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Profesor Ponette

M^o - Inés Peré Martín



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THE PURPOSE OF MY WORK.-

Why to choose as object of my work a man and an author about whom it has been said so much and so widely?

Lady Carolina Lamb wrote in her Diary when she first met Lord Byron: "Mad, bad, and Dangerous to know", and just some days afterwards: "...that beautiful, pale face is my fate."

Once again it is the effect of Byron's fatality on a human being and on a woman.

It might be that this fatality has not lost its power and keeps manifesting its influence. Byron himself in his "Childe Harold", Canto IV, Stanza CXXXVII, says:

"But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:
My mind may loose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain;
But there is that within me which will tire
Torture and time, and breathe when I expire;
Something unearthly, which they deem not of,
Like the remember'd tone of a mute lyre,
Shall on their soften'd spirits sink, and move
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love."

And when I first met Byron through his works I really felt this "something" and this "lyre"; I undoubtedly

have been more attracted by the psychological complexity of this Romantic, than by any of his contemporaries. I explain this to myself affirming that behind his poems, and I should better say "in" his poems, there is a man, but a very special of his kind. A man who is mostly human, and whose humanity emerges in all the actions of his life, humanity in the full meaning of the word, humanity with its good and evil, its madness, as exactly says Lady Carolina Lamb, and I add: madness both of the brain and of the heart, but also its sanity and soundness, again of both the brain and the heart.

Byron is a man that can be either despised or praised, but not ignored: his personality is too strong and too individual to permit to anyone who gets acquainted with it, not to take a definite attitude towards it.

I think that the best position to take in consideration this man's soul, life and work, is to try to understand it, not by an extreme or exaggerated point of view, but with a lot of understanding; that kind of understanding and comprehension that an human being ought to have with another human being.

Accepting this, every prejudice should be put apart: I will not study this man and his work by an already taken side about the positivity or positiveness of his religions, social and political beliefs.

All these last elements I will consider just in function of their relation with the man, as his background that inevitably is part and condition of his life-manifestations.

Once then, these prejudices have been put away, here remains the man, bare in his soul, ready to accept our understanding and, why not, our criticism, but a just and objective criticism.

Considering Byron's literary production we agree in dividing it into two great categories: first the poems of his young years before the marriage, together with the poems written immediately after it, and in the second category "Beppo" and "Don Juan".

Why these two categories, and why and in which way do they differ? To make it easier, we should say that "Don Juan" from the point of view of versification, is definitely the best. I said in verse, because considering the prose, his "Journals and Letters" and his "Diary" have nothing to envy to our "Don Juan". But there is a main and most important disjunction between "Don Juan" and all the rest: in "Don Juan" Byron is looking at himself from the outside, if it is possible to talk about an outside in Byron, but, at least, he is trying to make

himself, his need of fatality, the hero that he sees and feels existing in himself, objects of satire.

And we could define this satire as "objective" satire.

The object of this satire is, of course, not just himself, but the society in which he lives (Venice and Italy in "Beppo" for instance) and the society in which he has lived (the English Society, the aristocratic society of pietistic and evangelical Christianity in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century).

Now we could ask which of the two Byrons is "the" Byron, the real Byron: the Byron of "Manfred", of "Childe Harold", of "Lara", or the Byron of "Beppo" and "Don Juan"?

I have chosen as a title of this study: "The Byronic Hero in Manfred", and in choosing it I have already given my reply.

The Byron that I understand the more, the Byron that attracts my sympathies the more is the Byron-Manfred, is Byron-Lara, is Byron-Childe Harold. I am convinced that this is "the" Byron, the Byron of the heart and not the Byron of the head.

There is another point that has induced me to accept this decision. In Byron's Correspondence we find very few allusions to "Manfred", still these few are



interesting. When he was in Italy (Venice) he wrote the third act of the drama, and writing to one of his friends he reports:

"I have no poem, nor thought of a poem called 'The Gondola', nor any similar subject. I have written nothing but a sort of metaphysical poem, which was sent to Murray the other day - not for publication, but to show Mr Gifford. Tell him to show it to you. I would not have published it Unless Gifford thought it good for anything; for myself I have really and truly, no notion what it is good for." ("Lord Byron Correspondence" ed. J.Murray - London 1922- Letter to Kinnaird, March 31st, 1817 Venice - Vol. 11 p. 43). And again:

"I have sent Murray two recent things, one a sort of a drama..." (he ment the new third act of "Manfred"). ("Lord Byron Correspondence" -Letter to Kinnaird- Rome, May 11th, 1817 - Vol. 11, p. 51).

We have the clear feeling in Byron's attitude towards his poem, that he himself does not know their value, or at least their literary signification.

In a letter dated November 25th, 1813, he asks Lady Melbourne:

"These I leave to you to discover & I mean totally independent of criticism, for you may not like it a bit

the better-, You know me better than most people, and are the only person who can trace and I want to see whether you think my writings are me or not" (it is about "The Bride of Abydos a Turkish Tale 1813) - and he insists:

"When I speak of this 'Tale' and the 'author', I merely mean 'feelings'; the characters, and the costume, and the Tale itself (at least are very alike it, I heard) are Mussulman. This no one but you can tell."

("Lord Byron Correspondence" - Letters to Lady Melbourne- Vol. 1, Chap. 1V, p. 217).

It is clear that he is asking here an opinion, as he himself does not know, and one cannot doubt the sincerity of these questions. Generally speaking Byron is always spontaneous in his letters as he is in his Journals, and mainly in his letters to Lady Melbourne, of whom he himself said in his "Diary" at the end of November 1813:

"To Lady Melbourne I write with most pleasure - and her answers so sensible, so 'tactique'- I never met with half her talent. If she had been a few years younger, what a fool she would have made of me, had she thought it worth her while,- and I should have lost a valuable and most agreeable friend....".

(R.E. Protheroe ed. "The Works of Lord Byron: Letters and Journals"- London 1898;1901, 6 vols.)

The evidence of this friendship and its sincerity is clear: they understand each other perfectly. She was the one human being by whom Byron not only allowed himself to be guided, but wished to be guided too.

So he asks this person that knows him so well to give him an opinion about the origin of the feelings that are included in his works, he has not yet reached the capacity to objectivate himself, as it will happen in his later literary production.

Why he does not know? Let us Byron give himself his reply:

"To withdraw myself from myself has ever been my sole, my entire, my sincere motive in scribbling at all; and publishing is also the continuance of the same object, by the action it affords to the mind, which else recoils upon itself. If I valued fame, I should flatter received opinions, which have gathered strength by time, and will yet wear longer than any living works to the contrary. But, for the soul of me, I cannot and will not give to lie to my own thoughts and doubts, come what may. I am a fool, it is at least a doubting one; and I envy no one the certainty of his self-approved wisdom.

All are inclined to believe what they covet, from a lottery-ticket up to a passport to Paradise, - in which from the description I see nothing very tempting.

My restlessness tells me I have something 'within the passeth show'. It is for HIM, who made it, to prolong that spark of celestial fire, which illuminates, yet burns, this frail tenement; but I see so such horror in a 'dreamless sleep', and I have no conception of any existence which duration ~~sh~~ould not render tiresome.

How else 'fell the angels', even according to your creed? They are immortal, heavenly and happy, as their apostate Abdiel is now by his treachery. Time must decide; and eternity won't be less agreeable or more horrible because one did not expect it. In the meantime I am grateful for some good, and tolerably patient under certain evils - grace à Dieu et à mon bon tempérament."=

Of this long letter (I have reported it wholly because I will use it later talking about Byron's religion), let us consider just the words "to withdraw myself from myself has ever been my sole, my entire, my sincere motive in scribbling at all".

It is exactly the same motive that we find in these other lines in which he talks about the Journal he started to keep at the beginning of his journey through the Continent:

"This Journal is a relief. When I am tired - as I generally am - out comes this, and down goes every thing. But I can't read it over; and God knows what contradictions it might contain. If I am sincere with myself (but I fear one lies more to one's self than to any one else), every page should confute, refute, and utterly abjure its predecessor. I am so far obliged to this Journal as it preserves me from verse - at least from keeping it. I have just thrown a poem into the fire and have smoked out of my head the plan of another. I wish I could easily get rid of thinking, or at least the confusion of thoughts."

Here we are: he writes when his heart and his mind are full, when he is oppressed by thoughts, and by confused thoughts. The product of this volcanic eruption he is not able to analyze: he "can't read it over", because what he was looking for was a relief, and the act of re-reading his own writings should be like to go in search of them and re-take them into his self.

I think then that the same fact of this need of expulsion is a proof of the sincerity of the product of this expulsion. He does not care about literary success in general, or more precisely about the acceptance

of "Manfred" or of his "Tales": he just wrote them because his mind and his heart needed to liberate themselves from that kind of oppressive weight.

The concepts that we find in these poems might be confused, and they really are in "Manfred" and other compositions as we will see later.

Their style might not be as perfect as the style of "Don Juan"; but at least they are sincere, we must be sure about this sincerity.

Even if Byron says "But I fear one lies more to one's self than to any one else", I think that we must believe in this sincerity, otherwise we could not find any point where to start from and where to build upon some logical and valuable conclusion.

I think as well that we have to take this last Byron's assertion, as one more demonstration of the mutability of his moods, the versatility of his personality, and a constant need in 'showing' himself off.

I decide then to accept this basic sincerity in "Manfred", and the illogical conclusions and confusion of thoughts that we find in it, as a characteristic and a proof of this sincerity.

In "Don Juan" Byron is not writing under the impulse of the need of liberation, and this is also

demonstrated by the length of time which he employed in writing the whole composition.

In Italy Teresa Guiccioli, his last "amante", wanted to convince Byron to leave his "Don Juan": she thought it was not enough romantic and too much ironical and destructive towards the Italian society and mainly towards the Italian Woman, and she nearly succeeded: she could not have done it with the "Bride of Abydos" for instance, which "was written in four nights to distract my dreams from +++" (Augusta is generally admitted".

In Manfred the process of composition in the sense of "expulsion" has attained its utmost intensity.

As we said these conditions of creativity are not favourable to the purity, beauty and completeness and, above all, perfection of a work, and Byron knows this better than anyone, and does not care in the least.

But I am not looking here for perfection, my purpose is to try to understand the process of the heart and the mind of this man as a human being, and the more he puts his bare soul in our hands, with or without literary perfection, the more we will be able to get near to him.

We will try then, through this volcanic product of his heart and mind, which is "Manfred", to reply the

questions he was asking Lady Melbourne about his 'feelings'.

We already know that his writings ARE him, and that is something to start with.

Now we must see how this ME is, and which is its essence and psychological composition, and first of all why, through the analysis of these elements we are allowed to call and define him as an HERO.

"Hero" must be considered as a part, not because he is a better one, but because he is a special one. In his "Hero", when talking about the Hero, the Lyones Hero, we will find the help of other heroes that appear mainly in the field to complete the picture and the Hero as HERO.

It might be made a parallel between "Faust" and "Hero". This parallel has been very much discussed, but I again refer to Byron's comment on his own work. We find a letter to Murray with this allusion:

"Goethe's 'Faust' I never read, for I don't know German, but within four weeks of my arrival, translated most of it to me viva voce; and I like it very much much with it; but it was the 'Stoic' and the 'Just' and the 'Hero' much more than 'Faust', that made me write 'Hero'. The first scene however and that of 'Faust' are very similar."

Generally speaking we could find some points of

PARALLEL BETWEEN BYRON'S "MANFRED" AND "GOETHE'S "FAUST".=

As we are going to talk about an "hero", a human hero, we have to analyse whether there is any relation between our hero and others of the same kind in the history of literature.

Nevertheless I consider that "Manfred" must be considered as a part, not because he is a better one, but because he is a special one. I said "Manfred", but talking about the Hero, the Byronic Hero, we will need the help of other heroes that appear mainly in the Tales to complete the picture and the Hero as ARCHETYPE.

It might be made a parallel between "Faust" and "Manfred". This relation has been very much discussed, but I again revert to Byron's comment on his own work. We find a letter to Murray with this allusion:

"Goethe's 'Faust' I never read, for I don't know German, but Matthew Monk Lewis at Coligny, translated most of it to me viva voce; and I was naturally much struck with it; but it was the 'Stanback' and the 'Jungfrau' and SOMETHING ELSE, much more than 'Faustus', that made me write 'Manfred'. The first scene however and that of 'Faustus' are very similar."

Generally talking we could find some points of

relation between the two, but we must accept Byron's assertion as more valuable than any other critic's point of view.

I think that we should try to analyze the "hero" in "Manfred" not by a comparison with other authors, but by a comparison between "Manfred" and the other heroes in Byron's work, finding out analogies and discrepancies. As a term of this comparison we will take "Childe Harold" mainly, and some of the protagonists of the "Tales" and "Dramas".

Another interesting point to touch should be Shelley's "Prometheus", as belonging to the same literary movement, and being Prometheus one of the most profoundly human characters and the most representative of the always actual problems of innocence and sin, of just or unjust punishment, and of sublimate heroism in liberation.

Moreover I think that there is another very important difference between "Manfred" and "Faustus".

Whatever Faustus' metaphysical and religious problems are of a more universal value than the ones of "Manfred", they are treated in a manner which I should call "northern". The interpretation of Nature, of the Spirits, of the Witches etc. is closer to the northern tradition of the Sagas; there is very little of the classic

Southern Latin tradition.

Going back to our "Manfred", I acknowledge the presence in it of the same Goethe's elements: Nature, Spirits and Witches. Byron himself will say:

"I wrote a sort of mad drama, for the sake of introducing the Alpine scenery in description...

Allmost all the Dram. pers. are spirits, ghosts or magicians, and the scene is the Alps and the other world...." (Peter Quennel: "Byron , a self Portrait-

Letters and Journals". Vol.11- London J.

Murray 1950- Letter to T. Moore, venice, March 1817)

But these supernatural characters, whatever gothic they may be, they have been touched and transformed by Byron's sensibility, which is not a northern one, but a latin one. In this sense then, "Manfred" is closer to our understanding.

We are conscious however that about the problem of the existence of a classicism in Byron and a northern tradition in Goethe's work, we must make justice to the latter in a certain sense: the chronology must be considered as well.

The first part of Goethe's "Faust" was written in 1808 and the second part was not finished till 1831. We notice then that against the extremely romantic Goethe of

the first part, we find in the second part another Goethe, who, by his journey in Italy, has been conquered by the most pure classicism, which is personified in the classical and immortal beauty of Helen. In Act III we assist to a very strange union: Helen and Faustus. And I think that a symbolism must be seen in this match: it is the most pure classic tradition, the world of the Greece of Heroes, Gods and Demigods, that has been fused together with the contemporary world and the northern tradition.

Faustus himself will tell Helen to forget her past: she must just feel to be Jupiter's daughter and the daughter of the Era of Myths.

A new Arcadia is hypothetically born for them, ready to contain their happiness.

This victory against time could be apparently inconsistent and unnecessary to the evolution of Faustus' destiny. But the new character we find here, Euforion, (Helen and Faustus' son) has its meaning in function of Faustus' attitude towards life and experience.

Euforion represents here "action", action in favour of a Land and of a Nation fallen in disgrace, in political, social and intellectual degradation: Greece.

This "action" directed towards a highly human purpose is going to have a great importance when the final

salvation or condemnation of Faustus is going to be decided. as loved by the most beautiful and interesting woman. In Act IV, Faustus will say: "To whom strongly operates, the world cannot be mute" (Goethe, "Faust", Francesco de Silva Editore 1950, pag. 348)

Without considering now a deeper analogy between Goethe's metaphysical thought and the Byronic religious credo, we must consider a more immediate analogy. It is accepted that in describing Euforion, Goethe was thinking of Byron. Byron for Goethe is the incarnation of a perfect mixture of classicism and modernity.

Euforion leaves the new Arcadia in which he is born, the love of his parents, the love of maids, to go to fight; and that is because this native land of him is too narrow, and most of all because he wants to fly higher and higher, because he is hearing the drums announcing "war" and "victory", because he wants to stimulate the man, born free, to keep his liberty. And of course his fate will be death, but at least "death in action".

This is exactly Byron's trajectory; in part these same illusions will lead him to find his death in Missolongi. And the words of the song of the Chorus could be considered as Byron's epitaph: Even if he is dead, he is going to be always remembered for the song

of his lyre and his courage. He was born by noble parents, he has been loved by the most beautiful and interesting women, but he has broken violently any link with tradition. In the end his ardour was directed to a great enterprise, but, alas! he failed.

Of course Byron died at Missolonghi, but at the same time I think that this death could be considered as a victory. In a certain sense, in accepting to fight in this campaign, he gave up the metaphysical ideals of his youth and he accepted a simpler reality; the more humble reality which consists in doing something every day. It does not matter the result, the most important thing is that at least he tried.

I conclude then, that if an analogy exists between the two Authors, we could talk of an influence of the first part of Faustus in Byron, and on the other hand, of a moral influence at least, of Byron in the second part of Goethe's "Faustus".

In a certain sense there is an analogy with Byron: in both we find personified an archetype: the angry young man of his day, trying to break with the complex religion, that means the archetype of the "rebellious".

In Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus" and Byron's "Manfred", there is a great belief in the potentialities of his



PARALLEL BETWEEN "MANFRED" AND "THE TRAGEDY OF
DOCTOR FAUSTUS" by CRISTOPHER MARLOWE.=

It might be a little adventurous to try to find any link or relation between two authors so distant in time, but still I think that this could be done appealing to the everlasting and out of doubt existence of a latent relation between literatures of all times and of all countries. Moreover Christopher Marlowe and Byron both belong to the same Country and so far we are allow to try to put them side by side. But really this is not the point.

The point lies in the personality of these two men. Marlowe is an Elisabethan, but his poetry has the attributes and is the result of a young man of the Renaissance, in the sense that he is rebellious against many traditions, social and religious traditions, and yet strongly influenced by the heritage of his own times. In a certain sense then there is an analogy with Byron: in both we find personified an archetype: the angry young man of his day, trying to brake with the orthodox religion, that means the archetype of the "nonconformist".

In Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus" and Byron's "Manfred", there is a great belief in the potentialities of the

human mind. They are going against orthodoxy, but they are both in search for infinite and wider values.

Scene This word "infinite" has to be analysed: in Marlowe it has a more definite and circumscribed meaning. Faustus is the scholar in search of unlimited knowledge, and of the power that this knowledge may confer. He gets it by making a compact with the devil: he gives his soul to him. The theme is great (though not new in literature), but simple and I may say ingenuous. Once the deal is accepted, what does he ask Mephistophilis? His questions all deal with infinite and supernatural matters and yet they are simple questions:

Scene VI - Faustus to Mephistophilis -

" 30 Come Mephistophilis, let us dispute again
And argue of divine astrology.
Tell me, are there many heavens above the moon?
Are all celestial bodies but one globe,
As is the substance of this centric earth?
.....
82 Tell me, who made the world? "

and so for. There is ingenuity in these questions, and there is ingenuity in the same Scene of the appearance of the devil and Mephistophilis. It is an ingenuity that has Medieval attributes, and this impression is augmented

by the use of latin; the "formula" of the conjuration is an example of it:

Scene III -

Sint mihi dei Acherontis propitii! Valeat numen
triplex Iehovae! Ignei aerei aquaticæ spiritus,
Salvete! Orientis princeps Belzebub, inferni
ardentis monarcha, et Demagorgon, propitiamus vos,
ut appareat et surgat Mephistophilis!

Quid tu moraris? Per Yehovam, Gehennam et conse-
cratam aquam quam nunc spargo, signumque crucis
quod nunc facio, et per vota nostra, ipse nunc
surgat nobis dicatus Mephistophilis!

(Grant me your favour, Gods of Acheron; Let the triple name of Jehovah prevail! Hail spirits of fire, air and water! Belzebub, prince of East, monarch of the fires of the hell and, Demogorgon, we propitiate you that Mephistophilis may rise up and appear. Why do you wait? By Iehovah, by Gehenna, and by the holy water which now I sprinkle, and by the sign of the cross which now I make, and by our prayer, now summoned by us, Mephistophilis, arise !)

And there appears Mephistophilis like a Friar as a result of these "heavenly words".

Everything is clear and easy; the conjuror laureate has reached his aim without too much mystery; of course

there is the Thunder and the Latin, but this is not sufficient to impress us.

In Byron there is not such clearness, the process of invocation, the appearance of not identified spirits and wights is much more obscure.

But the difference does not lie in the setting and scenery, it is a much more profound one. Even though they are both seeking for universal motives and solutions to their problems, the process is not the same.

First of all, Marlowe's Faustus is seeking for universal knowledge, this is the purpose of his deal with the devil, and he will spend "Twenty- four years" for vain pleasure. The "cunning" he has got through his dealing with the devil is a mean to "live in all voluptuousness", to have "whatsoever I demand", "to slay mine enemies" and "aid my friends". (Scene III).

To get all this he had first of all "to surrender up" his soul to Lucifer, and this is the point, this is the main divergence between Faustus and Manfred.

It is at this very moment that Byron breaks tradition and creates the HERO.

This essential divergence lies in the fact that Manfred will not surrender to any power, whatever this power might be, good or bad, celestial or infernal.

Both Goethe and Marlowe's Faustus stay "in" the tradition: to get their desires they bend and surrender, they bow to the power that is over them.

Byron-Manfred as we said will not surrender and he dies without bending.

Manfred did not want wisdom, nor knowledge, as he already had all this. By his own skill and human intelligence he has already got into the stage to govern Nature and the same Spirits that are in and over Nature. Manfred wants to go a step further: he wants oblivion. But as a matter of fact the point here does not consist in what he is asking for. Of course it has its importance; it is a result as well than a difference of Times: Marlowe in the Renaissance wants to "Know", Byron as a Romantic wants to "forget".

Above the personal situation that creates this difference of longings we could then lift this difference at a wider meaning: the sixteenth century wants to Know, wants to enlarge all the possible branches of human knowledge and the center of this activity is the Man. The nineteenth century wants to forget, may be because the results of that activity of knowledge has reached aims of which the Man is now perhaps afraid.

But as we said (and passing over these last, and

may be too out of the matter, considerations), this is not the point. The point, I repeat, consists in the attitude of supreme PRIDE that there is in Manfred.

An Analogy persists yet. Both in Faustus and Manfred there is fear of the Supernatural; this fear has its origin in the fact that they are certain about the existence of a supernatural power, it does not matter how do they call it. It might be God, the Trinity or Christ as in Faustus, it might be the "Overruling Infinite" or "the Maker" as in Byron.

What it has to be seen is how Faustus and Manfred face their own fear.

Faustus again keeps in the traditional line: at times he feels repentance coming through his rational soul, and at times he is nearly on the point of going backwards and abjure the devil. But he doubts of God's benevolence and of his power of pardoning his sins; he will say in Scene XLV:

"Faustus offence can ne'er be pardoned; the Serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus".

Marlowe creates an ATHEISTIC character in Faustus. We know that in 1553, the year of his death, investigations were done by the Privy Council about Marlowe's

"atheistic teachings". And now we may ask: who is more atheistic, Marlowe or Byron ?

We said that Faustus at times feels repentance, that means that he is not at all an atheist: he has not reached yet enough strength and enough self assurance to accept once for all the consequences of his former decision and therefore his destiny.

We see the failing come to his heart when his fellow-Scholars go to him and try to help him. Can the words that follow be the words of an atheist?

Scene XLV -

Scholar-Yet, Faustus call on God.

Faustus On God, whom Faustus hath blasphemed? Ah,
My God, I would weep, but the Devil draws in
My tears! Gush forth, blood, instead of tears,
Yea, life and soul. Oh he stays my tongue; I would
Lift up my hands but, see, they hold them, they
Hold them!

All Who, Faustus?

Faustus Mephistophilis.

His will then is here divided yet, he would call for mercy, but Lucifer and Mephistophilis hold him tight, he is now willing to accept the help, moral help, which his friends offer him, but he is unable to do so; his

deal with the devil has made his will useless and powerless.

For a better understanding of the moral difference in the position of Faustus and Manfred there is another character which appears in both plays : Marlowe call him "Old Man" and Byron calls him "Abbot", but they are and represent the same type and they have the same intentions towards the dying man; intention which consists in guiding his last steps to repentance and therefore to celestial and eternal rest.

Their intention is the same, but the results they obtain upon the objects of such intention are fairly different.

In both plays the Holy Old Man appears at the last moment, in the few last hours that have to decide the destiny of a soul going towards death. Let us see then the different reactions of the two dying men.

Faustus the same as he was inclined to accept his friends' help; again he accepts the words of comfort and hope which the Old Man offers him. We are not looking now at the result that this help is going to obtain, the point is that this help has been accepted.

Scene Xlll - Faustus to the Old Man -

67 Ah my sweet friend, I feel thy words

To comfort my distressed soul,

Leave me awhile to ponder on my sins.-

May be something could be done to save Faustus' soul, but it is really too late, he has gone too far in his moral degradation; his soul is too much under the control of the devil, and the Old Man himself, even trying hard, foresees the denouement:

Old Man to Faustus - Scene Xlll

70 I go sweet Faustus, but with heavy cheer
fearing the ruin of thy hopeless soul.-

The situation is utterly different in Byron:

The main theme is LONELINESS, a complete and unconditional loneliness, willingly accepted and maintained by the protagonist. It is the loneliness with all the characteristics of extreme PRIDE.

Manfred is conscious of his many crimes but he does not accept any mediator, nor any help.

Act lll - Scene 1

Manfred 52Whatever

I may have been, or am, doth rest between
Heaven and myself. I shall not choose a mortal
to be my mediator.-

The end of his life approaches and with it there comes the Spirit, or the Genius of the mortal who is going to die.

The Genius pretends to take away his soul: where to, we do not know, but what is clear is that a punishment is waiting for it. But Manfred has already made his choice:

Act III - Scene IV -

Manfred 123 Must be crimes be punished by other crimes?

And greater criminals? -Back to thy hell!

Thou hast no power upon me, that I feel;

Thou shalt never possess me, that I know:

What I have done is done; I bear within

A torture which could nothing gain from thine:

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 stripped of his mortality, derives

No colour from the fleeting things without,

But is absorbed in sufferance or in joy,

Born from the knowledge of its own desert.

Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;

I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey -

But was my own destroyer, and will be

My own hereafter. - Back, ye baffled fiends!

The hand of death is on me - but not yours!

I think that by giving these reasons to explain

his decision Manfred draws the full picture of his character in all his strength: he has achieved and completed the full picture of the HERO.

He wanted first "oblivion", but to obtain it he had to swear abedience to the Witch's will, and he does not actually accept this definite condition.

He refuses then to bend and surrender. The very fact that he wanted oblivion could be put as a weakness on his part: he asserted that the "knowledge of its own desert" was going to be his eternal torment, and avoiding this punishment he is not exactly behaving as an hero.

It is in the second moment of the process that he acquires a height of hero. First of all he refuses to surrender and then in the end he accepts "heroically" all the consequences: he accepts to die without forgetting.

He dies, he does not know where his soul is going to be led, and he takes with him consciously the burden of his memories. The punishment will consist then in this "bearing within" the torturing remembrances.

In making now the following statement, I do not pretend to be sympathetic to Manfred, but I think that the last words he pronounces before "taking his earthless flight", pretend to augment the formerly expressed idea of a freely accepted and self-inflicted punishment:

Act III -Scene IV -

Manfred- Old Man! Tis not so difficult to die.-

These words are evidently in contrast with the wild and excited words of the preceding acts and scenes. They pretend to reflect a situation of serenity in the dying man. And may be this serenity exists: it is the tranquillity attained after long moral struggle. But above all it is the proud tranquillity of the man that is conscious of his having heroically won a moral battle.

Following the trajectory of Manfred's life, we see then a lonely birth, a lonely and tragic existence, and a lonely and not less tragic death.

It is the process of a soul that in his extreme dream of greatness, has forgotten the meaning of a word: humility, accepting as his own and only law, the law of loneliness and pride.

He ends by creating a world of his own, away and apart from orthodoxy, in which at least, he thinks to have found a certain consequence and a kind of peace.

In other circumstances, social relations could be ignored, but as we said not in Byron's case.

It is admitted that men are social animals, and that to understand or to catalogue one of these men it

SOCIETY AND RELIGION.-

The former considerations about the analogies and differences in religious feelings in Faustus and Manfred have driven us to consider that the personality of this Manfred-Byron is permeated by an outstanding attribute: LONELINESS. The loneliness of a human being which contributes to create the figure of the "Hero" in all his life manifestations: religion, social relations etc.

I think that it should be interesting to consider a little deeply this loneliness expressed in these two sides. First of all, as we said, religion, or more particularly, the relation or the position of a man with his Creator, and secondly, society.

Religion, in this particular case I think should be considered as a result of a social background.

It might be asked why should be touched the ground of social life to enlighten the religious thought in a man.

In other circumstances, social relations could be ignored, but as we said not in Byron's case.

It is admitted that men are social animals, and that to understand or to catalogue one of these men it is

is necessary to see him among his fellow-creatures.

Byron's life consists in a subsequence of social events: events of acceptance and events of rejection. Acceptance and reject from two very neatly differentiated types of society: men and women.

And this last specification is not without a precise meaning; as we will see, it is extremely important in Byron.

We will then see him in these two aspects, each one with the derivations we pointed at, and of course never forgetting our main purpose: which consists in delimitating the character of the Hero.

Society.--

We should then start from Society and we will use for this study the later cantos of "Don Juan".

Even if these cantos are evidently permeated by a spirit widely different from Manfred's, it will be usefull to consider them anyway: it will be then a study going backwards, as we will return then to our Manfred.

We have a letter from John Bull to Byron from which we draw these lines:

".... You know the society of England, you Know what English gentlemen are made of...; and you very well

know what English ladies are made of; and...that "Knowledge" is a much more precious thing... than any "notion" you or any other Englishman can ever acquire either of Italians, or Spaniards or Greeks."

(John Bull's letter to Lord Byron - ed. A.L. Strout, Norman - Oklahoma 1947)

Which is Byron's purpose in writing these cantos? Byron sometimes thought of himself as a satirist of the traditional kind, writing with a serious and didactic purpose:

"Don Juan will be known by and bye, for what it is intended - a 'Satire' on 'abuses' of the present state of Society, and not an eulogy of vice."

(Prothero: "Letters and Journals" = VI, 155)

And he told Dr. Kennedy that his object was: "To remove the cloth, which the manners and maxims of society throw over their secret sins and shew them to the world as they really are. You have not been so much in high and noble life as I have been; but if you had fully entered into it, and seen what was going on, you would have felt convinced that it was time to unmask the specious hypocrisy, and shew it in its native colours... It is impossible you can believe the higher classes of society worse than they are in

England, France and Italy, for no language can sufficiently paint them."

(Kennedy James : "Conversations on Religion, with Lord Byron and others held in Cephalonia..." London 1834, pp. 163-4)

We see then that a profound knowledge of society is attributed to Byron, we see too that Byron's purpose consists exactly in describing, in analyzing this society and then in criticising it, if necessary.

Does Byron's criticism acquire an objective point of view, or it is conditioned by personal resentments?

Many are the opinions about this subject, and the reply is a little complex, that is to say, it is not unique, but has many shades.

There is one stanza in "Don Juan" - Canto XI, which could illustrate the attitude Byron took in criticising the English Society:

Stanza LXLX -

"Thrice happy he who, after a survey
Of the good company, can win a corner,
A door that's in'or boudoir out of the way
Where he may fix himself like small "Jack Horner",
And let the Babel round run as it may,
And look as a mourner, or a scorner,
Or an approver, or a mere spectator,

Yawning a little as the night grows later."

We conclude then that Byron has reached now his corner, but he has gained it after "a survey of the good company", after having been deeply involved in all the aspects of this society as an active member.

There are other stanzas in which the tone Byron uses in his critic is rather clear: Canto XLV -
Stanza XVII -

"Doubtless it is a brilliant masquerade:
But when of the first sight you have had your fill,
It palls - at least it did so upon me,
This paradise of pleasure and 'ennui'."

Stanza XVIII -

"When we have made our love, and gamed our gaming,
Drest, voted, shone, and, may be, something more;
With dandies dined; heard senators declaiming;
Seen beauties brought to market by the score
Sad rakes to sadder husbands chastely taming;
There's little left but to be bored or bore.
Witness those 'ci-devant jeunes hommes' who stem
The stream, nor leave the world which leaveth them."

And in another stanza, Stanza LXXIX of the same Canto:

"And hence high life is oft a dreary void,
A rack of pleasures, where we must invent

A something wherewithal to be annoy'd.
Bards may sing what they please about 'Content';
Contented, when translated, means but cloy'd;
And hence arise the woes of sentiment,
Blue-devils, and blue-stockings and romances
Reduced to practice, and performed like dances."

This is a satire written by an aristocrat who had savoured and exhausted all the pleasures of Society. The same happens for instance in these other stanzas about a country-house party, in which he describes with detail the boredom with a knowledge that can only rise from personal experience: Canto Xlll - Stanza Cl -

"The gentlemen got up betimes to shoot,
or hunt: the young, because they liked the sport-
The first thing boys like after play and fruit;
The middle-aged, to make the day more short;
For ennui is a growth of English root,
Though nameless in our language: -we retort
The fact for words, and let the French translate,
That awful yawn which sleep cannot abate."

Stanza ClI -

"The elderly walk'd through the library,
And tumbled books, or criticised the pictures,
Or saunter'd through the gardens piteously,

And made upon the hot-house several strictures,
Or rode a nag which trotted not too high,
Or on the morning papers read their lectures,
Longing at sixty for the hour of six."

It is evident here that Byron condemns this life as tedious, but there is in these lines more amusement than disgust, there is a shade of tolerance and sympathy more than a critic deploring this society bred in idleness.

We know that in the exile he had a keen sense of the boring, ridiculous and unpleasant aspects of society, but also that he felt a certain nostalgia for it, and in the former stanzas we can see then that he criticises and re-creates for this aim for us, its futility and its fun as well.

In any case it is a critic which is far from being objective: it is a critic fairly of "participation". The mood and the result of this participation depends greatly from the nearness in time of the social and personal events in Byron's life we were alluding to.

But this is not the most important thing we were pointing at. The most important thing we wanted to arrive to, is the existence of a "participation" to the society he is describing: Don Juan in these last cantos is living in the same world in which once Byron moved



like Juan.

A more evident proof of this participation is the extension the Author gives to the English episode: sixteen are Don Juan's cantos and six are devoted to the English Society.

As a consequence of this participation we find a deep difference in style and constructions between the former cantos and these last. For instance we can notice that Byron is far more confused about his feelings and that the strength of his critical judgments is not the same strength he employed in criticizing and disapproving WAR in cantos VII and VIII.

His attack on war I think is one of the most realistic attempts to reconcile poetry with truth and wisdom. That is, in Cantos VII and VIII, he leaves behind romantic feelings about fame, and heroic deeds, to go nearer to the reality of life, in all its wide meaning of horrible and realistic events.

Love, passion and the Mutability of Man's sentiments are put aside. But above all I think that in these cantos Byron is a real moralizer, that is, he is trying to show to men the realism of war, and the incongruity of death without sufficient justification.

In "Child Harold" (Canto III) he had already

touched this matter, but it was by another point of view.
In the Waterloo episode there is vividness and dramatism,
but they are only meditative statements and generalizations:
Childe Harold's Pilgrimage - Canto lll

Stanza XXVll -

"And Ardennes waves about them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave, -alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe
And burning with high hope shall moulder cold and low."

XXVlll

"Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms, - the day
Battle's magnificently stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is cover'd thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,
Rider and horse, - friend, foe, - in one red burial blent!"

War here is just a pure destructive force; Byron is here only concerned with the general situation of the brave men doomed to die.

On the other hand, as we said, in "Don Juan" generalizations are put aside and Byron enforces his moral judgements by giving us an accurate and truthful picture of human life, in one of his most terrific aspects: War.

Byron had already been interested in truth in his Eastern Tales, but there was more a question of getting the costumes and manners right.

About this section of the poem Byron wrote a letter to Moore, explaining his intentions:

"I have written three more cantos of Don Juan, and am hovering on the brink of another (the ninth). The reason I want the stanzas again which I sent you, is that as these cantos contain a full detail (like the storm in canto Second) of the siege and assault of Ismael, with much sarcasm on those butchers in large business, your mercenary soldiery, it is a good opportunity in gracing the poem with XXX. With these things and these fellows, it is necessary, in the present clash of philosophy and tyranny, to throw away the scabbard. I know it is against fearful odds; but the battle must

be fought; and it will; be eventually for good of mankind whatever it may be for the individual who risks himself". (Prothero: "Letters and Journals" VI, 101)

Maybe Byron's metaphores might seem exagorate, but we must remember that he had been ready in Italy to fight for liberty as he was to be later ready to fight tyranny in Greece.

We must admit then that his purpose is really the one we pointed at: to fight a battle, or in other words, to moralize (using poetry as a weapon to action) to help humanity by forcing them to see and face the truth and rousing them to indignation and febellion.

CXXI The seriousness of his moral aims is reinforced and strengthened by some stanzas in which he loose his seriousness, falling again in futility or at least, evading from reality. These are for example the Stanzas in which he describes the horrors of a sack:

Canto VIII - Stanza CXXIX -

"Much did they slay, more plunder and no less
Might here and there occur some violation
In the other line; - but not to such excess
CXXLI As when the French, that di&isipated nation,
Take towns by storm: no causes can I guess,
Except cold weather and commiseration;

But all the ladies, save some twenty scores,
Were almost as much virgin as before."

CXXX But while the thirst for gore and plunder raged,
"Some odd mistakes, too, happen'd in the dark,
Which show'd a want of lanterns, or of taste-
Indeed the smoke was such they scarce could mark
Their friends from foes, - besides, such things
(from haste
Occur, though rarely, when there is a spark
Of light to save the venerably chaste:
But six old damsels, each of seventy years,
Were all deflor'd by different grenadiers."

CXXXI : He is not making plain and objective statements, but he
is making
"But on the whole their continence was great;
So that some disappointment there ensued
To those who had felt the inconvinient state
Of a 'single blessedness', and thought it good
(Since it was not their fault, but only fate,
To bear these crosses) for each waning prude
To make a Roman sort of Sabine wedding,
Without the expense and suspense of bedding."

CXXXII : anyway, the exception confirms the rule:
except
"Some voices of the buxom middle-aged
Were also heard to wonder in the din

(Widows of forty were these birds long caged)

'Wherefore the ravishing did not begin!'

But while the thirst for gore and plunder raged,

There was small leisure for superfluous sin;

But whether they escaped or no, lies hid

In darkness - I can only hope they did."

If Byron tries here to make us laugh, I think that he does not reach his aim, as I am sure that he is not being funny at all; but he is being rather in bad taste, and I repeat, he abandons really the standard of morality on which his former satire had been based.

He is going against the principle he himself had stated: he is not making plain and objective satire, but he is making an eulogy of vice and a show of useless cynicism.

Maybe and as a justification, we could consider these stanzas as an escape from his own former moral intensity.

And as well his most cynical mood might be attributed to the argument: sex. Byron wants perhaps demonstrate to himself and to us too, that a man of the world should not take such things seriously.

But anyway, the exception confirms the rule: except for these few stanzas, Byron keeps in the line of a serious moralizer.

the same way as Byron?

Taking the attributes we have just described about Byron's way of critic, that is "Participation, "moral aims", and at the same time "confusion" in his feelings towards society, I think we could successfully make a parallel with another great moralizer in English literature: Alexander Pope.

This approach is not hasty or thoughtless. Byron is a Regency aristocrat, yet we must admit that he had a much greater range of interests and experiences, of ideas and feelings than the average man-about town; and this we saw just now in the episode about war and his interest in the value in some ideals.

As a Regency aristocrat, Byron belongs in the wider sense of the word, to that kind of society, that is, as a representative of that society he possesses not only the intellectual qualities, which his rank and education have given to him (a part his natural gifts of intelligence), but his vices and excesses as well, which Byron strongly and widely lived.

His criticism and irony about his own society are made possible by some kind of intellectual detachment and by an experience of the world acquired not only in his own Country, but abroad as well.

Did Pope belong to the society he criticised in the same way as Byron?

I think that this is a very important point to consider. Even if son of a commoner, Pope lived and participated of the society of "Reason" and "Rococo", but not in the same way as Byron did. As we said, Byron possessed rank, qualities and vices, and Pope, on the other hand had, or at least he thought to have and represent "the best" of his society. He is a member, nor a critic of Society and he identifies himself with the best traditions, social, intellectual, moral, and religious of his age. This position unables him to attack vice, folly, bad taste, as aberrations.

There is then a great difference in the start point and its consequences are clear: Byron is partly hostile, partly tolerant and sympathetic towards English Society, and with these fluctuations and ⁱⁿ this respect he is radically different from Pope.

Byron sometimes seems to keep in the best line of classic criticism and satire, but he again falls into the typical inconsequence of these last cantos.

And really the greatness and the characteristic of them does not lie in the denuntiation of sin and hypocrisy, but in a witty and brilliant survey of Society and in the naive presentation of his own mixed feelings towards it.

In comparison with Pope we find anyway analogies and differences.

Sometimes Byron attains effects in style and contents not unlike Pope's, as in the following stanzas, in which he describes the intoxicated bustle, the shoddiness and, at the same time, glitter and foolish pretentiousness of a London evening in the "beau monde":

"Don Juan" - Canto XI - Stanza LXVI -

"His afternoons he passed in visits, luncheons,
Lounging, and boxing; and the twilight hour
In riding round those vegetable puncheons
Call'd 'Parks', where there is neither fruit nor flower
Enough to gratify a bee's slight munchings;
But after all it is the only 'bower'
(In Moore's phrase) where the fashionable fair
Can form a slight acquaintance with fresh air."

LXII
"Then dress, then dinner, then awakes the world!

Then glares the lamps, then whirl the wheels, then roar
Trough street and square fast flashing chariots hurl'd
Like harness'd meteors; then along the floor

Chalk mimics paintings; then festoons are twirl'd;
Then roll the brazen thunders of the door,
Which opens to the thousand happy few

An earthly paradise of 'Or Molu'."

And we find the alike in Pope's Third Canto of "The Rape of The Lock", about a comic apostrophe to the formal Tea, attended by all the nymphs and heroes:

"In various talk the instructive hours they passed,
Who gave the ball or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks and eyes;
At very word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that."

One of the most excelling qualities in Pope is his capacity in creating sudden changes from what is deeply moving or sublime, to what is foolish or unimportant, or in other words a devotion to symmetrical patterns and a constant use of anthitheses. Sometimes his play with opposed thoughts is precarious, but normally he attains a masterful equilibrium.

And Byron sometimes seems to rival Pope in his own ground like in the following lines:

"Don Juan" - Canto XVI - Stanza LXIII -

"Now justice of peace must judge all pæces
of mischief of all kinds, and keep the game

And morals of the country from caprices
Of those who have not a license for the same;
And of all things, excepting tithes and leases,
Perhaps these are most difficult to tame:
Preserving partridges and pretty wenches
Are puzzles to the most precautions benches."

These two last lines sound very like these others by
Pope:

"Whether the hymph shall break Diana's Law,
Or some frail China Jar receive a Flaw,
Or stain her Honour, or her new Brocade...."

("The poems of Alexander Pope" - Twickenham edn. London 1939)
11 - 164).

The analogy yet should be found not only in the
superficial employ of alliteration and juxtaposition of
terms but in the meaning and conception.

Pope puts on the same level Belinda's Honour and
her new Brocade, virginity and a China Jar.

Byron on the other hand puts on the same level
"partridges" and "pritty wenches".

They both give the same importance to subjects
that obviously do not have it.

But we come now to the main difference we were
trying to discover: under and in spite of this light-

hearted satire, Pope adheres firmly to his moral principles; there is no doubt about the writer's moral point of view. There is humour, but not ambiguity in his personal position and participation on the subject he is dealing with.

There is participation in Pope, in the sense that he evidently takes a real delight in the "patches", "powders", the perfumes, the puffs, as well as the frilled vanities and follies on which the "smart" Society was founded.

It might be said then, that in Pope's attitude there is a complacent acceptance, but this acceptance is directed to the Society's external habits and not towards its morals.

And this last is the most important point of opposition and contrast between Pope and Byron.

In Byron as we said, there is "participation" as there is "participation" in Pope, but then, this "participation", as it finds its origin in the profound and fatal inheritance of birth and social background deeply rooted in Byron, it exerts in him such an influence as to create some doubt about the steadiness of the writer's own position about the moral "lesson" he is giving.

Religion.-

We have seen now the existence of a critic in Byron towards his own society, but as well a certain kind of pride in belonging to this same society.

It does exist an analogous attitude of both influence and repulsion in the religious thought towards the religion of his own time.

This is a very important point to understand the need of a fatal attitude in Byron and its expulsion personified in the creation of the Byronic Hero.

There is a letter written to his wife Annabella, dated September the 26th, in whichnByron declares clearly his religious feelings:

"I come now to a subject of your inquiry which you must have perceived I always hitherto avoided - an awful one - Religion. I was bred in Scotland among Calvinists in the first part of my life which gave me a di-
a dislike to that persuasion. Since that period I have vi-
sited the most bigotted and credulous of countries -
Spain, Breece, Turkey. As a spectacle the Catholic is
more fascinating than the Greek or Moslem; but the
last is the only believer who practices the precepts of
his Prophet to the last Chapter of his Creed. My opinions

are quite undecided. I may say so sincerely, since, when given over at Patras in 1810, I rejected and ejected three Priest-loads of spiritual consolation by treatening to turn Mussulman if they did not leave me quiet. I was in great pain and looked upon death as in that respect a relief without much regret for the past, and few speculations of the future... I believe doubtless in God and should be happy to be convinced of much more. If I do not place implicit faith in tradition and revelation of any human creed, I hope it is not from want of reverence for the Creator, but the created, and//... but the moral of Christianity is perfectly beautiful and sublime of virtue - yet even there we find some of its finer precepts in the earlier axioms of the Greeks - particularly 'Do unto others as you would they should do unto you' - the forgiveness of injuries, and more which I do not remember...."

(R.E. Prothero ed. "The Works of Lord Byron: Letters and Journals"- London 1898-1901; Vol.111, pp. 401-403)

That is, then, Religion for Byron: "an awful subject". Yet as we said it is a subject which cannot be ignored in the explanation of his need of heroic attitude and in the creation of an objectivation of

this attitude: the heroes in his dramas and tales. Byron was bred in the Calvinistic thought and he has a dislike for this kind of moral rules, all based on strict and logical thought. Moreover there is another point that has to be considered: Byron was influenced as well by the greatest religious power in the eighteenth and nineteenth century in England: the Evangelical Christianity of which the Victorian England was the social product.

It has to be noted that Byron keeps believing in God, but that he has renounced as well the tranquil confidence of a man that keeps believing not just in God, but in the "tradition and revelation".

I think that is now clear the meaning of the statement he made in the letter I have reported on page 13: "But, for the soul of me, I cannot and will not give to lie to my own thoughts and doubts, come what may. I am a fool, it is at least a doubting one; and I envy no one the certainty of his self- approved wisdom. All are inclined to believe what they covet, from a lottery-ticket up to a passport to Paradise, - in which from the description I see nothing very tempting."

It is the attitude of the man who is not against

the belief in a Creator, but against the "superstructures" that society has created and to use Byron's own word it is against the "created" that he is.

If we are allowed to define as "superstructures", all the tradition and dogmas of a revealed religion as the Christian creed is.

Moreover we assert that there is a certain point in Evangelicalism which could be defined as a weakness: Evangelicalism is a moral and spiritual movement, more than an intellectual one. That means that Evangelicalism did not admit the need of an intellectual reintegration or vindication of the Christian faith.

We conclude then that Byron has already acquired an intimate knowledge of the Bible at Aberdeen, but at the same time he is influenced by the "scepticism" that is widely spread by the Evangelist society. Scepticism which has its origin in the strict dogmas affirmed by this creed.

We find then two essential forces, and two antagonistic ones, in Byron's life: the sceptic and, if looked by an orthodox point of view, sacrilegious ideals of his own, and the pietistic religious attitude of the middle-class Evangelicals.

It cannot be denied the reality of a passionate

nature in Byron, and it is this rather wild and uncontrollable nature that drove him into the first attitude of aversion towards any religious rule. But there is at the same time the strong social background that inevitably creates an opposition and a dualism in his soul. It is may be as the protest of the better and quiter part of his nature against a certain kind of extreme and wild passion and pride.

It is not in vain then, that we started our study from his "Don Juan": in Don Juan and generally in his latest works, the dualism between the two psychological forces we were talking about, has reached a certain kind of objectivation, and therefore Byron is able to shape his attitude in a kind of logical satire. The scepticism persists yet, but it is an organised one, it is a scepticism which originates a conscious, though ironical, criticism.

When he was first driven into exile, the conflict was not yet clarified; it existed, but was still very confused. It was more rather like a feeling in his own heart: "I wish I could easily get rid of thinking, or at least the confusion of thoughts"(page 15)

There is in "Childe Harold", in "Manfred", in Cain, in "Lara", a confused, yet very wild and clearly perceived,

sense of wrong doing. All the protagonists have deep in their hearts the sense of sin, and a proud and passionate conflict originated by the doctrines of predestined sin and predestined guilt, which find their origin, as we said, in the Evangelical-Calvinist-Agustinian creed. Effectively the "motif" in "Manfred" is eternal suffering for inexplicable crime. And all the play consists in the progressive revelation of the hero's character and history in search for an escape from the consciousness of guilt. We admit then that the inconsistency and the inexistence of a logical thought in Manfred.

(R.S. Prothero: "The Works of Lord Byron: Letters and Journals") For a better understanding of this conflict and its consequences of confusion in thought, of this sense of unexplained attitude of despair, we could touch a theme that frequently recurs in Byron; NATURE. Byron wrote the first two acts of Manfred in 1816 (September). In April the 25th of the same year, Byron left England and precisely in September (17th-29th) he went on a Journey in the Alps with his friend Hobbhouse. And we have a description of this journey: "The Journal of my journey in the Alps contains all the germs of Manfred..."

"I am a lover of Nature and an admirer of Beauty. I can bear fatigue and wellcome privation, and have seen some of the noblest views in the world. But in all this - the recollections of bitterness and more especially of recent and more home desolation, which must accompany me through life, have preyed upon me here; and neither the music of Shepherd, the crashing of Avalanche, nor the Torrent, the Mountain, the Glacier, the Forest, the Cloud, have for a moment lightened the weight upon my heart, nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty and the power, and the glory around, above, and beneath me."

(R.E. Prothero: "The Works of Lord Byron: Letters and Journals" - Vol.111, page 364)/

We have in this passage exactly "all the germs of Manfred".

The first deduction we can draw, is that Nature and its description are not at all the main purpose of the drama. Though there is in Byron's descriptions of Nature a deep feeling and admiration for it (we must not forget the place that Nature has in the Romantic poetical and literary tradition in England), and as beautiful and as roaring as they are, these descriptions of nature are not the main aim of Byron's poetry: the

central character is not Nature, it is the "hero", the man with the weight of his recollections and desolation.

We notice as well, that the Scenes of Nature in its different manifestations, are situated in the composition of the drama, at the beginning of each new scene: that means that they are the "setting" of the action we are going to assist to.

Shelley read Byron's "Manfred" and rather liked it:

"There are passages most wonderfully impressive", but then he adds: "Why do you indulge this despondency? It made me dreadfully melancholy."

("Lord Byron's Correspondence" - John Murray ed. London 1922, Vol. 11, p. 59 : Letter to Byron- Marlow, July 9th 1817)

We see then that "Manfred" is primarily a "metaphysical" poem, and that Byron's interest lies in the hero and in the display of his characteristics and problems; in a word it is not the landscape that is interesting but the "something else" and that "weight upon my heart".

The purity of Nature is always used to put in evidence the wretchedness of Man.

For instance in Act 1 - Scene 11, after describing the beautiful and glorious visible world he will say:

"But we who name ourselves its sovereigns, we
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit,
To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence make
A conflict of its elements, and breathe
To breath of degradation and of pride,
Contending with low wants and lofty will,
Till our mortality predominates,
And men are what they name themselves,
And trust not^{to} each other.... "

Byron will say later in 1821: "What is poetry?
The feeling of a former world and a future."

And this is exactly the kind of poetry that we find
in Manfred, a feeling and a psychological situation,
not an organised essay about religion, sin and retri-
bution.

It is may be useful to look rapidly at "Childe
Harold" in search of the "ego" necessary to the
shaping of the hero. And this "via" towards an extreme
centralization of the character could be found through
the feeling of the protagonist towards Nature.

In the first two Cantos it is clear that Childe
Harold is not yet an "hero", as he is introduced for
the sake of giving some connection to the piece, as

Byron himself wrote in the Preface to his Work.

I don't venture to say that the landscape and the description of strange Countries have the main part in these two Cantos, but they have a great part in them. The problems of Childe Harold are not of the kind of Manfred's. They have a more definite and general value. The poem expresses the mind of Europe when the long period of high hopes and fierce conflicts which the French Revolution inaugurated, had ended with Waterloo. We have great Men, Napoleon, Rousseau, Voltaire, Gibbon, Hannibal; we have as well great events: Waterloo, Cannae; and great Cities: Venice, Florence, Rome. All these Men, Events, Cities, tell the same: "Vanitas Vanitatum", and only Nature and only Beauty endures. Childe Harold after his dealing with humanity, feels solitude, desillusion and isolation. But the most important thing is that one thing persists: the possibility of a "conversation" with Nature. It still persists then the Wordsworthian and Shelleyan conception of Nature: a Nature- Mother, mild and benevolent who is still able to 'fill' and give shelter to one of his desillusioned children.

The night is not yet an eternal vigil in despair, but can be a rest. We clearly see all this in "Childe



Harold", Canto 11 - Stanza XXXVII -

"Dear Nature is the kindest mother still;
Though always changing in her aspect mild;
From her bare bosom let me take my fill;
Her never-wean'd though not her favour'd child.
Oh! she is fairest in her features wild
Where nothing polish'd dares pollute her path:
To me by day or night she ever smiled
Though I have mark'd her when none other hath,
And sought her more and more and loved her
(best in wrath."

There is then a conversation with Nature, it is a solitude, a physical solitude may be, but it is not yet the loneliness and the isolation that will lead the hero to despair and tragic ending.

Canto 11 - Stanza XXV -

"To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scenes,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold,
Alone o'er steps and foaming falls to lean;
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her
(stores unroll'd."

We find then this other kind of isolation in the two last Cantos. And I think it is significant that it is now that Byron starts to employ the first person "I". Canto lll - Stanza lll.

"In my youth summer I did sing of one
The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind..."

It is the year 1816 : the "fatal year", and we are rapidly approaching to the apex in the evolution of the Byronic personality. The apex in which everything and everybody exists and has a significance just in function and around this new being that is born: the hero. The hero who suffers injustice, the hero who tries to understand his place among the complexity of the human world. In Canto lll, Stanza Vll, we find the consciousness of a change and as well the first Byron's tendency to assume the attribute of the hero, who is ready to "bear" without bending, under the influence, as hurting as it could be, of Fate.

"Yet I must think less wildly: -I have thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:
And thus untaught in youth my heart to tame,
My springs of life were poison'd. 'Tis too late!

Yet I am changed; though still the same
In strength to bear what time cannot abate,
And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate."

We said that we are nearer and nearer to the personification of the hero as it is in Manfred, but we have not yet arrived. That is explained by Byron's attitude towards Nature. Childe Harold looks backwards to his own life and concludes: "I have lived in vain"; he looks at all the great Men of the European countries that have fought for some ideal and finds that they are dead, and if they are still alive, their life has no purpose and no meaning, and he asks himself a question:

Canto lll - Stanza LXXI

"It is not better then to be alone,
And love Earth only for its earthly sake?"

And again in the LXXII of the same Canto:

"I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities a torture: I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
Classed among creatures, when the soul can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain."

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"And thus I am absorb'd, and this is life...."

Even here Nature keeps being a friend for him: he has met humanity and he remained disgusted by it. The result is that he does not ask yet for forgetfulness, as he will do in "Manfred", but his first impulse is to find an escape to his desillusion in the sein of Nature. He literally plunges into Nature in a way c which we could define "pantheistical".

He resolves in a generalization of annulment of personality the problems that we have defined as general: the general theme of historical world desillusion.

In "Manfred" there is not such a generalization. The main note is of a more deeply personal value.

In all the Drama Byron seems to demand more sympathy and admiration for the hero, his greatness based on his virtues and attributes: aristocracy or superiority upon ordinary humanity, independence and pride, strength of will, in a word he wants here to create the "unique superman".

W.J. Calvert will say that it is an attempt

"to give objective expression to intensely subjective emotions" (W.J. Calvert: "Byron, Romantic Paradox", Chapel Hill, North Carolina 1935).

We can see each of the "virtues" attributed to the hero, exalted by his attitude towards each of the Dram. Pers. which appear in the Drama and I think it should be interesting, to consider them one by one to give the final full picture of the hero in Manfred.

For instance, from the first Scene in act 1, we can draw two attributes: his fatality and his negative position towards Nature.

We have seen Byron's attitude towards Nature in "Childe Harold", and we saw how Childe Harold accepts, even in his despair to be pantheistically accepted in its sein in search of a kind of motherly protection and consolation. In Manfred this does not happen any more. Byron fully rejects the Wordsworthian and Shelleyan concepts of nature: he denies the power of nature, both of spiritual and physical Nature. And we can see this clearly when he summons the Spirits of Earth, Ocean, Air, Night, Mountains Winds and his own Star.

The status or essence of these Spirits is not clarified, we do not understand exactly whether they represent aspects of physical nature, or some spiritual being behind natural phenomena; but what is important it is not the essence of these spirits, It is mainly

important that these spirits are no more able to give him what he is asking: forgetfulness. The reason is simple: the only thing they could give is the mastery of the elements which are under their control, but they have no power to grant him oblivion in death as they are immortal and they cannot tell him whether death will bring what he desires. It is asserted then an elision between man and nature, and the former "conversation" with it has been interrupted.

This separation puts in evidence one more thing: the man is now alone, alone and doomed by some fate, blasted and perverted; it is the fatal being alone without any possibility of help coming from the outside.

In the incantation which follows the seventh spirit assumes the form of a beautiful female: Astarte, and we deduce that it is the spirit of his lost Love. The incantation fill up the picture of the hero as a man accursed and sinful, isolated from his fellows by his agony and guilt.

Then from this isolation he strats to build up the hero, beginning by giving him the attributes of aristocracy: this is evident in the long dialogue with the Chamois Hunter.

Furthemore he contrasts the Chamois Hunter's simple life and virtues with his own blighted and tormented soul, but he rejects the other's attempt at consolation, since he despises Christian piety and Christian ethics. And his spiritual pride and self-sufficiency are further emphasised by his, receptions of the Hunter's final words : Act II, Scene I

C. Hun. " Heaven given thee rest!

And penitence restore thee to thyself;

My prayers shall be for thee.

Man. I need them not- But can endure thy pity."

In the next scene Manfred calls up the Witch of Alps, and he describes to her his love for Astarte, her death and his consequent search for oblivion. The witch offers to assist him on condition that he swears obedience to her, but he refuses, preferring to endure his agony rather than to submit to such a degradation:

Man. "I will not swear to Obey! and whom the spirits

Whose presence I command...."

And this parallels the episode of the Chamois Hunter in his rejection of Christianity, and the same will happen with the Old Man in act III.

All the other attributes of pride, independence, greatness, strength of will, are evident in other

episodes, which Byron is continuously inventing.

This evident in the episode of Arimanes.

The hero seeks help from:the devil Arimanes and his servants, and refuses again to kneel to him.

The fact that he goes to the Devil for aid instead to the God whom he acknowledges to be superior is significant. It is surely because he thinks he can meet Arimanes on equal terms, whereas the other would require some form of submission.

The hero in Manfred considered in the central problem of the poem, which is guilt, has an emotional immaturity, and in a moral-metaphysical play like "Manfred" this is not very convincing.

But this is not very important as we have admitted that this drama is an "expulsion" and we know as well that Byron "feels" but he is incapable of a philosophical solution.

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