THE RICE INSTITUTE

BYRON'S IDEA OF LIBERTY IN THE POETRY OF THE
CHILDE HAROLD PERIOD

by

CAMILLA GROBE

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

Approved

May 2, 1953

Houston, Texas
May, 1953
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Political Liberty</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Dissatisfaction with Society</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. The Realization of Liberty</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS


NOTE: If it is not stated otherwise, all references to Byron's poetry are to The Complete Poetical Works, ed. Paul E. More.
LIST OF WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED


INTRODUCTION

One of the epithets most frequently used to describe Byron is the term inconsistent. The views expressed in his poems are often taken to be contradictory. That his ideas and feelings appear widely dissimilar and cover an extensive range of experience must be granted. Their divergence, however, does not preclude a basic consistency.

The purpose of this thesis is to define Byron's concept of liberty and to show how the search for this concept is the unifying theme of the poetry to the Childe Harold period. This interval extends from October 31, 1809, when Canto I was begun at Janina, in Albania, to January 2, 1818, when Canto IV was completed at Venice. It is a period of turbulent creativeness and of ideas and emotions in ferment.

The following pages present a summary of the interpretation proposed in this thesis. In Chapter I the central theme, liberty, is discussed in relation to the poet's views on politics. Chapter II is a study of Byron's dissatisfaction with society. The final chapter investigates the basis of this dissatisfaction, its relation to Byron's ideas on freedom, and his ultimate definition of liberty.

More specifically, Chapter I deals with the development of Byron's concept of political liberty. The poetry of the Childe Harold period reveals an increasing penetration into the problems of attaining freedom. Byron's poetry encompasses several aspects of political endeavor.

The examples of tyranny which Byron observed, especially
in Albania and in France, impelled him to a consideration of the characteristics of the tyrant. A conflict between base ambition and lofty desire for liberty was inherent in every leader, Byron believed. In the great leader, however, the valid aim for his people would dominate the degrading passion for personal gain. The great leader's command of his own passions must include the capacity to subordinate himself to law, as political liberty involved the allegiance of everyone in the state, including the ruler, to "just" law.

As tyrannical passion was the danger inherent in the leader, so submissiveness was the base instinct of the people. The traditions of freedom which Greece and Venice had inherited made present vassalage even more degrading. The examples of attainment of liberty given by former citizens should serve both as an inspiration and as a model for modern subjects.

Byron held the people responsible for the power which the tyrant wielded over them. Their passivity, or even obsequiousness, constituted the source of despotic command. Byron's admiration for the Spanish resistance to Napoleon contrasts sharply with his scorn for Portuguese indifference. The ultimate blame for the tyranny of Napoleon resides in the pusillanimity of the French people. The same is true in the case of the sway of the Turks over Greece; the unconquerable spirit of Thermopylae has been dominated by weakness. Thus also Venice's 1300 years of liberty have been undermined by the loss of moral stamina in her people.

The drama which animates much of Byron's political poetry consists of the conflict between the hope for the realization
of liberty and the despair for its difficult attainment. The hope for liberty, in turn, rests upon the love of liberty inherent in every citizen; the despair resides in the weakness also instinctive in every man. Byron was less concerned, therefore, with the form or mechanics of the state, than with the dominant spirit of its people. The love of liberty within the individual was, for Byron, a greater guarantee of freedom than the type of political structure.

Related to Byron's dissatisfaction with politics was his dissatisfaction with society in general. The modern stereotype of Byron as social rebel is inaccurate, as witnessed both by his attitudes in his poetry and by the facts of his life. Both bear testimony that he was not seeking to overthrow established conventions and institutions, but was rather seeking reform within the prescribed order. He did not advocate that society should revolt from traditional principles, but that it should fulfill the goals it professed.

Many of Byron's attitudes toward society during the **Childe Harold** period revolve about the "exile from society," who embodies the feelings of estrangement. Both a "love of liberty and a detestation of cant" contribute to the sense of exile. The distinguishing characteristic of the exile is his pride and his independent nature. His love of liberty arises from the necessity for freedom demanded by individualism.

Travel does not bring resolution of the conflict with society. Foreign societies, as well as English, the poet concludes, give verbal, not actual, homage to their standards. Between the profession and the practice of ideals is a world
of transgressions.

Byron's return to England in 1811 did not bring a resolution of the problem of dissatisfaction with society. His first attempt at understanding the conflict was not made until 1816, after he had left England. Then, under the influence of Shelley and the grandeur of the Swiss Alps, Byron sought recompense in nature for society's failure. Though he professed that nature revealed to him "the language of another world," it was not Byron's native tongue, nor could it yield to him an explanation of his disappointment in society.

From his reflections upon the nature of the individual man, however, Byron gained insight into the fundamental problem. His basic premise was that man's essence is "half dust, half deity." It is man's dual nature that is responsible for the woeful discrepancy between ideals and realities. Society did not debase man; man debased society. Thus the evils of society originated in the evil inherent in every individual. Man should not be regarded, in Byron's estimation, as naturally good, but as essentially both good and evil.

The force for good inherent in man's nature is identified with spirit, or mind, or imagination. This "Promethean spark" presents mind with visions of the ideal. These visions gain greater validity in that they are somehow associated with a divine origin. The force for good is opposed by the principle of turpitude. This degrading factor is embodied in man's material aspect, which makes him a subject of his own passions as well as the passions of others.

Man's struggle for freedom, a struggle to be free from
the degrading element inherent in his nature, has political, as well as social, significance. Love of liberty is thus associated with the aspiring characteristic of man and submissiveness with the base characteristic. The foundation of tyranny is the loss of moral fortitude.

Through the aspirations of his spiritual element, however, man can overcome the principle of turpitude, which engenders both the desire to tyrannize and the desire to yield, the former being the vice of the strong and the latter the vice of the weak. The imagination, which is an aspect of man's spiritual nature, has significant power as inspiration towards freedom. The independence of spirit of Italy's great artists infused a vision of freedom into the works of each. Thus art may serve both as revelation and preservation of the ideal of liberty and should inspire its realization.

The most significant victory for imagination, however, is the domination of mind over material reality. The highest attainment of ideal freedom is possible only in mind and is, furthermore, the greatest realization. Byron's concept of liberty has transcended the aims of practical politics when he regards it as the "Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind." Hence, for Byron, the ultimate realization of liberty is the independence of spirit.
CHAPTER I

POLITICAL LIBERTY

The meaning of political liberty, as revealed in Byron's poetry, was greatly enriched during the Childe Harold period. From a superficial support of the traditional Whig doctrines, Byron's attitude developed into a lasting concern for the spirit of liberty in the individual. His interest in foreign affairs, even more than his participation in English politics, contributed to the evolution of his concept of political liberty.

What is purposed here is to trace the development of the meaning of political liberty in Byron's poetry during the period which encompasses the writing of the four cantos of Childe Harold. Byron's tours of 1809 to 1811 and, further, his exile from England in 1816 tended to render him, as he later termed himself, "a citizen of the world." Doubtless, the resultant attitude was much more cosmopolitan, much broader, than any view he could have gained from continued association with traditionally English, traditionally Whig principles. Byron recognizes the influence of travel upon his political thought. Medwin quotes the poet as saying,

Perhaps, if I had never travelled,--never left my own country young,--my views would have been more limited. They extend to the good of mankind in general--of the world at large. Perhaps the prostrate situation of Portugal and Spain--the tyranny of the Turks in Greece--the oppression of the Austrian Government at Venice--the mental debasement of the Papal states, (not to mention Ireland,)--tended to inspire me with a love of liberty....I am become a citizen of the world.1
In the poems of the Childe Harold period, Byron considers various aspects of political liberty in connection with several foreign countries. Spain, Greece, and Venice impel him to emphasize the significance of the traditions of liberty. The concept emerges that the dominance of the love of freedom in the past citizens of a country makes present submission to tyranny even more ignominious. The valid aims and the false aims of the leader of a people are also analyzed in Byron's verse. Mainly from his observations of the rules of Ali Pasha and of Napoleon, Byron was to evolve his concept of the great leader. However, in Byron's regard, both of these sovereigns failed to fulfill that ideal. In Byron's poetry their weakness embodies the universal cause of despotism.

In every country Byron marked the relationship of the spirit of liberty in the individual to political liberty in the state. He was less concerned with the form or mechanics of the state than with the attitudes, primarily, of its people and, secondarily, of its leader. The poet's developing views emphasize the theme of the importance of the love of liberty in the individual.

Byron's early political activities were more the result of propinquity and propriety than of any deep-felt enthusiasms. Before his tour abroad, Byron exhibited a preference for the Whig party; but his propensity at this stage could hardly be called zealous. In this early period of his life, his political actions were often the consequence of temporary personal prejudices rather than of either thoughtful consideration or emotional sympathy.
In February, 1806, Byron wrote his mother that he desired to leave Cambridge, as he was convinced his education would gain more through a tour abroad. Two years later he reiterated to his mother his belief that a foreign tour would be an asset to him. He writes that he is considering a political career upon his return. He maintains that "a few years' knowledge of other countries than our own will not incapacitate me for that part...it is from experience, not books, that we ought to judge of them." Byron expresses here the traditional attitude, enriched by Shaftesbury and Thomson, of the young Briton toward the continental tour, that it would further the development of his political judgment.

Byron's attendance at the university had been desultory. After the rejection of his plans for a European tour, he found a new extra-curricular activity through his friendship with John Cam Hobhouse. Their association led to Byron's joining the newly formed Cambridge Whig Club, of which Hobhouse was, if not the founder, as Byron later maintained, a leading spirit.

In October, 1806, Byron displayed his party loyalty through his poem "On the Death of Mr. Fox." The young Whig poet with intensity eulogized Fox, "o'er whose corse a mourning world must weep." We should note, however, that his lines are a general defense of Fox's honor and greatness, not a justification of that Whig leader's political principles.

In March of 1809, Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* appeared. Though primarily a satire against specific critics and authors of the contemporary English scene, the poem also
derides the Tory government. Byron was speaking as a Whig when he enjoined Britain:

Still hear thy motley orators dispense
The flowers of rhetoric, though not of sense,
While Canning's colleagues hate him for his wit,
And old dame Portland fills the place of Pitt."

Byron's sarcasm was not reserved exclusively for Tories, however. The chief offense against him had been perpetrated by the Whig organ, the Edinburgh Review, which had occasioned English Bards by its contemptuous attack on Byron's early collection of poems, Hours of Idleness. Byron's invective spread to Holland House, the Whig gathering place, and its master and associates.

Illustrious Holland! hard would be his lot,
His hirelings mention'd, and himself forgot!
Holland, with Henry Petty at his back,
The whipper-in and huntsman of the pack.
Blest be the banquets spread at Holland House,
Where Scotchmen feed, and critics may carouse!
Long, long beneath that hospitable roof
Shall Grub-street dine, while duns are kept aloof."

These lines on the hosts and visitors of Holland House were soon very much regretted by Byron. They do serve, however, to show the strong hold Byron's personal feelings had over his political interests at that time.

On March 13, two days before English Bards was published, Byron took his seat in the House of Lords. Concerning this occasion, Byron had earlier written Hanson, "though I shall not run headlong into opposition, I will studiously avoid a connection with ministry."\(^8\) William A. Borst remarks in his Lord Byron's First Pilgrimage that, though in this statement Byron did not strongly favor either party, yet he did betray some preference. Borst further comments that "there is no
real reason for doubting his sincerity when he closed the letter to Hanson with the statement, 'So much for Politics, of which I at present know little and care less.' 9

In June of the same year Byron realized his long-felt desire to go abroad. On the 28th of the month, from Falmouth, he jubilantly wrote the Rev. Henry Drury: "We sail tomorrow in the Lisbon packet... by this time tomorrow evening we shall be embarked on the vide world of vaters, vor all the world like Robinson Crusoe." 10

The distance Byron traveled across this "vide world of vaters" brought him to a new world of experience. As Borst points out, Byron probably had thought little about the Iberian war before his visits to the countries involved. "Almost certainly if so articulate a young man as Byron had felt the passionate zeal for the Spanish cause that animated many of his fellow countrymen, there would have been at least some passing reference to the war in his many letters to his friends or in the poetry he wrote in late 1808 and early 1809." 11 Once landed on the Peninsula, however, Byron was deeply moved by the war's wretched effects which he himself witnessed. In Medlin's Conversations of Lord Byron, Byron has been quoted as saying that the "prostrate situation of Portugal and Spain" was perhaps one very important factor which "tended to inspire me with a love of liberty." 12

From his experiences in Portugal and Spain, Byron received, also, a lasting impression of the futility of war. His first iambics in Childe Harold relevant to this theme concern the much-derided Convention of Cintra. In 1808 Napoleon put his
brother Joseph on the throne of Madrid, deposing Charles IV. The Spaniards rose in arms and drove Joseph out. They then called on England to help them restrain Napoleon's aggressions. England sent Wellesley, who began his successes in the Peninsular War by defeating the French at Rolica, August 1st. On the 21st he mastered Junot at Vimeriro. The next day Sir Harry Durrard superseded Wellesley in command and countermanded Wellesley's orders to give pursuit, thus losing the opportunity for a complete victory. The Convention of Cintra allowed Junot and his French troops to return to France unmolested. So great was the public displeasure in England at the escape of the enemy that a court of inquiry was held. In stanzas 24-26 of Canto I of Childe Harold, Byron expresses his rancor also. The English war efforts were futile, he feels, because "policy" frustrated them. Byron is indignant when he protests:

Here Folly dash'd to earth the victor's plume,
And Policy regain'd what arms had lost....

Though Byron sympathized with the cause of freedom both for Portugal and Spain, he does not sympathize with the Portuguese people themselves. In stanza 16 of Childe Harold, I, in reference to English aid to Portugal, Byron says accusingly of the British that,

...Albion was allied
And to the Lusians did her aid afford,—
A nation swoln with ignorance and pride,
Who lick yet loathe the hand that waves the sword
To save them from the wrath of Gaul's unsparing lord.

Later in the same canto, Byron compares the Portuguese and the Spanish peasants. His partiality for the Spanish is as strong as his scorn for the Portuguese:
Well doth the Spanish hind the difference know
Twixt him and Lusian slave, the lowest of the low.\(^{14}\)

There were numerous reasons why Byron, or any Englishman
of that period, would be averse to the Portuguese. Borst dis-
cusses several factors which probably contributed to Byron's
attitude. The usual view of foreigners, even before the war,
had been that the Portuguese were a people "cowed by a despotic
ruling family and a greedy overbearing clergy."\(^{15}\) Byron most
likely felt also a contempt for the former rulers and leading
families of Portugal. In November of 1807, frightened by
Napoleon's threats, the royal family and 15,000 of its leading
subjects fled to Brazil, yielding Portugal to Napoleon without
a struggle. Portuguese prestige among the nations was, of
course, greatly diminished by this precipitate action.

In Wordsworth's *Tract on the Convention of Cintra*, Sir
Robert Ker Porter is quoted as observing, "I have heard of
nations submitting quietly to a generous conquerer; but to
sheathe the half-drawn sword, to bend the head without a word
to the yoke of violence and extortion, is an abjectness of
spirit never before paralleled, I believe, in the history of
man."\(^{16}\) Borst adds, "Porter spoke for many Englishmen when
he declared that 'It has been a growing evil with Portugal,
the assistance she has always sought in all her wars from
foreign powers.'"\(^{17}\)

As opposed to the passive submission of the Portuguese,
the stubborn resistance of the Spanish to the French appeared
admirably courageous. There were a number of instances in
which the people of a town bitterly resisted the invaders.
Such was the citizens' defense of Saragossa, during which the girl Augustina won the title of "Maid of Zaragoza." Byron celebrates her heroism in stanzas 54-56 in *Childe Harold*, I. 

Her fairy form, with more than female grace, 
Scarce would you deem that Zaragoza's tower 
Beheld her smile in Danger's Gorgon face, 
Thin the closed ranks, and lead in Glory's fearful chase.

This romantic adventure alone would probably have been enough to win Byron's sympathy to the Spaniards.

Another probable factor in any English dislike of the Portuguese would have been the inept rule of the Council of Regency, which was established after the expulsion of the French. This governing body proved to be corrupt and inefficient in every function. Order in Lisbon in 1808 and early 1809 was maintained, not by the Council, but by the British garrison there. Even so, isolated Englishmen were occasionally assaulted and robbed. 18

Byron had occasion to witness this Portuguese problem at first hand. His account of it is vivid and strongly worded. 

"It is a well-known fact that in the year 1809, the assassinations in the streets of Lisbon and its vicinity were not confined by the Portuguese to their countrymen; but that Englishmen were daily butchered: and so far from redress being obtained, we were requested not to interfere if we perceived any compatriot defending himself against his allies." 19

Byron did not alter his opinion concerning the Portuguese. At least in the spring of 1811, after the victory over the French at Barossa, he spoke in a derogatory and sarcastic tone about them:
Yet Lusitania, kind and dear ally,
Can spare a few to fight and sometimes fly.\(^{20}\)

"Portuguese troops had gained in ability and confidence
during 1810 and 1811 and the fiber of the people began to
stiffen with military success. Yet in *Childe Harold* Byron
lets his early judgments stand."\(^{21}\)

Though Byron could thus contemptuously dismiss the Portu-
guese, the Spanish cause caught his imagination and awakened
in him an enduring love for liberty. In an address to the
men of Spain, he exhorts them:

> Awake, ye sons of Spain! awake! advance!
> Lo, Chivalry, your ancient goddess, cries...

In the succeeding passage, Byron attacks the ambition
and desire for fame of the despot. The aspiration of the
tyrant is not only cruel but vain—it leads only to a dream.
Despots can never own more of the earth than that which at
last receives their bodies. Byron admonishes in stanza 42,
*Canto I*:

> There shall they rot, Ambition's honour'd fools!
> Yes, Honour decks the turf that wraps their clay!
> Vain Sophistry! in these behold the tools,
> The broken tools, that tyrants cast away
> By myriads, when they dare to pave their way
> With human hearts—to what?—a dream alone.
> Can despots compass aught that hails their sway?
> Or call with truth one span of earth their own,
> Save that wherein at last they crumble bone by bone?

All the struggle of the ambitious after renown, a struggle
in which they cause widespread misery, cannot revitalize them
after death, the poet concludes.

> Enough of Battle's minions! let them play
> Their game of lives, and barter breath for fame,—
> Fame that will scarce reanimate their clay,
> Though thousands fall to deck some single name.
The element of fate enters the poem when Byron predicts the fall of Seville.

Full swiftly Harold wends his lonely way
Where proud Seville triumphs unsubdued;
Yet is she free—the spoiler's wished-for prey!
Soon, soon shall Conquest's fiery foot intrude,
Blackening her lovely domes with traces rude.
Inevitable hour! 'Gainst fate to strive
Where Desolation plants her famish'd brood
Is vain, or Illion, Tyre might yet survive,
And Virtue vanquish all, and Murder cease to thrive.

The carefree attitude of the people of Seville toward the war is next portrayed. They are unmoved, as yet, by its threats and heedlessly seek pleasure in revelry. Byron is conscious, however, of the gap between the gay feelings of the city dwellers and the emotions of the peasants who know the immanence of war.

Not so the rustic; with his trembling mate
He lurks, nor casts his heavy eye afar,
Lest he should view his vineyard desolate,
Blasted below the dun hot breath of war.
No more beneath soft Eve's consenting star
Fandango twirls his jocund castanet:
Ah, monarchs! could ye taste the mirth ye mar,
Not in the toils of Glory would ye fret;
The hoarse dull drum would sleep, and Man be happy yet!

Spain's position was, indeed, precarious. In 1788 Charles III had died, leaving the throne to his unworthy son, Charles IV. The post of chief minister was soon given to the Queen's favorite, Godoy. Godoy's intrigues with Napoleon succeeded in keeping Spain in semi-vassalage to France for many years. In 1805 Godoy began to fear Ferdinand, Charles's son. The admiration of the Spanish people for Ferdinand had increased with their hopes for him as a deliverer from the intrigues of Godoy and from the docile submission of Charles and the Queen
to the dictates of France. Ferdinand, in turn, had been in secret league with Napoleon, but this collaboration was to do him little good. At the instigation of Godoy, Charles forced Ferdinand to confess to his intrigues. This incident served as an excuse for Napoleon to send an army into Spain to dethrone the King and Queen, to put aside Ferdinand, the heir-apparent, and to place Joseph Bonaparte on the Spanish throne.22

Thus matters stood when Byron summarized Spain's troubles in the lines:

They fight for freedom who were never free,
A kingless people for a nerveless state;
Her vassals combat when their chieftans flee...

Byron left Gibraltar for Malta sometime soon after the 15th of August.23 Hobhouse states in his Journey that "On Tuesday, September 19, 1809, we left Malta, and on the following Saturday, at nine o'clock in the morning, we were in the channel between Cefalonia and Zante."24 Stanzas 39-41 of Childe Harold, II, describe the landing at Prevesa, in southern Albania.

"A ride of less than an hour across a plain and through olive groves took the travelers to the ruins of Nicopolis, the famous city of victory built by Octavius Caesar in honor of his victory over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium."25 The city, though built in brick, was then in ruins. The theme of the vanity of conquest reappears in Byron's reflections upon the melancholy aspect of Nicopolis.

Ambracia's gulf behold, where once was lost
A world for woman, lovely, harmless thing!
In yonder rippling bay, their naval host
Did many a Roman chief and Asian king
To doubtful conflict, certain slaughter bring.
Look where the second Caesar's trophies rose,
Now, like the hands that rear'd them, withering!
Imperial anarchoe, doubling human woes!
God, was thy globe ordain'd for such to win and lose?
The most dramatic aspect, however, of Byron's visit to Albania was his acquaintance with Ali Pasha, the powerful chieftain who had become Vizier of all Albania. The Pasha's strength made him important in the European political scheme. His realization of this fact enabled him to increase his influence even further by favoring first one country and then another. During the period from 1797, when the French seemed to have won the Pasha's favor, to 1809, when Byron visited Jania, Ali had changed allegiance several times. "Intriguing now with the Porte, now with Bounaparte, now with the English, using the rival despots of the country against each other, hand in glove with the brigands, while commanding the police for their suppression, he extended his power by using conflicting interests to aggrandize himself."26

When Byron arrived in Albania, Ali Pasha was currently supporting the English. Therefore, as a nobleman of England, Byron was accorded considerable hospitality from Albania's lord.

It is clear that the Vizier's cordiality was in no way made the less by the fact that the British had but recently seized four of the Ionian Islands off the Albanian coast from the French; he took occasion to congratulate his visitors on this achievement. Ali seems to have been at pains to leave Byron and Hobhouse with the impression that he had always been friendly with England and hated the French and that he was confident now that the British were his neighbors that they would not treat him as the French had done.27

In Byron's letter to his mother from Prevesa, November 12, 1809, there is evidence that he was convinced by Ali's arguments.28

Ali's conflicting characteristics impressed Byron considerably, as we learn both from his letters and from his poetry.
In the same letter referred to above, Byron wrote, "His Ali's manner is very kind, and at the same time he possesses that dignity which I find universal among the Turks. He has the appearance of anything but his real character, for he is a remorseless tyrant, guilty of the most horrible cruelties, very brave, and so good a general that they call him the Mohametan Bonaparte."

In Childe Harold, II, Byron limns the fascination of Ali:

Yet in his lineaments ye cannot trace,
While Gentleness her milder radiance throws
Along that aged venerable face,
The deeds that lurk beneath and stain him with disgrace. 29

But crimes that scorn the tender voice of Ruth,
Bespeaking all men ill but most the man
In years, have mark'd him with a tiger's tooth:
Blood follows blood, and, through their mortal span,
In bloodier acts conclude those who with blood began. 30

The chief appeal which Ali had for Byron's imagination, however, was his personal power. The spectacle of one personality ruling a nation was always to fascinate Byron. 31

The two factors in Byron's nature which probably contributed most to his interest in the powerful leader were his love of action and his highly personal interpretation of life. A great leader would be the translation of the abstract spirit of liberty into personal terms. The great leader must be the master not only of the wills of others but of his own will and emotions. He must subordinate himself to the pursuit of liberty through law rather than tyranny through personal, arbitrary aggrandizement. The idea that government must not function according to the arbitrary determination of a ruler,
but according to fixed law, applied equally to everyone in the state, including the ruler, was basic to liberal doctrine. The great leader would enslave by the heart not by the hand. Ali was indeed a "chief of power, where all around proclaim'd his high estate," but his cruelty and the arbitrary nature of his rule prevented him from being a chief of greatness.

Byron and Hobhouse continued their journey down into Attica. On Christmas day they reached Athens. "In 1810 Athens was a squalid Turkish provincial town of about ten thousand inhabitants under the protective custody of the Kislar Aga in Constantinople." Since the annihilation of the Byzantine empire by the Turks in 1453, the Greeks had known many masters. After the fall of Constantinople, Turkish subjugation of the Greeks quickly followed. Franks, Spaniards, and Venetians, at various periods before 1821, also ruled Greece. For the century before the War of Liberation, 1821, however, the Turks had control of the whole of Greece.

These facts led Byron to lament Greece's "long accustomed bondage." "That Greece under the Moslem yoke had had a checkered history was probably due to lack of national inspiration. Her people seemed to have bowed their necks to every succeeding conqueror. Hence their succumbing before Saracen and Turk, and even before Franks, Spaniards, and Venetians." The suffering of the Greeks was intense. The Venetians punished them because they submitted to Turkish rule and the Turks punished them because they submitted to Venetian rule. The Greeks had neither the inspiration nor the allies to resist,
however, until the early part of the nineteenth century.

Greece's submission to many rulers brings the charge from Byron that

Not thirty tyrants now enforce the chain,
But every carle can lord it o'er thy land;
Nor rise thy sons, but idly rail in vain.

Their inheritance of slavery remains theirs, Byron alleges, only because they allow it, doing nothing to free themselves, save appeal for allies. Byron avers,

Hereditary bondsmen! Know ye not Who would be free themselves must strike the blow? Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye? no! True, they may lay your proud despoilers low, But not for you will Freedom's altars flame.

Before Greece can be free, Byron concludes, her people must undergo a change of heart. The true patriot must feel, even in the midst of revelry, sadness for his country's fate. Greece shall be free only when Grecians feel the courageous conviction that she must be free.

...midst the throng in merry masquerade, Lurk there no hearts that throb with secret pain... How do they loathe the laughter idly loud, And long to change the robe of revel for the shroud.

This must he feel, the true-born son of Greece, If Greece one true-born patriot still can boast,— Not such as prate of war but skulk in peace, The bondman's peace, who sighs for all he lost, Yet with smooth smile his tyrant can accost, And wield the slavish sickle, not the sword: Ah, Greece, they love thee least who owe thee most— Their birth, their blood, and that sublime record Of hero sires who shame thy now degenerated hordes!

When riseth Lacedaemon's hardihood, When Thebes Epaminondas rears again, When Athens' children are with hearts endued, When Grecian mothers shall give birth to men, Then may'st thou be restored, but not till then.
Throughout Byron's poetry concerning the current Greek cause there are references to the Greek traditions of liberty, the history of her former struggles for freedom. This great tradition enriches the present worth of Greece. The country of Thermopylae is still "Immortal, though no more; though fallen, great!" The appeal of the Greek past for Byron is summarized in the lines

"Where'er we tread 'tis haunted, holy ground...
Age...spares grey Marathon."

The Greek heritage of freedom, Byron insisted, made the current cause of liberation necessary not only for the sake of present Greece but for the sake of past Greece. Byron berates the Greeks for neglecting their inheritance of the independent spirit. He longs to see a return to the ancient virtues of courage and love of liberty. In the opening lines of Childe Harold, Canto II, Byron addresses Athena:

Ancient of days! august Athena! where,
Where are thy men of might? thy grand in soul?
Gone—glimmering through the dream of things
that were:
First in the race that led to Glory's god,
They won and passed away—is this the whole?

Byron wonders where the leaders will be found to inspire and sacrifice for Greek independence. A present realization of the courageous spirit of Thermopylae is needed. Byron asks "Fair Greece;"

Who now shall lead thy scatter'd children forth,
And long accustom'd bondage uncreate?
Not such thy sons who whilome did await,
The hopeless warriors of a willing doom,
In bleak Thermopylae's sepulchral strait—
Oh! who that gallant spirit shall resume,
Leap from Eurotas' banks and call thee from
the tomb."
Similar feelings and thoughts concerning the Greek cause of freedom can easily be found in the poetry Byron wrote during his tour. They reappear frequently in the Oriental tales, which were penned after he returned to England.

In Vostizza, a small town near Athens, Byron had been taught a famous Greek war song of Rhigas. Later he translated it into the English version. The freedom-seeking lines had an evident appeal for Byron.

Sons of Greece, arise!
...Then manfully despising
The Turkish tyrant's yoke,
Let your country see you rising,
And all her chains are broke.

Byron and Hobhouse left Athens, March 5, 1810, for Smyrna, the chief city of Asia Minor at that time. At Smyrna Byron completed his first draft of Childe Harold on March 28th, as notes by him on the cover of the original manuscript indicate. Byron had planned to have Childe Harold follow his own journey to the Near East, but his muse would not attend him that far. On September 7, 1811, Byron wrote Dallas, "I feel honoured by the wish of such men that the poem should be continued, but to do that I must return to Greece and Asia...I had projected an additional canto when I was in Troad and Constantinople, and if I saw them again, it would go on..." Byron does, however, use the festive gaiety of the Bosphorus as contrast to the sadness which the true-born son of Greece should feel.

During the stay in Turkey there was little opportunity, as Hobhouse noted in his Journey, for a close acquaintance with the Turks. Byron managed, however, to draw some conclusions about the Turkish character. He esteemed the Turks for their
bravery and independence. "If it be difficult to pronounce what they are," he decided, "we can at least say what they are not...they are not cowardly...nor has an enemy advanced to their capital."

Byron returned to Greece on July 18, 1811, and remained there until late April of the following year. During this stay in Athens, Byron became acquainted with "a group of distinguished Continental men of the arts...Byron's companionship with men of such strong enthusiasm and extensive knowledge of Greece past and present must indeed have quickened his own appreciation of Athens past and present."

During his second sojourn in Athens, however, Byron began to look to allied aid, rather than to the Greeks' own efforts, to free the country. On January 23, 1811, Byron wrote that "The Greeks have never lost their hope, though they are now more divided than ever on the subject of their probable deliverers." Byron felt that the English should assume the task. He also maintained, however, that "To talk, as the Greeks themselves do, of their rising again to their pristine superiority, would be ridiculous...but there seems to be no very great obstacle, except the apathy of the Franks, to their becoming an useful dependency, or even a free state, with the proper guarantee..."

Byron returned, however, to the concept that Greek freedom must be secured by the Greeks themselves. He charges the Greeks that their weakness of character makes the tyranny of the Turks possible. Where love of liberty was the dominant factor in the nature of the ancient Greeks, submissiveness
rules the present-day subjects. The theme of Greek freedom recurs in three of Byron's Oriental tales, which were composed after the return to England. The first of these tales, The Giaour, was written during the months from May through November, 1813. The first 160 lines of the poem concern the beauty of Greece and her present servility. Byron's picture of Greece is one of decadence and melancholy.

"Tis Greece, but living Greece no more!
So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
We start, for soul is wanting there. 47

Byron addresses Greece as the

Climb of the unforgotten brave!
Whose land from plain to mountain cave
Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave. 48

The present Grecians Byron reviles as the "servile offspring of the free." As he had done in the second canto of Child Harold, 49 Byron blames the loss of Greek freedom upon the character of her people.

No foreign foe could quell
Thy soul, till from itself it fell;
Yes! Self-abasement paved the way
To villain-bonds and despot sway. 50

The fight for freedom, even without victory, is glorious in itself. The Greeks should defend their heritance of love of liberty which their ancestors would give them.

For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeath'd by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft is ever won. 51

Early in the same November during which The Giaour was published, Byron pressed himself to write (in four nights, or, according to another account, a week) The Bride of Abydos, which he published immediately. 52 During the course of the
tale, Selim describes his liberation from the charge of the Turkish tyrant Giaffir. The likelihood is great that Byron was affected by his recent sights of Turkish rule. Selim's lines are a spontaneous expression of the emotion of freedom.

One work alone can paint to thee
That more than feeling—I was Free!

By 1815, when *Siege of Corinth* was written, Byron's confidence in the Greeks' ability to free themselves was less certain and his attitude toward the Greek position less dynamic, more passive and pessimistic. In *Childe Harold* he had insisted that the conquest must be wrought by the "right arms" of the "hereditary bondsmen" themselves. In 1815 Byron asks disconsolately of a Turkish officer who, soon after recovering the Peloponessus from the Venetians, died cursing the Christians:

*Coumourgi, can his glory cease,*
That latest conqueror of Greece,
*Til Christian hands to Greece restore*
The freedom Venice gave of yore?

In *The Siege of Corinth* Byron's overall picture of freedom's infrequent inspiration to the present Greece is wistful rather than hopeful.

Oh! still her [Freedom's] step at moments falters
O'er wither'd fields, and ruin'd altars,
And fain would wake, in souls too broken,
By pointing to each glorious token;
But vain her voice, till better days
Dawn in those yet remember'd rays,
Which shone upon the Persian flying,
And saw the Spartan smile in dying.

The meaning of liberty had been greatly enriched for Byron by his two years abroad. From the Portuguese and the Greeks Byron learned that apathy cannot preserve freedom. From the Spanish peasant he gained some concept of the price which must
be paid for it. Everywhere he learned that liberal reform was a slowly accomplished work. This realization discouraged him from taking concrete measures in its behalf. From Constantinople, he wrote his mother (July 1, 1810) that he was "not ambitious of a parliamentary career," which he regarded as "of all things the most degrading and unthankful." His plan for governmental action was, at this time, idealistic rather than practical. "If I could by my own efforts inculcate the truth, that a man is not intended for a despot or a machine, but as an individual of a community, and fit for the society of kings, so long as he does not trespass on the laws or rebel against just governments, I might attempt to found a new Utopia..."55

After his return to England, however, Byron continued to be very much interested in politics, particularly in the career of Napoleon. The anticlimactic character of Napoleon's abdication disillusioned the poet. Napoleon's fortune had waned with the loss of Leipzig. Byron wrote, "I thought, if crushed, he would have fallen...and not have been pared away to gradual insignificance..." Byron felt, even then, that the European balance of power would soon be restored. He complained, "...here we are, retrograding, to the dull, stupid old system—balance of Europe—poising straws upon kings' noses, instead of wringing them off!"56

Leipzig was the opening scene of an acrid satire, The Devil's Drive, which Byron wrote in December. The miseries of war and the hypocrisies of politics gave much pleasure to the devil, Byron bitterly recorded.
On January 12, 1814, Byron wrote to Lady Melbourne of his disappointment in Napoleon's stature. A few days before, Napoleon had confessed to the commissioners, "I do not fear to acknowledge that I have made war too long...I was mistaken." Byron was probably referring to this speech when he spoke of Napoleon as "a sad whining example to your future conquerors." In a letter to Moore on April 9th, Byron said ruefully of Napoleon's abdication, "Oh! my poor little pagod, Napoleon, has walked off his pedestal...a crouching catastrophe."

The following day Byron sent Murray his "Ode on the Fall of Napoleon Bonaparte," in which he strongly expressed his scorn for Napoleon's action. After Napoleon's return from Elba in the spring of the next year, however, Byron was reconciled to his "little pagod." Late in July of 1815, Byron wrote the sympathetic "Napoleon's Farewell." In March and April of the following year the poet showed further sympathy with the former French leader in three poems which also purported to be "from the French."

Byron was not joyed by the allied victory. He had hoped Napoleon's rise was "a prelude to greater changes and mightier events." Byron realized that the restoration of the "old system" was soon to follow Waterloo. These views held by Byron were very unpopular in England. They doubtless added to the impetus of his social banishment.

During the first few months of his unhappy exile, Byron began the third canto of Childe Harold. The poet is more closely identified with Childe Harold in this canto than he had been in the first two. The poem gains correspondingly
in forcefulness. Byron's interest in Napoleon led inevitably to his visit to Waterloo. Stanzas 16 to 65 of Canto III record the thoughts and emotions aroused by the sight of that battlefield. The poet's disillusionment concerning English victory is here revealed as he calls it a "king-making Victory." Though the restoration of royalty to rule in France may be fit retribution for Napoleon's ambition, Byron questions whether the cause of Freedom had been advanced thereby. The suffering of Europe has been in vain since this battle meant only the exchange of one kind of tyranny for another. This conclusion had been foreshadowed in Byron's poetry in his "Ode from the French."

France hath twice too well been taught  
The "moral lesson" dearly bought—  
Her safety sits not on a throne,  
With Capet or Napoleon!

In 1817, when Byron was writing the fourth canto of Childe Harold, he complained that the French had not learned the lesson of how to gain and preserve their freedom:

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,  
Rotting from sire to son...62

Byron insisted that he spoke "not of men's creeds...but of things allow'd...and the intent of tyranny avow'd." The rulers of the world, he judged, in re-establishing monarchy in France were but

The apes of him who humbled once the proud  
And shook them from their slumbers on the throne...

Byron's final question echoes his earlier thoughts on "the king-making Victory": "Can tyrants but by tyrants conquered be?"
On the evening of April 9, 1814, Napoleon's abdication of Fontainbleau had been announced. The following morning Byron had written an ode upon this event and had published it immediately, though anonymously. The theme of the ode is scorn for Napoleon's abdication. Napoleon's death would have made him more admired by his followers, while his living in exile makes him nothing, Byron reprimand:

'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!63

The world is fortunate that Napoleon did not die a hero, however. Had he died, thus celebrated, his fame might have inspired a new tyrant.

If thou hadst died as honour dies,
Some new Napoleon might arise,
To shame the world again--
But who would soar the solar height,
To set in such a starless night?64

Once, when Napoleon was at his greatest power, it would have been "an act of purer fame than gathers round Marengo's name" to have resigned his rule. This thought appears in Childe Harold, IV, 83-84, where Byron expresses admiration for the Roman tyrant Sulla for relinquishing his dictatorial powers. Napoleon could not surmount his ambition, however, Byron concludes in the "Ode." The desire and not the man ruled. Byron summarizes his scorn for Napoleon in the lines:

But thou forsooth must be a king,
And don the purple vest.---

By July of 1815, after the return from Elba, Byron's antipathy toward Napoleon had altered completely. By this time he was again fascinated by Napoleon's powerful personality.
His "Napoleon's Farewell" was much too sympathetic with the
former emperor for English taste. Byron's interpretations of
Napoleon's thoughts were very unpopular on the Island.

Farewell to thee, France!—but when Liberty rallies
Once more in thy regions, remember me then...
And yet may thy heart leap awake to my voice...
Then turn thee and call on the Chief of thy choice.

By the spring of 1816, when Byron was writing the third
canto of Childe Harold, his views concerning Napoleon's fall
included the elements found in the "Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte"
and "Napoleon's Farewell," both the scorn and the sympathy.
Napoleon is, Byron determined, at once a "conqueror and a
captive of the earth." The formerly great ruler is now
"nothing, save the jest of Fame." However, Byron has admira-
tion for Napoleon's bearing since he has been stripped of
power. The poet grants the exile that

...well thy soul hath brook'd the turning tide
With that untaught innate philosophy,
Which, be it wisdom, coldness, or deep pride,
Is gall and wormwood to an enemy.65

Potentially, Napoleon was Byron's ideal of the great
national leader. The General had a dynamic will which could
command both service and loyalty from his people, but the
Emperor lacked the vision of liberty toward which to direct
his will. The greatness of Byron's ideal ruler lay not only
in the will which could dominate a nation but even more in
the will which could subject itself to just law. In 1821
Byron was to say, "It is not one man, nor a million, but the
spirit of liberty which must be spread."66 Had Napoleon sought
to strengthen liberty in France with the same fierce energy
with which he pursued personal power, his rise would, indeed,
have been "a prelude to greater changes and mightier events," and Byron would have found a worthy idol.

In almost every poem in which Byron dealt with Napoleon, he considered the reasons for Napoleon's fall. In general, Byron ascribes three causes for Napoleon's vanquishment: Napoleon's inability to govern his own passions, the temptation of Fate, and the insatiable desire for power. In *Childe Harold, III*, Byron characterizes Napoleon by all the above weaknesses and adds a fourth, the failure to hide his scorn for the people. Both Napoleon's rise and his fall, Byron deems, could be accounted for by the fact that Napoleon was extreme in all things (stanza 36). Had he not been so, either his throne would have still been his, or he would never have possessed it. The reader is left to wonder, as Byron does, which would have been the outcome. Napoleon has been both more and less than a man—more than a man in that he could crush and rebuild empires, less than a man in that he could not control his own emotions (stanza 38). Nor was Napoleon able to "learn that tempted Fate will leave the loftiest star" (stanza 38). Napoleon's habitual scorn of the men he used to build his empire was the beginning of his overthrow. Their adulation had been the best weapon of that conqueror. His greatest mistake was to undervalue it. (stanzas 40-41)

In the "Ode to Napoleon Bounaparte," Byron had ascribed Napoleon's fall to ambition to be king (ll. 154-155). The themes of the greed for power and the temptation of Fate are combined in the following lines from "Napoleon's Farewell."

I have war'd with a world which vanquish'd me only When the meteor of conquest allur'd me too far...
Napoleon's inability to govern his own passions is integrated with his insatiable desire for power as a cause of his downfall in "Ode from the French."

Who could boast o'er France defeated,
Till lone Tyranny commanded?
Till, goaded by ambition's sting,
The Hero sunk into the King?

In Canto IV of Childe Harold, Napoleon is compared to Caesar. Napoleon is not the equal of the Roman conqueror, Byron concludes:

...for the Roman's mind
Was model'd in a less terrestrial mould
With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,
And an immortal instinct which redeem'd
The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold...

Napoleon, though he may be ranked with such "men of iron," was "vanquish'd by himself, to his own slaves a slave--The fool of false dominion..." Byron seeks to explain the Emperor's fall through one tragic flaw,

One weakest weakness—vanity,
Coquettish in ambition—still he aim'd—
At what?...And would be all or nothing.

The nature of Napoleon's ambition is probed both in Childe Harold, III, and the "Ode to Napoleon Bounaparte." Stanzas 42-45 of Childe Harold, III, are concerned with this problem. Byron does not pass judgment. He only attempts to explain ambition such as Napoleon's. Some men have had, as Napoleon, ambition which is "a fever at the core," ambition which "preys upon high adventure," ambition which is fatal to all who have it. Such aspiration is inherent in some men, as it is in Napoleon.

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...
If men who possess such need for adventure cannot act, they inwardly die.

The concept of the fervent activity and the madness of ambition which is found in Childe Harold had also been expressed by Byron in the "Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte."

The triumph, and the vanity,
The rapture of the strife--
The earthquake voice of Victory,
To thee the breath of life;
The sword, the sceptre, and that sway...
All quell'd--Dark Spirit! what must be
The madness of thy memory!

In a later stanza of this poem Byron depicts Napoleon as a prototype of the ambitious man who is forced to be inactive.

Thou Timor! in his captive's cage
What thoughts will there be thine,
While brooding in thy prison'd rage?
But one—"The world was mine!"

Byron no longer admired Napoleon as a liberator, as he had earlier done; yet the drama of Napoleon's struggle and the force of his personality still stirred the poet. Napoleon failed as a great leader, Byron would generalize, because he succumbed to his own base passions instead of upholding his early vision of a free, republican France. Ultimately, Napoleon's fall could not be attributed to external circumstance, or chance, being opposed to him, but to submission to his own degrading instincts.

After the threat of Napoleon had been vanquished, the rulers of Europe met at the Congress of Vienna. "By virtue of the treaty there agreed upon, arrangements were entered into in regard to Italy and Europe at large, which remained in force down to the middle of the present century...The
countries belonging to Venice and Lombardy were made over to Austria, under the name of Lombardo-Venetian kingdom. Austria, by actual possessions and by the dependence of the petty rulers, most of whom were related to the Austrian dynasty, became more than ever the predominant power in Italy. As Metternich, prime minister, of Austria said: 'Italy is only a geographical expression.' And Austria was to prove the most determined foe of Italian unity. 69

Byron devotes many stanzas of Childe Harold, IV, to a lament for Venice's thraldom. His first thoughts about Venice concern her former renown and her enduring beauty (stanzas 2, 3, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15). To Byron, the old glory of Venice rested upon her freedom. The battle of Lepanto (a naval victory by the fleets of Italy and Spain in 1571 which turned the tide of war in favor of the Venetians) symbolized this spirit of freedom.

The essence of despair in the awareness of the loss of long-held liberty is depicted in Childe Harold, IV, stanza 13.

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,  
Their gilded collars glittering in the sun;  
But is not Doria's menace come to pass?  
Are they not bridled?—Venice, lost and won,  
Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,  
Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose! 70

These same feelings inspired Byron to write "Ode on Venice" the following year. The theme of this ode is the moral and political decay of Venice from her former eminence. The sentiments expressed are the same as those in the fourth canto of Childe Harold.

...Thirteen hundred years  
Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and tears;
And every monument the stranger meets,  
Church, palace, pillar, as a mourner greets,  
And even the Lion all subdued appears...

In both the above passages and, indeed, throughout his treatment of Venice, Byron emphasizes the Venetian traditions of liberty. The seventeenth century English republicans had firmly implanted in the liberal English mind the notion that the Venetian government had for centuries preserved true liberty in its republican institutions. The essence of the classical republic, as interpreted by seventeenth century liberal thought, was a balanced and divided power among the three elements of government—the monarchial, the aristocratic, and the democratic. If the monarch dominated the state, tyranny was the result; if the aristocracy held sway, oligarchy; if the demos had preponderant power, mob rule. All these dangerous tendencies are pointed out in *Marino Faliero*, which contains Byron's most complete statement on the political state.

"The project of *Marino Faliero* followed hard upon *Manfred*, and is the fruit of Byron's sympathetic study of the history of Venice." Byron states in his introduction to the drama, "It is now four years that I have meditated this work." Thus, though *Marino Faliero* was begun in 1817, it was not finished until 1820, when Byron completed it in the three months ending July 17. *Marino Faliero* is the focus of Byron's early political thoughts. The old Doge, who seeks "to renew the times of truth and justice," is the mouthpiece for Byron's own views. Byron's sympathy for the Doge is evident in the introduction as well as in the play itself. The fact that the Doge is willing to die for his belief in liberty is alone sufficient to reveal...
Byron's sympathy for his character. The Doge declares that he

...would rather fall by freemen's hands,
Than live another day to act the tyrant
As delegate of tyrants."

Marino laments that the laws of Venice are no longer supreme. He had appealed to the law for restitution for a personal grievance through the Council of Ten, who refused to administer the punishment to the offender. The personal grievance of the Doge is thus associated with the plebeian cause for equal rights under the law. The essence of the liberal republican state is described in the Doge's plan for Venice:

We will renew the times of truth and justice,
Condensing in a fair free commonwealth
Not rash equality but equal rights
Proportion'd like the columns to the temple,
Giving and taking strength reciprocal,
And making firm the whole with grace and beauty,
So that no part could be removed without
Infringement of the general symmetry."

Venice's submission to Austrian rule was pitiable degradation, Byron believed. He could justify it in no way according to his "romantic" concept of liberty, in which death through resistance was much to be preferred to life through submission. Between these two extremes Byron would not recognize another alternative. The idea is repeated several times in the poetry of the early period. This romantic concept of the demand for courage which love of Freedom imposes applies to personal freedom as well as to national. In the "Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte," Byron disdained Napoleon's decision:

To die a prince—or live a slave—
Thy choice is most ignobly brave!
In the poem "On the Star of 'The Legion of Honour'" Byron speaks as a Frenchman when he addresses the goddess of freedom.

And soon, oh Goddess! may we be
For evermore with them [those who died fighting for freedom] or thee!

In The Giaour Byron accuses the Greeks of being content to be the "servile offspring of the free." He asks whether the physical setting is all that is left of Thermopylae. The same idealized concept of the choice of extremes which love of liberty exacts is applied to Venice both in Childe Harold, IV, and the later "Ode on Venice." In Childe Harold, IV, Byron's admonishment for Venice is that, rather than acquiesce to Austrian rule, she would

Better be whelm'd beneath the waves, and shun,
Even in destruction's depth, her foreign foes,
From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.

In "Ode on Venice" Byron is even more vividly emphatic:

...Still, still, for ever
Better, though each man's life-blood were a river,
That it should flow and overflow, than creep
Through thousand lazy channels in our veins...
...better be
Where the extinguish'd Spartans still are free,
In their proud charnal of Thermopylae,
Than stagnate in our marsh....

Both the degrading willingness to be subjugated, and the desire to be free conflicted within all men. Though Byron often felt despair for the hopes of freedom, he also often expressed his faith that the dream of liberty could and would be realized by European countries. It is, however, impossible to state with certainty whether Byron was more strongly convinced of the despair or of the hope. The struggle between the two elements creates the drama inherent in much of his
political poetry.

In The Giaour Byron is concerned with the Greek cause of liberty. He charges the Greeks that

Self-abasement paved the way
To villain bonds and despot sway.

He still has trust, nevertheless, in the ultimate victory of the fight for freedom.

For Freedom's battle once begun
Bequeath'd by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft is ever won.

In the "Ode from the French," though disappointed in his belief in Napoleon as the liberator of Europe, Byron reaffirms his faith in the power of the love of freedom. The poem ends with an optimistic credo.

But the heart and the mind
And the voice of mankind,
Shall arise in communion—
And who shall resist that proud union?
The time is past when swords subdued—
Men may die—the soul's renew'd;
Freedom ne'er should want an heir;
Millions breathe but to inherit
Her forever bounding spirit:
When once more her hosts assemble,
Tyrants shall believe and tremble—
Smile they at this idle threat?
Crimson tears will follow yet?

In Canto III, stanzas 80-84, Byron discusses Rousseau's influence on the French Revolution. Rousseau's life was "one long war with self-sought foes," the life of the romantic revolutionist. Byron observes that, though the Rousseauists sought the overthrow of unjust traditions and institutions, they frequently demolished the good with the ill. Often, also, the same institutions were rebuilt upon their ruins. Man, however, had learned what it was to be free. Mankind had been so
long enslaved, Byron states with sympathy, that it was no
wonder it mistook its foes. Men will be slow to learn how
to use their freedom; but Byron, the Romantic, affirms that
that time will come.

The effects of the Napoleonic wars are lamented in Canto IV. Byron's images, as are his thoughts, on this topic are
violent.

France got drunk with blood to vomit crime
And fatal have her Saturnalia been
To Freedom's cause...
And vile ambition...
Nips life's tree and dooms man's worst—
his second fall.

Following this declaration of despair, Byron's reaffirmation
of faith in the ultimate victory of freedom is less jubilant,
less romantic, but more moving and more convincing, than his
statement in the "Ode from the French."

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner, torn but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm against the wind;
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind:
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
Chopp'd by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the sap lasts,—and still the seed we find
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;
So shall a better spring less bitter fruit
bring forth.

The drama embodied in much of Byron's political poetry
was due to the conflict between the hope and the despair for
the realization of liberty. The hope resided in the love of
freedom within the people of a country. The despair resulted
from the submissiveness also inherent in the people. This
conflict between love of liberty and weakness was the basic
issue in the state.
Second to this fundamental conflict within the people was the conflict within the leader between base ambition to gain personal power and admirable desire to secure liberty for his people. The strength of Ali Pasha and Napoleon had been directed towards false goals. The great leader must command not only his people but also his own passions. He must place just law above even himself.

In "Ode from the French," Byron warned that French safety cannot lie with the absolute ruler, the "Capet or Napoleon," but rather that it lies "in equal rights and laws." In Marino Faliero the law of the ideal state is presented as republican in nature. In Childe Harold, Byron's concept of the ideal political state is more nebulous. A state should not, of course, yield in any way to foreign rule. Nor should a state depend in its fight for liberty upon allies' support, for this, in turn, is a kind of submission to alien power. Byron is convinced that loss of political freedom is due to loss of moral stamina. Complete liberty can be regained only through unalloyed devotion to the cause and through Spartan bravery.

The traditions of liberty, which Spain, Greece, and Venice have inherited from their past, should provide both the example and the inspiration for their liberation. Since love of liberty was the ruling force in the hearts of their forefathers, the present-day subjects are even more to be blamed for their submission to foreign power and tyranny.

The essence of Byron's political thought is that the citizen is responsible for freedom in the state. Liberty has its origins within the individual. The purchase of freedom is worth any price.
CHAPTER II

DISSATISFACTION WITH SOCIETY

As Byron's interest in political liberty was both in personal and in abstract aspects, so his interest in social liberty concerns both individual and general relationships. In the main, Byron's concepts of political liberty dealt with the relationship of the individual to the state. The personal element in this association was the filiation of the people to their leader. The abstract, or collective, aspect was the allegiance of the people to the law, every individual, including the leader, being subject to the law. Though Byron was fascinated by the strength of the leader, he also insisted that the leader must be subject to law.

Byron's ideas concerning social relationships exist on two levels. The first includes the relationships of the individual to other individuals. This field encompasses views on love, pride, pleasure, grief, hope, memory, and other facets of personal associations. The most significant level, at least for this study, of Byron's interpretation of social relationships is that which deals with the relative position of the individual to society as a collective body. This field of ideas includes Byron's views on the conventions of society and on the judgment of the individual transgressor by society.

From an examination of Byron's attitude toward society, the poet emerges, not as the rebel against society, as he has so often been pictured, but as a reformer attempting to work
within the established order. Byron was not advocating the overthrow of contemporary conventions for an order based on new principles; he was not desirous of revolutionizing the traditional social system, as Shelley dreamed of doing. Byron's criticism against society was directed, not at its professed goals, but at its failure to live up to those goals. Concerning the attack of society against him following the separation from his wife and his exile from England, Byron did not deny his responsibility for the failure of his marriage, but he vehemently protested that society was not qualified to judge him.

To comprehend Byron's concepts of social liberty, both individual and collective, we must understand the feelings which appear in his early poetry of the "exile from society." The exile embodies the two principles which Byron himself said constituted his greatest consistency, "a love of liberty and a detestation of cant."1 W. S. Bowden, in his article "Byron's Social Doctrine," comments upon the liberty theme in Childe Harold: "It is a significant fact, I think, that Byron returns again and again to the love of freedom in his description of each of the places Childe Harold visits."2 Indeed, the distinguishing characteristic of the exile portrayed in Childe Harold, his sense of individualism, necessitates his love of liberty. The expression of individualism demands freedom.

The condition which professedly motivates the Childe to exile himself from England is his unhappiness in viewing the hypocrisies of that society, in other words, his "detestation of cant." Later Byron was to formulate his contempt for society
thus: "In these days, the grand résumé mobile of England is cant: cant political, cant poetical, cant religious, cant moral; but always cant, multiplied through all the varieties of life. I say cant, because it is a thing of words, without the smallest influence upon human actions." 3

Byron's detestation of mankind in general was concentrated... upon fashionable society... although they prided themselves on their aristocratic position, there was nothing noble in their views or motives.... Most despicable of all was their cant and hypocrisy. They smugly considered English standards of society more moral than the continental, and they pretended to be horrified when anyone violated the code; but the plain truth was that they ostracized not all who were immoral but only those who were careless enough to be publicly found out. That the realm should be ruled by such as they seemed to Byron a preposterous mockery. 4

Byron's problem of discontent with society in England was not resolved by his travel abroad, however, for foreign society, he found, was essentially the same as English in its failure to fulfill its alleged principles.

In the return to British society, Byron did not reconcile himself with it, nor did he make any progress toward an understanding of his problem of dissatisfaction with society until after his final departure from England in 1816. His first attempt at resolution of disappointment was a turning toward nature. This action proved to be an escape rather than a method leading to a valid comprehension, however. For Byron, the problem of dissatisfaction with society had to be faced directly to be weighed and judged with any degree of adequacy.

Crane Brinton analyzes Byron's method of approaching his dilemma as, first, an attempted escape, and, later, as a search for understanding. "The early Byronic hero was ... a free agent, a man above the petty restraints of artificial society. Society
did succeed, by weight of numbers, in achieving the ruin, usually catastrophic, of the hero; that was the tragedy. But as Byron rose above the crude melodrama of his earlier romances, he began to question whether society was not a part of things, and injustice decreed from on high. It may be shown, furthermore, that, even in the period of the early romances, Byron was, at least, groping for an explanation of the failure of society to realize its ideals.

During the *Childe Harold* period, Byron's ideas dealing with society bear a close relationship to the events of his life. Byron's experience of society was the basis of the unity of theme which underlies all his writings on social relations. The purpose of this chapter is to re-evaluate the social thought in his poems and to show that this interpretation is consistent with biographical fact.

In Cantos I and II of *Childe Harold*, the Childe feels exiled from society by his recognition of its hypocrisy and the vanity of its pleasure-seeking life. Byron's letters before his first tour abroad, in 1809, reveal similar subjective feelings of estrangement from English social life.

After the tour, during the years 1812-1816, Byron's greater insight into London social circles accentuated, rather than detracted from, his sense of isolation from society. Byron was as disillusioned by London society as it was shocked by him.

After the separation from his wife, in 1816, Byron's ostracism by society led to his exile in fact as well as in feeling. The third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold* and
the poems written during 1816-1818 are strongly influenced by the circumstances of the separation drama. The poetry after the separation appears almost as a fulfillment of that which was written before.

The elements of which the "exile" of Cantos I and II of Childe Harold are composed are reflections, though distorted through dramatization, of Byron's own life. Thus, the various aspects of Childe Harold's thoughts and feelings are, in a sense, an interpretation of reality and are reflected further in the other poems of this period. Though the events of Childe Harold's pilgrimage parallel Byron's tour of 1809-1811, the mood of the poem was set by Byron's reactions to conditions in England prior to his leaving.

Although Byron had been popular and successful at Harrow and at Cambridge, even in his schooldays and earlier there had been factors which fostered a moody introversion in his nature. Elements of a gloomy fatalism from his early Calvinistic upbringing and from his twisted family-tree remained with Byron always. The passionate extremes of his mother contributed toward making him an unusual, emotional childhood. Subjectively, at least, his lameness marked him with a different fate from others. The factors in his life of this early period contributing to the melancholy side of his nature, indeed, are many, and more are to be discovered in the period immediately preceding the tour. It should be remembered, however, that such events and their disconsolate effects are only one part of a life which was also gay, light-hearted, and humorous. The latter side of his nature and life is
revealed mainly in his letters; the poet more frequently reflects upon those events which yield a melancholy meaning.

Byron's innate restlessness was probably the primary cause of his desire to travel. Hopes for a tour abroad were expressed as early as February, 1806, in a letter Byron wrote to his mother from Cambridge, and those desires recurred frequently until his eventual departure in 1809. A trip would mature his judgment, prepare him for politics, and, by inference, satisfy a demanding curiosity.⁶

After leaving Cambridge, Byron spent most of his time at Newstead until his arrival in London, in January, 1809. At Newstead, with some of his college friends, Byron spent his days in fanciful dissipation. They practised pistolry in the hall, masqueraded as monks at dinners which lasted until two or three in the mornings, drank from Byron's skull-cup, and spent considerable time with the servant girls.⁷ Byron "was persuaded that he had drunk the cup of dissipation to the bottom, that there was nothing left for him to see through in the world of 'pleasure.'"⁸ Childe Harold was to have a similar, but more dissolute, more exotic, background.

At Newstead, there were still unhappy memories, which Byron never let himself forget, of Mary Chaworth, the childhood sweetheart who had married in August, 1805. When Byron dined at Amnesley one evening, Mary proudly exhibited her infant daughter. Byron's resulting emotions were strong and produced the poem "Well! Thou Art Happy," a sentimental outpouring of young, unrequited love. Soon afterwards he wrote "Stanzas to a Lady on Leaving England" and "To a Lady on Being
asked My Reasons for Quitting England in the Spring," in which he imagined his proposed tour as a "flight" from "Eden's bowers."

On January 21, 1809, the past was brought before Byron with an even more real sorrow, the death of his friend and former Harrow companion, Edward Lang. In a Harrow text-book, Byron added a note to the names of some school-mates—"Of the four persons whose names are here mentioned, one is dead, another in a distant climate, all separated..."9 Here was more material for Childe Harold's loneliness.

Byron spent several weeks in London before his tour commenced. His stay there only served to increase his desires to be gone. Financial matters, of which he hated to be concerned, were demanding attention. They provoked dire comment from his mother, who wrote that she saw "nothing but the Road to Ruin in all this."10 Byron borrowed money for the trip, hoping that the sale of his Rochdale estate would soon cancel his debts and rejuvenate his fortunes. Meantime, "his relations with his mother got no better and a foreign tour would save repeated explanations of his absence from her society."11

During Byron's last weeks in London he was further agitated by the memories of his recent political and literary activities. His first book, Hours of Idleness, had been pilloried. Though he had issued a retaliatory satire, he still felt estranged from the press and public. Lord Carlisle's declining to sponsor him in the House of Lords still rankled. His entry into Parliament had been a "dismal and unpromising" affair.12
Dallas described Byron's mood before leaving England as one of "bitter discontent." "Resentment, anger, and disgust held full sway over him, and his greatest gratification...was overcharging his pen with gall, which flowed in every direction against individuals, his country, the world, the universe, Creation, and the Creator."13

After Delawarr's visit to the milliner's,14 the day before Byron's departure, Byron told Dallas, "Friendship! I do not believe I shall leave behind me, yourself and family excepted, and perhaps my mother, a single being who will care what becomes of me."15 The statement was not accurate but the feelings were, at least for the moment, genuine, their effects upon his poetry, definite.

The reasons Byron could find for his travel, then, were many. Borst accuses Byron of "motive hunting" and concludes that, "once he resolved to leave England, he could look upon the journey as an escape from all that was displeasing to him and could play with the fancy that any or all of these motives and grievances drove him from his home."16 Doubtless, no factor was as important in deciding Byron to travel as his own wanderlust, but the many current disconcerting events of his life surely impelled him to hasten departure.

Though Byron did not begin relating the tale of Childe Harold until he reached Janina, in Albania, the Childe's experiences reflect Byron's own of the recent period in England. Cantos I and II evolve from two main themes: the political, which has already been discussed, and the personal-social. Though the two themes are alternately treated during the
narration of the first pilgrimage, they are not integrated, at least externally.

In Canto I Childe Harold's feelings are those of the exile, not only from his country, but from society in general. Byron presents three main factors in the evolution of the exile: satiety of emotions, realization of the vanity of the pleasure-seeking life, and the hypocrisy of society.

The early stanzas of Canto I describe Childe Harold as a voluptuary,

Who...spent his days in riot most uncoth,  
And vex'd with mirth the drowsy ear of Night.  
Ah me! in sooth he was a shameless wight,  
Sore given to revel and ungodly glee;  
Few earthly things found favor in his sight  
Save concubines and carnal companie,  
And flaunting vassailors of high and low degree.  

Thoughts akin to those which induced Byron to write those stanzas of Childe Harold had earlier also dictated the song "Fill the Goblet." The sentiments are those of the disillusioned voluptuary, who declares,

I tried in its turn all that life can supply;  
I have bask'd in the beam of a dark rolling eye;  
I have loved,...

but cynically concludes,

In the goblet alone no deception is found.

Child Harold's reactions to the life of selfish pleasure are more honest and his conclusions are melancholy rather than cynical.

The first note of regret in Childe Harold is introduced when the poet comments that one ne'er-do-well can spoil a good family name forever, "However mighty in olden time." Nor can any poetic treatment of the "loosel's" actions consecrate his
evil deeds. The home of the Childe's ancestors

...was a vast and venerable pile;
So old, it seemed only not to fall...

The sense of decay in family tradition is dramatized also in the short poem, "Newstead Abbey," written in 1811. The scene is one of desolation and the poet laments that

...vain was each effort to raise and recall
The brightness of old to illumine our Hall;
And vain was the hope to avert our decline,
And the fate of my fathers had faded to mine.

And theirs was the wealth and the fulness of fame
And mine to inherit too haughty a name;
And theirs were the times and the triumphs of yore,
And mine to regret, but renew them no more.

Childe Harold's hedonistic way of life is disrupted when he comes to know "the fulness of satiety," a fate worse than "adversity," the poet comments. This feeling of satiety recurs in Byron's later poetry. In Lara that self-exiled chieftain is described as having tried.

...in youth all action and all life...
Burning for pleasure, not averse from strife;
Woman, the field, the ocean, all that gave
Promise of gladness, peril of the grave,
In turn he tried...
Chain'd to excess, the slave of each extreme...

Byron's experiences, to Byron, had encompassed all phases of living. Perhaps, if we include the experiences of his imagination with those of his life, he had, indeed, explored much of the range of man's existence.

Childe Harold's sense of the hypocrisy of society contributes to his feeling of exile from society. He knew the revelers who gathered about him to be mere "flatterers of the festal hour" and felt that none loved him. The feelings concerning friendship in the disparaging remarks which Byron made to Dallas
before leaving England have been expanded to the extreme emotion. As Childe Harold begins his journey, he expresses regret for his apathy and his lack of ties: "My greatest grief is that I leave no thing which claims a tear."

Childe Harold's reactions to events and scenes in Portugal reflect the past experiences which had brought him to become an exile from his old life. His reaction against the pleasure-seeking life is revealed in his comments on William Beckford's Portuguese palace. Childe Harold observes that after wealth has filled a person's life with luxurious thrills, peace shuns him. The decaying splendor of the palace seems to Childe Harold a lesson that the voluptuous existence is vain, that its pleasures are not lasting.

In the Canto II narration of the pilgrimage, Childe Harold's reactions to the luxury of the Moslem Tapalcn are similarly described. His responses are akin to those he experienced when viewing Beckford's palace. As he has done in other societies, Childe Harold quickly tires of "wealth and wantonness." He repeats an earlier thought that peace abhors artificial joys. Pleasure leagued with pomp, he observes, destroys the enjoyment of both.

The lure of such a life, however, Childe Harold understands. (Canto I,65) As he views the "sweet, though ignoble," beauties of Cadiz, he rationalizes his former weaknesses, asserting that the "soft" ways of Vice have an irresistible fascination for the youth and mold a lure for every type of taste. In a later poem, The Bride of Abydos, Solim warns Zuleika of the dangers which may beset a person in the "lap of
Luxury." He regrets,

...how oft the heart
Corruption shakes which peril could not part!

Childe Harold ends his personal revelations of Canto I in the poem "To Inez." Here, he discovers the inescapable nature of his problem. Though he has left the setting of his hedonistic living and of English hypocrisy, he realizes that the exile cannot flee from himself or from his own thoughts and memories. Since he has shared, in his own vain living, some of the faults of society, he cannot escape memory of them.

In Canto II, 23-27, the solitude of the exile is pictured. The scene of the Mediterranean at night evokes in the poet melancholy thoughts. Night makes the heart, though friendless now, dream it has a friend. When a man's soul no longer finds communion with its fellows, there is little left for death to destroy. None is so desolate, however, that there is not something dearer than self to him.

This preoccupation with loneliness leads the poet to an examination of the nature of solitude. He imagines himself among several natural scenes. He observes that his sense of harmony with nature constitutes a communion with her charms and thus cannot be real solitude. On the other hand, he imagines himself in the midst of crowds which are totally indifferent to his fellings, not sharing his thoughts, and hypocritical in their actions. This inner sense of exile from society, a spiritual isolation, is true solitude, he concludes. This sense of spiritual isolation becomes a dominant theme in
Byron's poetry, the crescendo reaching greatest height in *Manfred*, then gradually subsiding to minor diminuendo in the later satires.

The next episode of Canto II revolves about Childe Harold's friendship with "Sweet Florence." The poet maintains that Childe Harold was unmoved by the much sought-after beauty. Stanza 35 contains the comment that

> When all is won that all desire to woo,
The paltry price is hardly worth the cost.

Though Childe Harold was unresponsive to the beauty of Sweet Florence, Mrs. Spencer Smith, Byron was not, as his letters and other poems which speak of her reveal. In his "To Florence," Byron praises her

> ...in whom at once conspire
> All charms which heedless hearts can move,
> Whom but to see is to admire,
> And, oh! forgive the word—to love.

While Byron lavished such laudatory phrases upon Mrs. Smith, Childe Harold remained consistent in his philosophy of aloofness.

In some of his poetry written during the following turbulent years in England, Byron attempts to deny feeling, as Childe Harold had done, but is unsuccessful. In Canto III Byron, speaking of himself, first maintains that the man who has grown old though experience of woes and of the full range of human emotions no longer feels the piercing effects of sorrows and joys. Byron soon accuses himself of "thinking too wildly" and returns to the *Childe Harold* theme only to return to himself. Childe Harold he describes as he has described himself, one who would seek the Stoic's resistance to feeling because he has felt the cynic's pain of disillusionment. Childe Harold
essays to mingle with society in safety by sheathing his feel-
ings with an invulnerable mind. Thus, closely guarding his
emotions, he would study the members of a crowd only as inter-
esting objects for speculation. The experiment fails. Childe
Harold is caught up into the tumult of the emotions he observes,
for

...who can view the ripen'd rose nor seek
To wear it?

In Parasisna Byron concludes that man can't cease to feel,
no matter how he appears outwardly. The sorrow of Azo produced

A heart which shunn'd itself—and yet
That would not yield nor could forget,
Which, when it least appear'd to melt,
Intensely thought, intensely felt:
The deepest ice which ever froze
Can only o'er the surface close;
The living stream lies quick below,
And flows--and cannot cease to flow.

Emotion is as much, or more, a part of man as thought, the
First Destiny in Manfred claims:

--the passions, attributes
Of earth and heaven, from which no power, nor being,
Nor breath from the worm upwards is exempt...

The concluding stanzas of Childe Harold, II, were written
after Byron's return to England, July 17, 1811. The poet no
longer speaks as Childe Harold, but as himself. The feelings
of the exile dominate these last stanzas. The death of Byron's
mother and his friend Matthews, shortly after Byron's reaching
England, evoked the despairing note that "none are left to please
when none are left to love."

Byron also mourns here an unknown love. Earlier in this
canto, in stanza 9, he had referred to this love.

There, thou!—whose love and life together fled,
Have left me here to love and live in vain—
In the concluding stanzas of the canto, the death of this "more than friend" is again mourned. He addresses her as one

Whom youth and youth's affections bound to me,...
What is my being? thou hast ceased to be!
Nor staid to welcome here thy wanderer home...
Would he had never return'd to find fresh cause to roam.

In thought and emotional content these lines are related to the "Thyrza" group of poems, which were written during the same period. Thyrza, a love who has died, is the subject of several laments. Though there is evidence in Byron's letters and conversations that Thyrza was a real person, her identity has never been established.21

The poems "To Thyrza," "Away, Away, Ye Notes of Woe," and "One Struggle More" contain expressions of sorrow for past love. The tenor of these poems progresses from grief for death of a loved one, in "To Thyrza," to a sense of personal injustice in "One Struggle More," in which the poet longs to be free from the love. In the poems "And Thou art Dead" and "If Sometimes in the Haunts of Men," which are of the same period and express the same emotions as the Thyrza group, the poet returns to the theme of devoted love and grief.

In Childe Harold,II, the poet bitterly accuses death,

All thou couldst have of mine, stern Death, thou hast,

The parent, friend, and now the more than friend...

The worst of the woes of age, Byron concludes, is to survive the death of friends and be left alone, "To view each loved one blotted from life's page...."

The exile-poet asks whether he must join the society he left and endure its hypocracies:
Then must I plunge again into the crowd?
And follow all that Peace disdains to seek?
Where Revel calls, and Laughter, vainly loud,
False to the heart, distorts the hollow cheek,
To leave the flagging spirit doubly weak!
Still o'er the features, which perforce they cheer,
To feign the pleasure or conceal the pique,
Smiles form the channel of a future tear,
Or raise the writhing lip with ill-dissembled sneer.

The first pilgrimage done, the exile's feelings become
more than ever involved with the life of society.

Byron's interests included not only man but also society
and the individual's relation to it. This interest in social
order was greatly heightened in Byron's years of fame and years
of notoriety. His poetry becomes fraught with scorn for the
society which had condemned him and brought him to seek peace
in exile. In Byron's life many illustrations of his respect
for conventional behavior can be cited. These examples at first
appear incongruous with his poetic attacks upon society. Hayne
regards the duality of his treatment of social convention,
attacking in verse and yielding in life, as "the real problem
of his character." She attributes his actions to the "ambition
and the pusillanimity of his will...the one driving him, in
fancy, to revolt against convention, the other bending him, in
actual life, meekly before it."

If the problem is analyzed in a different manner, however,
Byron's behavior can be explained without charging him either
with pusillanimity or with inconsistency. The clue lies in the
direction of his attacks—not mainly against the conventions of
society, but against society itself in its capacity as judge
and juror and, ultimately, against society for its hypocrisy.
During his few years as the idol of London social circles, Byron's insight into the life of the capitol greatly decreased his respect for an aristocracy which had no regard for its own conventions and codes. The poet had ample opportunity to observe the workings of these fashionable circles, since, soon after the publication of Cantos I and II of Childe Harold, he was swept into their midst. From the morning on which he awoke to find himself famous, London was transformed for him from a city in which he was known by only a few friends to a Mayfair in which he was sought after by all the elite. Quennell pictures Byron in this new position as "the most celebrated young man in the whole of London, the cynosure of admiring and inquisitive glances, the subject of endless excited talk...Women thronged and struggled to catch a glimpse of him." The Byron fever spread rapidly. In 1812 the poet was unequalled in popularity with the fashionable set. In reviewing the popularity of Childe Harold, Quennell concludes that Byron's triumph was "personal rather than poetic." Childe Harold expressed much of the scepticism, discontent, and nostalgia of the age; society immediately identified Byron with the Childe.

The picture of Byron which was established in 1812 was one of a melancholy misanthrope, moody, passionate, cynical, unconventional, rebellious, and ultimately inscrutable. His reserved contemplation of the people he met became the famous "underlook." The fashionable world delighted in trying not to understand him. Byron was amazed at the gullibility of society yet encouraged the impression it had formed of him.
The "Byronic pose" seems to have been both spontaneous and self-conscious. Byron's shyness, his instinctive uneasiness in the glittering groups, made him assume a countenance reticent and withdrawn, which was readily interpreted as aloof and cynical. Byron, sensitive to the effects he had on others, would realize the impression he created and thus spontaneous reserve would become self-conscious pose. Hayne analyzes the pose in the sense of "poise." "Somewhere in Byron, melancholy reigned supreme. Neither the gaiety nor the gloom was histrionic; one did not mask the other—both were frankly what they called themselves. There was never a more spontaneous poser—using 'pose' in its true sense of poise. His spontaneity in this amounted to simplicity..." He confided to Lady Melbourne once, "With the world I have a part to play; to be diffident there is to wear a drag-chain, and luckily I do so thoroughly despise half the population in it, that my insolence is almost natural."

Despite his unprecedented popularity, Byron did not feel secure in his success. The "paradox" of Byron's beliefs is commented upon by Hayne. "He set the world ablaze and knew that he had set it so—yet was convinced that his vocation was not poetry, and that the world did not at all appreciate or understand him." The general picture which the public held of Byron as social rebel was, indeed, inaccurate. Byron's early rigorous, aristocratic training and, above all, his feeling for tradition engendered in him a lasting respect for convention. Commenting on Byron's liberal social views, Brinton concludes, "it is clear that his Liberal leanings are not those of a violent, un-English
rebel against society. But he was in many respects even more orthodox than he has been painted. Byron's beliefs, both political and social were not radical and democratic, but were rather, in the Whig tradition, aristocratic and conventional. In a letter to Murray from Ravenna, he expresses his sympathy for "reform" and corresponding fear of "uprooting." Though these sentiments were then applied to political views, they might also be applied to Byron's attitudes toward society. He did not seek to revolutionize the ideals which society professed to believe in, but rather he criticized society for not fulfilling those goals.

The social life of the aristocracy of Byron's day was little inhibited by convention and little given to punctilious observance of morals. At a later date, commenting upon the morality of the fashionable Englishmen, Byron observed that theirs was a code manifested in words rather than actions. Profession, not observation, of high standards was the practice. Quennell quotes a contemporary as judging, "Language can hardly exaggerate the folly that prevailed in 1812." The amorous demeanor of Byron's day elicited the remark from Hayne that "Hardly a woman in his sphere whose name was not coupled with a lover's. Wherever he looked, there was, or had been, intrigue." Grierson condemns the current mores even further, though he begins with the statement that "with Pitt's ministry the era of absolutely subservient and personally scandalous ministries had closed, and purifying forces were at work." Grierson quotes Sir George Trevelyan as saying that during the time of Charles Fox, "men of standing...and refined cultivation...
lived...shamelessly...as no one who had any care for his reputation would now live during a single fortnight of the year at Monaco." Grierson continues, "Yet in all essential respects the aristocratic society of the Regency was still both the privileged and the corrupt society which Trevelyan describes." Grierson makes the obvious, but important, conclusion that it is not surprising that, while "the ideals of this society shaped and colored his Byron's feelings and conduct...at the same time that society evoked his scorn and hatred."33 Murry notes that the particular social circle with which Byron became entangled practised a code of morality which was lax even as judged by the standards of the Regency period.34

For the ideals of conduct which that society professed, however it might deviate from them, Byron had sympathy. He would have liked to have been in accord with both the conventions of propriety and with the moral values underlying the social code. In him there was, at least, a seeming desire to live within social bounds; but the strength of his individualism forced him beyond them.

In May of 1810, from the Dardanelles, he wrote Hobhouse concerning his affinities for conventionality in a half-mocking, half-serious tone. "...I begin to find out that nothing but virtue will do in this damned world. I am tolerably sick of vice, which I have tried in its agreeable varieties, and mean, on my return, to cut all my dissolute acquaintance, leave off wine and carnal company, and betake myself to politics and decorum. I am...a good deal disposed to moralize."35

In February, 1814, Byron advised the young poet John Hamilton
Reynolds that "Happiness must, of course, depend upon conduct,—and even fame itself would be but a poor compensation for self-reproach."  

In its largest sense, social convention encompasses moral values. Byron recognized the calamitous consequences which transgression of convention could bring. His own life, like that of Sardanapalus, was to reveal

...to what gulfs
A single deviation from the track
Of human duties leads even those who claim
The homage of mankind as their born due,
And find it, till they forfeit it themselves!

The crucial test of Byron's social, or moral, code involved man's behavior toward woman. In every instance, with the one vital exception involving Augusta Leigh, of Byron's relationship with a woman, his comportment was at least acceptable to the mores of his times. His fame, coupled with his astonishing personal beauty, made him frequently the pursued rather than the pursuer. He was sought after by many women of the fashionable circles of London. At first he found his popularity exhilarating and was flattered by the attention he received; but, as every ruse was unashamedly used to gain his favor, he began strongly to desire retirement from demanding adulation.

To attempt to defend Byron's actions in the affairs he became engaged in is a task not in our province. To understand the origins of his disillusionment concerning the women of his society, however, is not difficult. If he felt they were far from his ideal of them and from their ideals of themselves, the reasons are not obscure.

Byron's affair with Caroline Lamb, whom he met in 1812,
was ill-fated from the start by the very nature of the principals. Byron's taste for the voluptuous, calm woman and his need for serene friendship could never have been met by a Caroline. Caroline has been frequently described as Quennell pictures her, "a creature compact of imagination, caprice, and headstrong feeling..."38 A friend of Caroline's described her as "the same wild, delicate, odd, delightful person." Maurois summarizes Caroline's charm and her greatest fault: "She had a horror of the 'conventional.'"

In the beginning, Byron was fascinated and flattered by the favor of this fashionable, volatile young lady; but he became greatly annoyed as she became desperate for his attentions. She besieged Byron, inventing countless disguises and ruses to attain to his presence. Byron at length realized Caroline's weakness. He candidly wrote her, "I never knew a woman with greater or more pleasing talents...But these are unfortunately coupled with a total want of common conduct."39 He advised reserve. "This same prudence is tiresome enough; but one must maintain it, or what can one do to be saved? Keep to it."40 It was Byron's prudence, however, not Caroline's, which finally terminated the unfortunate affair.

Apparently at Lady Melbourne's suggestion, Byron engaged in an affair with Lady Oxford, as he says, mockingly, "to play off Lady Oxford against her [Caroline]," in the hopes of convincing Caroline of the futility of any wish to continue their relationship. The affair with Lady Oxford served a different purpose, however. It became a refuge. Lady Oxford "was a sedative to his jangled nerves, and greatly to his relief she
took control of the predicament which was exhausting him.\textsuperscript{41} She was forty and she guided him with gentle, undemanding sophistication. Lord Oxford was a most considerate host and Lady Oxford was very liberal in her views. There was no conflict such as was to develop in his relationship with Lady Frances Webster. Byron was discreet, cautioning Lady Melbourne to keep the affair private and heeding her advice about not traveling "en famille" with the Oxfords.\textsuperscript{42}

Byron's letters to Lady Melbourne speak again and again of the chief appeal of this interlude with Lady Oxford--its quietude. On October 30, he writes, "I am sick of scenes, and have imbibed a taste for something like quiet." On November 4, he comments, "All our wishes tend to quiet..." Five days later his statement is much the same; "Our mutual wish is quiet..." The letter of December 27, reiterates his former desires.\textsuperscript{43}

This love of quiet emphasized Byron's propensities for domestic proprieties. During this undisturbed interlude he greatly enjoyed family life without responsibility. Lady Oxford's children became favorites of his. His dedication of \textit{Childe Harold}, the Iaithie stanzas, was directed to Lady Oxford's daughter, Charlotte Harley. Quennell refers to Byron's "deep, though thwarted, respect for the domestic proprieties."\textsuperscript{44} That biographer also comments that Byron was probably never "fully aware of the inward schism that made it impossible for him to achieve that humdrum happiness--that calm and contented domestic obscurity--which was the goal he had always most desired."\textsuperscript{45}

Better evidence of Byron's prudence can be found in his acquaintance with Harriette Wilson, "one of the most celebrated
courtesans of her day." Her keen interest in Byron is revealed in a series of letters she wrote about him. Harriette admits that she tried to draw Byron out through conversation when she met him at a masquerade in July, 1813. Quennell comments, "Byron had had the bad taste to reject her homage. During his residence in Albany, Harriette...wrote him a letter, begging to be allowed to make his acquaintance...Byron, who had never been, in the ordinary sense of the word, a coureur de femmes, did not reply to this overture for three days; and when Harriette wrote, expostulating, she elicited a polite but guarded reply." She would not like him, "either as a lover or as a friend," he assured her. Her next, more determined, effort, brought a coldly stiff reply from Byron, asking that the acquaintance might be ended.46

Byron's discretion was put to a more severe test that fall in his friendship with Lady Frances Webster. Byron spent considerable time in October and November with the Websters at Aston Hall. Byron relates the drama of Lady Frances to Lady Melbourne in a series of detailed letters. Byron's Childe Harold reputation had proceeded him to Aston Hall, so Lord Webster had already adjudged Byron a ruff. In his letter of October 13, Byron holds Webster in contempt for his treatment of his wife. Concerning Byron's contemplated affair with Lady Frances, he rationalizes to Lady Melbourne, "Besides, he [Webster] literally provoked and goaded me into it, by something not unlike bullying...If he had been rational, and not prated of his pursuits, I should have gone on very well..." Byron admits he made the first move, "a speech," in the billiard room. Lady Frances quickly reciprocated. Indeed, all his advances were readily accepted. Byron did not
fail to see her fallibility and the incongruity of this quiet and seemingly conventional young matron encouraging his attentions. He writes of another step in his disillusionment about feminine virtue. "She, however, managed to give me a note and to receive another, and a ring before Webster's very face, and yet she is a thorough devotee, and takes prayers, morning and evening, besides being measured for a new Bible once a quarter."

A week later Lady Frances told Byron, "We cannot part." She also revealed that she had never loved her husband. She contemplated flight with Byron. Byron wrote Lady Melbourne, "I came here with no plan, nor intention of the kind as my former letters will prove to you...you cannot be more astonished than I am how, and why all this has happened."

The next day Byron writes of his cautious proceedings in the affair. His is not the action of a confirmed social rebel. "Publically I have been cautious enough, and actually declined a dinner where they went, because I thought something intelligible might be seen or suspected."

In his following letter to Lady Melbourne, written three days later from Newstead, Byron refers to "the perpetual conflict within myself" and the "Curst situation I have thrust myself into." The crisis had been passed, however, for Lady Frances had offered herself to Byron and he had refused.

Correspondence between Byron and Lady Frances continued, after this date, nevertheless. Byron commented to Lady Melbourne upon the paradoxical nature of Lady Frances's concept of "the fitness of things" and "the beauty of virtue." Byron relates, "She vindicated her treachery to Webster thus: after condemning
deceit in general, and hers in particular, she says: 'but then remember it is to deceive "un marito", and to prevent all the unpleasant consequences, etc... Does not this expression [to deceive un marito] convey to you the strongest mixture of right and wrong?' Byron, at least, was not deceived as to the true values at point.®

In time sequence Byron's liaison with Claire Clairmont does not rightly belong with his early affairs; but, in relative significance concerning his views on conventionality, it does. During the period of Byron's connection with the Drury Lane Theatre, Claire had begun a correspondence with him on the pretense of asking advice upon entering a stage career. She wrote several letters. Byron did not reply to all of these and Claire complained of "no answer." His eighth epistle reveals Byron's reticence in continuing the acquaintance. "You bid me write short to you," she states. "You also bade me believe that it was a fancy which made me cherish an attachment for you." Later, she patiently comments on Byron's inconsiderateness in keeping her and Mary Shelley waiting when they visited him. "On Monday evening I waited nearly a quarter of an hour in your hall, which though I may overlook the disagreeableness, she is not in love and would not."® In another letter Claire suggests a trysting place.® In the last communication which she sent before his departure for Switzerland, her words reveal that Byron was "already tired of an intrigue to which he had never more than half-heartedly consented."®

Claire followed Byron to Switzerland in 1816. Again her letters show Byron's reluctance. She made arrangements for the
resumption of their affair. Though Byron "abhorred women who ran after him," he passively consented. Byron refers to their relationship with contempt in a letter to Augusta, calling Claire "a foolish girl." "I have had all the plague possible to persuade her to go back again."\footnote{52}

"We go in two days," wrote Claire to Byron on August 26, 1816. "Are you satisfied?" Grylls comments that "He [Byron] would probably have agreed to anything to get rid of her—as he made quite obvious."\footnote{53}

Byron's toleration for Claire's actions had been, to a considerable extent, due to his regard for Shelley, Claire's brother-in-law. Byron's respect for Shelley was based upon his admiration for that poet's genius. Of Shelley's social virtues, however, Byron was suspicious, commenting that Shelley was "crazy on the subject of religion and morality."\footnote{54} Byron, the exile from society, was echoing the view of conventional society concerning Shelley.

The chain of events which had led to Byron's exile was begun in 1812 when Byron was seeking escape from the dilemma presented by Caroline Lamb. On September, 15, he wrote to Lady Melbourne. "'Manage her!' it is impossible...all I have left is to take some step which will make her hate me effectually." Later he confesses to Lady Melbourne, "I do not know a single gentlewoman who would venture upon me, but that seems the only rational outlet from this adventure."\footnote{55}

Lady Melbourne had been encouraging a match between Lord Byron and her niece, Anabella Milbanke. Concerning this young lady, Byron wrote Lady Melbourne on September 18: "You ask,
'Am I sure of myself?' and I answer, 'No, but *you* are', which I take to be a much better thing." Byron then, however, elaborates upon his admiration for Anabella. Concerning the qualities which Byron sought in Anabella as a wife, Mauois remarks, "On marriage, as on many other matters, Byron was a slave to Convention." He esteemed Anabella; she was an amiable and clever woman and of high blood, he noted. Love he deemed unnecessary for a successful marriage. Anabella's propriety was an important aspect of her character to Byron; he was extremely proud of her unimpeachable reputation and wrote of her virtues to all his friends.

Sometime between October 1, and October 12, 1812, Byron had proposed marriage to Anabella and had been refused. Their correspondence was later cautiously resumed by Anabella in August of 1813, but it was not until September of the following year that Byron renewed his proposal of marriage. During the time between the first and second proposals, the affair with Caroline Lamb had raged on; the autumnal interlude with Lady Oxford had begun and had resolved; the intrigue with Lady Frances had occurred; and the fateful relationship with Augusta had originated.

In 1814 it was apparently Augusta, as well as Lady Melbourne, who urged marriage upon Byron as an escape into the safety of conventionality. Byron was doubtless speaking of Augusta when he wrote to Lady Melbourne in October, "She wished me to marry, because it was the only chance of redemption for two persons, and was sure if I did not that I should only step from one scrape into another..."
Byron's own desires to find a conventional haven from his predicament accorded with these plans. He believed, or rather, he hoped with intensity amounting to belief, that marriage would be the salvation of his reputation and his peace of mind. As Maurois aptly points out, marriage was Byron's "last illusion."

Byron assured Lady Melbourne, half-mockingly and then earnestly, that his resolutions for married life were honorable. "In course I mean to reform most thoroughly, and become 'a good man and true,' in all the various senses of these respective and respectable appellations. Seriously, I will endeavor to make your niece happy; not by 'my deserts, but what I will deserve.'"60

In Byron's letters of 1814, the basis of his hopes for marriage is revealed as residing in his faith in Anabella's virtues and goodness. He speaks often of her "perfections" and, engagingly, regrets his own past failings. His concepts of Anabella's function as his wife and his "last illusion" are seen in his letter of October 14th, in which he expresses the desire that she will guide him toward good conduct.61

From many of Anabella's earlier remarks it would seem that she was well-suited for the role of reformer. In her first letter to him, in August, 1813, Anabella had stated a purpose. "I have the right of a constant and considerable zeal for your happiness, and the right which you have given, and will not reasonably withdraw. I entreat you then to observe the more consistently the principles of unwearied benevolence..."62

There follows a lengthy discourse on the tenets of good conduct.

Anabella, however, did not and, indeed, could not, fulfill
her promise of guiding angel. She became too emotionally
involved with the object of her reforming instincts and there-
by rendered herself incapable of carrying out her theories.
Two months before their wedding, Byron sensed the change which
Anabella's emotions had wrought in her. He wrote Lady Melbourne,
"...her passions are stronger than we supposed." A week later
he was uneasy concerning Anabella's "Carolinish" proclivities.
"Do you know I have grave doubts if this will be a marriage
now? Her disposition is the very reverse of our imaginings...
I hear nothing but 'feeling' from morning till night..."
Instinct gave him further warning, "I fear she won't guide me..." 63
As is true of so many events in Byron's life, the consequences
have the character of fatality, of inevitability.

In Byron's existence, the other crucial relationship, that
with his half-sister, Augusta Leigh, had already been begun. The
most widely accepted work on the nature of their relation is Sir
John Fox's The Byron Mystery (1924), which was instigated by the
publication of the later edition of Astarea (1921) and the Cor-
respondence, edited by Murray (1922). Fox's study is based
mainly upon an integration of the two latter works.

It is unnecessary to recount Fox's evidence here. For this
paper we have accepted the following conclusions from his study.

1. Byron's relation with Augusta did include incest.
   Lovelace, 33-36; Fox, 210.

2. The affair with Augusta ended with Byron's marriage.
   Lovelace, 33, 36, 38; Fox, 125, 210.

3. The letters of Lady Byron to Augusta following the
   separation drama reveal her efforts to save Augusta
   socially and spiritually from the consequences of
   incest. Lovelace, 63; Fox, 130-133
Drinkwater, in his discussion of this crucial association, comments that "It has been observed by more than one critic that no poet has been more dependent upon the external aspect of his experience for the substance of his poetry than he... And poetry and letters alike are always related with obvious intimacy to the physical and casual events of his life. Abstraction to him is, with the slightest reservation, an unknown device."64

Later, however, Drinkwater warns against the biographical fallacy to the extent of maintaining that "to use his [Byron's] poetry as incriminating evidence against him in any specific circumstance in his life is utterly offensive to the propriety of criticism..."65

In this chapter, in dealing with Byron's relationship with Augusta, the purpose will not be to use his poetry as testimony against him, but rather to illuminate the meaning of the poetry through the acceptance of Fox's conclusions. It would, indeed, be difficult to interpret clearly Byron's poems of the period 1814 to 1818 if the judgment of Fox were not granted. With its admittance, however, the feelings and thoughts of the poems have a consistent meaning.

The public outcry which led to Byron's voluntary exile in 1816 was not due to any one reason. The public had created an idol but resented his fame. Byron had expressed the social and political dissatisfaction of the age and, though he was applauded, the public misinterpreted him and somehow distrusted him. Certainly much of the attack on Byron in 1816 arose, not from moral indignation, but from political animosity.
The first significant hint of the insecurity of his uncontested fame came in February, 1814. The occasion was Byron's acknowledgement of the verses, "Lines to a Lady Weeping," which commemorated a scene at Carlton House, where the Princess Charlotte "had been reduced to tears by a public altercation between her father and some of his ministers." Byron found that his claim to these verses put "all the newspapers in hysterics and, town in an uproar." Drinkwater comments that "Indirectly a political question was involved, and it was taken up by the press with the utmost bitterness of party faction." All those who resented Byron's political, social, and literary successes entered the fray. The Sun suggested that, though Byron's action could not be prosecuted as criminal, the Lords would surely expell such a disreputable member. Drinkwater concludes, "The significant thing for us at this distance is the temper in which the attack upon him was conducted. The opposition had declared itself, and it was formidable. His first false step in public had been no more than an indiscretion, but the most had been made of it." 66

Between this incident and his final departure from England, occurred his marriage to Annabella Milbanke, the separation drama, and the subsequent public outcry. Knight quotes Jeaffreson as observing that "had Byron voted with the Tories, treated the Prince Regent respectfully, and held his pen and tongue about matters touching the Thirty-Nine Articles, English higher society would never for a single instant have sided with Lady Byron in her domestic troubles." 67 This is a strong position; but certainly Byron's support of unpopular liberal causes in
Parliament, his attack upon the Regent, his sympathetic addresses to Napoleon, and his ridicule of Southey furnished many with causes for discontent.

Macaulay’s comments upon Moore’s Life of Byron are the classic statement of the public reaction to Byron’s fame. Upon Byron’s spectacular popularity, Macaulay notes, “At 24 he found himself on the highest pinnacle of literary fame...all this world and all the glory of it were offered...Everything, it seemed, was to be forgiven to youth, rank, and genius.

"Then came the reaction. Society, capricious in its indignation, had been capricious in its fondness, flew into a rage with its forward and petted darling...nothing is, nothing ever was positively known to the public, but this, that he quarreled with his lady, and that she refused to live with him."

Later Macaulay proclaims the injustice of the public’s judgment of Byron. “The public, without knowing anything whatever about the transactions in his family, flew into a violent passion with him, and proceeded to invent stories which might justify its anger...these stories were not the causes but the effects of public indignation." The latter comment is one of Macaulay’s most penetrating remarks on the subject.

Macaulay credits the attack on Byron to British self-righteousness. His scorn for this trait is strongly expressed. "We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality...Once in six or seven years our virtue becomes outrageous...Accordingly, some unfortunate man, in no respect more depraved than hundreds whose offences have been treated with lenity, is singled out as an
expiatory sacrifice...At length our anger is satisfied. Our victim is ruined and heartbroken. And our virtue goes quietly asleep for seven years more..." Macaulay voices strong objection to the British punishment of vice by a "lottery of infamy."68

Knight interprets Byron's comments in Lady Blessington's *Conversations of Lord Byron* as placing the blame of his fall upon his former idolatry by society. Knight paraphrases Byron's words in the *Conversations*: "Faced by any 'striking superiority,' they [the public] accordingly search for some 'defect' or 'weakness' to counterbalance and console their envy. The 'herd' were, moreover, always ready to turn against their idol with an irrational fury. The man of genius may thus be rendered dangerous by the 'slander' and 'calumny' and distorted accusations of crime which, without any trial, have banished him from society, 'injustice rankling in his heart..."69

Political views and fame were not the only facts with which Byron was reproached in 1816. Many had always been willing to associate Byron with the characters of his poetic heroes. Now they identified him with them, interpreting the Oriental Tales in the light of current rumors, and the current rumors in the light of the Oriental Tales. Mayne stresses the significance of Byron's poetry in connection with the separation, maintaining that it might have gone unnoticed had the public not found hints of intrigue in his poetry; "but where everything was already hinted at, such an action was at once interpreted in the sense of scandal."70

The press found more poetic material to wield against Byron when, in March and April, Byron wrote to his wife the address
"Fare Thee Well." He also penned "A Sketch" of Mrs. Clermont, whom, as Quennell states, "Byron suspected—apparently quite without reason—of having plotted against him with his detestable mother-in-law." Hayne notes that "Hurray was commissioned to print both 'for private distribution,' and, through somebody's indiscretion, both found their way to the public press."

A Tory paper, The Champion, published the poems, on April 14, to reveal the moral habits which accompanied Lord Byron's reprehensible political opinions. Every other paper immediately took up the cry, "in the interest of its readers." Haurois remarks that the campaign of the Tory press "turned Byron into a traitor in the eyes of the populace. His chaste and discreetly silent spouse became a symbol of all the British virtues...Middle class opinion," that ruthless force, "had been turned against him.""72

Hayne relates that for years "writers of every class exhausted themselves in conjecture." Every form of attack was used..."commentaries on the poems, loading every line with a narrow personal significance; pamphlets virtuous and vicious; little filthy contraband brochures...a rank growth of printed matter crowded about a problem with which the public had long been made too familiar, and in the end left that problem precisely where the Separation Proceedings had found it!"73

An example, which Chew terms "moderate," of the many accounts of the affair was the prose Narrative of the Circumstances which Attended the Separation of Lord and Lady Byron (1816). Chew states the theme of the article: "The public has a right...to know the true explanation of the separation."75 That was the frequently echoed belief in 1816, and that was the point which
Byron was cogently to deny.

Immediately following the signing of the Separation papers, Byron was contrite, assuming the blame and praising Lady Byron. In a letter to Moore, March 8, he wrote, "The fault was not—no, nor even the misfortune—in my 'choice'...for I do not believe—and I must say it, in the very dregs of all this bitter business—that there was ever a better, or even a brighter, or kinder, or more amiable and agreeable being than Lady Byron. I never had, nor can have, any reproach to make her, while with me. Where there is blame, it belongs to myself, and, if I cannot redeem, I must bear it."76

Byron's attitude toward his wife altered, however. This change was probably due to several factors. His daughter Ada had been made a ward of the Court without his knowledge; he held Lady Byron responsible for this action. Furthermore, Byron suspected, and rightly, that Lady Byron was dictating the stilted, reserved letters he was receiving from Augusta. He came to refer to Anabella as his "moral Clytemnestra." She had refused, and continued to refuse, to give specific reasons for her separation from him. Whether he knew them or not, and he always insisted that he did not, the effect of her silence on the subject was to enable scandal to paint whatever picture it wished of him. As Fox postulates, Lady Byron had good reasons for silence and she was incapable of telling the half-truth which might have saved Byron from the speculation which knew no bounds.77

The ensuing onslaught of calumny has already been here discussed. Byron's name "became a topic for every salacious
tongue in town, and his appearance in the streets a signal for public insults." Persecution followed him to Switzerland.

Years later he told Hodgen of the notoriety with which society plagued him. "...there was no story so absurd they did not invent at my cost. I was waylaid in my evening drives...I believe that they looked upon me as a man-monster."?

In August, 1819, an article appeared in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, attacking Byron's character through remarks on the early cantos of Don Juan. In the following months, Byron wrote a reply, the only formal defense he made of his position.

I cannot 'in any way justify my own behavior in that affair.' I acquiesce, because no man can 'justify' himself until he knows of what he is accused; and I never had...any specific charge...submitted to me by the adversary, nor by others, unless the atrocities of public rumour and the mysterious silence of the lady's legal advisers may be deemed such...Upon what grounds the public founded their opinion, I am not aware; but it was general, and it was decisive. Of me or mine they knew little, except that I had written what is called poetry, was a nobleman, had married, become a father, and was involved in differences with my wife and her relatives, no one knew why, because the persons complaining refused to state their grievances...

I was a little surprised to find myself condemned without being favored with the act of accusation, and to perceive in the absence of this portentous charge or charges, whatever it or they were to be, that every possible or impossible crime was rumored to supply its place, and taken for granted.

...Madame de Stael said to me in Switzerland, 'You should not have warred with the world—it will not do—it is too strong always for any individual...' I perfectly acquiesce in the truth of this remark; but the world had done me the honour to begin the war; and, assuredly if peace is to be obtained by courting and paying tribute to it, I am not qualified to obtain its countenance.

On the twenty-third of April, 1816, Byron saw England for the last time. Childe Harold, Canto III, is a dramatization of
his emotions upon leaving England and during the first months of exile. Canto IV and many of the other poems of the period of 1816 through 1818 further reveal thoughts concerning the exile. The thoughts emphasized by the exile-poet had been in his mind before the exile, though many of them in nebulous, undefined form. After Byron left England, these former subjective feelings of exile from society were crystallized in the experience of the exile in fact and were focused upon that event.

The main characteristic which distinguishes the exile from others, the poet postulates, is his independence of spirit and his pride. In Childe Harold, III, the hero is described as the prototype of the exile:

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with Man, with whom he held
Little in common;—untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quell'd
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompell'd,
He would not yield dominion of his mind
To spirits against whom his own rebell'd;
Proud though in desolation; which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind. 81

A similar concept appears in stanza 69:

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind:
All are not fit with them to stir and toil...

In the last stanzas, Byron himself speaks as the exile, having been compensated for his loss of society's favor by his pride:

I have not loved the world, nor the world me;
I have not flatter'd its rank breath, nor bow'd
To its idolatries a patient knee,
Nor coin'd my cheek to smiles, nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo; in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such; I stood
Among them, but not of them; in a shroud
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and
still could,
Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself subdued. 82
The canto concludes with the exile's declaration of respect for his adversary.

I have not loved the world, nor the world me,
But let us part fair foes...

The feelings of Manfred reveal the most intense statement in Byron's poetry of the exile's independence of spirit and of his spiritual isolation. Manfred's passions and powers were of a different order from those about him and created a solitude around him.

From my youth upwards
My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,
Nor look'd upon the earth with human eyes;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
The aim of their existence was not mine;
My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers,
Made me a stranger; though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh...

In the second act, scene 4, the first of the Destinies elaborates upon Manfred's unusual aspirations.

This man is of no common order...
...His sufferings
Have been of an immortal nature, like
Our own; his knowledge and his powers and will,
As far as is compatible with clay,
Which clogs the ethereal essence, have been such
As clay hath seldom borne; his aspirations
Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,
And they have only taught him what we know—
That knowledge is not happiness...

Manfred's early ambitions for his part as enlightener of others were thwarted because his spirit could not yield in any way to the demands of society.

I could not tame my nature down; for he
Must serve who fain would sway—and soothe, and sue,
And watch all time, and pry into all place,
And be a living lie, who would become
A mightily thing amongst the mean, and such
The mass are; I disdain'd to mingle with
A herd, though to be leader—and of wolves.
The lion is alone, and so am I.
...I would not make,
But find a desolation...

In Tasso, from his independence and pride of spirit, that poet finds the strength to bear imprisonment.

For I have anguish yet to bear—and how?
I know not that—but in the innate force
Of my own spirit shall be found resource.

As the sense of having experienced all aspects of life was a characteristic of the exile of Childe Harold Cantos I and II, so it is also a characteristic of the exile in the poems of the following years. That age should be computed by experiences, rather than by years, is a frequently appearing concept in Byron's poetry. It is one of the distinguishing traits of the exile that he believes himself to have experienced the full range of life in early years. He has, in this sense, anticipated life. Thus, Lara in youth had tried all action and all life. Hence also, at least as regards dissipation, Childe Harold of Canto II "felt the fulness of satiety." In Canto III Byron pictures himself as

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,
So that no wonder waits him; nor below
Can love, or sorrow, fame, ambition, strife,
Cut to his heart again with the keen knife
Of silent, sharp endurance...

In the "Epistle to Augusta," the idea of anticipating life recurs.

I have outlived myself by many a day;...
...I had the share
Of life which might have fill'd a century,
Before its fourth of time had passed away.

In Manfred this concept of early knowledge of all life is drawn to the extreme. Manfred feels he has already completed life.

...there is an order
Of mortals on the earth, who do become
Old in their youth, and die ere middle age, Without the violence of warlike death; Some perishing of pleasure, some of study, Some worn with toil, some of mere weariness, Some of disease, and some insanity, And some of withered or of broken hearts... Look upon me! for even of all these things Have I partaken; and of all these things One were enough...

Akin to the concept of anticipating life is the sense of experiencing all of life, all of woe, in a moment of time. The Giaour relives the griefs of a lifetime in one moment:

...in that instant o'er his soul
Winters of Memory seem'd to roll,
And gather in that drop of time
A life of pain, an age of crime.
O'er him who loves, or hates, or fears,
Such moment pours the grief of years...
Though in Time's record nearly nought,
It was Eternity to Thought!

The compass of conscience is not subject to time,

For infinite as boundless space
The thought that Conscience must embrace,
Which in itself can comprehend
Woe without name, or hope, or end.

In The Corsair the poet describes a moment, in which, driven by remorse, the soul views all its previous existence.

In that lonely hour when it [the spirit] most feels,
And, to itself, all--all that self reveals,
No single passion, and no ruling thought
That leaves the rest unseen, unsought...

In the "wild prospect" of the past existence revealed before it, the soul sees all thwarted ambitions, love's regrets, lost hopes, and hates—all "the hopeless past" and the driven future...

Deeds, thoughts, and words, perhaps remembered not
So keenly till that hour, but ne'er forgot...

Manfred further explains the paradox which makes the experience of a whole life in a moment possible:

Think'st thou existence doth depend on time?
It doth; but actions are our epochs...
Thus time has small effect upon Marino Faliero's passions:

...Time has but little power
On his resentments or his griefs...
...all things wear in him
An aspect of eternity...?

Upon not only the memory of griefs, but also the nature of grief, Byron focuses his speculation. In Childe Harold, III, Byron probes the grief which, though it shows no outward sign, alters a man's whole existence. Man comes to feed upon his sorrow and thus it permeates and poisons all of life for him:

There is a very life in our despair,
Vitality of poison, a quick root
Which feeds these deadly branches: for it were
As nothing did we die; but life will suit
Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,
Like to the apples on the Dead Sea's shore,
All ashes to the taste...?

In "The Dream" the Wanderer at last gained a strange immunity to his griefs and fed upon them:

...Pain was Mix'd
In all which was served up to him until...
He fed on poisons, and they had no power,
But were a kind of nutriment...

Though man may escape his grief in forgetfulness, release can only be temporary. Remembrance is ever recurring, is always close to consciousness. Man has no control over his capricious memory:

But ever and anon of grief's subdued
There comes a token like a scorpion's sting,
Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued;
And slight may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside for ever...
And how and why we know not...
...the shock...
When we least deem of such, calls up to view
The spectres whom no exorcism can bind...?

In Manfred is found the quintessence of the life filled with
grief. Manfred's remorse is an obsession which drives him to regard life as the greatest sorrow of all. The fatality to live with the remembrance of grief is the curse pronounced upon Manfred:

And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny;
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear ... 100

A Stoical acceptance of grief, however, may enable man to endure its inescapable presence. If he acknowledges despair as a portion of life, he loses the fear of its power over him.

In Childe Harold, III,

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
With nought of hope left, but with less of gloom;
The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
That all was over on this side the tomb
Had made Despair a smitingness assume... 101

The Giaour elucidates the recklessness which often results from despair:

Why marvel ye, if they who lose
This present joy, this future hope,
No more with sorrow meekly cope...
...the breast that inly bleeds
Hath nought to dread from outward blow... 102

In March, 1815, in the poem "Stanzas for Music," Byron expressed similar sentiments concerning the effects of grief:

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt, or ocean of excess:
The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain
The shore to which their shiver'd sail shall never stretch again. 103

A much more mature acceptance of despair is portrayed in the "Prisoner of Chillon." A calm and rational attitude, rather than a reckless one, is the result of the prisoner's acknowledg-
It was at length the same to me,
Fetter'd or fetterless to be,
I learn'd to love despair.

A very significant element in Byron's exile was his love for Augusta. He deemed that their love had been strengthened by the trial of exile. The song "The Castled Crag of Drachenfels," following stanza 55 of Childe Harold, III, was addressed to Augusta from Germany. In the stanza above, the poet prises the love which

Had stood the test of mortal enmities
Still undivided, and cemented more
By peril, dreaded most in female eyes;
But this was firm, and from a foreign shore
Well to that heart might his these absent greetings pour!

Similar thoughts were expressed to Mrs. Leigh immediately preceding Byron's final departure from England:

When Fortune changed and love fled far,
And hatred's shafts flew thick and fast,
Thou wert the solitary star
Which rose and set not to the last...
The winds might rend, the skies might pour,
But there thou wert—and still woul'dst be,
Devoted...

After he had left England, Byron wrote at Diodati other "Stanzas to Augusta," which traced similar beliefs for Augusta's faith in him:

Though the day of my destiny's over,
And the star of my fate hath declined,
Thy soft heart refused to discover
The faults which so many could find...
Though human, thou didst not deceive me,
Though woman, thou forborest to grieve me,
Though slanderer'd thou never couldst shake,...

From these attributes and loyalites of Augusta, Byron concludes:

From the wreck of the past, which hath perish'd,
Thus much I at least may recall,
It hath taught me that what I most cherish'd
Deserved to be dearest of all... 106

A second element in Byron's love for Augusta is a sense of guilt. In May, 1816, Byron wrote "Stanzas for Music," dedicated to Augusta. 107 Byron here claims the guilty grief of their relationship as his own, the gladness of it as Augusta's:

I speak not, I trace not, I breathe not thy name,
There is grief in the sound; there is guilt in the same.
Too brief for our passion, too long for our peace,
Were those hours—can their joy or their bitterness cease?
Oh! thine be the gladness and mine be the guilt!

In Childe Harold, III, stanza 55, Byron portrays an apology for their transgression, while, at the same time, revealing its fascination:

And there was one soft breast, as hath been said,
Which unto his was bound by stronger ties
Than the church links withal; and, though unwed,
That love was pure, and, far above disguise...

Later, at Diodati, he penned the "Epistle to Augusta," which has been frequently called the poem which contains the most significant revelation of the poet's genius and character. In the "Epistle" Byron acknowledges the guilt for his violation of the social code. He does not specify his transgression but it is doubtless significant that the poem is addressed to Augusta. For the "worldly shocks" which have beset him, he admits

The fault was mine, nor do I seek to screen
By errors with defensive paradox;
I have been cunning in mine overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe.
Mine were the faults, and mine be their reward. 108

Another note in Childe Harold, III, recalling the acceptance of guilt for social transgression, occurs in stanzas 69 and 70.
In the "contentious world" of society, there is a "wretched interchange of wrong for wrong," implying that man in society does not have complete control over his destiny. However, when man commits a wrong, he must still suffer remorse. In such society, unthinking,

...in a moment, we may plunge our years
In fatal penitence, and in the blight
Of our own soul turn all our blood to tears,
And colour things to come with hues of Night...

In Canto IV the acceptance of responsibility for social and moral transgression is more explicit. In stanza 10, Byron states,

...I seek no sympathies, nor need;
The thorns which I have reap'd are of the tree
I planted,—they have torn me and I bleed!
I should have known what fruit would spring
from such a seed.

In the last of this canto, though Byron does not deny his guilt, he does deny the justice of the punishment which society has inflicted upon him. He calls upon Time to rectify the injustice done:

It is not that I may not have incurred
For my ancestral faults or mine the wound
I bleed vital, and, had it been conferred
With a just weapon, it had flow'd unbound...

In following cantos, Byron appraises society as unfit to be his judge. His wrath is increased as he reviews the methods which were used to chastise him:

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
Have I not seen what human things could do?
From the loud roar of foaming calumny
To the small whisper of the as paltry few,
And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with silence, would seem true,
And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.
While at Diodati, Byron wrote the "Monody on the Death of the Right Hon. R. B. Sheridan," which contains similar sentiments, doubtless related in Byron's experience to those in Childe Harold, on the public's jealousy of the famous.

Hard is his fate on whom the public gaze
Is fixed for ever to detract or praise;
Repose denies her requiem to his name,
And Folly loves the martyrdom of Fame.
The secret Enemy whose sleepless eye
Stands sentinel—accuser—judge—and spy.
The foe, the fool, the jealous, and the vain,
The envious who but breathe in other's pain—
Behold the host! delighting to deprave,
Who track the steps of Glory to the grave,...
Distort the truth, accumulate the lie,
And pile the Pyramid of Calumny!

Manfred is the epitomizing expression of such passion as is found in Childe Harold, III and IV. Though Manfred is a dramatization of that remorse and that desire for justice, it yields a deeper penetration of the reasons for the sense of inequity done. Manfred accepts responsibility for a forbidden love. Of himself and his sister Astarte he admits, "We loved each other as we should not love." Later, he admonishes Astarte,

\[\ldots\] we were not made
To torture thus each other, though it were
The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.

Judgment and punishment cannot be imposed from without, however. Nor can consolation, penitance, or absolution come except from man's own soul. When the Abbot urges Manfred to reconcile himself "with the true church, and through the church, to Heaven...to smooth the path from sin," Manfred replies,

Old man! 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-condemned
He deals on his own soul.

The only equitable judgment and imposition of penitence
for individual sin, then, must come from the transgressor himself. No person can truly evaluate the guilt of another, or fairly mete out punishment; nor, indeed, has anyone but the individual himself the right and duty to do so.

In stanza 108 of Childe Harold, III, Byron offers a similar protest against condemning the sceptics Voltaire and Gibbon, maintaining that society does not have the right to hand down a verdict against them. Though the concept of ultimate justice here is given a different emphasis from that in Manfred, the idea that society does not have the power to condemn or pardon is the same:

Yet, peace be with their ashes for by them,
If merited, the penalty is paid;
It is not ours to judge, far less condemn;
The hour must come when such things shall be made known unto all...

In Manfred when the evil "spirit" of the world, which is perhaps Byron's concept of society as judge and punisher, comes to claim the soul of Manfred for his guilt, that defiant one again proclaims that he only has the right of his own punishment, that the evil spirit has no just power over him:

I do not combat against death, but thee...
... my past power,
Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,
But by superior science...
I do defy...ye...
Still the spirit would claim Manfred because of his guilt:

But thy many crimes have made thee--

Manfred vehemently denies that his transgressions give the spirit power over his eternal life:

What are they to such as thee?
Must crimes be punish'd but by other crimes,
And greater criminals?—Back to thy hell!
Thou hast no power upon me, that I feel;
Thou never shalt 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...ll2

Manfred's final defiance, expressing the whole of his beliefs of justice, is successful. He drives the spirit away with the words:

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. ll3

As Manfred had accepted the guilt for his transgression against society, so had Byron, and, as Manfred had denied the right of any but his own soul to be his judge, so had Byron. Manfred, therefore, appears as the climax of Byron's own conflict with society.

Byron elsewhere attempts to comprehend, if not resolve, this contention with society. He perceives that the lives of men do not harmonize with the ideals of men. He does not challenge the ideals of society but the realities of social life.

Throughout the poetry of this period Byron seeks, if not
a solution to the problem of evil in man's strife with himself and with society, at least some recompense for the unhappiness this struggle engenders. There are two main fields in which Byron seeks an answer, in nature and in imagination. Nature, as a dominant theme and as a solution for unhappiness, is not revealed in Byron's poetry until after the exile in 1816. Love of nature does not appear to be a theme inherent in Byron's personality, as is his love of liberty. How deep in his character his feelings for nature do lie cannot be clearly known.

Suffering from the effects of his exile from England and coming under the influence of Shelley during the early months of the exile, Byron turned, in bewilderment, to nature as a refuge from disturbing discontent. His communion with nature, he maintains, yields recompense for dissatisfaction with society and reveals a "marvel and a secret" to him. The recompense, however, is, at best, escape and the "marvel and secret," a vaguely expressed manifestation of his awe at the power and the beauty of nature.

In Canto III the nature theme is ardently sounded. A prologue to the Canto III feelings is given in "The Dream," which was written in July, 1816. The Wanderer

...made him friends of mountains \(114\) with the stars And the quick Spirit of the Universe He held his dialogues; and they did teach To him the magic of their mysteries; To him the book of night was open'd wide, And voices from the deep abyss reveal'd A marvel and a secret. \(115\)

Thus Nature's might taught Manfred "the language of another world." \(116\)
The quality of the "marvel and secret" named in "The Dream" is further probed in Canto III, where Byron expresses the belief that "true wisdom" will be found in the world of "Maternal Nature." In stanzas 68-75 the main themes of Canto III are united.

The personal feelings of the exile are shown in relation to society and in relation to nature. Lake Leman woos the poet to forsake society for the companionship of nature. The poet explains that his self-imposed withdrawal from society was not from hate of men but from the fact that he did not feel communion with them. In the "contentious world" of society there are those who find only "wretched interchange of wrong for wrong." Concerning such "wanderers o'er Eternity," who, unthinking, in a moment may incur remorse for a lifetime, the speaker asks,

Is it not better, then, to be alone,  
And love Earth only for its earthly sake?  
...Is it not better thus our lives to wear,  
Then join the crushing crowd, doom'd to inflict or bear?

In the "Epistle to Augusta," similar feelings are portrayed. To be lonely in the Alps is not to be desolate, Byron maintains. Though almost all his feelings have been benumbed by grief, he can still be moved by nature, which he asks to be a sister to him. Manfred also seeks the companionable solitude of Nature. He found that his "joy was in the wilderness." Nature was, to him, inspiration; society, degradation. The imprisoned poet Tasso recalls how he worshipped nature, making idols of its beauties.

...from my very birth  
My soul was drunk with love, which did pervade  
And mingle with whate'er I saw on earth.
Of objects all inanimate I made
Idols, and out of wild and lonely flowers,
And rocks whereby they grew, a paradise...

In stanza 75 of *Childe Harold* III, Byron expresses his sense
of affinity for nature in almost mystical terms:

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 in my heart
With a pure passion?

The presence of the divine is felt in all works of nature. The
beauty of Lake Leman inspires the poet to exclaim:

All is concentrated in a life intense,
Where not a beam nor air nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense
Of what is of all Creator and defence.

Communication with nature is most intimate in such moments, for

Then stirs a feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude when we are least alone...

In solitude, nature offers man insight into truth and eternal
harmony,

...a truth, which through our being then doth melt
And purifies from self: it is a tone,
The soul and source of music, which makes known
Eternal harmony...

At Clarens Byron's love of nature expands to worship, for

All things are here of him.

The ideal qualities of nature are inspirations to love and to
worship:

He who hath loved not, here would learn that lore,
And make his heart a spirit...

In Canto IV, stanzas 176-178, Byron concludes that for the
suffering he has known he still finds in nature reward for life:

...not in vain our mortal race hath run;
We have had our reward, and it is here,—
That we can yet feel gladden'd by the sun...
His final statement of the reward of nature is a lyrical image of escape:

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and Music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet can not all conceal.
CHAPTER III
THE REALIZATION OF LIBERTY

Byron's first attempt at dealing with the problem of unhappiness, of man's conflict within himself and with society, had been a turning toward nature. Rather than an understanding of the conflict, however, Byron gained, in the main, only a sense of escape in his communings with nature. Neither his awe at nature's grandeur nor his seclusion from the "contentious world" led to a significant discovery relating to the reasons for man's unhappiness.

The problem of dissatisfaction resulting from the discrepancy between ideals and realities had been expressed frequently in Byron's poetry. In 1814 he had published thoughts on disillusionment in the poem "Thou art not false, but thou art fickle." The concept expressed here is a superficial comment on the problem; there is no attempt either to justify or to understand the existence of sorrow.

To dream of joy and wake to sorrow,
Is doom'd to all who love or live.¹

Equally superficial, and even more despairing, are the "Stanzas for Music" in the Hebrew Melodies.

Alas! it is delusion all;
The future cheats us from afar,
Nor can we be what we recall,
Nor dare we think on what we are.²

At the end of Canto III, Byron reveals a somewhat similar mood of depression. In stanza 114 he expressed the hope, though of a wistful quality, that goodness might be found in society.
...I do believe,  
Though I have found them not, that there may be  
Words which are things, hopes which will not deceive,  
And virtues which are merciful nor weave  
Snares for the failing: I would also deem  
O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve;  
That two, or one, are almost what they seem,  
That goodness is no name and happiness no dream.

The knowledge Byron sought concerning the problem of  
evil in men's life could not bring happiness, only an insight  
into the nature of unhappiness. Yet, that in itself was  
somehow consoling to the poet. In the "Epistle to Augusta,"  
the "strange quiet" and the spirit which upholds his patience  
enable him to believe,  

...not in vain,  
Even for its own sake, do we purchase pain.

In Manfred the tragic aspects of wisdom, its price and its  
reward, are conveyed:

...grief should be the instructor of the wise;  
Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most  
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,  
The tree of knowledge is not that of life."

The discrepancy between man's ideals and the realities  
of his life is the essence of his tragedy. Men's ideal of  
love, Byron surmises, is but a fantasy.

Oh love! no inhabitant of earth thou art--  
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee,  
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart,  
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see,  
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be..."

"Nature," or reality, cannot fulfill men's search for his  
ideal beauty:

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,  
And fevers into false creation:--where,  
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized?--  
In him alone. Can Nature show so fair?
The poet is forced to concede that

Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out the mind's
Ideal shape of such; yet still it binds
The fatal spell, and still it draws us on...
The stubborn heart....
Seems ever near the prize,—wealthiest when most undone.

Byron had earlier experienced similar disillusionment concerning
men's pursuit of beauty in *The Giaour*. As the purple-winged
butterfly-queen lures the youth,

So beauty lures the full-grown child,
With hue as bright and wing as wild;
A chase of idle hopes and fears,
Begun in folly, closed in tears.
If won, to equal ills betrayed...

The tragic discrepancy between the ideal and the real
is abetted by chance. Few, or none, find the ideal of love
which they seek. Accident and the need to love may cause
man to compromise his ideal. His antipathies towards his
fellow man may, for a time, seem to dissolve, but they recur,
embittered by deep wrong.

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...

To this illusion with which our sympathies betray us, is
added "Circumstance, that unspiritual god and miscreator,"
who works against man also. "Circumstance," or chance, is
here portrayed as a "god" because it has god-like power over
the lives of men and is termed "unspiritual" because it is
not concerned with the ideal. "Circumstance" is a "miscreator"
because it creates wrong. This "unspiritual god"

...makes and helps along
Our coming ills with a crutch-like rod,
Whose touch turns Hope to dust,—the dust we all have
trod.
Thus "Circumstance" supports the evils already inherent in man's nature. The aid which this miscreator gives to evil turns hope to the despair which all men know. 7

Byron concludes that the system of things is not just:

Our life is a false nature, 'tis not in
The harmony of things,—this hard decree,
This uneradicable taint of sin,
This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree
Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be —
The skies which rain their plagues on men like—dew—
Disease, death, bondage—all the woes we see—
And worse, the woes we see not—which throb through
The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new. 8

Byron's explanation for the discrepancy between man's ideals of life and the realities of his existence, then, was based upon the dual nature of man. Man's life, he believed, was a "false nature." The aspirations of every individual were countered by an "uneradicable taint of sin." Byron did not hold, as Bernbaum maintains he did, "that human nature was good." 9 Society was not the corrupter of man; man was the corrupter of society.

In Canto III, stanza 74, Byron associates the base aspects in man's existence with material being, the aspiring elements, with spiritual:

And when at length the mind shall be all free
From what it hates in this degraded form,
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be
Existent happier in the fly and worm,—
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?

Such impressions of the poet tended towards those he was to note in 1821, in the journal he kept at Ravenna. In that collection of his thoughts, his remarks relevant to the
immortality of the soul reveal the dualism basic in his viewpoint.

Of the Immortality of the Soul, it appears to me that there can be little doubt, if we attend for a moment to the action of Mind. It is in perpetual activity. I used to doubt of it, but reflection has taught me better. It acts also so very independent of body...The Stoics, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, call the present state "a Soul which drags a 'Carcase:' a heavy chain, to be sure; but all chains, being material, may be shaken off...that the Mind is eternal, seems as probable as that the body is not so...Human passions have probably disfigured the divine doctrines here...Man is born passionate of body, but with an innate though secret tendency to the love of Good in his Mainspring of Mind.  

In July, 1816, Byron employed the Promethean myth to exemplify man's dual character. The meaning of the problem of unhappiness and of man's vacillation from the nadir to the zenith of experience was to be found in the dichotomy of his character. According to this interpretation, both greatness and weakness are, Prometheus-like, inherent in the essence of men. Thus is Prometheus a symbol of the fate and of the nature of all men. Byron addresses the "Titan":

Thou art a symbol and a sign  
To Mortals of their fate and force;  
Like thee, man is in part divine,  
A troubled stream from a pure source...

Man can, at times, foresee "his own funereal destiny" and also his resistance to that destiny. His glory lies in the struggle to free himself from the weakness in his fatal nature. His spirit may oppose itself to this evil:

...and equal to all woes,  
And a firm will, and deep sense,  
Which even in torture can descry  
Its own concentr'd recompense,  
Triumphant where it does defy,  
And making Death a Victory.
The conflict inherent within man is further portrayed in the analysis of his nature in *Manfred*. Half of the dyad called man is material and half is spiritual. The two essences create conflicting desires, for man is

Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
To sink or soar, with our mixed essence make
A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride,
Contending with low wants and lofty will...

In a later passage the spiritual element in man is equated with mind. The frustration of spirit originates in its conflict with the material element, symbolized by clay.

*Manfred* charges the Seven Spirits:

The mind, the spirit, the Promethean apart,
The lightning of my being, is as bright,
Pervading, and far darting as your own,
And shall not yield to yours, though cooped in clay!

In his admiration of *Manfred*, the First Destiny maintains

...his knowledge, and his powers and will,
As far as is compatible with clay,
Which clogs the ethereal essence, have been such
As clay hath seldom borne...

In *Marino Faliero*, *Angelino*, a character representative of ideal views, since she has only one dimension, her goodness, regards virtue as an innate feeling opposed to passionate desires. Men should, she believes,

...subdue all tendency to lend
The best and purest feelings of our nature
To baser passions.

A further statement of the dualism theme is embodied in *The Prophecy of Dante*, which, though conceived the year following the completion of *Childe Harold*, is entirely in accord with the sentiments of the *Childe Harold* period and illustrates well their meaning. In the opening lines of Canto
Byron contrasts the "weight of clay" to "the immortal vision." Later in that canto, man's degradation is associated with "the sense of earth and earthly things" and "corrosive passions, feelings dull and low." At the end of Canto III, the hold which evil has in man is lamented:

...for the mind
Succumbs to long infection and despair;
And vulture passions flying close behind,
Await the moment to assail and tear

Man's most difficult task, Byron avers, is to resist this evil within himself.16

Man's struggle to be free from the degrading element inherent in his character is a conflict which has political significance. Both submissiveness and courageous love of liberty contend within man's nature. Submission to baseness within is the root of subjection to tyranny without. The tyranny of mind is the most insidious of all tyrannies, but it can be overcome.

Thus, in 1813, Byron sternly rebuked the Greeks for submitting to tyranny, when love of liberty was dominant in their fathers.

...no foreign foe could quell
Thy soul, till from itself it fell;
Yes! Self-abasement paved the way
To villain-bonds and despot sway.17

Such sentiments were echoes of those in Childe Harold, III, in which Byron berated the present Greeks with the title "hereditary bondsmen." A change in the hearts of the Greeks must occur before they can gain liberty and the struggle must be their own for the rewards to be theirs.18
In *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, Byron portrays the effects of mental tyranny in France. The mental submission of her people is the source of power of her despots. Man's own nature contributes to his oppression.

What from this barren being do we reap?  
Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,  
Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,  
And all things weigh'd in custom's falsest scale;  
Opinion an omnipotence,—whose veil  
Mantles the earth with darkness; until right  
And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale,  
Lest their own judgments should become too bright,  
And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too much light.

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,  
Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,  
Proud of their trampled nature, and so die...19

As submission is the vice of the weak, so tyranny is the vice of the powerful. The great leader is directed by his nobler instincts, the despot by his baser passions. Whereas the love of liberty, of just government under law, is the goal of the great leader, the base love of personal power rules the tyrant. The conflict between greatness and littleness in Napoleon was finally dominated by meanness. His spirit was

...antithetically mixt
One moment of the mightiest, and again  
On little objects with like firmness fixt...  
An empire...thou couldst crush, command, rebuild  
But govern not thy pettiest passion....  
...nor curb the lust of war...20

In Canto IV Byron's analysis of Napoleon is the same. The General had become the Emperor, "the fool of false dominion;" he had been "vanquish'd by himself, to his own slaves a slave."21

As the poet had reproved the Greeks and the French for their submission to tyranny, so he rebukes the Venetians for
the subjection of their republic to Austrian rule. Thirteen
hundred years of republican tradition have shown the love of
liberty strong in the Venetians, Byron reminds the present
citizens. Submission to foreign rule originates in degradation
of spirit. The fate of Venice can be the tragedy of every
free people, since man is never free from base desires:

...still we lean
On things that rot beneath our weight, and wear
Our strength away in wrestling with the air;
For 'tis our nature strikes us down...22

Man's struggle for freedom, then, was a struggle to be
free from the base elements within. Courage conflicted with
pusillanimity of will. Self-abasement and defilement of virtue
were the bases of submission. Oppression of the people's free
thought was the absolute triumph of tyranny. Man is never free
from that within his nature which may strike him down, but his
greatest glory lies in his resistance to those degrading in-
stincts. The leader of a people is subjected to inner conflict
also. The desire for personal aggrandizement and insatiable
ambition constitute the passion which may enslave the leader,
as submissiveness and lack of courage may enslave a people. In
the great leader the love of liberty is the dominating factor in
his character. Thus, though base desires are inherent in man,
so also is love of liberty.

"The mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark," the spiritual
essence of man, is intimately associated with man's imagination.
Indeed, in the poems of the Childe Harold period, the concepts
of the imagination and the spiritual element in man cannot
be distinguished from one another. The imagination plays a
very significant role in man's struggle for freedom. The first aspect of imagination Byron probes is its function as a means of escape from unhappiness and oppression. In imagination man can free himself from dissatisfaction with his immediate environment. This, however, is a negative role. More significant is the power of the imagination as inspiration towards freedom. The ideals presented to mind have some connection with a divine source, hence the inspirational quality of great works of art. Byron stresses inspiration to freedom and the spirit of independence in Italy's artists. Works of art both reveal and preserve man's ideal of freedom. The greatest triumph of imagination, however, is achieved in the victory of mind over material reality. The most perfect realization of liberty is possible only in mind and is, after all, the greatest realization.

In the last canto of Childe Harold, Byron proclaimed the injustness of man's existence, the "false nature" of life, the tragic discrepancy between the real world, the world of society, and the ideal world in man's mind. Though the poet sought in nature compensation for the fact of evil, he concludes that nature cannot supply the wants of man's ideals; it cannot equal the dreams.23

In stanza 127, Byron recognizes the realm of mind as man's final and, indeed, sole, place of refuge. As mind is the source of man's ideals, it is the source of his hope of escaping and, finally, of overcoming evil. Man should not surrender before evil for
...'tis a base
Abandonment of reason to resign
Our right of thought, our last and only place
Of refuge...

The intrinsic qualities of the retreat offered by imagination are discussed in Childe Harold IV, stanzas 5-7. The imagination can banish the hatreds of man's life and then furnish the emptiness with its own beautiful creations. From the oppressive reality of this world man can be transported to the more pleasant reality of a subjective realm.

The beings of the mind are not of clay;
Essentially immortal, they create
And multiply in us a brighter ray
And more beloved existence. That which Fate
Prohibits to dull life in this our state
Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied,
First exiles, then replaces what we hate;
Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.

Such is the refuge of our youth and age...

A more tangible role of the imagination in the realization of freedom resides in its inspirational quality. Byron regards the love of liberty as an instinct corollary to the poetic spirit. In Childe Harold, IV, he discusses the aspirations of Italy's poets for their people's freedom. A vision of freedom is common to each of Italy's geniuses. Thus Canto IV links the socio-political theme of Childe Harold, the cause of freedom, with the power of the creative imagination.

The first thoughts of Byron regarding Venice concern her former glory and her enduring beauty (stanzas 2, 3, 11-15). To Byron, the old glory of Venice resided in her liberty. Without this glory of freedom, Venice were better to perish than to sue her foes. As an illustration to the Venetians
of the cogency of poetry in effecting the realization of
freedom, Byron portrays an incident from Plutarch's Life of
Nicias, in which is related the fortune of some of the Athenian
prisoners who won the good will of their Syracusan captors
by reciting Euripides to them. This episode is dramatically
depicted in Byron's writing.

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,
And fetter'd thousands bore the yoke of war,
Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,
Her voice their only ransom from afar:
See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the car
Of the o'ermaster'd-victor stops, the reins
Fall from his hands--his idle scimitar
Starts from its belt--he rends his captive's chains,
And bids him thank the bard for freedom and his strains.

To the Venetians Byron points to this event as symbolic of the
potentialities of art. His analogy of the fortune of the
Athenians to that of the Venetians is not valid, though the
transition here appears smooth. Whereas in the Grecian episode
the hearts of the victors were softened by the Athenian genius,
in the apostrophe to Venice, Byron admonishes that state that
her great poetry should have had deep-felt effects upon her
people, moving them to an unconquerable love of liberty:

Thus, Venice, if no stronger claim were thine,
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,
Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot,
Which ties thee to thy tyrants...

In a later stanza of Canto IV, Byron praises Petrarch's
ideals of Italian freedom from the Empire and of unified
nationality. Petrarch's vision of a unified Italy, his love
of Italian learning and of the Italian language made him, in
Mowat's phrasing, "one of the creators of the Italian nation."24
True, Petrarch's actions (on various occasions he praised the Papacy, the Emperor, and several of the tyrant-rulers of the city-states) were not in harmony with his political idealism. Nevertheless, Petrarch's "high conception of Italian nationality" and "the belief in that spiritual unity which underlay all her many discords" contributed in a real manner towards the creation of the spirit of the Italian nation. To Byron, Petrarch's fame rests upon the fact that

...He arose
To raise a language, and his land reclaim
From the dull yoke of her barbaric foes...

The discussion of Petrarch is included in the section of Childe Harold, IV, which has as its theme "Rome's poets shall be her resurrection." This section may be subdivided into two topics: (1) poets and places: stanzas 30-42, 48-77, (2) the fall of empire and the resurrection of Rome's glory: stanzas 42-47, 78-82. In his address to Rome, "lone mother of dead empires," Byron counsels his contemporary sufferers that their agonies are but evils of the moment as compared with the tragedy of the Roman world in ruins at their feet. Powerful forces were aligned against the empire:

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,
Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's pride...

Time and Ignorance have obscured Rome's former greatness. Her great period was one of freedom, in which was seen a now vanished "brightness in her eye." Though Rome appears at present only a

...desert where we steer
Stumbling o'er recollections,...
her poets shall be her resurrection. They embody the Italian spirit of the "longing after immortality"—the immortality of independence."

The immortality of Italy's poets is assured by the very nature of the products of the imagination, or mind. The thoughts of the creative imagination have, as mind has, an everlasting character. Both the "beings of the mind" and the mind are essentially "thought" and have an immortal reality.

Some aspects of the mind's perpetual existence are postulated in the short poem "When Coldness Wraps this Suffering Clay," which begins by asking the question, "Whither strays the immortal mind?" Mind in its pure state, free from the corrupting influence of matter, is "passionless," "Above or Love, Hope, Hate, or Fear..." The nature of mind, or spirit, is

Eternal, boundless, undecay'd
A thought unseen, but seeing all...29

Though "mind" is here termed "a thought," the creations of mind are also referred to as "thoughts." Frequently in Byron's poetry, there is no distinction between the originating mind and its products. Both share the same immortal quality.

In the early cantos of Childe Harold, III, Byron regards his thoughts as having life more vital than his own and, at the same time, as enabling him to live more fully. The thought exceeds the thinker. Byron asks,

What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
Invisible but gazing, as I glow
Mix'd with thy spirit...30
The generative power of mind and the vitality of its creations are depicted in an 1816 poem, *The Dream*. The mental forms engendered by mind have an objective reality and can long outlive material beings:

"...The mind can make
Substance, and people planets of its own
With beings brighter than have been, and give
A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh."

The essential immortality of the products of the creative imagination is again affirmed in Canto IV. The animate principle in art is imaged in stanza 4. To Byron, Venice, "the masque of Italy,"

"...hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms descand
Above the dogeless city's vanisht sway:
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto: Shylock and the Moor
And Pierre can not be swept-or worn away,
The keystones of the arch!—though all were o'er,
For us repopled were the solitary shore."

In the next stanza Byron summarizes these images in the concept

The beings of the mind are not of clay,
But are] essentially immortal...

In stanzas 6 and 7, Byron considers the validity of man's ideals, or visions. At first, he avers that the incorporeal world which man sees in imagination is more real than material actuality.

Yet there are things whose strong reality
Outshines our fairy-land; in shape and hues
More beautiful than our fantastic sky,
And the strange constellations which the Muse
0'er her wild universe is skillful to diffuse...

The effect of designating the tangible world "our fairy-land"
is to contrast it even more dramatically to the "strong reality"
of the realm of ideals. Thus substantial reality becomes
dreamlike and the vision world becomes real. In stanza 7,
however, Byron reluctantly restores the usual perspective. Of
the visions of the ideal world he has had, he regretfully
surmises,

I saw or dreamed of such,—but let them go,—
They came like truth, and disappear'd like dreams...

Thus, at their coming Byron believed his visions of the ideal
world to be real, but, at their leaving, he regarded them as
illusory.

In later stanzas of Canto IV, however, Byron re-affirms
his belief in the validity of man's ideals and suggests a divine
source. "The veil of heaven is half undrawn" as he views the
Venus de' Medici. The creative imagination, he avows, can embody
forms which surpass nature. Through the "visions" of the ideal
which man's poetic conception can yield him, his fate equals
that of the gods. The act of poetic conception is thus regarded
as divine. In the following stanza artistic inspiration is
considered as of the nature of a divine afflatus. Though Byron
would leave the explanation of technique of this work of art
to "the artist and his ape," he would not have the sublime
inspiration of the statue defiled by their explication. The
creator of the Venus, he believes, modeled the statue upon a
vision of an eternal ideal of beauty.

I would not their vile breath should crisp the stream
Wherein that image shall for ever dwell,
The unruffled mirror of the loveliest dream
That ever left the sky on the deep soul to beam.33

In stanzas 153-159, St. Peter's Cathedral is given as a
supreme example of art as inspiration, even revelation, by the ideal. Byron praises the structure as embodying great ideals:

...Majesty
Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty, all are aisled
In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

The ineffable greatness of St. Peter's inspires man through enlarging his soul to encompass the wonder he views.

...this
Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice
Defies at first our Nature's littleness,
Till, growing with its growth, we thus dilate
Our spirits to the size of that they contemplate.

In this sanctuary, "the fountain of sublimity displays its depth" and into this depth may draw the mind of man "its golden sands." The inspirational quality of the cathedral is inherent in the ideal it embodies.

The notion that artistic conception is vision of ideal reality is more explicitly stated in the subsequent stanzas. Byron here asserts that the inspiration which the artist expresses in the Apollo Belvedere is not of human origin: it had more than subjective reality. In the statue

...are exprest
All that ideal beauty ever bless'd
The mind with in its most unearthly mood;—
When each conception was a heavenly guest—
A ray of immortality...

The statue, with its "eternal glory,...if made by human hands, is not of human thought."

The ideals of man are thus given greater validity because they are of divine origin. However, that the good in man was the result of divine will or that the evil in his nature was
due to any outside source is not explicitly stated in any poetry of the Childe Harold period. Byron, rather, accepts the two principles as an integral part of man's character, the good in man being somehow receptive to inspiration by divine ideals. Byron ventures no further into metaphysics.

The dichotomy in man's character creates the tragic discrepancy between ideals and realities. That part of man which is a force for merit, which insists upon its own freedom, and which is integrated with mind, or imagination, or spirit, presents the mind with visions of the ideal, the good. This "Promethean spark" is opposed by the also inherent principle of turpitude, that which subjects man to his own passions and makes him prey to the domination of others' passions.

Thus, in society, man's idealism causes him ever to seek realization of his dreams and his peccancy causes him ever to find frustration. The visions of the imagination, the visions of good, constitute a "fatal spell," a lure which draws men always in search of these dreams, though he can never consummate his search with complete achievement. The absolute fulfillment of ideals is fated to failure by the "false nature of life," the "uneradicable taint of sin," which composes that part of man which is "half dust."

Man's resistance to the evil within himself encompasses his resistance to political tyranny, which has its roots in the very heart of man. Man's struggle to be free from the evil within himself is basic to his aspirations for political freedom. The weak passion to yield is as destructive to liberty
as is the base desire to tyrannize. Both are aspects of the corrupt element in man. Also instinctive to man, however, is the love of freedom. This love arises from the spiritual element in man and, through this aspiration, man can, to a great degree, overcome his base passions arising from his degrading, material element. As tyranny may dominate man from within, so freedom may be realized in the independence of spirit.

In "The Lament of Tasso" that imprisoned poet finds true freedom in the imagination. Though he suffers from physical bondage, he knows liberty of mind and spirit. His independent nature gives him the courage to avow,

...I stoop not to despair;
For I have battled with mine agony,
And made me wings wherewith to overfly
The narrow circus of my dungeon wall,
And freed the Holy Sepulchre from thrall;
And revel'd among men and things divine,
And pour'd my spirit over Palestine...

Byron's most advanced statement concerning the nature of freedom occurs in the "Sonnet on Chillon." Liberty is regarded as the "Eternal Spirit of the Chainless Mind." Here, much more than a goal of practical politics, liberty, to Byron, is an aim of the mind; it is the final victory of spirit over matter. In this sonnet Byron projects the concept of freedom in the imagination as expressed in "The Lament of Tasso" to the idea that the essence of liberty is

Brightest in dungeons...
For there thy habitation is the heart...

Liberty is strongest there because it exists in its purest state in the imagination. As mind is more important than matter,
so freedom in mind is ultimately far more significant than physical freedom. The independence of spirit is the ultimate realization of liberty.
NOTES

Chapter I

1 Thomas Medwin, Conversations of Lord Byron: Noted During a Residence with His Lordship at Pisa, in the Years 1821 and 1822, London, 1824, pp. 351-352.

2 LJ, I, 95-96.

3 LJ, I, 195.


5 M, p. 114, l.29.

6 M, p. 255, ll. 1013-1016.

7 M, p. 249, ll. 540-547.

8 LJ, I, 209.


10 LJ, I, 225.


12 Medwin, pp. 351-352.

13 CH, I, 25.

14 CH, I, 33.

15 Borst, p. 11.

16 Borst, p. 12, quotes Wordsworth's Convention of Cintra.

17 Ibid.

18 Borst, p. 12.

19 G, II, 86.

20 The Curse of Minerva, ll. 233-234.

21 Borst, pp. 19-20.

22 This introductory account of the political situation in Spain prior to Byron's visit is based primarily upon The History of Nations, ed. Henry Cabot Lodge, New York, 1939, VIII, and Borst.
25 Borst, p. 62.
26 LJ, I, 246n.
27 Borst, p. 74, bases his discussion on Hobhouse's Journey, I, 102-103.
28 LJ, I, 52.
29 CH, I, 62.
30 CH, II, 63.
31 LJ, V, 204-206.
33 "Sonnet to the Prince Regent" in M, p. 119.
34 Borst, p. 93.
35 History of Nations, II, 539.
36 CH, II, 82-84.
37 CH, II, 2.
38 CH, II, 73. The line "The helpless warriors of a willing doom" here refers to the Spartans at Thermopylae. Borst, p. 139, infers that this line reflects Byron's attitude toward the Greeks in 1809-1810. In 1810, Borst states, Byron had greater faith in the ability of the Greeks to improve their political conditions. "He (Byron) no longer looked upon them as "The helpless warriors of a willing doom."
39 M, pp. 161-162.
40 C, II, xvi.
42 CH, II, 78-83.
44 C, II, 206.
45 Borst, pp. 136-138.
47 The Giaour, ll. 91-93.
48 Ibid, ll. 103-105.
49 CH, II, 54-56, 83-84.
50 The Giaour, ll. 138-141.
51 Ibid, ll. 123-125.
52 M, p. 309.
53 M, p. 386, note to l. 141.
54 Siege of Corinth, V, ll. 146-150.
55 LJ, I, 284.
56 LJ, II, 339.
57 IBC, I, p. 231n.
58 Ibid, p. 231.
59 LJ, III, 65.
60 The three poems were "From the French," "Ode from the French," and "On the Star of the 'Legion of Honour."
61 LJ, II, 339.
62 CH, IV, 95.
64 Ibid, ll. 95-99.
65 CH, III, 39.
66 LJ, V, 163.
67 CH, IV, 90.
68 CH, IV, 91-92.
69 History of Nations, IV, 350-351.
70 In 1379 the Genoese Commander, Doria, said to the Venetians that the Genoese must bridle the horses which stood upon the porch of St. Mark. He added, "When we shall have bridled them, we shall keep you quiet." See M, note to p. 57, l. 111.
Chapter II


6 *LJ*, I, 195.


11 Drinkwater, p. 142.

12 *Ibid*.

13 Quoted by Mayne, *Byron*, I, 152.

14 Concerning this event, Byron indignantly told Dallas, "I have just met Delavarr, and asked him to sit an hour with me; he excused himself; and what do you think was his excuse? He was engaged with his mother and some ladies to go shopping! And he knows I set out tomorrow, to be absent for years, perhaps never return!" Quoted by Mayne, *Byron*, I, 152.


16 Borst, p. xx1.
19 William Beckford, the author of *Vathek*, had inherited a huge fortune and lived in a grandiose manner, indulging in ambitious architectural enterprises and amassing costly furniture, jewels, and treasures of art. See Bembaum, *Guide*, p. 33.

20 The poems—were "To Florence," "Stanzas Composed during a Thunder-Storm," "Stanzas Written in Passing the Ambracian Gulf" and "The Spell is Broke, the Charm is Fled."

21 Helene Richter, "Wer War Byrons Thyrza?" in *Archiv für Studium der Nueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 1904, CXII, 1904, pp. 70-79, gives a summary of the hypotheses concerning Thyrza's identity and offers yet another theory. Miss Richter postulates that the emotion in the Thyrza poems was a blending of Byron's feelings for Mary Chaworth and for that Mary who had lived at Newstead for a time and who was the subject of Byron's poem "To Mary."

22 Ch, II, 97.


26 IBC, I, 254.

27 Mayne, *Byron*, I, 278.


29 IBC, II, 144.

30 IV, V, 542.

31 Quennel, *Years of Fame*, p. 80.


34 IBC, I, 220. Murray, for his judgment, refers to the *Edinburgh Review*, October, 1921.

35 LII, I, 272.
Quennell, *Years of Fame*, p. 84. Quennell is here quoting Lady Elizabeth Foster.

In another letter of this period, Byron refers to Caroline as "totally devoid of all conduct" and vows he will leave the country if she persists.

Quennell, *Years of Fame*, p. 210. Quennell bases his discussion of Harriet Wilson upon letters which were printed for the first time in *Cornhill*, April, 1935.

Peter Quennell, *Byron in Italy*, New York, 1941, p. 55.

Quennell, *Years of Fame*, p. 94-125.

The letters concerning the affair with Lady Oxford are found in *IBC*, I, 190-197.

60 IBC, I, 268.
61 LJ, III, 145, 150, 151, 158.
62 Mayne, Life of Lady Byron, p. 58.
63 IBC, I, 287, 288, 290.
64 Drinkwater, p. 43.
67 Knight, p. 30.
69 Knight, pp. 38-39.
70 Mayne, Byron, II, 37.
72 Maurois, p. 254.
73 Mayne, Byron, II, 1.
74 Italics Mine.
76 LJ, III, 272.
77 Sir John C. Fox, The Byron Mystery, London, 1924, pp. 210-211.
78 Drinkwater, p. 252.
79 Medwin, p. 17.
80 LJ, IV, 478-480.
81 CH, III, 12.
82 CH, III, 113.
83 Manfred, III, 11, 50-57.
84 Ibid, iv, 52-62.
85 Ibid, III, i, 116-126.
The Lament of Tasso, II, 44-46.

Lara, VIII.


CH, III, 5.


C, IV, 125, note 2.

Manfred, III, i, 140-151.

The Giaour, 11. 259-272. See also The Dream, I, 11. 24-26--
"...a thought, a slumbering thought, is capable of years, and curdles a long life into one hour."


The Corsair, X, 336-349.

Manfred, III, i, 50-51.

Marino Faliero, II, i, 13-18.

CH, III, 34.


Manfred, I, i, 252-257.

CH, III, 16.

The Giaour, 11. 1149-1156.

C, IV, 424.

"The Prisoner of Chillon," XIV.

M, pp. 209-210, "Stanzas to Augusta."


These "Stanzas for Music" were enclosed in Byron's letter to Moore, May 4, 1814. See LJ, III, 80.


C, IV, 73.

Manfred, II, iv, 123-124.

Ibid, III, i, 66-78.
Chapter III

1 M, p. 173.
2 M, p. 223.
3 Manfred, I, i, 9-12.
4 CH, IV, 121.
5 CH, IV, 123.
6 The Giaour, ll. 396-400.
7 CH, IV, 25.
8 CH, IV, 26.
11 M, p. 191.
12 Manfred, I, ii, 40-44.
13 Ibid, i, 155-158.
15 Marino Faliero, I, i, 95-98.
"In vain it was that his (Petrarch's) correspondents pointed out the discrepancy between his professed zeal for Italian liberties, his recent enthusiasm for the Roman republic, and this alliance with tyrants who were destroying the freedom of the Lombard cities...while he stigmatized the despotism in his epistles to the emperor, he accepted their hospitality...He was clamorous for the freedom of the Roman people; yet at one time he called upon the Pope to re-establish himself in the Eternal City; at another he besought the emperor to make it his headquarters; at a third he hailed in Rienzi the founder of a new republic. He did not conceive that all these plans were incompatible. His relations to the Lombard nobles were equally at variance with his professed patriotism; and, while still a housemate of Visconti and Correggi, he kept on issuing invectives against the tyrants who divided Italy. — The Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed., New York, 1910, V, 312-313.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


The History of Nations, ed. Henry Cabot Lodge, New York, 1939, II, IV, VIII.


Medwin, Thomas, *Conversations of Lord Byron: Noted during a Residence with His Lordship at Pisa, in the Years 1821 and 1822*, London, 1824.


Quennell, Peter, *Byron in Italy*, New York, 1941.


Stickney, Edith Pierpont, *Southern Albania or Northern Epirus in European International Affairs, 1912-1923*, Stanford Univ., California, 1926, Chap. II.
