 454.  
35Ibid., p. 455.
only found ease in tracing out, in laying bare to the uni-
versal gaze, the very ground-work, the most secret paths,
the darkest coverts of one of the most wayward and un-
imaginable minds ever framed by nature." Jeffrey's next
comments are significant in that they provided a new dimen-
sion to contemporary criticism of Byron's heroes:

His troubled imaginary beings,—possessing much
of himself, and far more not of himself, he has
made into Giaours, Conrads, Laras and Alps,—
and his conception of himself has been expanded
into Childe Harold, as we now behold him on that
splendid pilgrimage. . . . We have admitted,
that much of himself is depicted in all his
heroes; but when we seem to see the poet
shadowed out in all those states of disordered
being which such heroes exhibit, we are far
from believing that his own mind has gone
through those states of disorder, in its own
experience of life. We merely conceive of it
as having felt within itself the capacity of
such disorders, and therefore exhibiting itself
before us in possibility.37

Pointing out that such poetic self-identification is "rare
with great poets," Jeffrey said that "neither Homer, nor
Shakespeare, nor Milton, ever so show themselves in the
characters which they portray. Their poetical personages
have no reference to themselves; but are distinct, indepen-
dent creatures of their minds, produced in the full freedom
of intellectual power." Byron, however, lacks "this freedom
of power." In Byron's work, Jeffrey continued, "there is

36 [Francis Jeffrey], [Review of Childe Harold. Canto
Fourth], Edinburgh Review, 30 (June 1818), 89.
37 Ibid., p. 96.
appropriation of character to events. Character is first, and all in all. It is dictated—compelled by some force in his own mind necessitating him,—and the events obey."

Byron's poems, therefore, are merely bold, confused, and turbulent exemplifications of certain sweeping energies and irresistible passions. They are fragments of a poet's dark dream of life. The very personages, vividly as they are pictured, are yet felt to be fictitious; and derive their chief power over us from their supposed mysterious connexion with the poet himself, and, it may be added, with each other. The law of his mind is, to embody his own peculiar feelings in the forms of other men. In all his heroes we accordingly recognize—though with infinite modifications, the same great characteristics—a high and audacious conception of the power of the mind,—an intense sensibility of passion,—an almost boundless capacity of tumultuous emotion,—a haunting admiration of the grandeur of disordered power,—and, above all, a soul-felt, blood-felt delight in beauty. . . .

However, in his review of Sardanapalus, Jeffrey observed in 1822 that the drama's protagonist "must be allowed to be a new character" among Byron's other heroes, who "are all one individual." 38

In the period immediately after Byron's death, Edward George Bulwer-Lytton was probably the first, and certainly one of the very few, to follow the practice, advocated by Moore and to an extent by Jeffrey, of examining Byron's

38 Edinburgh Review, 30 (June 1818), 94-95.

poetry apart from the poet's life. In his *England and the English*, Bulwer-Lytton discussed the contemporary reading public's disappointment in not always discovering an exotic poetic image of Byron in his poetry. According to this critic, Byron's dramas, unlike the earlier works, were not mere egotistical projections of Byron and his age; they were, instead, serious explorations of universal human motives and problems. According to this critic, Byron's dramas, unlike the earlier works, were not mere egotistical projections of Byron and his age; they were, instead, serious explorations of universal human motives and problems.  

Thomas Babington Macaulay, however, in his review of the first edition of Moore's *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, said that Byron "never wrote without some reference, direct or indirect to himself" and that "the interest excited by the events of his life mingles itself in our minds . . . with the interest which properly belongs to his works."  

In drawing each of his heroes, Macaulay wrote, Byron created "not a man, but a personified epigram." All of these figures were thus "universally considered merely as loose incognitos of Byron," as "there is every reason to believe that he meant them to be."  

Hartley Coleridge, on the other hand, did endeavor at times to establish an aesthetic distance between Byron and his characters. For instance, Coleridge said that Byron's assertion that "Harold

---


42 Ibid., p. 412.

43 Ibid., p. 414.
is the child of imagination" was "not the whole truth; but it is truer than it seems."\textsuperscript{44} Byron, unlike Harold, was neither "sated" nor "cheerless" nor "unamiable"; instead the poet was, at the time of his writing the first two cantos of Childe Harold, "all a-quiver with youth and enthusiasm and the joy of great living." Although "Byron was not Harold," Coleridge added, "Harold was an ideal Byron, the creature and avenger of his pride, which haunted and pursued its presumptuous creator to the bitter end."\textsuperscript{45} Hippolyte Taine, one of Byron's greatest admirers at the close of the nineteenth century,\textsuperscript{46} said that not even "In the freest flight of his thoughts" was Byron able "to liberate himself from himself." Because "he meditated too much upon himself to be enamoured of anything else," Byron "could not metamorphose himself into another." In his characterizations, therefore, Byron observed rather than invented and transcribed rather than created, in Taine's opinion. Thus, although "his copy is darkly exaggerated . . . it is a copy."\textsuperscript{47}

A survey of twentieth-century Byron criticism reveals a continuance of the biographical approach to Byron's poetry and indicates the soundness of Thorslev's remark that "with

\textsuperscript{44}E. H. Coleridge, ed., II, xiv.
\textsuperscript{45}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46}Thorslev, p. 11.
no other English poet has the identification of poet and poetic characters been so often made."\(^{48}\) Modern scholarship, however, has made important advancements in the various interpretations of the Byronic Hero as a significant literary figure, and the traditional biographical point of view is now sometimes subordinate to other critical emphases. Attempting to explain this identification, Oliver Elton wrote in 1912 that because so much is known of Byron's life, "we watch for him on every page, and when we have found him, he remains greater than his work, which is so perfect a mirror of his imperfections, of his elusive nature, that we still gaze upon it."\(^{49}\) The hero of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, Elton continues,

that strange doppelgänger, who figures in so many of his writings down to Manfred, and whose features melt and waver but at last fix into some distinctness . . . is sometimes as near to Byron and as like him, as his shadow thrown upon the mist. . . . Harold is, in truth, at once less and more than Byron. Less, for he is not the Byron of the letters, the satirist, the buck, the ex-dandy, the friend of Angelo and John Jackson; and more, because he is in part a personage in the "satanic" tradition, of Vathek or Schedoni ancestry, harried by the memory of sorrows and follies, if not of crimes, and it comforts Byron to think himself such a personage.\(^{50}\)

\(^{48}\) Thorslev, P. 11.


\(^{50}\) Ibid., pp. 141-42.
Lara, Elton says, "represents not so much the man that Byron thought he was, as the man that he feared and dreamed he might become; magnified, of course, and draped with rhetorical frippery." Elton further observes that nineteenth-century reviewers misplaced the critical emphasis in their evaluations of Byron and his heroes:

Macaulay and the old reviewers saw coarsely and said bluntly that he could only represent himself. They meant this for blame, but it is the point of interest in Byron. The more we read him, the more we are forced to think that he wrote sincerely when he wrote of himself; that he was accurately true to his mood of the moment; that he did not write dramatic lyrics; that when he said his peace was poisoned by memories, he meant it, and that when he said he had done amiss, he meant it; that the passions of his tragic heroes, as distinct from the occurrences in which he fancifully set them, reflect his own—magnified, no doubt, and melodramatised; that he really had some reason for remorse as well as for anger; and that his way of working off the poison was not to turn to religion, or philosophy, or action, but to make the world his confessor. 

Elton also makes the significant point that "Byron appropriated and heightened a type which was already afloat in the consciousness of Europe, and Europe, gratefully, forgot all Byron's debts and identified the type for good and all with Byron." 

Chew, although seeming to disagree somewhat with what he terms "the cry of anti-Byronism" in the criticism "from the days of Henry Taylor and Carlyle" that Byron "drew only

51 Ibid., p. 146.  
52 Ibid., p. 160.  
53 Ibid., p. 417.
his own character," states that "the poet's self-portraiture in the character of Sardanapalus is very evident."

Sardanapalus' "love of pleasure and ease, his selfishness and over-sensuality, his dislike of war and glory, his energy and perfect fearlessness when aroused, his antagonism towards priests and kings, his wit, pride, scepticism, freedom from illusions, and claim to intellectual liberty, are all of the very essence of Byron's complex nature."

He concludes that all critics must therefore admit "that Sardanapalus is an autobiographic revelation." 54 Eino Railo, in his study of English romanticism, published in 1927, says that Childe Harold mirrors Byron's pessimism, his "protest against the misery of the world and all mankind," his radicalism, and his love of liberty, and that the character of Harold is "an extremely thin disguise for Byron's own posing ego." The reading public then "easily superimposed" Harold's "spiritual development" on the heroes of Byron's Oriental Tales. This superimposition "resulted in the conception known afterwards as the 'Byronic Hero,' a type which the poet's own age, particularly the world of women, had good reason for supposing the poet himself to represent." 55

In the next decade, Gamaliel Bradford wrote of "the brilliant and varied assertion" which Byron gave to "the tremendous

54 Chew, p. 113.

importance of his own ego." The sequence of Byron's poems is, in Bradford's opinion, an "obvious . . . means of telling all his boy's secrets to the whole world and making that world remember him," and, as such, is "nothing more nor less than a continuous autobiography." Bradford further states that the "nerve-driven heroes" of the poems "surge through their thrilling tempests of adventure, or at least long for them, precisely as Byron himself did." In The Romantic Agony, Mario Praz suggests that it is quite probable that Byron "studied every detail" for the delineation of Conrad "in front of a mirror, even to the terrible oblique look with which he frightened people, particularly his mistresses." In his chapter on "The Metamorphoses of Satan" in Romantic literature, Praz says that Byron's heroes, like Byron, were fated men, doomed by the very nature of their beings. In describing Byron's "Fatal Men," Praz refers to Charles DuBos' theory that Byron "required the feeling of guilt to arouse in him the phenomena of the moral sense, and the feeling of fatality in order to appreciate

57 Ibid., p. 238.
58 Ibid., p. 240.
59 Ibid., p. 242.
the flow of life." Because "paroxysm became his natural atmosphere," Byron imparted to his heroes the needs of his own tumultuous passions. Thus, Praz concludes, Byron's "Fatal Men" were created from and became the reflections of Byron's "paroxysm," with "its jarring and clamorous discords." T. S. Eliot, also writing in the first half of this century, makes the general observation that the inconsistencies of Byron's character are evidenced in "the Giaour, the Corsair, Lara, Manfred and Cain." Eliot then says that the reader is immediately interested in the Giaour because of the early "glimpse of him through a Moslem eye" which reveals that "he is Lord Byron himself." Elie Halevy, in his England in 1815, writes that "Childe Harold was Byron himself" and that Conrad and Lara represent Byron's "oriental incarnation."

To André Maurois, the initial popularity of Childe Harold resulted from the fact that his poem was "the first to echo the tragic scepticism of a sickened generation"; the

---

61 Praz, p. 73.


64 Ibid., p. 228.

poem's future success was assured when Byron proved to be "a match for his work." The public, knowing something of the poet's background and recent travels, decided that Harold's story was Byron's own story, and consequently "all the sustained melancholy, the solitude, and the woes of the Childe were attributed to Lord Byron." When the public's imagination invested Byron with Harold's "heinous passions" and "marble heart," Maurois continues, Byron began to seek that in himself which his readers were admiring. The poetry, acted upon in its creation by the poet's idealized projection of himself, acted in turn upon its creator in his assuming Harold's mien as his own façade. This portion of Maurois' theory is reminiscent of Moore's opinion regarding the involved process of interaction between Byron the man and Byron the poet. Maurois describes the "mournful disdain" and "icy reserve" with which Byron publicly masked the "inborn shyness" and "profound disquiet" that were the results of his acute self-consciousness about his family heritage, his irregular upbringing, and his lameness. The resemblances between Byron and his heroes "were manifest--noble birth, a tender and passionate mind in adolescence, disappointment, rage, crime, despair." However, the

67 Ibid., p. 175.  
68 Ibid., p. 176.  
69 Moore, p. 648.  
70 Maurois, p. 176.
characters in the poems enacted the "dramas which Byron only dreamed," and "the Byronic hero became for his creator a false and theatrical model which Byron felt obliged to imitate." Conrad, for example, "was not Byron, but he was the Byronic hero of the authentic type," in whose image the poet seemed to recast himself on occasion. Maurois says that Byron thus "clung obstinately" to and attempted to portray the idea of himself which he perceived in his characters of "the wandering spirit, the fallen angel, the being born for a superhuman existence but guided by destiny to deeds of evil." When Byron surveyed his life as it was and realized what it might have been, he, like Conrad, was tortured by a fury of remorse and envy—"an envy of those who, happier than himself, have contrived to wield their powers without coming into conflict with mankind, and a supreme envy of the man he could have been, the man that for an instant he was." Therefore, Maurois asserts, "as Lucifer in Hell is jealous of Lucifer in Heaven, so was Byron jealous of Byron." In Marchand's opinion, as in Maurois', Byron's shyness caused the poet "to play his own hero" and become "the aloof and melancholy Childe Harold" in London society during the

71 Maurois, p. 241.  
72 Ibid., p. 242.  
73 Ibid., p. 240.  
74 Ibid., p. 253.  
75 Ibid.
days of Byron's first literary fame.\textsuperscript{76} Manfred voices later "the ultimate" of Byron's "revolt against the condition of life itself." This revolt, in Marchand's opinion, moves toward despair in Cain, and, in spite of Byron's "protestation in the Preface that Lucifer's words were those of the character and not of the author and were necessary for the dramatic development, and that it was difficult 'to make him talk like a clergyman upon the same subject,' Byron did make him voice some of his own speculations and stand as an alter ego to Cain, who is a compound of intellectual rebel and rationalistic skeptic of the Age of Reason."\textsuperscript{77} Marchand also views Byron's writing as a poetic catharsis to which the poet turned for relief from despondency and frustration.\textsuperscript{78} When Byron completed The Bride of Abydos, for instance, he wrote Moore that "all convulsions end with me in rhyme; and to solace my midnights, I have scribbled another Turkish story."\textsuperscript{79} In Marchand's opinion, Byron found emotional escape in the "patent self-revelations" with which he frankly endowed his heroes, and his personal "demons were dispersed by the rapid composition" of such poems as the Oriental Tales.\textsuperscript{80} In creating Manfred, Byron found relief

\textsuperscript{76}Marchand, I, 330. \textsuperscript{77}Marchand, II, 918.
\textsuperscript{78}Marchand, I, 408.
\textsuperscript{79}Moore, p. 197. Letter of 30 November 1813.
\textsuperscript{80}Marchand, I, 450-51.
from "all the unhappiness, the sense of guilt, the frustrations, and the dismal broodings which had grown out of his reflection . . . on his relations with Augusta, his marriage, and the separation." And his absorbing interest in Sardanapalus, at which he worked "for hours at a stretch at white heat, was generated by the fact that it was, like almost everything he wrote con amore, the apologia for his own life, the escape from his own self-criticism." Paul West writes of Byron's efforts "to remake himself according to his own whim" in Venice, where the poet "lived up to" and exceeded "the legend of his Childe." In his comments on the customary approach to "Byron's poetry as a useful and rather tedious index to his personality," West notes the frequency with which Byron's "various and exotic personae have supplied biographers with sustaining images and extravagant postures." He also points out that an attempt to devise for Byron "a fixed literary self is to ask for trouble" because "this would be to assume that he had no control over his contrasts: an absurd assumption." However, West's statement that "the Byronic characters would have a splendid reason to do a Pirandello on their author," who "is more concerned with displaying his temperament than

81 Marchand, II, 655.
82 Ibid., p. 908.
83 West, p. 22.
84 Ibid., p. 11.
85 Ibid., p. 96.
with resolving any putative problems of his own" and thus "usually ends up as puppeteer," indicates that West's critical stance is closely related to that of traditional criticism on the Byronic Hero. This is further evidenced by his asking, "What, then, of the characters whose agonies take up so many lines?" which he promptly answers with another question: "Are they not merely figments, but plaster absurdities. . . . ?" And, on the subject of Byron's early declaration that Childe Harold was a fictitious character, West observes that Harold "was really the transplanted sensitive plant, exhalating an odour of well-bred brooding." West says that Byron's verse romances, "on one level of interpretation," are perfect illustrations of Albert Camus' universe that is "absurd with or without God." Byron's characters, in revealing Byron's "perception of doom" that eventuates in "an absolute of hopelessness," are eliminated rather than tested as "life closes in" with its impossible odds; they usually apprehend "some part of truth," however, before their elimination. West further points out that these poems are filled with images of "purification," "aspiration," and "yearnings to cleanse and outstrip." In the "trapped men" of Byron's dramas, West continues,

---

86 Ibid., p. 95.  
87 Ibid., p. 96.  
88 Ibid., p. 43.  
89 Ibid., p. 92.  
90 Ibid., p. 17.
"self-indulgence wars with conscience." Each protagonist, unable to escape himself, "has a conscience which he is not profligate enough or irresponsible enough to ignore consistently"; each is "romantic enough to enjoy the feeling of being 'self-made,' yet is sufficiently aware of the workings of society, destiny and politics to discern his own transgressions." Byron's dramas are important, not because they provide answers or solutions, but simply because they "illuminate in an uncompromising way the flaws and yearnings of most reflecting people." Byron's trapped men, in West's opinion, anticipate the alienated characters in the works of Ernest Hemingway, Joseph Conrad, Albert Camus, André Malraux, Lionel Trilling, and David Riseman. West also regards Byron's writing as a kind of catharsis through which the poet strives for a kind of self-elimination, and this critic asserts that the characters "longing for exculpation" in Byron's poetry "constitute the weird charade into which Byron poured so much of the self he had to eliminate."

In somewhat the same vein as West, G. Wilson Knight writes that Byron attempted to be a living exemplum of the

91West, p. 105.
92Ibid., pp. 105-06.
93Ibid., p. 120.
94Ibid., pp. 17, 19.
95Ibid., p. 92.
96Ibid., pp. 92, 123.
97Ibid., p. 126.
98Ibid., p. 82.
99Ibid., p. 85.
Promethean element with which he had endowed Manfred, a longing to be "the enlightener of nations" (M,III.i.107). The great endeavor of Byron's life and poetry was, therefore, "to subdue, or rather raise, the Napoleonic to the Promethean." Knight states that Byron consequently considered himself a personal extension of the "Promethean spark" displayed by his hero (M,I.i.154) and, as such, not only a poet but also "an incarnation" of his poetry. Andrew Rutherford says that Byron "had moods when he liked to think of himself as just this type of man" which he had made his hero and that the intensity in Byron's "portrayal of these heroes is the intensity . . . of adolescent daydreams, and the overwriting and exaggerations are peculiarly revealing" biographical factors. Byron's heroes, Rutherford suggests, reveal "a strong element of silly self-dramatisation" and "were projections of a private quasi-adolescent fantasy." The reader may "enjoy them with the same indulgence that one brings to the works of P. C. Wren or Peter Cheyney," but he

101 Knight, p. 243.
102 Works, p. 480.
103 Knight, p. 244.
105 Ibid., pp. 40-41.
can never "take them seriously, either as symbolic figures or as representations of human nature."  

In the introduction to his selection of Byron's letters, Barzun describes the purging effect of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold* upon a public longing for "relief from war news and politics" and upon the poem's young author, who "exorcised" his own "blue devils by writing of them."  

Barzun believes that "Byronic melancholy" and "ennui," both typical of early nineteenth-century England, were rooted in "energy repressed," "enforced inaction," and "curbed desire"; the antidote was the vicarious satisfaction afforded both Byron and his reading public through "Byronic heroism."  

The lasting influence of the Byronic Hero into eras of "post-Byronic despair-plus-rebellion," Barzun continues, is traceable "to a persistent need in the hearts of men and in the structure of society" for "the Byronic traits of lofty brooding and lone-wolf pugnacity."  

In his essay "Byron and the Byronic," Barzun terms the type of reasoning that posits Byron as the mirror-image of the Byronic Hero as "truly ad absurdum."  

He says that the application of terms such as "Machiavellian," "Rabelaisian," "Platonic," and "Byronic" to "express certain commonplace notions in frequent
Barzun thus rejects the concept of the Byronic Hero as a stereotype of Byron, suggesting rather that Byron's protagonists are the unique results of a commingling of several related elements. That is, nineteenth-century melancholy, repression, and longings for freedom were acted upon by the catalytic discharge of Byron's unique intellectual vitality. The result, emerging from the interaction between the writer's private life and the peculiar historical, social, and environmental constituents of the period, is a dramatic presentation of what Barzun calls "the new man, the unknown who risks life for glory." Encouraged by the success of his heroes, Byron continued to study the nature of this "new man," his sensations and his reactions. According to Barzun's theory, Byron did not invent these traits that he presented in his characters, however, nor did he project them directly from his own personality and character to the heroes of his verse narratives. They were, rather, present in Byron's world, an inescapable "part of the human nature of his time."

Studies of Byron's individual heroes are an important part of the overall scholarship on the Byronic Hero, and,

111 Barzun, "Byron and the Byronic," p. 47.
112 Ibid., p. 28.
113 Ibid., p. 48.
interestingly, the autobiographical emphasis in many of these specialized studies is a subordinate or entirely negligible element. Donald M. Hassler observes that the heroes of *Marino Faliero* and *Don Juan*, different as these works are in tone and style, display some of the same basic characteristics of the Byronic Hero. Marino Faliero looks backward to the "remorseful, melodramatic, and deadly serious" figure created by Byron in *Childe Harold*, the earlier Oriental Tales, and *Manfred*, Hassler asserts, but the old Doge also looks forward to "the serious motifs such as virtue, truth, and timelessness" which are inherent in the character of Don Juan. Marino Faliero died "because of his disgust with hypocrisy and his belief in the reality of the heroic posture and the timelessness of ideals."

This same disgust coupled with a positive belief in "the reality and eternity of ideas" provides "the basic position that supports all of the satire in *Don Juan*."

Leonard Michaels terms *Cain* a "deliberately ironical kind of anti-story," which is given a distinctly modern quality by Byron's "ironic concentration on the form of the form . . . in order to emphasize the extraordinary consciousness of the hero who refuses to acquiesce to the demands of

---

114 Donald M. Hassler, "Marino Faliero, the Byronic Hero, and *Don Juan*," *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 14 (1965), 58.
115 Ibid., p. 61.
116 Ibid., p. 62.
117 Ibid.
Michael's main argument is that in Cain Byron converts Biblical myth "to the personal psychology of his hero who . . . needs the crime he commits in order to identify or account for himself." Although Cain is a typical Byronic Hero in that he is "disaffected, self-pitying, self-hating, suicidal," Michael says that there is a major distinction between Cain and "such Byronically heroic figures as Lara and Manfred." Cain, unlike the other heroes, "is not directly presented to us agonizing over his guilty past."

Because Cain re-lives rather than lives the Biblical story, he is, in Michael's opinion, a "dramatic creature who plays Cain until, voilà, he murders his brother and discovers he is Cain."  

In his analysis of the hero of the third canto of Childe Harold as one of Byron's most important characters, Kenneth A. Bruffee says that Byron had been content previously to draw characters consisting of "bits and pieces selected from Gothic character types, combined with special Byronic cleverness and flair."  

---

119 Ibid., p. 71.
Harold in the first two cantos, Byron had done little more than "fill a skin of mysterious and obscure Satanic grandeur with the skeleton and meat needed to keep it from collapsing like a worn bag to be swept away to obscurity forever."\textsuperscript{121} This was not true of the Harold in the third canto. Although this canto reveals many similarities between Harold and the poem's reflective narrator, it also contains significant differences, in Bruffee's opinion. The narrator, "a figure deeply involved in himself and his problem," holds the stage until Harold's entry in Stanza 8,\textsuperscript{122} and the differences between Harold and the narrator are so evident that each character is an easily distinguished entity until Stanza 62. At this point in the poem, Bruffee states, a third character is identifiable. The narrator begins merging into Harold's sensibility from the time that Harold gazes on the Rhine Valley in Stanza 46, and "in the excited words of Stanza 62 'Above me are the Alps,' the merger is complete."\textsuperscript{123} The third character thus emerging is "a configuration, and it is this synthetic hero who undergoes the experience which climaxes the poem."\textsuperscript{124} An understanding of the identity of the poem's "synthetic hero" and of the "experience undergone in the poem," Bruffee concludes, is dependent upon a recognition of the poem's "process of identification," which

\textsuperscript{121}Bruffee, p. 671.  \textsuperscript{122}Ibid., p. 673.  
\textsuperscript{123}Ibid., p. 674.  \textsuperscript{124}Ibid., p. 675.
occurs through "the 'confusion' of narrator and 'hero,' by which a new 'synthetic hero' is introduced."  

Michael G. Sundell, in an examination of the development of The Giaour through its various revisions, asserts that Byron "progressively transformed" the poem "from a good adventure story, interesting primarily for its plot, into the forceful presentation of a mysterious and powerful character whose fate exemplifies humanity's."  

Rejecting the general critical opinions that Byron's revisions were haphazard and detrimental to the poem's artistic value, Sundell says that Byron displays a definite method of poetic organization which "he was later to employ more firmly in the last two cantos of Childe Harold and in such dramas as Manfred and Cain."  

His "reigning purpose" in these revisions, which more than tripled the length of the poem, was "to subordinate the divers elements of his poem to the idiosyncratic vision of its protagonist so that the protagonist's vision will strike us as universally true."  

That Byron was successful is evidenced, in Sundell's opinion, by the finished poem's mood "which sustains the impression that the Giaour's fate is inevitable and universal, that the character of the world

125 Bruffee, p. 677.
127 Ibid., p. 599.
128 Ibid., pp. 598-99.
makes heroic behavior both necessary and futile."\textsuperscript{129} Although it is not possible to include in this study references to all the critical publications on individual Byronic Heroes, these four works are indicative of the recent scholarly concern with Byron's protagonists and the distinctive characteristics of each apart from those of their author.\textsuperscript{130}

There are many problems involved in an autobiographical interpretation of literature, and certainly the autobiography present in the Byronic Hero cannot be ignored. Every literary character, as Thorslev points out, "is to an extent a projection of his author's personality, if for no other reason than that the author must have felt moods and attitudes analogous to those of his heroes in order to understand and express them."\textsuperscript{131} When, however, detailed

\textsuperscript{129}Sundell, p. 598.

\textsuperscript{130}For the most comprehensive exegesis of a single work by Byron, see Truman Guy Steffan, \textit{Lord Byron's Cain} (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1968). Indeed, by its very comprehensiveness, this work stands apart from the other studies herein referred to. Part I presents a thoroughly documented analysis of the drama's background, composition, dramatic theory, religious concepts, characterization, metrics, and diction, as well as of the physical characteristics of the manuscript itself, its printing, and the poem's various editions through 1905. In Part II, Steffan reproduces the text, along with variants in the major editions, extensive annotations, and a discussion of possible sources and parallels for Act II. Part III contains a survey of Cain criticism from Byron's time through the twentieth century.

\textsuperscript{131}Thorslev, p. 11.
biographical accounts of an author are published by a number of his contemporaries, critics of later periods are plagued by problems of personal interpretation and even bias from which must inevitably result inconsistencies and inaccuracies. The views of Byron published by Trelawny, Hunt, Medwin, and Lady Blessington, for instance, are radically different from one another and from those by Dallas, Moore, Hobhouse, and Rogers; the Byron described in Pietro Gamba's worshipful narrative is barely recognizable in the Byron presented in the recollections of J. W. Polidori, James Kennedy, Julius Millingen, and William Parry; and Harriet Beecher Stowe's Lady Byron Vindicated describes a vastly different Lord


133 See Pietro Gamba, A Narrative of Lord Byron's Last Journey to Greece (London: John Murray, 1825); J. W. Polidori, The Diary of Dr. John William Polidori, 1816, Relating to Byron, Shelley, etc., ed. W. M. Rossetti (London: E. Mathews, 1911); Julius Millingen, Memoirs of the Affairs of Greece; containing An Account of the Military and Political Events, which occurred in 1823 and following years. With Various Anecdotes relating to Lord Byron, and An Account of his Last Illness and Death (London: John Rodwell, 1831); William Parry, The Last Days of Lord Byron; with his Lordship's opinions on various subjects, particularly on the state and prospects of Greece (London: Knight and Lacy, 1825).
Byron from the English nobleman of whom Teresa Guiccioli writes in My Recollections of Lord Byron.\textsuperscript{134}

Byron's "multiple nature, chameleonic and irresponsible," as West calls it,\textsuperscript{135} was, of course, largely responsible for the contradictory nature of many of these biographical accounts by his contemporaries. However, to attribute all paradoxical evidence to Byron's deliberate posturing is to oversimplify the problem. Because there is so much of Byron's personality in his poetry, a thorough knowledge of the poet is essential to any critical approach to the poetry; and it is essential that the critic be sensitive to and distinguish between Byron's intentional dissimulation, much of which does seem at times "irresponsible," and the discordant elements in his nature of which he was acutely aware but unable to reconcile in his own attempts at self-analysis. Byron was fully conscious of himself as the object of many contradictory comparisons, both as man and as poet. In 1821, he made the following journal entry:

\begin{quote}
I have been thinking over . . . the various comparisons, good or evil, which I have seen published of myself in different journals English and foreign. This was suggested to me by accidentally turning over a foreign one lately; for I have made it a rule latterly never to
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{135}West, p. 13.
search for any thing of the kind, but not to avoid the perusal if presented by Chance.

To begin then—I have seen myself compared personally or poetically, in English, French, German (as interpreted to me), Italian, and Portugese, with these nine years, to Rousseau—Goethe—Young—Aretino—Timon of Athens—"An Alabaster Vase lighted up within"—Satan—Shakespeare—Buonaparte—Tiberius—Aeschylus—Sophocles—Euripides—Harlequin, the Clown—Sternhold and Hopkins—to the Phantasmagoria—to Henry the 8th.—to Chenier—to Mirabeau—to young R. Dallas (the Schoolboy)—to Michael Angelo—to Raphael—to a petit maître—to Diogenes—to Childe Harold—to Lara—to the Count in Beppo—to Milton—to Pope—to Dryden—to Burns—to Savage—to Chatterton—to "oft have I heard of thee, my Lord Biron" in Shakespeare—to Churchill the poet—to Kean the Actor—to Alfieri, &c. &c. The likeness to Alfieri was asserted very seriously by an Italian, who had known him in his younger days; it of course related merely to our apparent personal dispositions. He did not assert it to me (for we were not then good friends), but in society.

The Object of so many contradictory comparisons must probably be like something different from them all; but what that is, is more than I know, or any body else.

On occasion, Byron seemed to deliberately foster confused impressions of himself that would later confound scholars. He once said to Lady Blessington that

people take for gospel all I say, and go away continually with false impressions. Mais n'importe! It will render the statements of my future biographers more amusing; as I flatter myself I shall have more than one. Indeed, the more the merrier, say I. One will represent me as a sort of sublime misanthrope, with moments of kind feeling. This, par exemple, is my favorite rôle. Another will portray me as a modern Don Juan; and a third (as it would be hard if a votary of the Muses had less than the

136 Quennell, p. 795.
number of the Graces for his biographers) will, it is to be hoped, if only for opposition's sake, represent me as an amiable, ill-used gentleman, "more sinned against than sinning." 137

However, in the same conversation, Byron revealed a genuine concern with the ambivalences of his nature:

Now, if I know myself, I should say that I have no character at all. By the by, this is what has long been said, as I lost mine, as an Irishman would say, before I had it. . . . But, joking apart, what I think of myself is, that I am so changeable, being every thing by turns and nothing long—I am such a strange mélange of good and evil, that it would be difficult to describe me. There are but two sentiments to which I am constant—a strong love of liberty, and a detestation of cant, and neither is calculated to gain me friends. I am of a wayward, uncertain disposition, more disposed to display the defects than the redeeming points in my nature; this, at least proves that I understand mankind, for they are always ready to believe the evil, but not the good; and there is no crime of which I could accuse myself, for which they would not give me implicit credit. 138

And in another conversation with Lady Blessington, Byron again seemed to be struggling for an objective analysis of himself: "You will believe me, what I sometimes believe myself, mad, when I tell you that I seem to have two states of existence. One purely contemplative, during which the crimes, faults, and follies of mankind are laid open to my view, (my own forming a prominent object in the picture,) and the other active, when I play my part in the drama of life, as if impelled by some power over which I have no

137 Blessington, pp. 363-64. 138 Ibid., pp. 135-36.
control, though the consciousness of doing wrong remains. It is though I had the faculty of discovering error, without the power of avoiding it."^{139}

A further problem involved in critical assumptions that the Byronic Hero is Byron's poetic self-reincarnation has to do with what Rosalie Colie, in her study of the tradition of paradox in Renaissance literature, calls "the paradoxical 'I am not I'" or "the Liar Paradox."^{140} Although Colie nowhere mentions Byron, her findings are singularly relevant and provocative in a study of Byron's poetry. Colie argues that the "I am not I" paradox must be recognized in any poetry wherein the writer depicts himself. The images of the author as both creator and subject are "infinitely mirrored, infinitely reflected, in each other," and the resultant "I am not I" paradox simultaneously "lies, and it doesn't" and "tells the truth, and it doesn't."^{141} For this reason, Colie points out, "Sidney is, but also is not the 'I' that is Astrophil--although, of course, Astrophil's words must come from Sidney's mouth as Pantagruel's do from Rabelais'.^{142} If, then, we apply Colie's reasoning that "man's relations with himself are inevitably paradoxical" to the dictum that Byron is, to a great extent, his own hero,


^{141}Ibid., p. 6.

^{142}Ibid., p. 95.
the literal impossibility of an absolute biographical interpretation of Byron's poetry is obvious. As Colie explains, because man's relations with himself must be paradoxical and because even "the most neutral self-reference is inevitably descriptive," any "reflexive self-reference" in a literary production is a mirror-image, which of necessity "begins an endless oscillation between the thing itself and the thing reflected." Consequently, there ensues "an infinite regress," wherein the individual identity of author and character is both confirmed and questioned—confirmed "by splitting the mirrored viewer into both observer and observed, giving him the opportunity to view himself objectively, as other people do" and questioned "by repeating him as if he were simply an object, not 'himself,' as he so surely 'knows' himself to be, by repeating himself as if he were not (as his inmost self insists that he is) unique." Colie's observation that "the re-created self" becomes an unendurable threat in that it "may replace the original and originating self" is especially provocative when applied to Byron's insistent denials that his intention was to re-create himself in his heroes. When a writer, either deliberately or otherwise, draws his characters from the basis of a reflexive self-reference, the resultant portrait is never an actual

self-portrait: "the more faithful the likeness, the greater the falsity of the picture, the greater its isolation from any reference point outside of the creating, re-creating self. . . . A man cannot make himself."\textsuperscript{146} A character thus created must be regarded as registering "its own kind of truth," but it is the truth of "something new, something different from the original."\textsuperscript{147}

Although it is not possible to arrive at any comprehensive or conclusive statement regarding the exact relationship of the Byronic Hero to Byron, it is possible, on the basis of this survey of Byron scholarship, to suggest several generalizations. First, the majority of critics, from the first quarter of the nineteenth century to the third quarter of the twentieth century, are in agreement that the Byronic Hero is a reflection of Byron, but there is little critical unanimity on the degree or kind of verisimilitude which the Byronic Hero displays. Second, there has been, throughout the past century and a half at least, a pervasive though never dominant critical tendency to evaluate Byron's poems and the Byronic Hero as autonomous literary productions and not as mere verse portrayals of Byron's life. And finally, there is emerging from this second critical trend a significant body of scholarship on the individual heroes of Byron's poetry which is concentrating upon a

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., p. 359. \textsuperscript{147} Ibid., p. 386.
number of specific, unbiographical aspects of the Byronic Hero, such as his place in the literature of his period, his role in post-Byronic literature, his universality, and his embodiment of ideas and literature that were in existence long before Byron wrote the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

According to Thorslev, whose study on the Byronic Hero is the most definitive presently available, "all the elements of the Byronic Hero existed before him in the literature of the age. This hero is unique, in one sense, in the powerful fusion of these disparate elements into a single commanding image; but he did not spring by a miracle of parthenogenesis from Byron's mind; he is to a large extent a product of a Romantic heroic tradition which was a half-century old before he appeared. Byron may in some sense have become his hero after the fact, but his hero was no mere outgrowth of the poet's personality. Byron did not project life into literature nearly so much as he projected literature into life."\(^{148}\) In the course of his analysis of the influence upon the Byronic Hero of three eighteenth-century pre-Romantic hero-types and of four Romantic hero-types, Thorslev includes an examination of two Renaissance literary figures—Faustus and Satan—who are pertinent to the present study. Byron was one of the few Romantic writers

\(^{148}\) Thorslev, p. 12.
to be influenced by the Faust-legend,¹⁴⁹ Thorslev states, as it evolved from Marlowe's raising "Faust's stature to that of tragic hero" to Goethe's depiction of Faust as "a Romantic hero emerging from the dead certainties of the eighteenth-century enlightenment."¹⁵⁰ Of Milton's Paradise Lost, Thorslev says that "the putative villain . . . was heroic in almost everyone's eyes, and it would be difficult to overemphasize the influence of this epic, not only in England -- on Blake, Byron, and Shelley -- but also on the Continent."¹⁵¹ In the next chapter, the general characteristics of the Byronic Hero will be examined in conjunction with similar characteristics of a number of other literary characters from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, notably Marlowe's Faustus and Milton's Satan. Whether Byron read the works in question cannot in every case be proved. However, the evidence in his works, coupled with what is known of his intellectual curiosity, his poetic imitativeness, his extensive readings, and his interest in the theatre, makes it relatively certain that Byron was familiar with all the Renaissance heroes included in this study.

¹⁴⁹ Thorslev, p. 149. ¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 85. ¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 188.
CHAPTER V

THE BYRONIC HERO AND HIS OUTWARD MANIFESTATIONS
OF CHARACTER

The purpose of this chapter is to suggest the presence in the Byronic Hero of certain outward manifestations of character that are also discernible in some of the Renaissance protagonists included in this study. Fundamental to this discussion, and to those of the following chapters, is the conviction that Byron was familiar with the writings of the major sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English authors. This conviction is based upon external evidence such as the suggestion by Dr. Glennie that Byron, before he was twelve years old, had read a set of volumes containing the works of English poets from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries;\(^1\) the assertion by Byron in 1807 that he had read "all the British classics";\(^2\) the statement by Moore regarding the early and extensive study of Byron of English writers;\(^3\) and the extant catalogues of the books that Byron owned. Further attestations to Byron's close acquaintance with the literature of the English Renaissance are the

\(^1\)Moore, p. 5. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 46. \(^3\)Ibid., p. 48.

167
numerous references to the authors of this period and their works in Byron's poetry, as well as in his letters, journal entries, and recorded conversations.  

It is impossible, of course, to establish definitely that the physical appearance of the Byronic Hero was directly influenced by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literary characters. The findings of this chapter are based, of necessity, entirely upon internal evidence. There are, however, a number of striking parallels between the outward aspect of the Byronic Hero and that of several of the earlier literary characters under consideration here. In mass, these parallels practically rule out the likelihood that all are merely adventitious.

A major aspect which the Byronic Hero shares with his Renaissance predecessors is an aura of pervasive melancholy. It is impossible to describe even superficially the heroes of Byron's poetry without referring to their characteristic melancholy natures. The works of Kyd, Marston, Shakespeare, Tourneur, Webster, Massinger, and Ford all portray heroes whose natures are preponderantly melancholy. It should be noted at this point that Byron himself was something of a

4 See pp. 23-67 above.

5 Although Coriolanus is less characterized by excessive melancholy than are many of Shakespeare's other characters, his inclusion as the only Shakespearean protagonist examined extensively in this study is justified by the presence in his character of a number of other traits that are also characteristic of the Byronic Hero.
melancholiac. Moore, for instance, recounted a conversation in which Byron remarked that some "people have wondered at the melancholy which runs through my writings," whereas "others have wondered at my personal gaiety." Byron then related to Moore an exchange with Lady Byron in which Byron had said to his wife, "Bell, I have been called and miscalled melancholy—you must have seen how falsely, frequently." Lady Byron replied, "No, Byron, it is not so; at heart you are the most melancholy of mankind; and often when apparently gayest."\(^6\) Byron told Lady Blessington that his thoughts were "always of the somber hue" and that his poetic powers became "dispersed and vague," fading away "like snow before sun" when he emerged from his natural solitariness.\(^7\) Scott observed that "the flashes of mirth, gaiety, indignation, or satirical dislike, which frequently animated Lord Byron's countenance, might, during an evening's conversation, be mistaken by a stranger for a habitual expression, so easily and so happily was it formed for them all; but those who had an opportunity of studying his features for a length of time, and upon various occasions, both of rest and emotion, will agree with us, that their proper language was that of melancholy."\(^8\) Moore attributed the development of Byron's poetic sensibilities to Byron's introspection and love of solitude.\(^9\)

\(^6\)Moore, p. 295.  
\(^7\)Blessington, p. 310.  
\(^8\)Moore, p. 295.  
\(^9\)Ibid., p. 118.
pointing out that the world's greatest poets, "from Homer down to Lord Byron," had all been "restless and solitary spirits, with minds wrapped up, like silkworms, in their own tasks." The Byronic Hero, who expresses this side of Byron's nature, is never brightened by gaiety and displays no trace of the wit and humor which are prominent in Byron's correspondence and satirical poetry.

The Renaissance theory of melancholy based on the so-called four-humours doctrine of Hippocrates (460-357 BC) and Galen (129-199 BC) was, of course, anachronistic by the nineteenth century. However, Byron was quite familiar with the Renaissance concepts of melancholy through his familiarity with Robert Burton's The Anatomy of Melancholy (1621), which George F. Sensabaugh says was probably the last important treatise on this subject. Burton's Anatomy was, in fact, the only work of the Renaissance for which Byron expressed anything like unqualified admiration. In 1807, Byron made the following observation:

10 Moore, P. 268.

11 George F. Sensabaugh, The Tragic Muse of John Ford (1944; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965), p. 17. Sensabaugh says that the most popular of the numerous works on melancholy preceding that of Burton were Timothy Bright's A Treatise of Melancholie (1586), Juan Huarte's The Examination of Mens Wits (1594), and Thomas Wright's The Passions of the Minde In General (1601), p. 17.

The book, in my opinion, most useful to a man who wishes to acquire the reputation of being well read, with the least trouble is "Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy," the most amusing and instructive medley of quotations and classical anecdotes I ever perused. But a superficial reader must take care, or his [Burton's] intricacies will bewilder him. If, however, he has patience to go through his volumes, he will be more improved for literary conversation than by the perusal of any twenty other works with which I am acquainted,—at least in the English language.  

Sixteen years later, Byron remarked to Lady Blessington that in his opinion Burton's Anatomy was excellent because of the "quantity of desultory information it contained, and was a mine of knowledge that, though much overworked, was inexhaustible."  

Although Byron's regard for Burton's work was probably based largely upon the book's antiquarian uniqueness, the writers of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries were seriously concerned with melancholy as a disease capable of generating destructive passions that were markedly apparent in a melancholiac's appearance and actions. Lily B. Campbell goes so far as to assert that the major interest of the authors of these centuries was "centered about the melancholy Man." According to Burton's analysis of this Renaissance theory, melancholy is the most important of the four humours  

generated by the physiological functions of the body and controlled by the rational faculties of the soul. 16 The "spirits"—subtle vapors created in the heart, expressed in the blood, and conveyed to the brain—serve as a connecting medium between the body and the soul, which is the seat of all human behavior. 17 If the humour of melancholy is somehow subjected to excessive heat, an unnatural humour referred to as "melancholy adust" is generated, and this abnormal melancholy causes "diverse and strange symptoms." 18 Burton further points out that man's various passions are the progeny of the imagination and reside in the heart. If the spirits, which are refined in the heart, are "confounded" by the passions, man thereby becomes a totally disordered being because of the presence of abnormal melancholy, which is both aggravated by and gives rise to passions. 19 Burton's catalogue of passions includes anger, envy, emulation, pride, jealousy, anxiety, compassion, shame, discontent, despair, ambition, avarice, love, joy, desire, hatred, fear, remorse, and sorrow; although each of these causes misery, Burton says, sorrow is melancholy man's most incessantly cruel torment. 20 Burton also describes the man afflicted with abnormal melancholy and its concomitant passions as

16 Burton, Anatomy, I, 147, 155.
17 Ibid., pp. 147-48.
18 Ibid., pp. 398-99.
19 Ibid., pp. 250-53.
20 Ibid., pp. 250-53.
solitary, lean, and hirsute, with a sallow complexion that is often flushed by rising passions. The Renaissance melancholiac has eyes that are hollow and either glaring or fixed in a deathlike stare; his face is furrowed, with wrinkled brows and "rivelled" cheeks.\(^{21}\)

The following examination of the Byronic Hero and of a number of Renaissance heroes is neither an attempt to discover an exact physical prototype of the Byronic Hero in Renaissance literature nor to physically reconstruct the Byronic Hero from analogous components in the aspects of the Renaissance heroes. It is, rather, an effort to suggest that, although the Byronic Hero is less indebted to his sixteenth- and seventeenth-century predecessors for his physical traits than for some of his other characteristics, there are some noticeable similarities between the two types.

Similar to that of the Renaissance hero, the countenance of the Byronic Hero frequently registers his ruling passions and so indicates his typical habits and states of mind, such as melancholy, solitariness, nobility, and determination. The Byronic Hero does not appear full-face until the Oriental Tales, but his outline is present in Childe Harold's "hollow cheek," distorted by empty laughter that is "false to the heart" (CH, I.xcvii.911-12), the despair-masking smiles which "form the channel of a future tear, / Or raise the

writhing lip with ill-dissembled sneer" (CH, I.xcvii.916-17), and the lofty brow prematurely graven with austere lines (CH,III.lii.464), all of which are manifestations of the typically "moody texture of the melancholy bosoms" of Byron's heroes (CH,IV.xxxiv.300-01). Age is of little consequence in the Byronic Hero: Marino Faliero and the elder Foscari, two of Byron's most aged protagonists; Selim and Hugo, two of the youngest; and Conrad, Lara, and Manfred, heroes of indeterminate age, all display the same basic attitudes and traits of character. Regardless of his age, the Byronic Hero has in every case "grown aged in this world of woe / In deeds, not years" (CH,III.v.37-39), and those deeds leave their scars upon his face and spirit. The furrows on Lara's lowering brow are indications of "passions, but of passions past" (L,I.v.67-68). The lines of Manfred's face have been "plough'd by moments, not by years" (M,I.ii.133), and the Chamois Hunter comments that "the seal of middle age / Hath scarce been set" on Manfred's brow (M,II.i.49-50). Marino Faliero's young wife, Angiolina, says that the Doge's "bold brow / Bears but the scars of mind, the thought of years, / Not their decrepitude" (MF, II.i.20-22).

22 Works, p. 35.  
23 Ibid., p. 43.  
24 Ibid., p. 60.  
25 Ibid., p. 36.  
26 Ibid., p. 367.  
27 Ibid., p. 484.  
28 Ibid., p. 509.
Scars of passion rather than of age are also characteristic of the faces of several Renaissance heroes. The Median lord Agydas is aghast at the marks of wrath entrenched upon the brow of Marlowe's Tamburlaine (III.ii.62), and Menaphon comments that Tamburlaine's "lofty brows in folds do figure death" (II.i.21). In a speech to his son on the qualities essential to kingship, Tamburlaine asserts that no man is worthy to wear the crown of Persia unless bitter, hard-won experience has so seared his breast that "in the furrows of his frowning brows / Harbours revenge, war, death, and cruelty" (I.iii.77-79). The conflicting passions registered on the face of Massinger's Malefort junior are also similar to those evinced by the Byronic Hero. One of the captains, in his description of the melancholy and "inward griefe" manifested by the pirate leader, notes that an occasional tear falls upon the "hollow cheeke" of Malefort junior but is always dried up immediately by "a sudden flash of fury" (II.i.16,17,20,22).


30 Ibid., p. 69.

31 Marlowe, II Tamburlaine, p. 129.

marked face also reflects something of the ravaged visage of Milton's Satan as he stands before his fallen horde on the charred soil of Hell: "... his face / Deep scars of Thunder had intrenched, and care / Sat on his faded cheek, but under Brows / Of dauntless courage, and considerate Pride / Waiting revenge" (I.600-94).  

The Byronic Hero and Marlowe's Tamburlaine are both described as pallid or pale, and Agydas says that the fury of Tamburlaine's heart "casts a pale complexion on his cheeks" (III.ii.73,75). The pallor of the Byronic Hero, however, like that of Chapman's Duke of Byron, is frequently displaced by his rising passions. For instance, the Giaour's "sallow front," usually "pale as marble o'er the tomb, / Whose ghostly whiteness aids its gloom," is at times suffused "with the reddening flush / Of transient Anger's hasty blush" (G,194,238-39,236-37). The Corsair's men have learned that the "varying hue" of their captain's features indicates the inward workings of "feelings fearful and yet undefined" (C,I.ix.209,212), that, once loosed, "rise--convulse--contend--freeze or glow, / Flush in the cheek, or damp upon

34 See Works, G, 611, p. 316; I Tamburlaine, II,i.19, pp. 68-69.
35 Marlowe, I Tamburlaine, p. 84.
36 Works, p. 312.
Similarly, Janin remarks that "grief hath brought all his forces" to the countenance of Chapman's Duke of Byron, whereon "blood expels paleness, paleness doth blood chase, / And sorrow errs through all forms in his face" (V.iii.219).

The passions of the Byronic Hero and of the Renaissance hero are also reflected in unforgettable eyes. The flash of the Giaour's "dilating eye / Reveals too much of times gone by" (G,834-35); Giaffir reads correctly the rebellious wrath and hatred blazing from Selim's eyes (BA,I.v.115-17); and Conrad's "dark eyebrow shades a glance of fire" (C,I.ix.196). In fact, the Byronic Hero's gaze is so penetrating and yet impenetrable that only the most temerarious of men dare challenge it:

There breathe but few whose aspect might defy
The full encounter of his searching eye:
He had the skill, when Cunning's gaze would seek
To probe his heart and watch his changing cheek,
At once the observer's purpose to espy,
And on himself roll back his scrutiny,
Lest he to Conrad rather should betray
Some secret thought, than drag that chief's to day.
(C,I.ix.215-22)

---

37 Works, p. 341.
39 Works, p. 318.
40 Ibid., p. 325.
41 Ibid., p. 341.
42 Ibid.
Lara, too, has a "glance that took / Their thoughts from others by a single look" (L.I.vi.72-73). Praz makes the perceptive observation that the enigmatic expression in the eyes of Byron's heroes, as well as in those of the other "Fatal Men of the Romantics," is traceable to Shakespeare's King John:

The image of a wicked heinous fault
Lives in his eye; that close aspect of his
Does show the mood of a much troubled breast.
(IV.ii.71-73)

There are, moreover, other Renaissance characters whose eyes are similar to those of the Byronic Hero. The "glance of fire" of Byron's heroes, for instance, resembles Tamburlaine's "fiery eyes" wherein "the fury of his heart" shines like menacing "comets" (I.ii.158;III.ii.73-74). Cominius says of Shakespeare's Coriolanus after his exile that his eye is "red as 'twould burn Rome" (V.ii.64). In The Duchess of Malfi, Delio comments that Prince Ferdinand's glance is so fiery that a salamander "lives in's eye, / To mocke the eager violence of fire" (III.iii.58-60). The Byronic Hero's eyes, in which alternating passions are sometimes

43 Works, p. 337. 44 Praz, p. 61.
45 Shakespeare, The Life and Death of King John, p. 567.
46 Marlowe, I Tamburlaine, pp. 65-66, 84.
47 Shakespeare, Coriolanus, p. 1307.
48 Webster, Duchess, p. 82.
partially revealed, are also similar to the eyes of Milton's Satan that mirror both cruelty and remorse (1.603-04). 49

Another characteristic of Byron's heroes that appears in several Renaissance heroes is the mirthless, self-mocking smile. Although the Byronic Hero smiles rarely, "when he doth 't is sad to see / That he but mocks at misery" as "that pale lip will curl and quiver" (G,851-53). 50 The Byronic Hero's infrequent laughter is usually bitter and self-derisive, an example of which is the loud laughter which bursts from Conrad as he despairingly sits alone in Seyd's highest tower, fettered and hopeless of rescue (C,II.xi.379, 366-67;xiii.446-59). 51 Lara "could seem gay amidst the gay"; his smile, however, "if oft observed and near, / Waned in its mirth and wither'd to a sneer," and, though the smile "might reach his lip but pass'd not by, / None e'er could trace its laughter to his eye" (L,I.xvii.298-300). 52 Praz asserts, again quite perceptively, that the baffling and mocking quality of the smiles of Byron's heroes, as well as those of other Romantic Fatal Men, proceed from the smiles of Shakespeare's Cassius: 53

49 Milton, Paradise Lost, p. 227.
50 Works, p. 318.
51 Ibid., pp. 352-53.
52 Ibid., p. 370.
53 Praz, p. 62.
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort
As if he mock'd himself and scorn'd his spirit
That could be mov'd to smile at any thing.
(I.iii.205-07)\

Similarly, in *The Unnatural Combat*, immediately after Malefort junior learns that his father has accepted the challenge to single combat, his dark countenance registers a mirthless cheer that is, like that of the Byronic Hero, the mask of sorrow and despair (I.i.45-46). In somewhat the same nature as the Byronic Hero's mirthless laughter is that of Ferdinand in *The Duchess of Malfi*. Overhearing the frightful sound, Delio comments that Ferdinand's laugh is "like a deadly cannon / That lightens ere it smokes."

Pescara's response might also apply to the laughter of the Byronic Hero: "These are your true pangs of death, / The pangs of life" (III.iii.66-67, 68-69).

In Byron's dramas and romances, the heroes' hair is a distinguishing aspect of outward characterization. The hair of the valiant, defiant Byronic Hero is dark, flowing, and unruly. The Giaour's hair is referred to as a black "serpent-braid" (G,897), and Conrad's pale forehead is veiled by "sable curls in wild profusion" (C,I.ix.204).

Similarly, Marlowe's aspiring, arrogant Tamburlaine is

55 Massinger, *Unnatural Combat*, p. 76.
56 Webster, *Duchess*, p. 82.
57 Works, p. 319. 58 Ibid., p. 369.
described as having "hair, / Wrapped in curls, as fierce as Achilles' was," that hangs about his "lofty brows" (II.ii. 21, 23-24). On the basis of a reference from Byron's Sardanapalus and one from Marlowe's Tamburlaine, it is possible to conjecture that both Byron and Marlowe equated curled, unruly hair with qualities of manliness. Tamburlaine, bitterly disappointed that his sons do not display any trace of his own fiercely ambitious nature, refers to the boys' hair as an outward manifestation of their lack of manliness:

Their hair as white as milk and soft as down,
Which should be like the quills of porcupines,
As black as jet, and hard as iron or steel,
Bewrays they are too dainty for wars. (I.iii.25-28)

Byron reflects a similar idea in his description of Sardanapalus' fair hair. Unlike Byron's dark-haired, rebellious, vengeful heroes, Sardanapalus, like Tamburlaine's sons, is totally averse to violence. He ignores repeated warnings of the obvious unrest among his subjects and of the threat of open rebellion, preferring to believe that his subjects share his own love of peace and beauty. However, after the rebelling satrapies attack the palace, Sardanapalus enters the fray and fights courageously at the head of his troops. Although Sardanapalus willingly enters the battle, his participation is a violently atypical action in view of the earlier manifestations of the intrinsic elements of his

59 Marlowe, I Tamburlaine, p. 69.
60 Marlowe, II Tamburlaine, p. 128.
character, a point which Byron subtly but unmistakably under-
scores in his reference to Sardanapalus' fair, flowing hair
during the battle (S,III.i.204-07).\(^61\) It is thus possible
to conjecture that both Marlowe and Byron regarded "bristling
locks" (L,I.xi.197)\(^62\) as an external sign of innate valor,
whereas to both authors fair, soft hair seemed to exemplify
natures that were basically unmasculine.

The Byronic Hero's outwardly manifested characteristic
of unquestioned leadership is a trait that appears frequently
in the Renaissance hero (and of course, in the heroic poetry
of earlier ages as well). Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Beaumont
and Fletcher's Arbaces, Shakespeare's Coriolanus, Chapman's
Bussy D'Ambois and Duke of Byron, Massinger's Malefort
junior, Ford's Perkin Warbeck and Milton's Satan are all
capable of commanding unswerving support from their followers,
as are Byron's Giaour, Conrad, Selim, Lara, and Marino
Faliero. Usumcasane's vow to follow Tamburlaine "even to
death" (I.i.59),\(^63\) for instance, is typical of the unques-
tioned loyalty accorded the Renaissance hero as well as the
Byronic Hero by their followers. Also, in the case of
Renaissance heroes such as the Duke of Byron, Perkin Warbeck,
and Satan and of Byronic heroes such as Conrad, Lara, and

\(^61\) Works, p. 574. \(^62\) Ibid., p. 368.
\(^63\) Marlowe, I Tamburlaine, p. 73.
Marino Faliero, the followers are meted the same punishment the vanquished leader receives.

The presence of devoted followers implies a leader who is concerned with the welfare of his fighters, and this concern the Byronic Hero also shares with such figures from Renaissance tragedy as Malefort junior, Arbaces, and Perkin Warbeck. As Byron's Conrad broods over his possible defeat in the contemplated raid on Seyd's fortress, his thoughts turn to the crew which has always followed him unhesitatingly into danger:

Long have I led them—not to vainly bleed;
No medium now—we perish or succeed!
So let it be—it irks not me to die;
But thus to urge them whence they cannot fly.

(C.I.xiii.331-34)

Ford's Perkin Warbeck, proudly unrepentant and defiantly acceptant of his death sentence, displays an attitude similar to that of the Byronic Hero as he pleads that his followers not be forced to share his execution:

. . . if there can be mercy
In a protested enemy, then may it
Descend to these poor creatures, whose engagements,
To the bettering of their fortunes, have incurred
A loss of all; to them if any charity
Flow from some noble orator, in death
I owe the fee of thankfulness. (V.ii.99-105)

The grief of Milton's Satan is marked by "signs of remorse and Passion" (I,605) when he beholds "the fellows of his

64 Works, p. 343.
65 Ford, Warbeck, pp. 416-17.
crime, the followers rather" (I,606), condemned to a painful and eternal existence in hell. Satan's reaction is much like the remorseful grief of Byron's Conrad when he believes his men have all been slain by Seyd, of Lara when he sees his peasant army devastated by Otho's forces, and of Sardanapalus, whose last order is for the safety of his soldiers and slaves.

Despite his genuine regard for his followers, however, the Byronic Hero, like the Renaissance hero, is always a reserved leader who disdains camaraderie and discourages familiarity. In their manner of leadership and their attitude toward the commonality, Byron's heroes bear a close resemblance to Coriolanus. Although Conrad "mingles not but to command" (C,I.ii.62) and "ne'er seasons he with mirth" his corsairs' "jovial mess" (C,I.ii.65), the pirates "forgive his silence for success" (C,I.ii.66). The unbending quality of this type of leadership is described by the narrator of The Corsair:

And who dare question aught that he decides? That man of loneliness and mystery,— Scarce seen to smile and seldom heard to sigh; Whose name appalls the fiercest of his crew, And tints each swarthy cheek with sallower hue,— Still sways their souls with that commanding art That dazzles, leads, yet chills the vulgar heart.

What should it be that thus their faith can bind? The power of Thought—the magic of the Mind!

---

67 Works, p. 339.
68 Ibid.
Link'd with success, assumed and kept with skill,
That moulds another's weakness to its will.
(C,I.viii.171-77,180-83) 69

Both Cominius of Rome and one of Aufidius' Volscian lieutenants mark the same quality in Coriolanus' command over the Volscian soldiers:

Cominus: He is their god. He leads them like a thing Made by some other deity than nature, That shapes man better. And they follow him, Against us brats, with no less confidence Than boys pursuing summer butterflies Or butchers killing flies. (IV.vi.90-94) 70

Volscian Lieutenant: I do not know what witchcraft's in him, but Your soldiers use him as the grace 'fore meat, Their talk at table, and their thanks at end. (IV.vii.2-4) 71

Coriolanus, too, had early "learn'd to curb the crowd, / By arts that veil and oft preserve the proud" (C,I.xvi.539-40); and, like Byron's Conrad, Coriolanus had come to "value less who loved than what obeyd" (C,I.xvi.554). 72 Although the safety and well-being of Rome were the chief concerns of Coriolanus before his ignominious treatment at the hands of the Senate and the people of Rome, he was incapable of being other than aloof from the people he was sworn to protect; and, again like the Byronic Hero, he "only saw and did not share / The common pleasure or the general care" (L,I.vii.101-02). 73

69 Ibid., p. 341.
70 Shakespeare, Coriolanus, p. 1304.
71 Ibid., p. 1305.
72 Works, p. 346.
73 Ibid., p. 367.
The same disgust which prompts Sardanapalus to rail against his disgruntled subjects, whom he terms "this vile herd, grown insolent with feeding" (S.I.ii.388), and whose complaints he calls "their noisome clamour" (S.I.ii.390), underlies Coriolanus' furious words to his soldiers as they retreat before the Volscian forces:

You shames of Rome!
    ....... ........................................
You souls of geese,
That bear the shapes of men...
    ....... ........................................
Mend, and charge home,
Or, by the fires of Heaven, I'll leave the foe  
And make my wars on you. (I.iv.30,34-35,38-40)

The words of Angiolina regarding Marino Faliero's patrician aloofness, pride, and impatience are an excellent assessment of all aristocratic leaders such as the Byronic Hero and Coriolanus:

His faults are those that dwell in the high bosoms
Of men who have commanded: too much pride,
And the deep passions fiercely foster'd by
The uses of patricians, and a life
Spent in the storms of state and war; and also
From the quick sense of honour, which becomes
A duty to a certain sign, a vice
When overstrain'd, and this I fear in him.
And then he has been rash from his youth upwards,
Yet temper'd by redeeming nobleness. (MF,II.i.103-12)

The foregoing references to some of the martial leaders of Renaissance literature and to the Byronic Hero indicate the

74 Works, p. 556.
75 Shakespeare, Coriolanus, p. 1276.
76 Works, p. 510.
presence of parallel qualities of leadership in both groups of heroes. More specifically, they suggest that the resemblance of this aspect of the Byronic Hero to Coriolanus, especially in view of the documented accounts of Byron's great interest in this Shakespearean drama, may be more than coincidental.  

Another aspect of the Byronic Hero which resembles that of several Renaissance protagonists is his ability to love faithfully without allowing that love to dominate his other passions. Each of Byron's heroes has "but one only love" (BA,II.xx.417); and, although this constant love may temporarily "tame and turn the sterner heart" (G,933), it is never a deterrent to the hero's will. Conrad's loving concern for Medora is as genuine as is Marino Faliero's for Angiolina, Jacopo Foscari's for Marina, Cain's for Adah, Tamburlaine's for Zenocrate, Coriolanus' for Virgilia, and Warbeck's for Katherine. Regardless of the depth of love given and received, however, each of these men resolutely pursues a destructive goal, the outcome of which must be pain to the woman he loves. The most beautiful lines in Tamburlaine are those in which Tamburlaine speaks of his love for Zenocrate, but Tamburlaine, like Byron's heroes,

77 See pp. 63-64 above.  
78 Works, p. 333.  
79 Ibid., p. 319.  
80 See Marlowe, I Tamburlaine, pp. 64, 88-89, 107-08; II Tamburlaine, pp. 138-39, 140-41.
refuses to allow love to halt his resolve. After hearing
the graceful plea of Zenocrate that he lift the siege from
Damascus and make peace with her father, Tamburlaine muses
in soliloquy upon Zenocrate's beauty and his desire to
please her. Abruptly, however, he puts away such thoughts
as weakness:

But how unseemly is it for my sex,
My discipline of arms and chivalry,
My nature, and the terror of my name,
To harbour thoughts effeminate and faint!

(V.i.174-77)\textsuperscript{81}

Unalterably convinced that "virtue solely is the sum of

\textit{glory}" (V.i.189),\textsuperscript{82} Tamburlaine, shortly before he dies,
commands his son Amyras never to allow love to exceed honor
(V.iii.199).\textsuperscript{83} The reply of Charlemont, hero of \textit{The Atheist's
Tragedy}, to Castabella's urgings that he not become a soldier
or else that he allow her to go with him to war is in the
same vein as Tamburlaine's counsel to Amyras and would serve
as an appropriate farewell from the Byronic Hero to his lady:

\ldots for my selfe to stay,
Or you to goe, would either taxe my youth
With a dishonourable weaknesse, or
Your louing purpose with immodestie. (I.ii.103-04)\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{81}Marlowe, I \textit{Tamburlaine}, p. 108.

\textsuperscript{82}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{83}Marlowe, II \textit{Tamburlaine}, p. 179.

\textsuperscript{84}Cyril Tourneur, The Works of Cyril Tourneur, ed.
Allardyce Nicoll (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963),
p. 181. Tourneur's works are hereafter cited as Tourneur, \textit{Atheist's Tragedy}; Tourneur, \textit{Revenger's Tragedy}.  

Conrad's devotion to Medora, like that of the Renaissance hero to the woman he loves, is complete—"tried in temptation, strengthen'd by distress, / Unmoved by absence, firm in every clime, / And yet . . . untired by time" (C,I.xii.294-96). Nevertheless, on the eve of the fateful raid against Seyd, Conrad sternly disregards Medora's fervent wish "that those days were over" and that Conrad would "learn the joys of peace to share" (C,I.xiv.388,389). Sardanapalus loves Myrrah, a Greek slave girl, as he loves all beautiful things of pleasure, but his deeper passions are not aroused until he arms himself and fights before his men against the attacking rebels. Jacopo Foscari loves Marina, his intensely loyal wife, but his most ardent love is for Venice, banishment from which is worse to him than death. Among all the wonders of Paradise, there is nothing to Cain's "eyes and heart / Like Adah's face. I turn from earth and heaven / To gaze on it" (Ca,II.i.472-74). But when Adah, fearful of Lucifer's strangeness, pleads with Cain to "walk not with this spirit" (Ca,II.i.357), Cain is heedless of her words; and thus the subtle dissenter is granted admission, not only into the Garden, but into Cain's own heart.

85 Works, p. 342.  
86 Ibid., p. 343.  
87 Ibid., p. 643.  
88 Ibid., p. 633.
There is a similarity to the foregoing examples of the often fateful result of the Byronic Hero's love in the love of several of the Renaissance heroes. In *The Wounds of Civil War*, for example, Cornelia, Scilla's wife, is subject to death at Marius' hands after Scilla's defeat by the Marian faction of Rome. However, Scilla's knowledge of the resultant danger to Cornelia from his concerted warring against the enemy forces does not deter Scilla in his determined efforts to regain control of the city in which Cornelia lives, surrounded by her husband's foes. Similarly, the love of Shakespeare's Coriolanus for his gentle wife, Virgilia, is one of his most human attributes. However, the rage and disgust of Coriolanus at the people of Rome are not softened by his devotion to Virgilia, nor is his ultimate disavowal of his plan to raze Rome the result of this love. The love of Ford's Perkin Warbeck for Katherine is explicit in Warbeck's statement that his only fear regarding the invasion of England is for Katherine's safety as "partner in my sufferance" (IV.iii.138). Regardless of this concern for Katherine, the invasion is undertaken, and Warbeck's Scottish allies subsequently abandon the cause. Despite the inevitability of his own capture and death and the great peril in which Katherine is placed by his actions, Warbeck continues his hopeless efforts to gain the throne of England.

These references to the love of the Renaissance hero and of the Byronic Hero suggest that although each is capable of faithful devotion to a woman, neither Byron's heroes nor those of the Renaissance dramatists allow love to swerve them from a determined, and frequently disastrous, course of action.

An additional characteristic of the Byronic Hero, closely related to the previous discussion, which is paralleled in the Renaissance hero is that although love may be the instigating passion of a course into which the Byronic Hero hurls the force of his will, it is usually superseded by other passions that provide the dominant motivation for his actions. For instance, in The Bride of Abydos, Selim loves Zuleika; however, it is his vengeful hatred of Giaffir that eventually causes his death. In Parisina, Hugo is beheaded because his father learns of the love between Hugo and Parisina, Azo's wife; however, the origin of the breach between father and son is not the love of Parisina but is rather the knowledge Hugo has long possessed of his mother's dishonoring at Azo's hands. Byron's Manfred is driven to a ceaseless quest for forgetfulness that eventuates in death because of remorse over his love for Astarte, and Marino Faliero is executed as a traitor because of his role in a conspiracy, assumed after he received a shameful requital for an insult to Angiolina, his wife. Despite the passionate love of Byron's Giaour for Hassan's harem girl, hatred and
remorse, and not love, are the Giaour's ruling passions after Leila's murder by Hassan's order.

There is also evidence that in the Renaissance hero, as in the Byronic Hero, "Love itself could never pant / For all that Beauty signs to grant / With half the fervour Hate bestows" (G, 647-49). In Marston's *The History of Antonio and Mellida*, for example, Antonio is completely motivated in his actions by his love for Mellida. The remorse of Antonio over his mistaken belief that his father, Andrugio, lately the Duke of Genoa, has been killed in a sea battle against Venice is consequently secondary to Antonio's desire to be reunited with Mellida in spite of the enmity of her father, Piero Sforza, the Duke of Venice. However, in Marston's sequel to this drama, *Antonio's Revenge*, Antonio becomes a bloody, vengeful Nemesis to Piero, who is solely responsible for the murder of Andrugio and the humiliation and unnecessary death of Mellida; and, as is typical of the Byronic Hero, love becomes subordinate to the protagonist's stronger passions. In a similar fashion, although the nominal reason for the assassination of Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois is

---

90 Ibid., p. 316.


the jealousy of Montsurry over his wife's love for Bussy, Bussy's auspicious and sudden rise in the court of Henry III constitutes a threat to Monsieur, the king's brother, and the Duke of Guise which can only be controlled by Bussy's destruction. Also, the implacable vengeance and corroding remorse of both Tourneur's Vindice and Ford's Giovanni may be referred to as additional examples of compelling passions that ultimately exceed the love by which they were instigated. It may be inferred, therefore, that while love is an important component in the natures of the Byronic and of the Renaissance Hero, it is usually sublimated in these characters by far more violent passions from which the characters' actions are directly generated.

The final portion of this discussion of resemblances between the external aspect of Byron's heroes and that of the heroes of the Renaissance writers is concerned with the characteristic nobility and mystery of background found in each group of characters. Although the theme of a hero's noble but unknown heritage runs through much English literature and cannot be considered an exclusive characteristic of either the Renaissance or Romantic literature, it is a strongly pervasive element in the poetry of Byron and in the Renaissance works included in this study. Over and over it will be noted that both the Byronic Hero and a number of Renaissance heroes are characterized by a proud and reserved
manner that marks them as aristocrats although their background is frequently mysterious.

When Byron's Manfred refuses to bow down before Arimanies, the First Destiny notes that "this man / Is of no common order, as his port / And presence here denote" (M,II.iv.421-23). The name of Byron's Conrad "on every shore / Is famed and fear'd" (C,II.ii.62), and the Corsair leader's inherent aristocracy is evident in "the lofty port, the distant mien" that "awes if seen; / The solemn aspect, and the highborn eye, / That checks low mirth but lacks not courtesy" (C,I.xvi.541-44). However, not even Conrad's men know who their chieftain really is. When Byron's Lara, that "long self-exiled chieftain," returns to his ancestral home, his serfs know only that he has come home "in sudden loneliness, / And whence they know not, why they need not guess" (L,I.i.4;iv.43-44). Accompanied by Kaled, "a single page, / Of foreign aspect and of tender age," Lara disdains to speak of either "the course his restlessness had run" in youth (L,I.iv.47-48;ii.23) or of more recent events, the memory of which "at moments lighten'd o'er his livid face" (L,I.v.84). With Byron's other heroes Lara

93 Works, p. 489.  
94 Ibid., p. 339.  
95 Ibid., p. 346.  
96 Ibid., p. 366.  
97 Ibid.  
98 Ibid., p. 367.
shares a "coldness of mien, and a carelessness of praise; / 
A high demeanour"; and, also typical of the Byronic Hero, 
"around him some mysterious circle thrown / Repell'd approach 
and show'd him still alone" (L, I.v.70-71; vii.107-08). 99

Byron's Hugo taunts his father with the manifest nobility 
which Azo has bequeathed his son, along with a "heritage of 
shame" and the knowledge of a mistreated mother's ruined 
reputation (P, xiii.245): 100

Albeit my birth and name be base,  
And thy nobility of race  
Disdain'd to deck a thing like me,  
Yet in my lineaments they trace  
Some features of my father's face,  
And in my spirit--all of thee. (P, xiii.282-87) 101

Most of the Renaissance protagonists included in this 
study are also of the nobility, and the mystery surrounding 
the parentage of Beaumont and Fletcher's Arbaces, of 
Massinger's Malefort junior, and of Ford's Perkin Warbeck is, 
like the disclosure of the true identity of Byron's Selim in 
The Bride of Abydos, of significance to the plot of each 
drama. Marlowe's Tamburlaine and Faustus, Chapman's Bussy 
D'Ambois and Duke of Byron, and Ford's Perkin Warbeck are 
examples of the earlier writers' concern with inherent as 
well as inherited nobility, a concern also mirrored in nearly 
all the protagonists of Byron's poetry.

99 Works, p. 367. 100 Ibid., p. 399. 101 Ibid.
Although little is known of the early life of Tamburlaine beyond the fact that he is of peasant stock, this man who boasts that "Jove himself will stretch his hand from heaven / To ward the blow, and shield me safe from harm" (I.ii.180-81) is innately majestic. There is neither humility nor reluctance in his words to Zenocrate which reveal his lineage and his aspiration: "I am a lord, for so my deeds shall prove, / And yet a shepherd by my parentage." (I.ii.33-34) Techelles' comparison of Tamburlaine to a princely lion before whom lesser creatures bow is but an echo of Tamburlaine's claim to lordship by virtue of valorous deeds (I.ii.52-57). Faustus, also from "parents of base stock" (Prologue,11), has attained scholarly renown and aspires to nothing less than the domination of "all things that move between the quiet poles" (I.i.54), including Mephistophilis and his spirit legions (I.i.33). Bussy D'Ambois, unable to lay claim to either wealth or position when he first appears at the French court of Henry III, achieves a meteoric success at court because of what Eugene M. Waith terms Bussy's "intrinsic virtue," which includes the incomparable assets of "greatness of spirit" and "a soul

102 Marlowe, I Tamburlaine, p. 66.
103 Ibid., p. 62.
104 Ibid., p. 63.
105 Marlowe, Faustus, p. 336.
106 Ibid., p. 337.
107 Ibid., p. 342.
both noble and strong by nature." Even Monsieur, the king's brother, and certainly no friend to Bussy, recognizes Bussy's natural nobility in a speech that vividly evokes the image of the Byronic Hero:

His great heart will not down; 'tis like the sea
That partly by his own internal heat,
Partly the stars' daily and nightly motion,
(Their heat and light), and partly of the place
(The divers frames), but chiefly by the moon,
Bristled with surges, never will be won
(No, not when th' hearts of all those powers are burst)
To make retreat into his settled home
Till he be crown'd with his own quiet foam.
(I.ii.153-61)

Chapman's Duke of Byron, whose title was bestowed and not inherited, has performed great services to France during the ruinous civil wars and is known for his "matchless valour." Although as little is known of the Duke of Byron's early life as of Bussy's before he arrived at Henry's court, the Duke's innate nobility is likened to "the state of man / In his first royalty ruling" (Prologue,62,72-73). Ford's Perkin Warbeck may indeed be, as Lambert Simnel asserts, "Osbeck's son of Tournay, a loose runagate, / A landloper," whose "father was a Jew, / Turned Christian merely to repair

---


110 Chapman, Byron's Conspiracy, p. 153.
his miseries" (V.iii.24-26), rather than the "sole heir / To the great throne of old Plantagenets" (II.i.50-51), which he claims to be. Warbeck is, nevertheless, utterly convinced of the validity of his nobility and of his right to the throne of England, denied him by Richard's treacherous acts, and the nobility of his conviction impresses and wins the allegiance of King James of Scotland. Frankly skeptical at first, James, at the close of the speech in which Warbeck pleads his cause, concludes that "he must be more than subject who can utter / The language of a king, and such is thine. / . . . be whate'er thou art" (II.i.106-08).

Closely related to this concept of an unknown but noble heritage in the Byronic Hero is the suggestion that unexplained events in the hero's past seem to have impelled him into a far different life than that for which he was born. The narrator of Childe Harold, for instance, declines to reveal the Childe's identity but suggests that the poem's lonely traveller has, by some nameless act, blighted a noble name (CH,I.iii.19-27). The description of the Giaour, "his face and race alike unknown" (G,807), by one of the friars in the monastery in which the Giaour has incarcerated

111 Ford, Warbeck, p. 420.
112 Ibid., p. 364.  113 Ibid., p. 365.
114 Works, p. 4.  115 Ibid., p. 318.
himself, is appropriate to this aspect of Milton's Satan as well as of the Byronic Hero:

The close observer can espy
A noble soul, and lineage high:
Alas! though both bestow'd in vain,
Which Grief could change, and Guilt could stain,
It was no vulgar tenement
To which such lofty gifts were lent,
And still with little less than dread
On such the sight is riveted. (G,868-75)

The speaker then marks the greatness that remains in despoiled grandeur by comparing the ruin of a cottage with that of a mighty tower:

The roofless cot, decay'd and rent,
Will scarce delay the passer by;
The tower by war or tempest bent,
While yet may frown one battlement,
Demands and daunts the stranger's eye;
Each ivied arch, and pillar lone,
Pleads haughtily for glories gone! (G,868-75,876-82)

Unexplained also are the events in Conrad's past that Conrad "would not have seen" but which are not totally concealed and by which "his soul was changed, before his deeds had driven / Him forth to war with men and forfeit heaven" (C, I.xi.251-52). Byron's Cain, upon first viewing Lucifer, notes that Lucifer has "a shape like to the angels, / Yet of a sterner and sadder aspect" (C,I.i.80-81). Cain is also instantly aware of Lucifer's blighted glory:

If I shrink not from these, the fire-armed angels,
Why should I quail from him who now approaches?
Yet he seems mightier far than them, nor less

116 Works, p. 319.  
117 Ibid., p. 342.  
118 Ibid., p. 628.
Beauteous, and yet not all as beautiful
As he hath been, and might be. Sorrow seems
Half of his immortality. (C, I. i. 91-96)\textsuperscript{119}

The Renaissance character most closely mirrored in this aspect of marred nobility in the Byronic Hero is Milton's Satan. The majesty of Satan, "though chang'd in outward luster" (I. 97),\textsuperscript{120} is inwardly undiminished by his great defeat in heaven and banishment to hell. As Satan defiantly faces the circumstances for which his actions are responsible, his words are reminiscent of Byron's exiled, aristocratic heroes, whose deeds also have driven them to "forfeit heaven" (C, I. x. 252)\textsuperscript{121} and rule in solitary nobility far from their ancestral lands:

\begin{quote}
What matters where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less than he
Whom Thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free;

\ldots Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
To reign is worth ambition though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n.
(I. 256-59, 261-63)\textsuperscript{122}
\end{quote}

Byron's use of the ruined tower image to suggest the marred but still-haughty grandeur of his hero (G, 876-82)\textsuperscript{123} might have been inspired by the description of the leader of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{119} Milton, \textit{Paradise Lost}, p. 214.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Works, p. 342.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Milton, \textit{Paradise Lost}, p. 218.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Works, p. 319.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Milton, \textit{Paradise Lost}, p. 218.
\end{itemize}
fallen angels:

Thir dread commander: he above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent
Stood like a Tow'r; his form had yet not lost
All her Original brightness, nor appear'd
Less than Arch-Angel ruin'd, and th' excess
Of Glory obscur'd. (I.589-95)  

At times, however, Satan gives voice to a remorse-engendered anguish over his fallen estate that sharpens awareness and accentuates hatred:

But what will not Ambition and Revenge
Descend to? who aspires must down as low
As high he soar'd, obnoxious first or last
To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
Bitter ere long back on itself recoils. (X.167-72)  

The Byronic Hero, also "too firm to yield, and far too proud to stoop" (C.I.ix.255), is, like Satan, tortured by thoughts of the bitter events which have resulted in a life which is in sharp contrast to what it once was:

The Mind, that broods o'er guilty woes,
Is like the Scorpion girt by fire:
In circle narrowing as it glows
The flames around their captive close,
Till inly search'd by thousand throes,
And maddening in her ire,
One sad and sole relief she knows;
The sting she nourish'd for her foes,
Whose venom never yet was vain,
Gives but one pang, and cures all pain,
And darts into her desperate brain;--
So do the dark in soul expire,
Or live like Scorpion girt by fire;
So writhes the mind Remorse hath riven,
Unfit for earth, undoom'd for heaven,

124 Milton, Paradise Lost, p. 226.
125 Ibid., p. 382.
126 Works, p. 342.
Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around it flame, within it death!  (G,421-38) 127

These parallel passages suggest a more than accidental relationship between the Byronic Hero's aspect of marred nobility and the despoiled grandeur of Milton's Satan.

Although the literary influence of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century concepts of melancholy is generally acknowledged by scholars of Renaissance literature, such as Sensabaugh, 128 there is nothing in the references of Byron to Burton or in the poetry itself to prove that Byron's melancholy heroes were influenced by the old four-humours theory. However, several points suggest the possibility that Byron may have incorporated into his solitary, passion-ridden heroes some of the physical traits of the Renaissance melancholy man that are mirrored in many Renaissance literary characters. First, it has been established by the many documented statements of Byron's contemporaries and by modern biographers that Byron was highly susceptible to all ideas with which he came in contact; second, Byron was familiar with Burton's Anatomy and with the literature of the English Renaissance; and, third, because Byron considered himself a melancholy individual and was so regarded by most of his acquaintances, it is logical to assume that he would have

127 Ibid., p. 314.

recognized and been attracted by this quality in others. It thus seems fairly probable that the parallels in the physical appearance of the Byronic Hero and in some of the Renaissance characters are to some extent a reflection of the influence of Byron's reading of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors.
CHAPTER VI

THE BYRONIC HERO AND HIS GOTHIC ANCESTRY

The major concern of this chapter is to further establish the influence of Renaissance literature upon the Byronic Hero by examining the presence in Byron's poetry of certain elements now termed "Gothic" which are abundant in the work of the early English writers, particularly the dramatists. Because of the considerable amount of scholarship since 1920 on the obvious similarities between Byron's heroes and the villains of eighteenth-century Gothic fiction, however, the conclusions of this section must be approached through an investigation of the evolving meanings of the term Gothic and of its development into a recognized literary tradition by the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

The word Gothic, as elusive of precise definition as is the term Romantic, has been used as a critical adjective for well over two hundred years. Although this usage of the word was not common until the eighteenth century, according to Devendra P. Varma, the history of Gothicism, or of the idea of the Gothic spirit at large, began even before the close of the Dark Ages.¹ William C. Holbrook, in his study

of the adjective *Gothique*, says that at the beginning of the Renaissance, *Gothic* was used to imply contempt for the qualities of opprobrious archaism, uncouthness, and barbarity which were associated with the rude, uncivilized character and architecture of the northern tribes of the Middle Ages. However, when things medieval came into favor during the emergence of the "democratic-romantic" era of the Renaissance, Varma says in his summary of Holbrook's article, the adjective *Gothic*, or *gothique*, acquired overtones of respectability, though it continued to suggest things savage, cruel, and barbarous. Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, the Gothic tradition was almost wholly dormant, a natural consequence of the aesthetic emphasis during this time upon the decorum and discipline of classicism. As the eighteenth-century sensibility broadened and shifted toward the imaginative and away from a strict adherence to neoclassicism, there was a revival of interest in the Middle Ages and a decided change of attitude toward things medieval. This change is significantly reflected in the literary connections with the word *Gothic* in the last part of the eighteenth century. Varma cites Richard Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762) to show that, although in the

---


3 Varma, p. 11.
first half of the eighteenth century the cluster of closely allied meanings that surrounded the term connoted the barbarous, the medieval, and the supernatural, Gothic was also used eulogistically as well as disparagingly.  

Robert B. Heilman says that by the second quarter of the eighteenth century, certain impressions, such as awesome "venerableness, vastness, and gloominess," came to be connected with Gothicism.  

Horace Walpole is generally credited with changing the popular conception of the term Gothic from a slurring adjective of scorn to a glowing epithet of praise, which also became a trope throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century for moral, spiritual, and cultural freedom. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Varma notes, the concept of Gothicism had lost much of its medieval connotation and was usually equated in literature with the sublime and numinous, as well as the ghastly and grotesque, with great stress frequently placed upon the supernatural or superhuman.

Varma bases a discussion of the numinous elements of Gothicism on Wilhelm Worringen's *Form in Gothic* (1881), which

---


6 Varma, p. 13.
"establishes a connection between Gothic proper and the Gothic spirit at large." The numinous elements of Gothicism derive from the continuum of ideas contained in the concept of the Gothic spirit at large, which had its beginnings before the Renaissance. That is, primitive man had felt threatened by an unexplainable external world that emanated obscure mysteries and intimations of harm, thus giving rise to an aura of constant "apprehension of the unknown." Because of this phenomenal universe and its fearsome unpredictableness, he was thus motivated by the energy of fear to seek spiritual assurance in the absolute of religion. His clumsy advances to the awful power controlling all things were for him propitiations to the Unknowable designed to insure at least a modicum of safety. According to Worringer, the Gothic spirit consequently expresses "an ecstasy of communion" with the powers of the unknown, before which it also makes "humble obeisance," and thus charges man's fearful and otherwise senseless existence with a tenebrous, unfathomable, and sacred purpose. 

When this feeling for the unknown, which in Varma's opinion is the religious or spiritual aspect of the Gothic spirit, is combined with a contemplation of natural objects, 

---


8Varma, p. 15.
including night and sunrise and storms, there is a resultant "concord in literature between man's mood and the predominant aspect of nature." In Gothic literature, therefore, both scenery and weather are always presented subjectively. Villainous murders and macabre tortures, for instance, are enacted against a background of rolling thunder and slashing lightning across a midnight sky, and tender love scenes are surrounded by twilight's muted colors and sounds or dawn's dew-spangled freshness. Thus, not only are the agitated elements in accord with man's personal agitation, but also the benevolent and silently powerful forces and scenes of nature may be regenerative and often exultant powers that impel man forward in his aspiration toward truth, beauty, and personal fulfillment. Adjunctive to the Gothic attitude toward nature are plot elements involving grim and grotesque incidents that utilize ghosts, spirits, skulls, corpses, dire omens, and supernatural occurrences.

Varma further notes that an entire paraphernalia of Gothic machinery logically developed as an intensification of the Gothic spirit emerged. The Gothic edifice, at first a castle and later possibly also a convent, an abbey, a ruin, or a grotto, became the symbol and the embodiment of all passions and themes displayed in Gothic writings. This

9 Varma, p. 20.  
10 Ibid., pp. 20-21.  
11 Ibid., p. 17.  
12 Ibid.
somber pile— with its gloomy corridors, vaulted chambers, traceried windows, buttresses, cloistered pillars, and menacing tower—is always the passive agent of terror in Gothic literature, and the Gothic villain, usually the lord of the castle or the ruler of the environs, is the active agent of terror who functions as the exemplum of unspeakable cruelty and diabolical fiendishness, according to Varma.\footnote{Ibid., p. 19.}

The hero is of slight importance in Gothic fiction, serving primarily to heighten by contrast the villain's heinous nature. The heroine is traditionally an indistinctly portrayed maiden, who is vaguely delineated as beautiful, forlorn, passive, and harassed.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 60-63.} Along with an assorted group of frightened servants and a devoted female or male accomplice who often serves as the implement of an intricate ficelle, Varma says that the cast of characters in Gothic fiction frequently includes a "venerable ecclesisastic."\footnote{Ibid., p. 12.}

Although this priest, monk, bishop, or abbot may be villainous, he is often a benignant influence whose function is, Cassandralike, to issue warnings that are rarely heeded.

Although, as will be discussed in this chapter, the components of Gothicism had existed in English literature at least as early as the sixteenth century, Horace Walpole is considered by most scholars to have created in his The Castle
of Otranto the first Gothic novel. Elie Halévy goes so far as to state that the publication of Walpole's novel in 1764 marked the "inauguration of a literary revolution." In this work, Walpole consciously utilized the machinery and settings of Gothicism, and his characters, distinctly individualized in accordance with the Gothic age, tone, and nature of the story, include a feudal tyrant, a pious monk, a hero, and a helpless damsel in distress. It is in the works of Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, who was born the year in which Walpole's The Castle of Otranto was written, that eighteenth-century Gothic fiction approached its apex of development. In creating her wild scenery in The Mysteries of Udolpho and in drawing her murderous villain Schedoni in The Italian with a deftness at once terrible and beautiful, Mrs. Radcliffe raised the "passion of fear" to the "dignity of romance." She skillfully wove into her stories a series of "supernatural apprehensions" and "half-heard sounds," and, at the same time, she afforded a base of reality by offering credible explanations of the incredible, by defining the

17 Halévy, p. 511.
18 Varma, p. 60.
indefinable, and by carefully explaining the natural agency responsible for each wondrous event. 21 The Gothic tales and dramas of Matthew Gregory Lewis, a friend of Byron, possessed none of the reticence of Mrs. Radcliffe and the writers who strove to emulate her presentation of the rational and sentimental aspects of Gothic romance. In The Monk, for example, Lewis employed all the machinery of Gothic fiction for the purpose of luridly depicting ghastly themes that were highlighted with a brutal emphasis on gross detail and sensationalism. 22 His sepulchral horrors follow each other in quick, disjointed sequences, giving an overall effect that is totally unlike the ordered obscurity that underlines the mystery and terror of Mrs. Radcliffe's stories. 23 By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Gothicism had been largely formulized in fiction by the scores of writers who adapted Walpole's utilization of the components of the Gothic tradition, and the Gothic villain had become an easily recognizable stereotype.

In Patricia Ann Spacks' opinion, these villains were, for the most part, mechanically drawn monsters from lifeless

21 Varma, pp. 101-105.


23 Varma, pp. 139-45.
traditions. And Eino Railo comments that the delineation of the melancholy, defiant Gothic villains became "a kind of approved composite portrait," the outward characterization of which was commonly marked by "a high, white forehead shadowed by ebony curls, a dark, piercing glance, general beauty of countenance, a manly character and a mysterious glance."  

The Byronic Hero's outward similarity to the Gothic Villain is, of course, obvious and has been frequently noted by critics interested in tracing the Byronic Hero's lineage. Edith Birkhead, for instance, says that Byron's heroes must be viewed as "among the direct progeny of the eighteenth-century villains, who are known by their world-weariness, their penetrating eyes, their passion-marked faces, and their "verra wrinkles Gothis."  

Railo comments that the relation of Byron's work to that of Mrs. Radcliffe must always be kept in mind in examining the genealogy of the Byronic Hero, and Rutherford specifies that Byron's heroes were strongly influenced by characters such as Mrs. Radcliffe's Schedoni and William Godwin's Gabor. Praz emphasizes the

---


25 Railo, p. 219.


27 Railo, p. 232.

28 Rutherford, p. 39.
striking similarity in the appearances of Byron's Lara and
Mrs. Radcliffe's Schedoni by juxtaposing the following
descriptive passages from The Italian and Lara:

. . . the livid paleness of his face. . . .
There was something in his physiognomy extremely
singular, and that cannot easily be defined. It
bore the traces of many passions, which seemed
to have fixed the features they no longer
animated. . . . His eyes were so piercing, that
they seemed to penetrate, at a single glance,
into the hearts of men, and to read their most
secret thoughts.

That brow in furrow'd lines had fix'd at last,
And spoke of passions, but of passions past:
The pride, but not the fire, of early days,
Coldness of mien, and carelessness of praise;
A high demeanour, and a glance that took
Their thoughts from others by a single look. . .
And some deep feeling it were vain to trace
At moments lighten'd o'er his livid face.29

Thorslev, however, negates Praz's conclusion that Byron
slavishly imitated Mrs. Radcliffe, suggesting rather that,
while Praz correctly notes certain resemblances, numerous
dissimilarities invalidate an application of these charac-
teristics either to the Byronic Hero generally or to Lara
specifically.30

Although the Byronic Hero's physical resemblance to the
Gothic Villain is evident, it must be stressed that the
similarities are in surface appearance only. As Thorslev

29Praz, p. 85. The first quotation is from Ann Rad-
cliffe's The Italian (London, 1811), pp. 69-70; the second
is from Byron's Lara, Works, p. 367, st. v, lines 66-72.
The italics in both selections are Praz's.

30Thorslev, pp. 56, 57.
points out, a Gothic Villain is a villain and a Byronic Hero
is a hero; there is thus a profound difference in the charac-
ters of the two types, and it is the Byronic Hero's charac-
ter far more than his appearance that makes for his importance
as a literary figure.\(^{31}\) In much the same vein, Lovell states
that Byron's heroes, like Milton's Satan, are all "beings
of a higher order who have fallen from innocence," whereas
Mrs. Radcliffe's villains "were presumably villains in their
cradles, and never call forth the pathos associated with a
character born for a better life than circumstances allow
him."\(^{32}\) There was, however, in the Gothic literature of
the eighteenth century a transitional phase in which the
Gothic Villain was propelled toward becoming a Romantic
hero, Thorslev states;\(^{33}\) and some understanding of how this
transformation may have taken place is necessary for a
reconciliation of the Byronic Hero's role in the continua-
tion of the Gothic tradition in literature into the nine-
teenth century, a tradition in which the villain had hereto-
fore completely dominated the hero. Three of these speculative
theories on the Byronic Hero's mode of metamorphosis from
Gothic Villain are particularly relevant to a study of
influences upon the Byronic Hero which must ultimately be
traced back to the Renaissance.

\(^{31}\) Thorslev, p. 57.  \(^{32}\) Lovell, p. 143.  
\(^{33}\) Thorslev, p. 57.
Eino Railo, for instance, proposes that Sir Walter Scott's consolidating of the Gothicism of Walpole, Mrs. Radcliffe, and "Monk" Lewis with his own knowledge of history and folklore produced the intermediary character who bridges the chasm between the Gothic Villain and the Byronic Hero.  

In accord with Railo's point of view, Halévy also sees Scott's romances, emerging from the final shock waves of the literary revolution that produced the school of terror writers, as the immediate precursors of Byron's Oriental Tales. Scott's *Waverley*, a tale of the rebellion of Scotland's Chevalier Prince Charles Edward in 1745, had the same psychological appeal to readers as that of Mrs. Radcliffe's stories, but Scott's hero is of a different ilk from either the flaccid protagonists or the sinister villains of Mrs. Radcliffe. Although Scott's Waverley is not the forceful, vivid hero of Byron's Oriental Tales, his character is dimensional as well as believable, and Halévy says that Scott's utilization of the romance as a vehicle for presentation of the manners and history of a previous era prepared the way for Byron's adventuring heroes in their exotic settings.

Thorslev also comments that Scott's influence on the development of the Byronic Hero is unmistakable, noting that Scott's Noble Outlaw—a composite of the ballad outlaws, the

---

34 Railo, p. 221.

35 Halévy, p. 517.
Gothic Villains of England of Germany, and the two major Teutonic outlaws of the period, Goethe's Götz, in Götz von Berlichingen (1771), and Schiller's Karl Moor, in Die Rauber (1791)—is remarkably similar to the heroes of Byron's Oriental Tales. For example, if Marmion's mysterious secret were more honorable, his regard for women wholly courteous, his passion intensified, and his character more enigmatic and complex, he would be, in Thorslev's opinion, "a true Byronic Noble Outlaw." Scott's heroes, though usually outside the law, are chivalrous and patriotic; the Byronic Hero, solitary and consumed by the passions of his quest, also is unfailingly courteous and brave to a fault. The sympathy of the reader is thus engaged by the heroes of Scott and Byron, whereas the Gothic Villain's sadistic misogyny marks him as completely unregenerate. An extensive contemplation of the Byronic Hero, however, reveals many dissimilarities in his character and that of Scott's swashbuckling, charming Noble Outlaw. That the two are related in their development from the same spirit of the age is indisputable, but the relationship is more that of cousins-german than that of immediate progenitor and offspring.

Another theory of the Byronic Hero's metamorphosis from the Gothic Villain is Lovell's contention that John Moore's

36Thorslev, p. 77.  
37Ibid., p. 79.  
38Ibid., p. 55.
Zeluco, in the novel _Zeluco_ (1786), provides the proximal character to the Byronic Hero descended from the Gothic Villain.\(^{39}\) The first point upon which Lovell bases this premise is that Moore's Zeluco, though undeniably culpable, is tormented by remorse and guilt. These emotions, never experienced by Mrs. Radcliffe's villains, are, however, painfully present in Byron's heroes. Lovell next points to Zeluco's villainy and misanthropy as having been forced upon him by powers outside his control. Like Byron's Conrad and Lara, Zeluco is mistreated by the world, and his disfigured character is the result of what Lovell calls "environmental determinism."\(^{40}\) The Gothic Villain ruthlessly elects to be cruel; Zeluco's pseudo-villainous role is chosen no more deliberately than is the role of Byron's unhappy Giaour. Finally, Lovell contrasts the total absence of psychological subtlety in the Radcliffean villain with "Dr. Moore's careful dissection of motive and slow hardening of habit" in Moore's delineation of Zeluco.\(^{41}\) Noting that Byron was impressed by and commented on Moore's acumen in observing mankind, Lovell suggests that the creator of the Byronic Hero, while definitely indebted to Mrs. Radcliffe's villains for his characters' general outward appearances, is far more deeply, as well as immediately, indebted to Dr. Moore's

\(^{39}\) Lovell, pp. 117, 185.  \(^{40}\) Ibid., p. 142.  
\(^{41}\) Ibid., p. 143.
That Byron was deeply impressed by Zeluco is apparent in the addition to his preface to the first two cantos of Childe Harold in which he states that he had intended to sketch "a modern Timon, perhaps a poetical Zeluco." There is cogency in Lovell's theory that it is Moore's Zeluco, wretchedly incapable of enjoying nature or man because of his cruel destiny, who is the adjacent character providing the tradition and the pattern by which the unregenerate Gothic Villain develops into the pensively brooding, remorseful (though not penitent) Byronic Hero. This postulation lacks, however, the conclusive quality of a theory proposed by Bertrand Evans.

Evans, while admitting that the Byronic Hero is obligated to the Gothic tradition begun by Walpole in 1768 and is descended from the villains of this school of writers, maintains that the link in the progress from villain to hero is to be found in Gothic drama. In plays such as Robert Jephson's The Count of Narbonne, Bertie Greatheed's The Regent, Francis North's Kentish Barons, and Thomas Sedgwick Whalley's The Castle of Montval, the villains gradually evolved into more attractive characters than the villains of Gothic novels because of two theatrical circumstances, only accidentally

42 Ibid., pp. 142, 143.  
43 Works, p. 2.
related. One of these was the late eighteenth-century rise of principal actors to places of great power in the theater. The role of villain was invariably much more challenging than that of the ineffectual protagonist, and Gothic playwrights took special pains to make their villains attractive to leading actors of this period. Although these plays end with villainy defeated by virtue, the impotent hero never contributes to the villain's ultimate downfall. The villain's role is essentially central since the total dramatic purpose of Gothic drama was dependent upon the villain's function within the plot.

As the villain, played by outstanding actors, grew in stature, he inevitably became endowed with a dual personality which Evans terms "a mixture of odium and attractiveness." In the course of the transformation, the villain, still possessing unlimited capacities for evil, was provided with princely manners and a great soul. Since identification with leading actors of the day made the already central role of villain even more dominant as well as more attractive,

---


47 Ibid.
the agony of remorse became one of the essential components of the villain's character. While serving as an excellent vehicle for the actor's histrionics, this remorseful agony made a compelling bid for the audience's sympathy. As the audience responded to the now remorseful villain, Evans asserts, the Gothic Villain passed through that remorse-induced sympathy in the final stages of his evolution to Byronic Hero. 48

At the same time the star actors' exploitation of the agony of remorse was projecting the eighteenth-century villain much nearer the nineteenth-century hero of Byron, the result of another theater-related situation was paralleling this evolutionary character development. Gothic dramatists were forced to give positive evidence of their ethical integrity because of the intense moral scrutinizing their plays underwent at this time. The villain, always brought to destruction, thus became an object lesson as he agonized through repeated scenes of remorse, which served the double purpose of ostentatiously displaying the actor as well as of placating the eighteenth-century censor. 49 A survey of the monstrous actions in plays by leading dramatists such as Matthew Gregory Lewis, Bertie Greatheed, Francis North, William Sotheby, and Joanna Baillie reveals that the censor of Gothic drama allowed illimitable

48 Ibid., p. 762.  
49 Ibid., p. 763.
representation of vice so long as it was balanced by equally unlimited remorse. This remorse, required of the villain as a moral requital, evoked the sympathy that became an important part of the Gothic Villain's elevation to hero. These remorseful villains of Gothic drama are not Byronic Heroes or even Romantic rebels, as Thorslev points out, but their connection to the Byronic Hero is too close to be ignored.

This quality of remorse that Evans underscores in the villain of Gothic drama as an important transitional element in the development of the Byronic Hero from Gothic Villain is a characteristic of Azo, the antagonist in Byron's Parisina. In appearance and in purpose, Azo resembles the villains of both Gothic novels and Gothic dramas. He has the typical "fair broad brow" that is scarred by "intersected lines of thought" (P,xx.539,540), and his tyrannical behavior toward his son is reprehensible, to say the least. After the consummation of his revenge, however, Azo's character parallels that of the remorseful villain of Gothic drama rather than that of the unconscionably malevolent villain of Gothic novels. Upon discovering the love between his wife and his son, Azo adamantly declares that death is Hugo's

50 Ibid., p. 765.  
51 Thorslev, p. 61.  
52 Works, pp. 396-402.  
53 Ibid., p. 402.
penalty for this love, his "crime's reward" (P,xii.208). The betrayed husband and father justifies his merciless act by insisting that "there breathes not one / Who would not do as I have done" (P,xii.203,204), but he soon becomes the victim of his own vengeance. Even before Hugo dies, the remorse that consumes his despotic father is apparent. With a shaking hand, Azo hides his face to veil from onlookers the passion reflected there, "for on his brow the swelling vein / Throbb'd as if back upon his brain / The hot blood ebb'd and flow'd again" (P,xiii.224-226). Hugo dies unrepentant, his death heralded by Parisina's insane shriek and witnessed by curious spectators, and Azo's vindication is complete. The emptiness of his revenge, however, is attested by the deep furrows of sorrow on his once-handsome face, "scars of the lacerating mind / Which the Soul's war doth leave behind" (P,xx.543,544). No jubilation such as that enjoyed by a successful Gothic Villain marks lonely Azo's future. Haunted by memories too deeply implanted to be uprooted, his frozen heart receives no surcease from his banished tears. His wretched old age is as barren as a great tree whose trunk has been blighted by lightning striking its upper branches (P,xx.537-86). Unforgiving and

54 Ibid., p. 398.  
55 Ibid.  
56 Ibid., p. 396.  
57 Ibid., p. 402.  
58 Ibid.
unforgiven, Azo is something of a monster, but he is a remorseful monster. The remorse strikes a sympathetic note in the reader, who feels a degree of affinity with the villain and his self-bequeathed legacy of "sleepless nights and heavy days" (P,xx.547). Victim as well as victimizer, Azo personifies the remorse which both Lovell and Evans see as bridging the gap from Gothic Villain to Byronic Hero.

Each of the foregoing theories regarding the transition of the Byronic Hero from the eighteenth-century Gothic Villain is of significance in an examination of the development of the Byronic Hero. However, the last chapter of this study is devoted to the argument that the Byronic Hero's remorse, as well as other characteristics which distinguish him from genuinely villainous characters, is traceable to Renaissance characters, such as Webster's Bosola.

All the elements contained in eighteenth-century Gothicism were present in the literature of the Renaissance period. Although the major emphasis in modern scholarship on the Gothicism in the writings of the late eighteenth century is not on the earlier manifestations of what was to become a literary convention by Byron's time, the role of the old English authors in this area has not gone completely unnoticed. For instance, Varma refers to Praz' suggestion in The Times Literary Supplement of 13 August 1925 that

59 Works, p. 402.
Walpole "embodies in himself the particular antiquarian phases of early English romanticism," that include an "appreciation of Gothic architecture which later gave impetus to the creation of the first Gothic novel."\(^{60}\) Also, Varma says that Mrs. Radcliffe's villains are drawn from the type developed by Marlowe and later Elizabethans and are "characterized by the same domineering, relentless personality, and selfishness";\(^ {61}\) and Praz too suggests that Elizabethan dramas supplied the sources for Mrs. Radcliffe's villains\(^ {62}\) and further asserts that John Moore's Zeluco, usually associated with Milton's Satan, is actually sketched from the pattern of Elizabethan characters.\(^ {63}\)

Byron's extensive knowledge of eighteenth-century Gothic literature is well-documented\(^ {64}\) as is his admiration for many of these works of Gothic fiction.\(^ {65}\) However, Byron had also steeped himself from childhood in the literature of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English writers. From what is known of Byron's consistent efforts to base his Oriental Tales and dramas upon a background of authenticity, it may be conjectured that, while the Gothic works of Walpole, Mrs. Radcliffe, Lewis, and other of the eighteenth-century

\(^{60}\) Varma, p. 46. \(^{61}\) Ibid., pp. 117-18.  
\(^{62}\) Praz, p. 71. \(^{63}\) Ibid., p. 86.  
\(^{64}\) See Moore, p. 47, for example.  
\(^{65}\) See Moore, pp. 47, 358, 376; Chew, p. 62; Marchand, I, 39, 459.
writers were the immediate inspiration, the dramas of the 
Renaissance were the fundamental influence upon the Gothic 
ingredients discernible in much of Byron's poetry.

The flavor of Gothicism is present in Byron's works as 
early as the second canto of Childe Harold, in which the 
poet's description of a Greek skull as analogous with a 
ruined temple is unmistakably Gothic:

Look on its broken arch, its ruin'd wall, 
Its chambers desolate, and portals foul: 
Yet, this was once Ambition's airy hall, 
The dome of Thought, the place of the Soul. 
Behold through each lack-luster, eyeless hole, 
The gay recess of Wisdom and of Wit 
And Passion's host, that never brook'd control: 
Can all saint, sage, or sophist ever writ 
People this lonely tower, this tenement refit? 
(CH II,vi.46-54)66

The later description in the fourth canto of the desolation 
of Rome is also permeated with elements typical of the sub-
jectivism toward nature of the Gothic spirit which were to 
appear in Byron's narrative poetry and dramas:

Then let the winds howl on! their harmony 
Shall henceforth be my music, and the night 
The sound shall temper with the owlets' cry, 
As I now hear them, in the fading light. 
(CH IV,xxxvi.946-49)67

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown 
Matted and mass'd together, hillocks heap'd 
On what were chambers, arch crush'd, column strown 
In fragments, choked up vaults, and frescoes steep'd 
In subterranean damps where the owl peep'd,68 
Deeming it midnight. (CH IV,xxxvii.955-60)

66 Works, p. 20. 67 Ibid., p. 71. 
68 Ibid.
J. M. S. Tompkins, in his introduction to Varma's study of the development of Gothic literature, refers to the Freudian interpretations of the Gothic edifice as "the gigantic symbol of anxiety, the dread of oppression and of the abyss, the response to the political and religious insecurity of disturbed times." In view of the Renaissance writers' use of a similar setting for the mental tortures and physical acts of violence of the characters in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century tragedies, it is probable that the significance of the Gothic edifice in Renaissance literature may be similar to the Freudian interpretation of the castle in eighteenth-century Gothic fiction. For instance, Hieronimo's most dramatic scenes in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* are enacted in the castle of the Spanish king. It is in the king's presence chamber that Hieronimo presents his futile plea for royal justice, and the castle walls are privy to Hieronimo's passionate vow of "Vindicta mihi." In the final act of Kyd's drama, Hieronimo fulfills this oath to vengeance by arranging a court entertainment, during which are murdered Lorenzo, the king's nephew, and Balthazar, the son of the Portugese viceroy, the two

---

69 Varma, Introduction, p. xiii.


71 Ibid., p. 83.
characters upon whom Hieronimo has sworn revenge for the murder of his son. It is also in the castle that Hieronimo undergoes an inquisition, which he terminates by biting out his tongue shortly before he stabs the final victim of his vengeance, the Duke of Castile. Although the building in which Faustus' study is housed is never described in Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragicall History of Dr. Faustus*, the room itself is a Gothic interior, with its ancient volumes of metaphysical magic, necromancy, and astrology, as well as its brooding atmosphere of supernatural power and unexplored horrors. It is in this study that hell is revealed to Faustus, and it is within the chamber's precincts of forbidden knowledge that the scholars discover Faustus' dismembered body after hearing his agonized shrieks for help at the stroke of midnight. The Venetian palace of Piero is also the Gothic setting of most of the major action in John Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*, and it is in the palace courtyard that Piero boasts that he will drink a toast "even in Antonio's skull" (III.ii.229), a remark that immediately calls to mind Byron's poem "Lines Inscribed Upon a Cup Formed From a Skull." Andrugio, Antonio's father, responds to Piero's offer "to recompense any man that brings Andrugio's

72 Marlowe, *Faustus*, p. 337.
74 *Works*, pp. 153-54.
head" (V.ii.137-38) by appearing in the palace and presenting his unhelmeted head to the Duke with the command that the astonished Piero "strike, or bid me strike" (V.ii.161). This bizarre episode in the ducal hall is then climaxed with Andrugio's presenting to the duke a coffin which purportedly contains "the breathless trunk of young Antonio" (V.ii.175), but from which Antonio rises after hearing Piero remorsefully proclaim that he would give even his life if it "would but redeem one minute" of Antonio's breath (V.ii.208). The Gothic overlay of events leading to a happy ending in Marston's first play becomes in Antonio's Revenge a ghastly overture, dominating the action from the murder of Andrugio and Feliche by Piero and his villainous accomplice, Strotzo, at the play's opening until the destruction of Piero in the final scene. Mellida, the typically helpless maiden of Gothic fiction, is harried and maligned by her father. When she mistakenly supposes that Antonio is dead, she says, "I know he lov'd me dearly, dearly I; / And since I cannot live without him, I die" (IV.i.221-22), and promptly swoons and dies, just as does Byron's Medora upon being informed, also mistakenly, of

75 Marston, Antonio, p. 74.
76 Ibid., p. 75.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid., p. 77.
79 Marston, Antonio's Revenge, p. 63.
Conrad's death. Alone in the "stark dead night" by Andrugio's taper-illumined tomb in St. Mark's Church (III.i.2), Antonio swings about the tomb a chafing-dish containing perfume as he mournfully soliloquizes on his father's murder. Suddenly the Ghost of Andrugio appears and orders Antonio to "seize on revenge" by inventing "some stratagem of vengeance / Which, but to think on, my like lightning glide / With horror through thy breast" (III.i.36). When Antonio later falters in his plan to murder Piero's innocent young son, Julio, in the vault of St. Mark's, the Ghost of Andrugio again enters and utters the word "Revenge" (III.i.174). After stabbing Julio, Antonio sprinkles his father's tomb with the child's blood, saying, "Ghost of my poison'd sire, suck this fume; / To sweet revenge, perfume thy circling air / With smoke of blood" (III.i.207-09).

The appearances in this drama of Andrugio's ghost demanding that Antonio avenge his father's murder and the horrible Thyestean feast which is served Piero after Antonio's murder of Julio are in the Senecan tradition, of course, as are most of the revenge-inspiring ghosts and scenes of inhuman violence which appear in the plays of this period. However, Senecan and Gothic are not necessarily mutually exclusive terms. Many elements which are considered a part

---

80 Ibid., p. 42.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., p. 48.
83 Ibid., p. 50.
of the eighteenth-century Gothic tradition are also viewed in criticism of Elizabethan tragedy as stemming from works such as Seneca’s Medea, Thyestes, and Hippolyta. Fredson Bowers, in his study of Elizabethan revenge tragedy, lists as the most obvious indebtednesses of the Elizabethans to Seneca the dramatic use of personal revenge resulting from and serving as the cause of murder; the instigation and supervision of a revenge by a ghost; revenge motivated by seduction, adultery, or usurpation; and periods of frenzied ecstasy in the revenger, caused by the strong passions of revenge, which result in abnormal and frequently hideous actions. All of these characteristics may be found in the strain of Gothic fiction that stems from Walpole’s The Mysterious Mother and culminates in the orgy of revolting incidents presented in Lewis’ The Monk. Whereas they may be considered initially of Senecan derivation, by the last part of the eighteenth century they had become incorporated into the current Gothic tradition.

George Chapman’s Bussy D’Ambois is replete with characteristically Gothic events and settings. D’Ambois steals through the corridors of the palace of the Duke of Montsurry and enters the chambers of Tamyra through a secret passage.


the assignation having been arranged by the sympathetic Friar. The Duke's wife and D'Ambois are betrayed to the Duke by Pero, Tamyra's maid. Montsurry, dishevelled and half-dressed, drags his wife by the hair into a dimly lighted room, stabs her twice, and then places her on the rack. When the Friar attempts to save Tamyra from Montsurry's jealous rage, Montsurry kills the old man and places his body in the castle vault. The Duke then forces Tamyra to write a letter to D'Ambois, but she writes it in her own blood, hoping that "he may see / These lines come from my wounds, and not from me" (V.i.176-77). The Friar has previously summoned the spirit of Behemoth, who cryptically foretells the tragic events, and the Ghost of the Friar later appears to warn D'Ambois of Montsurry's trap. Ignoring the warning, D'Ambois goes to Tamyra and is murdered in the presence of his tortured mistress.

The Gothic elements of setting and events throughout Cyril Tourneur's The Revenger's Tragedy might have appealed to the same side of Byron's nature that applauded the work of Walpole and Lewis. The action begins with Vindice holding the skull of his sweetheart, Gloriana, who had been poisoned nine years earlier by the lecherous old Italian Duke when she refused to become his mistress. There is an incestuous-like relationship between the Duchess and Spurio,
the Duke's bastard son, that is based on a mutual desire for
vengeance on the Duke. When Vindice, calling himself Piao
and masquerading as servant to Lussurioso, the Duke's son,
is ordered by the Duke to bring a veiled lady to the ducal
garden for him to enjoy in the darkness, Vindice's revenge
is hideously accomplished. The skull of Gloriana is draped
with clothing and its lips are poisoned. After the Duke
kisses the lips and tastes the poison, Vindice orders his
brother to place a torch near the skull so that the Duke's
"affrighted eyeballs / May start into those hollows" (III.v.
155-56). In Tourneur's The Atheist's Tragedy, Borachio, D'Amville's
servant, who has just crushed the skull of Montferrer with a
stone and then thrown the body into a gravel pit to make the
death appear an accident, tells D'Amville that his orders
have been executed. Gloating over his brother's murder and
the inheritance that will be his, D'Amville declares that
he will build a new manor house upon the spot where his
brother fell and that the "faire Rubie" with which the deed

87Tourneur, Revenger's Tragedy, p. 122.
88Ibid.
was accomplished would be used as "the chiefest corner stone" of the structure (II.iv.114). 89

The mental torture of the Duchess of Malfi during her imprisonment in the palace at Malfi is another particularly horrible example of the macabre side of early Gothicism. Isabella's brother Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria, first presents the Duchess with a wax hand bearing the ring she had given Antonio and tells her that "here's a hand, / To which you have vow'd much love: the Ring upon't / You gave" (IV. i.51-53). 90 Ferdinand then forces his sister to view the figures of her husband and children which have been fashioned from wax into death-like postures and placed behind a traverse. Finally, her spirit numbed but unbroken by the fiendish cruelties, Isabella is informed by a servant that her brother is sending to her chamber "severall sorts of mad-men" (IV.ii.44), 91 and, to this further attempt to drive her insane, Isabella replies quite simply, "Let them loose when you please, / For I am chain'd to endure all your tyranny" (IV.ii.63-64). 92

The events in John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore leading to Annabella's murder by her brother, Giovanni, and the scene immediately following are among the most macabre

89Tourneur, Atheist's Tragedy, p. 203.
90Webster, Duchess, p. 90.
91Ibid., p. 94. 92Ibid., p. 95.
incidents in this survey of Gothicism in the Renaissance dramas. Soranzo, frenzied with mad jealousy, drags Annabella by the hair into a chamber late at night and "hales her up and down" (IV.iii.76), demanding that unless she reveal her lover her flesh will be hewn to shreds (IV.ii.72-73). Vasquez, Soranzo's accomplice, tricks Putana, Annabella's old serving woman, into telling him of Giovanni and Annabella's incestuous passion, and, as reward for this confidence, Putana is mutilated and then burned alive. Friar Bonaventura, learning from Annabella of Giovanni's danger, warns Giovanni not to attend the feast to which he has been invited by Soranzo. Heedless of the warning that he is going into an entrapment, Giovanni goes to Soranzo's palazzo, murders his sister, and skewers her heart, "trimmed in reeking blood" (V.vi.11), upon his dagger. He then enters the banquet room, and, after confronting Soranzo and his guests with Annabella's heart and informing them that "these hands have from her bosom ripped this heart" (V.v.69), Giovanni kills Soranzo, and Soranzo's hired assassins kill Giovanni.

A similar analysis of Byron's work reveals numerous variations of the Gothic settings, characters, and plot elements that occur in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century

93 Ford, 'Tis Pity, p. 142.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid., p. 159.
96 Ibid., p. 160.
dramas. After the Giaour's raid, the palace of the tyrant Hassan is a desolate ruin:

The steed is vanish'd from the stall;
No serf is seen in Hassan's hall;
The lonely Spider's thin gray pall
Waves slowly widening o'er the wall;
The Bat builds in his haram bower;
And in the fortress of his power
The Owl usurps the beacon-tower;
The wild-dog howls o'er the fountain's brim,
With baffled thirst and famine, grim;
For the stream has shrunk from its marble bed,
Where the weeds and the desolate dust are spread.

His revenge complete, the Giaour, "his floating robe around him folding, / Slow sweeps . . . through the column'd aisle" of the abbey (G,883-84),98 and, while the monks kneel and worship, the Giaour, in the flickering light of a "lone and wavering torch" (G,889),99 passes alone within the cloister's porch. In *The Bride of Abydos*, Zuleika's chamber is in the tower of Giaffir's palace, and, although "all that can eye or sense delight / Are gather'd in that gorgeous room" (BA, II.v.82-83),100 its atmosphere is one of gloom and foreboding from the menace of Giaffir's cruelty. The final meeting place of Zuleika and Selim is a "grotto, hewn / By nature but enlarged by art" (BA,II.vii.100-01)101 that is lighted by a brazen lamp whose fitful gleams are reflected in the pile of scimitars and swords of Selim's pirate crew. In *The

97 *Works*, p. 313.
98 Ibid., p. 319.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid., p. 329.
101 Ibid., p. 330.
Corsair, Conrad's castle, built at the summit of his island's highest mountain, is complete with towers, turret, torch-lighted chambers, and shadowy corridors (C,III.xix. 568,581,597,595). At the height of the battle between the Corsairs and their foes in the high hall of Seyd's palace, Conrad, unaware of the harem apartments beyond the stairs, orders his men to "fire the dome from minaret to porch" (C,II.v.197). After his defeat and capture, Conrad is fettered and imprisoned by Seyd "in the high chamber of his highest tower" (C,II.xi.366); because Seyd's palace had "perish'd in the flame, this fort / Contain'd at once his captive and his court" (C,II.xi.368-69). In Lara, Lara's hall is a medieval castle, with stairs and "dark gallery, where his fathers frown'd / In rude but antique portraiture" (L,I.ix.137-38); a solitary chamber with high walls decorated with "the painted forms of other times" (L,I.xi.183); lattice-work through which the moonlight filtered "o'er the floor of stone" (L,I.xi.192); a "high fretted roof; and saints that there / O'er Gothic windows knelt in pictured prayer" (L,I.xi.193-94). Azo's hall, in Parisina, is also a medieval palace, with tower, turret, and winding passages, and is surrounded with gardens filled with the musical whisperings of hundreds of small

102 Works, p. 364.  
103 Ibid., p. 350.  
104 Ibid., p. 352.  
105 Ibid., p. 368.
waterfalls. **Manfred** begins and ends in a "Gothic Gallery" (M, I. i), the tower chamber in the castle of Count Manfred. Doges Marino Faliero in *Marino Faliero*, and Francis Foscari, in *The Two Foscari*, dwell in and rule from the ancient Ducal Palace of Venice, that contains not only the royal living quarters, but the Hall of the Council of Ten, numerous state chambers, and a dark prison.

The horror underlying many of the events in Byron's works is much like that depicted by the old dramatists, the only difference being that it is heightened in Byron's poetry by half-explanations rather than lurid detail. Leila's murder at midnight, for example, is never explicitly described. The Moslem boatman, who serves as narrator for this portion of *The Giaour*, first speaks of the stealthy approach of a band of turbaned men, wearing silver-sheathed swords and bearing a mysterious burden. He is ordered by the group's leader to row them "midway to those rocks where sleep / The channell'd waters dark and deep" (G, 368-69). The bag containing Leila's presumably still-living body is pushed over the boat's side, and, although the narrator never knows the exact nature of the turbaned men's burden, he recalls its slow disappearance into the dark waters:

```
Sullen it plunged, and slowly sank,  
The calm wave rippled to the bank;  
I watch'd it as it sank, . . .  
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
```

I gazed, till vanishing from view,
Like lessening pebble it withdrew;
Still less and less, a speck of white
That gemm'd the tide, then mock'd the sight;
And all its hidden secrets sleep,
Known but to the Genii of the deep,
Which, trembling in their coral caves,
They dare not whisper to the waves.

Conrad has seen men slaughtered in combat and so is inured
to violence and death; yet his reaction to Gulnare's murder
of Seyd as he slept and to the spot of blood "upon her brow,
unknown, forgot, / Her hurrying hand had left" (C,III.ix.
414-15)\textsuperscript{109} is one of shuddering horror, the impact of which
is transmitted to the reader:

\begin{quote}
He had seen battle, he had brooded lone
O'er promised pangs to sentenced guilt foreshown;
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
But ne'er from strife, captivity, remorse,
From all his feelings in their inmost force,
So thrill'd, so shudder'd every creeping vein,
As now they froze before that purple stain.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{(C,III.x.418-19,422-25)}\textsuperscript{110}

\textbf{Lara} abounds in chillingly unnatural events that are never
fully explained. During solitary, nocturnal walks of Lara
through the castle's dark, portrait-tenanted chambers, the
fearful servants hear "the sound of words less earthly than
his own" (L,I.ix.140).\textsuperscript{111} Lara reveals to no one why he
keeps a human skull upon his reading table or why he turns
his dark gaze on this ghastly memento for long intervals
(L,I.ix.143-46).\textsuperscript{112} The tension of mystery surrounding Lara

\textsuperscript{108}Works, p. 314.
\textsuperscript{109}Ibid., p. 361.
\textsuperscript{110}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111}Ibid., p. 368.
\textsuperscript{112}Ibid.
culminates in his violent midnight encounter with an unseen foe, which leaves him unconscious and "cold as the marble where his length was laid" (L,I.xiii.211). The terror he has confronted remains unknown, but its hideous nature is fixed in his half-sealed eyes and "the horrible repose" of his countenance upon which was imprinted terror (L,I.xiii.217,221,224). There is also the unexplained horror of unspeakable past events in Count Ezzelin's strange disappearance and in the mystery surrounding Kaled--her origins, her reasons for assuming a page's disguise, and her ardent devotion to Lara. Manfred recoils from the cup of wine offered him by the Chamois Hunter, exclaiming that "there's blood upon the brim" (M,II.i.21). Seeing no blood, the old man is fearful that Manfred's senses are wandering, but Manfred vehemently insists that the blood is before him and that it is the blood he shared with Astarte:

I say 't is blood--my blood! the pure warm stream
Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours
When we were in our youth, and had one heart,
And loved each other as we should not love,
And this was shed. (M,II.i.24-28)

Francis Foscari's situation is perhaps more frightful than that of any of Byron's protagonists. Forced by his position as Doge to witness his son's agony upon the rack, which

113 Works, p. 369.  
114 Ibid.  
115 Ibid., p. 484.  
116 Ibid.
Barbarigo describes as suffering "beyond nature's / Most stoical endurance" (TF, I.i.12-13), the elder Foscari endures his anguish "with more than Roman fortitude" (TF, I.i.24). 117 The Doge's tortured inward convulsions are manifested only when Jacopo dies and his father commands an officer representing the signory of Venice to inform the Council that "they have no further power upon these ashes; / While he lived he was theirs, as fits a subject; / Now he is mine--my broken-hearted boy!" (TF, IV.i.204-06). 118

Although the most explicit supernatural occurrences in this group of Byron's poems are the spirits which appear to Manfred and the apparition in Lara's castle, there are in Marino Faliero two events that are strongly reminiscent of a scene in The Wounds of Civil War by Thomas Lodge. 119 After Caius Marius defeats Lucius Cornelius Sulla and drives the Sullan faction from Rome, the rule of Marius is supreme until his death, which is presaged by a supernatural omen that Lectorius describes to a Roman captain. Bent only on a day of pleasure in the countryside, Marius, a group of soldiers, and a number of Roman lords had proceeded to a forest clearing near a spring and were seated beneath spreading trees filled with singing birds. Suddenly, seven great eagles,

fiercely taloned, appeared from the east, circled several
times about Marius' head and, with hideous shrieks, soared
away. Marius, "all aghast" (IV.ii.186), interpreted the
event to his frightened followers:

Romans . . . old Marius now must die.
These seven fair eagles, birds of mighty Jove, 
That at my birthday on my cradle sat, 
Now at my last day arm me to my death,
And lo, I feel the deadly pangs approach.
(IV.ii.189-93)

Shortly thereafter, Lectorius continues, "our worthy Consul
to our wonder died" (IV.ii.196). 121 Before Marino Faliero
is executed at the top of the Giants' Staircase, where the
Doges of Venice traditionally received their oaths of office,
he recounts to Angiolina two occurrences which he considers
portents of his destiny. On a festival day in the town of
Trevino, where he served in his youth as podesta and captain,
Marino Faliero had impatiently struck down "the sluggish
bishop who / Convey'd the Host" (MF,V.ii.597). 122 As the
aged bishop arose, he first raised his "tremulous hands in
pious wrath towards Heaven" (MF,V.ii.561), and then, point-
ing to the fallen Host, he pronounced a curse upon Marino
Faliero:

"The hour will come
When he thou hast o'erthrown shall overthrow thee:
The glory shall depart from out thy house,

120 Lodge, Wounds, p. 74.
121 Ibid.  
122 Works, p. 546.
The wisdom shall be shaken from thy soul,
And in thy best maturity of mind
A madness of the heart shall seize upon thee;
Passion shall tear thee when all passions cease
In other men, or mellow into virtues;
And majesty, which decks all other heads,
Shall crown to leave thee headless; honours shall
But prove to thee the heralds of destruction,
And hoary hairs of shame, and both of death,
But not such death as fits an aged man."
Thus saying, he pass'd on.—That hour is come.
(MF,V.ii.604-17)123

After recalling this incident that had come to seem but "a
supernatural dream" (MF,V.ii.624), 124 Marino Faliero reminds
his wife of a more recent happening that was starkly porten-
tous of his present circumstances:

Thou canst not have forgot, what all remember,
That on my day of landing here as Doge,
On my return from Rome, a mist of such
Unwonted density went on before
The Bucentaur, like the columnar cloud
Which usher'd Israel out of Egypt, till
The pilot was misled, and disembark'd us
Between the pillars of Saint Mark's, where 't is
The custom of the state to put to death
Its criminals, instead of touching at
The Riva della Paglia, as the wont is,—
So that all Venice shudder'd at the omen.
(MF,V.ii.628-39)125

Although incest cannot be considered an essential part
of Gothicism proper, it is an element which appears promi-
nently in such eighteenth-century Gothic works as Walpole's
The Mysterious Mother as well as in at least five of the
seventeenth-century dramas herein considered. Therefore, an
examination of the Byronic Hero's obligations to Renaissance

123 Works, p. 546.  124 Ibid., p. 547.  125 Ibid.
literature would be incomplete without some discussion of
the theme of incest, a theme to which Byron was powerfully
attracted, as Marchand points out. In a letter to
Professor E. D. Clarke after the completion of The Bride of
Abydos, Byron wrote that he had "felt compelled to make my
hero and heroine relatives, as you well know that none else
could there obtain that degree of intercourse leading to
genuine affection; I had nearly made them rather too much
akin to each other; and though the wild passions of the East,
and some great examples in Alfieri, Ford, and Schiller (to
stop short of antiquity), might have pleaded in favor of a
copyist, yet the time and the north (not Frederic, but our
climate) induced me to alter their consanguinity and confine
them to cousinship." Moore, well aware that all the
Oriental Tales were considered highly autobiographical by
the reading public, inserted a note after Byron's journal
entry for 16 January 1814 in which he hastened to assure his
readers that such assumptions were erroneous:

As the mathematician of old required but a spot
to stand upon, to be able, as he boasted, to
move the world, so a certain degree of founda-
tion in fact seemed necessary to Byron, before
that lever which he knew how to apply to the
world of the passions could be wielded by him.
So small, however, was, in many instances, the
connection with reality which satisfied him,
that to aim at tracing through his stories
these links with his own fate and fortunes,

126 Marchand, I, 418.

127 Barzun, p. 68. Letter of 15 December 1813.
which were, after all, perhaps, visible but to his own fancy, would be a task as uncertain as unsafe;—and this remark applies not only to The Bride of Abydos, but to the Corsair, Lara, and all the other beautiful fictions that followed, in which, though the emotions expressed by the poet may be, in general, regarded as vivid recollections of what had at different times agitated his own bosom, there are but little grounds,—however he might himself occasionally, encourage such a supposition,—for connecting him personally with the groundwork or incidents of the stories. 128

Although Byron was undoubtedly fascinated by the theme of incest, his treatment of the subject is far less heavy-handed than that of the earlier writers. For instance, although Byron's portrayal of Selim and Conrad was probably influenced by Massinger's Malefort junior, the theme of a father's sexual desire for his daughter and the way in which this theme is treated in the last three acts of The Unnatural Combat have no correspondences in any of Byron's work. The obscene advances of D'Amville toward his son's wife, Castabella, which constitute an incestuous like subplot in Tourneur's The Atheist's Tragedy, are also completely alien to Byron's discreet use of the theme of incest.

When Zuleika suspects that the melancholy contemplation into which Selim has withdrawn is the result of her father's plan that she marry Osman, she kneels before Selim, weeping, and declares that she will never marry without his approval:

Without thy free consent, command,  
The Sultan should not have my hand!

128 Moore, p. 217.
Think'st thou that I could bear to part
With thee, and learn to halve my heart?  
(BA, I. i. 315-18)\textsuperscript{129}

As Selim reveals to her that he is not her brother, but rather the son of her uncle, Zuleika is at first fearful that she has lost the love of her now "more than brother" (BA, II. xxii. 502).\textsuperscript{130} However, when Selim explains the circumstances of his coming into Giaffir's household and the true nature of his love for her, Zuleika is mutely unresponsive. The only proof offered in the poem of Zuleika's reciprocal passion for Selim is the narrator's description of Zuleika's death:

\begin{verbatim}
Thou didst not view thy Selim fall!
That fearful moment when he left the cave
Thy heart grew chill:
He was thy hope--thy joy--thy love--thine all--
And that last thought on him thou couldst not save
Sufficed to kill;
Burst forth in one wild cry--and all was still.
\end{verbatim}

(\textit{BA}, II. xxvii. 632-39)\textsuperscript{131}

Manfred's words to the Witch of the Alps on his love for Astarte are also restrained but filled with emotion:

\begin{verbatim}
She was like me in lineaments--her eyes;
Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone
Even of her voice, they said were like to mine;
But soften'd all, and temper'd into beauty;
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,
The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind
To comprehend the universe: nor these
Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine,
Pity, and smiles, and tears--which I had not;
And tenderness--but that I had for her;
Humility--and that I never had.
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{129} Works, p. 327.  \textsuperscript{130} Ibid., p. 334.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., pp. 335-36.
Her faults were mine—her virtues were her own—
I loved her, and destroy'd her! (M,II.ii.199-211)

When Nemesis summons Astarte from the grave at Manfred's request, she stands silent before Manfred's agony of remorse (M,II.iv.453-67):

Thou lovèdst me
Too much, as I loved thee: we were not made
To torture thus each other, though it were
The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.
Say that thou loath'st me not, that I do bear
This punishment for both, that thou wilt be
One of the blessèd, and that I shall die.
(M,II.iv.490-96)

Lucifer tells Cain and Adah, Cain's sister-wife, that love such as theirs will be considered a sin in their children, but Adah cannot comprehend why her son and daughter cannot love as she and Cain have loved. The adroitness of Lucifer's explanation is akin to that of Ford's Giovanni to Annabella as Lucifer tells Adah that "the sin I speak of is not of my making, / And cannot be a sin in you—what'er / It seem in those who will replace ye in / Mortality" (Ca,I.i.374-76).

Although the love between Hugo and Parisina, his stepmother, is not literally an incestuous relationship, a somewhat similar situation in The Revenger's Tragedy is referred to as "foul incest" (I.iii.170) by Spurio, who is the lover of his stepmother, the Duchess. There is, however, no

132 Works, p. 486.  
133 Ibid., p. 490.  
134 Ibid., p. 633.  
135 Tourneur, Revenger's Tragedy, p. 102.
similarity between the circumstances of the love between Hugo and Parisina, who were betrothed before Azo coveted Parisina's youth and beauty, and the relationship between Spurio and the Duchess, which is compounded entirely of vengeance and lust.

Byron's The Bride of Abydos is reminiscent of A King and No King, The Unnatural Combat, and 'Tis Pity She's a Whore; however, the conditions surrounding Selim's love for Zuleika are more similar to those of Arbaces and Panthea's love than to those of the other protagonists. The significant difference in Arbaces' situation and that of Selim is that Arbaces is unaware until the final act that Panthea is not his sister, whereas Selim has known since childhood that he and Zuleika are only cousins. As Arbaces' passionate desire overcomes his other senses, he is convinced that "secret scorching flames, / That far transcend earthly material fires, / Are crept into me, and there is no cure" (III.iii. 24-26). His agitation is so great that Arbaces vacillates between ordering Bessus, his captain, to "get my sister for me,-- / Thou understand'st me,--in a wicked manner" (III.iii. 149-50), and countermanding the order by swearing that he "will not do this sin" that "heaves to get out" of his

137 Ibid., p. 306.
After Arbaces tells Panthea that he has looked on her "with a lustful eye" and then begs her not to yield to his passion, he reviles himself as "a sickness, / As killing as the plague, ready to seize thee" (IV.iv.84-85). Dismayed at the fervor of her brother's words, Panthea responds that, although she wishes as heartily as does Arbaces that she were not his sister, she will rather "in a grave sleep with my innocence, / Than welcome such a sin" (IV.iv.89-90). After Gobrias, the Lord-Protector of Iberia and the actual father of Arbaces, reveals that Arbaces is not the son of the queen and the late king of Iberia, there are no further obstacles to the happy consummation of the love between Panthea and Arbaces, a conclusion that contrasts sharply with the tragic ending of 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, The Bride of Abydos, Parisina, and Manfred.

Ford's Giovanni and Byron's Manfred are both scholars and skilled in the arts of sophistry; however, the artful rationalization to the Friar by Giovanni of his right to Annabella's love is quite dissimilar to the self-recriminating statement by Manfred on his love for Astarte:

What I have done I'll prove both fit and good.
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
. . . the frame
And composition of the mind doth follow

139 Ibid., p. 326. 140 Ibid., p. 327.
The frame and composition of the body:
So, where the body's furniture is beauty,
The mind's must need be virtue; which allowed,
Virtue itself is reason but refined,
And love the quintessence of that: this proves,
My sister's beauty being rarely fair
Is rarely virtuous; chiefly in her love,
And chiefly in that love, her love to me:
If hers to me, then so is mine to her;
Since in like causes are effects alike. (II.v.13,15-26)\textsuperscript{141}

Giovanni is equally casuistic in his persuasive wooing of Annabella:

Wise nature first in your creation meant
To make you mine; else't had been sin and foul
To share one beauty to a double soul.
Nearness in birth and blood doth but persuade
A nearer nearness in affection. (I.iii.107-11)\textsuperscript{142}

To this cleverly couched pleading for the rightness of their love, Annabella responds with simple sincerity:

... thou hast won
The field, and never fought: what thou hast urged
My captive heart had long ago resolved.
I blush to tell thee,—but I'll tell thee now,—
For every sigh that thou hast spent for me
I have sighed ten; for every tear shed twenty:
And not so much for that I loved, as that
I durst not say I loved, nor scarcely think it.
(I.iii.116-23)\textsuperscript{143}

Byron's knowledge of Ford's work has been earlier established, and it is possible to speculate, on the basis of an analysis of the Byronic Hero, that Byron was as impressed by Annabella's defiance of Soranzo and steadfastness to Giovanni as he was by Giovanni's unshakable faith in his own powers of reasoning

\textsuperscript{141}Ford, 'Tis Pity, pp. 114-15.
\textsuperscript{142}Ibid., p. 99. \textsuperscript{143}Ibid.
or by Ford's utilization of a socially unacceptable theme in this drama.

Byron's characteristic use of nature to highlight and reflect the mood, condition, and action of his characters is strongly reminiscent of the subjective treatment of nature by the English writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Giaour is first presented against a backdrop of darkness, and the final meeting of Selim and Zuleika takes place on a night filled with moaning winds, rolling clouds, and high tides. Darkness veils Gulnare's furtive visits to Conrad in Seyd's prison, her murder of Seyd, and her surreptitious departure from Seyd's castle with Conrad. The nightmare quality of the encounter with an unknown visitant which leaves Lara in a deathlike trance is intensified by the poet's description of the castle's midnight-darkness, broken only by the dim light of a lone lamp in Lara's chamber. On the night of Sir Ezzelin's disappearance, a predawn mist veils the identity of the horseman who bursts from Lara's woods and heaves a cloak-wrapped burden into the dark river that divides the estates of Lara and Otho.

Just as in Byron's poetry, nature is much more than mere ornamentation in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century works considered in this study. The dark mood of Antonio's Revenge is initially established in the first eight lines of the prologue, which place the action in "the rawkish dank of clumsy winter," that, with its "drizzling sleet" and "snarling
gusts," numbs and lays bare the earth and so provides a "pleasing congruence" for the "sullen tragic scene" to be portrayed (Pro.,1-8). The first act begins with the appearance of Piero and Strotzo, bloody from their murder of Feliche. As Piero gloats over the success of his hideous act, the clock strikes twice, and Piero welcomes the hour's blackness as an accessory to his villainy:

'Tis yet dead night, yet all the earth is clutch'd
In the dull leaden hand of snoring sleep;
No breath disturbs the quiet of the air,
No spirit moves upon the breast of earth,
Save howling dog, nightcrows, and screeching owls,
Save meager ghost, Piero, and black thoughts.

(I,i.3-8)

Shortly before Andrugio's ghost appears to Antonio as he stands before his father's tomb, Antonio observes that "the black jades of swart night trot foggy rings / 'Bout heaven's brow" (III.i.1). When the Friar in Bussy D'Ambois summons Behemoth "from the last night's black depth" in order to learn the fate planned for the lovers by Monsieur and Montsurry (IV.ii.77), Behemoth's appearance is heralded by bursts of thunder. After the Friar is murdered by Montsurry, thunder also accompanies the arrival of the Ghost of the Friar to Tamyra, who has now been tortured and stabbed.

144 Marston, Antonio's Revenge, p. 3.
145 Ibid., p. 6.
146 Ibid., p. 41.
147 Chapman, D'Ambois, p. 85.
by her husband (V.iv).  In *The Revenger's Tragedy*, Vindice, sickened by the lust he witnesses in the Duke's household under cover of night, observes that midnight is made for acts of wickedness:

> If any thing be dambd,
> It will be twelue a clock at night; that twelue
> Will never scape;
> It is the Iudas of the howers; wherein,
> Honest salvation is betrayde to sin.

*(I.iii.76-80)*

Vindice chooses the Duke's "un-sunned lodge, / Where-in tis night at noon" for his revenge upon the Duke for Gloriana's death (III.v.20-21). Montferrers' ghost, in *The Atheist's Tragedy*, appears to Charlemont in camp during a black and stormy night to urge Charlemont to return to France and avenge his father's murder (II.vi.24-27), and Charlemont's discovery of his uncle's treachery occurs at midnight in the charnel house of the churchyard in which Montferrers is buried. The grisly nature of the final scene of Massinger's *The Unnatural Combat* is intensified by "the sudden storm and darknesse of the night" that encompasses the tragic action (V.ii.255). Theocrine, after being ravished by Montrevile, is roughly thrust from the castle into the night by

---

150 Ibid., p. 119.
Montrevile's soldiers and dies at her father's feet. The darkness is then filled with a hideous cacophony composed of Malefort's wild grief, Montrevile's fiendish mirth, and the storm's fury, when suddenly Malefort is killed by a flash of lightning that leaves Theocrine's body unscathed.

In Byron's *Manfred*, as in the Renaissance works described above, mood and emotion are matched with somber and fearful aspects of nature. For instance, the wild beauty of the Bernese Alps is an agony to Manfred's empty heart, for, although he longs only for death and oblivion, he is compelled to witness and yet be apart from the throbbing vitality of nature:

Ye toppling crags of ice!
Ye avalanches, whom a breath draws down
In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush me!
I hear ye momently above, beneath,
Crash with a frequent conflict; but ye pass,
And only fall on things that still would live.

\[(M,I.ii.335-40)\]

This passage brings to mind Marlowe's use of nature imagery to mirror and heighten a character's emotional condition. In frenzied pain at Zenocrate's approaching death, Tamburlaine declares that nature's light shall be forever darkened when the fire of Zenocrate's glorious eyes is extinguished

\[153\textit{Works}, \text{p. 482.}\]
\[154\textit{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 482-83.}\]
by death:

Black is the beauty of the brightest day;
The golden ball of heaven's eternal fire
That danc'd with glory on the silver waves,
Now wants the fuel that inflam'd his beams,
And all with faintness and for foul disgrace,
He binds his temples with a frowning cloud,
Ready to darken earth with endless night.
Zenocrate, that gave him light and life,
Whose eyes shot fire from their ivory bowers,
And temper'd every soul with lively heat,
Now by the malice of the angry skies,
Whose jealousy admits no second mate,
Draws in the comfort of her latest breath,
All dazzled with the hellish mists of death.

(II.ii.1-14)

Another aspect of the subjective treatment of nature by Byron and by the Renaissance writers is the extensive employment of metaphors based on nature imagery for the purpose of enhancing character. In *Childe Harold*, the narrator exultantly compares the dark splendor and strength of a thunderstorm over the Alps with the strong loveliness in "the light / Of a dark eye in woman" (CH III, scii. 860-62). As he contemplates the beauties of Rome's decaying glories, his melancholy is deepened by the view of the sun's setting against the city's ruins and the Rhaetian hills:

. . . a paler shadow strews
Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting day
Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away,
The last still loveliest, till--'t is gone--and all is gray. (CH IV, xxix. 257-61)

155 Marlowe, II Tamburlaine, p. 138.
156 Works, p. 49.
157 Ibid., p. 59.
Marlowe's Zenocrate employs a lovely nature simile in her extravagant description of her lord: "As looks the sun through Nilus' flowing stream, / Or when the morning holds him in her arms, / So looks my lordly love, fair Tamburlaine" (III.ii.47-49).

In describing himself as "emperor of the three-fold world," Tamburlaine commands that he be likened "to an almond tree y-mounted high / Upon the lofty and celestial mount / Of evergreen Selinus," whose delicate, white blossoms will each respond to the smallest breath that blows through heaven (IV.iii.118-31). When Chapman's Tamyra becomes fearful of the results of her love for D'Ambois, she compares the onslaught of sin in one's life with the tyranny of a sudden winter's storm:

O, the dangerous siege
Sin lays about us, and the tyranny
He exercises when he hath expugn'd!
Like to the horror of a winter's thunder
Mix'd with a gushing storm that suffer nothing
To stir abroad on earth but their own rages,
Is sin when it hath gathered head above us:
No roof, no shelter can secure us so,
But he will drown our cheeks in fear or woe.

(III.i.11-19)

The tenor and vehicle of the nature metaphors in the epilogue of Faustus and in the last lines of Byron's Parisina are so similar in their depiction of the tragedy of wasted human potential that a parallel reading of the two passages

159 Marlowe, II Tamburlaine, p. 167.
160 Chapman, D'Ambois, p. 43.
is warranted. After the inevitable, storm-heralded outcome of Faustus' prostitution of his intellect, the chorus makes the following proclamation:

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burned is Apollo's laurel bough,
That sometimes grew within this learned man. (Epi.,1-3)\textsuperscript{161}

Although Byron's Azo has other sons after Hugo's death, his heart is haunted by the son whose execution he had ordered, and his life is a wretched procession of empty hours:

The tainted branches of the tree,
    If lopp'd with care, a strength may give,
    By which the rest shall bloom and live
All greenly fresh and wildly free:

    But if the lightning in its wrath,
    The waving boughs with fury scathe,
    The massy trunk the ruin feels,
    And never more a leaf reveals. (P,xx.579-86)\textsuperscript{162}

Another feature that Byron's work shares with that of the early English dramatists is the depiction of a beautiful aspect of nature that often serves to sharpen the reader's reaction to later tragic events. The benevolent aspect of nature, which makes "the very rocks appear to smile" (C,III. xviii.556)\textsuperscript{163} as Conrad and Gulnare arrive at Conrad's island after escaping from Seyd's fort, is in sharp contrast to the empty corridors and chambers that Conrad encounters as he searches his castle for Medora, only to find "that

\textsuperscript{161}Marlowe, Faustus, p. 389.
\textsuperscript{162}Works, p. 402. \textsuperscript{163}Ibid., p. 363.
death with gentler aspect wither'd there" (C,III.xx.604). The beautiful description of the grounds of Lara's estate at midnight also affords a contrast to Lara's ghostly encounter immediately following within the castle's walls:

\[
\text{It was the night, and Lara's glassy stream} \\
\text{The stars are studding, each with imaged beam;} \\
\text{So calm, the waters scarcely seem to stray,} \\
\text{And yet they glide like happiness away;} \\
\text{Reflecting far and fairy-like from high} \\
\text{The immortal lights that live along the sky.} \\
\text{Its banks are fringed with many a goodly tree,} \\
\text{And flowers the fairest that may feast the bee;} \\
\text{Such in her chaplet infant Dian wove,} \\
\text{And Innocence would offer to her love.} \\
\text{These deck the shore; the waves their channel make} \\
\text{In windings bright and mazy like the snake.} \\
\text{All was so still, so soft in earth and air,} \\
\text{You scarce would start to meet a spirit there.} \\
\] 
\text{(L,I.x.155-68)}

In the first two stanzas of Parisina, the love of Hugo and Parisina is in perfect accord with the waterfalls, the flowering shrubs, and the nightingale's song as the two sit together in the Este gardens in the shadow of the night (P,I.ii.1-28). The tone of the narrative quickly darkens, however, and Hugo's execution takes place at twilight, just "before the summer sun shall set, / Which rose upon that heavy day / And mock'd it with his steadiest ray" (P,xvi.408-10). Shortly before Marino Faliero is to sound the bell of St. Mark's as a signal that the conspirators "strike the blow, / Which shall unpeople many palaces" and free

164 Works, p. 364.  
165 Ibid., p. 368.  
166 Ibid., p. 396.  
167 Ibid., p. 400.
Venice from the tyrannical rule of the aristocracy (MF, III. ii. 612-13), the patrician Lioni returns from a festival and seeks to allay an unexplained anxiety that has troubled him all evening by contemplating the still Venetian night through an open lattice. After drinking in the soothing view of moon and stars and placid waters, he speaks his gratitude for nature's solace only moments before the storm of rebellion breaks about his head, shattering not only the peace of this night but of all Venetian life for many days to come:

I thank thee, Night! for thou hast chased away
Those horrid bodements which, amidst the throng,
I could not dissipate; and with the blessing
Of thy benign and quiet influence,
Now will I to my couch, although to rest
Is almost wronging such a night as this.  

(MF, IV. i. 106-11) 169

And as the great bell of St. Mark's tolls the pre-dawn hour, Marino Faliero is arrested and charged with treason before the soft nocturnal "sights and sounds which here pervade / The ocean-born and earth-commanding city" have yet given way to day (MF, IV. i. 103-04).  

Beleses' soliloquy on the sun's setting on the last evening of Sardanapalus' reign forewarns the bloody end of Semiramis' empire:

The sun goes down: methinks he sets more slowly,
Taking his last look of Assyria's empire.
How red he glares amongst those deepening clouds,
Like the blood he predicts. 

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

. . . . . . . . . . 't is the furthest

168 Works, p. 527.  
169 Ibid., p. 529.  
170 Ibid.
Hour of Assyria's years. And yet how calm!
An earthquake should announce so great a fall.
(S,II.i.1-4) 171

The sound of thunder is heard intermittently during the banquet in Sardanapalus' illuminated hall, and suddenly Pania, bloody and dishevelled, breaks into the room and announces to Sardanapalus and his startled guests that the rebelling satraps are storming the palace walls. The fighting continues all night, and by morning the disastrous outcome is obvious to the inhabitants of the palace. Myrrha watches the day break magnificently through the long night's blackness, and, aware that this is probably the last sunrise she will see, she is able to view objectively the ephemeral nature of earthly glories and ambitious passions and to calmly meditate upon the happiness which all men seek but few are wise enough to recognize (S,V.i.1-38). 172

In a way similar to Byron's, Kyd highlights and preludes an episode of violence in The Spanish Tragedy with a reference to a gentle phase of nature in Horatios' invitation to Bel-imperia to accompany him into Hieronimo's garden at twilight:

Now that the night begins with sable wings
To overcloud the brightness of the sun,
And that in darkness pleasures may be done,
Come Bel-imperia, let us to the bower,
And there in safety pass a pleasant hour. (II.iv.1-5) 173

The lovers are then attacked by a group of disguised men, led by Lorenzo, who stab Horatio and leave his body hanging among the flowering shrubs in his father's garden. Nature serves to contrast and intensify a scene of horror in *Antonio's Revenge*. After Piero's murder of Feliche and Andrugio, their ghosts appear to Antonio late at night, crying for revenge. Failing in his efforts to grasp the apparitions, Antonio opens a large bay window and witnesses a terrible night-scene that reflects the horrors of his awesome visitation:

The verge of heaven  
Was ring'd with flames and all the upper vault  
Thick lac'd with flakes of fire; in midst whereof  
A blazing comet shot his threat'ning train  
Just on my face. *(I.ii.115-19)*

However, morning signals a return to a semblance of normalcy in the palace, and Antonio greets the dawn with relief:

Darkness if fled; look, infant morn hath drawn  
Bright silver curtains 'bout the couch of night;  
And now Aurora's horse trots azure rings,  
Breathing fair light about the firmament. *(I.ii.65-68)*

In *Bussy D'Ambois*, Tamyra's invocation to the spirits of night reveals an eager anticipation of her tryst with D'Ambois, but it also contains a sense of foreboding that hints at tragic events yet to come:

Now, all ye peaceful regents of the night,  
Silently gliding exhalations,  
Languishing winds, and murmuring falls of waters,

*Marston, Antonio's Revenge*, p. 15.

All the friends of rest
That ever wrought upon the life of man,
Extend your utmost strengths and this charm'd hour
Fix like the center; make the violent wheels
Of Time and Fortune stand, and great existence
(The Maker's treasury) now not seem to be
To all but my approaching friends and me.
They come, alas, they come! Fear, fear and hope
Of one things, at one instant, fight in me.
(II.ii.108-20)  

One of the most explicit examples of Byron's identifying a protagonist with natural powers, a characteristic which, according to Worringer's theory, may be considered a significant manifestation of the spirit of Gothicism that existed long before Mrs. Radcliffe's day, is the storm episode in The Corsair. On the night of the fourth day of Conrad's imprisonment, a wild storm breaks through the darkness, and, as Conrad listens to the rushing waters outside his prison, "his wild spirit wilder wishes sent, / Roused by the roar of his own element!" (C,III.vii.52-53). Buoyed from despondency by the rolling thunder and slashing lightning, Conrad seeks to embody himself in the storm, and, as it diminishes, his hopes also recede:

Loud sung the wind above; and, doubly loud,
Shook o'er his turret cell the thundercloud;
And flash'd the lightning by the latticed bar,
To him more genial than the midnight star:
Close to the glimmering grate he dragg'd his chain,
And hoped that peril might not prove in vain.

177 See Varma, p. 15.
178 Works, p. 359.
He raised his iron hand to Heaven, and pray'd
One pitying flash to mar the form it made:
His steel and impious prayer attract alike—
The storm roll'd onward, and disdain'd to strike;
Its peal wax'd fainter--ceased--he felt alone,
As if some faithless friend had spurn'd his groan!
C,III.vii.258-69)

In The Two Foscari, when Jacopo Foscari is informed that he again is to be exiled from Venice, he cries out in his despair to the tutelar saints of Venice to send a storm that will lash the ship upon which he is to be carried from Venice until the seamen are forced to give his body to the waves to be washed back upon Venetian soil:

. . . lash up from the deep the Adrian waves,
And waken Auster, sovereign of the tempest!

(TF,IV.i.129-30)

May all the winds of heaven howl down the Gulf,
And tear the vessel, till the mariners,
Appall'd, turn their despairing eyes on me,
As the Phenicians did on Jonah, then
Cast me out from amongst them as an offering
To appease the wave. The billow which destroys me
Will be more merciful than man, and bear me
Dead, but still bear me to a native grave.

(TF,IV.i.149-57)

A striking example by a sixteenth-century dramatist of a character's subjective identification with nature is the scene in The Wounds of Civil War in which Marius, exiled and forsaken, wanders down from the Numidian mountains into a barren desert and speaks of his wretchedness, made more painful by memories of former glories:

179 Works, p. 359.  180 Ibid., p. 617.
Thou that hast wlk'd with troops of flocking friends,  
Now wand'rest 'midst the labyrinth of woes,  
Like to these stretching mountains clad with snow,  
No sunshine of content my thoughts approacheth;  
They find their spring, where winter wrongs my mind;  
They weep their brooks, I waste my cheeks with tears.  
Mountains have peace, where mournful be my years;  
Yet high as they, my thoughts some hopes would borrow,  
But when I count the evening end with sorrow.

And friendly Echo answering to my talks  
Rebounds the accent of my ruth again.  
She, courteous nymph, the woeful Roman pleaseth,  
Else no sorts but beasts my pains appeaseth.  

(III.iv.1-2, 5-6, 9-10, 12-14, 29-32) 181

The same use of nature as backdrop, reflector, and intensifier of man's desolation is continued by young Marius, despairing of his father's welfare, as he and his troops enter the desert in their search for Marius, who has been recalled to Rome by the Senate:

This melancholy desert where we meet  
Resembleth well young Marius' restless thoughts.  
Here dreadful silence, solitary caves,  
No chirping birds with solace singing sweetly  
Are harbored for delight; but from the oak,  
Leaveless and sapless through decaying age,  
The screech-owl chants her fatal boding lays.  
Within my breast, care, danger, sorrow dwells,  
Hope and revenge sit hammering in my heart,  
The baleful babes of angry Nemesis  
Disperse their furious fires upon my soul.  

(III.iv.55-65) 182

In The Spanish Tragedy, before Isabella kills herself after she is driven to insanity by the senseless murder of her son,

181 Lodge, Wounds, p. 47.
182 Ibid., pp. 48-49.
she slashes down the plants and trees in the garden so that this place intended for happiness and love will become as barren and pestilent as her own bereaved, hate-filled heart:

Down with these branches and these loathsome boughs
Of this unfortunate and fatal pine:
Down with them Isabella, rent them up
And burn the roots from whence the rest is sprung:
I will not leave a root, a stalk, a tree,
A bough, a branch, a blossom, nor a leaf,
No, not an herb within this garden plot—
Accursed complot of my misery.
Fruitless for ever may this garden be,
Barren the earth, and blissless whosoever imagines not to keep it unmanur'd!
An eastern wind commix'd with noisome airs
Shall blast the plants and the young saplings,
The earth with serpents shall be pestered,
And passengers, for fear to be infect,
Shall stand aloof, and looking at it, tell
"There, murder'd, died the son of Isabel."
(IV.ii.6-22)

Tourneur's characters also identify with nature and its manifestations. As Vindice completes his vengeance in The Revenger's Tragedy by murdering the Duke's heir while Lussurio and his nobles sit at a banquet table, Vindice hears the sound of thunder and justifies his revenge by remarking that "no power is angry when the lust-ful die; /
When thunder claps, heauen likes the tragedy" (V.iii.63-64).

In The Atheist's Tragedy, Montferrers' murder takes place near a deserted gravel pit late at night, and D'Amville considers the storm that follows the murder a sign that nature approves his deed:

183 Kyd, Spanish Tragedy, p. 39.
184 Tourneur, Revenger's Tragedy, p. 91.
T'is a braue noyse,
And mee thinkes graces our accomplish'd
Project, as a peale of Ordnance
Does a triumph. It speaks encouragement.
Now Nature showes thee how it fauour'd our
Performance; to forbeare this noyse when wee
Set forth, because it should not terrifie
My brothers going home; Which would haue dash'd
Our purpose: To forbeare this lightning
In our passage, least it should ha' warn'd him
O' the pitfall. Then propitious Nature winck'd
At our proceedings; now it doth expresse,
How that forbearance fauour'd our successe.
(II.iv.175-87)\textsuperscript{185}

Again, D'Amville refers to night as the "beauteous Mistresse
of a murderer" (II.iv.204)\textsuperscript{186} and promises to wear her
colors at Montferrers' funeral because it was through her
agencies that the plot's success was assured.

The impulse to Gothicize, in Varma's sense of the term,
is universal; its persistent manifestations in literature
occur among every age and nation. As the old Anglo-Saxon
bards sang of Grendel and his invasion of Heorot, of vast
and mist-enshrouded moors, and of hoar-frosted trees and
black swamp waters, their audiences, like those of Byron and
of the Renaissance authors, became co-creators in the evoca-
tion of a sense of terror-inspired beauty and mystery. The
renewal by the Renaissance writers of literature's contact
with the fertile depths of mystery and primitive emotion was
re-adapted by the late-eighteenth-century authors of Gothic
fiction. The old authors, however, were much nearer the

\textsuperscript{185}Tourneur, \textit{Atheist's Tragedy}, p. 206.

\textsuperscript{186}Ibid., p. 206.
well-springs of Gothicism than were Byron's immediate predecessors; and Byron's poetry is a reflection, refined and markedly Byronic, of course, of the awfulness and grandeur of nature, the barbaric richness of color, the air of dim and sweeping vastness, and the passions verging on the demonic that permeate the earlier British literature.
CHAPTER VII

THE NATURE OF THE BYRONIC HERO'S WILL

The major emphasis of this examination of the influence upon the Byronic Hero of certain Renaissance literary protagonists has thus far been upon external manifestations of character. Although the parallels discussed in the previous two chapters are important in establishing this influence, the most significant resemblance between the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century hero and the Byronic Hero is an inflexible tenacity of purpose. The Byronic Hero's predominant trait is his indomitable will, and, in each of the works by the Renaissance writers included in this study, the protagonist is impelled by a similarly intransigent volition. Moreover, there is in the obduracy of Byron's heroes an interrelatedness of Promethean and Satanic elements that also appears in the Renaissance protagonists.

These Promethean and Satanic elements in Byron's poetry have not gone unnoticed by critics. Praz observes that Milton endowed his Satan with all the defiance, unrepentance, sadness, and charm of Aeschylus' Prometheus. He then states that Byron perfected in his heroes this glorious rebel, descended from Milton's Satan, who in turn is

1Praz, p. 57.
descended from Aeschylus' Prometheus. Eliot assesses what he terms Byron's "peculiar diabolism" as the result of an admixture of Shelley's Promethean attitude, the Romantic passion for liberty, and Byron's own image of himself as a man of action. In Byron's poetry as well as in his life, Eliot continues, this diabolism emerges as a uniting of Promethean and Satanic attitudes. Somewhat similar to Eliot's position is Knight's theory that Byron, because of his loathing of tyranny, instinctively associated himself with Prometheus and Satan and so endowed his heroes with his own Promethean and Satanic rebellion against all oppression. Although Bertrand Russell does not explicitly refer to Satan or Prometheus in his comments on the "Byronic variety" of Romantic hero, his conclusions are akin to those stated above. Because the strongest passions of this violent, solitary, and rebellious hero are usually destructive, Russell says, he is invariably "an anarchic rebel or a conquering tyrant."

The traditional concepts of both Prometheus and Satan had undergone significant alterations by Byron's time.


Thorslev says that the meanings of Satanic and Promethean had somehow merged by the beginning of the nineteenth century in such a way that either could represent the apotheosis of the Romantic hero in British literature.\(^6\) Prometheus had long been symbolic of man's resistance to tyranny, but Milton's Satan was not generally interpreted as a sympathetic rebel until the eighteenth century was well under way.\(^7\) Prior to the Romantic interpretation of Satan as the hero of Milton's epic, he was generally regarded as the vile representative of evil, the embodiment of all things antithetical to Christianity. A poetic defense or exaltation of Satan would have elicited general outrage and would have been denounced as blasphemous. However, when the Romantic mind encountered Milton's Satan, a new image emerged bearing small resemblance to the traditional concept of the devil. By the late eighteenth century, Thorslev says, Satan had evolved from a fiend into an increasingly sympathetic character, whose sins were easily forgiven because of his inherent sublimity.\(^8\)

By Byron's day, both Satan and Prometheus represented the ultimate in heroic sublimity, dignity, defiance, and courage. Thorslev further points out that the Romantic concept of Prometheus as mankind's defiant savior comes almost

\(^6\)Thorslev, p. 108. \(^7\)Ibid., p. 110. \(^8\)Ibid., p. 109.
entirely from Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*. The Aeschylean Prometheus, however, is a far cry from the Prometheus extolled by the Romantics, being distinguished more by his long-suffering endurance than by heroic defiance. The Prometheus in Hesiod's *Theogony*, who is described by such words as "crafty," "cunning," and "crooked," is still less a Romantic hero. Hesiod's Zeus, on the other hand, is a benevolent but sternly just ruler whose "dear heart" is sorely wounded and gravely angered by wily Prometheus' perfidious theft of fire as a gift to man. In Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, however, Prometheus is man's benefactor in many ways. He not only gives mankind a "flame of all-fashioning fire," but he makes "men cease from looking forward to death" by making "a home for vague hopes in their breasts." He also leads men forth from their dark ignorance into a knowledge of "the ways of the stars," the science of numbers, the arts of writing and memory, and the use of animals and of such contrivances as boats. Because of his kindness to man, Prometheus incurs the wrath of Zeus and is consigned to eternal torment, lashed with "adamantine bonds" onto barren rocks.

11 Ibid., p. 51.
12 Ibid., p. 52.
The Promethean concepts in Byron's poetry, however, are nearer to those of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, published in 1820, than to those of Aeschylus' drama. In his preface, Shelley notes the resemblance of Milton's Satan to Aeschylus' Prometheus. He then states that he considers Prometheus "a more poetical character than Satan," because Prometheus not only possesses the courage, majesty, and defiant opposition to omnipotent power that are displayed by Satan but is "in addition exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement" that mar "the Hero of *Paradise Lost*." Shelley's immortal Titan is traditionally unvanquished and unyielding, but, in spite of his unjust punishment at Jove's hands, he wishes "no living thing to suffer pain" (I.305).

The unalloyed Luciferian concepts discernible in such Byronic works as *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, and *Parisina* are chiefly marked by the absence of this Promethean humanitarianism. The distinction made by Shelley is seen also in Byron in the sense that Milton's Satan, unlike Prometheus, feels no benevolence toward mankind and in fact is made more aware of his own wretched estate by the happiness he finds God's new creatures on earth enjoying.


15 Ibid., p. 214.
Consequently, Satan's aim, vastly unlike that of Prometheus, is to reduce mankind to a state of misery equal to his own, "for only in destroying I find ease / To my relentless thoughts" (IX.119-23,130-31).\(^1\) If he thus either can destroy mankind or, better yet, induce man to work his own dissolution, Satan is certain that to him "shall be the glory sole among / Th' infernal Powers, in one day to have marr'd / What he Almighty styl'd, six Nights and Days" (IX.132-37).\(^2\) Several of Byron's heroes, like Milton's Satan, are dominated by a desire for revengeful cruelty. However, the inhumane acts of these Byronic characters invariably result in an intensification of their unhappiness, which is also characteristic of the eternal misery of Satan. Byron's Giaour commits himself to the annihilation of Hassan and his estate, although, as a result of the accomplishment of his purpose, the Giaour becomes a wretched, guilt-haunted recluse. In The Bride of Abydos, Giaffir is relentless in his destruction of Selim; Giaffir's act is robbed of triumph, however, because Zuleika dies as a result of her father's vengefulness. Azo, in Parisina, is responsible for his son's execution and his wife's mysterious fate, but because of his unyielding inhumanity, Azo's remaining years are empty and miserable.

\(^1\) Milton, Paradise Lost, p. 381.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 382.
Although based on separate archetypal entities, these Promethean and Luciferian elements appear variously in the Byronic Hero as convergent, parallel, and disparate. The concept of the suffering, unconquerable Titan, for example, blends at times in the Byronic Hero's unremitting defiance and perseverance of will with that of the rebellious, intractable fallen angel of Paradise Lost. Satan commits his "unconquerable Will, / And study of revenge, immortal hate, / And courage never to submit or yield" to eternal warfare against the "grand Foe, / Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy / Sole reigning holds the Tyranny of Heav'n" (I.106-08,122-24).

And, less fiercely but in the same vein, Aeschylus' Prometheus says, "I hate all the gods / Who, once well served by me, grossly abuse me." Prometheus adds that though the tyrant Zeus, who is "in all matters shewn / Merciless," may eternally continue his tortures, but "bend me he will not." In Byron's "Prometheus" also, the enduring will of the suffering Titan opposes "the inexorable Heaven, / And the deaf tyranny of Fate, / The ruling principle of Hate" and "even in torture can descry / Its own concent'red recompense, / Triumphant where it dares defy" (18-20,56-58). As the following analysis will show, the

18 Milton, Paradise Lost, p. 214.
19 Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound, p. 93.
20 Ibid., pp. 29, 36. 21 Works, p. 191.
disaster that the Byronic Hero's action frequently brings upon his followers is often as calamitous as that suffered by Satan's compliant host of doomed angels in *Paradise Lost*, while, at the same time, the Byronic Hero's compassion for these beings whose destruction he implements is sometimes akin to Prometheus' concern for mankind. Furthermore, it is this Promethean trait of humanitarianism, completely alien to Milton's Satan, that is usually responsible for the Byronic Hero's downfall.

Because the overlay of Promethean and Luciferian elements in Byron's concept of the hero is most fully expressed in his attitude toward Napoleon, an examination of this Promethean-Luciferian concept will help prepare the reader for a comparison of the Byronic and the Renaissance Satanic-Promethean hero. As early as his years at Harrow, Byron had been an enthusiastic admirer of Napoleon and his Titanic aspirations. This youthful admiration is apparent in a letter to Moore in which Byron writes that he almost wishes that Bonaparte would conquer "all countries but this." In a journal entry two months later, Byron expresses growing disappointment in Napoleon, whose statue the young poet had physically defended at Harrow against the jeers and threats of destruction by "the rascally time-servers" there: I am sure when I fought for his bust at school, I did not think

---

he would run away from himself." Byron's disillusionment with his idol was overwhelming on 8 April 1814 when he learned that his "poor little pagod, Napoleon" had been "pushed off his pedestal" and that the debacle was "his own fault." When news of Napoleon's abdication arrived the next day, Byron was stunned: "Napoleon Buonaparte has abdicated the throne of the world. 'Excellent well.' Methinks Sylla did better; for he revenged and resigned in the height of his sway, red with the slaughter of his foes--the finest instance of glorious contempt of the rascals upon record. . . . I am utterly bewildered and confounded. . . . I think I, even I (an insect compared to this creature), have set my life on casts not a millionth part of this man's. . . . Alas! this imperial diamond hath a flaw in it and is now hardly fit to stick in a glazier's pencil." The final line of this entry, however, indicates Byron's lifelong adherence to his concept of Napoleon's inherent greatness: "But I won't give him up even now; though all his admirers have, 'like thanes, fallen from him.'"

In his "Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte," written the day after this journal entry, Byron expresses his bitter disappointment in nineteen stanzas, beginning with the disdainful

---

23 Moore, p. 201. Journal entry for 17 November 1813.
lines "'T is done--but yesterday a King! / And arm'd with Kings to strive-- / And now thou art a nameless thing: / So abject--yet alive!" He then derides Napoleon's ignominious surrender: "To die a prince--or live a slave-- / Thy choice is most ignobly brave!" (i.1-3; v.44-45). The Promethean-Luciferian frame of reference of Byron's regard for Napoleon is obvious in the sixteenth stanza:

... like the thief of fire from heaven,
Wilt thou withstand the shock?
And share with him, the unforgiven,
His vulture and his rock!
Foredoom'd by God--by man accurst,
And that last act, though not thy worst,
The very Fiend's arch mock;
He in his fall preserved his pride,
And, if a mortal, had as proudly died! (xvi.136-44)

Less than two years later, Byron's acute disappointment that France's "Eagle, whose gaze in that moment was blasted," failed to soar on "with eyes fix'd on victory's sun" appears appreciably lessened in his poem "Napoleon's Farewell," but, even so, in the third canto of Childe Harold (1816), the poet's concept of Napoleon at Waterloo is definitely Luciferian rather than Promethean:

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of men,
Whose spirit antithetically mixt
One moment of the Mightiest, and again
On little objects with like firmness fixt,
Extreme in all things! (CH,III.xxxvi.316-20)

27Ibid., p. 181.  
28Ibid., p. 186.  
29Ibid., p. 40.
Struggling to maintain a vestige of Napoleon's wavering
Promethean image, the poet continues:

If, like a tower upon a headlong rock,
Thou hadst been made to stand or fall alone,
Such scorn of man had help'd to brave the shock;
But men's thoughts were the steps which paved thy throne,
Their admiration thy best weapon shone.

(CH,III.xlii.361-65)

Then, ruefully realistic, Byron diagnoses the Luciferian
source of Napoleon's failure:

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
And there hath been thy bane; there is a fire
And motion of the soul which will not dwell
In its own narrow being, but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

(CH,III.xlii.370-79)

However, in a conversation with Lady Blessington a number of
years later, Byron's earlier censure of Napoleon is softened
by a reflective comment that mirrors the enduring concept of
the heroic elements of both Prometheus and Satan with which
Byron had always attempted to endow Napoleon:

I find fault, and quarrel with Napoleon, as a
lover does with the trifling faults of his
mistress, from excessive liking, which tempts
me to desire that he had been all faultless;
and, like the lover, I return with renewed
fondness after each quarrel. Napoleon was a
grand creature, and though he was hurled from
his pedestal, after having made thrones his
footstool, his memory still remains, like the
colossal statue of the Memnon, though cast down

30 Works, p. 41.
31 Ibid.
from its seat of honor, still bearing the ineffaceable traces of grandeur and sublimity, to astonish future ages.\textsuperscript{32}

Strong-willed heroes (and villains) have, of course, always existed in literature, but the \textit{pervasiveness} of a hero-type characterized by a blending of the Promethean and Luciferian is peculiar to Byron's works and to literature of the Renaissance—particularly the drama. The comparisons that follow will demonstrate that this resemblance can hardly be accidental.

One quality shared by both the Romantic hero and the Renaissance hero is inflexibility of purpose. The relentlessness of the Giaour's vengeful pursuit and destruction of Hassan is equalled by the vigor of Selim's revolt against Giaffir's emasculating taunts and base cruelty; in Conrad's raid upon Seyd's heavily-fortified palace; in Lara's leadership of the peasant army against Otho's aristocratic forces; and in the bitter denunciation Hugo addresses to his father in Azo's chamber of state after Azo has declared that Hugo's death is to be "crime's reward" (P,xii.208).\textsuperscript{33} Manfred's goal is surcease through total oblivion from the anguish of consciousness made unbearable by searing remorse. Although Marino Faliero's ambition to liberate Venice from a corrupt aristocracy's misrule may not be secondary to his intractable

\textsuperscript{32}Blessington, pp. 205-06.

\textsuperscript{33}Works, p. 398.
determination to exact reparation for the offense to his honor afforded by the Council of Ten, Faliero is totally un-deviating in his purposeful actions against the Venetian nobility. Sardanapalus becomes as indomitable in his milit- tant leadership against the rebelling satrapies as he has been in his previous determination that his reign be remem- bered as one of peace and beauty. There is no wavering in the resolve of Francis Foscari to serve Venice by presiding over his son's torturous examination with disinterested dignity and fortitude befitting the ruler of the state. According to Steffan's analysis, Cain's devotion to Adah and his children is sublimated to an aggressive intellectual aspiration. This ambition compels Cain to reach for mortally unattainable goals and so contains the seeds of inescapable disaster. The will of Byron's Lucifer, in Steffan's opinion, is motivated by a series of paradoxical aims. For instance, Lucifer proffers arcane enlightenment but withholds the ultimate truth which Cain covets; the master rebel professes great concern for mankind's plight, but his actions prove him selfishly indifferent to human suffering and incapable of altruistic love; finally, Lucifer claims also to be an arrogant champion of liberty and an opponent of tyranny, but he proves himself an absolute "paragon of negation." Regardless of the reader's individual interpretation of this

34 Steffan, pp. 36-37. 35 Ibid., p. 60.
complex character's many facets, clearly Lucifer's overall aspiration is to excite in Cain a state of mind that will lead to tragic dissension among the ancestors of mankind.

The relentless force of the aspiration of an "unquench'd soul" also drives each Renaissance protagonist to "aspire / Beyond the fitting medium of desire;" impelled by a "fever at the core, / Fatal to him who bears it, to all who ever bore" (CH, IV.cxxi.1089; III.xlii.373-74, 377-78).36 Once resolved upon his course of vengeful retribution for Antonio's murder, Kyd's Hieronimo is no more to be deterred from his purpose than are Lodge's Sulla and Marius from their unremitting conflict over the leadership of Rome. For Marlowe's Tamburlaine, "the thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown" (II.vii.12)37 is symbolic of his aspiration to soar above kings and gods. Although scholars seem generally to agree on the nature of Tamburlaine's grandiose aim, the driving force behind Faustus' self-destructive actions is less easily definable. Leo Kirschbaum says that Faustus' primary aim is the gratification of appetite;38 Kristian Smidt suggests that Faustus' will is dominated by intellectual curiosity that demands the ultimate fulfillment of

---

36 Works, pp. 73, 41.
37 Marlowe, I Tamburlaine, p. 79.
supernatural knowledge; and Sherman Hawkins proposes that Faustus' purpose is to become as God through the attainment of knowledge. Although in Antonio and Mellida Marston's Antonio is dominated by his passion for Mellida, his purpose in Antonio's Revenge is to avenge his father's murder by the most hideous means he can devise.

In Raymond B. Waddington's opinion, because Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois has dedicated himself to establishing his preëminence in the eyes of the world as a courtier, he is determined to rise to greatness in the fields of love and honor; however, the findings of this study are more in agreement with Waith's observation on Bussy's determined resolve to assert his intrinsic freedom of will and the superiority of his virtue to man-made laws and the world's opinion. Both Millar MacLure and Ennis Rees regard Chapman's D'Ambois and Duke of Byron as overreachers in their aspirations. Coriolanus shares with most of the


42 Waith, p. 92.

characters in this group an inflexibility of will that is at once his greatest strength and his greatest fault. To the dogged resolve to adhere to his principles which he displays in the first three acts of the drama is added the relentless determination to destroy the city for which he formerly would gladly have given his life. Every thought and act of Tourneur's Vindice is aimed at the consummation of his revenge upon the Duke and his evil household; and Charlemont is equally determined to discover the identity of his father's murderer, although the disclosure will likely result in his own death.

B. J. Layman praises "the iron will" of Vittoria Corombona that Webster displays so brilliantly in the trial scene in The White Devil, in which Vittoria magnificently defies the court of the virulent Cardinal Monticelso; and Sensabaugh says that the defiant will of Webster's White Devil is almost as heroic as that of Milton's Satan when he first steps forth upon hell's marl. Webster's Bosola, described by Alexander W. Allison as a "brilliantly drawn


ambivalent character,"\textsuperscript{46} is as unaltering in his final efforts to embrace the cause of Isabella and Antonio as he is in his earlier machinations against them while he is furthering the evil causes of Isabella's brothers. Neither thoughts of personal safety nor of ties of blood can sway Massinger's Malefort junior from his bloody confrontation with his father. Similarly, Ford's Giovanni is driven by his wilful passion to effect not only his own destruction but that of his beloved sister. Although both Winston Weathers and Lawrence Babb regard Ford's Perkin Warbeck as a study of mental disorder resulting from an excess of melancholy humour,\textsuperscript{47} the tenacity of Warbeck's will to accomplish that which is obviously impossible from the beginning is similar to that of the Byronic Hero.

The most obvious of the intermingled Promethean and Luciferian elements in the heroes of Byron and in the Renaissance writers is their rebellious defiance. One aspect of this defiance is that it is usually against a lawfully established or conventionally accepted institution or individual. Byron's Hassan, Giaffir, Seyd, and Azo are cruelly


despotic, but the actions of each are, nonetheless, within legally or traditionally prescribed bounds. On the surface, the Giaour's annihilation of Hassan and his estate is, of course, as much a revolt against tyranny as is Conrad's attack on Seyd's palace; Selim's piratical raids on other rulers similar to Giaffir; and Hugo's usurpation of his father's marriage bed. However, the rebellion of each of these characters is a bid against authority, as is the dedication of Marston's Antonio to the destruction of Piero Sforza, a villainous tyrant who is nonetheless the titular ruler of Venice.

There are numerous examples of defiance against unjust but legally constituted authority in the works of Byron and of the Renaissance dramatists. After the conspiracy of Byron's Marino Faliero has been discovered, Doge Faliero will "deny nothing--defend nothing" and will ask nothing "but silence for myself / And sentence from the court" (MF,V.i.296,297-98). When Benintende, the Chief of the Ten, reminds Marino Faliero of "the torture" (MF,V.i.300), the Doge replies, "if you will / Add the corporeal rack, you may: these limbs / Will yield with age to crushing iron; but / There's that within my heart shall strain your engines" (V.i.302-05).48 The attitude of Byron's Doge is similar to the defiant refusal of Kyd's Hieronimo to respond to the Spanish

48Works, p. 542.
king's questioning. When the king orders that Hieronimo be tortured, the old Admiral, unquailing, retorts that physical torment holds no terror for him now that his heart is "eas'd" by his avenging of his son's murder (IV.iv.190). And only moments before he delivers his coup de grace, Hieronimo triumphantly cries, "First take my tongue and afterwards my heart!" (IV.iv.190,191). Similar is the defiant assertion of Byron's Manfred to the malevolent Spirits that "the Promethean spark, / The lightning of my being, is as bright, / Pervading, and far darting as your own, / And shall not yield to yours, though coop'd in clay!" (M,I.i.154-57).

Chapman's D'Ambois might have continued in the royal regard as King Henry's "eagle" (III.ii.20) had he not disregarded the sanction of marriage in his relationship with the Count of Montsurry's wife. D'Ambois, however, has a great appetite for all the adventures that life affords, and he, like Byron's Giaour, prefers death at the height of his manhood to a mundane, routine existence:

I'd rather be the thing that crawls
Most noxious o'er a dungeon's walls,
Than pass my dull, unvarying days,
Condemn'd to meditate and gaze. (G,990-93)

49 Kyd, Spanish Tragedy, p. 118.
50 Works, p. 480.
51 Chapman, D'Ambois, p. 49.
52 Works, p. 320.
Shortly before D'Ambois dies from a fatal pistol wound, his comment that his death defines life as "nothing but a courtier's breath" (V.iv.84) might appropriately have been concluded with the Giaour's following words:

Yet death I have not fear'd to meet;  
And in the field it had been sweet,  
Had danger woo'd me on to move 
The slave of glory, not of love. (G,1008-11)

The Duke of Byron's revolt against Henry IV, whom Rees considers Chapman's finest portrait of an ideal ruler, is strikingly like that of Milton's Satan against God. In his first speech, Byron proclaims his superiority and his aspirations, and asserts that in his heart "this shall be written: 'Yet 'twas high and right'" (I.ii.44). After his treason is discovered and he is imprisoned, the Duke of Byron scornfully asks whether it is "possible the King should be so vain / To think he can shake me with the fear of death? / Or make me apprehend he intends it? / Thinks he to make his finest men his clouds?" (V.iii.38-41) Thus, the Duke of Byron is ultimately defeated because he, like the hero of Byron's The Corsair, is "too firm to yield, and far too proud to stoop, / Doom'd by his very virtues for a dupe" (C,I.xi.255-56). In fact, both Chapman's Duke of Byron

53 Chapman, D'Ambois, p. 111.  
54 Works, p. 320.  
55 Rees, p. 52.  
56 Chapman, Byron's Conspiracy, p. 161.  
57 Chapman, Byron's Tragedy, p. 259.  
58 Works, p. 342.
and D'Ambois are, like the Giaour, men who characteristically would consider it far "better to sink beneath the shock / Than moulder piecemeal on the rock!" (G,969-70). 59

Webster's Vittoria Corombona is assuredly guilty of most of the charges brought against her in the court presided over by the virulent Cardinal Monticelso. However, she is not a villainess, and one must agree with both the French Ambassador's comment that "shee hath lived ill" (III. ii.19) 60 and that of the English Ambassador that "shee hath a brave spirit" (III.ii.28). 61 The bravado of her defense is at its defiant best in the brilliant counterattack Vittoria hurls at Monticelso after his "cursed accusation." Her scorn of the wicked intention that pervades the court before which Vittoria is arraigned and convicted is explicit in her statement "Find mee but guilty, sever head from body: / Weele part good frendes: I scorn to hould my life / At yours or any mans intreaty, Sir" (III.ii.22,25-27). 62 Vittoria's defiance is undiminished when she is sentenced to a "house of convertites," a place of confinement for penitent whores, as she makes the following retort to the Cardinal:

It shal not be a house of convertites--
My minde shall make it honester to mee
Then the Popes Pallace, and more peaceable
Then thy soule, though thou art a Cardinall;

59 Works, p. 319.
60 Webster, White Devil, p. 258.
61 Ibid., p. 259.  
62 Ibid.
Know this, and let it somewhat raise your spight,
Through darkenesse Diamonds spred their ritchest light. 
(III.ii.16-21)\textsuperscript{63}

And she might well have said, as did Byron's Manfred to the evil Spirit, "I do defy ye; / Nor will I hence, while I have earthly breath / To breathe my scorn upon ye" (M,III.iv.359-64).\textsuperscript{64}

Bitterness toward the tyrannical cruelty of one in authority, which transforms the natural attitude of filial obedience "to rebellious rage and insolent pride" (II.i.133-34),\textsuperscript{65} results in Malefort junior's fatal duel with his father in Massinger's \textit{The Unnatural Combat}. The words of Byron's Hugo to his father are appropriate in Malefort junior's case when one considers the hidden crime for which Massinger's protagonist seeks retribution: "My crime seems worst to human view, / But God must judge between us two!" (P,xiii.316-17).\textsuperscript{66} The conviction of Ford's Perkin Warbeck of his right to wrest the crown of England from Henry VII is a further example of defiant revolt against traditional authority. Even after Henry captures and imprisons Warbeck, however, Warbeck's defiance, like that of Byron's Conrad, is majestically intact: "Still in his stern and self-collected

\textsuperscript{63}\textit{Webster}, \textit{White Devil}, p. 258.

\textsuperscript{64}\textit{Works}, p. 496.

\textsuperscript{65}\textit{Massinger}, \textit{Unnatural Combat}, p. 79.

\textsuperscript{66}\textit{Works}, p. 399.
mien / A conqueror's more than captive's air is seen" (C,II. viii.300-01). Coriolanus, accused of being a traitor to his country, is indeed justified in his anger and outrage toward the people of Rome. In a final tirade to the agents of his banishment, he asserts that "he would not buy / Their mercy at the price of one fair word, / Nor check my courage for what they can give" (III.iii.90-92). Byron's Marino Faliero, also convicted of treason against the state, says with similar defiance that he "would not take / A life eternal, granted at the hands / Of wretches, from whose monstrous villainies / I sought to free the groaning nations!" (MF,V.i.396-99).

Although their motives are unquestionably selfish and evil, the Duke of Calabria and the Cardinal represent the traditional heads of Isabella's family in Webster's The Duchess of Malfi. Yet Isabella defiantly ignores her brothers' command that she not marry: "Must I, like a slave-borne Russian, / Account it praise to suffer tyranny?" (III. v.90-91). However, "since not to sink beneath, is something still" (C,III.vi.243), as Byron says of Conrad in

67. works, p. 351.
68. Shakespeare, Coriolanus, p. 1297.
69. works, p. 543.
70. Webster, Duchess, p. 87.
71. works, p. 359.
Seyd's prison, the Duchess of Malfi wins a mental victory despite the incessant horrors visited upon her; she maintains her dignity, and, more amazingly, her sanity. The nature of Isabella's enduring defiance is unmistakably like that of Byron's Prometheus, whose "silent suffering, and intense" exemplifies all such individuals who "can feel of pain, / The agony they do not show, / The suffocating sense of woe, / Which speaks but in its loneliness" (6, 8-11). When Bosola arrives to make Isabella prisoner at the order of her brothers, she says, "... come whither you please: I am arm'd 'gainst misery: / Bent to all swaies of the Oppressors will. / There's no deepe Valley, but neere some great hill" (III.v.167-69).

The quietly firm resistance of the Duchess of Malfi is unlike the fiery defiance of Byron's Marina in The Two Foscari, who forces her way into the "terrific chamber" of the Ten to tend her husband's tortured body (TF,I.i.179):

Despair defies even despotism: there is
That in my heart would make its way through hosts
With levell'd spears; and think you a few jailors
Shall put me from my path? Give me, then, way.
(TF,I.i.267-70)

The attitude of Jacopo Foscari, on the other hand, is reminiscent of that of Webster's Isabella. During his ordeal in the Chamber, he cries out only twice, "and those two

Works, p. 191.  
Works, p. 598.  
Webster, Duchess, p. 89.  
Ibid., p. 599.
shrieks were not in supplication, / But wrung from pangs" 
(TF,I.i.339-40). Before Marina informs Jacopo of the Council's decision that he is to be returned to Candia, the younger Foscari, like the Duchess of Malfi, is armed against his misery in his dark dungeon:

My doom is common, many are in dungeons,  
But none like mine, so near their father's palace;  
But then my heart is sometimes high, and hope  
Will stream along those moted rays of light  
Peopled with dusty atoms which afford  
Our only day. (TF,III.i.98-103)

After Jacopo learns of his banishment, however, "his sole regret" like that of Byron's Conrad, is "the life he still possesst" (C,II.viii.287).

The attitude of the Byronic Hero toward death, which is an intrinsic part of his Promethean and Luciferian defiance of all tyrannical authority, is also an inheritance from the Renaissance literary characters. The words of Byron's Giaour, for instance, are a reflection of the stance toward death of Chapman's D'Ambois and Duke of Byron, Shakespeare's Coriolanus, Tourneur's Charlemont, Webster's Vittoria Corombona, and Ford's Giovanni and Warbeck:

Death is but what the haughty brave,  
The weak must bear, the wretch must crave;  
Then let Life go to him who gave:  
I have not quail'd to danger's brow  
When high and happy—need I now? (G,1024-28)

76 Works, p. 600. 77 Ibid., p. 609. 78 Ibid., p. 351. 79 Ibid., p. 320.
To Chapman's Duke of Byron, "Death is nothing; what can you say more?" (V.iv.45); and, although Shakespeare gives Coriolanus no death speech, Coriolanus' disdain of a life in which a man must debase his integrity is evident in the statement that "better it is to die, better to starve, / Than crave the hire which first we do deserve" (II.iii.120-21). As Charlemont, in Tourneur's The Atheist's Tragedy, leaps upon the scaffold prepared for his execution, he explains his fearlessness of death to D'Amville:

To shew thee with what light respect,
I value Death and thy insulting pride;
Thus like a warlike Nauie on the Sea,
Bound for the conquest of some wealthie land,
Pass'd through the stormie troubles of this life;
And now arriu'd upon the armed coast;
In expectation of the victorie,
Whose honour lies beyond this exigent;
Through mortall danger with an actiue spirit,
Thus I aspire to vndergoe my death. (V.ii.135-44)

Webster's Vittoria shows the same scorn in her words to Lodovico before her murder: "Tell thee what, / I will not in my death shed one base teare, / Or if looke pale, for want of blood, not feare" (V.vi.11-13). And to the assassins who fatally wound him, Ford's Giovanni says "I thank thee; thou hast done for me / But what I would have

80 Chapman, Byron's Tragedy, p. 266.
81 Shakespeare, Coriolanus, p. 1287.
82 Tourneur, Atheist's Revenge, p. 251.
done on myself" (V.vi.114-16). Death to Ford's Warbeck is "but a sound; a name of air; / A minute's storm, or not so much" (V.iii.216-17).

Similarly, in Parisina, Azo is reminded by Selim that he has no dread of death, "for thou hast seen me by thy side / All redly through the battle ride" (P.xiii.234-36).

And the Giaour, in the spirit of Chapman's D'Ambois and Duke of Byron, says "I could not whine nor sigh, / I knew but to obtain or die. / I die--but first I have possess'd. / And come what may, I have been blest" (G,1112-15). In Byron's Marino Faliero, Israel Bertruccio's speech to the Doge on the glory of death for a noble cause is applicable to each of the Renaissance heroes who dies for his convictions:

They never fail who die
In a great cause: the block may soak their gore;
Their heads may sodden in the sun; their limbs
Be strung to city gates and castle walls--
But still their spirit walks abroad. Though years
Elapse, and others share as dark a doom,
They but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts
Which overpower all others, and conduct
The world at last to freedom. (MF,II.ii.606-14)

There is an interesting parallel in the death scenes of Chapman's D'Ambois and of Byron's Francis Foscari. When D'Ambois receives his fatal wound and realizes he is dying,

84 Ford, 'Tis Pity, p. 161.
85 Ford, Warbeck, p. 426.
86 Works, p. 399.
87 Ibid., p. 320.
88 Ibid., p. 517.
he chooses to die like an emperor, standing. Refusing Tamyra's assistance as he struggles to his feet, D'Ambois declares that he, unlike Vespasian, will stand alone as he dies:

Nay, without help, in which I will exceed him;
For he died splinted with his chamber grooms.
Prop me, true sword, as thou hast ever done!
The equal thought I bear of life and death
Shall make me faint on no side; I am up;
Here like a Roman statue I will stand
Till death hath made me marble. (V.iv.91-97)

In The Two Foscari, Senator Barbarigo, perceiving that Francis Foscari looks deathly ill as he prepares to leave the Ducal palace to the successor named by the Ten, pleads with him to "lean upon us." The Doge's reply, only a moment before he dies, is "No! A sovereign should die standing!" (TF,V.i.306)

Closely related to the attitude of the Byronic Hero and some of the Renaissance heroes toward death is refusal of religious succor in their most desperate moments. When the Bishop commands Chapman's Duke of Byron to "now resign / Your sensual powers entirely to your soul" shortly before Byron's execution, for instance, the Duke's attitude is explicit in his response (V.iv.24):

Let me alone in peace,
And leave my soul to me, whom it concerns;

89 Chapman, D'Ambois, p. 111.
90 Works, p. 625.
91 Chapman, Byron's Tragedy, p. 265.
You have no charge of it; I feel her free;  
How she doth rouse and like a falcon stretch  
Her silver wings, as threatening Death with death;  
At whom I joyfully will cast her off.

I [being] a [large] globe, and a little earth,  
Am seated like the earth, betwixt both the heavens,  
That if I rise, to heaven I rise; what stronger faith  
Hath any of your souls?

I will not die  
Like to a clergyman; but like the captain  
That pray'd on horseback, and with sword in hand,  
Threaten'd the sun, commanding it to stand;  
These are but ropes of sand. (V. iv. 25-31, 44-49, 50-53)

A similar attitude toward death is expressed by the dying Giovanni in Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. In reply to the Cardinal's order that Giovanni consider his sinful life and its fatal end and thus pray for mercy, Giovanni says that he is finding the mercy he seeks in his death. The Cardinal again insists that Giovanni must "strive yet to cry to Heaven," but Giovanni, ignoring the Cardinal completely, realizes that his last minute has come and welcomes death as "a guest long looked for." With his final breath, Giovanni asks only that, wherever he goes, he may "enjoy this grace, / Freely to view my Annabella's face" (V. vi. 121, 123, 125-26).

When Ford's Urswick, Chaplain to King Henry VII, tells Perkin Warbeck to pity his soul even though he will not save his body by confessing his treachery, Warbeck refuses even to acknowledge the Chaplain's presence (V. iii. 81-82).

92 Chapman, Byron's Tragedy, p. 265.
93 Ford, 'Tis Pity, p. 162.
94 Ford, Warbeck, p. 422.
The actions of four of Byron's protagonists reflect this same basic attitude. When Conrad steels himself to face torture and death in Seyd's prison, he will make no claim on God's intercession because of his recollection that in his youth he forsook God: "I have no thought to mock his throne with prayer / Wrung from the coward crouching of despair" (C,II.xiv.480-81). Although the Giaour is not ungrateful to the Friar who offers spiritual assistance at the close of the Giaour's confession, the grief of the Giaour "looks not to priesthood for relief," and he prefers that his "soul's estate" remain "in secret guess":

Waste not thy orison, despair
Is mightier than thy pious prayer:
I would not, if I might, be blest;
I want no paradise, but rest. (G,1206-08,1266-69)

When Lara is dying from the wound delivered by Otho, someone proffers "the absolving cross" in order that Lara might "touch the holy bead / Of which his parting soul might own the need"; but Lara, with a disdainful eye, simply smiles as he looks upon the cross he mutely refuses (L,II.xix.477-81). In Manfred, the Chamois Hunter, sensing Manfred's despair, makes two attempts to persuade him to turn to religion for surcease. To the Chamois Hunter's urging that he seek "the aid of holy men, and heavenly patience," Manfred replies that such words are for "mortals of a dust like thine,— / I am

\[^{95}\text{Works, p. 354.}\]
\[^{96}\text{Ibid., p. 322.}\]
\[^{97}\text{Ibid., p. 382.}\]
not of thine order" (M,II.i.33,37-38). At Manfred's departure, the Chamois Hunter says, "My prayers shall be for thee," to which Manfred answers, "I need them not, / But can endure thy pity" (M,II.i.88-90). Shortly before the appointed time for Manfred's death, the Abbot pleads with Manfred to repent and so become reconciled through pity "with the true church, and through the church to heaven." Manfred responds, however, that regardless of what he has become or has been in the past, he will accept no mortal mediation between himself and heaven:

... there is no power in holy men,  
Nor charm in prayer, nor purifying form  
Of penitence, nor outward look, nor fast,  
Nor agony, nor, greater than all these,  
The innate tortures of that deep despair,  
Which is remorse without the fear of hell  
But all in all sufficient to itself  
Would make a hell of heaven,—can exorcise  
From out the unbounded spirit the quick sense  
Of its own sins, wrongs, sufferance, and revenge  
Upon itself; there is no future pang  
Can deal that justice on the self-condemn'd  
He deals on his own soul. (M,III.i.49-51,52-55,66-78) 

And as he dies, Manfred says, "Old man! 't is not so difficult to die" (M,III.iv.411).

The defiant, rebellious heroes of Byron's dramas and romances and of Renaissance tragedy must by their very nature elicit from the reader a moral judgment, or at least, a consideration of moral problems. Point of view is of great

98 Works, p. 484.  
99 Ibid., p. 485.  
100 Ibid., p. 492.  
101 Ibid., p. 497.
importance in character particularization, of course. Zeus undoubtedly considered Prometheus' theft of fire a treacherous villainy; the Titan's act, however, was motivated by his concern for the human race and sprang from Prometheus' desire to liberate mankind. Similarly, although many of the actions of the Byronic Hero and of the Renaissance heroes who are reflected in Byron's protagonists appear criminal or evil on the surface, each of these actions stems from motives that are basically Promethean, which is to say humanistic, rather than Luciferian.

On the other hand, a desire for vengeance—scarcely a humane motive—is one of the most common characteristics shared by Byron's heroes and those of the Renaissance writers included in this study. However, none of Byron's protagonists and few of the Renaissance ones are villainous murderers who, like Marston's Piero, are "great in blood" simply because of unqualified and "fester'd rankling malice" (I.i.17,27). In cases like those noted, the tragic irony lies precisely in the fact that without a generous concern for others, the heroes would not likely be moved to commit murder. Consequently, each character adopts the role of revenger in order to requite a wrong inflicted upon someone he loves. This role, as Arthur Freeman points out with regard to the revenge of Kyd's Hieronimo, does not mean that

102 Marston, Antonio's Revenge, p. 7.
the character "has lost his humanity"; it is rather a manifestation of an essentially human reaction based on his own human problems. 103 John D. Ratliff follows a similar vein in his interpretation of the following words of Hieronimo:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Vindicta mihi!} \\
\text{Ay, heaven will be reveng'd of every ill,} \\
\text{Nor will they suffer murder unrepaid:} \\
\text{Then stay, Hieronimo, attend their will,} \\
\text{For mortal men may not appoint their time.}
\end{align*}
\]

(III.xiii.1-5) 104

In Ratliff's opinion, Hieronimo's speech is neither anti-Christian nor Machiavellian; it is instead an expression of the human instinct for self-preservation: if Hieronimo waits for legal redress, then heaven will have his murder to avenge also. 105 Self-preservation—the inclination to place one's life above his enemy's—may not be a high Promethean motive, but certainly it is not Luciferian (unless all men are Lucifers). Peter B. Murray's suggestion that Hieronimo's acts spring from the "predictable retributive element within the tragic mystery of the human condition" 106 may be applied to all the revengers of Byron and of the Renaissance authors.


104 Kyd, Spanish Tragedy, p. 83.


The nature of the Byronic Hero is no more that of a wilful murderer than are the natures of Marston's Antonio, Tourneur's Vindice, or Ford's Giovanni. Byron's Conrad, for example, accustomed as he is to blood spilled in battle, is horrified at Gulnare's midnight murder of Seyd. Although Antonio has become resolute in his determination to avenge himself upon Piero's unspeakable villainy in *Antonio's Revenge*, he instinctively recoils from his plan and falters before little Julio's trusting innocence. Antonio would have foregone this part of his revenge had he not been goaded on by the appearance of Andrugio's mutilated ghost. Allen Bergson even goes so far as to suggest that Antonio's actions are a part of Marston's "serious attempt to examine the possibilities of moral action in a world dominated by evil." 107 In *The Revenger's Tragedy*, Vindice is so sickened by the deaths he has effected in retaliation for Gloriana's murder that he welcomes the "speedy execution" ordered by Antonio: "Tis time to die, when we are our selues our foes" (V.iii.154). 108 The revengeful murders by Giovanni in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, especially that of Annabella, are more difficult to reconcile within the framework of humanity than the other cases examined here. However, if one accepts the


view of Margaret Joan Sargeaunt that Giovanni's aim throughout is "the practice of rational morality," Giovanni's great love for his sister may be regarded as its own justification and thus "will wipe away that rigour / Which would in other incests be abhorred" (V.v.83-84). By the same token, according to Sargeaunt's reasoning, both Giovanni's murder of Annabella and the death of Giovanni may be considered "in the faith not of religion but of love." Giovanni, moral rationalist though he may be, is afflicted by something of the same remorse that hounds Byron's Manfred and Giaour. Before Giovanni stabs his unsuspecting sister, his request to her for forgiveness, which is rather mystifying at this point, implies an emotion that becomes unmistakable in his next words:

Be dark, bright sun,
And make this mid-day night, that thy gilt rays
May not behold a deed will turn their splendour
Moore sooty than the poets feign their Styx!
(V.v.93-96)

Although Giovanni says of this murder that "honour doth love command," the wrenching remorse that follows his deed is evident as he says that he has "killed a love, for whose each drop of blood / I would have pawned my heart" (V.v.101,117-18).

110 Ibid., pp. 95, 97; Ford, 'Tis Pity, p. 157.
111 Sargeaunt, p. 98.
112 Ford, 'Tis Pity, p. 157.
113 Ibid., p. 158.
Although there are undeniably Luciferian as well as Promethean elements in the attempts by the Byronic Hero and some of his Renaissance predecessors to reach goals unreasonably high or unattainably grandiose, this aspect of these characters also may be viewed predominantly as a prominent part of the human, or Promethean, condition of man. According to Homan, Tamburlaine's aspiration, perhaps one of the most striking examples of this trait in literature, has resulted in a spate of contradictory interpretations of Tamburlaine "ranging from the apotheosis of Renaissance individualism to the cast history of a mass murderer." 114 There are humanly redeeming features in this self-appointed "scourge and wrath of God" (III.iii.44), 115 however. The aspiration of Tamburlaine, like that of the Byronic Hero, contains no personal greed for material riches. Byron's Giaour gives his wealth to the monastery in which he spends his final, remorse-filled years; Selim, who has been reared as a prince in the midst of the opulence of Giaffir's court, turns to piracy to satisfy his love of adventure and assuage his pride rather than to gain wealth; and Lara lavishes his bounty upon the serfs whom he feeds and whose army he supports. Similarly, Byron's Marino Faliero,
Sardanapalus, and Francis Poscari are scrupulous in not beggar their countries to fill their private coffers. The same magnanimity is often seen in Elizabethan heroes. When Bajazeth speaks of the ransom Tamburlaine may expect to receive for the Turkish emperor, he is quickly informed that Tamburlaine places no esteem on the gold of Turkey (III.iii. 262). Tamburlaine's love for Zenocrate and his unappeasable grief at her death are also indications of his humanity. Indeed, a recurrent situation in Elizabethan tragedy, as in Byron's works, is that of the hero who, however violent some of his actions may be, shows a sensitive humanity in his love of a woman whom he inadvertently hurts and frequently loses. Tamburlaine's desire to live on in his sons and his disappointment in their natures are also poignantly human reactions.

Most typical of the human condition reflected in aspiring characters such as Tamburlaine, Faustus, D'Ambois, the Duke of Byron, Coriolanus, and Warbeck, as well as in the Byronic Hero, is the fact that death inevitably limits or vitiates a fulfillment of aspiration, thus establishing that even the greatest overreachers are yet but men. MacLure says that the dying forgiveness by D'Ambois of his murderers and his bid to Montsurrury and Tamyra to be reconciled evince.

116 Marlowe, I Tamburlaine, p. 92.
D'Ambois' "native noblesse";\(^{117}\) and Waddington views these final acts of D'Ambois as Promethean, in spite of their futility.\(^{118}\) The humanity in D'Ambois at his death is also noted by Waith, who points out that the final thoughts of Chapman's ambitious hero are for his reputation among men, for Tamyra's suffering on his account, and for his failure to have achieved what he believed himself capable of.\(^{119}\) In Homan's opinion, the humanity of Chapman's Duke of Byron, like that of D'Ambois, is most evident at his death. The "defiant superman" who at the beginning set himself up as "a potential savior" of Henry's state arrives at a new self-knowledge and humility at his death.\(^{120}\) Branding "this body but a sink of folly" (V.iv.32),\(^{121}\) the Duke of Byron condemns his previous attempts to be "greatest, and not best" (V.iv.145).\(^{122}\) Homan adds that the warmly human facets of the Duke of Byron's character are further underscored by the king's regard for Byron. Even after the Duke's treasonous activities have been proved, Henry confesses he "never lov'd man like him" and that Byron "hath deserv'd my love with worthy service" (IV.ii.7,9).\(^{123}\)

\(^{117}\)MacLure, p. 124. \(^{118}\)Waddington, p. 46.
\(^{119}\)Waith, p. 104. \(^{120}\)Homan, p. 43.
\(^{121}\)Chapman, *Byron's Tragedy*, p. 266.
\(^{122}\)Ibid., p. 268.
\(^{123}\)Homan, p. 239; Chapman, *Byron's Tragedy*, p. 239.
Most of Byron's heroes also realize their closest affinity with humanity at the time of death. Before he dies, the solitary Giaour recites his tragic story to a humble friar of the monastery. Lara receives his fatal wound as he leads an army of peasants, and he spends his final moments in serene conversation with Kaled, his page. Manfred's suicide is prevented by a chamois hunter, and, when Manfred dies, his only companion is an aged clergyman. The common people of Venice are deeply disturbed by the execution of Marino Faliero. When the headsman's sword falls, one citizen says, "Then they have murder'd him who would have freed us," and another adds that the Doge "was a kind man to the commons ever" (MF,V.iv.821,822).124 The last acts of Sardanapalus are to free his slaves and send his followers to safety, and his sole companion in death is a Greek slave girl.

One of the most paradoxical aspects of the commingled Promethean and Luciferian elements in the Byronic Hero and a number of the Renaissance characters is the frequency with which a protagonist's Titanic or Satanic ambition is defeated or transformed by his Promethean, or humanitarian, instincts. For example, Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois is so shaken by the sight of Tamyra's tortured body that his composure is shattered and the valor with which he has previously faced his enemies diminishes; consequently D'Ambois' death is easily

124 Works, p. 549.
accomplished by Montsurry and his murderers. Similarly, Selim remains unharmed by the guns and swords of Giaffir's swarming band until he pauses "where strand and billows met" and turns for one last look at Zuleika before he is rescued by his nearby comrades. That "fatal gaze" results in his death, for at that moment Giaffir's bullet finds its mark (BA,II.xxv.560,565). The conviction of Chapman's Duke of Byron for treason is the result of the Duke's implicit trust in his dissembling, perfidious advisers; and the disgrace and decapitation of Byron's Marino Faliero also results from a misplaced faith in one of his followers, who betrays the conspiracy to the Venetian Council.

Shakespeare's Coriolanus is dissuaded from his resolve to destroy the city to which he owes his "revenge properly" (V.ii.90) by his mother's eloquently adroit pleading. After hearing out Volumnia's impassioned supplication that he spare Rome, Coriolanus acquiesces, and his doom is thereby assured. After a moment of silence, he tells his mother that she has assuredly "won a happy victory to Rome, / But for your son, believe it, oh, believe it, / Most dangerously you have with him prevailed, / If not mortal to him" (V.iii.186-89). Filial love and respect are also responsible

125 Works, p. 335.
126 Shakespeare, Coriolanus, p. 1308.
127 Ibid., p. 1310.
for the death of Massinger's Malefort junior in the duel with his father. When young Malefort falls, his captain, instantly aware that the sword thrust of Malefort junior was deliberately misaimed, comments "That was a strange misse"; the blow of Malefort senior, however, is "a certaine hit" (II.i.181,197). After his son dies at his feet, Malefort senior continues to mangle the lifeless body until the arrival of his friend and of Malefort junior's captains, who have all witnessed the duel from a distance.

Although Webster's Bosola turns from his evil masters and their villainous commands too late to save the Duchess of Malfi and her family, his remorse is genuine as he strives to undo the evil he has done. When it appears that Isabella is yet alive after she has been strangled, Bosola dares to hope that his villainy has not been as complete as he feared:

She stirres; here's life:
Returne (faire soule) from darkenesse, and lead mine
Out of this sencible Hell: She's warme, she breathes:
Upon thy pale lips I will melt my heart
To store them with fresh colour:

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
. . . her Eye opes,
And heaven in it seemes to ope, (that late was shut)
To take me up to mer[cy]. (IV.ii.369-71,373-75)

Isabella's revival is only temporary, however, and Bosola eases the last moments of the Duchess of Malfi by telling

128 Massinger, Unnatural Combat, p. 181.
129 Webster, Duchess, p. 103.
her that Antonio lives and has been reconciled through the Pope's intervention with her two brothers. Filled with remorse over his role in the deaths of the Duchess and four of her children, Bosola resolves that he will devote himself to putting Antonio "into safety from the reach / Of those most cruell biters, that have got / Some of thy blood already" (V.ii.375-77). When Antonio, unaware of his wife's death, comes to the Cardinal's palace hoping to make peace with Isabella's brothers, Bosola is waiting in the darkness to murder the Cardinal and accidentally stabs Antonio. When Bosola realizes the terrible mistake he has made, the intensity of his remorse is similar to that of Byron's guilty, remorseful heroes: "Antonio? The man I would have sav'de 'bove mine owne life!" (V.iv.61).

Remorse after an act of violence also transforms Byron's Giaour. Before he avenged Leila's death by killing Hassan, the Giaour had been a daring warrior and leader of men. However, after the bloody fray is over, he becomes a haunted, solitary presence that is but a gloomy shade of the man he once had been. Byron's Manfred is unable to find surcease for his remorse over Astarte, whom he loved and destroyed, in the knowledge he searched for in this world or in the "forbidden conclusions" that he found in his quests of "the

130 Webster, Duchess, p. 116.

131 Ibid., p. 119.
caves of death" (M,II.ii.177,174). The oblivion he seeks is to be found only in death, and death for Manfred has been as elusive as his remorse has been constant. Although the circumstances are different, the life of Byron's Conrad is altered as radically by remorse as is that of Webster's Bosola. When Conrad learns that Medora is dead, he abandons his wealth, his castle, his ships, and his men. Conrad's followers search and hope endlessly, but neither "trace, nor tidings of his doom declare / Where lives his grief, or perish'd his despair!" The pirate crew knows only that Conrad is gone, though "he left a Corsair's name to other times / Link'd with one virtue and a thousand crimes" (C,III. xxiv.689-90).

Ford's Perkin Warbeck displays a humane attitude similar to that of Byron's Conrad toward the helpless women of Seyd's harem. Warbeck jeopardizes his relationship with the "war-like King of Scotland" (III.iv.11), thus risking the loss of the Scottish alliance so essential to Warbeck's effort to gain the throne of England, because of his refusal to comply with James' command that the invading troops ravage the English countryside and "spare no prey of life or goods" (III. iv.55-56). Warbeck's response to the Scottish king is

132 Works, p. 486.  
133 Ibid., p. 366.  
134 Ford, Warbeck, p. 390.  
135 Ibid., p. 392.
respectfully couched, but it is underscored with Promethean compassion:

O, sir, then give me leave to yield to nature;
I had never sought
The truth of mine inheritance with rapes
Of women or of infants murdered, virgins
Deflowered, old men butchered, dwellings fired,
My land depopulated, and my people
Afflicted with a kingdom's devastation:
Show more remorse, great king, or I shall never
Endure to see such havoc with dry eyes;
Spare, spare, my dear, dear England! (III.iv.57,60-68)\textsuperscript{136}

There are also several examples in Byron's poetry of the destruction of a protagonist resulting from his humanitarian impulses. Had Lara not sympathized with the hungry peasants, for instance, he probably would have lived out his lifetime following the solitary pursuits with which he occupied his days before his espousal of the peasant cause. Sardanapalus wished only to rule his people with "love and to be merciful, to pardon / The follies of my species" (S,I. ii.323-25),\textsuperscript{137} and it was for this leniency that his reign was challenged, his empire destroyed, and his life sacrificed. Cain, whose dearest wish is that the pain of death never mar the happiness of his family or blight the delights of the Garden, trustingly accepts Lucifer as his mentor and so brings into the world the very agony his compassion would have debarred from mankind. Despite a desire for vengeance

\textsuperscript{136}Ford, Warbeck, p. 392.
\textsuperscript{137}Works, p. 555.
that springs from a deep sense of injury, the compassion of Marino Faliero for the men he would destroy does as much to preclude the conspiracy's success as does Bertram's betrayal. Trying to explain to the conspirators his ties to these former friends whom he is now sworn to kill, the Doge says "All these men were my friends; I loved them, they / Requited honourably my regards; / We served; we smiled and wept in concert" (MF,III.i.440-44). Although Faliero then symbolically shrugs off this compassion by bidding farewell to "all social memory! all thoughts / In common! and sweet bonds which link old friendships," Israel Bertruccio is alarmed at the possible consequences of the Doge's remorseful thoughts and urges Faliero to cease dwelling on the past and think only on his deep wrongs that must be "nobly avenged before another night" (MF,III.i.448-49,487).

The final consideration of the Promethean and Luciferian elements present in these two groups of characters is concerned with free will, or man's freedom of choice. Prometheus chose the course that led to the rock and the vulture; Satan instigated the rebellion that led to Hell and Pandemonium. In Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound, Hermes reminds the suffering Titan that his present state has resulted from neither the trickery of fate nor the power of Zeus, but is

---

138 Works, p. 525. 139 Ibid.
rather the consequence of Prometheus' "own acts of folly." In *Paradise Lost*, Milton makes it perfectly plain that the Father endowed the angels as well as man with freedom of choice. In his first speech, the Father explains that he made man "just and right / Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall," and that in this same manner he "created all 'th Ethereal Powers / And Spirits, both them who stood and them who faild; / Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell" (III.98-102). Thus, Satan and his followers "decreed / Thir own revolt" and their subsequent fall from heaven was "without least impulse or shadow of Fate" (III. 116-17,120). Satan even admits that there was a freedom of choice in heaven and that he chose the fall (II.19). Sensabaugh seems to sum up the theories of Milton and Aeschylus in his statements that "in both Renaissance and Greek concepts man's free will in a world of human values stands out clear" and that "deepest tragedy came when free will not necessity struck man down" as a result of man's working his own doom.

140 Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, p. 38.
143 Ibid., p. 232.
144 George F. Sensabaugh, "John Ford and Elizabethan Tragedy," *Philological Quarterly*, XX (1941), 452.
It should be noted at this point that autobiographical critics of Byron's work frequently insist that Byron believed much more in determinism than in free will. Peter Quennell, for one, says that Byron was possessed of a "pagan fatalism" that "had a Christian colouring"; and Rutherford discusses at some length the "fatality" which Byron regarded as the ruling force of his life. There are occasional references in Byron's poetry to what might be interpreted as limited or environmental determinism, such as the following lines from *Childe Harold:*

Few--none--find what they love or could have loved,
Though accident, blind contact, and the strong
Necessity of loving, have removed
Antipathies--but to recur, ere long,
Envenom'd with irrevocable wrong;
And Circumstance, that unspiritual god
And miscreator, makes and helps along
Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
Whose touch turns Hope to dust,—the dust we all have trod.

*CH,IV.cxxv.117-25*

However, the Byronic Hero's acceptance of responsibility for his actions shows little evidence of a total rejection by his creator of free will in favor of destiny's tyrannical rule. Many of the Renaissance characters whose influence is mirrored in Byron's heroes are also quite explicit in their references to man's freedom of choice.


146 Rutherford, pp. 17, 19.

147 *Works*, pp. 73-74.
An early instance of the Renaissance attitude toward free will is the assertion by Marius in *The Wounds of Civil War* that fortitude will always conquer silly fate (II.ii. 26-28).\textsuperscript{148} In Freeman's opinion, even Hieronimo, hemmed in and dogged as he is by the dramatic ironies by which Kyd creates a "framework of destiny," is able to set his own pace and shape "at least the particulars of his conduct."\textsuperscript{149} Byron's Marino Faliero expresses something of this idea to Angiolina as he reviews the events of his life leading to his arrest: "... there was that in my spirit ever / Which shaped out for itself some great reverse" (MF, V.ii.587-88).\textsuperscript{150}

The disdain of Marlowe's Tamburlaine for fate, destiny, or gods is obvious in his famous boast: "I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains, / And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about" (I.ii.174-75).\textsuperscript{151} So certain is Tamburlaine of his power over all forces of heaven and earth that he makes the following brazen claim: "Should I but touch the rusty gates of hell, / The triple-headed Cerberus would howl, / And wake black Jove to crouch and kneel to me" (V.i. 96-98).\textsuperscript{152} Byron's Giaour, like Tamburlaine, takes full responsibility for his actions: "Shall I the doom I sought

\textsuperscript{148} Lodge, *Wounds*, p. 26. \textsuperscript{149} Freeman, p. 94.

\textsuperscript{150} Works, p. 546.

\textsuperscript{151} Marlowe, *I Tamburlaine*, p. 66.

\textsuperscript{152} Marlowe, *II Tamburlaine*, p. 170.
upbraid?" (G,1116). Tamburlaine's attitude toward the gods is also mirrored in the words of Byron's Manfred to the Spirits: "Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me; / I have not been thy dupe nor am thy prey" (M,III.iv.397-98).

Marlowe's Faustus is another matter, however. When Faustus is floundering in one of his several struggles over repentance and non-repentance, he blames Mephistophiles for having deprived him of the joys of heaven. Mephistophiles immediately reminds Faustus that "'twas thine own seeking, Faustus, thank thyself" (II.ii.4). Shortly before Lucifer's devils arrive to escort Faustus to hell, he curses his parents for having "engender'd" him, thus blaming them for his dilemma; however, in the very next line, he says ruefully "No, Faustus, curse thyself" (V.iii.174-75).

Somewhat related to this discussion is Smidt's interesting suggestion that Faustus' rejection of divinity and subsequent alliance with Lucifer are the result of Faustus' rejection of the current "insistence on the doctrine of predestination," the doctrine characteristic of Luther's university of Wittenberg, of which Faustus is a member. The youthful attempts of Byron's Lara to blame fate for his own wilful acts are

---

153 Works, p. 321.  
154 Ibid., p. 496.  
155 Marlowe, Faustus, p. 250.  
156 Ibid., p. 388.  
157 Smidt, p. 240.
similar to Faustus' desire to avoid facing the truth:

He call'd on Nature's self to share the shame,
And charged all faults upon the fleshly form
She gave to clog the soul and feast the worm;
Till he at last confounded good and ill,
And half mistook for fate the acts of will. 158

(L, I, xiii. 332-36)

Chapman's D'Ambois imperiously proclaims that his will is "free" of all domination (II.i.194), 159 and the Duke of Byron makes a similar assertion in his speech to La Brosse, the Astrologer:

I have a will and faculties of choice,
To do, or not to do: and reason why
I do, or not do this: the stars have none;
They know not why they shine, more than this taper,
Nor how they work, nor what: I'll change my course,
I'll piece-meal pull the frame of all my thoughts,
And cast my will into another mould.

... ...........................................
I'll wear those golden spurs upon my heels,
And kick at fate; be free, all worthy spirits,
And stretch yourselves for greatness and for height,
Untruss your slaveries; you have height enough
Beneath this steep heaven to use all your reaches.

(III.iii.112-18,129-34) 160

Waddington, an advocate of the theory that D'Ambois exercises his own will in choosing his destiny, points out that D'Ambois' disregard of the warning by the ghost of Friar Comolet is "a symbolic rejection of the powers of foreknowledge," and, as such, is indicative of the Promethean quality in D'Ambois'  

158 Works, p. 371.
159 Chapman, D'Ambois, p. 32.
160 Chapman, Byron's Conspiracy, p. 190.
character. The admonition of Lucifer in Byron's Cain reflects an emphasis similar to that of Chapman's heroes upon the significance of an unfettered will:

One good gift has the fatal apple given—
Your reason: let it not be over-sway'd
By tyrannous threats to force you into faith
'Gainst all external sense and inward feeling:
Think and endure, and form an inner world
In your own bosom—where the outward fails;
So shall you nearer be the spiritual
Nature, and war triumphant with your own. (Ca, II. ii. 664-71)

After his imprisonment, Tourneur's Charlemont says that "our owne constructions are the authors of / Our miserie" (III. iii. 16-17). This idea is closely paralleled in Burton's theory that man's nature is "calamity's inn, / Where seek for any mischief, 'tis within" and in the assertion by Byron's Sardanapalus that "as our mould is, must the produce be" (S, II. i. 523). In Allison's opinion, the dying pronouncement of Webster's Bosola captures the overall tone and spirit of The Duchess of Malfi. After referring to this "gloomy world" as a "deepe pit of darkenesse" in which fearful mankind must exist, Bosola adds that man is still free to make the right choice, even though it may cost him death or disgrace: "Let worthy minds nere stagger in distrust /
To suffer death, or shame, for what is just" (V.v.24-28).\(^{167}\) Byron's Giaour, like Webster's Bosola, knows that he is his "own destroyer, and will be / My own hereafter" (G,399-400).\(^{168}\) One of the finest illustrations of a Renaissance character's assertion of free will is that by Ford's Perkin Warbeck. After Katherine's fearful remark that all men and women must submissively kneel to and not question "what our destinies / Have ruled-out in their books," Perkin makes the following response:

Then to fear when hope is fruitless,
Were to be desperately miserable;
Which poverty our greatness dares not dream of,
And much more scorns to stoop to. (III.ii.196-98)\(^{169}\)

Byron's Corsair was tempted only once to abandon his cause. Turning for a last look at his castle, "he almost stopp'd--and nearly gave / His fate to chance, his projects to the wave: / But not--it must not be--a worthy chief / May melt, but not betray to woman's grief" (C,I.xvi.515-18).\(^{170}\) A passage from Marlowe and one from Milton serve as final references to the probable influence of Renaissance literature upon the idea of freedom of choice expressed by Lord Byron's heroes. Marlowe's Mephistophilis says that "where we are is hell / And where hell is, there must we ever

\(^{167}\)Webster, Duchess, p. 124.  
\(^{168}\)Works, p. 496.  
\(^{169}\)Ford, Warbeck, p. 386.  
\(^{170}\)Works, p. 345.
be" (II.i.121-22),\textsuperscript{171} and Milton's Satan says that "the mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (I,254-55).\textsuperscript{172} The final statement of Byron's Manfred to the Spirit echoes the basic idea that the destiny of man is shaped by man's own mind:

\begin{quote}
The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts,
Is its own origin of ill and end,
And its own place and time; its innate sense,
When stripp'd of this mortality, derives
No colour from the fleeting things without,
But is absorb'd in sufferance or in joy,
Born from the knowledge of its own desert.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{173}\textit{(III.iv.389-96)}

The perceptive description by Epernon of Chapman's Duke of Byron is an equally apt description of the aspect of the Byronic Hero examined in this chapter:

\begin{quote}
Oh of what contraries consists a man!
Of what impossible mixtures! Vice and virtue,
Corruption, and eternesse, at one time,
And in one subject, let together loose!
We have not any strength but weakens us,
No greatness but doth crush us into air.
Our knowledges do light us but to err,
Our ornaments are burthens, our delights
Are our tormenters, fiends, that, rais'd in fears,
At parting shake our roofs about our ears.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{174}\textit{(V.iii.189-98)}

The commingled Promethean and Luciferian elements in the Byronic Hero and in the protagonists of some of the sixteenth-

\textsuperscript{171}Marlowe, Faustus, p. 349.
\textsuperscript{172}Milton, Paradise Lost, p. 217.
\textsuperscript{173}Works, p. 496.
\textsuperscript{174}Chapman, Byron's Tragedy, p. 263.
and seventeenth-century authors may thus be regarded as a distinctive manifestation of the "half dust, half deity" (M.I.i.301)\textsuperscript{175} attribute for which the Byronic Hero is at least partially indebted to a number of his Renaissance predecessors.

\textsuperscript{175} Works, p. 482.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In this study of the influence upon the Byronic Hero of a number of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literary characters, one major point at least has become clear: the Byronic Hero is not simply an extravagantly accoutered but thinly disguised self-portrait of Byron. Because of the numerous contemporary accounts of Byron's unusual life, the widespread and long-lasting critical tendency to regard Byron's adventurous and complex heroes as literary projections of the poet himself has resulted in many analyses that, while generally sound so far as they go, are usually incomplete interpretations of the many-faceted Byronic Hero. A strictly biographical interpretation of the Byronic Hero is never totally valid because by its very nature it not only ignores Byron's denials that he recreated himself in his heroes, but it also implies a repudiation of the creativity that must be an intrinsic ingredient in any significant artistic production.

Byron was, like all sensitive individuals, acutely receptive to everything he encountered in life and in literature. It has been established conclusively by the many biographers of Byron that the impressions most responsible
for forming his nature were those of his early childhood and youth. His exposure to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature began when Byron was quite young. Byron's considerable knowledge of these works is well documented in the many accounts by his contemporaries of his reading and in the extant lists of books he owned, as well as by the numerous references to these writings by Byron in his poetry, his recorded conversations, his journal entries, and his letters.

Measured by Renaissance standards, the Byronic Hero is a pathological melancholiac, like the characters he most closely resembles in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century drama, and indeed his driving passions are generally those engendered by excessive melancholy. Byron assuredly put no more stock in the four-humours theory than do readers of today. However, he was thoroughly familiar with Burton's detailed exposition on the subject of melancholy and its relation to man's body and soul. Because of this knowledge, joined to his remarkable susceptibility to the nuances of character which he encountered in literature and in life, Byron could not have failed to recognize the many characters in Renaissance drama who exemplified the physico-spiritual symptoms described in Burton's enchiridion. In the delineation of his own melancholy, passion-driven heroes, Byron frequently adapted the Renaissance writers' technique of emphasizing a character's dominant passions in his physical
appearance. Thus, in the Byronic Hero, as in the Renaissance hero, passions such as hatred, vengeance, remorse, love, and ambition are often externally manifested in the character's face and mien.

The Gothic villains of eighteenth-century fiction also display certain physical attributes that are characteristic of the Byronic Hero, but the fixed or glaring eyes, the pallor frequently suffused by rising emotion, and the mirthless smile are all evinced much earlier in the characters of English Renaissance drama as the outward manifestations of irrepressible passions engendered by abnormal melancholy. The influence upon Byron's work of eighteenth-century Gothic fiction was immediate but comparatively superficial, providing at most surface trappings for the characters and settings of Byron's Oriental Tales and dramas. For the basic ingredients in Byron's poetry of what is referred to in Varma's work as the "Gothic spirit at large,"1 Byron turned to the English dramatists of the Renaissance, finding in their works the Gothic elements which became a part of the Byronic Hero and his environment.

The Byronic Hero also mirrors Byron's admiration for the Promethean and Luciferian qualities with which Byron attempted to endow Napoleon. Byron's comment to Scott on Napoleon's having begun "like Tamerlane" and ending like

1Varma, p. 15.
Bajazet" is but one example of the deeply ingrained concepts of the bifurcated characters of Renaissance literature that were constantly surfacing as supports for Byron's current interests. The reader is always conscious that Byron, like the Renaissance dramatists and poets, created in his heroes natures in which good and evil are constantly contending. In Manfred, as in most of the Renaissance protagonists, "there is an awful chaos—of light and darkness, / And mind and dust, and passions and pure thoughts, / Mix'd, and contending without end or order" (M,III.i.163-66). Conrad also seems to be related to a galaxy of characters ranging from Kyd's Hieronimo to Milton's Satan in whose minds there is a "warring chaos" wherein all the "elements convulsed, combined, / Lie dark and jarring with perturb'd force" (C, II.x.329-30).

The hatred of tyranny expressed by the Renaissance protagonists is reflected in all of Byron's "souls who dare use their immortality— / Souls who dare look the Omnipotent tyrant in / His everlasting face, and tell him that / His evil is not good!" (Ca,I.i.137-40). Although the Byronic Hero may be considered a fatal man, as Praz asserts, he is not a fated man. The rejection by the Byronic Hero of

3Works, p. 443. 4Ibid., p. 32.
5Ibid., p. 629.
submission to the tyranny of a prearranged, inescapable fate, and his recognition that he works his own destruction through the actions of his will are strikingly illustrated by the words of Shakespeare's Cassius: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, / But in ourselves" (I.ii.40-41). Or, as Novalis put the idea, fate and temperament are really the same.

One does not have to like either Marlowe's Tamburlaine or Byron's Lara, but one must respect the strong will of each character. Neither the Byronic Hero nor the Renaissance protagonists whom he resembles have enjoyed consistent, universal acclaim, mainly because, as Shakespeare's Aufidius comments in Coriolanus, "our virtues / Lie in th' interpretation of the times" (IV.vii.49). However, the Byronic Hero's literary and cultural influence, extending from the first appearance of Childe Harold into the present century, is generally acknowledged by critics. Therefore, this investigation of the relationships between Byron's heroes and those of a number of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English writers should provide additional insight into certain basic components of the Byronic Hero which might be

6 Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, p. 818.
7 Shakespeare, Coriolanus, p. 1306.
8 Thorslev, p. 4.
very significant in the study of many characters in
nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature.
APPENDIX A

A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF BYRON'S MAJOR WORKS INCLUDED IN THIS STUDY

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.
   Canto I and Canto II.
      Written 1809-1810; published 1812.
   Canto III.
      Finished and published 1816.
   Canto IV.
      Written 1817-1818; published 1818.

The Giaour.
   First draft written 1813; seventh and definitive edition and publication 1813.

The Bride of Abydos.
   Written and published 1813.

The Corsair.
   Written and published 1814.

Lara.
   Written and published 1814.

Parisina.
   Written 1815; published 1816.

Manfred.
   Written 1816-1817; published 1817.

Marino Faliero.
   Written 1817-1820; published 1821.

The Two Foscari.
   Written and published 1821.

Sardanapalus.
   Written and published 1821.

Cain.
   Written and published 1821.

1The authority for this chronology is The Complete Works of Byron, ed. Paul Elmer More (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1933).
APPENDIX B

A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF THE SIXTEENTH- AND
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY WORKS INCLUDED IN
THIS STUDY

Thomas Kyd, The Spanish Tragedie: or Hieronimo is mad againe.
Written c. 1582-92; entered in Stationers' Register 1592.

Thomas Lodge, The Wounds of Civil War.
Written c. 1586-89; entered in Stationers' Register 1594.

Christopher Marlowe, Tamburlaine the Great, Part I and Part II.
Written c. 1587-1588; published 1590.
The Tragicall History of Dr. Faustus.
Written c. 1589; entered in Stationers' Register 1601; published 1604.

John Marston, The History of Antonio and Mellida; The First Part.
Written c. 1599; entered in Stationers' Register 1601.
Antonio's Revenge; The Second Part of Antonio and Mellida.
Written c. 1600; entered in Stationers' Register 1601.

George Chapman, Bussy D'Ambois.
Written c. 1604; entered in Stationers' Register 1607.
The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron.
Written c. 1607-1608; published 1613.

William Shakespeare, The Tragedy of Coriolanus.
Written c. 1607-1609; first published in First Folio 1623.

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, A King and No King.
Written c. 1607-1611; entered in Stationers' Register 1618; published 1619.

1The dating in each case is that of the source cited in the text of this study.
Cyril Tourneur, *The Revenger's Tragedy*.  
Written c. 1606; entered in Stationers' Register 1607.  
*The Atheist's Tragedy*.  
Written c. 1610; entered in Stationers' Register 1611.

John Webster, *The White Devil* or *Vittoria Corombona*.  
Written c. 1607-1612.  
*The Duchess of Malfi*.  
Written c. 1612-14.

John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*.  
Written c. 1625-1633; published 1633.  
*Perkin Warbeck*.  
Written c. 1629-1634; published 1634.

Philip Massinger, *The Unnatural Combat*.  
Written c. 1629-39.

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*.  
Completed 1663; published 1667.
APPENDIX C

THE LIST BYRON MADE OF HIS READING IN AN 1807 MEMORANDUM-BOOK


Scotland.—Buchanan, Hector Boethius, both in the Latin.

Ireland.—Gordon.

Rome.—Hooke, Decline and Fall by Gibbon, Ancient History by Rollin (including an account of the Carthaginians, &c.), besides Livy, Tacitus, Eutropius, Cornelius Nepos, Julius Caesar, Arrian, Sallust.

Greece.—Mitford's Greece, Leland's Philip, Plutarch, Potter's Antiquities, Xenophon, Thucydides, Herodotus.

France.—Mezeray, Voltaire.

Spain.—I chiefly derived my knowledge of old Spanish History from a book called the Atlas, now obsolete. The modern history, from the intrigues of Alberoni down to the Prince of Peace, I learned from its connection with European politics.

Portugal.—From Vertot; as also his account of the Siege of Rhodes,—though the last is his own invention, the real facts being totally different.—So much for his Knights of Malta.

Turkey.—I have read Knolles, Sir Paul Rycaut, and Prince Cantemir, besides a more modern history, anonymous. Of the Ottoman History I know every event, from Tangralopi, and afterwards Othman I., to the peace of Passarowitz, in 1718,—the battle of Cutzka, in 1739, and the treaty between Russia and Turkey in 1790.

Russia.—Tooke's Life of Catherine II., Voltaire's Czar Peter.

Sweden.—Voltaire's Charles XII, also Norberg's Charles XII.—in my opinion the best of the two—A translation of Schiller's Thirty Years' War, which contains the exploits of Gustavus Adolphus, besides Harte's Life of the same Prince. I have somewhere, too, read an account of the Gustavus Vasa, the deliverer of Sweden, but do not remember the author's name.

Prussia.—I have seen, at least, twenty Lives of Frederick II., the only prince worth recording in Prussian annals. Gillies, his own Works, and Thiebault,—none very amusing. The last is paltry, but circumstantial.

Denmark.—I know little of. Of Norway I understand the natural history, but not the chronological.

Germany.—I have read long histories of the house of Suabia, Wenceslaus, and, at length, Rodolph of Hapsburgh and his thick-lipped Austrian descendants.

Switzerland.—Ah! William Tell, and the battle of Morgarten, where Burgundy was slain.

Italy.—Davila, Guicciardini, the Guelphs and Ghibellines, the battle of Pavia, Massaniello, the revolutions of Naples, &c. &c.

Hindostan.—Orme and Cambridge.

America.—Robertson, Andrews' American War.

Africa.—merely from travels, as Mungo Park, Bruce.

BIOGRAPHY.

Robertson's Charles V.—Caesar, Sallust (Catiline and Jugurtha), Lives of Marlborough and Eugene, Tekeli, Bonnard, Buonoparte, all the British Poets, both by Johnson and Anderson, Rousseau's Confessions, Life of Cromwell, British Plutarch, British Nepos, Campbell's Lives of the Admirals, Charles XII., Czar Peter, Catherine II., Henry Lord Kaimes, Marmontel, Teignmouth's Sir William Jones, Life of Newton, Belisaire, with thousands not to be detailed.

LAW.

Blackstone, Montesquieu.
PHILOSOPHY.


GEOGRAPHY.

Strabo, Cellarius, Adams, Pinkerton, and Guthrie.

POETRY.

All the British Classics as before detailed, with most of the living poets, Scott, Southey, &c.—Some French, in the original, of which the Cid is my favourite.—Little Italian.—Greek and Latin without number—these last I shall give up in future.—I have translated a good deal from both languages verse as well as prose.

ELOQUENCE.

Demosthenes, Cicero, Quintilian, Sheridan, Austin’s Chironomia, and Parliamentary Debates from the Revolution to the year 1742.

DIVINITY.

Blair, Porteus, Tillotson, Hooker,—all very tiresome. I abhor books of religion, though I reverence and love my God, without the blasphemous notions of sectaries, or belief in their absurd and damnable heresies, mysteries, and Thirty-nine Articles.

MISCELLANIES.

Spectator, Rambler, World, &c. &c.—Novels by the thousand.2

2Ibid., p. 47. Byron explains in a paragraph following: "All the books here enumerated I have taken down from memory. I recollect reading them, and can quote passages from any mentioned. I have, of course, omitted several in my catalogue; but the greater part of the above I perused before the age of fifteen."
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources


333


Secondary Sources


Allison, Alexander W. "Ethical Themes in *The Duchess of Malfi.*" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900,* 4 (1964), 263-73.


Catalogue of Books, the Property of a Nobleman, About to Leave England on a Tour to the Morea . . . which will be sold by auction, by R. H. Evans, at his house, No. 26, Pall-Mall, on Thursday July 8th, and following Day. Printed by W. Bulmer and Co. Cleveland-row, St. James's, 1813.

Catalogue of the Library of the Late Lord Byron, Which Will be Sold at Auction by Mr. Evans at his House, No. 93, Pall Mall on Friday, July 6, 1827, reprinted with introductory essay by G. H. Doane. Lincoln, Nebraska: privately printed, 1929.


Dallas, R. C. Esq. Recollections of the Life of Lord Byron, from the Year 1808 to the End of 1814. London: Charles Knight, 1824.


______________, 30 (June 1818), 87-120. Anon. Review of *Childe Harold*. Fourth Canto.


Hassler, Donald M. "Marino Faliero, the Byronic Hero, and Don Juan." Keats-Shelley Journal, 14 (Winter 1965), 55-64.


Hobhouse, John Cam. A Journey through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia, to Constantinople, during the Years 1809 and 1810. 2 vols. 2nd ed. London: John Murray, 1813.


Huarte, Juan. The Examination of Mens Wits. London: A. Islip, 1594.


-----------------------

"Tragic Effect in Webster's The White Devil." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900,* 5 (1965), 345-61.

-----------------------


-----------------------


