# "I have pray'd for madness as a blessing": Poetics of Disorder in Lord Byron's *Manfred*

Daniela Solimine, Department of English

McGill University, Montreal

April 2021

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Arts

My solitude is solitude no more,

But peopled with the Furies; —I have gnash'd

My teeth in darkness till returning morn,

Then cursed myself till sunset;—I have pray'd

For madness as a blessing—'tis denied me.

(Lord Byron, *Manfred* 2.2.130-134)

Table of Contents

Abstract

As one of the most prominent and memorable of the Romantic poets—owing to his often-exaggerated public persona—Lord Byron is notable for the emotional depth of his poetry. My thesis directly questions the stereotype of the "mad poet"—a myth that pervades literary scholarship regarding Byron and his contemporaries—as it pertains to his poetic corpus. I will be focusing on the poet's 1817 metaphysical drama *Manfred* to examine how Byron utilized the closet drama form as a therapeutic rendering of his probable bipolar disorder, as first postulated by Kay Redfield Jamison. Though bipolar disorder was not "discovered" until many years after Byron's death, it is the clinical descendant of the *poetic madness* phenomenon that the Romantic poets were acutely familiar with. Byron in particular was both a natural and a self-made "mad poet"; his discordant emotions were both a symptom of his untreated mental illness and a part of his persona that he deliberately played with in crafting his own reputation. How can we read *Manfred* as an allegorical representation of the poet's psychological distress, and how does that reconcile with the romanticized and facetious image of the "mad poet" constructed both by Byron and *for* him by his peers and critics? My thesis will analyze the figure of the Byronic hero alongside the supernatural phenomena in *Manfred* to interrogate the mad poet myth's adherence to Byron's legacy.

Résumé

En tant que l'un des poètes romantiques les plus importants et les plus mémorables – grâce à sa personnalité publique souvent exagérée —Lord Byron est remarquable pour la profondeur émotionnelle de sa poésie. Ma thèse questionne directement le stéréotype du « poète fou » — un mythe omniprésent dans les études littéraires concernant Byron et ses contemporains— en ce qui concerne son corpus poétique. Je me concentrerai sur le drame métaphysique *Manfred* (1817) pour examiner comment Byron a utilisé la forme du drame caché comme méthode thérapeutique de son trouble bipolaire, comme premièrement postulé par Kay Redfield Jamison. Bien que le trouble bipolaire n'ait été « découvert » que plusieurs années après la mort de Byron, c'est le descendant clinique de *la folie poétique,* que les poètes romantiques connaissaient très bien. Byron, en particulier, était un « poète fou » à la fois naturel et autodidacte ; ses émotions discordantes étaient à la fois un symptôme de sa maladie mentale non traitée et une partie de sa personnalité avec laquelle il jouait délibérément pour se forger sa propre réputation. Comment peut-on lire *Manfred* comme une représentation allégorique de la détresse psychologique du poète, et comment cela se concilie-t-il avec l'image romancée et facétieuse du « poète fou » construite à la fois par Byron lui-même et par ses contemporains et ses critiques ? Ma thèse analysera la figure du héros byronien à côté des phénomènes surnaturels dans *Manfred* pour interroger l'adhésion du mythe du « poète fou » à l'héritage de Byron.

Acknowledgements

To my parents, Mary and Pat Solimine, I will be forever grateful. You have encouraged my rambunctious soul and voracious love of literature from the moment I learned to read. I can never repay you for the unconditional love and support you have shown me over the past twenty-five years. You have always encouraged me to follow my heart, even when my heart led me to a different province. I also send my gratitude to my sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, Nonna, my late Nonno, and dearest dog Biscotti, who have filled my life with love, support, and laughter.

This thesis could not be possible without my incredible supervisor Professor Michael Nicholson, whose expertise and tireless support has made my graduate school experience such an enriching highlight in my life. I am so incredibly lucky to have found a supervisor who has shown me nothing but kindness and support over the past two years, and who has listened to me rattle on about Byron with such profuse enthusiasm. You have deepened my love for Romanticism and inspired me to continue my academic journey.

I extend my gratitude to the Department of English at McGill University for giving me this remarkable experience, as well as the Department of English at the University of Toronto, where my academic passion was stirred as an undergraduate.

I owe special thanks to the support of my wonderful therapist Dr. Stefanie Mathes, who has supported me, my dreams, and my mental health for the past five years. I also thank Dr. Kay Redfield Jamison, whose work on bipolar disorder has been instrumental to this project. Dr. Jamison's book *Touched With Fire* was the first thing I bought when I was diagnosed with bipolar II disorder, and has shown me that life can be brilliant and exuberant regardless of my illness.

To my incredible friends at McGill University and beyond who have supported me tirelessly throughout the past few years, I thank you for all the love, laughter, feedback, and support you have given me throughout the project. I extend a special thank-you to Elena Matas, Maggie Gowland, and Hadas Blum for their incredible support in making this project coherent and listening to my non-stop Byron trivia. I owe immense gratitude to Maggie Gowland, who has proofread every iteration of this thesis and spent countless hours with me over Zoom encouraging me to write this whirlwind of a project. To Madeline Metcalfe, the Percy Bysshe Shelley to my Byron, I thank you for sharing my love of Romantic poets and being such a beacon of love and support.

I cannot possibly express the love and gratitude I have for my incredible partner Conor Egberts, without whom this degree would not be possible. Conor, when we first met, I told you I wanted to apply to graduate school but was hesitant and did not think I was good enough to get in, but you have supported and encouraged me every step of the way. I think of this project not only as a labour of my own love but yours as well. Thank you for listening to and reading every word of my thesis, for performing *Manfred* with me in our tiny living room, and for embarking on this journey to Montreal with me with no hesitation. I adore you so incredibly much, and I will never be able to describe my love for you in words alone. You have made my life brighter and happier than I ever could have imagined. My heart and soul are yours.

# INTRODUCTION

Madness was divine before it was considered to be an ailment. The ancient Greeks believed madness was a form of divine inspiration: Apollo brings prophetic madness, Dionysus inspires ritual madness, Aphrodite provokes erotic madness, and the Muses gift poetic madness. Voices of antiquity such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle all saw merit in the notion of madness as a facet of divine inspiration, and over time their vision has been transmuted into the figure of the mad poet: a great mind plagued by the instability of creative inspiration. What was once thought of as divine is now thought of as a hindrance to the human condition and—with the rise of modern psychology—a spectrum of illnesses of the mind. Literary theorizations of madness and its possible link to poetry ebb and flow through history, but the popularity of this theory flourishes in the minds of the Romantic poets. Whether or not every Romantic poet claimed their madness, the image of the mad poet became solidified—and or glorified—in the Romantic era. The British Romantic poets believed to some degree that to be a true genius of poetry meant sacrificing oneself to a life of mental and creative anguish. George Gordon, 6$^{th}$ Lord Byron—immortalized as mad, bad, and dangerous to know—believed in poetic madness fervently, both about poetry as a whole and as a facet of his identity.

Studies of poetic madness have recently turned into studies of mental illness within the ranks of well-known writers. As modern psychology advances and various mental illnesses become conclusively defined, classified, and named, it is becoming increasingly common to analyze poets or poetry through the lens of mental illness. Modern psychology defines the fluctuation between mania and depression as the bipolar spectrum, a variety of disorders in

which the affected individual struggles with emotional regulation.[1] Bipolar disorder is classified as a mood disorder in which the individual shifts from high, energetic mania/hypomania to lethargic, consuming depression. While descriptions of "poetic madness" often suggest instances of psychosis, Kay Redfield Jamison's seminal study on creativity and mental illness, *Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and The Artistic Temperament* (1996), categorizes a large number of artists bipolar. The most prominent among them is Lord Byron.

My analysis of the mad poet trope—which I will refer to in this thesis as the "mad poet myth"—will explore how literary scholarship before and after the rise of modern psychology represents the link between creativity and mental illness. Long before the introduction of clinical methodology and closed control groups, literary scholars began imposing idealized notions of madness upon poets. In this way, lofty, glorified, and sometimes biased studies of the mental well-being of poets often flourish. While some scholarship is backed by psychological research on the link between creativity and mental illness, many other scholars do not engage with interdisciplinary texts in their musings on the figure of the intrinsically "mad" poet. This project aims to examine these viewpoints with a critical eye and dispel any dehumanizing rhetoric involved in the study of the mad poet, particularly as it pertains to the literary reception of Lord Byron and his lasting legacy as a famously troubled and tumultuous figure.

To account for the mad poet myth and its role in Lord Byron's works and legacy, my research will be comprised of three sections: the first will situate the mad poet theory within studies of Romanticism, the second will contextualize the madness of the Byronic hero figure as

[1] The categorization of bipolar disorder has, in recent years, expanded into a spectrum. The DSM-5 categorizes the disorders under the umbrella of "bipolar and related disorders" as: bipolar I disorder, bipolar II disorder, cyclothymic disorder, substance/medication-induced bipolar and related disorder, bipolar and related disorder due to another medical condition, other specified bipolar and related disorder, and unspecified bipolar and related disorder ("Bipolar and Related Disorders"). For the purpose of this study, I will be specifically talking of bipolar II disorder in relation to Byron, as it is the diagnosis Jamison has postulated.

a mirror of the poet himself, and the third will examine the legacy of the mentally agonized Byronic hero at his finest in the metaphysical closet drama *Manfred* (1817). Byron is often read differently from his Romantic peers, which is perhaps prompted by his celebrity status and the salacious rumours that clouded his reputation. This study acknowledges that there is no simple or definitive way to show that Lord Byron suffered from any mental illness without the insight his memoirs might have given us about the state of his mind,[2] but it is the aim of my thesis to uncover Byron's bipolar disorder by examining his Byronic heroes—particularly the eponymous hero of *Manfred*—to engage the madness in his poetry. In contrast to the majority of Byron scholarship, it will be the ambition of my thesis not to speculate on the rumoured biographical implications of Byron's compositions, but to unearth the psychological dimensions of his poetry.

To trace divine origins of madness throughout its storied history into the Romantic era, the first chapter of this study will engage with criticism surrounding madness in the Romantic era by scholars such as James Whitehead, George Becker, and Silke-Marie Weineck alongside the foundational psychological research of Jamison to account for the history of the mad poet myth. I will first trace the origins of the mad poet to its inception in antiquity and my analysis will travel alongside the mad poet until its arrival within Romanticism. This study will not engage heavily with the work of clinical psychologists—with the exception of Jamison—in order to account for the erraticism of the mad poet myth within literary criticism. I will explore the Romantic infatuation with madness by looking at Byron and his peers' own musings on their mental states, but my analysis will focus primarily on Byron. In this chapter, I will establish one of the driving claims of my thesis: Byron was well aware of how he was perceived by his

[2] Byron's memoirs were burned by his friend Thomas Moore after his death at the behest of John Murray, his publisher. Moore later regretted the decision and went on to publish his own extensive biography of the poet (Marchand 1250).

society, and deliberately modulated his life in order to build a mythology around himself. Through his letters, poetic dedications, and the accounts of those closest to the poet, we will see how Byron fractures himself into multiple identities to further shroud the truth of his life and hide the deep emotional turmoil left by his bipolar disorder.

In the second chapter of my thesis, I will continue to explore Byron's deliberate self-fashioning by examining a handful of his protagonists. Though the rakish audacity that drove Byron's public persona has become the most lasting impression of the poet, it is important to consider *all* the dimensions to Byron's struggles—he was a man who suffered from genetic mental illness (bipolar disorder, as I will exhaustively discuss in this project), struggled with his image and was haunted by his self-imposed exile to Italy and inability to ever return and see his friends—and young daughter—in his lifetime. There is a deep mournfulness lurking behind the libertine image of Byron, and we can view that primarily through the guises of his heroes. While it is apt to discuss the Byronic hero for its proximity to Byron's public life and his known persona, I see more merit in discussing the Byronic hero as a vessel of Byron's own interiority. In discussing *Manfred* and *Cain* (1821), this section will also explore the influence of Milton's Satan and Goethe's Mephistopheles within Byron's dramas to evaluate how Byron refracts his persona through devilish influences to further muddle his self-mythologization. In exploring *Cain* and the issue of the ambiguity concerning the true protagonist of the play, we will see how Byron refuses clarification and creates a tension between the two poles of himself, represented by Lucifer and Cain.

In the third chapter of my thesis, I will focus solely on *Manfred* in order to account for how Byron confines his psychological turmoil within the play. Byron uses the closet drama form as a rudimentary mode of therapy for his disordered moods, rendering them as confessional

spaces for his sins and a place for him ponder the possibility of forgiveness. Byron was cognizant of his disordered thinking and knew that it was a trait inherited by his noble lineage, which he demonstrates through his dramatic heroes. This project will take an intimate look into Byron's use of the closet drama form through *Manfred* as it continues into the third chapter by paying special attention to the physical spaces in Byron's dramatic poetry that his hero occupies, both physically and emotionally. In my analysis of key scenes in the play, I will position *Manfred* as Byronic pre-cursor to "psychodrama." In psychotherapy, psychodrama is defined as a "psychotherapeutic exercise in which a patient acts out his or her feelings and problems with or in front of fellow patients and therapists" ("psychodrama"). Though Byron could not have predicted future psychotherapeutic practices, the role of the closet drama form in his poetry functions in a similar way to psychodrama. This section will analyze Byron's performative catharsis as he crafts a play that allegorizes by his psychological suffering; I will spend a considerable amount of time in Manfred's "tower," where the poet stages his play in the recesses of his mind.

Byron's poetry has always been coloured with deep passion. Among his peers, Byron remains the most expressive of the Romantics, and writes the full scale of emotion from melancholy to euphoria into his compositions. Where other Romantic poets emphasize the brilliance of nature or the plight of the working class, Byron's poetry ruminates on the volatility of the soul. Byron's continuing legacy—even centuries into the future—is predicated upon on the emotional depth of his poetry, and the way the poet manipulated his biography to compose such brilliant flashes of heartfelt expression within his corpus. This thesis aims to reflect that vulnerability as best it can.

# CHAPTER ONE:

## Thinking Wildly: Divine Inspiration to Romantic Madness

> Yet must I think wildly: – I have thought
> Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
> In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
> A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:
> And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,
> My springs of life were poison'd. 'Tis too late!
> Yet am I chang'd; though still enough the same
> In strength to bear what time can not abate,
> And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate.
> (*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.* Canto III. 7.)

Two types of madness existed in antiquity: human madness and madness spurred by divine intervention. In Plato's *Phaedrus*, Socrates proclaims that madness "is a divine gift and the source of the chiefest blessings granted to men" and petitions Phaedrus to consider why the first Greeks would "[connect] prophecy (*mantike*) which foretells the future and is the noblest of arts, with madness (*manike*), or called them both by the same name, if they had deemed madness to be a disgrace or dishonour" (Plato, *Phaedrus*). To Socrates, there is no shame in madness when it is considered divine; rather, those considered mad are revered for the gifts bestowed upon them by the gods and muses.[3] Socrates, Plato, and their peers made clear demarcations between what is acceptable versus contemptible madness. George Becker notes that "the divine disturbance that invited prophetic or poetic activity was clearly distinguished from clinical insanity" (6) in the times of the ancient Greeks, and human madness—that which did not produce great art—was still considered dishonourable. Aristotle also echoed similar sentiments on the link between creative achievement and madness, asking, "Why is it . . . that all those who

[3] Concerning poetic madness, Socrates also states that "he who, having no touch of the Muses' madness in his soul, comes to the door and thinks that he will get into the temple by the help of art—he, I say, and his poetry are not admitted; the sane man disappears and is nowhere when he enters into rivalry with the madman" (Plato).

have become eminent in philosophy or politics or poetry or the arts are clearly of an atrabilious [i.e., melancholic] temperament?" (Aristotle qtd. in Becker, 6). Aristotle did not echo Socrates or Plato in their affirmations of poetic madness as the highest form of artistic capability, but rather he saw madness—specifically melancholia—as any other disease of the mind or body would have been considered in antiquity: an improper balance of the four humors.[4] Aristotle, like many other philosophers and scholars, allied the melancholic temperament with the figure of the mad poet.

The figure of the mad and tortured poet arose out of a yearning for a creative form of valor. This theory developed over time, fluctuating between the idea of genius as mad and genius as *made*. Mental illnesses are now recognized and wide-ranging and was no longer simply reserved as justifications for creative minds. Thus, it is interesting to see how the seed of divine madness planted by the ancient Greeks has flowered and proliferated throughout time across Western thought and philosophy. The poet may not be a direct recipient of divine madness anymore, but a degree of chaotic sensibility is still expected of artists. Silke-Maria Weineck writes that "[t]he notion of poetic madness . . . seeks to conceive of madness as more than a model of ultimate arbitrariness or the complete loss of reason. Any concept of poetic madness invariably invests insanity with meaning, with a cause and a goal, *arche* and *telos*, reinscribing the absence of reason into a reasonable teleological pattern" (55). Weineck's theory forms the basis of my rebuttal against the mad poet myth, and postulates alternatives to popular

[4] In humourism, the four humours are thought to coincide with the four temperaments. An excess of red blood created the *sanguine* temperament, which produced exuberant, extroverted individuals; an excess of yellow bile created the *choleric* temperament, a marker of those with high ambitions and short tempers; an excess of phlegm created the *phlegmatic* temperament, reserved for peaceful negotiators; and an excess of black bile created the *melancholic* temperament, indicative of those with deep emotions and feelings.

understandings of poetic madness that are integral to our understanding of the complexities of mental illness.

Little information regarding the inherent madness of the creative soul survives from the Roman or Medieval ages, but the Renaissance saw the rebirth of the esteemed creative mind: the *genio*. Genius itself has a multitude of meanings, the most prominent being "an exceptionally intelligent or talented person" and "a supernatural being" ("genius"); in the *genio*, these two meanings combine. This rebirth in creativity and great artistic achievement lauded and supported artists in a way that had been repressed since antiquity. Once again, creativity became a symbol of great achievement, though it was mainly expressed "in terms of an imitation of the established masters and of nature," and "unlike the modern conception of the genius, one that stresses originality as the distinguishing feature of the creative individual, the standard of the humanistic tradition involved the *imitatio-ideal*" (Becker 7). The *genio*—lauded for their ability to imitate nature, rather than being gifted his creativity by the gods—was not without their own form of madness. Much like the divine *manike* of antiquity, *pazzia* differentiated from human madness by being reserved for highly creative and esteemed individuals, referring instead to qualities associated with the melancholic temperament, such as eccentricity, sensitivity, moodiness and solitariness (Becker 7-8). This *pazzia* was something more like a frenzy; it was a state brought on by the act of creating great art, but it was not essential to the creation of great art. The *imitatio-ideal* of the *genio* offered something that Socrates' divine genius did not: a possibility of greatness through individual achievement alone. In that way, *genio* became seen as more of a popular affectation than a gift. The Renaissance painter Giovan Battista Armenini regarded the popularization of *pazzia* with disdain, stating that it was "an awful habit [that] has developed among common folk and even among the educated, to whom it seems natural that a painter of the

highest distinction must show signs of some ugly and nefarious vice allied with a capricious and eccentric temperament" (Armenini qtd in Becker 8). Not every artist regarded *pazzia* as a necessity for creative achievement, and some—like Armenini—saw it as a fad popularized by those of lesser creative talent.

During the Age of Enlightenment, the picture of creative genius underwent a transformation from the frenzied artist at odds with reality and sanity into a more lucid, analytical model of ambition and excellence, prompting rapid and pronounced changes in theories of creative genius. Cynicism following the Renaissance critique of *pazzia* created a shift in what constituted genius; gone was the creative madman, and in his stead rose the rational and intellectual genius. Many Enlightenment philosophers, such as Alexander Gerard[5] and Immanuel Kant,[6] did not believe that creativity was solely dependent on the imagination of the artist, but rather on a combination of multiple influences. To Gerard, these influences were imagination, sense, memory, and judgement; to Kant, they were imagination, taste, creative spirit, and understanding (Becker 9). True genius needed harmony between all aspects, and works lacking judgement or understanding teetered on the edge of instability. Madness was no longer glorified as the poetic ideal, as it was considered lacking in the elements of reason and judgement necessary to balance genius in the Enlightenment. Advances in the scientific exploration of the

[5] "Mere imagination will not constitute genius . . . As fancy [imagination] has an indirect dependence both on sense and memory, from which it received the first elements of all its conceptions, so when it exerts itself in the way of genius, it has an immediate connexion with judgment, which must constantly attend it, and correct and regulate its suggestions. This connexion is so intimate, that a man can scarce be said to have invented till he has exercised his judgment" (Gerard qtd in Becker 9).

[6] "For all the abundance of [imagination] produces in lawless freedom nothing but nonsense; on the other hand, the Judgment is the faculty by which it is adjusted to the Understanding" (Kant qtd in Becker 9).

human mind allowed for artists to become something they had never been before: voices of reason, who were not here to add to the vibrance of the world but rather to decipher it.[7]

The Enlightenment severed madness from genius, but the period did not completely avoid ruminations on madness. Theories of what it meant to be mad and *who* could be considered mad were still prevalent as the rise of the scientific method became the ideal means of philosophical truth. Most writing on medicine in the late Enlightenment still considered mania—described in the Oxford English Dictionary as a state "characterized particularly by euphoria, grandiose thought, rapid speech expressing loosely connected thoughts (flight of ideas), decreased need for sleep, increased physical activity, and sometimes delusions or hallucinations" ("mania")—to be "an extreme form of melancholia" (Jamison 35), not yet differentiating between the two extremes which would later come to define bipolar disorder.[8] The British physician William Battie in his *Treatise on Madness* (1758) shifts his definition of madness several times before theorizing that 'insanity' is not homogenous but rather a plethora of different types of madness: "when thoroughly examined, it discovers as much variety with respect to its causes and circumstances as any distemper whatever. Madness...rejects all general methods" (Battie qtd in Whitehead 76). Battie's reflections allow for a distinct look at how the Enlightenment redefined madness and expanded its definition beyond the inflexible characterizations of earlier periods.

---

[7] Becker summarizes the Enlightenment genius as follows: "The prevailing Enlightenment conception of genius did, therefore, recognize certain natural or sub-rational components rooted primarily in the creative imagination. However, it pointedly established judgment, or reason, as a counterweight to these components and buttressed judgment with memory, taste, sense, sensibility, and so forth. Judgment was not only capable of averting caprice and extravagance but also made madness a virtual impossibility for genius" (10).

[8] Jamison quotes a 1751 statement from Richard Mead here: "That [which] they call mania, this melancholy. . . . generally differ in degree only. For melancholy very frequently changes, sooner or later, into maniacal madness; and, when the fury is abated, the sadness generally returns heavier than before" (35).

Much of what Battie wrote mirrored lessons from Locke. James Whitehead writes that "Locke had suggested that the mad might develop delusions via the association of ideas, either from the correct and rational interpretation of erroneous perceptions, or in reasoning erroneously from true perceptions" (79); this reinterpretation of madness as a loss of rational perception is partially mirrored in Battie's treatise. However, Battie also conceptualized madness as a disease of the mind, asserting that "several disorders, really independent of Madness, and of one another, are thus blended together in our bewildered imagination" (Battie qtd in Whitehead 77). Departing from earlier ruminations on madness that had always located madness as a deficiency of the mind, Battie's treatise makes a compelling argument for a medical categorization of madness but was met with rebuke. In the Bethlem[9] physician John Munro's response to Battie's treatise—a work vehemently opposed by the Munro family, who were the proprietors of Bethlem—he expresses a much less sympathetic view towards madness, claiming that madness "is a distemper of such a nature, that very little of real use can be said concerning it . . . [it] must forever remain dark, intricate, and uncertain" (Munro qtd in Whitehead 77). Munro's opinion on madness as an ailment worthy of little discussion is perhaps more indicative of the larger Enlightenment opinion on madness than Battie's, although influential thinkers such as Locke held more compassionate views. Despite Locke's loftier approach to madness and its dependence on ideas and delusions, he later retracted his previous statements, stating that "I shall be pardoned for calling it by so harsh a name as madness" (Locke qtd in Whitehead 79). Whitehead claims that Locke humanized madness, making it less ruinous than his predecessors, while also believing that "what could be identified as 'madness' went far beyond the behaviour of obvious

[9] Bethlem Royal Hospital—colloquially known as Bedlam—was known for its mistreatment of patients in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In *Madness and Civilization* (1961), Michel Foucault notes that "as late as 1815, if a report presented in the House of Commons is to be believed, the hospital of Bethlehem exhibited lunatics for a penny, every Sunday" (Foucault 68).

lunatics: that any evident errors of perception or judgement might be less 'harsh' fractional gradations of movement towards a total state of insanity" (79-80). Locke's prominence in Enlightenment philosophy and his lasting impact provides an interesting take on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century musings on mental illness. By offering a gateway towards the more humanizing and sympathetic approaches towards madness, Locke's theories predicated later scholarship on the mad poet.

The burgeoning field of psychology emerged in the late Enlightenment era but did not proliferate until the nineteenth century with the birth of experimental psychology.[10] Faculty psychology,[11] as well as experimental psychology, led to increased scientific attention towards pathologizing creativity. Jamison notes that Enlightenment deliberations on madness were "almost completely reversed by the nineteenth-century Romantics, who once again emphasized not only the melancholic side, but also the more spontaneous, inspired, and swept-by-the-muses qualities of genius" (52). Whitehead writes that the "[the mad poet's] formation is analyzed in three areas: medical and pseudo-medical discussion of insanity and the imagination, and its handling of poetry; journalistic writing about poetic madness; and the biographical figure of the mad poet" (Whitehead 72-73). Whether or not philosophers and psychologists agree, one thing remains clear: in mad poet discourse, genius thrives in tandem with madness, and chaos is intrinsic to the creative mind. The mad poet has always been "the child of conflict," and "in the absolute absence of any psychological conflict, it seems doubtful that true creativity could ever

[10] "The association of creativity with clinical madness is a decidedly modern phenomenon. Far from having been a source of concern over the course of many centuries in Western society, as supporters of the pathology position tend to assume, this association does not predate the 1830s" (Becker 4).

[11] A school of thought based on Aristotelian views that were repositioned in the eighteenth century that divided the mind into a number of "faculties." Faculty psychology theorists such as Thomas Reid believed the number of components of the mind was "expanded to twenty-four but retained such traditionally recognized intellectual powers as perception, judgment, memory, and moral taste" (Becker 15).

emerge, due in part to lack of intrinsic motivation" (Diamond 258). In the scholarly imagination, the genius was born mad and remained so well into the nineteenth century.

## The Romantic Reliance on Madness

As the eighteenth century gave way to the nineteenth, a new school of thought began to emerge across Europe, one that valued emotion and eschewed the rationalism favoured by Enlightenment scholars: Romanticism. The cliché of the mad poet found its home amongst the poets and artists of the thriving Romantic movement. Of the British Romantic poets, very few were excluded in studies of madness and creativity. The late Romantics—particularly Lord Byron—passionately played into this stereotype. While Europe reeled from the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, poets and artists found new means of inspiration to draw into their art. The Romantics were fervent believers in the mad poet myth themselves. The starkest portrayal of the Romantic infatuation with the concept of the divinely mad poet can be glimpsed in Percy Bysshe Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry* (1821):

> In the infancy of the world, neither poets themselves nor their auditors are fully aware of the excellence of poetry: for it acts in a divine and unapprehended manner, beyond and above consciousness; and it is reserved for future generations to contemplate and measure the mighty cause and effect in all the strength and splendor of their union . . . A poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician, who feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why. (Shelley 595)

Romanticism has always been enamoured of a revival of ancient ideals and finds itself often going against the ideals of its Enlightenment predecessors. It is expected, then, to see the Romantics eschew the Enlightenment idea of genius in favour of the lofty ancient *manike*. In her

chapter on the German Romantic poet Friedrich Hölderlin, Weineck describes the 'major themes' of poetic madness in the Romantic and post-Romantic period as "temporal displacement, loss of identity and, nevertheless, *poetry*" (49). In Byron's poetry, these same themes of displacement and fractured identity haunt the majority of the poet's compositions, particularly his post-exile works. With Romanticism and the rebirth of poetic vulnerability, rising celebrity culture allowed public conjecture on the mental health of poets and artists to become a common pastime, and artistic biographies and memoirs became an increasingly popular interest. Jamison writes of the fascination of valorizing artistic biographies as a troubling reaction to pathologizing poetry, and remarks that many biographers and readers tend to overlook "aspects of mood swings, such as hypomania, and even at times overt psychosis," in favour of labelling such episodes as "'eccentricity,' 'creative inspiration,' or 'artistic temperament'" (58). The need to pathologize Romantic poets and the desire to prove their sanity pull and tear at each other in scholarship on Romanticism.

A figure of particular interest is William Blake, who some critics revere as having obtained prophetic power similar to the ancient Greek *mantike* whereas others disdain any mentions of madness pertaining to Blake. His poems, in tandem with his paintings, suggest a break with reality in the poet's mind. Jamison postulates that "for those who 'defend' Blake against charges of insanity, much of the concern seems to stem from assumptions that 'mad' is somehow 'bad,' that madness is a fixed condition with no periods of rational thought or experience, that great art cannot come from madness and, therefore, great artists cannot have been mad" (92). The evidence of Blake's possible experience with madness—particularly psychosis—does exist, however, and is compelling enough for us to conclude with certainty that

Blake *did* have experience with psychosis.[12] Nevertheless, the narrow-minded view of mental illness Jamison identifies in her exploration of Blakean critics is, unfortunately, prevalent in much of literary scholarship.

For those who do not suffer from mental illness, it is hard to conceptualize both what it is like to live with a mental illness and how it could be anything other than a detriment. This viewpoint occurs more often in scholars of literature and the humanities than of scholars of psychology and medicine, though similar opinions do permeate the fields of psychology and psychiatry with much more dangerous effects on real-life patients. Bipolar disorder is not a detriment to live with for all patients, despite the stereotypes attributed to the illness. For the scholarly contemporaries of the Romantics, however, this line of thinking was not always the dominant view. With psychology as a sustained field just beginning to enter the public imagination—including the popular and contested pseudoscience of phrenology—more interest than ever was centered around the human mind. Phrenology, established in 1796 by Franz Joseph Gall, relied on using the physical features of the skull to discern personality traits or illnesses of the mind. It was a popular source of both intrigue and ridicule amongst the Romantics. Coleridge notably "found both phrenology and mesmerism intriguing for their antidualistic and organicist tendencies, while at the same time rejecting phrenological theory for its associations with materialism and, more tellingly, for its 'fragmented' model of the mind" (Richardson 41). Many Romantics, however, did not engage with theories of phrenology and built their thoughts on madness from distinctly more ancient sources. The return of the mad artist in the Romantic era

[12] In Jamison's table "Mood Disorders and Suicide in British and Irish Poets born 1705-1805" (63-71), she identifies Blake as suffering from manic-depressive illness with psychotic features, citing his "hallucinations and delusions from an early age. Periods of exaltation and grandiosity, as well as periods that he described as 'a deep pit of melancholy—melancholy without any reason.' Excessive irritability and attacks of rage, suspiciousness, and paranoia" (66).

relied as much on mystical influence as the divinely inspired poet of antiquity had but did so with eloquence.

Edmund Burke's essay *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756) is famous for its evocation of the sublime: "Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling" (111). The Burkean sublime has come to be known as a cornerstone of Romantic poetry—it pervaded the minds of Wordsworth, Coleridge, the Shelleys, Keats, and, of course, Lord Byron—and ushered in the prospect of another realm of possibility outside the sane mind. Detractors of the affective Romantics often used their inheritance of the sublime against them. Whitehead echoes Jamison's earlier point of the critical belief that madness and great accomplishment cannot be linked, noting:

> When originality, the sublime, genius, and inspiration were invested in the divisive and stigmatized figure of the madman, those terms became suspect by association, and subject to popular incredulity and satirical invective; or worse, to automatic hostility, and the association of all creative activity with mental disintegration and incapacity generally, as was to happen with increasing force through the nineteenth century. (2)

Greatness was made mad by the Romantics; they wove the possibility of madness into the fibre of their literary being.[13] Percy Bysshe Shelley and Byron believed they had gone mad several

---

[13] Robert K. Sawyer writes that "The Romantics believed that clinical madness was an unfortunate side effect of extreme creativity . . . many of the Romantic poets began to embrace madness, and some claimed to experience mental anguish and madness simply because they thought they were supposed to" (Sawyer qtd. in Whitehead 155-156).

times during their short lives, and often made these reflections with self-effacing indifference to avoid worrying those around them. Other Romantic poets, such as William Blake and John Clare, expressed similar sentiments. Regardless of lived experience with mental illness, madness fascinated the Romantics and found its way into their poetry and correspondences; in the aftermath of the overly rationalized model of poetry in the Enlightenment, Romantic poets found solace in how errant madness allowed them more freedom in their compositions.

## Lord Byron's Warring Emotions

Byron was unsubtle with his threats and deliberations on suicide, having put both his wife Annabella Milbanke and his half-sister Augusta Leigh on edge with his suicidal behaviour. Annabella mentions in a letter on January 18th, 1805, that during at stay at Halnaby Hall, Byron "had his loaded pistols & dagger (which are always by his bedside at night) on the table through the day, and frequently intimated a design of suicide. Once he seized the dagger, & ran with it to his own room. the door of which I heard him lock" (Lady Byron qtd in Elwin 344); on a separate occasion, Augusta reports him having threatened to overdose on Laudanum: "He immediately looked very dark & black (in the old way) & said 'I have plenty of Laudanum—& shall use it'" (Leigh qtd in Elwin 413).[14] The pistols were not a one-off experience in his life; Sir John Warren recalls having once found "pistols placed on the [dinner] table as if they were a customary part of the dinner service" (Marchand 9). In 1813, the poet told his then wife-to-be that "poets 'rarely' went '*mad,*' but were generally very *near* it" (Gilmour 211); Percy Bysshe Shelley, in the summer of 1816 remembered Byron as "mad as the winds," remarking that the final Canto of

[14] Laudanum, an opium tincture, was a popular catch-all drug in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but its addictive nature often outweighed its medical benefits. Thomas de Quincey's 1821 memoir, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, provides a profound account of the tribulations of Laudanum addiction. While Byron is not thought to have a sustained Laudanum addiction in the same way de Quincey did, he was known to use it in his more destructive moods. Substance abuse and bipolar disorder are often comorbid. At the time of Jamison's study, a reported 60% of patients with bipolar illnesses also reported a history of substance abuse or dependence (Jamison 43).

*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* was written when Byron was, "if insane, [in] the most wicked & mischievous insanity" (Gilmour 212). Though Shelley did worry for Byron's mental state, he also revered him for his poetic genius; upon hearing the fourth Canto of *Don Juan,* Shelley wrote to his wife Mary that "it sets him not above but far and above the poets of the day: every word has the stamp of immortality" (Shelley qtd in Woodman 193).

The poet, whose family history was rife with possible suicides on both sides,[15] frequently proclaims his shifting moods as they delve into what I identify as suicidal ideation. Byron's tug-of-war between claiming his madness and trying to distance himself from the cliché of the mad poet lasted his entire life. His mood swings are notable in his letters and recollections, and often confined to specific periods that fluctuate from mania to depression, the two major features of bipolar disorder. Jamison makes a clear assertion that Byron suffered from "manic depression," what bipolar disorder was known as at the time of publication of Jamison's book, that followed him from his early teens and haunted him until his final illness and death at the age of thirty-six. It is important to note that Byron was plagued by unstable moodiness on both sides of his family tree—the violently tumultuous Gordons on his mother's side, and the financially volatile Byrons on his father's.[16] His mother, known for her temper, raised her son—who "displayed a temper equal to his mother's" (Marchand 29)—alone and in financial straits. Byron's tumultuous

[15] Jamison identified the prevalence of suicides in the poet's family as proof of his hereditary bipolar disorder: "Byron had a family history remarkable for its suicides (in itself more likely to be associated with manic-depressive illness than with any other condition), violence, irrationality, financial extravagance, and recurrent melancholia" (155).

[16] Marchand, in explaining the poet's family history describes the Byrons as "[seeming] to have grown more irresponsible with each generation, until the summit of social irregularity is reached in the character and conduct of the great-uncle and the father of the poet, if not indeed in the poet himself" and the Gordons of Gight as "[displaying] a startling record of violence rare even in the annals of Scottish lairds . . . Signs that they were subsiding into a civilized state appeared only a little before the line ran out with Byron's mother, Catherine Gordon, the unlucky thirteenth to hold the castle and lands in Aberdeenshire" (3).

childhood and lack of parental stability undoubtedly affected him in his later life, especially in tandem with his genetic mental illness.

Leslie Marchand's seminal and exhaustive biography of the poet begins with the assertion that "Byron was a human being, shaped by the strange combination of his inherited traits and his unnatural upbringing, but essentially likeable, disarmingly frank in his confessions of his own peccadilloes, with a delightfully fresh observation of the human character and human frailties and a unique facility for lucid and concrete expression" (ix). His greatest offence, Marchand continues, was "his honesty in giving expression to what many feel but most suppress or refuse to acknowledge" (ix). Byron's candour allowed his contemporaries to both revere and worry for him, creating a turbulent reputation for the poet in his intimate social circles.

Byron purposely facilitated his reputation of the 'mad poet,' knowing that public perception would always mark him as undesirable or salacious. His close friend John Cam Hobhouse once recalled that "Augusta herself used to say: 'Byron is never as happy as when he can make you believe some atrocity against himself;" Thomas Moore also tells us "that there was 'hardly any crime so dark or desperate' of which he might not occasion hunt that he had been guilty . . . this is a trait everyone recognized and evidence of it abounds" (Rawes, *Byron in Context* 232). Byron believed in the mad poet myth and sought it out as a defining feature of his public and private personae. His outlandish acts were often deliberate. Biographical accounts are not the only sources of indication of the poet's war with his moods. In nearly all of Byron's compositions—particularly *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812-18), *Manfred* (1817), and *Cain* (1821)—there is a hint of roiling war and mental uncertainty within the poet's psyche. Even in work as sound and satirical as *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), where Byron

ascribes madness to the figure of the poet[17]—particularly himself—with self-deprecation, his inclination towards idealized poetic madness is present. When Byron left England for the final time in April of 1816, his British readership's intrigue into his life did not wane; in fact, it was in his European exile that Byron wrote some of his greatest and most famous works.

Byron's composition of *Manfred* started after his marriage to Annabella Milbanke crumbled and rumours of a salacious affair with his half-sister Augusta Leigh began to spread, and he wrote the first two acts during his stay at Villa Diodati contemporaneously with the infamous gloomy evening which produced Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and the birth of science fiction. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*—started in 1812—was also finished during his time in Europe. Though he wrote to Augusta during the early days of his composition of *Manfred* that "At present I am better—thank Heaven above—& woman beneath" (Jamison 179), his moods quickly turned to torrid agitation and unbalance. In a letter to Thomas Moore, his friend and later biographer, Byron reported "that he had been plagued by sleeplessness and 'half delirium' for a week" (Jamison 180). *Manfred* deals heavily with the demons that weighed upon the poet's psyche and the remorse and shame he had tried to hide behind the rakish identity that led to his self-imposed exile from England; in the final act of the drama, Manfred proclaims, "What I have done is done; I bear within/A torture which could nothing gain from thine" (3.4.127-128). The final moments of the drama end in the eponymous hero 'expiring' after a long battle with his desire and begging for death from the spirits that harangue him—"Old man," he tells the Abbot, "'tis not so difficult to die" (3.5.151).

[17] From *English Bard and Scotch Reviewers* "I cannot purchase fame at such a price,/ I'll labour gratis as a Grinders' wheel,/ And blunt myself, give edge to others' steel,/ Nor write at all, unless to teach the Art/ To those, rehearsing for the Poet's part,/ From Horace, show the pleasing paths of song,/ And from my own example—what is wrong." (Byron qtd in Whitehead 38).

Byron's desire for a heroic demise haunted both his personal life and his poetry—it appears first in *Childe Harold* and finds a home in *Manfred*. If *Manfred* can help us discern anything about the poet's self-image, it is that he was a man who suffered greatly despite the audacious, womanizing figure that was painted of him in the memories of his contemporaries and fans. Jamison describes the appeal of Byron as depending on "the sheer power of his life and emotions" (190). Byron desired heroic remembrance over everything, and in the end died a hero in Greece, where he is memorialized with multiple statues and monuments across Missolonghi and Athens. Lord Byron continues to fascinate readers centuries after his own demise, and the heroic archetype he created through his poetry has remained immortal. Although Byron may not have lived to appreciate the reach of his influence, he is no doubt one of the most captivating members of the later Romantics. What he tells us about the mad poet myth—the timeless manic and melancholic hero pervasive in every era—is that poetry is both *made* and *mad*.

# CHAPTER TWO:

## "There is a war": The Bipolar Byronic Hero

> There is a war, a chaos of the mind.
> When all its elements convuls'd — combined —
> Lie dark and jarring with perturbed force.
> And gnashing with impenitent Remorse
> (*The Corsair,* II.933-936.)

The pull of Byronism has never depended solely on autobiography; rather, the poet has always been famously unknowable and, consequentially, mutable to what his reader wants him to be. As the progeny of Byron's own public persona, the Byronic hero is defined by Thomas Babington Macaulay as "a man proud, moody, cynical, with defiance on his brow, and misery in his heart, a scorner of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection" (344) and shares an implicitly autobiographical proximity with the poet. Peter Thorslev describes as the criteria for the Byronic hero as a figure who is "courteous toward women, often loves music or poetry, has a strong sense of honor, and carries about with him like the brand of Cain a deep sense of guilt. He is almost invariably sympathetic in spite of his 'crimes,' none of which involve unnecessary cruelty, as do the crimes of the Gothic villain" (8). Byron's famous heroes were instrumental in creating the mythology surrounding his life by blurring the line between fact and fiction, most famously through the protagonists of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, The Giaour* (1813), *The Corsair* (1814), *Lara* (1814), and *Manfred*. Daniel McVeigh invites us to consider that "Byron's work has always given his readers the *impression* of autobiography," and asks, "has any other writer created characters—Harold, the Giaour, Conrad, Manfred and the rest—so quickly assumed to be authorial alter egos?" ("Byron and the Mark of Cain" 273). Much of Byron's poetic fame—and by extension the fame of his heroes—has always been tied to the tangential link it has to Byron as a person; the bulk of Byron studies have, consequentially,

leaned heavily into speculation surrounding the poet's personal life. As a scandalizing figure in his rigid Regency-era society, Byron held a polarizing position in the public—and critical—imagination.

In the first chapter of this project, I explored how Byron deliberately pulled the strings of his public perception by telling salacious and often improbable tales of his wrongdoings in an effort to self-mythologize. We are reminded of Augusta Leigh's previously cited maxim that "Byron is never as happy as when he can make you believe some atrocity against himself" (Leigh qtd in Rawes, *Byron in Context* 232) in considering the image he crafted for his public persona. Byron's letters to Lady Melbourne prove how he deliberately warped his image when given a captive, and gullible, enough audience.[18] Alan Rawes describes that in Byron's letters to Lady Melbourne, we see the poet "playing on and enjoying her willingness to believe him guilty of some 'unspeakable' atrocity, [bringing] into view a mischievous, tongue-in-cheek, self-fictionalizing — indeed often self-demonizing — quality that is a feature of Byron's poetry" (Rawes, *Romantic Biography* 177). Byron's meticulous manipulation of his reputation show his control over how others perceived him, but we also see that a certain level of emotional anguish haunted his life. What I identify as the Byronic hero is inherently informed by the poet's bipolar disorder; his heroes remain famous for their erratic mood swings and descents into deep melancholy, episodes of grandiosity and detachment from reality.[19] Per Jamison, it is clear Byron suffered with some degree of bipolar disorder from the symptoms he displayed: violent mood swings infused his life, "ranging from the suicidally melancholic to the irritable, volatile, violent

[18] Though Byron's changeability regarding his image has been largely centred around his letters with Lady Melbourne, Thomas Moore also recalls that, in regard to another, unnamed woman: "Lord Byron did endeavour to make her think that he murdered some one ... This at first alarmed —, but when she came to know him better she saw through his acting***Must enquire more about this" (Moore qtd in Rawes, *Romantic Biography* 176)

[19] *Manfred* in particular—due to the play's metaphysical nature—shows the Byronic hero as living outsides the bounds of probability and reality.

and expansive"; Ennui, despair, and lethargy characterized his bouts of depression. His financial volatility—a trait inherited primarily from his father, infamous promiscuity, consuming bouts of anger, irrationality, recklessness and irritability characterized his mania (Jamison 153). These traits combine in the famously protean and brooding Byronic hero to create a figure that this project will identify as a bipolar interpretation of Byronic agony.

In this chapter, I will discuss the Byronic hero as an archetype informed by the poet's bipolar disorder and own self-conception. Three main aspects influence the Byronic hero: the poet's protean public image, his struggles with mental illness, and his fascination—and internalization—of damnation seen primarily through the influence of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust* (1808-32) in *Manfred* and *Cain*. I will base my discussion on a contextual analysis of key scenes from *Manfred* and *Cain* to show how the poet self-demonizes his reputation and literary legacy through his famous heroes and how the figure of the Byronic hero represents the poet's manic and depressive states through poetic damnation. In contextualizing the impact that Satanic figures such as Milton's Satan and Goethe's Mephistopheles have on Byron's characters, I will explore how early Satanic influence heralded the conception of the Byronic hero. This chapter is, in part, prompted by Sir Walter Scott's review of the third Canto of *Childe Harold*:

> I question whether there ever lived a man who, without looking abroad for subjects excepting as they produced an effect on himself, has contrived to render long poems turning almost entirely upon the feelings, character, and emotions of the author, so deeply interesting . . . *There is something dreadful in reflecting that one gifted so much above his fellow-creatures, should thus labour under some strange mental malady that destroys his peace of mind and happiness, altho' it cannot quench the fire of his genius*. I fear the

> termination will be fatal in one way or other, for it seems impossible that human nature can support the constant working of an imagination so dark and so strong. Suicide or utter insanity is not unlikely to close the scene. (Scott qtd in Jamison 179; emphasis own).

## Devilish Sympathy: The Byronic Satan and Mephistopheles

Though Byron himself remains the leading and most obvious inspiration for his protagonists, there is an undeniable debt to be paid to the devil for his handiwork in shaping the poet's heroes. John Milton's iconic Satan of *Paradise Lost* (1667) and the alluring Mephistopheles of Goethe's *Faust, Part One* (1808) imparted clear inspiration on Byron's heroes.[20] Byron, like most poets writing after Milton, was fascinated with the controversial anti-hero of *Paradise Lost*. Though critics may never agree on the heroic status of Milton's Satan, but in the eyes of Byron and many of his contemporaries, most notably Shelley, the charismatic devil created the framework of a new type of Romantic hero. Robert Southey, a contemporary of Wordsworth and Coleridge and a bitter critic of Byron, once placed Byron at the head of what he called "the Satanic school," a group comprised of Byron and Shelley that was "more properly characterized by a Satanic spirit of pride and audacious impiety" (Southey qtd in Tuite 227).[21] In *Romantic Satanism*, Peter Schock claims that with Milton's Satan—the "autogenous rival to Milton's God"—Byron and Shelley discovered "an adequate vehicle for their ideological backlash" (26). Satan created the pedestal upon which many Byronic heroes were built, most notably the eponymous hero of *Manfred* and—though it may be controversial to categorize a devil as a "hero"—Lucifer from *Cain*. Byron's metaphysical drama *Manfred* is famous for its

[20] Byron predeceased *Faust, Part Two* by eight years, thus its influence on Byronic texts is irrelevant. For the purpose of this study, only the first part of Goethe's *Faust* will be considered.

[21] Byron in turn replied sardonically to Southey's accusation: "what is the 'Satanic School?' who are the Scholars?" (Byron qtd in Tuite 227). Neither he nor Southey thought highly of one another and were often at odds.

"spectral machinery" that represents "'projections' of the hero's own personality, psyche or ideas" (Dennis 109); Manfred's choices, coupled with his control over and defiance of the spirits, bear heavily on his mind and make him the ultimate example of the emotionally tortured Byronic hero.

The devil and his historic association with rebellion has always occupied Byron's poetry "as a potent figure for cultural mediation and figuration itself, and as the initiating allegory of scandalous self-reflexive celebrity" (Tuite xx). Milton's fallen angel mirrors exactly what Byron—especially in his self-imposed exile—believed himself to be: a renegade on the outside of Eden, looking in on a society that both fears and excludes him. Byron's 'Satanic' dramas are "charismatic yet profoundly isolated figures, exiles or outlaws from conventional society, alienated by a combination of their superior nobility of mind and some obscure act of crime in their past" (Parker 1). Byron notes in a letter to Thomas Moore on February 10th, 1814, during the uproar of *The Corsair'*s publication, that "My person . . . has been denounced in verses, the more like the subject, inasmuch as they halt exceedingly. Then, in another, I am an *atheist,* a *rebel,* and, at last, the *devil*" (Byron qtd in Marchand 432). Mirka Horová explains that the characteristics of the Satanic hero functions in Byron's corpus as a figure that "stands for 'stern' and 'stubborn,' but also loyal and heroic – intellectual, agonistic. It excludes empathy while increasingly heralding sympathy, ultimately replacing both with a discourse epitomizing memory and power" (186).

Byron alludes to Milton's epic repeatedly during *Manfred*, most notably with the presence of the mysterious and unknown voice of the "incantation" heard when Manfred falls senseless in the first scene of the play. The incantation scene takes place after Manfred's first confrontation of the seven spirits and is spoken by an unknown voice assumed to be presiding

over his unconscious body. The identity of this voice is unknown—or perhaps unknowable—and the reader sits perplexed attempting to place it; we wonder if it is an amalgamation of the Spirits speaking a curse unto Manfred, or perhaps Manfred's inner voice itself. Perhaps it is something darker—infernal, even—lying below the realm of our experiences. If no source is to be given within the text, it could be possible to presume this may be the devil speaking to Manfred, or that the devil is speaking *through* Manfred.

After the incantation, "*Manfred* might have ended here, after one scene: the usual Byronic gesture and this devastating thunderbolt of rebuttal," but the drama continues "because Manfred cannot stop struggling, cannot give up the pursuit. Because, even conceding now the futility, the violence and 'harm' of the game, no alternative can yet be imagined" (Dennis 114-5). In a later conversation with the Abbot, Byron mirrors Milton in an iconic showing of his hero's hell-bound conviction:

> The innate tortures of that deep despair,
> Which is remorse without the fear of hell
> But all in all sufficient to itself
> Would make a hell of heaven,—can exorcise
> From out the unbounded spirit the quick sense
> Of its own sins, wrongs, sufferance, and revenge
> Upon itself; there is no future pang
> Can deal that justice on the self—condemn'd
> He deals on his own soul.
>
> (*Manfred* 3.1.70-78)

These lines reflect Satan's own words once again: "The mind is its own place, and in itself/ Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (*Paradise Lost* 1.254-55). In *Paradise Lost*, we read these lines as the devil musing over whether or not he may ever make his way back to heaven before he realizes that "Hell" is not a place, but rather an aspect of himself; hell follows Satan wherever he goes and Manfred, similarly, cannot escape damnation in the drama. Compare Manfred's "innate tortures" to "the mind" of Satan as a landscape for inner suffering; Satan

seeks to leave his hell—to slip into Eden and imagine himself as unfallen—but Manfred makes no attempt to escape his. He instead takes stubborn ownership of his damned mindscape, echoing the devil's sentiment in the final scene of the drama:

> 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
> (*Manfred* 3.4.127-32; emphasis own)

Byron, through Manfred, sees his damnation—or rather, his troublesome and untreated mood disorder—as a permanent state of being, a static realm he must perish within. Manfred spurns the demons that provoke him and offers them no ownership over his mind; he promises "I have not been thy dupe nor am thy prey, / But was my own destroyer, and will be/ My own hereafter" (3.4.138-140) and shortly thereafter "expires" (3.4.151), still possessed by his tortured mind. Manfred's overwrought guilt and wounded pride put him firmly in line with the devil's plight.

While *Manfred* was being composed in the summer of 1816, Byron, the Shelleys, and his doctor John Polidori were joined by Matthew "Monk" Lewis, who translated Goethe's *Faust* for Byron.[22] Byron was not unfamiliar with *Faust*—Madame Germaine de Staël and Percy Bysshe Shelley had also translated passages for him—but Lewis' translations piqued his interest further (Burwick 47). Byron admired Goethe's work, and Goethe admired Byron himself in return, showing appreciation of Byron's earlier work, but *Cain* and *Manfred* earned the majority of his

[22] Polidori authored the first vampire novel in the English literary tradition that summer following the same ghost-story writing competition that Byron pitched and gave us Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. *The Vampyre* based its main character *heavily* on Byron—and was indeed first published under Byron's name—, adding vampires to the lineage of the Byronic hero.

praise.[23] Goethe wrote in response to *Cain,* "Byron alone I admit to a place by my side" (Goethe qtd in Steffan 324). Of the two dramas' relationship to Goethe's work, I wish to make a distinction when comparing similarities between the major figures of both works: Manfred mirrored Faust,[24] and *Cain*'s Lucifer imitated Mephistopheles. While the eponymous hero of Cain himself bears resemblance to Faust, his resemblance is not as strong as the conjurer Manfred's is. Rather, it is the Mephistophelean impression of Lucifer that perfectly mirrors the Byronic demon-hero that Satan and Mephistopheles have predicated.

Byron's Lucifer, the silver-tongued mentor of *Cain*, "functions as an ironized mouthpiece for free thought" (Schock 8), but Byron does not attempt to posit Lucifer as an outright evil presence in the drama. Lucifer's role in the drama is to provide insight to the protagonist. In the end of the second act, he tells Cain:

> One good gift has the fatal apple given, –
> Your reason – let it not be overswayed
> By tyrannous threats to force you into faith
> 'Gainst all external sense and inward feeling:
> Think and endure, – and form an inner world
> In your own bosom – where the outward fails;
> (*Cain* 2.2.459-464)

Lucifer posits himself as a bringer of knowledge, one who can teach Cain things that his creator was unwilling too; Mephistopheles also claims to "only speak the sober truth" (*Faust* 1346) when engaging Faust for the first time. Lucifer's charismatic viewpoint asks the reader to ponder his intentions; we wonder if Lucifer—and Cain—may be able to "give voice to an important part

[23] In Goethe's review of *Manfred*, he recalls an account—which is likely fictitious or exaggerated—of "Byron's Real life revenge-murder of an amorous rival in Florence" (Dennis 112). The source of this supposition is unclear but not entirely uncalled for in the realm of Byron-related rumours but shows that Goethe had particular interest in Byron as a public and scandalous figure as well as a talented writer.

[24] Rolf P. Lessenich makes the lineation between Manfred and Faust clear: "Like Goethe's Faust, [Manfred] traverses time and space, conjures up spirits and converses with the dead. His complaints about man's lack of knowledge are Faustian, yet he declines the devil's pact that would enslave him even more. This was Byron's answer to Goethe" (226).

of Byron's own personality, one of which the poet himself was highly suspicious" (McVeigh, "Byron and the Mark of Cain" 284). In an 1821 letter to John Murray, Byron explains the purpose behind his drama and denies that it is a temptation narrative:

> Cain is a proud man – if Lucifer promised him kingdoms &c. – it would elate him – the object of the demon is to depress him still further in his own estimation than he was before – by showing him infinite things – & his own abasement – till he falls into the frame of mind – that leads to the Catastrophe – from mere internal irritation. (*BLJ* ix. 53)

Though Byron did not publicly proclaim Lucifer to be a Mephistophelean figure—one who revelled in the act of temptation—he nonetheless became one. McVeigh suggests that "*Cain* keeps a suspicious silence about Satan's aspersion. Was Byron then of the devil's party, knowing it? But if so, why choose Cain—especially *this* Cain—to carry the burden of his protest? Like a true devil, Byron seems everywhere, and nowhere" (McVeigh,"Byron and the Mark of Cain" 277). Lucifer's true purpose is—much like the poet—protean and unknowable; Byron will never admit to positioning Lucifer as the secret protagonist of the drama, much like he will never nakedly admit to his own emotional instability.

*Cain* is one of few Byronic texts in which the central "Byronic" figure is difficult to parse—we assume at first that, by virtue of being the titular character, Cain must be the poet's stand-in, but Lucifer's magnetism muddles that assumption. Is Byron both Cain and Lucifer, rather than one or the other? The fraught battle between Cain and Lucifer as heroes of Byron's drama is crucial to this project's exploration of bipolar disorder within Byron's compositions. Split between two extremes—neither of which can be described as morally upright—the Byronic façade is fractured into two complete halves in *Cain*. Byron's two selves in the drama function together to create the whole of the poet, but they also exist in tension. Though Lucifer and Cain

do not adhere strictly to clinical descriptions of mania or depression, they subtly represent both poles of Byron's temperament. Lucifer is the striking, grandiose side of Byron that influenced his debauched public identity, and Cain is the apathetic, scowling side of Byron that resides within his inner turmoil. Byron provides a similar sentiment in *Manfred*, wherein the hero proclaims that he is "Half dust, half deity, alike unfit / To sink or soar" (1.2.40-1). The double-Byron in *Cain* is also dust—Cain, who was born of the earth—and deity—Lucifer, who was born of the heavens. Byron's repetition of this theme—of being half man and half god—clarified the tension inherent in having both sides of himself represented in his poetry. In his life and his work, Byron mythologized himself and put himself above the stature of a regular man. It is just as possible that he believed himself deity as it is that he believed himself dust.

The pull of Byron's two greatest dramatic heroes owe a debt to the devils that came before them.[25] Byronic self-expression draws heavily the Miltonic and Faustian examples of protagonist-lead tales of damnation. In writing *Manfred*, Byron is still reeling from the aftershock of his scandalous departure from England and the implosion of his marriage and reputation—it is a project concerning itself primarily with exercising the demons plaguing the poet's psyche and the madness of his tumultuous moods; he seeks to forget his past but find self-knowledge in a new, deeper way. *Cain*, conversely, makes one distinct departure from *Manfred*'s progress: while Manfred begs the spirits to help him forget his past and his shame, Cain seeks out knowledge deliberately and welcomes it from his infernal companion. He asks the devil "Wilt thou teach me all?" (*Cain* 1.1.301), to which Lucifer agrees to on the condition that Cain "fall down and worship me – thy Lord" (*Cain* 1.1.302). Cain does not readily agree to this; no

[25] *Cain* and *Manfred* are not Byron's only 'Satanic' heroes, but they are the most prominent. *Werner* (1822) and *The Deformed Transformed* (1824)—also closet dramas—follow along the thread created in *Manfred*, and deal with the poet's tempestuous musings on his life and legacy, but to a less successful degree.

Byronic hero ever readily agrees to submit to the wills of others and neither does their maker, but the devil only asks as a formality. He knows that "Ne'er the less,/ Thou art my worshipper; not worshipping/ Him makes thee mine the same" (*Cain* 1.1.318). Writing in the aftermath of *Manfred*, the poet no longer needs to beg for forgiveness for his past sins; he has come to terms with his demons. Byron passes the shores of self-realization in *Cain* and comes to accept his murky reputation and psyche for what they are, now seeking a newer, deeper knowledge that perhaps only a devil can teach.

## Lord Byron's Mutable Reputation

The image Byron projected to the public orbited the scandals attributed to him. Byron was notorious for his affairs with married women, liaisons with other men and—most condemning of all—the purported affair with his half-sister Augusta Leigh. Most biographies of Byron, both by his contemporaries and writers of our time, tend to hinge upon the sensational aspects of the poet's private life in order to make their biographies marketable.[26] In Harriet Beecher Stowe's biography of Byron's wife Annabella Milbanke, *Lady Byron Vindicated* (1869), she focuses primarily on the poet's alleged dalliance with Augusta Leigh as evidence for her damning depiction of the poet. Despite never having met the poet himself, Stowe wrote and published her account of Lady Byron's recollections of her marriage nine years after Milbanke died; though she draws on accounts she heard *from* Lady Byron, the biography is sensationalized in nature and hinges on claims that may have come from a fittingly biased source.[27] In his

[26] Peter Thorslev notes that "in the decade following the Byron centenary in 1924 not one book-length study of his poetry was published, but there were no less than twelve book-length biographical studies, six of which covered the whole span of his life" (Thorslev 4-5). As established earlier, this asserts the marketability in making Byron into a spectacle.

[27] G. Wilson Knight makes the impassioned statement that "not a word of Lady Byron's evidence subsequent to her leaving her husband can be trusted" (Knight qtd in Rawes, *Romantic Biography* 181) due to their inherent link to the Byrons' divorce proceedings in which Annabella fought fervently to keep her reputation intact while marring Byron's, which later lead to his self-exile to Italy.

discussion of the sensationalized Byron biographies by Benita Eisler and Stowe, Rawes stresses to his reader consider that "Harriet Beecher Stowe emphatically tells the reader of her *Lady Byron Vindicated* (1870) that 'I ... testify that Lady Byron ... stated to me ... that the crime which separated her from Lord Byron was incest.' If this testimony is true, then Lady Byron's statement sits uneasily with a letter of January 1816" (*Romantic Biography* 182). If we are to consider Stowe's depiction of the poet as true in any unequivocal sense, we must also account for the bias Milbanke would have had against the husband that abandoned her and their child after the scandalous dissolution of their marriage.

The circulation of incest rumours provides most of the appeal for many Byron biographies, such as in Stowe's and Eisler's, which uncovers an issue inherent to most biography studies of major literary figures. While it is not immaterial to discuss these rumours—the poet does deliberately toy with the notion of incest in his poetry, particularly in *Manfred*—such readings have become synonymous with Byron's legacy and overwhelm existing criticism surrounding his corpus. While Marchand notes that "the circumstantial evidence [of his affair with Augusta] in Byron's letters cannot be ignored, and that certain aspects of his life and correspondence cannot be explained sensibly in any other terms" (404), it does remain pertinent to take even these bits of supposed proof with caution. Byron was cognizant of his reputation and was deliberate in how he constructed his image; any rumours, even ones as grave as incest, could be creative fodder just as easily as they could be true. Much of what we know of these incest "confessions" that biographers like Stowe, Eisler, and Phyllis Grosskurth depend on come from

Byron's letters to Lady Melbourne.[28] As I have already touched on, we should be prudent when considering any of Byron's correspondence with the susceptible Lady Melbourne.

It is feasible that "[n]ineteenth century biographers of Byron searched for a moral center and did not find one" (North 287) and that the accounts we have skew heavily towards disfavour, but we must also consider that Byron created these unsympathetic portraits of himself to garner interest in his poetry. *The Corsair* (1814), was one of Byron's most popular and widely read poems; on the first day of publication alone, it sold an astonishing ten-thousand copies.[29] The poem begins with a dedication to Thomas Moore, in which Byron writes: "if I have deviated into the gloomy vanity of 'drawing from self,' the pictures are probably like, since they are unfavourable; and if not, those who know me are undeceived, and those who do not, I have little interest in undeceiving" (*The Corsair* 4). Knowing that the poem would pull at the strings already attached to his image, Byron deliberately published *The Corsair* and alluded to himself through the poem's protagonist, Conrad; during the scandalous publication, he cared little about the ramifications of the poem.[30] In a journal, Byron recounts a rumour told to him by his friend John Cam Hobhouse: "… that I am the actual Conrad, the veritable Corsair, and that part of my travels are supposed to have passed in privacy. Um!—people sometimes hit near the truth; but never the whole truth" (Byron qtd in Marchand 434). When contrasting these journals against his statements in the dedication of *The Corsair* to Moore, we can see how Byron deliberately played with his image for the profit of notoriety. If we view Byron's compositions "as self-expression,"

---

[28] In the specific instance Marchand discusses here, Byron writes to Lady Melbourne of his plans to bring Augusta with him on his travels to Europe, to which she reacts: "Your kind letter is unanswerable; no one but yourself would have taken the trouble; no one but me would have been in a situation to require it. I am still in town so that it has as yet had all the effect you wish" (Melbourne qtd in Marchand 404).

[29] In just over a month, the number of copies reached twenty-five thousand copies.

[30] Writing to his publisher John Murray—regarding his insistence on the inclusion of *Lines to a Lady Weeping* to be published alongside *The Corsair*—Byron proclaims "I care nothing for consequences, on this point. My politics are to me like a young mistress to an old man—the worse they grow, the fonder I become of them" (Byron qtd in Marchand 434).

they become "poetry which is actually much more concerned with fictionalizing—indeed, demonizing and mythologizing — its author, [and] looks very much like a direct and wholehearted acceptance of the poet's invitation to buy into Byronic self-fictionalization" (Rawes, *Romantic Biography* 205). Byron invites his readers to think of his poetry as biographically confessional, leading them into the sweetened trap of supposed intimacy.

Conrad is considered, besides Childe Harold, as one of the earliest depictions of the Byronic hero due to the cryptic confessional hints in the poem's dedication to Moore. Byron initially planned to publish *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* under the name *Childe Burun's Pilgrimage*—deliberately inserting biography into the poem with "no thought of concealing its autobiographical character" (Marchand 288) by invoking his family's ancestral name.[31] While *Childe Harolde's Pilgrimage* introduces the first and most popular Byronic hero, it did not reach the peak of Byronic obscenity until the publication of Canto III in 1816, after Byron had already fled England in self-exile. We see in Conrad and the reception he inspired that Byron's famous heroes did build primarily upon his own *assumed* personal life as inspiration. Contemporary readers would have seen in the brooding but gentlemanly Conrad the sort of self-reproach that would haunt each Byronic hero in the poet's canon. Described in the poem as "That man of loneliness and mystery, / Scarce seen to smile, and seldom heard to sigh" (*The Corsair*, I.173-74), Conrad becomes the blueprint for the Byronic hero. To quickly summarize the events of *The Corsair*: it follows the protagonist Conrad, the titular corsair—a term for privateer, or conversely pirate—as he plans to attack and raid the Pacha Seyd. His wife is Medora, who perhaps not-so-

---

[31] Radulfus "Ralph" Burun is the ancestor to which the Byrons trace their lineage to and was a contemporary to William the Conqueror.

coincidentally shares a name with Augusta Leigh's daughter, who later claimed that Byron was her father. Medora pleads with him not to pursue his plans, but he sails around the Aegean Sea in search of Seyd despite her pleas. His attack proceeds successfully until the cries of Seyd's harem break the gentlemanly Conrad's focus and he attempts to free them. In the final Canto, Gulnare—one of the freed women of Seyd's harem—endeavours to save Conrad, kills Seyd when Conrad refuses to, and returns home with him, where it is tragically discovered that Medora has died from her despair over her husband's fate (*The Corsair*, III.1792). This tragedy—Medora's death—that befalls Conrad is a common thread throughout each Byronic hero's tale: the loss, often fatal and shrouded in mystery, of a loved one.

The Byronic hero is an amalgamation of a reworked hero of romance mixed with a Gothic villain: chivalrous and honourable, but also corrupted by melancholy and scorn. Though some Byronic heroes, like the eponymous hero of *Lara* and the fratricidal *Cain*, are more violent than others, there is always a crime—assumed or blatantly displayed—that comes with the territory of Byronic heroism. In Byron's work, "every poetic character is to an extent a projection of his author's personality, if for no other reason than that the author must have felt moods and attitudes analogous to those of his heroes in order to understand and express them" (Thorslev 11). As Jerome McGann, one of the foremost Byron scholars, aptly states "Even when we seek the man Byron in the driest historical records, we find a mythological transformation often takes place. The mortal figure constantly tends to assume legendary form even when we know our facts are right" (*Fiery Dust* 27). Byron scholars and critics alike remark that "it must be one of the greatest ironies of literary studies that the poet most renowned for his 'self-conscious' biographical impulses and 'egotism,' whom critics from Northrop Frye to William Hazlitt have accused of '[making] man after his own image,' has nonetheless inspired a deep

sense of mystery about the 'truth' of his character, his poetic process and his art" (McDayter 306-07). Byron is set apart from the typical Romantic model of idealized individuality through his duplicitous nature; rather than being one, solitary individual—which may align him closer to Harold or Manfred—Byron is a Romantic individual fractured into multiples, impossible to definitively pin down.

We see Byronic heroes stretch away from Byron's hands and secure themselves into the present, littering popular culture in the form of brooding anti-heroes and love interests. The legacy of the Byronic hero is what cements Byron's place in history—more than all the scandalous rumours of his life combined—and remains immortal. Byron created an archetype that was inherently fascinating and has been emulated in popular media since its inception. In heroes ranging from the brooding Heathcliff of *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Bram Stoker's eponymous *Dracula* (1897), and—over two-hundred years later—Edward Cullen of the popular young-adult fantasy series *Twilight* (2005-8), the lineage of the Byronic hero has made a lasting impression compelled by "their varying degrees of separation from Byron and the characters he created" (Eckert 300). Eckert traces the Byronic lineage of Edward Cullen from Heathcliff, comparing them alongside Tony Stark of Marvel's Comic Universe and Al Swearengen of the television series *Deadwood* (2004-6; 2019) to assert that "their character trajectories ultimately reveal a social conscience that motivates them to help and lead others . . . The variety of characters indebted to Byron signals his wide-ranging influence beyond the texts that he wrote and their continued circulation in print" (300). Byron's fractured selves—as mentioned previously—make the wide-ranging capabilities of the Byronic legacy possible. Not every Byronic hero fits the same set of characteristics; some are as sensitive as Harold or as cruel as Lara, others are as tortured as Manfred or as "monstrous"—due to physical characteristics or

fantastical monstrous rendering—as Arnold of *The Deformed Transformed* (1824). What makes Byron's legacy so lasting is entangled with his fractured selves; what makes his heroes so beloved in popular culture is the empathy their tortured heroism evokes. The lasting power of the Byronic hero has become so commonplace in popular culture from the Victorian era to the present that it is impossible to dismiss his cultural legacy.

## Fractured Selves and Heroes of Distress

Byron's heroes remain famous primarily for their mutable nature, often tumbling from one emotional extreme to another, usually rage to melancholy. As the blueprint for his protagonists, Byron infuses each of his brooding anti-heroes with the same facets of himself that could otherwise be labelled symptoms of his bipolar disorder. These same symptoms must be weighed against the poet's theatrical self-fashioning as well, as it would be careless to dismiss the careful way that Byron constructed—perhaps even performed—his public persona. In considering the fractured selves of Byron, Richard C. Sha remarks that "thinking about human beings as subjects of multiple, quantifiable, and conflicting forces like emotions helped [Byron] to understand why human history so often repeated itself . . . The motion behind emotion further enabled him to see human beings as victims of circumstance" (25). The strength of these emotions—which render themselves both melancholic and manic—has been the driving force of Byron's poetic fame. What we consider Byronic has often been traduced in criticism as vain cynicism and a self-dramatizing craving for approval, and as a result "these epithets suggest an exaggerated or even insincere quality, and in doing so tend to minimize the degree of genuine suffering that Byron experienced; such a characterization also overlooks the extraordinary intellectual and emotional discipline he exerted over a kind of pain that brings most who

experience it to their knees" (Jamison 165). Though Byron has come to be known for his constant shifts in temperament, the extent to which we see these swings from mania to melancholy must be assumed to be diluted from how the poet felt them.

As this project has discussed, Byron's obsession with his reputation created a veneer around the poet to protect himself from any criticism wounding him too deeply—but there are startling moments of tenderness and clarity in which we can see the full parameters of how he may have suffered with his mental health. In an 1813 letter to his future wife Annabella Milbanke, Byron writes about his struggles with his moods with stark honesty: "You don't like my *'restless'* doctrines—I should be very sorry if you did—but I can't stagnate nevertheless—if I must sail let it be on the ocean no matter how stormy—anything but a dull cruise on a level lake without ever losing sight of the same insipid shores by which it is surrounded" (Byron qtd in Jamison 151). When Byron left England after the dissolution of his unhappy marriage to Annabella years later, these words followed him; he kept his word lived a life free of peaceful stagnation, and he would not have a chance to do so for the rest of his short life. I wish to pay particular attention to this confession by Byron, as it contains the schema of the bipolar Byronic hero in its defiance of stagnation.

The Byronic hero as a bipolar figure is a concept most criticism has tended to skirt around. Whitehead notes of this absence: "In most other respects, 'Byronic' poetry is vague in terms of its endorsement of the image of the Romantic mad poet, and discussion of the mad, bad, and dangerous to know Byron has often remained biographical in its readings or has conflated biography with his characters and personae" (191). This project has thus far conceived of the "mad poet myth" as it pertains to Byron as both *mad* and *made*, but I wish to look further into the clues Byron provides us with in his work. Byron modulated and tempered his emotions through

his poetry, which allowed him an experimental sanctuary to mediate his inner thoughts without blatantly betraying his vulnerability. In lieu of Byron's missing memoirs, his poetry provides the most candid look into the poet's emotional struggles. Take this selection from *Lara*, which was published in 1814 shortly after *The Corsair* as an intended continuation of the autobiographical aura of Conrad's tale:

> There was in him a vital scorn of all –
> As if the worst had fall'n which could befall,
> He stood a stranger in this breathing world,
> An erring spirit from another hurled;
> A thing of dark imaginings, that shaped
> By choice the perils he by chance escaped;
> But 'scaped in vain, for in their memory yet
> His mind would half exult and half regret;
> (*Lara* 1.18.313-320)

This "vital scorn"—the same refusal to stagnate seen in Byron's letter to his future wife—is an iconic facet of the Byronic hero that Byron plucked from his own life. The strange otherworld he finds himself a stranger in accounts for the psychological realm within Byron's poetry, a place in which the hero can interact with his "dark imaginings" and reckon with his inner turmoil. When we consider the fact that Byron deliberately intended to market *The Corsair* and its companion *Lara* as autobiographical musings, we can see the inklings of Byron's bipolar persona present in one of his earliest Byronic heroes.

If we can accept *The Corsair* and *Lara* as deliberate tales of poetic autobiography—as Byron insinuated during their publication—then it is not far off to consider them as presentations of the poet's own disordered moods. As a figure who was candid about his suffering, it would be remiss to assume the poet would draw inspiration solely from his public life when his inner life had such a wealth of emotional material to draw upon. Byron infused his heroes with what was missing in the poetry of his juvenile collection *Hours of Idleness* (1807): a candid, intimate look

into his inner thoughts and the self-mythologization of his image and history. There is an extent to which Byron must have conceived of himself as, in some way, cursed by the deep depression that ebbed throughout his life. In a conversation with Lady Blessington, a close friend and confidante, he writes "It is ridiculous to say that we do not inherit our passions, as well as . . . any other disorder" (Byron qtd in Jamison 155).[32] Byron likely had his parents in mind when writing this: his mother had a fluctuating temper and symptoms of the same bipolar disorder that Byron inherited and he once described his father as "born for his own ruin" (Byron qtd in Marchand 32).[33] It could have also been his physical disability—a club foot that "caused him so much bodily suffering and mental agony, and that probably did more to shape his character than it will ever be possible to calculate" (Marchand 25)—that tempered his depressive periods. In *Manfred*, we see his reflections on pre-ordained ruin, and in *The Deformed Transformed* how the pain and insecurity around his disability permeated his life. It is not far off, then, to parse the poet's anguish from the earlier passage from *Lara*—and countless others verbalized by his heroes throughout his poetry—with the the stormy inheritance he mentioned to Lady Blessington in mind.

Deep melancholy interspersed Byron's compositions, but brilliant flashes of manic grandeur characterize the Byronic hero as well. In many of his heroes, Byron stresses some sort

---

[32] Another interesting passage from Lady Blessington's *Conversations with Lord Byron* explains what the poet believes to be his 'predisposition to grief': "There are some natures that have a predisposition to grief, as others have to disease; and such was my case. The causes that have made me wretched would probably not have discomposed, or, at least, more than discomposed, another. We are all differently organized; and that I feel acutely is no more my fault (though it is my misfortune) than that another feels not, is his. We did not make ourselves; and if the elements of unhappiness abound more in the nature of one man than another, he is but the more entitled to our pity and forbearance. Mine is a nature . . . that might have been softened and ameliorated by prosperity, but that has been hardened and soured by adversity" (Blessington 283).

[33] Throughout his letters, Byron makes constant references to his mother's unpredictable moods during his Harrow years, calling her temper "variable, and when inflamed, so furious that I dread our meeting" (Byron qtd in Jamison 160). In one letter, the poet refers to his mother as "certainly mad . . . her conduct is a . . . compound of derangement and Folly" (160).

of superiority—either by birthright or by morality—as a defining feature in his poetic stand-ins. In *Manfred*, the protagonist is described as "noble" by both himself and the Abbot in relation to both his aristocratic rank and own personal scruples. In one mention by the Abbot, he makes a poignant remark regarding Manfred's nobility not as praise, but as disillusionment: "This *should have been* a noble creature: he / Hath all the energy which would have made / A goodly frame of glorious elements, / *Had they been wisely mingled*" (3.1.160-163, emphasis own). Byron had reason to believe in this grandiose self-image—he was, after all, born into aristocracy—but self-mythologized himself in a way that erred towards delusion. What Manfred—and by extension Byron—*should have been* is incompatible with what he is, and the expectation of both the poet and his hero to become honourable, restrained men of rank is an ill-advised request. Coupled with stubborn irritability and abounding recklessness, this tortured nobility became one of the pillars of the Byronic hero; the other, as discussed, was built upon his mournful sense of shame and melancholy. It is difficult to divorce the parts of Byron that are bipolar from the parts of his heroes that are Byronic; one establishes the other, and without the poet's mental struggles his heroes are incomplete. Without this emotional torture, *Manfred* would not be nearly as starkly influential as it has been to build the Byron mythos.

Byron must have been aware of how infusing his heroes with elements of his emotional struggles would have impacted the way his audience perceived him, and how such emotional honesty would weigh on his legacy. He stood apart from previous melancholy figures in part because of the charming allure of his personality alongside his social rank. Unlike previous mad poets, Byron's place in London's high society provided him with an audience to beguile and deprived him of any real solitude. Occasional critics are quick to dismiss the Byronic hero as facetious and performative, but such shallow interpretations hold little importance in the greater

critical imagination. Byron remains one of the most marketable "mad poets," owing largely to the legacy of his timeless heroes. The success of bleeding his emotions onto the page makes Byron one of the foremost figures of the Romantic movement, but it is one he did not expect. Though Byron always conceived of himself as destined for greatness, "he imagined a small audience of friends who would mediate between him and the unpredictable reaction of a larger and more public audience. The loss of that sense of a mediating audience deprived Byron of the protective intimacy of a coterie and precipitated him into the constructed intimacy of celebrity" (Mole 47). Laying his greatest agonies out in his compositions may have catapulted Byron into success, but the repercussions of his celebrity weighed heavy on his psyche. Byron invited intimacy into his poetry but concealed it behind the masks of his long-suffering heroes. His celebrity status was inherently linked with his emotional turmoil—though he presented a flippant façade to the world, he was undoubtedly sensitive to how others perceived him.[34] We often conceive of Byron as "the most personal of poets, recklessly candid, self-revealing to a fault" (McGann 141), but as evidenced by his deliberate attempts to construct his image through his letters and conversations, there is still a thin membrane between fact and fiction holding Byron's deepest interiority at bay. We may never know the true depth of his feelings, or how erratic—naturally or consciously—they were, but carefully contextualizing biographical clues reveals to us that Byron and his heroes suffered from an affliction much more palpable than just vain posturing.

The legacy of Byron's brooding heroes traverses literary genres and eras not because of simple name recognition but because of their mysterious sincerity—they speak to the

[34] This sensitivity is perhaps best represented in his satires, particularly *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), in which a twenty-one-year-old Byron rebuked critics that disparaged his first volume of poetry, *Hours of Idleness* (1807). Though *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* shows Byron's skill with satire, it betrays his sensitive temperament.

vulnerability and propensity for despair that many of Byron's readers feel. Jamison describes Byron as "a study in contrasts" who, with "his divided and mercurial temperament, resembled less a cohesive personality than a field of tectonic plates clashing and grating against one another" (150). The same "chaos of the mind" that Byron speaks of in *The Corsair* (2.933) pervades nearly all of his poetry. Byron and his heroes are often misunderstood as being superficial and over-wrought, but—as seen in my analysis of the history of the poet's famously bipolar heroes and their infernal forefathers—there is a resounding emotional intimacy that lurks beyond the surface of his poetry. Treatment for bipolar disorder—or even a name for bipolar disorder—did not exist in Byron's time. The Romantics could only conceive of what was then glorified as "poetic madness," a catch-all term bestowed on any form of creative achievement formed by those with erratic, melancholic temperaments. From a modern standpoint, it is easy to see how the poet's genetic history and biographical accounts have made way to the post-humous diagnosis of bipolar disorder made by scholars like Jamison. What endears us to Byron's heroes—most notably the ones that exist his dramas—is their raw interiority and overwhelming emotional pain. Byron wrote with an intensity that burned him, and it scalded his name into history.

# CHAPTER THREE:

## "Man of strange words, and some half-maddening sin": *Manfred*'s Dark Mind

Man of strange words, and some half-maddening sin,
Which makes thee people vacancy, whate'er
Thy dread and sufferance be, there's comfort yet
(*Manfred* 2.1.31-33)

Most scholarship of Byron's most popular dramatic poem, *Manfred,* tends to revolve around the purported incest confession that the hero reveals to the spirits, but Byron did not attempt to have *Manfred* stand in as an incest confession. He instead utilized the metaphysical nature of the drama to allegorize his feelings on his emotional health and reputation. Always cognizant of the fact that readers would associate their own ideas of his personal life with his compositions, particularly those written after he left England in disgrace, Byron interspersed dramatized snippets of his personal life into *Manfred*, masking his vulnerability under his audience's suppositions. To John Murray, Byron offered an obscure description of the drama that may better inform our own readings of *Manfred* as a fully rounded psychological allegory:[35]

> [*Manfred* is a] kind of poem in dialogue...but of a very wild—metaphysical—and inexplicable kind . . . Almost all the persons—but two or three—are Spirits...the hero [is] a kind of magician who is tormented by a species of remorse—the cause of which is left half unexplained—he wanders about invoking these spirits—which appear to him—& are of no use—he at last goes to the very abode of the Evil principle in propria persona—to

[35] The word "allegory" can be traced to two different origins: the Anglo-Norman/Middle French *allegorie* ("narrative which has a hidden or ulterior meaning") and Latin *allēgoria* ("figurative or metaphorical language"), a Latinization of the Greek *ἀλληγορος*, which derives from *ἀλλο* (allo-), meaning "other, different" and *ηγορος* (agora), meaning "speaking in assembly" ("allegory"). Manfred is harangued by an assembly of spirits throughout the narrative, all of whom speak in lofty, metaphorical language. Act 2, scene 4 displays a particularly potent example of allegory in the Hall of Arimanes.

> evocate a ghost—which appears—& gives him an ambiguous & disagreeable answer. (Byron qtd in Macdonald 25)

Far from being unambiguously autobiographical, Byron deliberately used the rumours that swirled his personal life to cloud the deeper meanings in his drama. Besides Manfred's servants, the Abbot, and the Chamois hunter, every other character is a thinly veiled portrait of Byron, creating a chorus of asynchronous voices that piece together and construct the poet as a whole. Manfred is the most obvious of these stand-ins, but the spirits—aptly identified as "the genius of this mortal" (3.4.81)—and Manfred's alleged Augusta-figure Astarte also represent parts of the poet.

This study will now depart from viewing *Manfred* as a work of autobiography and venture into a close reading of key scenes in the each of the drama's three acts in order to examine the thread of psychological allegory within the drama. Through this textual analysis, my research demonstrates how the closet drama is the perfect vessel for the poet to express his emotional trauma due to the inherent intimacy of *Manfred*'s mental theatre. I contextualize Byron's "neurotic fear of competition" and the "hidden urge to reach the stage" he veiled behind magnanimous personality as typical of the "Byronic paradox" put forward by Rolf P. Lessnich (224). Lessenich writes that, rather than just a public confession of scandal, *Manfred* is also "about the modern intellectual's loss of religious humility and orientation. If the strong passions of humankind are uncontrollable . . . then punishment is unjust: a creator would simply be punishing humanity for the unavoidable sins he had imposed on them" (225). In this chapter, building on the foundation Lessenich has set and expanding away from the themes of religion, I explore the psychological dimensions of Byron's closet drama. In dialogue with what Andrew Elfenbein and Julian North have identified as Byron's "simulacrum of intimacy" (Elfenbein qtd

in North 282), I will critique the lack of attention paid to the psyche of the poet by his critics—both Byron's contemporary audience and current scholars—and the dangers of surface-level readings of *Manfred*.

My textual analysis of key moments in *Manfred* is split into three sections in accordance with the three acts of the play. In the first, I identify the allegorical voices of the spirits and the unnamed "incantation"—previously explored in this project as a vessel of Satanic and Mephistophelean influence in *Manfred*—as Byron's own inner voices speaking in a cacophony indicative of the paranoia and jumbled thinking prevalent in bipolar mania. In the second section, I look to the scenes with the witch of the Alps and the spectre of Astarte in the hall of Arimanes as evidence of the poet's rumination on suicide, which saturated his family history and weighed heavily on Byron's own mind and reputation. Finally, I analyze the setting itself of Manfred's closing scene in his "tower" primarily for what it can tell us about Byron's own mind as a metaphorical tower or fortress and the mental stage of the drama. Byron is bipolar figure who managed to hide much of the inner turmoil tormenting him throughout his lifetime under the dazzling guise of his salacious public persona and used his disgraced image to his advantage. In absence of what our current society may recognize as therapy or bipolar treatment plans, as well as the lack of trained psychiatric professionals, the poet found his own means of nullifying his shifts in moods and stability. Byron had his poetry to alleviate the symptoms of what he could accurately surmise was a hereditary condition, but still lacked a name for his illness to validate the emotions he felt; in his dramas, he found a way to stage his emotional history under the façade of his personal dishonor.

A Cacophony of Spirits and Cryptic Incantation

> Mysterious Agency!
> Ye Spirits of the unbounded Universe!
> Whom I have sought in darkness and in light,
> Ye! who do compass earth about – and dwell
> In subtler essence – Ye to whom the tops
> Of mountains inaccessible are haunts,
> And Earth's and Ocean's caves familiar things!
> I call upon ye by the written charm
> Which gives me power upon you – Rise! – Appear!
>
> (*Manfred* 1.1.28-36)

*Manfred's* first encounter with the spirits opens with the metaphysical promise Byron made to Murray. Although *Manfred* has always been rightfully aligned with the Gothic—in part as a result of the Gothic gallery in which the drama famously opens—Byron's dramatic poem reaches past the bounds of the Gothic into a realm between two worlds: one still indebted to the sublimity of the Gothic and more aligned with metaphysics.[36] Unlike most Gothic texts, *Manfred* does not hinge upon the usual tropes of Catholic depravity, persecuted young women, or lecherous patriarchs, nor does it make any significant effort in evoking the themes terror of horror[37] that are integral to Gothic texts. Byron's drama is more cerebral than the setting of its opening scene suggests, which insinuates that the Gothic could be a red herring. In this first scene, Manfred begins his dialogue with the spirits with a demand: "Answer, or I will teach you what I am" (1.1.158). We are offered no explanation as to how the hero has managed to obtain

[36] Metaphysics is defined as "The branch of philosophy that deals with the first principles of things or reality, including questions about being, substance, time and space, causation, change, and identity (which are presupposed in the special sciences but do not belong to any one of them); theoretical philosophy as the ultimate science of being and knowing" ("metaphysics"). Byron's interest in the sciences was largely inconsequential, but—as discussed—he expressly defined *Manfred* as metaphysical.

[37] Ann Radcliffe, regarded as one of the greatest Gothic writers, is cited as being the first to note the difference between terror and horror as literary mechanisms: "Terror and Horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes and nearly annihilates them" (Radcliffe 149).

the powers necessary to command the spirits, but—with the Gothic and the metaphysical in mind—the suggestion that Manfred can summon the spirits with no material components, nor any explanation into the source of his power imbues the hero with the sort of otherworldly and inhuman nature that the poet seeks to cloak his poetic reputation in. Manfred addresses the seven spirits, calling upon them from their respective elemental planes of origin and summons them with mysterious mastery. When the spirits appear reluctant and suspicious of what the mortal hero has to say, he makes his demands quite clear: he wants to forget. What exactly he wants to forget is unclear, but later in the text it is thought to be relevant to the demise of Astarte, a purported stand in for the poet's own half-sister Augusta Leigh. Byron's critics readily conflate Augusta with Astarte, most notably his own grandson Ralph King-Milbanke, 2nd Earl of Lovelace. In *Astarte: A Fragment of Truth concerning George Gordon Byron, first Lord Byron* (1921), Lovelace makes the distinction clear that he believes Astarte to be a veiled Augusta and, by extension, a confession of his grandfather's incest, claiming that Lady Byron found "crushing evidence that the phantom of Astarte in 'Manfred,' . . . had been no unreal apparition, but belonged to a living creature, who had confessed everything" (Lovelace 137). This confession was allegedly received by Dr. Lushington, Annabella's lawyer at the time of the Byrons' divorce (Lovelace 159), and as such cannot be validated as indisputable truth.

Before continuing any further with our analysis, it is necessary to categorize the roles of the seven spirits that Manfred summons. The first spirit hails from the heavens, a "mansion in the cloud, / Which the breath of twilight builds, / And the summer's sun-set gilds" (*Manfred* 1.1.51-3), the second from Mont Blanc itself, "the monarch of mountains" (1.1.60); the third through fifth represent the elements—"the blue depth of the waters" (1.1.76), "the slumbering earthquake" (1.1.88), and "the Rider of the wind" (1.1.100) respectively—while the sixth

represents darkness: “my dwelling is the shadow of the night, / Why doth thy magic torture me with light?” (1.1.108-9). Peculiarly, the seventh spirit does not represent an element, light, or dark, but rather proclaims to Manfred: “The star which rules thy destiny, / Was ruled, ere earth began, by me” (*Manfred* 1.1.110-11). This seventh spirit will be of particular interest to this project, as it is the first metaphysical mirror of the poet himself seen in the drama outside the hero and identifies itself as the “most powerful of ye” (*Manfred* 1.1.186). Manfred’s fateful spectre shocks him by appearing in the form of a ‘beautiful female figure’ (*Manfred* 1.1.189) after the hero quarrels with the spirits, causing Manfred to collapse. Expressing his vitriol for the spirits once they decide they will not give him the forgetful oblivion—correctly identified as death (1.1.163), which he seeks without having to commit suicide himself—he refuses to tell them what—and *who*—it is he actually seeks to find. The seventh spirit does not accept Manfred’s grandiose deflection; it knows precisely what Manfred has summoned the spirits to seek—and to escape—and refuses to play the mortal’s games. The beautiful female figure represents Astarte, who Manfred will again attempt to channel in the second act, but her conjuration in this scene catches him off guard, causing him to exclaim “Oh God! if it be thus – and thou / Art not a madness and a mockery – / I yet might be most happy – I will clasp thee, / And we again will be” (*Manfred* 1.1.189-192). When the illusory woman dissipates, he forlornly exclaims “My heart is crushed!” before falling senseless (*Manfred* 1.1.192). The spirits dissipate as well, leaving Manfred’s unconscious body alone in the gallery and vulnerable.

Immediately following Manfred’s collapse, the mysterious incantation closes the first scene. While we can readily surmise the voice might be the same seventh spirit, or as suggested earlier, something much darker and infernal, the voice could very well be *no one* at all. With no clear source given, we can perhaps assume that the poet is speaking plainly and openly to

himself through this unknown moderator. What is striking about the incantation in the final scene in Act One is that it was never expressly written for *Manfred*, but instead predates it. Originally published alongside *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1816), the exact date of its composition is unknown (McVeigh, "Manfred's Curse" 602), and the meaning remains unclear as well.[38] Marchand theorizes that, in its original publication, the invocation was meant to be a damning condemnation against Lady Byron and her friends (Marchand qtd in McVeigh, "Manfred's Curse" 602). When contextualized alongside the rest of the metaphysical musings of the drama, however, it may be more worthwhile to consider the incantation to be part of Byron's own inner monologue, or a musing on his mental state that pre-dates *Manfred* and remained so pertinent that it later found its way into the poet's turbulent drama. In this stark final scene, the drama "first [turns] from external to internal nature," pushing us into a new territory that is interspersed with "psychological as well as supernatural phenomena" (Twitchell 608). Emerging from the silence left by the hero's collapse, the nameless speaker of the incantation bestows a 'curse' unto Manfred:

> Though thy slumber may be deep,
> Yet thy spirit shall not sleep;
> There are shades which will not vanish,
> There are thoughts thou canst not banish;
> By a power to thee unknown,
> Thou canst never be alone;
> Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
> Thou art gather'd in a cloud;
> And for ever shalt thou dwell
> In the spirit of this spell.
> (*Manfred* 1.1.203-212)

[38] Byron offered a strange explanation of this fragment upon its publication, stating: "The Following Poem was a Chorus in an unpublished Witch Drama, which was begun some years ago" (Byron qtd in McVeigh, *"Manfred's Curse*" 602n). The "witch drama" remains unknown, and may have never existed to begin with.

"My slumbers—if I slumber—are not sleep" (*Manfred* 1.1.3) is echoed in "Though thy slumber may be deep,/ Yet thy spirit shall not sleep; (1.1.203-4). Later, in the second scene, Manfred ponders committing suicide by jumping off the Jungfrau mountain: "My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed/ To rest for ever" (*Manfred* 1.2.18-9). The craving for sleep—unattainable for Manfred because of his inner turmoil—turns into a desire for death throughout the drama. When Manfred is unconscious, it is the only time we see the hero resting. Rest—or the lack thereof—fills *Manfred* with an anxious unease from the moment the hero wakes, filling the reader with the exact kind of inner dread that the hero himself is wracked by; we know nothing positive will happen for the hero and that his redemption will never truly be achieved. Manfred's suicidal tendencies make him the most starkly depressive of the Byronic heroes, and his restless spirit(s) hounds him until death. Byron, a man who "often feared that he was going mad," may have seen "his involvement with the Greek independence cause as a probable road to death, and it is likely that had he not died in Greece he would have killed himself in another way" (Jamison 153). Byron wrote his struggles into *Manfred* and allegorized them into a dazzling supernatural spectacle. The incantation as an omen for worse things to come incentivizes the psychological turmoil that flows throughout the rest of *Manfred* as the anxious pace of the drama quickens and stirs the reader and our hero into a frenzy.

Manfred's inevitable toil is predicated by the voice, ready to haunt the rest of the play, but the hero remains unconscious and unable to hear such damning words. We know these words will spell out Manfred's fate and are echoed by the hero throughout the play, but we wonder how he knows about this curse and how could it permeate his mind. The incantation's mysterious speaker operates as one of the main proxies of the psychological allegory within *Manfred*. William Melaney suggests that "Byronic allegory" hinges on "inherent complexity and ties to

inexpressible concerns," explaining that "Byron employs allegory to disrupt mediation in calling attention to ethical dilemmas, instead of employing it as the ideal vehicle of verbal completeness" (471). Through *Manfred*, Byron individualizes allegory—a form that was often religious in usage—in a similar way to how he modulates epic in *Don Juan* (1819-24). In his revision of allegory, he substitutes religious themes for psychological candour, allowing him to express his innermost feelings from an alternative perspective. Byron's willingness to alter pre-existing traditions such as the epic and allegory exposes his protean intentions. Identifying the incantation is a complex and elusive process that is typical to Byronic poetry: it is elusive, capricious, ready to make grand exclamations, and its functions primarily to disrupt. The incantation scene is abrupt and cryptic; it holds the rest of the play and all its characters in captivity, punctuating the flow of *Manfred* with esoteric secrecy before fading out completely and returning to the play as it descends further into Manfred's madness. Byron's incantation allegorizes the "curse" he felt was upon him in his real life—that same "predisposition to grief" and "nature . . . that might have been softened and ameliorated by prosperity, but that has been hardened and soured by adversity" (Blessington 283) that always haunted his mind. The incantation is the first example of the poet's allegorized emotional struggle within the play and remains the most jarring due to its anonymous narrator.

The incantation is a damning condemnation of Manfred that requires further inspection. The voice lists Manfred's various misdeeds and transgressions, which are echoed in the hero's mind:

> By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
> By thy unfathom'd gulfs of guile,
> By that most seeming virtuous eye,
> By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;
> By the perfection of thine art
> Which pass'd for human thine own heart;

> By thy delight in others' pain,
> And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
> I call upon thee! and compel
> Thyself to be thy proper Hell!
> (*Manfred* 1.1.243-52)

There is no other moment in the drama where Manfred described as serpentine, hypocritical, or murderously in line with Cain. Although Manfred insists Astarte's demise is his fault, he deliberately clarifies that it was "Not with my hand, but heart" (*Manfred* 2.2.118). The limbo that the incantation itself was written in—not for *Manfred*, nor for any identifiable major work—estranges it from the play and prompts us to set these ten lines away from the rest of the drama. In this passage, we see accusations leveled not at Manfred, but at Byron himself; the voice that speaks these accusations is also the poet. Many of these claims are reminiscent of the spurious rumors that spiraled Byron, such as the rumours of purported murder spread by Goethe in his review of *Manfred* and those spread by the poet himself. It is not Manfred that the incantation is evoking at all, but Byron reckoning with the rumors that colour the spectacle of his life and calling them into existence in order to achieve catharsis. The mystifying voice of the incantation is unveiled when it proclaims "I call upon thee! And compel/ Thyself to be thy proper Hell!" (*Manfred* 1.1.251-52), mirroring Milton's Satan before revealing itself to be the poet all along through the first-person perspective and imprisoning himself in the hellish fortress of his own mind. The drama begins with a cacophony of spirits, but closes out its first scene with the lone, furtive voice of the poet whispering a condemnation for his avatar, allowing the drama to take "the first turn from external to internal nature" (Twitchell 608).

Spiritual Agitation

In Act One, Scene Two Manfred finds himself faced with another spectre: a "daughter of air" (2.2.126), known in the drama as the Witch of the Alps. Manfred conjures her with a handful of water, entreating her to help him:

> I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
> Of Earth, whom the abstruser powers permit
> At times to commune with them—if that he
> Avail him of his spells—to call thee thus,
> And gaze on thee a moment.
> (*Manfred* 2.2.28-32)

The Witch appears—at the same mercy of Manfred's strange sorcery that the other spirits in the drama experience—and recognizes him, identifying him as "a man of many thoughts,/ And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,/ Fatal and fated in thy sufferings" (*Manfred* 2.2.34-6). What follows is perhaps the most grandiose scene in the drama. Manfred's vocabulary is filled with lofty language and heroic images as he describes his troubled life: "From my youth upwards/ My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,/ Nor look'd upon the earth with human eyes" (*Manfred* 2.2.50-2). He sets himself apart from his mortal peers, and perhaps given his mystical powers of conjuration, this grandiose distinction is necessitated. Manfred portrays himself as an outsider—or rather, a "stranger" (*Manfred* 2.2.56)—who has struggled all his life to relate to his fellow men:

> 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,
> Nor midst the creatures of clay that girded me
> (*Manfred* 2.2.53-8)

Above all other humans, he values only his departed Astarte—whom I consider in this project to be an aspect of Byron's interiority rather than an Augusta replica. Manfred has otherwise

wandered his life alone, isolated with his riotous mind and uneasy guilt. This scene is particularly confessional, and rife with the autobiographical interpretations that dominate most Byron scholarship,[39] but can be of more use to us as a psychological confession rather than a scandal confession.

Manfred continues his soliloquy of internal torment for much of the scene, while the Witch plays mediator and continually attempts to get Manfred to elucidate further on what precisely and explicitly he wants from their encounter. He continues his soliloquy nonetheless, and Byron's language in one particular passage unveils a pertinent look at his psyche:

> My solitude is solitude no more,
> But peopled with the Furies;—I have gnash'd
> My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
> Then cursed myself till sunset;—*I have pray'd*
> *For madness as a blessing—'tis denied me*.
> I have affronted death, but in the war
> Of elements the waters shrunk from me,
> And fatal things pass'd harmless—the cold hand
> Of an all—pitiless demon held me back,
> Back by a single hair, which would not break.
>
> (*Manfred* 2.2.130-39, emphasis own.)

Madness is mentioned three times in the drama, in three separate contexts,[40] but it is these highlighted lines that betray the overarching desire of the poet hidden inside *Manfred*: clarity as a balm for his suffering and an explicit identification of the mental ailment that had plagued him his entire life. The concept of blessed madness harkens back to the divine, poetic madness that prompted this study—the type induced by the Muses of antiquity—and is the thing Byron has

---

[39] Benita Eisler reads *Manfred* as an autobiographical text in *Byron: Child of Passion, Fool of Fame* (1999), which Rawes cautions against. In his discussion of Eisler's book, he states that "she is clearly falling in with Byron's own invitation to read his fiction as self-expression and, seemingly, allowing him to set the terms of her reading" (204).

[40] Manfred, upon seeing the false apparition of Astarte in the first scene of the play exclaims: "if it be thus,/ and thou Art not a madness and a mockery,/ I yet might be most happy" (1.1.189-191) before the apparition disappears and the hero falls senseless; Nemesis, a member of Arimanes' court and herself the Greek goddess of retribution, parlays in Act II, Scene III that part of her punishments for mortal failings is "Goading the wise to madness; from the dull/ Shaping out oracles to rule the world" (2.3.66-7).

always sought. It is no secret that Byron believed himself to be—in some way or another—better than or apart from others; he, like his hero(es), lived with a "spirit [that] walk'd not with the souls of men" (*Manfred* 2.2.51). In *Manfred*, Byron seeks to obtain something higher than clinical madness, looking instead to achieve an equivalent to the ancient Greek *manike* and Renaissance *pazzia* discussed in the first chapter of this project. Byron thought of poetry as "the lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents an earth-quake" (Byron qtd in Jamison 122)—inspiring and destructive in equal measure—but also believed it to be imbued with some sort of healing capability. In a letter to Annabella in 1813, he muses that: "I cannot help thinking rhyme is so far useful in anticipating & preventing the disorder" (122). *Manfred* is indicative of this same anticipation of madness and the balm Byron used to keep his psychological demons at bay; the blessed madness Manfred seeks is the heart of the entire play—more so than the hero's belaboured quest for Astarte—but even then, it remains out of his reach. Manfred, unable to obtain even blissful madness, becomes resolute with his fate and instead rigidly consigns himself to suffer: "I dwell in my despair—/ And live—and live for ever" (*Manfred* 2.2.149-50).

By the end of the scene, the Witch gives Manfred neither the blessed madness he seeks nor a moment of time with his beloved Astarte, disappearing just as abruptly as she appears and leaving the hero alone. Manfred remarks upon his fate, but his words speak for all mortals, which is peculiar in a play so enrapt in its hero's solitude and status as a forlorn stranger:

> We are all the fools of time and terror: Days
> Steal on us and steal from us; yet we live,
> Loathing our life, and dreading still to die.
> In all the days of this detested yoke—
> This heaving burthen, this accused breath—
> This vital weight upon the struggling heart,
> Which sinks with sorrow, or beats quick with pain,
> Or joy that ends in agony or faintness—
>
> (*Manfred* 2.2.164-171)

The poet's use of "we" reintroduces symphony to the narrative, which had been severed by the exit of the seven spirits in the first scene. This time, the camaraderie is not among spirits, but among mortals; Byron—and his hero—finally lowers himself down to the ranks of his readership. We can read this passage as both a heartfelt show of compassion on Byron's part and as a self-multiplication in which the "we," rather than the "I" comes to represent the two poles of Byron. The Romantics were known for being individualistic and proud of their anguished emotions, but Byron would not suffer quietly. During the writing of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in Switzerland—the same time in which he was beginning the composition of *Manfred*— Byron wrote to Moore: "I was half mad during the time of its composition, between metaphysics, mountains, lakes, love inextinguishable, thoughts unutterable, and the nightmare of my own delinquencies" (Byron qtd in McVeigh, "Manfred's Curse" 607). Byron configured Romantic solitude in a way that departed from idyllic Wordsworthian solitude, and instead turned his reflection inward; rather than become the solitary figure within nature, he becomes a solitary figure against nature with his sorcerous Manfred. Marchand notes that, in *Manfred*, "All the unhappiness, the sense of guilt, the frustrations, and the dismal broodings which had grown out of his reflection during the summer on his relations with Augusta, his marriage, and the separation, found relief in a poetic drama that had been conceived amid the avalanches in the high Alps and now burned for expression" (655). Alone in the Alpine valley, Manfred—though endearing himself momentarily to human suffering as a whole—resolves to seek closure with the spectre of Astarte. Before his exit, he plans to finally grasp the closure he needs, proclaiming "I have one resource/ Still in my science/ I can call the dead,/ And ask them what it is we dread to be" (*Manfred* 2.2.177-9).

Manfred resumes his quest in the hall of Arimanes—identified as the "prince of Earth and Air" (*Manfred* 2.4.1)—where he is met by another throng of spirits, joined now by Nemesis and the three destinies. This is the only scene in the play that takes the hero outside the bounds of earthly reality and places him into an esoteric, wholly metaphysical place filled with fire and demons. Arimanes is Byron's version of the Zoroastrian god of evil Ahriman,[41] but he adds very little to the drama; within the entirety of the play, he only has two lines. Manfred refuses to bow to Arimanes, much to the chagrin of the attending spirits. Faced with the threats leveled at him by the spirits of Arimanes' court, Manfred stands firm in his resolution not to kneel before the king of darkness:

> many a night on the earth,
> On the bare ground, have I bow'd down my face,
> And strew'd my head with ashes; I have known
> The fullness of humiliation, for
> I sunk before my vain despair, and knelt
> To my own desolation.
>
> (*Manfred* 2.4.37-42)

Beholden only to his "own desolation," Manfred earns the bemused respect of the first destiny. The spirit proclaims "This man/ Is of no common order, as his port/ And presence here denote. His sufferings/ Have been of an immortal nature, like/ Our own" (*Manfred* 2.4.52-6), and "No other Spirit in this region hath/ A soul like his—or power upon his soul" (2.4.71-2), placating the spirits and pausing the mortal's persecution. Convinced, the rest of Arimanes' court allows Manfred to make his request. Nemesis asks why Manfred has intruded upon their realm, to

[41] James Twitchell summarizes the role of Zoroastrianism in *Manfred*: "The cosmos of the Zoroastrian religion that Byron knew was one split and united by the constant tensions between Good and Evil. Ormazd, the Lord of Goodness and Light, wages constant war against Ahriman, the Lord of Evil and Darkness. Beneath these great patriarchs extend vast sublunar worlds of daemons, who are good or evil depending on which hierarchy they are in, that of Ormazd or that of Ahriman. This dualism is marked and distinct—man is given the choice of worshiping either the Good or the Evil" (610).

which he answers “Thou canst not reply to me./ Call up the dead—my question is for them” (*Manfred* 2.4.78-9), yearning once more for the “One without a tomb” (2.4.83): Astarte.

Nemesis “uncharnels” (2.4.82) the phantasmal Astarte, raising her from the aether. For a moment, we ponder where this wicked spirit has summoned her from; if she is the one without a tomb, is she dead at all, or does she live in limbo, readily available only as an apparition? Perhaps Astarte never existed at all. I will turn my analysis inward here and consider Astarte not as a phantasmal Augusta, but rather as an idealized, innocent facet of Byron’s psyche that he searched endlessly for in life. According to Dennis, “Astarte's power is rooted in her inaccessibility, in just this tormenting appearance of life, of spectral being, that cannot be possessed;” like an idealized balm for Manfred’s pain, she is “[a]vailable to be seen and longed for, [but] she is never to be obtained and triumphed over. Bid to speak by the greatest powers available, her phantom stays silent in maddening self-sufficiency” (121). When summoned, Astarte remains silent, and her silence maddens Manfred, who becomes increasingly more apprehensive in her presence and unable to move on. Manfred’s emotional development hinges almost wholly on Astarte and the forgiveness he begs her for. The spirits and their taciturn leader watch in thrall of the emotionally intense wordlessness that surrounds Manfred and his ghostly love.

Astarte is summoned by Nemesis and Arimanes, and here the psychological allegory strengthens. Unhinged by her silence, Manfred continues to implore Astarte’s ghost, speaking of all the places he has screamed her name and has been met with the same silence that stifles him now. The hero pleads, filling his words with images of the loneliness has carved out for himself:

> I know not what I ask, nor what I seek;
> *I feel but what thou art—and what I am*;
> And I would hear yet once before I perish
> The voice which was my music—Speak to me!

> For I have call'd on thee in the still night,
> Startled the slumbering birds from the hush'd boughs,
> And woke the mountain wolves, and made the caves
> Acquainted with thy vainly echo'd name
> (*Manfred* 2.4.131-38; emphasis own)

Astarte's silence stems from her incorporeal nature, leaving her ability to grant Manfred's wishes unclear. Stuart Sperry invites us to note the importance of her ephemerality: "it is significant that she is summoned before him specifically by Nemesis—the spirit of retributive justice and revenge. She arises from the dead, moreover, to answer the specific questions he addresses to her which have to do with his own sense of guilt" (196). If Astarte is simply an apparition used against Manfred by the merciless Nemesis, she is less a defined character in Byron's fledgling psychodrama than an aspect of the mental illness that followed him through life. Voiceless and incorporeal, Astarte's role in the drama is not to reflect Augusta but to *deflect* Byron.

The absence of Astarte's voice turns Manfred's fretful soliloquys into an echo chamber rather than a conversation. Despite his protests, Manfred does not seek an answer from Astarte; he knows he cannot answer him when she is nothing but an aspect of *himself* that he has lost. We see this readily in the ways Manfred has described her throughout the play: "she was like me in lineaments" (*Manfred* 2.2.105), "She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,/ The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind/ To comprehend the universe" (2.2.109-111), "Her faults were mine—her virtues were her own—" (2.2.116). The contrast between Manfred and his double Astarte functions as an implicit play on the poet's bipolar disorder and having the two figures exist in such tension shows the strain of Byron's mental state. The two have similarities that correspond to mania and depression: we can consider Manfred and his entire fantastic metaphysical adventure to be a mirror for reality-averse mania and Astarte's melancholy, deathless state to be a mirror for depression. Their fateful meeting in the hall of Arimanes does

not happen by pure happenstance, rather it is evident that "[a]s we move higher up through the 'daemonic realm' we start to move deeper into Manfred" (Twitchell 609), and Byron's two halves distinguish themselves into the two characters as we do so. Manfred's ascent into Arimanes' domain parallels a psychological descent in the poet's own mind, and by virtue of being in a realm of evil, Romantic readers would assume that the hall of Arimanes requires descent rather than ascent. In the end of this fraught scene, Astarte does not act as a consolation for Manfred's anguish, nor does she forgive him; rather, she cryptically hints at his coming demise, crying "Manfred! To-morrow ends thine earthly ills./ Farewell!" (2.4.151). When Astarte foretells the end for Manfred, her short residence in Arimanes' realm ends and her phantom dissipates, leaving the hero alone once more among the demons of his madness, stewing in a dangerous mixture of emotions that lay between mania and melancholy—a sadness bolstered by anguish, heading towards self-destruction.

The need to divorce the trivial facets of biography from our conception of *Manfred* as a psychodrama is crucial to my reading of the play as a psychological allegory. McDayter agrees that Astarte functions better as a projection of Manfred than a separate character, stating, "although Astarte resides in the heart of Manfred as the unspeakable, she nonetheless speaks him. She has become a threat to Manfred's own ability to articulate himself and he must rid himself of her enthralling presence in order to make space, and to embrace the radical loss that enables subjectivity and desire to emerge" (310). Most of Byron's poetry has been read for what it tells us about what the poet has done, but *Manfred*—particularly as he has been understood in this project—must also be read to tell us about what the poet felt. It is characteristically Romantic of Byron's poetry to revolve so heavily around emotion, and he was unrivaled in his depiction of emotional precarity and anguish. The climax of this last scene in the halls of

Arimanes propels the final—and most strikingly psychological—act of the play forward. Manfred, now rid of Astarte and his desire, returns to his tower to die.

## The Fortress of The Mind

The final act of *Manfred* takes place solely in the hero's own terrain, where he toils throughout the final evening of his life. Manfred's tower is of interest to this project insofar as it is a space entirely possessed by the hero. This section will conceptualize Manfred's tower not just as a Gothic backdrop but as a metaphorical fortress representing the poet's own mind. A particularly poignant line is spoken by Manfred's servant Manuel, who reminisces alongside Herman about happier days on Manfred's estate: before the castle can become a place of joy again, "These walls / Must change their chieftain" (*Manfred* 3.3.29). This line reads as Manuel implying that the castle can only become peaceful once ownership changes hands, but the castle cannot change ownership since it is part of Manfred. Like any line of Byron's famously fickle poetry, meaning cannot always be so easily inferred; we know by now that the poet deliberately toyed with the truths and rumours surrounding his life while still in England, and that he wrote *Manfred* knowing that his readership would perceive the drama as autobiographical. Byron—who vehemently "refused the distinction between his life and his art" (McGann, *Fiery Dust* 28)—did not intend to make the psychological component of his poetry too readily available, which explains why the allegory in his work is buried deeply beneath the surface. Manfred's tower is configured solely to be his private domain, it is a deeply private, wholly personal place that allows the hero to unleash his anguish away from his ancestral estate. When Manfred dies, it is not said what happens to the tower—it does not crumble or fall into ruin—but when viewed as the fortress of the hero's mind, the tower will cease to lose its power when its master dies. In this

way, the tower is both a sanctuary and a prison for the poet; it is a place where Manfred goes to be safe in his solitude, but it is also a place where his demons can finally attack him with no way for him to escape.

Manfred's tower as a personification of Byron's psyche is established by analyzing the final two scenes of the play. The juxtaposition between scenes three and four of this final act provides a metaphor for this project as a whole: we begin outside the tower—looking for exterior reasoning for the mad Byronic persona—before we manage to break the threshold and analyze Byron's "madness" from the inside. I wish to reintroduce two elements discussed earlier in this project to conceptualize Manfred's intellect fortress: the dichotomy of genius as mad versus made, and the self-involved, methodical conception of the Byronic hero as a mask for the poet's true self. Manuel and Herman's recollections of the hero in his tower function as psychological allegories for the poet's self-reflection. To the servants, Manfred's tower is a place fiercely guarded by the hero and unknowable to all else, much in the same way that Byron—suffering from an ailment that he would never fully understand—sought to extricate the unpleasant aspects of his illness from his dashing, mysterious public image.

Manfred, as evidenced heavily in his turmoil throughout the drama, does not seek salvation nor think it possible for himself by the end of the play, and he rebukes the Abbot for invading his personal domain. Still, Manfred feels a momentary inner tranquillity: "There is a calm upon me—/ Inexplicable stillness! which till now/ Did not belong to what I knew of life" (*Manfred* 3.1.6-8). Knowing his life is in its final stretch, he has finally come to terms with his ending and believes he has conquered his demons before his placid monologue is interrupted and the Abbot appears. In this deeply personal final act, the Abbot is a stand-in for Byron's worried loved ones and readership, whose pity he scorned as he navigated his own stormy emotions.

Always the image of pride, Manfred rebukes the Abbot in the same way Byron has always rebuked his critics: with steadfast determination and little afterthought. Aware of the hero's torment and suicidality, the Abbot knows of Manfred's meddling with demons and personal offenses and has come to offer Manfred the aforementioned salvation of "penitence and pardon" (*Manfred* 3.1.58). Manfred rebukes him, stating "I shall not choose a mortal/ To be my mediator" (*Manfred* 3.1.54-5), shunning the Abbot from his domain and admonishing his holy advances. Manfred's fate, however, has already been made; stubborn like the poet behind the page, Manfred is obstinate in his ownership of his destiny. In his refusal to submit, the hero addresses his audience directly to let them know that his legacy is his alone, marred as it may be. Mad by birth and made in madness, Byron wrestles his with the spectacle of his exile one last time before letting it go as his hero departs the scene and heads to his tower.

Manfred's torment gets brief respite in the third scene of Act Three, where the hero is peculiarly absent. It is one of only two scenes in the entire play that do not feature the protagonist, the only other being the scene between the Destinies and Nemesis,[42] and from this vantage point, we are privy to Manfred's mind to the same degree we are privy to Byron's: close, but still at arms-length. Even without the physical presence of Manfred, this scene revolves around him entirely from a speculative standpoint. Herman leads the dialogue in this scene, opening with these lines:

> 'Tis strange enough; night after night, for years,
> He hath pursued long vigils in this tower,
> Without a witness. I have been within it,—
> So have we all been oft—times; but from it,
> Or its contents, it were impossible
> To draw conclusions absolute of aught
> His studies tend to. To be sure, *there is*

[42] These two scenes in relation to one another make an interesting contrast. In the scene with the Destinies and Nemesis, the spirits anticipate Manfred's descent into the hall of Arimanes and the narrative awaits the decision of Manfred's fate; in this scene, Manfred has already decided his own fate and the narrative is preparing for his demise.

> *One chamber where none enter*: I would give
> The fee of what I have to come these three years,
> To pore upon its mysteries.
>
> (*Manfred* 3.3.1-10; emphasis own)

The line "there is one chamber where none enter" is particularly significant here. The isolated chamber eluding Manfred's dependents provides the backdrop for this project's analysis of psychodrama, allowing the audience to view Byron's performance of this emotional exorcism within the haven of his own mind. If Byron used the closet drama form to therapize his emotional distress in a period where no treatment was available to him, then this hypothesis is supported by Twitchell, who notes that "[as] with any psychodrama, the battle is with evil, not with death; within the mind, not within the cosmos" (614). *Manfred* depicts that same battle with evil, evident in every scene where the hero has warred with the cacophony of spirits. Yet in this scene we find uneasy silence without the hero and his discordant spirits present. Herman plays the role of the reader expertly as he exercises morbid curiosity in the same breath as reticence. He longs to enter the forbidden chamber of Manfred's abode in the same way the reader longs to enter the hidden recesses of the poet's mind. Manfred's chamber is cloaked in a mysterious aura and spoken about in prying tones that tempt the reader to stride further into its walls.

As we parse through the surface-level Gothic subtext of the play within Manfred's tower, we find ourselves in a rare moment of contemplation: this scene allows the reader to take a break from the turmoil characterizing much of the play through a moment of recollection. The forbidden chamber of Manfred's tower functions as an homage to the dark, locked rooms that populate the Gothic—decaying realms where horrid secrets are kept away from the light; in Manfred's tower as well as many Gothic fortresses, none but the master may enter. It is an easy comparison to make if we view the play only through the autobiographical lens, in which this

locked chamber would likely stand in as a metaphorical backdrop for the incest confession that *Manfred* is thought to revolve around. Given the magical and metaphysical elements of the play, it is likely that the source of Manfred's inexplicable power over the spirits resides in that locked room. The perplexing source behind Manfred's sorcerous ways informs this scene and its meditations on Manfred's hidden chamber with more suspicion. Byron was notably superstitious regarding things like magic and fate in his life, but "liked to draw a veil of mystery over his superstitions" (Hudson 720). William Parry recalls Byron having once told him "I have from my childhood endeavoured to impress a belief of supernatural causes on my mind. I cannot say why I had such a propensity, nor why it continued so long; but I derive pleasure from the idea; even now, I actually believe such things may be" (Byron qtd in Hudson 718). Does that same propensity for supernatural unease still pervade Byron's mind in adulthood? It seems to announce itself quite clearly here, both in the denial of revealing the secrets of Manfred's chamber to his dependents and in the self-obsessed fascination with destiny saturating the play. Twitchell reminds us:

> It has become something of a critical commonplace to regard Byron's 1816 and 1817 works as emotionally cathartic and therefore not as carefully structured as his later poetry. It is true that Manfred was written during a period of intense domestic turmoil . . . In spite of all the biographical material, Byron constructed a cosmic psychological and mythological system of some sophistication. (612)

These psychological and mythological systems intermingle in the play to propel the mystery around Manfred's forbidden tower, imploring the reader to delve further into Manfred's mind.

Turning our attention back to the conversation between Herman and Manuel, the two reminisce about the days of Manfred's father, who has remained unknown throughout the text.

Manuel notes that Count Sigismund, the hero's deceased father whom "he nought resembles" (*Manfred* 3.3.15), was "proud, but gay and free" (*Manfred* 3.3.19) and cared not for the "books and solitude" (*Manfred* 3.3.21) that his son obsessed over. Their musings on the old Count are fleeting but betray another hidden dichotomy within the play: rather than symbolize Byron's own father, who the poet had never properly met and had no memories—fond or spiteful—of, Count Sigismund, the old chieftain of these walls, represents pre-exile Byron, whereas the broody, tortured Manfred represents the poet at the time of composition. In Gothic texts, the paternal figure is often rendered oppressive or lecherous, but in *Manfred* there is no room for overbearing fathers. Count Sigismund does not hold a stable place within the narrative, but instead acts as yet another splintered piece of the poet. In this brief aside, we see Byron mourn for someone he used to be—jovial, careless, "a warrior and a reveller" (*Manfred* 3.3.20)—before his life began to spiral out of his hands alongside his reputation. Manuel and Herman's mournfulness for their old master harkens back to Byron's own mournfulness for the happiness he had once felt, now replaced with a stubborn loneliness. In Jamison's study of Byron, she follows Byron's disordered moods throughout his lifetime in order to qualify his bipolar disorder. She poignantly notes that "In Byron's case aspects of his underlying temperament often worsened into periods of painful melancholia and disruptive, perturbed mental states; by the end of his life these periods of emotional distress began to outweigh periods of health" (Jamison 165). The painful melancholia Jamison detects in Byron's life and works pervades this otherwise tranquil scene. Manfred, as well as the poet, hides his pain away in his tower and agonizes on how to rid himself of it. Much like how Manfred is hounded by the guilt of the unspecified crime that killed Astarte, Byron is hounded by the reverberations of his untreated mental illness.

As the scene fades out, we re-enter the narrative for a final time within the mysterious tower itself. Manfred is, as expected, alone and preparing for the denouement of his life. He launches into a lengthy description of his youthful memories in Rome, recalling tranquil, beautiful scenery and the feeling of serenity that characterized his life at that time. It is an odd break in an otherwise fraught scene, and even the hero is caught off guard by the memory, "'Tis strange that I recall it at this time;/ But I have found our thoughts take wildest flight/ Even at the moment when they should array/ Themselves in pensive order" (*Manfred* 3.4.42-5). This moment of peace is fleeting, and the Abbot once again makes an unceremonious and unsolicited reappearance, barging in on the hero in his most private sphere to repeat his same pious spiel. Manfred replies with justified anger at this intrusion to his final moments: "Thou know'st me not;/ My days are number'd, and my deeds recorded:/ Retire, or 'twill be dangerous—Away!" (*Manfred* 3.4.53-5). As they fight, a Spirit enters the room, but no stage direction is given to denote this. When the spirit identifies itself as "the genius of this mortal" (*Manfred* 3.4. 81),[43] its origin is clear: it is part of Manfred, the origin of his Ancient Greek *manike*. The spirit—Manfred's aptly described genius—beckons the hero to follow him into the hereafter to no avail. *Manfred* has thus far been a drama that deliberately fights for its hero's desire for self-possession, and in these final moments "it does not matter if the final scene is a heroic climax or a bathetic falling apart—because, in neither case does Manfred, or Byron, submit: that is, surrender their lofty superiority over their audience" (Dennis 129). Deep in Manfred's tower—in his own mind and domain—the wills of the spirits and the Abbot are powerless against his self-determination.

[43] In the notes of the Broadview edition of *Manfred*, "genius" is contextualized in the passage as the Ancient Greek version of a guiding spirit (Byron, *Manfred* 60n).

*Manfred*'s final scene is triumphant in the same breath that it is catastrophic. There is no hope at salvation for the hero—regardless of what the Abbot offers in vain— but rather "he battles the unbidden demons who come take him away. He refuses to submit to them as he has refused submission to all of the other spirits, with the exception of Nemesis" (Terka 11). I wish to revisit the mad poet myth one last time in final scene of Byron's expertly crafted psychological allegory. The spirits intrinsically intertwined with Manfred fracture the hero and trouble him with the merciless remembrance of his unseemly deeds and harangue the hero like discordant wisps of paranoia-inducing mania throughout the play. Though Byron was not believed to have suffered from the sort of psychosis in his life that set poets such as Clare and Blake apart from their Romantic peers, he nonetheless remained in their ranks as a poet whose "madness" pervaded his compositions. Manfred's tower is the poet's own mental stronghold and has, up until this moment in the narrative, remained impregnable. When it is assailed by the voyeuristic gaze of the Abbot, the reader gains a foothold into Byron's world. What we find is a chaotic maelstrom that has arisen out of solitude, peopled by screeching spirits that personify the poet's spiritual strife. In Byron's attempt at psychodrama, the poet allows us to observe his inner demons as they battle on his mental stage, removed from biographical pomp. *Manfred* is the funeral pyre upon which the remains of Byron's pre-exile trauma are left to burn. The play purges Byron of the guilt that hung over him as a result of his scandalous exit from England. By allegorizing his psychological trauma in *Manfred*, Byron hides his pain under the shiny guise of a confessional tale and allows it to slip away from him when he writes his anguish onto the page. In the transition between the third and fourth scenes in Act Three, we see the English Byron die and a stateless Byron emerge.

Returning to the scene between Manfred, his *genius*, and the Abbot, we find Manfred still at war with his demons, but resilient in his defiance of them. More spirits gather as Manfred spurns the first, reflecting the dissonant stance he adopts in first scene of the play, but much has changed since we first met our hero; now, he has mastered his control over the spirits to perfection after receiving closure—albeit a cryptic version of it—from Astarte. Manfred's power over the spirit here allows Byron power over his own demons. Regarding *Manfred* as a psychodrama, in this scene we can finally see Manfred—and by extension, Byron—dominating the demonic forces around him and finding therapeutic control over his inner turmoil. Yet when the first spirit accuses Manfred of being in love with "the very life/ Which has made thee wretched" (*Manfred* 3.4.108-9), this stirs the hero's rage. Manfred shouts back, now electric and unstoppable:

> Thou false fiend, thou liest!
> My life is in its last hour,—that I know,
> Nor would redeem a moment of that hour.
> I do not combat against death, but thee
> And thy surrounding angels; my past power
> Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,
> (*Manfred* 3.4.109-14)

Manfred is devoid of any heroic splendour in this scene, and we are left with a starkly self-aware portrait of the poet. What Byron means to portray in this scene is his acceptance of the tarnished version of his life that will outlive him. He knows, like Manfred, that he cannot "redeem a moment" of it and yet he does not waver. As the hero declares that he will "defy—deny—/ Spurn back, and scorn" (*Manfred* 3.4.120-21) the spirits, Byron's emotions surge through Manfred; melancholia mixes with mania as the poet-hero battles his demons, creating a volatile, mixed emotional episode. At the core of Manfred's struggle is his singularity, which puts him at odds with the world and unable find a strong enough connection to make him want to live out his

natural life. McVeigh notes that "Manfred's curse is that he is *not* Everyman; [he is] better than other men, [but] he is also worse" ("Manfred's Curse" 606), and in this passage we can see the truth in that statement. Manfred's pride shines through this passage as he catalogues the strengths that have allowed him to hold the spirits in his thrall—science, penance, daring, and so forth—while remaining resilient. In the tower of his mind, the hero is a tower of iron wills.

Try as they might, the spirits cannot break Manfred's resolve. Though he can feel his own spirit waning and mortality slipping away, he remains in control of his fate. Byron's imagery of the hero remaining steadfast despite the input of his inner demons betrays his calculated attempts at aloofness. Though he does not cede to the spirits, they still provoke him and elicit emotionally intense reactions. They attempt to convince Manfred that he cannot separate himself from his crimes and claim moral superiority over his demons. The spirits seek to pull Manfred into their realm by dissolving his resolve, but Manfred fires back:

> 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.
>
> (*Manfred* 3.4.123-28)

These lines "suggest a man who, confronting the reality of his own misdeeds, has found it in his heart, if not to absolve, at least to release himself, a man who has achieved liberation not by self-repudiation but by going to the bottom of the night of his own experience and somehow re-emerging on the other side" (Sperry 201). Formerly tortured by his misdeeds, Manfred now comes to terms with his sins and inner torment and assuages his guilty conscience. In this moment, Manfred undergoes something close to an exorcism—there is a man of faith overseeing, demons spiralling, and a broiling climax ready to erupt—but does not try to dispel

his darkness. Rather than seek purification, Byron—and his hero—instead resolves to come to terms with his dark spirits and assimilate them with his better aspects. We know that he will never know the peace of a quiet soul and we are reminded once again of the lines he wrote to Annabella Milbanke: “if I must sail let it be on the ocean no matter how stormy—anything but a dull cruise on a level lake without ever losing sight of the same insipid shores by which it is surrounded—" (Byron qtd in Jamison 151).

Manfred’s final moment and last line remain the most poignant of the play. Having succeeded in rebuking the spirits, Manfred’s life quickly begins to drain from him. The Abbot holds him as he dies, begging Manfred to let him pray for his soul but the hero rejects his offer for redemption. Had Manfred expired as he hung over the Jungfrau before the Chamois hunter caught him, Byron would have still got the allegorical exorcism for his emotional pain, but the narrative would have fallen flat. The hero *expires* on his own accord inside his tower, finally succumbing to his fate as the Abbot watches Manfred’s soul leave him, reassuring the holy man as he perishes: “Old man! ’tis not so difficult to die” (*Manfred* 3.4.151). I wish to designate this final moment as the poet’s allegorical suicide, in which he finally allowed the weight of his tarnished life fall to limp beneath him. Byron was a man who suffered from great and terrible moods, and more than once contemplated taking his own life. Suicide is a prevalent threat to those with bipolar disorder, and depressive and mixed episodes further complicate the likelihood of suicide; in this final scene, Manfred is likely experiencing a mixed episode. Leslie Marchand remembers him as having “struck the human balance between idealistic aspiration and realistic disillusionment . . . he refused to ignore any note of feeling in the gamut that runs from one to the other, his self-honesty compelling him to record every nuance of the ‘mobility’ of his nature” (Marchand xiii).

The question of what happens to Manfred's tower without the hero around to inhabit it lingers as the scene fades out, leaving us to ponder the performative aspects of Byron's drama. It is true that without the evidence left behind in the poet's own unabashed memoirs, any deeply personal reading into *Manfred*—as well as all other Byronic texts—is mere speculation. The poet's known protean persona has always added to his allure both in casual and critical readership. In its immortal form, *Manfred* is "an exercise in sustained negation, the renunciation of all authority but that most innate to the self that is demanded of the modern poet" (Sperry 201). Manfred purges himself of the demons born within him that materialize to torture him, but this sort of serenity was only ever possible in death. The hero's demise remains haunted by his earlier failed attempt at suicide, and we are left wondering if the play reimagines suicide in the same way Byron reimagines allegory. Read as a psychological allegory, a psychodrama, or merely as a Gothic confessional, the staying power of *Manfred* has always remained tethered to the raw emotional honesty the poet has imbued within it.

# CONCLUSION

Although this project is in no way an exhaustive study of Byron's representation of his bipolar symptoms throughout his poetry, I have begun tracing a path for further scholarship to follow. Byron was a figure that both spurned and welcomed candour but did so on his own terms, and what we know about Byron's life is always subject to change. The poet knew this, and delighted in musing about how his future biographers would struggle to define him:

> People take for gospel all I say, and go away continually with false impressions. *Mais n importe!* it will render the statements of my future biographers more amusing; as I flatter myself I shall have more than one. Indeed, the more the merrier, say I. One will represent me as a sort of sublime misanthrope, with moments of kind feeling. This, *par exemple,* is my favorite *rôle.* Another will portray me as a modern Don Juan; and a third . . . will, it is to be hoped, if only for opposition sake, represent me as an *amiable,* ill-used gentleman, more sinned against than sinning.' Now, if I know myself, I should say, that I have no character at all . . . But, joking apart, what I think of myself is, that I am so changeable, being everything by turns and nothing long, —I am such a strange *mélange* of good and evil, that it would be difficult to describe me. (Byron qtd in Marchand vii)

Byron's image remains beholden to this *mélange*. The poet's protean image has offered him a way to escape the false impressions he predicted would befall him and has propelled him into near-godhood in the realm of poets. Byron was denied a place at Westminster Abbey when he died due to his scandalous reputation, but his legacy survives without it. Criticism remains divided on the sincerity of the poet, but this study candidly reflects that Byron conceived of sincerity in his own dramatized way.

We have seen how Byron constructed his image to create a mythology around himself. Prompted by the ideal of the mad poet, he deliberately constructed himself in his letters and his poetry into a study of contradictions; he undermines his own sincerity constantly and deliberately. In the first chapter of this project, we saw the seed of the mad poet myth plant itself within Byron's mind, and watched it bloom into a fully formed part of his identity. Byron has become synonymous with Romanticism for his dramatic, brilliant flashes of emotion, and has provided the blueprint for the type of mad hero that went out of style in the Enlightenment and found his footing once more in the Romantic era. As an inheritor of ancient Greek *manike* and Renaissance *pazzia*, this study attests that Byron symbolizes the quintessential bipolar poet. In speaking to the lasting power of Byron's poetic appeal, Jamison testifies that "Byron brought a deeply redemptive spirit to the problems of despair, ennui, uncertainty, and disillusionment" (190). Because he was so well acquainted with these feelings of desolation and portrayed them so candidly, Byron shatters the mad poet myth by exhuming humanity and vulnerability from an often-harmful trope. Prompted by Jamison's own work on Byron and bipolar disorder, my project has reconfigured Byron's legacy through a bipolar lens and hopes to open spaces within future scholarship for further empathetic readings of the work of bipolar poets.

Byron's vulnerability lives on in his heroes and stretches throughout popular culture as a popular heroic archetype: the Byronic hero. With "Byron's heroes it often seems to be – with a familiar Romantic emphasis – the intensity of consciousness itself that constitutes the alienated self: knowledge as alienation" (Parker 1), causing the Byronic hero to function as a blank slate of suffering that the reader and the poet can simultaneously project upon. In the second chapter of this project, I have unraveled the Byronic hero and laid out its schema. We have seen how Byron uses his protagonists to reflect parts of himself—often parts too painful for him to bear alone—

and send them off into the world to expunge himself of the memories or feelings he has associated with them. The refraction of Byron within his poetry—what this project has conceived of as a "fracturing of self"—allows for both "poles" of the poet to find representation within his corpus. Neither depression nor mania can be claimed to be the driving factor of Byron's poetry, but the equilibrium between the two is what has inspired this study. In each of the protagonists discussed, we see the poet reflected within a profound mournfulness.

*Manfred* remains one of Byron's most enigmatic and bizarre plays: half Gothic performance and half vulnerable psychodrama. The supernatural elements in *Manfred* converge with the psychological revelations of the poet. In Manfred's tower, loneliness has never felt so chaotic and loud. Byron's drama represents psychological stimuli externalized into unreal, sublime representations of spectres and demons, allowing them free reign against the solitary and imposing backdrops of the Alps, the hero's tower, and a hellish domain of demons. What *Manfred* does so expertly is invites the reader into a mystical world in which self-determination can eradicate pain and melancholy. Byron reimagines allegory as a driving psychological force within the play, eschewing morality in favour of catharsis. By subverting the conventions of typical drama, Byron crafts a play in which every major character is a different part of the poet, turning all dialogue within the play into an internal monologue. This deeply personal and psychologically complex play invites the reader to read past the biographical implications laid out at the surface and delve deeper into the emotional depth of the drama. Entering Manfred's tower, the drama comes to an intense, transcendent climax that pulls the breath from the hero's body and injects it into the reader's lungs.

This thesis is indisputably indebted to the work of Kay Redfield Jamison, whose research on bipolar disorder and creativity has driven this this study to completion. While psychological

explorations of Byron's work remain underexplored in scholarship, Jamison's meticulous study of the poet's biography, letters, and conversations catalogues Byron's manic and depressive traits with undeniable precision. In the nearly twenty-five years since the publication of *Touched with Fire*, studies of creativity and mental illness have flourished and progressed past idealized conceptions of poetic madness. My study aims to emulate the empathy Jamison imbues her research with by providing a portrait of Lord Byron that is free of judgement. In analyzing *Manfred*, the inner world of Byron clarifies itself. In concluding this study, I am prompted by the final lines of *Manfred*, spoken by the Abbot: "He's gone, his soul hath ta'en its earthless flight; / Whither? I dread to think; but he is gone" (3.4.152-3). Byron's immortal soul remains in flight, but his influence will never be gone. Even two centuries into the future, his legacy remains monumental.

# Works Cited

## Primary Sources

Byron, Lord George Gordon. *Lord Byron: Selected Poems and Letters*, edited by William Harvey. Marshall, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968.

——. *Manfred*. Broadview Press, 2017.

——. Marchand, Leslie A. *Letters and Journals.* Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1973.

Marchand, Leslie A. *Byron: A Biography.* Knopf, 1957, 3 vols.

## Secondary Sources

"allegory, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, December 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/5230. Accessed 17 February 2021.

"genius, n. and adj." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2021, www.oed.com/view/Entry/77607. Accessed 21 March 2021.

"mania, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, December 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/113459. Accessed 17 February 2021.

"metaphysics, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, December 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/117355. Accessed 17 February 2021.

American Psychiatric Association. "Bipolar and Related Disorders," *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5*. 5th ed., American Psychiatric Association, 2013.

Becker, George. "A Socio-Historical Overview of the Creativity–Pathology Connection: from Antiquity to Contemporary Times," *Creativity and Mental Illness*, edited by James C. Kaufman, Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 3–24.

Blessington, Marguerite. *A Journal of the Conversations of Lord Byron with the Countess of Blessington.* C. Scribner's Sons, 1893.

Bradley, Arthur, and Alan Rawes, editors. *Romantic Biography*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2016.

Burke, Edmund. *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, Vol. I. (of 12). Project Gutenberg*. 2005. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15043/15043-h/15043-h.htm.

Burwick, Frederick. "Lord Byron's Faustian Plays Manfred (1817), Cain (1821), and The Deformed Transformed (1822)." *Faust Adaptations from Marlowe to Aboudoma and Markland*, edited by Lorna Fitzsimmons, Purdue University Press, 2017, pp. 45–65.

Chew, Samuel C. *The Dramas of Lord Byron: A Critical Study*. Russell & Russell, 1964.

Dennis, Ian. *Lord Byron and the History of Desire*. University of Delaware Press, 2009.

Diamond, Stephen A. *Anger, Madness, and the Daimonic: The Psychological Genesis of Violence, Evil, and Creativity*. State University of New York Press, 1996.

Elwin, Malcolm. *Lord Byron's Wife*. Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963.

Erdman, David V. "'In Caines Cynne': Byron and The Mark of Cain." *The Plays of Lord Byron: Critical Essays*, by Robert F. Gleckner and B. G. Beatty, Liverpool University Press, 1997, pp. 273–90.

Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization*. Vintage, 1988.

Gilmour, Ian. *The Making of the Poets: Byron and Shelley in Their Time*. Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2004.

Horová, Mirka. "The Satanic School." *Byron in Context*, edited by Clara Tuite, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2019, pp. 183–89.

Hudson, Arthur Palmer. "The 'Superstitious' Lord Byron." *Studies in Philology*, vol. 63, no. 5, 1966,

pp. 708–21.

Jamison, Kay Redfield. *Touched With Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament*. Free Press, 1993.

Lessenich, Rolf P. "Drama and Theater." *Byron in Context*, edited by Clara Tuite, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2019, pp. 222–29.

Lovelace, Ralph Milbanke. *Astarte: A Fragment of Truth Concerning George Gordon Byron*, edited by Mary Countess of Lovelace. Edited by Mary Stuart Wortley Lovelace, Christophers, 1921.

Macdonald, D. L. "Incest, Narcissism and Demonality in Byron's 'Manfred.'" *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1992, pp. 25–38.

McGann, Jerome. *Fiery Dust: Byron's Poetic Development*. University of Chicago Press, 1968.

McVeigh, Daniel M. "'In Caines Cynne': Byron and The Mark of Cain." *The Plays of Lord Byron: Critical Essays*, edited by Robert F. Gleckner and B. G. Beatty, Liverpool University Press, 1997, pp. 273–90.

——. "Manfred's Curse." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 22, no. 4, 1982, pp. 601–12.

Melaney, William D. "Ambiguous Difference: Ethical Concern in Byron's 'Manfred.'" *New Literary History*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2005, pp. 461–75.

Milton, John, and Alastair Fowler. *Paradise Lost*. Rev. 2nd ed., Longman, 2007.

Mole, Tom. *Byron's Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

North, Julian. "Recollections, Conversations and Biographies." *Byron in Context*, edited by Clara Tuite, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2019, pp. 281–88.

Parker, Fred. “Between Satan and Mephistopheles: Byron and the Devil.” *The Cambridge Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2006, pp. 1–29.

Plato. *Phaedrus*. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. The Internet Classics Archive.

Radcliffe, Ann. *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, New Monthly Magazine, 1826, pp. 145–52.

Rawes, Alan. “Autobiography.” *Byron in Context*, edited by Clara Tuite, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2019, pp. 230–237.

Richardson, Alan. *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Schock, Peter A. *Romantic Satanism: Myth and the Historical Moment in Blake, Shelley, and Byron*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Sha, Richard C. “The Motion behind Romantic Emotion: Towards a Chemistry and Physics of Feeling.” *Romanticism and the Emotions*, edited by Joel Faflak and Richard C. Sha, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014, pp. 19–47.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. “A Defence of Poetry.” *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, edited by Vincent B. Leitch, Second ed., W.W. Norton & Company, 2010, pp. 595–612.

Sperry, Stuart M. “Byron and the Meaning of ‘Manfred.’” Criticism, vol. 16, no. 3, 1974, pp. 189–202.

Steffan, T. G, and George Gordon Byron Byron. *Lord Byron's Cain: Twelve Essays and a Text with Variants and Annotations*. University of Texas Press, 1968.

Shilstone, Frederick W. *Byron and the Myth of Tradition*. University of Nebraska Press, 1988.

Terka, Dan. “Byron’s Underground Manfred.” *The Comparatist*, vol. 14, 1990, pp. 5–14.

Tuite, Clara. *Lord Byron and Scandalous Celebrity*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Twitchell, James. “The Supernatural Structure of Byron's Manfred.” *Studies in English*

*Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 15, no. 4, 1975, pp. 601–14., www.jstor.org/stable/450014.

Weineck, Silke-Maria. *The Abyss Above: Philosophy and Poetic Madness in Plato, Hölderlin, and Nietzsche*. State University of New York Press, 2002.

Whitehead, James. *Madness and the Romantic Poet: A Critical History*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

Woodman, Ross. *Sanity, Madness, Transformation: The Psyche in Romanticism*. University of Toronto Press, 2005.

Works Consulted

Cousin François-Régis, et al. *Anthology of French Language Psychiatric Texts*. Institut D'édition Sanofi-Synthélabo, 1999.

Elfenbein, Andrew. *Romantic Genius: The Prehistory of a Homosexual Role*. Columbia University Press, 1999.

Grosskurth, Phyllis. *Byron: The Flawed Angel*. Houghton Mifflin, 1997.

Healy, David. *Mania: A Short History of Bipolar Disorder*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008

Kaufman, James C, editor. *Creativity and Mental Illness*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Ludwig, Arnold M. *The Price of Greatness: Resolving the Creativity and Madness Controversy*. Guilford Press, 1995.

McGann, Jerome, and James Soderholm. *Byron and Romanticism*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Mole, Tom. *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Newlyn, Lucy. *Paradise Lost, and the Romantic Reader*. Clarendon Press, 1993.

Payne, Geoff. *Dark Imaginings: Ideology and Darkness in the Poetry of Lord Byron*. Peter Lang,

2008.

Peattie, Antony. *The Private Life of Lord Byron*. Unbound, 2019.

Praz, Mario. *The Romantic Agony*. 2nd ed. [reissued with corrections], Oxford U.P, 1970.

Prescott, Frederick Clarke. *The Poetic Mind*. Great Seal Books, 1959.

Purinton, Marjean D. *Romantic Ideology Unmasked: The Mentally Constructed Tyrannies in Dramas of William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, and Joanna Baillie*. University of Delaware Press, 1994.

Rothenberg, Albert. *Creativity and Madness: New Findings and Old Stereotypes*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.

Steptoe, Andrew. *Genius and the Mind: Studies of Creativity and Temperament*. Oxford University Press, 1998