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THE QUINTESSENCE OF BYRONISM: A STUDY
OF MANFRED,

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THE QUINTESSENCE OF BYRONISM:

A STUDY OF MANFRED

by

William A. ^{Arthur} Neville

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J. Burke Seaver
(Professor in Charge)

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Special committee directing the doctoral work of Mr. William A. Neville

J. Burke Seaver
Chairman

Gay B. Joplin

Rayl. Amstrong

Carl F. Stauch

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Introduction

After forty years, Professor Chew's chapter on Manfred in The Dramas of Lord Byron remains the most complete and extended of all studies of this poem. As a discussion of sources, it is perennially useful, resting as it does on its author's firm acquaintance with continental literature. Its observations on structure and prosody also retain their original validity. As an evaluation, it avoids a decided commitment, though the regret expressed in an earlier chapter that the dramas had taken "care and energy" that might have been expended "in work native to [Byron's] genius" -- that is, "ten more cantos of Don Juan,"¹ casts its shadow on Manfred. In the biographical inferences which Professor Chew draws from the poem the need for re-examination is most clearly evident, for denying the meaning of the hints of incest has become increasingly difficult in the intervening years.² Concerning other studies of Manfred, a safe generalization would be that they lack depth and balance, for they are brief or too much involved in the development of a broad biographical or critical thesis. The Earl of Lovelace's distortion of the poem demonstrates how far this functional kind of reading has been carried.³

However, the short supply of commentary on Manfred has not created any eager demand for it, probably because of a

fashionable apathy among critics and readers to Byronism. Poetry Explication, that extremely useful bibliography by Arms and Kuntz of interpretative articles between 1925 and 1950, contains no entry on Manfred, and remarkably few -- six -- on the complete body of Byron's poetry. (One of these is the justly derogatory "Mighty Like a Whale" by Ogden Nash.) Writing on the appearance in 1957 of a phonograph record of passages from Manfred read in Schumann's musical setting, a critic describes Manfred as more "fustian than Faustian" and calls it a play "read nowadays chiefly by college literature students."⁴ But it may be that even this modest distinction is in some danger, for at least one survey anthology of English literature designed for college use leaves Byron -- Don Juan and all -- out entirely.⁵ The Penguin Poets edition of selections from Byron has no room for Manfred. Are these indications that time is dealing justly with poetry that has no right to immortality? Or merely that our age is conditioned against approaching Manfred and the other Romantic poems in a serious, receptive spirit? Perhaps the "pageant of the bleeding heart" has been reenacted so often by spurious sufferers that most moderns unjustly suspect the credentials of the originator himself.

Paradoxically, then, the need for an interpretative and evaluative study of Manfred may be the greater because it is unfelt. Though the poem is an intense and awesome exploration of the power and frailty of the human spirit, it suffers from

a distracting resemblance to many lesser poems, some of which, unfortunately, were the work of Byron himself. If attention is focused on what is really in the poem and on the validity of the impulses which put it there, perhaps Manfred will be permitted to demonstrate its own excellence and importance.

According to some theories of criticism, such externals as the sources of the poet's inspiration are not pertinent to the interpretation or appraisal of a poem, but an argument for the wisdom of placing works in their historical and biographical context advanced by Professor Pottle⁶ is extremely persuasive and should remain so until the day arrives when the critic himself enjoys a godlike emancipation from personal quirks and his own Zeitgeist. Critical theories aside, it is only fair that Manfred, which has been often condemned on extraneous evidence, be defended on the battleground that its detractors have chosen. If the sincerity of the poet is suspect, then the poem can be stigmatized as mawkish, sentimental, or bombastic, even though there is nothing internal to suggest that the emotion is not genuine. The first chapter of this study is an attempt to show the depth and urgency of the impulse which engendered Manfred.

Another external problem which relates to the sincerity of the poem is that of sources. A high degree of derivative content in a work often suggests, and rightly, a lack of

profound emotional involvement on the part of its author. If Byron were merely retailing Goethe, Marlowe, Aeschylus, Rousseau, Shakespeare, Chateaubriand, Dr. Moore, Beckford, and Monk Lewis and all the tribe of Gothicists, then it would be fair enough to question his sincerity. But it is possible to show that the many sources of Manfred are not directly or consciously employed -- that rather they have been so much a shaping influence on his attitudes and behavior that they have mingled with and taken on the validity of experience. The remorse that Manfred feels parallels the remorse of the heroes of Gothic dramas,⁷ but so does the remorse Byron himself feels over his personal but remarkably parallel iniquities. There is evidence to uphold the suggestion that the impression that such heroes made on him at an early age was deep enough to influence his thought and conduct throughout life. Therefore, the second chapter is concerned less with the distinct literary relationships in Manfred, than with the possible effects of some of his reading on his personality.

"When Byron thinks, he is a child," a memorable pronouncement of Goethe's, has been a comfort to critics who cannot be bothered with making the effort to understand the thinking they condemn as superficial.⁸ Whether they have pondered the meaning of the pronouncement itself is a question worth opening, for immaturity of thought can mean many different things, depending on the views of the person who is biased enough to consider his own philosophy of life the truly mature one.

Byron is sometimes childish in his self-absorption, his impatience, and his inconsistency, but in his skepticism of ideas not supported by experience he was less childish than Wordsworth and Shelley. But this amounts to doing the work for those who should define their terms and find their own evidence. It would be interesting to see how what Manfred has to say literally and metaphorically about fate, immortality, sin, ambition, faith, love, guilt, honor, freedom, and courage could strike anyone as being childish. Chapter III explores the meaning of the poem and argues the validity of the thoughts on these matters and the power of the statement of it.

The resemblance of Manfred in many particulars to Childe Harold and Byron's romantic tales is obviously strong, for here are all the pronounced lineaments of Byronism: the egotism, the posturing, the fascination of travel, the mystification, the idealism, the skepticism, the world weariness, the misanthropy, the sentimentality, the fatalism, the snobishness, the unrestraint, and the uneven style, fitfully incisive and blowsy. That the irreconcilability of several of these qualities with one another does not destroy the impression of unity in the personality of Byron or his hero is something of a miracle -- a miracle which the biographers who argue that there are really two Byrons have no faith in. Certainly there are enough inconsistencies in the man and his work to bring any philosophical system tumbling down. But

Byron, though no child, is no philosopher, either. He is a poet, whose intellectual and emotional responses to life have coalesced into a distinct attitude called Byronism by universal assent. The thesis supported by all aspects of this study is that Manfred is the successful culmination of attempts to render this attitude in a definite literary form. That Byron was able to "leave off" being a "devil of a mannerist" after having written Manfred indicates that it was a satisfying expression of what he had been desperately needing to say for three years.

The title, "The Quintessence of Byronism," was chosen because of its perfect appropriateness and in spite of its familiar ring. Needless to say, it is not an invitation to mortifying comparisons. Besides the most obvious source of this echo, two others should be acknowledged. Miss Mayne uses the phrase, with what must be regarded here as less precision, to describe The Corsair and Lara.⁹ And Goethe, in his famous review of Manfred, remarks that in the poem is "the quintessence of the most astonishing talent, born to be its own tormentor."¹⁰

Chapter I

"Mountains . . . Metaphysics . . . and the Nightmare of My Own Delinquencies"

In employing generous quotation from Manfred to support his allegation of an incestuous relationship between Byron and his half-sister Augusta,¹ the Earl of Lovelace does his case, which is extremely cogent in other respects, a negligible service. But at the same time he does Manfred a great disservice, for he stresses it as a deliberate betrayal of guilt, inspired by a spiteful intention to embarrass Augusta. "When Manfred was published, 'nothing could have saved Augusta in the eyes of the whole world but want of faith in [Byron's] veracity' -- a very unfounded belief," says Lovelace with the help of an unidentified letter writer. Probably this writer is Mrs. Villiers, because she is immediately quoted in another great exaggeration -- "no avowal can be more complete"² -- thus showing how sharply her role as high priestess to Lady Byron and missionary to Augusta had hypersexualized her to all deliciously evil tidings. Essentially the damage done Manfred by Lovelace's approach to it is that it ignores or oversimplifies the most deeply seated of the psychological elements in its genesis and content. And, in the process, he deprives of all conviction

his comment that his extracts from the work "contain a sort of transfiguration of terribly real feelings and circumstances into a haunting apparition"³ and makes it seem unlikely that he understood the full force of his description of it as a "nightmare in blank verse,"⁴ for he gives no evidence of having pondered how complex and involuntary nightmares are.

John Drinkwater objects in his protest against Astarte to the practice of inferring specific autobiographical facts and motives from a fictional creation,⁵ and on this particular ground he is right. There can be, of course, no general rule to justify the assumption that a character's iniquities are those of his creator as well; but, even if there were, this particular play could offer nothing to biographical controversy because there is nowhere in it any unequivocal key to what is specifically troubling Manfred. The reader who concludes that it is incest must bring to the play suspicions which were aroused elsewhere. A good example of what an unsuspecting person derives from the play can be seen in what John Galt says of the relationship between Manfred and Astarte. Though he had heard scandalous rumors about Byron, he had no good reason to believe them. Reading the play closely, he infers that Astarte had been a human sacrifice in one of Manfred's occult experiments, not his partner in an incestuous affair.⁶

Such an interpretation is as supportable as any, for Byron's tormented hero, Mrs. Villiers and the Earl of Lovelace notwithstanding, merely mystifies and confuses when he speaks of his dreadful offense against Astarte. This mystification may be as irritating to critics who like correlatives to be objective as it is to biographers who like fiction to be factual; but it is hardly an artistic flaw in a work which is fundamentally more lyrical and philosophical than dramatic, for Byron's means of convincing the reader of the intensity of the "pang" which "must find a voice" is to convey the spiritual and intellectual effects rather than the causes of the tragic catastrophe for which his hero takes the blame.

Any unforced -- and, therefore, valid -- study of the experiential content of Manfred should not be concerned with "proving" anything about Byron's life. And if one is to avoid tempting speculation, he must begin with acknowledging that the only way to be certain that one detail or another is autobiographical is to see it as a precise reflection of a detail already established by other evidence. This chapter, which attempts to provide the biographical background essential to an informed explication and evaluation of Manfred, is, therefore, concerned mostly with external sources of information.

There are several reasons why preliminary preparations of this sort are especially valuable in the study of Manfred. One is that they aid in removing an excessive suspicion of

the emotional conviction, the "sincerity," of this and some of the other Byronic poems. A second is that they establish a greater respect for the ideas in Manfred, which also have been taken too lightly, by showing that they are grounded in experience, and shaped by intense reflection. A third -- extremely important in revealing quintessential Byronism -- is that they point up the degree and nature of the self-expression to be found in Manfred and related works, and thus make it possible to see, in Byron's characteristic motives for poetically expressing himself, the pivotal position of Manfred in his personal and artistic development.

The biographer who approaches the question of "sincerity" most directly and thoroughly is Ethel Mayne; and though she is perhaps more sympathetic than others, she creates rather than dispels suspicion. She feels that "we believe in the Byronic youth from the bottom of our hearts, in short, simply because there never was such a youth, and (as Voltaire said of the Deity) it was necessary to invent him."⁷ When she calls "The Dream" "a poem sincere in its very insincerity,"⁸ she seems to mean that it honestly expresses an induced mood, which is subjectively genuine to Byron and the sympathetic reader, but which is not objectively justifiable. She is probably right about "The Dream," but her comment is a moderate example of a widespread skepticism regarding the soundness of the emotional underpinning for typically Byronic poetry. Moore had said that the writing of "The Dream" had

cost Byron "many a tear," but most biographers since have been in accord with Hobhouse's note in the margin of his copy of Moore: "Not one I believe."⁹

Marchand, however, makes an observation which is worth pondering: "It is strange how little account has been taken of Byron's plain statement that his passions were developed very early."¹⁰ It is strange indeed, but characteristic, for to many of Byron's biographers and even to his intimates many of his frankest revelations are as unavailing as the prophecies of Cassandra, though as true. Ethel Mayne, again, assumes an affectionate, though patronizing skepticism in commenting on his callow but nevertheless truthful boasting about his early amatory exploits. Maurois, the greatest offender in this respect, is quick to second Hobhouse's view that most of Byron's literary, conversational, and epistolary agonizing was largely sham. And if the view of Byron as a thorough cynic with a flair for theatrical posturing and declaiming is what one assumes as he reads Manfred, he will take "little account" of the spiritual torment, which the style does not greatly exaggerate after all.

Byron's affair with Augusta, among those who take the hardboiled view of his personality, is simply the worst of a number of infamies in his career, but not in the least uncharacteristic. His conscience is assumed to be so calloused that he only affects to feel remorse when ephemeral moods of maudlin sentimentality come upon him. The sudden outbursts

of his remorseful agonies which frightened his wife are mere impositions on her impressionability, which will continue "only as long as she continues to notice,"¹¹ as Maurois concludes with the help of an observation of the skeptical Hobhouse -- an observation made, incidentally, on the far less momentous subject of Byron's behavior as a dinner guest. It is not remarkable, then, that the poetry involving a remorseful hero and sometimes touching on the theme of incest is regarded as empty sentimentality and perhaps boastful diabolism. And though Byron himself sometimes encouraged such a view by congenially joining in the derision of his gloomy propensities, I have found nothing that he, or Hobhouse, or Maurois has said which offsets one overwhelmingly persuasive evidence of his genuine remorse. In 1819, when the objectivity and levity of Don Juan had had ample time to lighten the pangs of Manfred, Byron was thrown into convulsions as he witnessed a play which involved incest.¹² No one, not even Maurois, has suggested that these were histrionics.

Whether Byron suffered any like fits during the summer and fall of 1816 is not recorded,¹³ but there are abundant facts to support the belief that Manfred arises from a state of mind in Byron which is hardly exceeded in the dramatic hero. The well known Journal-Letter to Augusta, which Byron kept on his September, 1816, tour of the Bernese Alps, reveals a deep and painful agitation:

But in all this -- the recollections of bitterness, and more especially of recent and more home desolation, which must accompany me through life, have preyed upon me here; and neither the music of the Shepherd, the crashing of the Avalanche, nor the torrent, the mountain, the Glacier, the Forest, nor the Cloud, have for one moment lightened the weight upon my heart, nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty, and the power, and the Glory, around, above, and beneath me.¹⁴

This, however, despite its despairing tone, does not reveal his dangerous spiritual ferment so persuasively as his flip-pant description some months later of the mood in which he wrote the third canto of Childe Harold: "I was half mad during the time of its composition, between metaphysics, mountains, lakes, love unextinguishable, thoughts unutterable and the nightmare of my own delinquencies. I should many a good day, have blown my brains out, but for the recollection that it would have given pleasure to my mother-in-law."¹⁵ And if this is how he felt when writing a poem which is relieved with refreshing enthusiasms and hopeful speculations, it is quite likely that when he wrote the first two acts of his play, he was near distraction as was his hero.

Byron also spoke later of not knowing "what the devil

possessed him¹⁶ when he wrote Manfred, and it is probably true that he did not recognize many of the notes of the discord within his mind and that he did not wish to speak of those he did recognize. Elsewhere, he seems more analytical, but hardly more candid, in his avowal of the complete originality of the play: "It was the Staubach [sic] and the Jungfrau, and something else, much more than Faustus, that made me write Manfred."¹⁷ As we have seen, Lovelace would take the mysterious "something else" to be the incestuous affair and, more immediately, annoyance with Augusta -- who was accepting Lady Byron's moral counsel -- for her hints that she chose not to see him again.¹⁸ But, although Byron did later on register his exasperation with Augusta's aloof and enigmatic epistolary style -- "d'd crinkum crankum"¹⁹ -- this was well after the composition of most of the personal allusions in Manfred; and it was after the publication that he asked with mocking bitterness if Manfred had not caused "a pucker."²⁰ But there is no asperity whatever in the journal-letter just quoted, which is close to Manfred, not only in time but in substance and imagery, or in any of his contemporaneous letters to her. The precise meaning of "something else" to Byron cannot be ascertained; that it had to do with a spiteful motive, however, is an unfounded assumption. Nevertheless, the probability is strong that he did have Augusta in mind -- so strong and so apparent that there is a danger of reducing complexities which puzzled

Byron himself to a facile simplification or of crowding out other possible meanings that he might have consciously attached to his phrase. He may have meant, as we shall see, his rejection of Shelley's philosophical views, which emerges in Manfred -- and more mildly in the journal-letter -- or perhaps the confusion accompanying his attempt to develop a philosophy of his own. But while no one can know exactly how much Byron consciously included in his "something else," it logically encompasses every influence -- conscious and unconscious -- other than Alpine scenery -- everything that explains why the Staubbach and the Jungfrau worked so strangely on his imagination. Through an understanding of as many of the forces as can be known, it is possible to appreciate the power and sincerity of the emotional energy discharged in Manfred.

The experience which can be traced as the ultimate source of this energy is the crime of incest with his half-sister Augusta. In more than one respect I regret that this must be the sine qua non of my case, for aside from my reluctance to magnify this blemish in a man whose suffering and striving were perhaps more than sufficient atonement, there is the practical problem of explaining why I accept Byron's guilt as a fact, while there are still some who have not given up his defense. Marchand gives such diehards a little more than is due them when he comments in a footnote that "It is true that the extant evidence does not amount to legal proof, for

eyewitnesses are out of the question in such a case, certain papers are unavailable, if they have not been destroyed, and some of the witnesses would be dismissed by any judge as prejudiced or unreliable. All that can be said is that the circumstantial evidence in Byron's letters can not be ignored, and that certain aspects of his life and correspondence can not be explained sensibly in any other terms."²¹ The demand for legal proof is, as Marchand implies, an irrelevant and impossible requirement, which he perhaps dignifies too much by mentioning it. Legalistic quibbles were invited in the first place by the anti-Byron faction, when they attempted to show that they could build a case against him which would hold up in court. The entirely superfluous book by Sir John Fox,²² which culminated these efforts, muddied the waters and raised a welcome side issue for those who would seize upon anything which might help to refute the exceedingly unpleasant but well founded arguments of Astarte. I sympathize with the impulsive reaction against Lovelace, for I am repelled by the tone of smug, ruthless righteousness which he seems to have inherited from his grandmother, Lady Byron, but I prefer the crisp justice of Ethel Mayne in this matter to the magnanimity of Marchand. She says:

Of the late Lord Lovelace's Astarte (1905), the text of this book says enough. Astarte gives us vivid evocations of Lady Byron and Mrs. Leigh, and it has, besides, the supreme merit of unassailable

documents -- to a degree which makes the sole attempt at refutation a mere monument of absurdity.²³ Writing in 1912, she of course had in mind Richard Edgcumbe's strange book, which sets highly inventive speculation against Lovelace's documents.²⁴ But there is no reason to suppose that her endorsement of Astarte would be shaken by the abstruse arguments that G. Wilson Knight offers to show that sodomy, not incest, was the proclivity which Lady Byron found to be unendurably repulsive in her lord.²⁵ Immediately connecting this controversy with Manfred are some comments by Chew in his Dramas of Lord Byron, which, appearing three years after Miss Mayne's biography, would hardly have changed her mind. Chew suggests that Manfred reflects Byron's remorse over behaving uncharitably to Mary Chaworth-Musters, who is also a pivotal figure in Edgcumbe's book. The case rests teeteringly upon two facts: (1) In "The Dream," which Byron wrote in the summer of 1816, there is a nostalgic and sentimental reminiscence of his boyish passion for this lady, (2) Byron had once said he thought of her as a sister. Thus she becomes the actual counterpart of Astarte, the sister whom Manfred loved and destroyed.²⁶ The fact that Edgcumbe was quick to applaud this view is an inverse tribute which Chew accepted gracefully but coolly.²⁷

This extremely brief sketch of the controversy is as much as I may fit into the confines of this study. To the objection that I have not adequately supported my indispensable

assumption that incest was what specifically weighed upon Byron's conscience, I plead that no purpose would be served by another sorting and interpretation of the facts and conjectures. Certainly nothing I could say would alter the opinion of those who remain unconvinced after reading Astarte; so I will content myself with addressing those who are already of my persuasion.

But even though this clear connection between Byron's remorse and Manfred's has been widely acknowledged, there has been no systematic review of the evidence which shows why it is that the attack of remorse, perhaps the most dangerous of Byron's life, should strike in the fall of 1816, two years after the end of the relationship with Augusta and three years after its beginning. The concurrence of several misfortunes has been assumed to have brought on despondency and perhaps a perverse yearning for the solace which Augusta, who loved and understood him, could provide.²⁸ But such assumptions do not take into account a causality which connects his misfortunes in such a way as to make their effect cumulative rather than aggregate. Once the piling up of disappointment and frustration upon one painful point in his consciousness is appreciated, the question of sincerity almost disappears. An accompanying benefit derived from a review of the circumstances leading up to the crisis in 1816 is that it offers an insight into why it is that the most Byronic of Byron's works were produced between the inception of his remorse in 1813 and

and the purgation of it in 1816.

In June, 1813, The Giaour, the first of the romantic tales, appeared. Excluding Childe Harold on the grounds that as Byron's transparent alter ego he seldom takes on a fictitious life of his own, we find that the Giaour is the first embodiment of the character that is to become known as the Byronic Hero. While it is true that this creation antedates Byron's involvement with Augusta Leigh, the poem did not long remain innocent of the consequences of this new experience, for in the additions which he composed during July and August for inclusion in later printings -- afterthoughts so extensive as to make the fifth edition, published at the end of August, nearly twice as long as the first -- the new influence is exerted. "His turning back to The Giaour at this time was an escape from the quandary into which recent events, and particularly his relationship with Augusta, had thrown him. Getting back into its moods offered him the truest catharsis. The lines he had written to free himself from another emotional crisis [his parting from Lady Oxford] he found most applicable to his present state of mind."²⁹ And much of the new material stresses the characteristic guilt which the hero shares with his creator and bequeaths through a succession of heroes to Manfred, the last of the line.

In the fall of 1813, the impact of his remorse had begun to alarm Byron; and, turning again to the palliative with which he had experimented in The Giaour, he attempted to lose

himself in the composition of The Bride of Abydos. His own description of the state of his feelings at this time strongly foreshadows the admission already quoted of his being "half mad" over the nightmare of his own delinquencies in the summer of 1816: "It [The Bride of Abydos] was written in four nights to distract my dreams from xx. Were it not thus, it had never been composed; and had I not done something at that time, I must have gone mad."³⁰ Compared to Manfred, this tragic little romance is tame indeed, for it creates a fabulous atmosphere, which makes the problems of its hero remote. Even the incest motif was ultimately disguised as love between cousins for a time imputed to be brother and sister. It is not likely that Byron would say of Manfred as he did of The Bride of Abydos: "I am much more indebted to the tale than I can ever be to the most partial reader; as it wrung my thoughts from reality to imagination -- from selfish regrets to vivid recollections."³¹ Manfred provided relief in its way -- a more effectual way, which Byron took three years to discover -- but it kept him well aware of the most terrifying realities.

His remarks on The Bride of Abydos set the tone of his most significant ventures, literary and actual of these three intervening years, which are dominated by experiment and failure. In Lord Byron: the Record of a Quest, Lovell perceives a part of this experimentalism, when he remarks on Byron's search for a spiritual cure,³² but being interested

primarily in the failure of Nature to fill the need, Lovell is not concerned with its place among several parallel failures. Neither does he find it useful to remark that the quest -- if the word is to be taken to mean a search for something earnestly desired -- is confined to a three-year period, beginning in 1813 with the incestuous relationship and ending in 1816 with the discovery of an effective spiritual cure. Unquestionably, the poems written before and after this period are pertinent to his study of Byron's developing attitudes toward Nature; but, unless two sharp turning points in Byron's spiritual life are blurred, these poems cannot be considered pertinent to the quest itself. Until 1813, there was no real spiritual ailment; and after the composition of Manfred, the cure was complete. There are, as Lovell usefully observes, two attitudes toward nature in the juvenilia and in the first two cantos of Childe Harold -- one that it is picturesquely delightful, the other that it is a reminder to the guilty person of his estrangement from the wholesome world.³³ But if, as Lovell also observes, Byron is merely adopting these attitudes from eighteenth-century poetry and Dr. Moore's Zeluco, then certainly Byron has not yet begun any serious quest of his own. The second chapter of this study will show that the early spiritual ills he suffered were largely imaginary. It is only after the experience of real, rather than poetically induced, guilt that he turns to Nature for the fulfillment of an urgent personal need --

self-forgetfulness. Though Lovell emphasizes Byron's significant failure to assimilate, in the 1816, Shelley's mystical doctrines, his consideration of poems composed after Manfred as evidence of a continuing quest through Nature distorts what is most significant about the failure -- its finality. When Byron turned to Nature again, he expected, and needed, nothing from it. If the search for a spiritual cure is shorter than Lovell would have it, it is also broader. It involves not only Nature but every other promising means to that escape from reality which Byron mistakenly prescribed for himself. The constant and all-inclusive quest during this distinct period of his life was sustained by that illusion. It is possible to demonstrate that the collective failure of the several ventures that constituted this quest is the chief cause of his despair in the fall of 1816.

One of his lesser, non-poetical attempts to assuage his feeling of guilt would be too trivial to mention if it were not that the consequences of its failure were tremendous. It is well known that Byron, in his conversation and correspondence, dropped dark hints of what was troubling him. His motive, of course, was not simple nor was it unmixed with irrational impulse -- a reprehensible desire, perhaps, to glory in an audacious diabolism or to bolster his courage by his own bravado. But an important part of this complex motive was undoubtedly the desire to unburden his conscience. Even if what is dubious about the testimony of the Earl of

Lovelace is dismissed, his allegation that Byron was exceedingly indiscreet in conversation holds up well.³⁴ Unpleasant gossip had spread as early as the spring of 1814, and it is unlikely that its ultimate source was anyone other than Byron himself. Marchand quotes brief excerpts from Hobhouse's diary, which, coming from this source, are inescapably persuasive. Of a conversation with Kinnaird, Hobhouse wrote on May 19, 1814, "We made mutual confessions of frightful suspicions." Coupling this with an entry of May 16, 1814 -- "Today I discover a frightful sign of what I yet know not" -- Marchand quite reasonably concludes "that Byron had hinted at some dark secret in his private life."³⁵ In the bitter sequel, Byron's confiding in others emerged as one of the great blunders of his life, for the small weight it lifted from his spirits in 1813 and 1814 was returned with interest in 1816 at a time when it was even more difficult to bear. Then with all his enemies heartened by his separation, the rumor, revived and embellished, played its part in making England intolerable to him. Moreover, it is unlikely that Lady Byron would ever have become suspicious enough to seek a confession from Augusta, if he had not dropped many indiscreet hints. His interest in Nemesis, which burgeoned in 1816,³⁶ shows that he was too well attuned to the irony of fate not to perceive that he had helped to fashion this effective instrument of torture and had placed it in merciless hands. Lines 23-24 in the "Epistle to Augusta" also reveal

an awareness of his own complicity in his ruin:

I have been cunning in mine overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe.

The confidante to whom he turned most frankly for solace and advice during the troubled time between the summer of 1813 and his marriage was Lady Melbourne, always an appreciative audience to his accounts of his "scrapes." Her amiable cynicism had never failed to shine warmly on him -- even during the grotesque perplexities of his affair with her son's wife. But when he told her of his plan to take Augusta to Sicily with him in June, 1813, she wrote: "You are on the brink of a precipice, and if you do not retreat, you are lost for ever -- it is a crime for which there is no salvation in this world, whatever there may be in the next."³⁷ If Byron had assumed that almost any vice was tolerable in Regency society, provided it was discreetly veiled, he was merely reasoning from experience gained since he was admitted to it on the morning he "awoke to find [himself] famous." And though his own Calvinistic sense of sin was not wholly obliterated by later experience, the vestige that remained had strength enough only to add piquancy to his fashionable indulgence in vice. But the discovery that he had stepped beyond the pale of Regency sophistication undoubtedly alarmed him more than is indicated by his abandonment of the voyage he had proposed.³⁸

Although Lady Melbourne's admonition did agitate his conscience, it did not, however, cause an essential amendment

of his conduct. Her interest and affection were, nevertheless, undiminished by the progress of the new "scrape" and she remained a wholesome influence. Understandably she was more concerned with the breaking of the dangerous liaison than she was with the rehabilitation of his conscience, which, if she thought of it at all, she believed would follow upon his separation from Augusta. But even in this first step she failed, for despite fitful attacks of sincere remorse, the affair continued in a pattern described by Byron in his famous "Stanzas for Music":

We repent, we abjure, we will break from our chain, --

We will part, -- we will fly to -- unite it again!³⁹

The "bitterest blackness" of his soul, of which he speaks in this same poem, is not, it would seem, chastening or constant enough to inspire a radical correction. Similarly, his protestations of remorse in his letters to Lady Melbourne seem to be overbalanced by the outburst of elation in a letter written on April 25, 1814, ten days after the birth of Augusta's daughter Medora:

Oh, but it is worth while, I can't tell you why,
and it is not an "Ape," and if it is that is my
fault; however I will positively reform. You
must however allow that it is utterly impossible
I can be half so well liked elsewhere, and I have
been all my life trying to make someone love me
and never got the sort I preferred before.⁴⁰

This letter also marks the conclusive failure of the first remedy which Byron was more than willing to try at Lady Melbourne's suggestion -- the seduction of some other woman. The sequel, his half-hearted wooing of Frances, the wife of his friend James Wedderburne Webster, is worthy of the restoration stage. Conscious that he was being a good patient, Byron wrote reports to Lady Melbourne on the progress of this therapy. Proceedings stayed narrowly within the realm of comedy, for when the coy heroine timorously offered her surrender, Byron responded in the same sentimental vein and "spared her."⁴¹ And though for a few weeks he was able to talk about the seriousness of his intentions, and even about how they had become honorable, it is clear that the sparing resulted less from generosity than lack of ardor.

And his subsequent adventures of this sort, though seldom so innocent, had no more effect than this toward removing the cause of his spiritual disorder or alleviating its effect. If any hope of transplanting his affections through intrigue had lingered as late as 1816, it was certainly not hardy enough to survive his affair with Jane Clairmont. Cast again as the reluctant lover -- this time of a girl who had "scrambled eight hundred miles to unphilosophize"⁴² him -- he became increasingly embittered with her as irritation succeeded indifference. The affair probably added its weight to his despondency by making him prize more highly his "love inextinguishable" for Augusta and by confirming his growing belief

that his emotional debilitation was so complete as to preclude the consolation of a new love.

Although it would be a distortion to regard his marriage as no more than an alternative remedy compounded when the first had failed, it can be demonstrated that both Lady Melbourne and Byron regarded his moral reclamation as most important among the advantages which the match offered. For example, in a letter to her on October 4, 1814,⁴³ he speaks of the promise of "redemption for two persons." The two persons are himself and Augusta, for not even her worst enemy would suppose that Anne Isabella Milbanke was one of the two, though he might mutter that this was just the trouble with her. And it would seem that the marriage did bring about the hoped-for amendment, as Augusta averred during Lady Byron's methodical dismantling of her conscience during the summer of 1816,⁴⁴ and as Byron bluntly declared in 1820: "Her [Augusta's] life & mine -- and yours [sic] [Lady Byron's] & mine -- were two things perfectly distinct from each other -- when one ceased the other began -- and now both are closed [sic]."⁴⁵

The reformation of his conduct, however, was not so salubrious to his spirit as he had expected; and throughout her life with him, sporadic eruptions of his profound agitation terrified his wife. The earliest outburst occurred on their honeymoon and was occasioned by Lady Byron's asking about the unwitting incest in Dryden's Don Sebastian. The innocent question aroused his suspicions so violently that he

menaced her with his dagger.⁴⁶ Another revealing aspect of his behavior, his penchant for dropping strong hints to Lady Byron about the cause of his disquietude, is well described by Marchand: "Like a man irresistibly drawn to the brink of a precipice, he constantly hinted at the thing that obsessed him."⁴⁷

But in one very strange and sinister way his marriage did lift some of the burden of self-accusation from him. By a twisted logic, dangerously close to that of a madman, he was able to represent his wife to himself as the real cause of his agony. If she had not, he reasoned, rejected his first proposal of marriage in 1812, he would not have become embroiled in the "summer adventure" of 1813. The germ of the idea began to sprout several months before the wedding. "I am quite horrified in casting up my moral accounts of the intervening years [since his proposal of 1812], all of which would have been prevented, and the heartache into the bargain, had she -- but I can't blame her. . ." he wrote to Lady Melbourne on September 23, 1814.⁴⁸ A month later he is somewhat less reluctant to blame her. "My only regret is her having taken so long a period to decide upon a very simple proposition; when had she but said the same thing two years, even a year ago, what confusions and embarrassments, good and bad, might have been prevented. . . As it was, in my pursuit of strong emotions and mental drams, I found them, to be sure; and intoxicated myself accordingly, but now I am sobered my

head aches, and my heart too."⁴⁹ And at about the same time he sounded the opening notes of this motif in his correspondence with his fiancée herself and soon apologized for having done so.⁵⁰ But the motif was picked up while they were at Halnaby and repeated as long as they lived together. Whatever sadistic pleasure this brought was not enough, however, to provide appreciable comfort to a conscience that saw all too clearly where the blame lay. Lady Byron's awareness of this and its dangerous implications is clear in her letter to Hodgson in February, 1816: "I believe the nature of Lord B's mind to be most benevolent; but there may have been circumstances (I would hope the consequences, not the causes, of mental disorder) which would render an original tenderness of conscience the motive of desperation, even of guilt, when self-esteem had been forfeited too far."⁵¹

The considerable wounds to Byron's pride and reputation inflicted by the separation have been made clear enough by other commentators; but even more important in grasping the part that this melancholy event played as an increment to his already dangerous remorse is an appreciation of how deeply Byron must have felt the collapse of his best hope of redemption. Though his marriage had carried him no farther than a termination of his intimacy with Augusta, he had undoubtedly retained, in his more placid moments, at least, the hope that it might carry out the rest of what it had seemed to promise -- salvation from remorse. The separation, then, removed another

barricade between himself and despair.

His outrage at the tactics of Lady Byron's family, his excitement over new sights and acquaintances on the continent, and his escape through the composition of poetry provided a few months of respite, but they could do no more than delay the approach of the giant; and, one by one, these defenses gave way. Several significant facets of his state of mind at the time of the separation proceedings are revealed in a letter to Thomas Moore: "Her nearest relatives are a **** -- my circumstances have been and are in a state of great confusion -- my health has been a good deal disordered, and my mind ill at ease for a considerable period. Such are the causes (I do not name them as excuses) which have frequently driven me into excess, and disqualified my temper for comfort. . . . It is nothing to bear the privations of adversity. . . ; but my pride recoils from its indignities. However, I have no quarrel with that same pride, which will, I think buckler me through every thing."⁵²

And his pride did protect him for several months as he fulminated against his enemies, but it clearly faltered when he sanctioned Madame de Staël's attempt at a reconciliation between himself and his wife.⁵³ The failure of this so stung him that he wrote in September, 1816, the "Lines on Hearing That Lady Byron Was Ill," which intemperately brands her as "the moral Clytemnestra of her lord." But with the injury to his pride so expensively requited, he was left with not even

his anger to bolster him as he faced the extinction of the flimsy hope, which he had humiliated himself to keep alive.

The excitement of travel also bolstered his defenses temporarily. Waterloo, the Rhine, the Alps, and Lake Geneva were refreshing distractions, whose effects upon Byron's spirit merge inseparably with those of the escape poetry which they inspired. Canto III of Childe Harold shows Byron's characteristic escapism in its descriptive and journalistic passages -- for example, his vivid recreation of the opening of the Battle of Waterloo and his ruminations on the great men whom he associated with Lake Geneva -- Rousseau, Voltaire, and Gibbon. But other passages, which will soon be discussed, foreshadow a dissatisfaction with the experiences and with their poetic expression, which will culminate in Manfred. An adequate testimony to his awareness of having reached the end of the stimulation offered by change of scene is contained in the portion of the Journal-Letter quoted above, in which he remarks on the inability of the Alpine scenery to divert him from his own wretchedness. But more evidence will be presented incidentally when the time comes to consider his rapid retreat from the view of nature which he had assumed while under Shelley's influence.

Quite properly, much has been said of the importance of this influence upon Childe Harold, for it is unlikely that any other acquaintance of Byron's was ever so powerful an intellectual stimulant. But what has not been noted is the

timeliness of Shelley's entrance into Byron's life, for never before or afterwards was Byron to be so susceptible to a new philosophic vision of the world as in the summer of 1816, the period when the desire to escape the terrifying fixtures in his mind was most intense. And this new vision has a place among Byron's attempted "cures" which is hardly second to his marriage in respect to the sanguinity of his initial hopes. Shelley was a new and infectious intimate to Byron, whose circle of friends had little taste for abstract speculation. The contagion of Shelley's enthusiasm is evident in the strains of Platonism and Wordsworthian pantheism, which are so clearly heard in the passages on Lake Geneva in Canto III of Childe Harold. There are in these a zeal so reminiscent of the young Wordsworth as to make the old Wordsworth peevish⁵⁴ and a metaphysic derived from Shelley, who felt no proprietary rights to it. Though the faith itself is essentially as old as Plato, Byron's testament is fresh and authentic.

All heaven and earth are still -- though not in sleep,
 But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
 And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep: --
 All heaven and earth are still. From the high host
 Of stars to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,
 All is concentr'd in a life intense,
 Where not a beam nor air nor leaf is lost,
 But hath a part of being, and a sense
 Of that which is of all Creator and defence.⁵⁵

Lovell's observation that "the pantheistic and 'mystical' passages in Byron's poetry are the product of a limited literary influence -- the expression neither of deeply satisfying spiritual experience nor of settled intellectual conviction"⁵⁶ is essentially true, but unfortunately it encourages an unjust skepticism of the intense sincerity with which the passages were written, and there is already too much skepticism of this sort in regard to Byron's literary and nonliterary utterances, as I have tried to show. That the passages did not represent "settled conviction" in one sense of the word settled is obvious enough, for his belief in these new principles was short-lived, hardly surviving up to the time of Shelley's departure for England. But the word also suggests that the belief was not, even briefly, established deeply and seriously in Byron's mind, and this suggestion is belied by evidence of how fervently and thoroughly he did believe for a time.

His hopeful enthusiasm for his new metaphysical outlook is strongly, if artlessly, expressed in the "Epistle to Augusta." Here he does not try to recreate poetically the tranquility of the mystical experience, as in Childe Harold, thus exposing himself to the suspicion of limited literary influence; but rather he is speaking directly of the new realm of experience that he has entered.

The world is all before me; I but ask
 Of Nature that with which she will comply --
 It is but in her summer's sun to bask,

To mingle with the quiet of her sky,
 To see her gentle face without a mask,
 And never gaze on it with apathy.
 She was my early friend, and now shall be
 My sister -- till I look again on thee.⁵⁷

Like the religious convert he resembles in several other ways, he confesses and deprecates his former errors.

I feel almost at times as I have felt
 In happy childhood; trees, and flowers, and brooks
 Which do remember me of where I dwelt
 Ere my young mind was sacrificed to books,
 Come as of yore upon me. . . .
 Had I but sooner learnt the crowd to shun,
 I had been better than I now can be;
 The passions which have torn me would have slept;
 I had not suffer'd, and thou hadst not wept.⁵⁸

On the surface, Byron's swift and extreme apostasy after Shelley's departure appears to testify to the feebleness of his conviction. Philosophically, pantheism and Zoroastrianism are at opposite poles, and Byron sped from one to the other in a month. Considered carefully, however, the depth of depression which was created when his hopes of salvation through nature ceased to support him is impressive testimony to the height to which these enthusiastic hopes had lifted him. Between the Wordsworthian sentiments of the poems composed in the summer of 1816 and the Zoroastrian premises of

Manfred, there is a relationship, a relationship of almost symmetrical contrast; for Nature, the "quiet" and "gentle friend" he had spoken of in the "Epistle to Augusta," becomes in Manfred, a malignant creation ruled by destructive -- though sometimes beautiful -- daemons; and the Platonic unity perceived in Childe Harold becomes a warring duality. Though a closer analysis of the religious and philosophical questions raised in Manfred must be deferred until Chapter III, it has been essential to the present purpose of discussing the personal impulses behind Manfred to point out the sudden and utter collapse of Byron's optimistic philosophizing -- an important cause of the desperate mood which engendered the poem -- and to try to account for it.

There is at hand an abundance of partial or oversimplified explanations, which need evaluation and synthesis. Of almost no use is Maurcis' superficial comment -- "Lose himself in the beauty of the whole? How were such things possible for the great egotist!"⁵⁹ Egotism, though it encompasses a number of Byron's traits and though it theoretically would be an impediment on the Platonic ladder, is not directly involved in the causes of Byron's desperation; the "nightmare of his own delinquencies," a force which is directly involved, grows out of an inescapable consciousness of self, a condition, as his lady put it, in which "self esteem had been forfeited too far" -- but to label the implied self-condemnation as egotism is extremely facile

logic and terminology.

Lovell's study suggests some interesting reasons for the sudden blight on Byron's spirit. One of these, already commented on in another connection, is that the pantheism of Childe Harold did not represent "deeply satisfying spiritual experience" or "settled conviction." Others are some formidable though indistinct tendencies in Byron's mind -- "mobilité," sometimes known as his "chameleon disposition," and a "hard sense of fact"⁶⁰ -- which militate against this shallow, unsettled outlook. What is mysterious about them is that they seem to be inscrutable first causes. The reviewer who remarks on Lovell's use of the term Calvinism as a makeweight to balance any psychological equation might have made the same observation in regard to these two terms.⁶¹ A full explanation of how Byron's mobilité has been often misunderstood and exaggerated must be deferred until Chapter II. A question which is raised by the other makeweight is why it was that the "sense of fact" was not operating so well in July and August of 1816 as it was in September.

The departure of Shelley, who appropriately took back to England with him the manuscripts of the poems which Byron had composed while inspired by his metaphysics, perhaps gave some impetus to Byron's incipient despondency. But it has been overemphasized by those who attribute too much to the miracle of mobilité, which is supposed to be invoked by a change of scene or company. The earliest indications of disenchantment

with Shelley's gospel appear well before the younger poet took his departure. Byron had refused, for example, the invitation to accompany Shelley on his tour of Chamouni, and it is unlikely that he was motivated only by his weariness with "Claire." Claire-Elaine Engel would rightly have it that "l'idealisme ethere de Shelley avait fini par l'exasperer,"⁶² and this is a development which would not, to say the least, have been alleviated by Shelley's continued presence. Another circumstance which would have to be over-emphasized is the arrival at Diodati of John Cam Hobhouse, that "enemy of fine sentiments," whose views of Byron's recent poetry were harsh, if not contemptuous. But it is a mistake to assume that Byron attuned his thoughts along with his demeanor to suit his friend's skeptical temperament. The presence of self-pity in the Journal-Letter and the metaphysics of Manfred show that Byron continued to entertain sentiments and ideas that his companion would have scoffed at. An amusing example of how Byron's lyrical agonizing struck, or failed to strike, Hobhouse is the latter's parody of "Though the Day of My Destiny's Over." It is unlikely that Byron was deeply stung by the reaction to this poem and the recent accretion to Childe Harold, which he had ill advisedly shown Hobhouse, for he had learned to expect such jibes from his old friend, but it is clear that he took care not to expose himself to more ridicule. And so well did he conceal how he really felt that Hobhouse was able to report to Augusta

on her brother's tranquility,⁶³ while Byron was, in fact, contemplating "blowing his brains out." If it is insisted that here Byron shows a likeness to the chameleon, no one could disagree, as long as it is clear that the changes in coloration go no deeper than the skin. But beneath these superficial adjustments and independent of them an inevitable temperamental and intellectual reaction was taking place, a reaction to his failure to find in anything he had tried, the balm his spirit needed. And though Hobhouse had nothing to contribute to the reaction itself, it is very likely that, in being far less receptive than Shelley might have been to any discussion of the ethical and metaphysical principles which were being compounded with an obsessive problem, he kept the lid on the cauldron until it was ready to explode.

The chief difficulty with attributing Byron's apostasy to a "hard sense of fact" is the implication that he simply resumed an objective, if not skeptical outlook on experience. To begin with, this implication is not consistent with Lovell's own allegation that the "Zeluco theme" reasserts itself in Manfred, for this theme, since it involves a woe-ful inability to respond joyfully to the beauty of Nature, obviously cannot represent Nature as perceived through a "sense of fact." But, furthermore, Lovell does not observe the importance of the evidence that Byron has progressed far beyond Zeluco's type of melancholy -- to a point where guilt-laden passivity to the solicitations of Nature has been replaced by a very active response -- specifically an awareness

of its malignant and menacing aspects. This progress can be traced in his Journal-Letter to Augusta, in which he registers a growing consciousness that nature could seem terrible and malign; and if anyone insists that it was a "sense of fact" that underlay this altered outlook, he is committed to the view that Byron's impressions of "frozen hurricanes" and "oceans of hell," for example, are purely objective. Though, as even Wordsworth discovered -- without the belated aid of Aldous Huxley -- it is fallacious to regard nature as a consistently tender nurse and teacher, a diametrically opposite view involves a fallacy as well. If he were being a passive or factual observer, Byron would have found less terrifyingly subjective images for glaciers and clouds. However, to give the "sense of fact" its due, it should be conceded that intellectual honesty -- certainly a related, but not identical tendency -- undoubtedly belongs among the forces which propelled Byron to this extreme. The distorted way in which he now saw his surroundings was clearly the result of his returning to those facts in his experience which excited terror and despair.

And this opens the way to a satisfactory explanation of why the radical change in his philosophical attitudes took place. It is by now clear that the one consistent motive throughout the three-year period since the summer of 1813 was the belief that there was a means of escape. As each way failed he persisted in believing that another would work.

But with the renunciation of pantheism, he renounced his faith in escapism as well. These renunciations were forced on him simply because by this time he had experienced abundant proof that he could not keep his mind fixed on innocuous thoughts. He was constitutionally not able to avoid looking squarely at his problems, but it took him three years to learn that he was not. That Wordsworthian philosophy served as his final lesson is paradoxically a tribute to its efficacy. If it had not been so promising, its failure would not have so thoroughly convinced him that the case was hopeless. And if it had not provided a wholesome respite, his sensitivity to the pain of recollection would not have been so strongly restored.

The poetry composed during his stay in Switzerland reveals the progress and ultimate loss of the struggle to escape. The contrasting moods of this poetry have been observed by many commentators, but none of them have proceeded to the extremely important observation that Byron is learning by trial and error a significant truth about his own personality and the relationship of his poetry to it. Out of these experiments will come the lesson that poetry can provide, not escape, but release. Professor Straumann, to take a recent example, perceives how Byron at this time revealed an ambivalent reaction to the things around him, a tendency to see in the same object a cause for joy and sorrow.⁶⁵ John Galt, to take an early example, sees somewhat the same duality,

although his approach to it is different, for he illuminates this tendency in Byron by showing the painfully meditative passages in Childe Harold as premonitory of the emotional storm in Manfred.⁶⁶ The approach that will be most rewarding in the present study is in no way at odds with either of these views, but it will place its emphasis upon how this poetry signals the decisive crisis in a long conflict.

The issue that is in balance is between the two ends which Byron's creative life served -- escape and catharsis. One of many utterances of the same tenor is this confession of Byron's: "To withdraw myself from myself (oh that cursed selfishness!) has ever been my sole, my entire, my sincere motive in scribbling at all."⁶⁷ It is already clear that this motive was behind his turning of his fresh external and internal experiences into poetry, and several of the most frequently quoted passages from Childe Harold are, like the metaphysical one quoted above, almost perfect accomplishments of his desire to withdraw from himself. Significantly, however, he is unable to sustain the desired condition for more than a few stanzas before his "cursed selfishness" reasserts itself, simply because the fleeting mood cannot be bound by self-deception or imposition of the will (a further answer, by the way, to those who doubt its sincerity). Though welcome, it is uncontrived and spontaneous. Otherwise it would not elude Byron so quickly as it does when a chance association brings something unpleasant to mind.

An illustration of this elusiveness can be seen in Stanzas LXXXV through XCVII of Childe Harold, Canto III. The passage, which begins with an apostrophe to "clear, placid Leman," continues through seven stanzas of peaceful, meditative reflections; then, in Stanza XCII, is the description of an approaching storm, the thunder of which is the voice of the "joyous Alps" and, in the next stanza "mountain-mirth." But, in the stanzas following, the thought and imagery turn to parted lovers, left with an "age of years all winters;" to bolts of lightning searching out remnants in already desolate places; to tempests "within the human breast;" and, completing the return to self, to the desire to express in lightning "that which is within me." And this pattern can be traced in most of the poetry written during the three-year period when Byron's conscience was most intensely troubled: the alternating functions of escape and catharsis succeed one another rapidly -- escape whenever he is able to respond to new places, new ideas, new companions (or to his evocations of pleasurable past experience) -- catharsis, usually in the form of autobiographical complaint, whenever his enthusiasms flag or he encounters some reminder of his wretchedness. It is remarkable that Byron himself did not see sooner that the cycle usually goes on to complete itself in the purgation of his emotions, which then clears the way for the return of extra-personal concerns, just as the stormy night of the passage just examined is succeeded by

"the dewy morn . . . laughing the clouds away."

The other poems written during the summer of 1816 reveal these alterations of mood. Some -- the "Stanzas to Augusta," the "Incantation" (later incorporated into Manfred), and the "Lines on Hearing That Lady Byron Was Ill" -- are almost exclusively purgative. Others -- the "Epistle to Augusta," "The Dream," "Darkness," "Prometheus," -- like Childe Harold -- are inspired by the need for escape but lapse, nevertheless, into self-revelation. None of the poems of the period -- except the "Monody on the Death of Sheridan," which despite Byron's real affection for the man, has the generic insipidity and impersonality of occasional pieces -- is successful in maintaining a painless objectivity. It may seem that The Prisoner of Chillon should be noted as another exception; but its concern with humanitarian ideals and remote events is connected with a wronged and embittered hero, with whom Byron could feel a spiritual kinship. The hope that Byron himself had begun to nourish for redemption through a reattunement with nature is implicit in the prisoner's attainment of peace, in the fashion of the Ancient Mariner, through the dawning of love for the little bird.⁶⁸

In the light of Byron's avowed desire to employ composition as a diversion from his troubles it might be guessed that he would be displeased with the subjective turns that his muse often took. In confirmation of such a guess, one could

cite his remarks on his escapist desire "to withdraw from himself," his belief that the Bride of Abydos prevented him from going mad, and his confession of having burned in 1813, the beginnings of a comedy and a novel because "the scene ran into reality."⁶⁹ And so it is likely that the purgative passages which Byron was unable to exclude from his poems were something like weeds to him, and that so long as he remained unconscious of their curative power, he would have preferred not to have them choking out the euphoric drugs he was trying to cultivate. Though it is easy to see that, when he did release the tendency against which he had been struggling in the unalloyed catharsis of Manfred, he struck upon the cure he desperately needed, there is no way of determining whether he was clearly conscious of why that cure was effective. He seems to have been drawn to it involuntarily and may not have paused to seek later on the theoretical cause for its practical success. But there is no such uncertainty about his awareness, at the end of the summer of 1816, that the distractive power of his poetry had ebbed away, for his disillusionment with his adopted philosophy is apparent, not only in the Journal-Letter, but in his compositions of September and October.⁷⁰

The trip through the Bernese Alps in September, which was to yield the beautiful and terrible scenery of Manfred, takes a place in the pattern of Byron's explorations of avenues of escape -- a place that is insignificant if judged

by duration or by the intensity of the hope pinned to it, but worthy of note because it marks the completion of the pattern. His response to the change of scene is, at the outset, characteristically enthusiastic; and, for a short time he is refreshed by the shepherds' pipes and the primitive surroundings, and is moved to recall his much happier days with Hobhouse in the mountains of Albania. Returning briefly to what may even be a revival of his hopes of June and July, he is able to speak of having "lately re-peopled [his] mind with nature." But the habitual alternation of mood comes upon him very quickly, causing him to see menacing and sinister reminders in each new scene. The forest of pines all withered reminds him of his own family. The beautiful Staubbach, the waterfall of iridescent mist, strikes him as the tail of the horse upon which death rides in the Apocalypse. And avalanches become a pelting of the devil with snowballs. Other nightmarish turns in his imagery have been noted above as has the despairing complaint with which he closes the journal of this tour that he has been unable to lose his own "wretched identity."

With another convincing failure fresh in his mind when he returned to Diodati from the Oberland on September 28, he was in no need of the further reminders which awaited him of how conviviality, intrigue, poetry, marriage, travel, and philosophy had all been unavailing as means of escape. But, almost as if fate were taunting him, he found letters which

epitomized all his frustrations and aggravated his feelings of guilt. There was an infuriating letter from "Claire" Clairmont, in which she may have struck far more deeply than she intended, for she began by supposing that he would be disappointed to find a letter from her rather than from Mrs. Leigh. This single sentence, particularly from this source, was certainly enough to inflame half a dozen regrets and frustrations connected with his persisting love for Augusta: guilt, loneliness, disquietude over not having heard from her, despair of seeking someone to supplant her in his affections, the apprehension that gossip about her was gaining strength, self-accusation for his part in starting the rumors. A second blow was the news of Madame de Staël's failure at a reconciliation with Lady Byron, which ended the ill-founded but nevertheless cherished hope that his marriage might save him in spite of himself. There was also a letter from Shelley praising his poetic gifts and predicting their further ascendancy, which, coming at a time when Byron had just confessed an inability to return to the mood which had engendered the praiseworthy poetry, could only have had a melancholy effect.⁷¹

With all his troubles so emphatically brought to a mind that characteristically tended to dwell upon them anyway, it may be safely assumed that Byron, like the hero he was about to create, found that his "eyes . . . closed only to look within." His retaliation against his adamant wife -- the

vituperative "Lines on Hearing That Lady Byron Was Ill" -- relieved his feeling of outrage; but in doing so it left him with no one to share the blame for the real causes of his dilemma. But at the same time it may have served as an additional object lesson in the effectiveness of composition as the "eruption of lava that prevents an earthquake." Both consciously and instinctively he was groping for a poetic catharsis of his central remorse. Like Manfred he urgently felt that his "pang must find a voice," but it is unlikely that the form his utterance was to take was premeditated, and that in this sense he was sincere in saying later that he did not know what possessed him. But that the groping was not entirely instinctive is suggested by his attempt earlier in the month at a novel which was to be a rather obvious allegory of his domestic difficulties. It is not strange that, with his emotions at a boil, he turned to the style and the type of hero which had brought solace before. Nor is it strange that with his recurrent disappointment with escape poetry he should employ these familiar elements in an attempt at catharsis. And even though the successful use of well-veiled allegory rather than direct complaint is rather new, it does have a precedent in The Prisoner of Chillon. But what is unprecedented and distinctive in Manfred has not thus far been accounted for, and that is its fascinating philosophical content.

The basis of Shelley's metaphysics was, as has been remarked, swept from Byron's mind in an extreme reaction,

but the questions that were raised persisted. If, for example, the cosmos were not unified and good, as Shelley believed, then what alternatives remained? This tendency to philosophize is perhaps the most powerful of the influences which shaped Manfred, and it is clearly what raises the play to a greater excellence and significance than its Byronic forebears. Manfred has been accurately called the "Byronic hero turned philosopher,"⁷² and it is quite unlikely that this metamorphosis could have occurred without Shelley's help.

Byron had, of course, read and discussed philosophy before but never very seriously. His protestations of free-thinking in Childe Harold and the arguments they occasioned with Dallas, along with professions in the same vein in his correspondence with Hodgson and with Miss Milbanke, are derivative and unremarkable, if not sophomoric.⁷³ His other intimates -- that is, those who were not vulnerably orthodox -- were, like Hobhouse, indifferent and sometimes hostile to metaphysical speculation. Byron's infection with this attitude shows itself in his comments on Coleridge's lectures, which are -- even with due allowances made for Coleridge's acknowledged abstruseness -- flippant and contemptuous.⁷⁴ Thus it was Shelley, whose breeding, talents, and proclivities (he was, after all, a gentleman, a poet, and a practicing opponent of conventional mores) must have quickly gained Byron's respect, probably impressed this man of the

world for the first time with the fact that an admirable person could take a sincere and enthusiastic interest in philosophy.

Moreover, Shelley did not merely talk about his beliefs; he lived by them. As an adept at uncovering fraud and hypocrisy, Byron had a corollary appreciation of how rare honesty and conviction were. One well-known episode, which put Shelley's credentials as a gentleman and philosopher to a convincingly severe test, developed when a dangerous squall struck the two on Lake Geneva. In contrast to the terrified boatmen, Shelley sat on the bottom of the foundering boat with arms folded. Since he could not swim, his main concern was with convincing Byron not to place himself in danger by trying to save him.⁷⁵ Their friendship was subsequently to be put under several strains: Shelley was constantly risking Byron's enmity in reminding him, however tactfully, of his responsibilities to "Claire," and Byron's intransigence in this matter must have put Shelley in the midst of much rancorous comment from Mary and "Claire."⁷⁶ For his own part, Shelley had reasons to criticize Byron for the coarse sensuality of his attachment to his Venetian mistresses⁷⁷ and on his excessive aristocratic pride; but he retained his respect for Byron's intellect and talents.⁷⁸ That Byron's regard for him also survived these vicissitudes is shown in his memorable tribute: "I never knew [a man] who was not a beast in comparison."⁷⁹ And along with this personal admiration,

his responsiveness to Shelley's ideas remained vital. Their meeting in Venice two years after their parting in Switzerland developed almost immediately a resumption of philosophical discussion. But Byron was no longer Shelley's pupil; he was rather his opponent in debate, for he had developed a pessimism which was in sharp conflict with Shelley's visionary faith. This debate is represented in Julian and Maddalo, but its beginnings can be traced to the vigorous dissent with Shelley's ideas which finds its expression in Manfred.

When Byron chose as the "motto" for Manfred, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy," he was obviously thinking of the demonology of the play. But Byron's habit of finding literary parallels with his own experiences makes it very likely that he regarded the quotation and his drama as a reply to Shelley, his optimistic Horatio during his Hamlet-like broodings in Switzerland. During the crisis at the end of September, 1816, the growing conviction that Shelley was wrong did not terminate metaphysical speculation. On the contrary, it engendered an obsession to explain why he was wrong, to create a metaphysic that fitted Byron's own empiric knowledge of the world. Since such an attempt was necessarily fused with the most painful and significant of his experiences, it led him deeper into a contemplation of his spiritual ills, rather than away from them as Shelley's metaphysic had done. And it tended to magnify and stress their significance because

they were now to occupy a place in a cosmic scheme. Reasons why they were almost too large and weighty to bear without further intensification have already been developed, so that it is now possible to wonder at the almost unimaginable ferment that was taking place with a rapidity to which the scant week spent on composition of Acts I and II impressively testifies. The emergence of this conflict in Manfred is observed by Marchand, who says that "the real drama" was in Byron's mind and that "the conflict was both personal and cosmic."⁸⁰

Although a close examination of the cosmic pattern that took shape must be deferred, it is essential to point out here that it is developed primarily in the first two acts of Manfred and that the moral and rational posture of the individual in it is not satisfactorily defined until Act III. Out of Byron's hyperactive consciousness there emerged a concept of a world dominated by evil and remote from the source of good to which the fettered spirit of man aspired. The plight of the individual was that there was no escape from the evil tendencies to which his flesh was allied, or from the incessant anguish which the spirit inflicted upon itself for having failed to resist these tendencies. Byron's attempt at a philosophy, then, had merely presented the dilemma with paralyzing clarity: his remorse was unendurable; yet it was everlasting because it was an intrinsic function of his indestructible spirit. It is not surprising, there-

fore, that thought and composition faltered once the problem had been presented in Acts I and II.

But, even though the uncompleted play did not present an intellectual solution, it did provide the emotional relief that he so desperately needed to get through what must be regarded as the most severe and dangerous psychological crisis of his life. It appropriately purged the haunting nightmare by bringing forth his deepest feelings of guilt in dreamlike symbol as well as in direct outcry. And this emotional catharsis was effective enough to dispel the obsessive urgency which had driven him to seek a metaphysical solution. The dilemma remained, and he was still unequipped to solve it, but the answer could wait until another day.

However, there was no "dewy morn . . . laughing the clouds away" after this prodigious storm. An "earthquake" had been prevented, but there are indications that his efforts had left his spirit enfeebled. On only one other occasion -- his brief visit to Constantinople -- had he entered a new country without registering his fresh impressions in Childe Harold. Not only did he fail to celebrate in this fashion his arrival in Italy by way of a temptingly scenic and historic route; but he went on to neglect serious composition entirely for some four months and failed to respond to Italy as a source of inspiration for nearly six. While the lightening of his personal burden enabled him, as his letters show, to take an alert and objective interest in his

fresh surroundings, his imagination had to feed on these new experiences for some time before it was sufficiently rehabilitated to sustain an attempt at completing Manfred. And in the process, Byron learned to look on the unsolved philosophical problem in a new light.

The restorative processes, which began in October 1816 and ended with the composition of a satisfactory Act III in May of the following year, passed through two stages, which may be chronologically divided by his departure from Venice for Rome on April 17, 1817. The first of these is his observation of and participation in a society whose mores were astonishingly lax, and which provided, in a way, an antidote to the shock occasioned by Lady Melbourne's warning that there was "no salvation in this world" for what he had confessed to her. The second stage is his reawakened response to the rich historical and literary associations of Ferrara and Rome.

His fascination, while he was at Milan, with the correspondence between Lucretia Borgia and Cardinal Bembo reveals that he was alertly receptive to any comforting parallels to his own iniquities. The encouragement and even amusement offered by the example of a woman who was unremorseful over crimes which reputedly included and exceeded incest prompted him to resume a diabolic note in a letter to Augusta, who, having grown "quite moral," was undoubtedly distressed by the implied reminiscence in the mention of the symbol ♄,

which she had once used as a signature in her correspondence with him. "And pray what do you think is one of her signatures? -- why this / a Cross -- which she says 'is to stand for her name &c.' Is not this amusing? I suppose you know that she was a famous beauty, & famous for the use she made of it; & that she was the love of this same Cardinal Bembo (besides a story about her papa Pope Alexander & her brother Caesar Borgia -- which some people don't believe -- & others do), and that after all she ended with being Duchess of Ferrara, and an excellent mother & wife also; so good as to be quite an example."⁸¹ If, as Marchand observes, Byron was shocked by the frankness of Italians in love matters,⁸² it was a pleasantly reassuring shock, a rekindling of capacities that he had prematurely mourned by writing his age as one hundred years in the register at the Hotel d'Angleterre,⁸³ and it was a shock which stunned any qualms not already purged by Manfred. Once again the lingering influences of his provincial upbringing added savor to the gossip which he heard and sometimes occasioned. There is in his early comments on Italian morality, up to and including Beppo, something of the sly salaciousness one might imagine in a citizen of Aberdeen on a Mediterranean holiday. This tone is taken in his retailing to Moore a story, which was also the fruit of his days in Milan, of a faithful lover's return, after having been excluded from Italy by the Napoleonic Wars, to his lady -- the Marchesa Castiglione. "The

Marchesa, mounting from reminiscence to reminiscence, through the lovers of the intermediate twenty-five years, arrived at last at the recollection of her povero sub-lieutenant. She then said, 'Was there ever such virtue,' (that was her very word) and, being now a widow, gave him apartments in her palace, reinstated him with all the rights of wrong, and held him up to the admiring world as a miracle of incontinent fidelity, and the unshaken Abdiel of abstinence."⁸⁴ The moral bias which makes the anecdote amusing is signaled by his use of the word wrong, and it is another face of the same attitude which had motivated, years earlier in his savage "Remember Thee," his startling accusation that Caroline Lamb was false to her husband. In Venice, of course, there were more numerous and flagrant evocations of this type of amusement, particularly during the carnival, which he greeted with delight. And with his conscience once more relegated to preparing sauce for his headlong adventures, it is not remarkable that the issues which had seethed in it a few weeks before shrank in importance.

Nor is it remarkable that this subjugation of conscience, impossible between his fatal involvement with Augusta and the composition of Manfred, brought with it a languor in his imagination, for it ended the pangs from which he had sought release in the Tales, Childe Harold, and the shorter pieces. Escape and catharsis were both, for the time, unnecessary; and they were never -- in the aftermath of Manfred -- to

become an obsessive need again. Besides the absorbing diversions offered by the foreign milieu, there was the great consolation of a new mistress, whose manner -- quite unlike the sentimental importunity of Caroline Lamb or Jane Clairmont, the solemn logicality of Miss Milbanke, and the furtiveness of his casual affairs -- dispelled his long-engrained certainty that his love for Augusta was unextinguishable. To her he wrote: "You can have no idea of my thorough wretchedness from the day of my parting from you till nearly a month ago though I struggled against it with some strength. At present I am better -- thank Heaven above -- & woman beneath -- and I will be a very good boy." In the same letter he had written: "This adventure came very opportunely to console me, for I was beginning to be 'like Sam Jennings very unhappy' but at present -- at least for a month past -- I have been very tranquil, very loving, & have not so much embarrassed myself with the tortures of the last two years and that virtuous monster Miss Milbanke, who had nearly driven me out of my senses."⁸⁵

His tranquility deepened into something close to apathy in consequence of overindulgence in the carnival and a debilitating fever. And it was in this totally incompatible mood that he wrote a concluding act to Manfred and sent the drama to John Murray for publication.⁸⁶ As was almost inevitable he had no solution to the quandary in which he had left himself and Manfred. What he produced was a flippant

circumvention of the philosophical question, in which the slapstick "pranks fantastical" -- used to discomfit an abbot whose good intentions are unconvincingly made suspect -- deprive the hero of dignity even in death. A sentence written at this time, which remains in the final version of the third act, perfectly conveys his intellectual and emotional torpor: "If that I did not know philosophy? To be of all our vanities the motliest,/ The merest word that ever fool'd the ear/
From out the schoolman's jargon, I should deem/ The golden secret, the sought 'Kalon,' found,/ And seated in my soul."⁸⁷

When Gifford, Murray's literary adviser, judged that, while the first act was "wonderfully poetic," he did not "by any means like" the third act, Byron understandably agreed: "The third Act is certainly d--d bad, and . . . has the dregs of my fever during which it was written. It must on no account be published in its present state. I will try and reform it, or re-write it altogether; but the impulse is gone, and I have no chance of making anything out of it. . . . The speech of Manfred to the Sun is the only part of this act I thought good myself; the rest is certainly as bad as bad can be, and I wonder what the devil possessed me."⁸⁸ If it were urged that Byron's immersion in sensuality after his fledgling flight into the metaphysical ether of the previous summer is a clear example of mobilité, the reply would clarify both the limitations of the term and the place which the late fall and winter take in his intellectual and artistic development. If mobilité

is to designate change and nothing more, all argument is at an end, for of course Byron, like anyone else, changed with the shaping experiences of his career. And he was involved at this point in the change which determined the direction of the last and most fruitful period of his life. He had outgrown and exhausted the ample but bitterly tainted springs of the poetry he had written during the height of his fame. His perception of this is his remark that he was "a devil of a man-nerist" and that after Manfred, he would "leave off."⁸⁹

Wordsworth and Coleridge, in very different circumstances, came to parallel crises, though the outcome was not so artistically fortunate for them as it was for Byron; and they recorded their responses to the faltering of their inspiration in "Resolution and Independence" and "Dejection: An Ode." It is safe to assume that mobilité was not connected with these profound changes. But if, as seems a fair definition, mobilité is the tendency to turn like a weathervane with each shift in the environmental wind, then it has little validity as an explanation of the change through which Byron was passing. He had cleared the way himself for the reaction that came; and though the temptation to live like a Venetian made that reaction more extreme, it was not the essential stimulant to the tendency to abandon philosophy for revelry. Nor is his escape, in the spring of 1817, from his inspirational doldrums, so much attributable to mobilité as it is to the constancy of his need to be creative. Even during

the winter, while his spent imagination lay dormant, with enough sensual pleasures on hand to drug any of its stirrings, he found that his "mind wanted something craggy to break upon," and so he went "every morning to the Armenian Convent (of friars not Nuns -- my child) to study the language."⁹⁰ He had also begun in February to explore the possibilities of writing a tragedy on Marino Faliero.⁹¹ In a brief figure, his conduct at Venice was an overshifting of the helm in setting himself on the course that his needs directed. Among a number of convincing indications that he had begun to make the correction, even before he began his trip to Rome in April, 1817, is his simple admission on March 25, "I can't stay in Venice much longer," in the midst of an account of external circumstances which would oblige a chameleon to retain its coloration.⁹²

Thus, when he departed about a month later, he was once more on the alert for any experiences which would speak directly to him. In such a mood, he had never before failed to find something congenial to his imagination in new surroundings; and, as was almost inevitable, he found inspiration -- this time at Ferrara among the reminders of Ariosto and Tasso. The turns his inventiveness took as he contemplated Tasso's cell and the melancholy history of its occupant were in several ways familiar. Certainly no commentators on The Lament of Tasso have failed to recognize its similarities to The Prisoner of Chillon; but of greater

importance in showing its place in Byron's maturing attitudes are its differences. Tasso was no political rebel; hence his confinement was meaningless, even from the standpoint of calculated evil. He had not opposed the tyranny of which he became the victim, nor had he any intention of pressing the hopeless love which had aroused suspicion. His imprisonment in a madhouse underlines the senselessness of his persecution and the danger to his own sanity which the contemplation of it threatens. "Remote/ From all communion with existence, save/ The maniac and his tyrant,"⁹³ he is obliged to find "in the innate force of [his] own spirit"⁹⁴ the fortitude to resist. And, though, for the sake of historical fidelity, he is a religious man, he is not encouraged to look outward for his salvation as is the Prisoner of Chillon upon the appearance of the symbolic little bird. Byron, then, was beginning to see that he had perhaps overestimated the craft and power of evil and underestimated the resources of his own spirit to resist it.

The parallels between "The Lament" and Manfred also show that he had returned to the unsolved personal and philosophical questions and had made some headway toward a solution. Tasso, like Manfred, experienced "the mind's canker in its savage mood,"⁹⁵ and "dream'd again the visions which arise without a sleep."⁹⁶ Another reminiscence too obvious to require comment appears in Tasso's recognition of his peril: "I thought mine enemies had been but Man,/ But

Spirits may be leagued with them -- all Earth/ Abandons,
 Heaven forgets me."⁹⁷ Unlike the Manfred of the first two
 acts, however, Tasso is equal to the combat, for he is en-
 abled to find solace in the idealization of his love and in
 the exercise of his power to create poetry, which will tran-
 scend and outlive the memory of his powerful persecutor.
 Byron's feeling that these two resources -- pure love and
 poetry -- were of no avail for him had been strongly, though
 allegorically, represented in Manfred. His love was fatal-
 ly tainted with guilt, and his poetic gifts, as symbolized
 in Manfred's magic, could not yield the forgetfulness which
 was his greatest desire. Now, as Byron created in his im-
 agination a character who was sustained by these resources,
 it seems likely that he was in the process of reviving his
 own hopes. With much of his sense of guilt exhausted in
Manfred and blunted by his experiences in Venice, he was
 perhaps purifying his own recollections of Augusta in find-
 ing parallels with Tasso's innocent but unfortunate pas-
 sion.⁹⁸ And the return of his own creative powers was ob-
 viously demonstrated in the composition of "The Lament"
 itself. But these revived hopes found no direct ex-
 pression in the third act; rather they lent conviction to
 the philosophical conclusion of Manfred, the faith that the
 human spirit can find within itself the strength to retain
 its integrity.

The decisive effect that contemplating the ruins of

Rome produced in Byron did find direct expression in the third act, but unfortunately in two obtrusive and disjointed passages. The first of these, an anecdote about Nero, ponderously explains the source of an unremarkable quotation that Manfred chooses to use: "It is too late."⁹⁹ The second touches inadequately on a potentially appropriate impression of the Coliseum by moonlight. Although this scene had deepened and, in fact, completed Byron's confidence in his own strength, it was some time after finishing Manfred that he was able to develop the logical as well as the emotional connection between this experience and the state of mind which he wished to represent in his hero. As he looks out of his tower, Manfred is reminded by the beautiful night that "in her [night's] starry shade/ Of dim and solitary loveliness,/ I learned the language of another world." But to Byron the language is still untranslatable, for the reminiscence which follows of the time when Manfred "stood within the Coliseum's wall,/ Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome" does not bring the details -- a dog's baying, an owl's cry, cypresses, and architectural ruins -- into any clear focus, except perhaps the stereotyped "graveyard" atmosphere, which is not what Byron is really striving for. Under the moon, which seems to represent eternity and the restorative powers of nature and time, "the place," vaguely, "became religion, and," irrelevantly, "the heart ran o'er/ With silent worship of the great of old." Byron's admission of defeat is implicit in

Manfred's perplexity: " 'T was such a night! / 't is strange that I recall it at this time."¹⁰⁰

It is not strange, though, that these perceptions are so badly presented, for Byron resumed work on Manfred after his arrival in Rome on April 29 and had sent it to his publisher by May 5.¹⁰¹ The refined analysis of the raw experience he hastily attempts to render in forty lines of the play occupies more than twice as many stanzas in Childe Harold. And it is to these that one must go for an appreciation of how Byron became spiritually and artistically rooted at last in a firm, stoical objectivity, which, because it now enabled him to see himself and his Sturm und Drang in perspective, resolved once and for all the long-standing conflict between the impulses toward escape and catharsis. The need to withdraw himself from himself and into externals was dispelled by the acquisition of a detachment, an ability to look upon himself with almost the same equanimity as that with which he viewed his world:

Oh Rome, my country, city of the soul!
 The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
 Lone mother of dead empires, and control
 In their shut breasts their petty misery.
 What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
 The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
 O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye!
 Whose agonies are evils of a day --
 A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.¹⁰²

And along with the diminution of his spiritual ills came a renewed confidence in his power to rise above them:

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:
 My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
 And my frame perish even in conquering pain;
 But there is that within me which shall tire
 Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;
 Something unearthly which they deem not of,
 Like the remember'd tone of a mute lyre,
 Shall on their soften'd spirits sink, and move
 In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.¹⁰³

Thus, the ways that he had begun to see in Tasso's example were now open to him. His poetry, which he had almost from the beginning regarded as an anodyne when he was in pain or a plaything when he was not, he now regarded as the monument by which his tribulations and frailties would find their place among the artistic and physical reminders of sin and retribution in the history of the race. He had become imbued, in other words, with one of the soundest and most durable of critical principles -- that art must deal with what is timeless and universal -- and he was, therefore, availing himself of the ennobling and consoling power of tragedy, which is the universally intelligible pattern of suffering. And, though his love was not, as Tasso's was, innocent, it could be, in the artistic process, objectified and idealized. Though the means of expressing this frame of mind were not

yet ripe when Byron completed the third act, it is probable that it underlay the dignified and courageous death of Manfred.

The paradox of how the full appreciation of the tragic view of life brought Byron close to the comic view from which Beppo and Don Juan were written need not be pondered long. Both attitudes are grounded in a sense of proportion, and the perception of the few matters that are to be taken seriously, carries with it contempt for or amusement with the many that are not. Byron had always had a taste for the absurd, but it was now refined to the point where he could savor his own absurdities as well as those in the world around him. Even Lady Byron could, in this new view, be regarded as a comic character, for by proportioning himself and his troubles in the scale of universal experience, he was able to see his own participation in human folly. And this is the insight of the comic spirit.

In summation, the reasons why the biographical significance of Manfred is greater than that of any of Byron's other poems may be pointed up. It is relatively unimportant that a number of the details corroborate the suspicion that Astarte is Augusta. Far more convincing corroboration can be found in the letters which Lovelace presents. What is important is that it expresses the despair which is the culmination of Byron's three-year struggle to clear his mind and spirit of the consequences of his guilt, and that

it records, because it was written in three installments, the steps in his ultimate recovery from despair. It is no exaggeration to say that the catharsis effected by the composition of the first two acts was the most powerful agent in a spiritual rehabilitation, which fundamentally altered his view of himself as a man and as an artist. It is for this reason that it claims a more central position than the more fully reasoned Canto IV of Childe Harold, which renders more clearly the resolution but less vividly the moment of the crisis itself.

Chapter II

The Sacrifice to Books

Once certain limitations are examined and accepted, a study of the literature related to Manfred contributes much to clarifying the essential Byronism of the poem. These limitations, arising from the entanglement of sources with one another and with Byron's experience, make it impossible to trace all but a few of the individual influences; but they by no means bar the way to an equally important objective -- a view of the unique way in which Byron assimilated his source materials. This chapter develops no fresh claims for Source A over Source B as a more direct influence on the poem; in fact it is sometimes concerned with disputing claims that have been made. Instead it develops the Byronic characteristics which are revealed by the stubbornness of such problems.

Another disclaimer is in order here. Although it is entirely taken up with questions of sources, this chapter does not dispose of the entire range of such questions. It is concerned exclusively with the central -- and most thickly tangled -- area, the origins of the Byronic hero. Influences on the style, form, and philosophical substance of the poem will be dealt with elsewhere, some in an appendix;

and others, mainly philosophical, will be brought in as contributions to the explication of the play in chapter III.

The three greatest handicaps to one wishing to answer specific questions about the sources of Byron's remorseful hero are (1) that Byron's experiences were so much influenced by what he read that first- and second-hand experiences merge in his works, (2) that the homogeneity and common derivative-ness of key elements throughout the body of imputed sources make the choice of one work or another -- or even of one group over another -- seldom more than arbitrary, (3) that the lack of external evidence generally prevents the discovery of which works lodged most prominently in Byron's memory. To illustrate these difficulties, one might imagine how much Professor Lowes' great task would have been complicated if Coleridge had been not the sedentary and discriminating reader that he was, but instead an explorer ashamed of his taste for the dime novels which inspired his wanderlust.

But in this situation there is more cause for rejoicing than for complaint, because there is much to be gained from examining these obstacles and accounting for their presence. One gains, first of all, a criterion for much work that has been done on sources. In general, the source hunter who is unaware of these unusual difficulties has created much unnecessary clutter. But a more important gain is that much light is thrown on the perennially discussed

aspects, real and imaginary, of Byron's personality -- affectation, mobilisé, fatalism, intellectual immaturity. Then, in turn, the clearer understanding of the Byronic personality leads to an all-important insight into the meaning and value of Manfred.

Ethel Mayne's inattention to the effects of Byron's reading is a singularly serious flaw in her analysis of his character; and it is most impressively betrayed in her swift disposal of any uncertainties about the sources of Manfred: "It was the Staubbach, and the Jungfrau, and something else' which inspired him, and though the literary influences assigned by the critics were manifold -- Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, Goethe's Faust, Calderon's El Magico Prodigioso, Christabel, the Prometheus of Aeschylus -- it needs but to read the drama to acknowledge the authentic Byron in every line."¹ Apparently she is satisfied that the quicksand to which her impatient leap has carried her is solid ground, but faith alone keeps the "authentic Byron" from sinking beneath her feet. It is true that Manfred springs from the personality and experience of Byron and that it re-employs the ingredients of his earlier works; but these circumstances do not eliminate the problem of sources; they merely push it into the distance. And "it needs but to read" the popular literature devoured by Byron in his youth to arouse skepticism about the existence of an "authentic Byron."

Miss Mayne again defers rather than overcomes the real difficulty when she goes on to argue that the German influence in Manfred comes entirely from Byron's recent observations of German landscape. If she were speaking of another writer she would have an argument against the influence of Faust, but she is speaking of Byron, whose singular gift for interfusing immediate impressions with recollections of his reading will soon be demonstrated. It would seem that Byron himself was sometimes unconscious of exercising this gift. If so, there may be no intention of deceit in his disavowal: "The devil may take both Faustuses, German and English, -- I have taken neither."² He was primarily conscious of how Manfred paralleled his personal tribulations; the critics were attracted to literary parallels; the truth seems to be that Manfred, Byron's experiences, and some of the imputed sources are all three parallel to each other. The first scene of Manfred, like its counterpart in Faust, is set in a Gothic gallery; but anyone arguing for an exclusive literary influence would have to meet the assertion that Byron could very well be recalling Newstead Abbey. Thus, what Miss Mayne uncovered is one of the difficulties enumerated above, the merger of first- and second-hand impressions, which, for the most part, precludes in matters of detail any reliable decisions about the relative strength of the two influences.

A typical puzzle is presented by Manfred's reminiscence of the Coliseum, which I have already discussed in another

connection. It was set down within a few days after Byron had visited the spot under the conditions he describes. The experience, as I tried to show, was a crux in his personal development. Here, if anywhere, one would think, is an example of direct inspiration. But in Chateaubriand's René, to which Chew ascribes a strong influence on Manfred, I came upon a passage which might greatly excite the casual source hunter:

I went and sat among the ruins of Rome and Greece, those countries of virile and brilliant memory, where palaces are buried in the dust and royal mausoleums hidden beneath the brambles. Oh power of nature and weakness of man! A blade of grass will pierce through the hardest marble of these tombs, while their weight can never be lifted by all these mighty dead!

.....

Sometimes I watched the sun which had shone down on the foundations of these cities now settling majestically over their ruins; soon afterwards, the moon rose between crumbling funeral urns into a cloudless sky, bathing the tombs in pallid light. Often in the faint, dream wafting rays of that planet, I thought I saw the Spirit of Memory sitting by my side.³

The moon, the tombs, the urns, the encroaching vegetation --

the features which the two descriptive passages most obviously have in common -- might very well give rise to the common response -- thoughts of the mighty dead -- in the imaginations of independent observers. Then, too, the scenes induce appreciably different attitudes in René and Manfred: sic transit gloria mundi in one and "silent worship of the great of old" in the other. But a quasi-mystical awe over closely similar scenes connects the two, not only with each other, but, to anticipate a further complication, with the sentimental fascination with ancient ruins that is commonplace in eighteenth-century literature. Therefore, while the connection is strong enough to make some degree of literary influence seem probable, the simple fact that Byron had recently surveyed the scene for himself casts doubt on any estimate of the strength of the influence. One can merely say that his immediate responses might have been colored, or perhaps tinted, by conscious or unconscious recall. To say more -- even with the aid of Byron himself, an analyst, and a lie detector -- would be no more than speculation.

The usual practice in cases where the evidence of parallel passages is inconclusive is to turn to external evidence. But this method also leads to uncertainty and disappointment. Byron's letters and other records do reveal much about his reading, but seldom about the works which bear most heavily on Manfred. During his mature years, Byron's knowledge of

specific books and even the time at which he read them are not difficult to establish; but many of the strongest influences on Manfred flow through his earlier works from the reading of his impressionable childhood, when he, according to his own testimony, read -- besides history, poetry, drama, and the Bible -- four thousand novels.⁴ That his reading throughout his life was as extensive as he claimed it to be has been doubted, but not for reasons strong enough to make it seem at all improbable that a mind so racingly active as to produce 80,000 lines of poetry during twenty years of a fantastically troubled and active life could also work the miracle of absorbing such quantities of literature.⁵ But even if the skeptical attitude were tenable, it would hardly be helpful in the area which should be explored. Here, the uncertainties do not come so much from Byron's unreliability as a guide as from his reluctance to serve at all. Fond as he is of quoting and judging specific works, he is habitually reticent about all but a few of his four thousand novels.

The need for guidance in this area is acute, not only because the works that lie within it contributed much to Manfred, but also because the bulk and homogeneity of these works make almost impossibly difficult the task of selecting the most immediate sources. If remorse is the central motif of Manfred, then the works which conspicuously employ this motif must be duly considered as likely precedents. But since remorse is the affliction of hundreds of characters in the fiction

and drama in which the young Byron steeped himself, how does one begin or end without the guidance of external evidence? Speaking of drama alone, Bertrand Evans remarks: "Between the countess [in Walpole's The Mysterious Mother] and Manfred fifty years of Gothic protagonists were inwardly consumed for causes which it was the business of the drama ultimately to reveal."⁶

Professor Chew's patient review of the imputed sources of Manfred also underlines the uncertainties arising from the confusing resemblances between members of the prolific Gothic family. Objecting to an assertion that Shelley's St. Irvyne or the Rosicrucian is a significant source, he remarks that the parallels drawn between Wolfstein and Ginotti on the one hand and Manfred on the other "are traits of the 'Gothic' type of hero in general . . . and of the Byronic hero-type in particular."⁷ But in advancing Chateaubriand's René as "the most direct source of Manfred, apart from Faust," he is guilty of a similar lack of circumspection: "Rene and Manfred have alike had an only love, and that love unlawful in the highest degree. Each has been bound to his sister by conformity of soul, so that the two have grown up together apart from other men. Each is overthoughtful, and each, through the grief of separation and the pangs of remorse, has become misanthropical."⁸ Unlawful love, isolation and misanthropy, remorse, and overthoughtfulness are the stock in trade of the Gothic novelist. Take them away and there is almost nothing

left of the parallel. And what is left, unsupported as it is by any external evidence of Byron's interest in René, is hardly strong enough to withstand the weight of the differences which Chew himself concedes: "In place of the tone of Christian submission . . . there is the Byronic 'courage never to submit or yield.' There is no introduction of the supernatural into Chateaubriand's story. In the character of René there is no trace of the titanic element."⁹ Chew's retreat from the claim that this novel is a direct source goes to the point where he contents himself with remarking that "in the composition of Manfred [René] exerted . . . only a sub-conscious influence."¹⁰ His qualifications are, in fact, so destructive as to provide a refutation, which makes one wonder why he ventured the claim in the first place. The one clear merit of the venture is that its failure demonstrates the soundness of his observation that "Byron had assimilated a large amount of the material common to all extreme romanticism."¹¹

If the discernment of particularly influential works in the mass of what Chew has called "pre-Byronic Byronism" has proven impossible, perhaps some hope might still remain for finding coherent subgroupings within the mass. Establishing even one coherent subclass of "extreme romanticism" and isolating its influence in certain key respects would obviously reduce the task of searching out precise relationships. But disappointingly the most brilliant attempt at establishing a

rudimentary classification does not really work.

This attempt was made by Bertrand Evans, who argued that the Gothic drama, rather than the novel, provided the closer prototype for the character of Manfred.¹² The significant distinction that he offers is that the novel typically made the villain a far more active and important character than the almost neglected hero, whereas the drama, out of necessity, presented a hero who bore all the engagingly terrifying traits of the villains of the novels. The necessity arose, Evans reasons, from the vanity of leading men, who insisted on playing a role that was not only the most important but the most sympathetic male part in the play. Faced with this demand the Gothic dramatist endowed the perpetrators of monstrous evils with consciences, which, in the process of tormenting them with remorse, proved that they were essentially good though misguided men. The dramatist's solution, then, is necessarily the intermediate step between the novelist's villain and Byron's hero. The logic here is compelling, and it seems to be reinforced by the very obvious resemblance between Manfred's remorse and that of the typical dramatic hero; but there are reasons for doubting the premises. In the first place, the step between the villain and the remorseful hero was so gradual that it might have been taken easily in response to the tastes and moral philosophy of the author and his public, rather than to the professional pride of the actor. Even

Manfred in The Castle of Otranto, the acknowledged prototype of the novel villain, inherited from the sentimental school of morality, which had largely prepared a favorable climate for Gothicism,¹³ a few scruples which caused him to waver on his evil course and thus win an occasional tear of sympathy. The idea of plucking more loudly upon this sentimental string would hardly tax the imagination even of a hack writer.

"Monk" Lewis's Ambrosio is a case in point. An indication that Byron without the help of an intermediary was probably capable of a much longer step is his statement that he intends his sympathetically portrayed Childe Harold to be "a modern Timon, perhaps a poetical Zeluco."¹⁴ The step is longer because there are fewer vestiges of good in Zeluco than are typically found in the Gothic villain. In the second place, although the evidence that Byron was impressed with the villains of specific novels -- with Zeluco, Faulkland, and the Monk -- is scarce, it must outweigh that for any special concern with individual dramatic heroes, for evidence of this kind does not exist.¹⁵ In the third place, Caleb Williams, published when Byron was seven years old, presents in Faulkland a character in whom the middle ground between hero and villain has been completely closed. If it were successfully argued that Godwin had taken his cue from the dramatist, the case for a more direct influence from the drama than from the novel upon Manfred would not logically be strengthened. These objections are not meant, it should

be clear, to exclude the likelihood that Byron was deeply influenced by the drama or even to claim a stronger influence for the novel. They do show, however, that the case for giving Gothic dramas precedence over the novels as possible direct sources of Manfred has not yet been convincingly presented.

In defining these three greatest difficulties besetting the student of sources, I have not, of course, intended to imply that all existing studies are worthless or that all future study will be fruitless. There are elements in Manfred that can be clearly traced to origins outside the mass of popular literature or within the reading which Byron is known to have done shortly before or during the composition of his play, reading which because of its freshness or inapplicability to his own conduct did not become blurred by parallel, first-hand experience. But because it is not in the main current of Byronism, I have chosen to deal in an appendix with work that has been done on matters outside the areas of difficulty. My objective here is not the precise identification of individual sources, but instead an insight into the general relationships between what Byron read and what he did, and between both of these and what he wrote. Because this objective is nothing more than an understanding of the creative process, it is hardly different from the ultimate objective of most useful source studies, which proceed beyond the point of the discovery of the particular source to

the demonstration of how the artist employed his imagination in reworking his materials. Although the method used here is different because of the unique difficulties which have been explained, it is logical and strangely efficient because it converts the circumstances from which these difficulties arise into instrumental evidence. The first example of how this is done develops as the merger between the influences of reading and experience is fully explored.

There is some evidence of Byron's awareness of such a merger. Writing to Moore on June 9, 1820, Byron remarks, "I have just been turning over Little, which I knew by heart in 1803, being then in my fifteenth summer. Heigho! I believe all the mischief I have ever done, or sung, has been owing to that confounded book of yours."¹⁶ Even allowing some discount because he may be jokingly overstating his debt, what remains is a substantial clue to how deeply he was affected by the kind of reading he did when he was young. The "Thomas Little" poems, popular because of their erotic sensationalism, were, like the popular fiction from which Byronism came, not what anyone with pretensions to literary taste would be proud to express an admiration for. And throughout his mature years, at least, Byron had and carefully preserved such pretensions. This is one reason why this friendly confidence is a rare, almost unique, confession that reading of this sort not only made a strong impression on him at the age of fifteen (in his sixteenth

summer, to raise a quibble), but also continued to exert its influence in the years following. What makes this confidence most valuable here is that it is a step toward establishing the triple linkage between what he read, what he sang, and what he did, and toward establishing, since it reveals his awareness of the linkage, that he was conscious of bringing the three together.

A similar, but not quite so explicit, piece of testimony is in the "Epistle to Augusta":

. . . . Trees, and flowers, and brooks
 Which do remember me of where I dwelt
 Ere my young mind was sacrificed to books,
 Come as of yore upon me, and can melt
 My heart with recognition of their looks.¹⁷

If Byron's claim to having read thousands of novels is recalled, it is clear that this is not merely a Wordsworthian lament over the passing of his pre-literate sensitivity. Nor, in spite of the bulk of his reading, is he complaining that books took up time that might have been better spent. Sacrifice suggests a self-destructive commitment of his mind to what he found in his books and, as we can infer from the next two lines, to notions and attitudes which hardened his heart. This interpretation is further supported by the relation of this passage to the scheme of the poem. In the course of expressing his gratitude to nature as the agent of his redemption, he couples reading with another of the

sins which made redemption necessary and thus makes it more than an inert obstruction to the true path. Along with the contagion of the crowd it is an unwholesome element in the formation of his character, although it is apparent that the two evils worked in decidedly different ways. His allusions to both influences here are reminiscent of his having written in his preface to Childe Harold, several years before personal disaster was to lend the belief full conviction, that the poem was intended "to show that early perversion of mind and morals leads to satiety of past pleasures and disappointment in new ones, and that even the beauties of nature and the stimulus of travel . . . are lost on a soul so constituted or mis-directed." On the same theme, he wrote in Childe Harold III that his banishment from "the crowd," though he had always felt aloof, would not have been enforced "had [he] not filed [his] mind, which thus itself subdued."¹⁸ In showing the role that reading played in the "early perversion" or defilement of Byron's mind and morals, I regret that so little more of his own testimony can be put to use, not because the case which must be constructed on circumstantial evidence is weak, but because it is ponderous.

Many of the well-known circumstances of Byron's life up to the beginning of his second year at Cambridge reveal his tendency to pattern himself after a composite of literary characters he found most fascinating. In reconstructing this composite, the characteristic resemblances between popular

works, which, as I have shown, frustrate the search for individual sources, become extremely helpful. The generalizations with which one must work are already formed, and so is the deduction that the similar patterns of character must have made a deep impression on Byron by dint of repetition. The wide recognition of the obvious influence of the composite upon the Byronic hero also testifies to the depth of the impression and consequently provides a promising beginning to the argument that this influence reached beyond and beneath Byron's poetic imagination to motivate the great and small eccentricities of his behavior.

In tracing the literary influence, Eino Railo observes, "Obviously there was formed a kind of approved composite portrait, recognizable as such whenever an author of the period occupied himself with the type."¹⁹ Collecting and augmenting the random details of the portrait that have already been mentioned in this chapter are in order here. The type is aloof, melancholy, secretive -- engaging by his good looks and his air of mysterious consequence great curiosity about what is troubling him. As his character unfolds, there are hints of a violent inner turmoil behind his enigmatic mask -- an elemental conflict between the good and evil in him. Even though he is a commonplace in fiction, he would be an incredible freak as a man, for he has the malignancy of a fiend and the conscience of a saint. Capable of cunning,

violence, and unspeakable lust, he is also a model of courage, quixotic generosity, and tenderness. He is the melodramatic counterpart of the traditional tragic protagonist, for the appeal he makes to pity and terror is sensationally unreal and extreme. The type is to be found not only in Gothic fiction and drama but also in the moralistic novels of Dr. Moore and Godwin, in such exotic tales as Vathek, and in Scott's romances, not to mention the works of other English and continental Romantics.

It is obvious that Byron encountered such characters often in the reading of his childhood and it is obvious that such a character would hold an unwholesome fascination for the mind of any sensitive juvenile. But that Byron was unusually sensitive and susceptible to the fantastic creatures of the novelist can be inferred partly from the power of his imagination, which he was to demonstrate as a poet, and partly from the dismal realities of his boyhood, which must have driven him to embrace the unrealities of fiction. It has become commonplace among biographers to lament the deficiencies of Byron's upbringing. To quote Galt: "It is impossible to reflect on the boyhood of Byron without regret. There is not one point in it all which could, otherwise than with pain, have affected a young mind of sensibility."²⁰ The blame falls largely upon Byron's mother, whose negligence and willfulness move Ethel Mayne to wrath: "She had a warm heart, courage, generosity, some shrewdness, and a crazy kind of devotion.

Yet she made the mere misery, and might easily have made the ruin, of her only child. What practical care, after all, had she ever given him? None in his babyhood: where was the mother on all those haunted nights in Aberdeen? None, or far too little, in his physical distress, or Lavender's peer beer-boy could not have been the common gapeseed of St. James's Lane in Nottingham. None, and worse than none, in his first really vital contact with the outer world, or Glennie would have been permitted to do what he could, and the guardian [Lord Carlisle], influential and prepared at least for duty-kindness, would not have been fatally estranged.²¹ That the painful awareness of her faults afflicted him with shame at an early age is evident in a well-known anecdote dating from his days at Dr. Glennie's school. To a school-mate who observed, "Byron, your mother is a fool," he is said to have replied gloomily, "I know it."²² His letters to Augusta during his early years at Harrow reveal how his bitterness had become deeper and more analytical.²³ If to the lack of maternal solicitude are added the repulsive and isolating influences of lameness; penury; and a bleak, provincial environment, it is not at all speculative to assume that the world created by his imagination out of the stuff he incessantly read was a necessary refuge, or that he wistfully hoped to enter into it in fact as well as in fancy.

It is not at all unusual, of course, for unhappy, bookish boys to dream of attaining the glory of the heroes they

admire, and certainly it is not unheard of that such dreams have inspired the accomplishments of manhood. But again the accidents of Byron's early years served to strengthen a common tendency to an abnormal degree. At a time in life when insistent reality commonly encroaches on fantasy Byron was to receive dramatic encouragement to identify the dream and the potentially real world. Among his biographers, Elze seems to have caught the clearest glimpse of the way in which coincidences between fact and fiction supplied this encouragement:

Between Zeluco . . . and himself, a striking similarity was recognized even by Byron himself, though, in his usual fashion, he represents himself by this comparison in colours far too dark; it was, indeed, his expressed design to describe in Childe Harold a kind of 'poetical Zeluco.' The life of Zeluco -- such is the author's plan -- in spite of rank, riches, and abilities, turns out unhappy and miserable, and this, merely because his self-will had been unrestrained in childhood. Zeluco, like Byron, loses his father early in life. As a child, he had displayed unmistakable symptoms of that vehement and imperious temper, to which he was by nature so disposed, and which had been held in check only by his father. . . . But Zeluco was not merely passionate, but endowed

with great intellectual gifts and of an exceedingly engaging character, and in this respect presents a similarity with Byron, which, however, does not extend beyond the years of childhood, or at least diminishes as he grows up; for Zeluco ends as a consummate scoundrel.²⁴

Elze, however, after such an incisive beginning, drops the comparison too soon -- and only because of the two observations with which it is now necessary to disagree: that Byron represents in "colours far too dark," and that the similarity "does not extend beyond the years of childhood." Byron, though not a "consummate scoundrel," was more of a scoundrel than he was believed to be before the appearance of Astarte. Elze would also have profited by the information that at the age of twenty-seven Byron was still so much haunted by his resemblance to Zeluco that Lady Byron heard him express his fear that, like Zeluco, he would strangle his own child.²⁵ If there was any alteration in the likeness, it was not a simple diminution. That the boy Zeluco and the boy Byron resembled each other was mostly a matter of chance. That the mature personalities were similar can be explained less by the logic that temperamental and environmental causes were behind the development of their characters than by the evidence that Byron intentionally sought to continue the parallel.

But to return for the present to the other childhood

experiences that formed a bridge between the real and imaginary worlds in Byron's mind, there can be little doubt that the most influential and dramatic of these was his accession to the title, an event so sudden and improbable that it belongs in a fairy tale. At the age of six an unhappy lame boy, who had no first-hand knowledge of the world south of Aberdeen, became, through the untimely death of a young cousin, the heir to a Barony. Though the news brought with it no material or cultural improvement, no practical help for preparing himself for this position, it was undoubtedly a spur to his hopes of reaching glory and distinction. The stories of how he was affected when the title actually became his four years later do not agree in detail, but they do agree on the point that might be surmised anyway: that he was deeply impressed with his new importance. It is also believed that his mother encouraged him to feel the wonder of the "total and talismanic change," as Moore called it.²⁶ If the fabulous leap from obscurity to the peerage was not enough like a development in a popular novel, Newstead Abbey provided a perfect setting. Ancient, Gothic, partly ruined, almost deserted, it was haunted by the traditional ghost and locally notorious for the violent history and misanthropic eccentricities of the late fifth lord, who himself would have been quite at home in one of Ann Radcliffe's novels. It is almost certain that the ten-year-old Byron felt that he had arrived in a familiar world, familiar, at least, in his imagination; and it is decidedly

possible that he began to regard novelists as reliable guides through the totally strange life ahead of him.

About two years later, while he was at Dr. Glennie's school in Dulwich, his schoolmates came to call him "the old English Baron," supposedly in derision of his inordinate pride in his title.²⁷ Whether Byron unintentionally suggested the epithet by remarking on the similarity between himself and Edmund, the hero of Clara Reeve's Gothic novel, The Old English Baron, or whether the boys struck upon it for themselves cannot be known. But in either case, this circumstance reveals that at the time, and possibly before then, Byron was prompted to review the coincidence that he and Edmund -- both raised in unpromising surroundings -- suddenly discover themselves to be heirs to baronies. Edmund, like Byron and Zeluco, is a boy of "uncommon merit," of "extraordinary genius." Like Byron, he had endured much misery at home: "He was beloved everywhere but at his [foster] father's house, and there it should seem that his merits were his crimes; for the peasant, his father, hated him, treated him severely, and at length threatened to turn him out of doors."²⁸ "Mrs. Byron furiosa," as her son once called her, was capable of comparably intemperate cruelty, the rankling memory of which emerges as late as ten years after her death in The Deformed Transformed. Obviously the parallels here are more whole-some than those with Zeluco, but not entirely so. The Old English Baron may very well have played some part in

developing Byron's snobbish pride in rank. Edmund's virtues are largely accounted for by his lineage; even the humbleness of his life before the discovery of his real identity did nothing to mar his innate aristocratic charm: "From his childhood he attracted the notice and affection of all that knew him."²⁹ Notable among many novels which employ this ancient fairy-tale situation is the Gothic prototype, The Castle of Otranto. Theodore, a wandering peasant, is far too accomplished to be of rough stock, and when the inevitable surprise comes he takes his place as the rightful lord of Otranto. The frequency with which Byron had come upon these flattering and stimulating parallels with himself can best be shown by the fact that besides employing the type, Ann Radcliffe had a name by which she could call for it in the stockroom -- the "interesting peasant."³⁰ Perhaps it is unfair to blame the Gothic novel entirely for the snobbishness, which even the most tolerant of Byron's friends found almost unbearable, but the circumstantial evidence that it had such claptrap to offer and that it was unquestionably on the scene, would make it seem at least an accomplice to his race-conscious mother.

The story-book elevation of Byron's fortunes, however, brought with it more than wonder and anticipation, which could be passively enjoyed, and a sense of importance, which could be further nourished by association with the admirable figures in novels; it brought with it, or rather thrust upon him, the

consciousness that the world was expecting him to assume an active role. Here, the "interesting peasant" failed him, because such a character, for all his virtue, seldom rose above being a passive figure, in whom both reader and author lost their tepid interest, when, usually at the end of the novel, he came into his own. Drinkwater perceives Byron's problem in this way: "He became at once dramatically conscious of a pride of race, and was duly encouraged in this by his mother; but she did nothing to teach him the proper way in which to support it."³¹ And Symons in this way: "Most of his life he was a personality looking out for its own formula."³² It is reasonable to believe that his chief resource was his reading, for he knew nothing first hand about how peers comported themselves. Considering his need, his temperament, and predilections which later became clearly evident, it is probable that he turned from the "interesting peasant" to the Gothic villain -- Manfred, Zeluco, Faulkland, and the like -- as the right formula, though he was not averse to an occasional experiment with other promising roles. He seemed to believe that, as a lord, he must be magnetically prepossessing; yet his personal claims to attention and admiration were small. He was lame, short, incorrigibly shy, and socially uncouth. Whatever else might be said of him the Gothic villain never was in need of respectful attention, and the part was for Byron very easy to play. His shyness and lack of poise could be effortlessly turned to the imitation

of the villain's air of melancholy and mystery. His habitual withdrawal to the graveyard at Harrow to recline meditatively upon a tomb must be regarded as a self-conscious effort to strike the right note of gloomy preoccupation. Other facets of his behavior at Harrow suggest, if not the inclination to play the villain, at least a bias against the facts and toward literary formula in his relationships with his schoolmates. His arrogant assumptions of superiority, based less on merit than on rank, were duly observed by his schoolmates, one of whom shrewdly predicted that Byron could not be induced to join a movement unless he were made its leader.³³ The passionate intensity with which he entered friendships and demanded loyalty of his friends also suggests a bookish rather than experiential orientation; and a likely inspiration for it is again, The Old English Baron, in which much is made of the medieval pact of friendship between Edmund and William.

It must be conceded that there were healthy correctives of solid reality which should have moderated his gloomy egotism. The irreverence of his schoolfellows, Lord Carlisle's aloofness, the painful and futile treatment of his foot, the tantrums of his mother, the stuffiness of Southwell all might have restored his morbid imagination to health. And if they failed, even more might be expected of the mortifying failure of his attentions to Mary Chaworth, whose attraction was for him more than that of her personal charm. There was

a melodramatic appositeness in the affair. Byron's predecessor, the fifth Lord Byron, had killed Miss Chaworth's grand-uncle in a savage sword fight; and, although no rancour persisted between their families, it had certainly occurred to Byron to envision himself and Mary as star-crossed lovers. At the age of ten, five years before he became a frequent visitor to Annesley, he had responded to Hanson's facetious advice that he marry his young neighbor with: "What, Mr. Hanson, the Capulets and the Montagues intermarry?"³⁴ The abrupt end of his romanticizing came when he overheard or heard of his Juliet expressing to the maid her contempt for "that lame boy."³⁵ It might be expected that this and the lesser humiliations he suffered as a boy would jolt him into a less fanciful view of the figure he intended to cut in the real world. But aside from the probability that his fancy had been insuperably bolstered by the favorable circumstances on which it had fastened itself, there was the likelihood that he was conscious of how misfortunes of this sort fit into a larger formula. The hero he admired was an unhappy man, burdened not only with guilt but with a misanthropy occasioned by misfortune and injustice. The gall of disappointment in love was thus one more perversely welcome parallel. Much of Byron's correspondence up through the crisis of 1816 shows a settled tendency to count his woes as others might count their blessings. But perhaps the clearest substantiation of the view that Miss Chaworth's disdain fed rather than dispelled

his morbid image of himself is that years later, in 1816, his recollection of the affair provided the means for dramatizing his heroic self-pity in "The Dream."

However, even if the essential illusion was undisturbed by the irreverent world, Byron's confidence in his ability to play the role he had selected was probably shaken. But this is not to say that he abandoned the hope that he might one day be up to a portrayal of the dark hero, which would be as devastatingly impressive in real life as was the original in the novels. He had always been self-conscious about his physical defects, but had probably never been so cruelly reminded before of how much they stood in his way. Nevertheless, he was favored with an essential resemblance to the heroic figure, which promised success if it were cultivated and if he could overcome his limp and his unfortunate susceptibility to corpulence. The drastic regimen of diet and exercise with which he tortured himself, the peculiar manner of taking short, quick steps on his toes are well known. So is his meticulousness in preserving his teeth and the curl in his hair. But they bespeak a vanity which is uncommon, not so much for being intense as for being quite specifically imitative. His model was the Gothic hero-villain, who Railo tells us had "a high, white forehead shadowed by ebon curls, a dark, piercing glance, [and] general beauty of countenance."^{35a} That Byron's hopes and methods were sound is demonstrated in the impression which he later made upon the ladies of London and

the artists who painted him. His portraits also reveal his cultivation of the facial expression appropriate to the introspectiveness of his model, as does the anecdote about his dissatisfaction with Thorwaldsen's bust of him because it did not make him appear unhappy enough.³⁶ But the development of the proper physical attributes was only one prong of his attack on the skepticism of his audience; the other was the development of a dark past which would enable him to take his part with absolute sincerity. Had he been content with the first, he would have become no more than the histrionic fraud which some of his biographers take him for; his pursuit of the second, however, was a strong motive in the fatal errors of his life, which make Manfred an expression of authentic agony.

But however hopeful he might be of an ultimate triumph, there was the immediate problem of protecting the heroic image until it was secure. The best protection, Byron discovered rather early, could be gained from dissimulation of his feelings. In his attitude toward Elizabeth and John Pigot and the other citizens of Southwell he reveals that he was developing a pose of worldly insouciance. The high content of satirical poems in his Fugitive Pieces is also indicative of this development. But the hardening and polishing of this mask over his romantic inclinations were not completed until the failures, social and literary, of his first year at Cambridge convinced him conclusively that the society

which he wished to enter was not impressed by swagger and exhibitionism. During that year he was almost pathetically faithful to a theatrical conception of the student-peer. He was quite proud of the mythically aristocratic accomplishment of going heavily into debt to Jewish moneylenders. Anticipating his Lara and perhaps recalling Lewis's Monk, he was seen with a mistress unconvincingly disguised as his brother. His way of living was calculatedly dramatic for its sumptuousness and eccentricity. Though he kept secret his excited interest in the progress of his anonymously published Hours of Idleness, he undoubtedly hoped that its success would add to his glory. But all of these ventures failed to create the sensation he had expected, as the indifference of his fellow students and the attack in the Edinburgh Review made evident.

Hobhouse's entrance into Byron's life during the second year at Cambridge was a consequence of a change in tactics inspired by these failures. Byron was by that time prepared to take up with an "enemy of fine sentiments." Hobhouse had kept aloof during the previous year because he had been scornful of Byron's affectations, specifically of his wearing a grey hat and riding a white horse. Hobhouse had no doubt read these symptoms right; if Byron had not curbed the attitudes that underlay them, the two could never have begun to get along. Byron had now developed a formula for his personality that enabled him to take a rather secure place in the sophisticated world.

Acceptance into Hobhouse's circle and the publication of "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" probably brought the final cleavage in Byron's personality. The much-discussed duality of his nature divides at this point, although the discussions of it seem to assume that it originated in the cradle. But, a much more serious fault that I have to find with these discussions is their assumption that the repression of the romantic side of Byron's personality was prompted more by conviction than expediency. Holding such a view makes skepticism of the sincerity of Byron's romantic poems inevitable. But in deciding which part of the duality is the mask and which the man, several influential biographers are guilty of bias -- a bias which is difficult to see as such because it is that of clearly sane, reasonable, perceptive people, in whose sound judgment the rational Byron is more admirable than the romantic Byron. And they are betrayed by their admiration into the assumption that the side of his nature with which they sympathize must be the bedrock of his character, while the other side is a superficial pose -- that it is merely the "actor Byron," as Drinkwater would have it. Their supreme authority is Hobhouse, who seldom saw and never tolerated the tendencies of which he did not approve. But knowing that Byron ought not to have taken certain extravagant notions seriously and knowing that he did not take them so are not one and the same. These notions, it is true, came largely from books which present a distorted and unreal view of life

and human nature; but again it is bias alone that inspires the confidence that Byron regarded the notions and the books skeptically, even after he learned that it was expedient to pretend that he did. Eventually, in the aftermath of Manfred, he did abandon most of the illusions, but not until they had played an important part in ruining his life.

Aside from bias, an important flaw in many assessments of Byron's duality is the failure to observe that the balance in the conflicting tendencies shifted as he grew older. In 1809, after he had learned to conceal his romantic tendencies, they were still a strong influence on his hopes of winning distinction. By 1814, he had fulfilled much of his intention to pattern himself after the fascinating Gothic hero-villain and was in fact suffering the inner turmoil about which so many plays and novels had been written and was able to play the part with some conviction before the impressionable devotees of Childe Harold; but he continued for the benefit of his closest friends the role of the cynic. Late in 1816, with the end of the spiritual ordeal brought on by his enactment of the part he had been obsessed with, he was ready to abandon forever the notions that had nearly destroyed him. In short, there is a beginning, middle, and end to the conflict between the main tendencies of his personality. There is not a constant domination of one over the other throughout his life.

The conflict involves what I will call the heroic Byron and the social Byron. The heroic Byron is the concept of his own destiny and personality which we have seen taking shape in his youth. It is Drinkwater's "actor Byron" without the prejudicial overtones of that term. The social Byron is "the man's man," as Ethel Mayne calls him -- Hobhouse's and Scrope-Davies' crony, than whom "Momus ne'er painted a livelier creature."³⁷ The literary expression of the heroic Byron is the Byronic hero, Childe Harold, Conrad, Lara, and Manfred, to name the outstanding examples; and that of the social Byron is to be found in the satirical poems, such as "English Bards," "The Vision of Judgment," and Don Juan. To those who take the heroic Byron too lightly, the conflict does not really exist, and the heroic Byron is nothing more than a ghost, which Byron raised occasionally in his poetry and in his antics before audiences whom he knew to be gullible, though he did not believe in it himself. But, on the contrary, he took this image most seriously, until 1816 at least, and fitfully strove to make it a reality which would win the credulity of the most sophisticated audience. He was always aware of the obligation to shape his behavior to his company, but he felt that he was most insincere when he was being gay and flippant.³⁸ He did know that the sophisticated world would deride his most cherished notions, but he felt that it was the world, not the notions, that was at fault. "When you are among fools, why motley's your only wear," he once wrote to Lady

Melbourne.³⁹

A fair test of whether the social Byron or the heroic Byron best represents his essential character is to consider the motives behind the most significant actions between his departure from Cambridge and his separation from Lady Byron -- specifically his travel in Greece, his seduction of Augusta, and his cruelty to his wife. Throughout these circumstances runs strong evidence that he was guided by intentions which were not rationally formed on the basis of worldly experience but rather on the basis of a fantastic desire to bring the heroic Byron created by his imagination from what he had read into being. It is because he fulfilled this desire in several ways that the tangle of literary and experiential influences in Manfred cannot be satisfactorily un-snarled.

Byron's decision to go to Greece is not remarkable, but his extremely romantic expectations and reactions are. His fellow passenger Galt presents a picture of him on board ship which strongly suggests that he had cast his motley aside and had resumed the mantle of brooding gloom.⁴⁰ If he was striking a pose merely for effect, it is difficult to see why he would make the effort when there was hardly anyone on hand to be impressed. If his abstraction must be called posing, it must have been assumed for his own benefit; and if he was conscious of his mien at all, he sincerely felt that it reflected the image that he hoped his trip would

help him to wear naturally. One of the chief attractions of the East was that it was the setting of many things he had read. Once there he tried to interfuse his experiences with the history and fiction that were familiar to him. The twelve birds he saw at Delphi were eagles of augury to him. That they looked like vultures to Hobhouse epitomizes, incidentally, the contrast in temperament between the two friends but, more importantly, the avidity of Byron's desire to fuse actuality with his romantic expectations.⁴¹ His interview with Ali Pascha and his later audience with the Turkish sultan must have made him feel that he was moving at last through the scenes of Vathek and other familiar tales of the East. It was inevitably Byronic that he visit the Troad and muse upon it by moonlight. But perhaps the most significant gestures was his swimming of the Hellespont. So elated was he with having woven himself into the fabric of eternal romance that he continued to boast of it for months.⁴²

But the publication of Childe Harold, which was an unguarded effusion from the heroic Byron, was by no means a sign that he felt the romantic image itself was yet secure from ridicule. Though impelled to write the poem by the liveliest activities of his imagination, he had taken Hobhouse's contempt of it as premonitory of how it would be received by the public and had not, until flattered by Dallas's praise, any intention of offering it to a publisher.

Its sensational success was one of a number of accidents which, like his accession to the title, almost force one to accept his persistent belief that he was manipulated by a malignantly intelligent fate.

Though he was vain enough to take much satisfaction from the ensuing adoration, the prematurity of his triumph caused him much disquietude. "It is odd I never set myself seriously to wishing without attaining it -- and repenting,"⁴³ he once observed. He had wanted, I think, to become the kind of person he imagined in Childe Harold, and behind this desire was a thirst for fame. But he repented because he felt he was a fraud and that in the eyes of those he respected most he was regarded as such. Two sources of his misgivings have often been observed: his feeling that writing poetry was an unworthy occupation for an aristocrat and the ambiguous fear that people would identify him too much or too little with Harold. The first of these requires no discussion here; the second is penetratingly discussed by Ethel Mayne:

One of his most characteristic sequences was the perpetual revelation to the world of his idea of himself, and the annoyance which he never failed to express (and indeed to feel) at that world's credulity -- for the idea was of course devoutly hailed as the reality. This sequence grew out of the uncertainty of touch to which I have already alluded. The ambition and

pusillanimity of his vanity were for ever at war with each other -- the one driving him, in fancy, to flagrant revolt against convention, the other bending him, in actual life, meekly before it. There is something tragic in his perpetual battle with this duality, which is the real problem . . . of his character. That other duality of gaiety and gloom . . . needs but an elementary knowledge of human nature to remove it from the region of the abnormal. ⁴⁴

Sound though this is, there are a few points which I feel obliged to question. For one thing, the two dualities she speaks of are really one, for the gaiety, so characteristic of the social Byron, is essentially a part of his surrender to convention, just as the gloom and rebellion are inseparable from the heroic Byron. For another, in confining his revolt to the realm of fancy and his submission to that of actual life, she oversimplifies. Revolt on rational grounds against abuses however much they were sanctioned by convention was something which Byron never shrank from. It was not convention that frightened him; rather it was fear of disparagement by people whom he admired and whose esteem he did not want to lose. But the most serious exception I take to Miss Mayne's observations is that she shares with most other commentators a disregard for the development and change of Byron's character, which make it necessary to

specify the time to which the appraisal of his duality applies. But the sequence of which she speaks is an easily demonstrable fact; and that it grew out of his uncertainty of touch is a sound hypothesis, beside which -- but by no means in opposition to it -- I would like place another.

Childe Harold, as the first Byronic hero, represented in many ways an intention rather than a reality. He was, as Byron admits, derived from literary sources. But in 1812 the heroic Byron had not progressed far enough toward the realization of the image that also was derived from the same sources. To put it another way Childe Harold is in many ways what the heroic Byron believes it is his destiny to be, not what he thought he was when the poem was published. Even in Childe Harold himself there is a curious inconsistency arising from the heroic Byron's consciousness of immaturity: though Harold is precociously embittered and wearied by excess, his title and situation are those of an inexperienced adventurer. And it is to this same consciousness of immaturity that Byron's malaise over being identified with his hero must be largely attributed. Taking up the role of Harold would have involved representing himself as a man with a romantically licentious past. The steps he had taken to provide one had been marred by sordidness or triviality. I believe he would have agreed with Miss Mayne, who looks almost pityingly on the harmlessness of his experiments in vice. She remarks that the Paphian girls of Childe

Harold's "monastic dome condemned to uses vile" were in actuality the women-servants of Newstead, "enchantresses" on whom "Society did not deign to frown."⁴⁵

But in saying that Byron in fact "was persuaded that he had drunk the cup of dissipation to the bottom," Miss Mayne overlooks his honesty and shrewdness. It is likely that, whenever he yielded to the encouragement of gullible souls like Dallas or Caroline Lamb to play Childe Harold for them, his conscientious antipathy to sham and hypocrisy intensified his desire to accomplish what was necessary to play such an attractive part honestly. At the age of thirty-three he was to write that in his early poems, including the first two cantos of Childe Harold "are the thoughts of one at least ten years older than the age at which they were written -- I don't mean for their solidity, but their experience."⁴⁶ This has been taken by Miss Mayne as more boasting, a renewal of the claim that when only 24 he had drained "the cup of dissipation;" but she overlooks the more likely meaning that he has lived through experiences which were anticipated rather than reviewed in the "thoughts" in Childe Harold. Though he was comparatively innocent in 1812, though perhaps less innocent than Miss Mayne assumes, the events between 1812 and 1822 establish Childe Harold as a modest prophecy.

When Maurois remarks that Byron felt obliged to live up to the poetic image he had created, he sees Byron's problem

as involving the assumption of the proper pose and manner. The obligation as the twenty-four-year-old Byron felt it, however, went much deeper: living up to the image meant being as well as seeming to be the image. His remark, "I should like to know how a person feels after committing a murder,"⁴⁷ has been variously interpreted according to how seriously the heroic Byron is taken. Taking him very seriously, I regard the utterance as the key to the intimacy not only between his reading and his work but between both of these and his behavior. In voicing it he was not consciously playing to an audience as Drinkwater,⁴⁸ for one, believes or exercising imaginative creativity which is to produce his literary heroes as Moore believes;⁴⁹ rather, he is frankly expressing the obsessive pragmatism which was the curse of his personal life.

If Emerson had, as Lowell aptly observed in "A Fable for Critics," a Greek head on Yankee shoulders, Byron might be said to have had a morbidly romantic head on Scottish shoulders. The fantasies his mind created from the clap-trap in popular literature had to be experimentally translated into experience. Fascinated as he was by the desperate victims of remorse, convinced of their thrilling transcendence over the humdrum, comfortable, moral herd,⁵⁰ he was not content to write about them; he had to write about their feelings from first-hand knowledge. And this is what he fully accomplished in Manfred. As I have

suggested, this experimentalism is linked with his essential honesty, which rebelled against identifying himself with his literary hero before he had in fact filled out its prodigious form. His life would have been much different and probably much happier if he had been able to see that the hero with whom he imagined a kinship was the creation of bookish, genteel ladies and gentlemen, whose knowledge of the psychological effects of guilt were theoretical and naive.

The idea that the heroic Byron, the personality behind the tragic errors of his life, stems from the extreme romanticism which Byron had absorbed in his formative years has not been explicitly developed, nor has enough attention been given to the idea that Byron was in several fateful actions driven by a dangerous experimentalism. But the belief that he was consciously impelled to embrace his own destruction has been well argued by Lovelace, Miss Mayne, Du Bos, and Marchand.

Lovelace tells us:

He had a fancy for some Oriental legends of pre-existence, and in his conversation and poetry took up the part of a fallen or exiled being, expelled from heaven, or sentenced to a new Avatar on earth for some crime, existing under a curse, predoomed to a fate really fixed by himself in his own mind, but which he seemed determined to fulfill. At times this dramatic

imagination resembled a delusion; he would play at being mad, and gradually get more and more serious, as if he believed himself to be destined to wreck his own life and that of everyone near him.⁵¹

Accepting this comment would make almost impossible the position of those who take the heroic Byron lightly. If performances like this are to be taken as mere theatrics, then the actions which he and the world regard as morally abhorrent must be ascribed to weakness rather than intent. Drinkwater preserves his skepticism by rejecting the allegations of incest completely. His reasoning is circular, because the grounds on which he throws the evidence out of court are that such behavior on Byron's part does not fit in with Byron's character as he has chosen to see it without admitting this evidence.⁵² Maurois preserves his skepticism by pointing up the mitigating circumstances of the crime. To him the fact that Byron and Augusta were strangers during their childhood and were, therefore, not emotionally conditioned by the closeness of their blood tie makes their conduct more a technical than a moral offence.⁵³ The flaw here is that Maurois goes against strong evidence when he assumes that Byron regarded the affair in any such light. To Byron the crime was strongly attractive as an ultimate in evil. The component of his personality which drove him with his eyes open into this disaster cannot be discounted as a histrionic flair.

Miss Mayne perceives that this drive was conscious and irresistible, although her inattention to the literary sources of Byronism prevents her from throwing the necessary light on the origins of this drive in Byron's mind:

To speak for the moment as a fatalist, I feel that Byron was forced by character, which is the only destiny, to do as he had done. Remorse he had to know; and only by some such error of the heart could he have known it.⁵⁴

Du Bos names this tendency "a need of fatality" and traces its powerful influence through Byron's life, particularly in his affairs with women. But he, like Miss Mayne, to whom he owed the germ of his theory, does not really interest himself in the origins of this need. He would have it that Byron is one of a very small class of "fatal beings," but his membership in it is the only explanation offered of his conduct. How or why "fatal beings" become so is less interesting to him than is the way that they willingly embrace catastrophe.⁵⁵

Marchand offers some pertinent but necessarily brief comments on the origins of Byron's fatalism: "The problem of evil as something inborn was readily fostered by the Calvinistic teaching of his nurse and his Presbyterian tutors, and was fortified as he learned more of his own ancestors. The fascinating idea that he was predestined to evil was strengthened at this time [about 1796] or not long after by his reading a semi-gothic novel by John Moore called Zeluco after its

misanthropic hero-villain, fated to perform dark deeds by forces beyond his control."⁵⁶ Here, at least is a beginning of the case for making the reading of Byron's youth, particularly the Gothic novels and plays, a primary cause of his need to know remorse or of his "need of fatality." What remains is to point up further parallels between the Gothic figure and Byron and to present the evidence that Byron was aware of them and consciously experimented with ways to strengthen them.

Byron's asking his mother after reading at a very tender age an allusion to an incestuous marriage in Roman history if he might not someday marry Augusta is, of course, no more than an innocent childish question, but his recalling it in 1814⁵⁷ shows that it had gathered sinister associations, most probably from the Gothic villainies he had since pondered and enacted. Incest, as the most sensational of these villainies, came obliquely or directly into many works -- obliquely into The Castle of Otranto and Zeluco, for example; directly into The Mysterious Mother and The Monk. It was a supercrime, excelling murder as an electrifying monstrous occasion for remorse. Byron reveals his great interest in some of the literary precedents of his subdued exploitation of the theme in The Bride of Abydos:

I had nearly made them [Selim and Zuleika] rather too much akin to each other; and though the wild passions of the East, and some great examples in

Alfieri, Ford, and Schiller (to stop short of anti-
quity), might have pleaded in favour of a copyist,
yet the time and the north . . . induced me to al-
ter their consanguinity and confine them to cousin-
ship.⁵⁸

A few days earlier he had called attention to these same
sources in a letter to Galt, in which he made an admission,
significant because it hints at the connection between ex-
perience and reading:

Something still more singular is, that the first
part, where you have found a coincidence in some
events within your observations on life, was
drawn from observations of mine also, and I
meant to have gone on with the story, but on sec-
ond thoughts, I thought myself two centuries at
least too late for the subject; which, though
admitting of very powerful feeling and descrip-
tion, yet is not adapted for this age, at least
this country, though the finest works of the
Greeks, one of Schiller's and Alfieri's in mod-
ern times, besides several of our old (and best)
dramatists, have been grounded on incidents of a
similar cast.⁵⁹

It is true that both these letters make no mention of
the Gothic materials I have stressed, but I will explain
later on his reluctance to confess indebtedness to sources

which he considers disreputable. It is also true that, since both these letters were written after Byron's affair with Augusta had begun, there is the possibility that the parallels come to mind after the fact. But this possibility diminishes as one considers the unusually quick perception of literary ties with his experience which is clearly evident in his letters. However, without assuming that the psychological state which preceded his fatal error is anything but labyrinthine, I am convinced that an important and clearly traceable part of it was Byron's awareness of how an uncanny fate was once again, as it had done in presenting him an "old English" barony, offering him the means to live, rather than play, the part of a fictional character, to be what had up to now been the derivative Byronic hero.

The time, the circumstances of kinship and upbringing, the character of Augusta were fantastically opportune. When Augusta joined him in London, Byron was between "attachments," restless and irresolute after Lady Oxford's departure had ended a year of intensely exciting intrigue and conflict. There was hardly any other time in a career driven by wild compulsion to experiment during which he would feel more reckless. That one with his proclivities would have a half-sister whom he had never met on terms of brotherly intimacy and that she would come into his life at a time when both were emotionally adrift and free of external restraint are malignantly providential circumstances. If to these are

added Augusta's "moral idiocy," her pliability, and her indulgent affection, the situation seems fatally contrived.

There are three answers to the argument that Byron was merely caught in the current of circumstance, that he drifted rather than steered toward calamity. One is that if he did not consciously perceive that this was an opportunity that would be the envy of the Gothic villain, there would have to be some explanation of why he is at this time so uncharacteristically obtuse. Another is provided by Byron himself in his chivalrous defense of Augusta to Lady Melbourne. He suggests that his advances were calculated, when, to take the blame on himself, he avers that "she [Augusta] was not aware of her own peril till it was too late."⁶⁰ Du Bos very ably develops the thesis that in his love affairs Byron was the pursued rather than the pursuer, the "seducer in spite of himself." But Du Bos stresses that the affair with Augusta was an exception.⁶¹ The third answer is suggested in a letter to Lady Melbourne, quoted in Chapter I, which speaks of his "pursuit of strong emotional and mental drama" during the time in question.⁶²

But the accomplishment of guilt was not the ultimate step in identifying Byron's destiny with that of the dark hero. The popular formula does not end with the commission of the abominable crime; often, in fact, the crime itself precedes the opening action of the story, though it is seldom explicitly revealed to the reader until the climax. The plot is mostly

taken up with the thrilling menaces of the hero-villain -- twisted and driven to desperation by remorse and fear of disgrace -- against a mystified and helpless innocent. At the conclusion the hero-villain is ruined by public exposure. Almost precisely on cue, the evil chance that had supplied Byron the opportunities to enact the formula thus far, brought to him the one more character necessary in the dramatis personae, the mystified innocent.

Since I must here re-examine some of the circumstances touched on in my first chapter, it is necessary to make some distinctions and qualifications. I have emphasized that one of Byron's most urgently felt needs between 1813 and 1816 was for relief from remorse. And I have regarded it as the motive behind his writing during this period, behind his decision to marry, and behind his imprudent self-revelation, particularly to Lady Byron. In this chapter I have spoken of another need, the need to bring experimentally into being the heroic Byron, shaped in his imagination largely by his boyhood reading and prematurely displayed to the world in Childe Harold. It was a significant motive behind his seduction of his sister and, as we shall see, behind his erratic domestic behavior. The two needs are not mutually exclusive, although they were for a time in conflict. Once he knew how it felt to commit, not a murder, but a crime which Ethel Mayne calls "spiritual murder," the remorse which he had sought proved so intensely unendurable that he was driven to means of alleviating it. But at the same

time, the awareness of how he had accomplished, in the experience of remorse, an identity with the tormented and doomed hero-villain of fiction inspired a fatalism, a conviction that the drama had already progressed too far toward a catastrophic ending. Thus the hope of "redemption for two persons" came in conflict with a fatalistic despair, which, augmented by a settled fascination with the dark heroic image, brought his will perversely into complicity with potentially disastrous circumstance. And, for as long as the conflict remained, Byron's mind was alternately captured by moods of hope and desperation.

The innocence and probity of Lady Byron, the same qualities which sometimes promised deliverance were also reminders of how perfectly the Gothic formula was proceeding towards its fulfillment. Two specific parallels, which there is reason to believe were prominent in his mind, are to be found in Zeluco and Caleb Williams. As I have remarked, Elze's observations on the similarities between the young Zeluco and the young Byron leave off too soon. Going further with them, we find that the mature Zeluco, after having committed a number of atrocities, including murder, asks Laura, the idealized heroine, to marry him. Like Annabella Milbanke, Laura rejects the first proposal, and it is some time before misfortune and intrigue force her to accept. Once married, "she adapted her conversation and conduct, as much as she could to what she thought would please him: but if there are tempers of such an

unfortunate frame that even when joined to goodness of disposition it is impossible to please, how then could the efforts of his unhappy young woman prove successful, who had to deal with a peevish temper engrafted on a vicious disposition?"⁶³

The similarity between this situation and Lady Byron's account of Byron's behavior is close indeed: her complaisance was often met with an irritability so savage that she believed her husband was insane and was thankful that Augusta was in the house to placate his wrath or at least to absorb a share of it. Moore's account of Zeluco's response to his wife's good humor might also serve as an accurate presentation of the reprehensible side of Byron's domestic conduct:

Wretched himself, he could not support the sight of happiness in others, and particularly nothing provoked him so much as the idea of his wife's being in a state of composure, while he felt himself tormented with malignant passions; and he often endeavoured to exhaust the virulence which corroded his own breast upon the unhappy Laura, who, before her marriage, had never known but from description what envy or ill-humour was.⁶⁴

Brooding on such similarities as these, some presented by chance, others consciously enacted under a fatalistic obsession, was most likely the source of Byron's fear that "like Zeluco, he would end by strangling his child."⁶⁵

If we turn to the differences between Zeluco and Byron, we find that they are differences which exist between Zeluco and the more typical Gothic hero-villain. Zeluco is not guilty of incest, probably not because of any scruples but because he is an only child; but the novel does present a tender and proper affinity between Laura and her half-brother, Captain Seidlits, which Zeluco misunderstands according to his own vicious lights. The depraved suspicion that his own infant son is an "incestuous bastard" drives him into a murderous fury. This development, though not precisely analogous to any in Byron's unfolding personal drama, is a link with those works in which incest is the source of torment to the remorseful character. Two other differences of some importance can also be said to arise from the composite nature of the heroic Byron. Zeluco feels the burden of his crimes mostly as fear of being punished rather than as remorse; and his animosity toward his wife stems from unfounded jealousy, a motive which even a vivid imagination could not inspire in regard to Lady Byron. Remorse, the affliction which Byron had come to share with the stock Gothic character, created an appetite for external as well as internal turmoil, but it could not like jealousy lend itself to satisfying this appetite through domestic strife. One fantastic satisfaction, commented on above, came from accusations that Lady Byron's rejection of Byron's first proposal was the cause of his guilt. Another came from an attempted re-enactment of the central

situation of Caleb Williams. In this novel Faulkland, whose greatest flaw is an exaggerated sense of honor, derived, remarkably, from his childhood reading of romances, feels not only the agonies of remorse over having murdered a villainous personal enemy, but also the obsessive dread of the disgrace which exposure would bring. Some time after two innocent men have been hanged for his crime, he brings Caleb Williams, a perceptive but imprudent young man, into his household as his secretary. Williams, after having heard of the events preceding the murder and of the circumstances of Faulkland's acquittal of the murder charge, and after having noticed some oddities in his behavior, begins to suspect that Faulkland is guilty. Moved by a naturally keen but unmalicious curiosity, Williams attempts by calculated hints to draw the truth out of his employer.

Mr. Faulkland's situation was like that of a fish that plays with the bait employed to entrap him. By my manner he was in a certain degree encouraged to lay aside his usual reserve, and relax his stateliness; till some abrupt observation or interrogatory stung him into recollection, and brought back his alarm. Still it was evident that he bore about him a secret wound. Whenever the cause of his sorrows was touched, though in a manner most indirect and remote, his countenance altered, his distemper returned, and it was with

difficulty that he could suppress his emotions, sometimes conquering himself with painful effort, and sometimes bursting into a sort of paroxysm of insanity, and hastening to bury himself in solitude.⁶⁶

The greatest obstacle to getting Lady Byron to play Caleb Williams to Byron's Faulkland was that her curiosity was not easily stimulated, and it is likely that some of Byron's savagery toward her sprang from exasperation. Qualified as she was by her meekness and innocence to play the part, she could not be tempted into prying further into matters which he frequently hinted were waiting for her discovery. (It was not until after the separation that she arranged his mystifications into a dreadful equation, which her curiosity, no less intense for being belated and methodical, demanded that she solve, at the expense of Augusta's sanity, if necessary.) Such episodes as his threatening her with a dagger when she asked a question about Don Sebastion show his desire to make the most of any sign of suspicion or curiosity. Considering what is reliably known about his domestic conduct, there is a strong credibility in Harriet Beecher Stowe's report that he once told Lady Byron: "Read 'Caleb Williams' and you will see that I shall do by you just as Faulkland did by Caleb."⁶⁷ If it seems too far-fetched to suppose that Byron transformed a conflict between two men, employer and secretary, to one between man and wife, there is the reply that he was merely

retracing the step that Godwin confessed having taken, when he acknowledged that his plot was borrowed from Bluebeard.⁶⁸

If Byron had followed the formula through to the end, the unfortunate events of his last months in England would have been disastrous. There was no electrifying exposure and confession, no catastrophic fifth act to induce sentimental pity over his blasted greatness; and he circumspectly avoided forcing such a conclusion when the separation proceedings invited him to do so. That he was willing to draw back from the ultimate precipice shows that he had learned a measure of discretion from developments which shook his faith in the heroic pattern. In the first place, remorse and despair were when experienced too painfully absorbing and unpleasant to afford any of the melodramatic grandeur which he had supposed that they would lend to his image of himself. His public too had shown in its response to rumor that what it wept over in fiction it found contemptible and abhorrent in fact. Another extremely strong deterrent was Lady Melbourne's dismay when he confided his guilt to her. Thus, instead of a fifth act, there was only an undignified exit, which left bailiffs, lawyers, gossips, and lampoonists as ill-informed critics of his ambiguous performance. In the cathartic passages of his poems written in Switzerland, he imagines that the "proper woe" of which he had been the "cunning pilot" has the tragic propriety that it lacked in fact. But the "day of his destiny," though he had narrowly escaped, was not over; the rock

of his last hope, though it was hardly secure, had not shivered; and his calling Lady Byron his moral Clytemnestra calls to mind, among the many differences between himself and Agamemnon, the fact that he was alive, even morally.

The hollowness of these efforts to aggrandize his misfortune does not, however, resound the note of insincerity for which the detractors of the heroic Byron eagerly listen. We have seen that the hardiness of his impulse to realize the romantic image of himself had overcome several encounters with the negations of hard fact. This impulse, tempered and confirmed by past challenges and victories, resurged against the most stubborn realities it had met. And until it was shunted safely into Manfred, it continued to threaten the accomplishment of two fatal alternatives: avowal of his rumored guilt by having Augusta come to live with him, or suicide. Questioning the sincerity of these last expressions of this dangerous impulse is possible only if one refuses to recognize the part it had played in bringing him to the very edge of irretrievable disaster.

By way of concluding the circumstantial case for the theory that Byron sought experimentally to create the heroic image shaped largely by his early acquaintance with sensational literature, it must be said that it has been impossible to bring all the substantiating evidence into court. As it is, it may seem to employ too much of the testimony which has been heard many times before, albeit not in support of this particular

plea. The intention has been to use no more than the minimum of well-known facts necessary to carry the argument and to face up to facts, equally well known, that might be thought to militate against it. In short, though selective, the evidence is not loaded and is quite representative of what could be done beyond the limits in which I have attempted to keep it.

Although it may seem that Manfred has had to wait in the wings too long, the significance of this exploration of Byron's motives justifies the delay. The echoes which can be heard throughout Manfred of the many works of pre-Byronic Byronism are tantalizing and deceptive unless it is understood that they are all part of a highly complex synthesis and that what may seem a facile derivativeness can at the same time have the authenticity of direct experience. Such an understanding also makes it possible to appreciate how most of the source material has been too completely assimilated to be isolated and identified. The mingling of oriental and classical deities in the demonology of the play has been observed as a minor impropriety, but it has never been cited as an example of how completely Byron has assimilated all his learning and experience into an organic unity which is his own.

Like all circumstantial cases, the one presented here can be objected to on grounds of the paucity of direct testimony. It would be fair to ask why, if Byron is obsessed by these values and attitudes, he does not offer more comment on them than he does in his letters and journals. The

reply is that he consistently adopts in his correspondence the same attitude that he had learned was necessary to a would-be sophisticate. His letters, in other words, are expressions of the social Byron. Consequently, the few allusions that he does make to the works of such authors as Monk Lewis or Ann Radcliffe are slighting or contemptuous. His attitude is of a piece with his critical pronouncements, which consistently avow an admiration for the classics and neo-classics and a scorn for his romantic contemporaries. And, of course, it is also connected with the fear of ridicule which is responsible for his malaise over being identified with Childe Harold, as it is with his embarrassment and outrage at the news that Murray had shown the manuscript of Childe Harold I and II to Gifford, whom he regarded respectfully, but feared as an exponent of sophistication and rationalism in literature.⁶⁹ In fact, there is nothing about it which cannot be explained by the concept of his duality presented above.

But even the letters do yield some corroborating evidence. The frequent employment of literary quotation and allusion supports very well the thesis that he was in the habit of seizing upon the literary precedent which paralleled his current thought or action. But a more important yield is that among the works with which he considers it seemly to admit a familiarity, those he brings up most frequently bear upon the familiar Gothic themes of guilt and

remorse. Believing that the frequency with which particular works appear is logically an index to how deeply and lastingly they had impressed him, I noted in the Letters and Journals up until the completion of Manfred the number of times to which he turned to particular works. It cannot come as a surprise that Shakespeare is put to use most often. But of some significance is the fact that of the 114 citations of him, the largest number, twenty-four, are drawn from Macbeth, the play which in its treatment of guilt and its psychological consequences is closest to the familiar Gothic pattern. Hamlet, its closest competitor, turns up seventeen times, which, although not so directly concerned with remorse, does offer a related presentation of concealed internal struggle and self-accusation. Richard III and Othello, both in their way treating of the consequences of "inexpiable crime," are the only other tragedies appearing with significant frequency -- each eleven times. Only one other tragedy, Coriolanus, is mentioned as many as four times. Besides character, another interesting common denominator in the Gothic literature and what would seem to be Byron's favorite tragedies is the presence of the supernatural. Among the four favorites, the exception in this respect is Othello, which is joined by a different but equally strong link -- the persecution of an innocent.

Before concluding that it was the Gothicism of these four plays that kept them almost at the tip of Byron's tongue, I

eliminated other conceivable causes for his preference. Is Byron showing the soundness of his critical judgment in preferring Macbeth, Hamlet, and Othello? These are, after all, three of the four tragedies that are acknowledged to be Shakespeare's supreme achievement. If so, Byron's neglect of the fourth, King Lear, alluded to only three times, does not fit into the pattern; nor does his attention to Richard III. And the best explanation is that Lear's character and torment are remote from those of the heroic Byron, while those of Richard are quite close. Is Byron exercising an ear for the colorful or striking phrase? If so, one would expect more abundant use, not only of Lear but of Antony and Cleopatra (2 allusions), Julius Caesar (1), possibly Romeo and Juliet (3) and of the comedies and histories, none of which except for Henry IV, Part I, appears more than four times.

In this one exception, sixteen allusions to Henry IV, Part I, there is further support for three conclusions that have already been drawn from other evidence: (1) that Byron was most impressed with literature which could be identified with his real or projected life, (2) that the social Byron is the mask and the heroic Byron the man, and (3) that literature of the Gothic type lent itself most readily to such identification. Byron's sense of humor, needless to say, was lively; but, as has been indicated in Chapter I, it was not, until liberated by Manfred and Italian mores, free to

sport with the sentimental solemnities of the heroic Byron. Byron would quite naturally delight in the rakishness of Falstaff and Prince Hal and would also be aware of how well quotations from the play were in accord with the comic attitudes he wished to assume for his friends and correspondents. He sometimes quoted from Goldsmith's and Sheridan's plays for the same reasons. But a deeper cause would have to underlie so strongly indicated a preference for this play over others in the comic vein. Probably, he perceived in Prince Hal a duality like his own -- a seriousness disguised by an insincere convivial attitude. Thus, it would seem that here, too, the strength of the appeal lies in identification with a literary character. However, the greater appeal of the Gothic formula is implicit in the more frequent allusion to the Shakespeare plays related to it than to those which are not; and, even though Henry IV turns up with significant frequency, it is the only play unrelated to the formula that does.

The negation of his interest in Gothic novels sometimes went beyond the omission of allusions to them. In the summer of 1816, he wrote:

It is odd that when I do read, I can only bear the chicken broth of -- any thing but Novels. It is many a year since I looked into one, (though they are sometimes ordered, by way of experiment, but never taken,) till I looked

yesterday at the worst parts of the Monk.

These descriptions ought to have been written by Tiberius at Caprea -- they are forced -- the philtered ideas of a jaded voluptuary.⁷⁰

This pronouncement, no doubt just and indicative of Byron's astuteness, could more easily be taken at face value if it were not known that at this time the Shelleys and Byron were amusing, and frightening, themselves with tales of horror and that the issue of these diversions was Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and Byron's attempt at a novel called The Vampyre. Besides indicating that Byron's critical opinions were not always in accord with his deeper feelings, these activities would provide additional evidence, if any were needed, that the Gothic tradition was very much on his mind shortly before the composition of Manfred.

The conclusions to which this view of how Byron's mind was sacrificed to books leads may now be drawn together. Byronism, was not, except in its early expressions, the superficial pose that it is often suspected to be. It became, through Byron's early manhood, an increasingly accurate reflection of attitudes confirmed by experience. What suspicion might be cast upon it by its derivation from a species of literature which is transparently unrealistic is largely dispelled by the evidence that Byron had experimentally brought upon himself the pangs suffered by Gothic villains. The assumption that Byronism was a mask which Byron sometimes enjoyed

wearing over a personality that was basically rational and realistic does not hold up well unless the motives behind his most tragically consequential actions are slighted. And the related assumption that mobilité accounts for occasional aberrations into extravagance is supported only what is well known of his facility at accommodating himself to the temper of his companions. It does not follow from this that there was no stable tendency beneath his changes in manner; and, again his important actions, along with some testimony of his own, show that this tendency was Byronism. In fact, it can be said that sophistication and mobilité were a mask which concealed his fascination with the Gothic figure and his obsession with identifying himself with the type, and that his reticence about his reading in Gothic literature and his denials of resemblance to Childe Harold were part of the fabric of the mask. The Byronic fatalism has not been so skeptically regarded as have been other aspects of Byron's dark image of himself, but it has been attributed only to his Calvinistic indoctrination or his fancy for oriental legends. The view of the effects of his reading developed here adds a third influence on this attitude -- the striking coincidence between the workings of chance in his own life and those in the books that he had read. The coincidences invited him to fill out a fatal pattern in events which he could control. All of these conclusions are essential in giving a fair and careful hearing to Manfred, the most complete and philosophic expression of Byronism.

Chapter III

More Things in Heaven and Earth

Thus far, the two major areas of the experience that found its way into Manfred have been explored. But beyond the success of Byron's unfortunate experiment with guilt and the frustration of his efforts to escape are other elements, largely related to Byron's reading, which can most conveniently be treated concurrently with the explication of the metaphysical and supernatural concepts, because they can be most illuminatingly applied as part of the solution to the problems as they arise.

Manfred is the quintessence of Byronism, not only because it presents the ultimate refinement of Byron's hero image, but because it penetrates to the basic moral and philosophical assumptions which gave the image form. In examining these, Byron was attempting to satisfy his own urgent curiosity, rather than explain himself to his public. Though his examination of the causes of the Byronic phenomenon came after the fact, it is far from a rationalization. The notion that Byron wallowed in self-pity may be sustained by such poems as The Dream, but it becomes prejudice when it is allowed to affect the reading of poems written in a sterner, and more characteristic, mood. Manfred does not attempt to

enlist anyone's sympathy, not even Byron's own. The honesty of his retrospective view leads him to the antithesis of rationalization -- self-reproach. What he said of Manfred after submitting it for publication strongly suggests that he hoped that it would not be understood at all in its connection with his personal anguish.¹ On the personal level, it was for his own understanding that he wrote, and the exercise cleared his mind of much clutter around his fundamental beliefs.

The stimulation to probe to the philosophical basis of the unexamined and habitual Byronic attitudes came, as has been noted earlier, from Shelley. The rejection of Shelley's metaphysic, instead of closing Byron's mind to abstract speculation, made him curious about the convictions that had caused him to reject it. The intellectual demands of his discussions with Shelley had provided a challenge which his ever active mind could not dismiss. Then, too, the puzzle of why he had been incapable of conversion to a system which might have saved him from despair had to be solved. He felt, rather than knew, that Shelley's Platonic concept of spiritual unity was wrong. And he would be troubled until he had framed an apologia which would bring out what he did believe. His resources were the doctrines which he had uncritically absorbed in his youth and the subsequent experiences which had confirmed them. The core of his reaction to Shelley was the belief in the existence of evil, which more strongly exerted itself in man and his world than he believed Shelley could know. Not

only did this evil exist; it pervaded the very objects which Shelley took to be manifestations of good. Not content with replacing Shelley's unity with a duality strongly overbalanced by evil, he took the further step of opposing the concept of pantheism with one which would have the separate elements of nature ruled by individual, and evil, spirits. He would insist that there were more things in heaven and earth than were dreamt of in Shelley's philosophy.

A further stimulation, which, unlike Shelley's, worked upon the form rather than the substance of his deliberations was his introduction to Goethe's Faust. Hearing Monk Lewis's translation of the greatest of philosophical dramas while he himself was absorbed in formulating his own philosophy was most likely responsible for its emergence in dramatic form. It is safe to say that the most important effect of Faust upon Manfred is that it inspired Byron to express himself in this unaccustomed medium.²

Much of the substance of his ideas came, in addition to the experience which have been explained at length, from the same body of reading which had inspired his unfortunate experiments. The villainous elements of the popular fiction which had left its mark on Byron have demanded prolonged treatment because it was through them that the influence on the Byronic experimentalism can be most clearly traced. But besides creating in him a thirst for unwholesome sensation, this fiction is the source of several of his later attitudes

in matters moral and social. Permeating even the worst novels are views that very simply approximate the broad assumptions of eighteenth-century moral philosophy. Although the moralistic tone of these works often seems to be an expedient by which author and reader can half convince themselves that excursions into sentimentality and horror are really edifying, it reflects, though with great oversimplification, the optimistic faith in the natural rectitude of the individual conscience, which is central in the characteristic philosophy of the age. The crimes committed in the sensational literature violate the natural inclinations of the criminal, for whose unnatural perversion adverse external influences are to blame. This generalization holds true with the works of the rational school of novelists like Moore and Godwin as well as of the sentimental school, the disagreement between them being only over whether the corruption of the reason or of the affections is more to be blamed for the perversion of the individual. Unlike Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, Byron was not much impressed by formal philosophy; but he was deeply, if unsubtly, impressed with the basic values it transmitted through popular literature.³ Just as the novels were responsible for much "mischief," they exerted a strong influence on the formation of his ideals. And concomitant with the remorse which the experiments inspired by the novels yielded was a strengthened belief in the power of conscience, for the more strongly he felt remorse, the more he believed

he had empirical confirmation of the principle that abhorrence of evil was natural to the human spirit.

Much of Manfred is the literary expression of this belief, which also underlies the humanitarian principles expressed in his works and deeds. "There are two sentiments to which I am constant," he told Lady Blessington, "a strong love of liberty and a detestation of cant."⁴ Both of these are clearly grounded in the belief in the individual's capacity to choose good if not constrained by tyranny or seduced by hypocrisy.⁵ His formative thinking did lack the discrimination and thoroughness which would later handicap him in his speculative poetry and thus bring upon it Goethe's judgment that it was childish; but his faith had the great advantage of being pragmatically confirmed. Wordsworth and Coleridge were superior metaphysicians; but when their better-reasoned humanitarianism met with things they had not dreamed of -- the ugliness of the French Revolution, the hard laws of nature and economics, the blandishments of a Tory regime -- it receded into a rationalized orthodoxy which deprived them of much that was worth their saying as poets. Shelley, also a better metaphysician, barricaded his idealism from the evils of the present with a belief in a millennial deliverance from them.

Though Byron's faith may have begun in a hazy sentimentality, it is unjust to assume that it ended there. Certainly, it led him to extravagances which were silly in his poetry⁶ and dangerous in his life. But even these were useful in the

development of his convictions. They brought him into a collision with evil, which only the firmest of his ideals survived. The climax of Manfred, in the Hall of Arimanes, is the completion of a spiritual ordeal from which the hero emerges with only those articles of faith strong enough to withstand the test.

Another piece to be fitted into the philosophical background, beside the belief in the natural rectitude of the individual conscience, was derived, not from the Gothic novel but from the closely allied oriental tale of terror and from the desultory readings in Eastern history and culture in which these tales probably inspired Byron's interest. A cast in Byron's thinking, most clearly evidenced in Cain, which prompted some of his contemporaries to accuse him of Manicheism, has been more precisely traced to Zoroastrianism. A recent article by Professor Maurice J. Quinlan convincingly argues the clear manifestations of this oriental faith in Manfred.⁷ The findings in it are perhaps the most useful treatment yet offered of direct source materials. And the extent of this usefulness will become clear as the explication of the play progresses. Zoroastrianism, and perhaps Manicheism, the Christian heresy related to it, had probably become a strong and pervasive influence on Byron's attitudes long before he wrote Manfred. Central in it is the belief that the devil has the power to create and rule. Byron's early indoctrination in Calvinism and superstition would make the doctrine appealing to him. It

is of especial importance to note again that the doctrine is the diametric opposite of the Platonism and pantheism he had striven to believe in. Although perhaps a lesser influence in the shaping of Byron's personal life than the doctrine of conscience, Zoroastrianism strongly conditioned his reaction to experience. In respect to the separate influences the two doctrines exerted on Manfred, it might be said that the first underlies the personal aspect of the conflict and the second, the cosmic implications of it.

Fatalism, a third strong motif in Manfred, came also from Byron's Calvinistic training; and it also had seemed to him to have received confirmation from his experience, from those accidents of his life which deceptively promised greatness and seductively invited him to participate in his own destruction.

These three broad philosophical beliefs -- in conscience, in the immanence of evil, and in fate, then, are the terms of the problem which Byron attempted to solve in Manfred. But the problem was much more than an intellectual exercise, for what seemed to Byron to depend upon his solution of it was his own sanity or survival.

Appropriately, the past adventures of the protagonist are not explicitly presented in Manfred. The exposition is kept brief and is further muted by being dispersed throughout the play. It is possible that Byron was not guided by artistic principle in making this a tragedy of ripe situation. Rather his impatience to relieve his emotions and a desire for

melodramatic mystery may lie behind this stroke. But the stroke is impressively effective, considering that his intent is philosophic drama. Not only does he exclude thereby the sentimental posturings of the heroes of his Tales, but he leaves himself scope to develop the tragic recognition which provides the cosmic moral insight of the play. Because of the short span of the dramatic action, however, the development of Manfred's character is subtle. No one is likely to miss the point that Manfred begins with the desire for oblivion and ends with the resolve to endure agonies as the inevitable consequences of possessing a free spirit. But the intermediate stages have not been clearly defined.

Between the first two scenes, Manfred's motives and his own estimate of his spiritual powers undergo a significant change. Whereas he had begun with enlisting the aid of spirits to achieve self-forgetfulness, he stands contemplating suicide at the opening of the second scene. Since there is no reason for him to doubt the spirits' statement that death cannot bring oblivion and is therefore no solution to his essential problem, there would seem to be no rational motive for suicide. But he is reacting, I believe, more to the agonizing and degrading episode at the end of the first scene than to the earlier disappointment of his hope for self-forgetfulness. Even though the reaction is not entirely rational, the emotional drive to die is adequately established in Manfred's response to the apparition of the seventh spirit as a

woman whom he recognizes:

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 - - - -

/The figure vanishes

My heart is crush'd!

/Manfred falls senseless. (I, 1, ll.
 188-191.)

The identity in Byron's life as well as in Manfred's of the woman represented has been the subject of speculation, which I see no hope of ending here. E. H. Coleridge notes: "It is evident that the female figure is not that of Astarte;"⁸ but it would be more reasonable to say that it is possible, or even likely that it is not, for Byron, avoiding definite clues, has made this one of the chief mystifications of his "inexplicable" drama. Chew agrees that it is not Astarte but objects to "Coleridge's assumption that it is the subject of the incantation." Not at all perplexed by the ambiguity of the situation, however, he attempts to show through comparisons with Faust, Dr. Faustus, "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," and "Epipsychidion" that the vision is the elusive "Spirit of Beauty." This conclusion is no sounder than the assumption upon which it rests: "It is best to put autobiographical allusions to one side and interpret the episode in terms of Goethe's Faust."⁹ Because Manfred is above all an explosion

of Byron's personal agony, and because, as I have shown, most literary allusion is fused with personal experience, I think it injudicious to interpret it in terms of literary influence before the more immediate autobiographical implications have been examined and rejected. Of the impulse to interpret Manfred too directly in terms of literary influence, I have more to say below.

The text itself reveals only that (1) the seventh spirit has chosen the vision of a beautiful female as the "aspect" which seems "most fitting" to him; (2) Manfred recognizes the vision as the form of a woman with whom he "yet might be most happy," then is overcome by grief when the figure vanishes; and (3) a voice not identified with that of any of the spirits pronounces an accusing and condemnatory incantation over Manfred. These facts by no means make "evident" that the form is not that of Astarte; and they indicate that Manfred, not the aspect assumed by the seventh spirit, is the subject of the "Incantation." Nor do they offer support to the notion that it is the "Spirit of Beauty." Since the incantation is uttered by a voice not heard before, it seems quite likely that the seventh spirit has adopted the voice as well as the form of the mysterious woman. If this is granted, then it becomes more difficult to accept Chew's interpretation, because the utterance of a curse is hardly a function of a "Spirit of Beauty." Strict adherence to the scant information explicit in the scene leaves open the possibility that the vision with which the seventh

spirit chooses to torment Manfred is that of Astarte, who would remind him alternately of bliss and guilt. Certainly the unity of the play is better preserved if the unexplained role of a second woman in Manfred's past is excluded.

But a question remains as to why Byron chose to becloud the identity of the woman represented, when he could very easily have made it clear. Her anonymity does not create suspense, because naming Astarte at this juncture would not reveal prematurely the nature of Manfred's relationship to her. The intentional mystification is very likely Byron's method of discharging one of the chief causes of his own agony without decidedly injuring the unity of the work. Further development of a love between Manfred and a second woman would create a complication which Byron, or even a far more experienced dramatist, would not be able to reconcile with the theme of Manfred's catastrophic love for his one perfect soulmate.

To Byron, the apparition probably represents Lady Byron, and the choice of the spirit of his star to appear in her form reflects his conviction that she has been the instrument of fate against him, his "moral Clytemnestra." Manfred's brief delusion that the vision is real and that he may find happiness in again clasping her parallels Byron's hope for salvation through his marriage and more immediately his hope for a reconciliation. His preoccupation with her contribution to his despair -- which brought him, like Manfred to the edge of suicide -- makes it more than likely that he would present her

as the bitterly relentless agent and voice of his destructive destiny.

The "Incantation" itself had been composed in the summer of 1816 and had already been published with "The Prisoner of Chillon." Since its original animus would seem to be against Lady Byron, it has been considered as not wholly adapted to its place in Manfred.¹⁰ But, if it is partially inappropriate, the inappropriate portions are much smaller than has been believed. The bitter reproach is turned wholesale against Manfred-Byron, because it is likely that Byron saw in the light of his cathartic honesty that his accusations against her were largely attempts to escape feeling of guilt -- to divert the responsibility to her. Now being mercilessly honest with himself, Byron turns it into his own arraignment and condemnation. His suspicion that she had begun to uncover his guilt would make it appropriate that her representative in the drama be an accuser.

Regardless of the identity of the woman who appears, it is clear that her apparition adds an unbearable increment to Manfred's agony, and that it is this which brings the reaction in the second scene:

The spirits I have raised abandon me,

The spells which I have studied baffle me,

The remedy I reck'd of tortured me;

I lean no more on superhuman aid. (I, ii, ll. 1-4.)

Although Manfred has boastfully asserted his powers over the

earth spirits, they have only slowly and grudgingly complied. Resentful and contemptuous, the seventh spirit has addressed Manfred as a "worm" and a "Child of Clay." And when the opportunity comes to teach Manfred that his mortality is degrading, despite his boast that he is equal to the spirits in power, the seventh spirit knows precisely what to do with it. There may have been no deeply malicious intent in the offer of one spirit to grant a service after Manfred had dismissed them all as unavailing. But this guileful evasion of the order of a "superior" opens the way to the malicious stratagem by which the seventh spirit overcomes Manfred. Once Manfred is senseless, he is unable to resist the curse which is pronounced over him. The result is that Manfred, having begun with a proud confidence in his power over the spirits, has been humiliated.

Manfred's desire for death in the second scene springs from this humiliation. The dominant sentiment of this scene is the moral frailty of the human condition, as it has been brought home to him by his own guilt and weakness. His impulse to escape this condition is now stronger than his earlier desire for oblivion. In the dangerous condition which Lady Byron would have said was "forfeiting self-esteem too far," he has "ceased/ To justify/ his/deeds unto/ himself/ -- /The last infirmity of evil." (ll. 27-29.) His awareness that in death he will not find spiritual peace is expressed in:

To be thus --

Grey-haired with anguish . . .

And to be thus, eternally but thus,

Having been otherwise! (I, II, ll. 65-71.)

And:

Farewell, ye opening heavens!

Look not upon me thus reproachfully --

Ye were not meant for me -- Earth! take these atoms.
(I, II, ll. 107-109.)

The fortuitous intervention of the chamois hunter is not, as it might seem, a contrived coincidence. Rather it is organically useful in demonstrating Manfred's impotency, while brooding upon his degradation, against the instrumentality of fate.

The intervention is well prepared for by:

There is a power upon me which withholds,

And makes it my fatality to live. (I, II, ll. 23-24.)

The power is that asserted in the "Incantation":

Nor to slumber, nor to die,

Shall be in thy destiny;

Though thy death shall still seem near

To thy wish, but as a fear. (I, I, ll. 254-257.)¹¹

Until Manfred is able to regain and surpass the strength which nearly made him a match for the spirit of his star he will be unable to free himself of this curse.

In the scene in the hunter's hut, Manfred begins the process of restoring his self-esteem and, consequently, his spiritual strength. In a sense, he begins again to justify his deeds unto

himself, for he progresses from the hallucination of seeing blood on the brim of the cup offered him (II, i, l. 21), which is symbolic, as the following lines reveal, of his still overpowering sense of guilt, to a calmer appraisal of his moral strength and weakness. His greatest strength, his pride, reasserts itself:

Patience and patience! Hence -- that word was made
For brutes of burthen, not for birds of prey;
Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine, --
I am not of thine order. (II, i, ll. 35-38.)

And his courage returns with:

I can bear --

However wretchedly, 't is still to bear --
In life what others could not brook to dream,
But perish in their slumber. (II, i, ll. 76-79.)

No doubt, the chamois hunter's question --

And with this --

This cautious feeling for another's pain,
Canst thou be black with evil? (II, i, ll. 79-81.) --

reminds Manfred that there is in his nature a tendency toward good which he had all but forgotten in the previous scene.

As a result of his cathartic confession to the hunter and the rediscovery of his spiritual strength, Manfred again becomes receptive to the restorative solicitations of beauty. While distracted, he had declared his incapacity to respond to the natural beauty around him, but in the Witch of the Alps

scene he is once more responsive, although his attitude is still morbidly tinged, as his simile comparing the waterfall with the tail of the horse ridden by Death in the apocalypse shows. The invocation to the spirit of the place, however, bespeaks unmixed delight. When the witch appears, he is again afforded a listener to whom he can confess. His recovery from his pitiless self-accusation of the scene on the precipice is apparent in his lyrical account of the motive of his crime and of his consequent spiritual struggle. The most striking indication of progress is his response to the witch's offer of possible help. He now refuses escape -- the object he had desperately sought in the opening scene -- when he learns that he can win it only by subservience. It is unacceptable because he sees that agony is the price of dignity and freedom. The submission which the spirit demands would, like the Christian submissiveness counselled by the chamois hunter, place Manfred beneath his rightful place in a spiritual order. It is important to note that the scene approaches being an explanation of why Byron rejected a religion of Nature. The witch is a separate spirit, not fused with a single animating world-spirit; moreover, she demands, as a power behind natural beauty, that he give up his identity -- the sum of all he had been and all that experience had taught him -- for the sake of comfort. And he chose to preserve his identity -- wretched as he knew it to be -- rather than to escape through self-abasement and delusion.

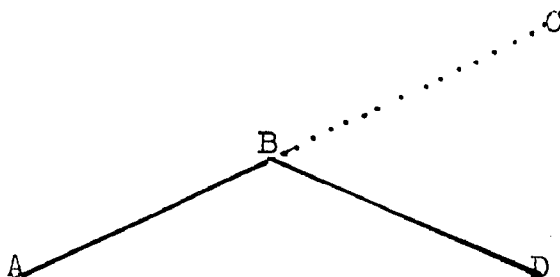
Now conscious of the ignobility of the means of relief open to him, he chooses not to escape, but to bring himself into confrontation with the destinies, whose broader powers surpass those of the earth spirits; with Nemesis, the agent of retribution contrasting completely with any hoped-for agent of escape; with Arimanes, the most powerful of all the evil spirits; and with the spirit of Astarte, who will most severely try his powers to resist the agony of guilt. Facing these most dreaded beings is an ultimate test of his pride and courage. And in the course of the ordeal, he is denied the chief consolation still conceivable -- Astarte's forgiveness -- although he does conquer the lingering though controlled fear of death, imbued in him by the "Incantation." Astarte's prophecy, however, is not much consolation, because the end of his "earthly ills" is of little importance to one whose most agonizing ills are spiritual and eternal. The withholding of forgiveness, the final extinction of the quest for external comfort, parallels Manfred's earlier disappointment at the disappearance of the seventh spirit. The parallel scenes provide an indication of Manfred's spiritual progress. He struggles successfully to retain his consciousness in spite of his paroxysm of agony. Whereas he had earlier been thrown into despair by being condemned to his own "proper hell," he now accepts the inevitable justice in his suffering and summons the strength to bear it. Convulsed with pain, he puts to the proof his boast to the chamois hunter of his superior resistance

to agony. He makes his "torture tributary to his will," and thus earns the admiration of the spirits. As the scene ends Manfred is perfectly in control of himself, and in this he shows that he has risen above the weakness which had enabled the spirits of lower rank to overcome him.

Philosophically, Byron had by this time solved his dilemma. Having exhausted all hope of relief from natural or supernatural sources outside himself, he had concluded that to preserve his sanity and his life, he could rely only upon his own pride and courage to oppose the menacing "nightmare of his own delinquencies." But it was one thing to see his character past the crisis, and quite another to follow the hard example that Manfred set. He had come to an inescapable conclusion; but his inability to continue the play into a third act is evidence that he was yet unsure of how he, or his character, would continue to live with blank despair. Suicide, the submerging of his own identity, forgiveness, and diversion from the persisting consciousness of guilt were all impossible. The one solution was already prepared for by the qualities developed in Manfred's character; but Byron had yet to confirm that his own pride and courage could be equal to bearing with dignity the endless agonies he saw ahead. There is no need to repeat what is offered in the first chapter as an explanation of how Byron gained the self-assurance necessary to write an impressive third act. The act itself shows Manfred to be confidently self-possessed. Still unwilling to choose escape at the cost

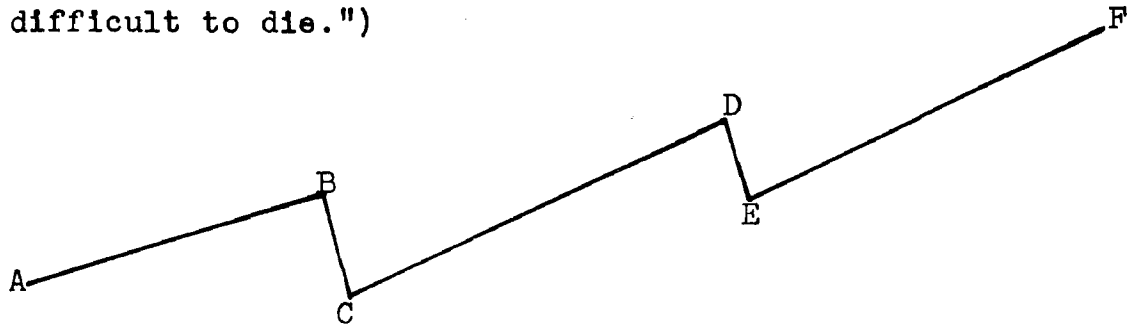
of self-abasement, he declines it when it is volunteered by the Abbot. And his defiance of the spirits who come to take him is also a function of his securely won self-reliance. If he has the pride and courage to renounce external comfort, this same strength enables him to defy external punishment.

Tracing the changes in Manfred's character has necessitated a summary of the plot. But the structural design of the action could not be conveniently examined in the course of this summary. Professor Chew's analysis of the plot would place the climax at the point of Manfred's intrusion into the Hall of Arimanes. However, it would be more precise to place it at the moment of his convulsive reaction to his encounter with Astarte, for his suffering at this point evokes the strength, hitherto unproven, which resolves the conflict between his remorse, of which the spirits take advantage, and of his will to endure it, which places him beyond their power. Chew further explains that "Manfred . . . represents well the double nature of tragic action -- spiritual triumph concomitant with material failure." The rising action consists of "the period of increasing power over the world of spirits." The falling action is the swift "decline to death." Accompanying the "material failure," however, "there is a continued spiritual rise."¹² He diagrams the plot in this fashion:



The solid lines, because BC represents the "decline to death," must be taken to represent the "material" action; and, if this is so, AB should be a dotted line. The rising action is clearly spiritual; and the entrance into the Hall of Arimanes is certainly not a "material" triumph. Moreover, there is no way of determining where BC should join AD, for it attempts to plot a progression which is not part of the real action of the play. If Manfred's decline in worldly fortune were of sufficient concern in a drama in which the action is emphatically spiritual, it could be represented only as a line descending from the fatal crime, which is antecedent to the entire action. But the greatest cause of confusion in the diagram is that it attempts to join two necessarily separate aspects of plot -- the development of action, which invariably consists of rising action, climax, and falling action; and the development of theme, which involves the success or failure of the protagonist. When the structure of the action is properly diagrammed, it should look the same regardless of the turn which the protagonist's fortunes take. The descending line from the climax indicates, not failure, but the slackening of the intensity of the conflict once the crisis is passed. An accurate diagram of the plot, then, would omit the BC line and would place point B at the moment of Manfred's paroxysm of agony near the end of Act II. If the quite different thematic course of Manfred's spiritual ascendance were diagrammed, the result would be a saw-toothed line climbing and falling back as his efforts meet success and

defeat and culminating in triumph over the devil ("Thou never shalt possess me, that I know") and over mortal fears ("It is not difficult to die.")



AB represents the action of the first scene, that is, Manfred's success in summoning up the spirits. But the conclusion of the act brings an effect that is the opposite of what he sought -- not forgetfulness but an intensive reminder of his guilt. BC proceeds from Manfred's frustrated attempt to "clasp" the apparition to the end of the scene on the precipice. When stopped in the act of destroying himself, Manfred has reached the lowest depth of despair. With the intervention of the chamois hunter at point C begins the recovery, which progresses through the dialogues with the hunter, the Witch of the Alps, the spirits, the destinies, and Arimanes himself and culminates in Manfred's winning of his dreadful objective, summoning up the dead. But when this act of great courage does not reward him with Astarte's forgiveness, his disappointment causes an agony which he quickly overcomes (DE). Throughout the Act III his hard won self-possession carries him unswervingly to his final spiritual triumph (F).

Considered as a whole, the action is a veiled review of Byron's quest to regain his psychic equilibrium so dangerously upset by the incestuous relationship with Augusta. It is not systematic enough to be considered allegory, nor is it rigidly and consistently faithful in the details or their sequence. The first scene and the expository portions of the scenes with the chamois hunter and the Witch of the Alps shadow forth the inception of his guilt and the futility of pursuing intellectual, imaginative, or experiential avenues of escape.¹³ But most of the action of this tragedy of ripe situation concentratedly represents the short and feverishly intense experience between the beginning of his tour of the Bernese Alps and his composition of the first two acts -- between the arrival of the news that a reconciliation with Lady Byron was impossible and the resolution to face squarely and alone the inescapable fact of his guilt. It is effectively symbolic that the spirit of Manfred's natal star, which rules his destiny, briefly and deceptively appears as a woman who seems to have the power to make that destiny felicitous. When she vanishes and quite possibly becomes an instrument of accusation, condemning him to suffering, Manfred is driven to desperation, as Byron felt Lady Byron's unrelenting hostility had done to him. The scene on the precipice, which reflects the descriptions in the Journal-Letter to Augusta, reflects also the very real danger into which Byron's despair threw him. The chamois hunter is not representative of a single person; but he does represent

the restorative influence of the Alpine shepherds, which is commented upon in the Journal-Letter.¹⁴ It is a striking coincidence that Byron remarks immediately after his expression of delight with the shepherds and their pipes that he "has lately re-peopled [his] mind with nature," for in the Witch of the Alps scene, Manfred is again responsive to natural beauty, as he was not in the suicide scene. But his hopeful turn takes Byron no further than the confrontation with the witch takes Manfred. It is apparently at about this time that Byron's objection to a religion of nature crystalizes: he sees that in order to escape by this means, he would be obliged to lay aside the truths confirmed by his own experience, that he would have to renounce his right to face all the facts of his experience and judge them as his own idiosyncrasy demanded. Very clearly, such a renunciation would involve the subservience of his own spiritual and intellectual powers. In effect, then, his final verdict upon Shelley's pantheism is that it would be, for him, an ignoble evasion of his responsibility to face truth. Manfred's resolution to summon up the dead is a reflex of his refusal of the Witch's aid. Determined now not to evade or undervalue the central tendencies of his character, he chooses the alternative, which is to prove his strength in facing the evil within and without. Byron's recognition of his inability to escape his "own wretched identity" placed him where he was forced to make a similar decision, to turn from escape to catharsis. Concern for Astarte is one of the strongest

ingredients in Manfred's remorse, and as the Journal-Letter shows Byron was deeply troubled by a like concern for Augusta. And Astarte's silence when bidden to speak is a parallel to Augusta's failure to respond directly to Byron's letters. Byron, unaware that Augusta was now very much under Lady Byron's influence, had concluded that she was embittered and unforgiving. Thus the entire scene in the Hall of Arimanes reflects Byron's resolve to cease trying to evade torture, but to bring himself to facing the worst and testing his powers to bear it.

Though such an allegorical interpretation is valid, it need not be insisted upon as necessary to understanding the play. Its real service is as an antidote to the predisposition of many readers to regard the play as flimsy melodrama. One wag would have it that Byronic poetry is "tranquility recollected in emotion." There is neither tranquility nor recollection in the spiritual agitation which burst forth in Manfred. Anyone appreciative of Byron's state of mind would be hard pressed to name another poem which is so immediately expressive of the moment of fatally profound spiritual conflict.

To some extent this same tendency to look upon Manfred as a rather shallow poetic exercise may be blamed for misinterpretation of its philosophical implications. Attempts at interpretation often labor too hard to show that it is second-hand Shelley, or Wordsworth, or Aeschylus; or to make it somehow captive to pet theories of what Byron was or what

Romanticism ought to be. Some of the imputed resemblances are apparent and others are forced; but even those that are valid are sometimes given an emphasis which smothers the fundamentally Byronic meaning of the play. What Byron borrowed is so well synthesized that any attempt to carry off one piece and represent it as the whole is badly misguided. It is disturbing to read interpretations which lean so far in the direction of the critic's prejudgment that they topple under the weight of facts from the text.

Professor Chew's explication, to take the most prominent example,¹⁵ pays more attention to the development of doctrines he believes Byron has borrowed than to examination of the real content of Manfred. In the process emphases are sometimes contradictory to the text. "Arimanes and his crew," according to Chew's explication, "represent the flaming walls of the world within which [Manfred's] cabined ample spirit is confined, and against which he rebels." The fact that Manfred has subjected the crew, and even the captain, to his will presents a serious difficulty at the outset; but beneath the rhetoric there is enough truth to make the statement broadly acceptable. Manfred, after all, does seek and find supernal truth, and he does deprecate the limitations of the flesh. But what follows from this is less clearly warranted: "Refusing to submit to such limitations, he reaches out into communion with the whole." That Manfred perceives no spiritual unity in the universe is later on observed by Chew himself,

when he declares that the play is posited on "a dualistic concept of the universe."¹⁶ Among a number of evidences that even this dualism is fragmented into numerous spiritual entities, there is in the closing scene, Manfred's tenacious hold on the separate identity of his spirit. Even if there were a "whole" to commune with, Manfred would cling to his self-punishing isolation. The assumption here is that there can be only one path for the person who would escape his earthly prison. But having caught an interesting idea, Chew proceeds, not to the text for confirmation, but to an insulated development of the idea. "This is of course mysticism, for he seeks to realize the harmony and unity of nature to which the mystic aspires." Then, carried still farther from the letter and spirit of the play, he turns to other literary associations. "His mysticism is like that of Paracelsus, of an empirical nature and he seeks revelation through the spiritual interpretation of physical facts. This leads to a dislike of speculation apart from actual concrete experience." It would seem that mysticism is not really what he wants to talk about, but perhaps the term is elastic enough not to snap under the strain. Manfred's statement that "Philosophy and science, and the springs/ Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world, / I have essay'd . . . / but they avail not"(I, 1, ll. 13-17), makes quite clear that his "dislike of speculation" included matters of concrete experience. Furthermore I see no significant evidence that Manfred's spiritual knowledge was empirically founded. Some

could be cited to show that perhaps Byron resembles Paracelsus in this respect; but clearly Manfred has gained his acquaintance with the world of spirit by means of magic. "Manfred therefore seeks the cause of death, not through abstract speculation, but through the study of its effects, an idea probably suggested to Byron by the opening of Shelley's Alastor." And again the pattern repeats itself, an ill-informed statement followed by a literary parallel which would have been useful if the statement were supportable.¹⁷ I have dealt only with six consecutive sentences which I consider typical of Chew's method. Since it is not feasible to subject the entire explication to such minute analysis, I turn to dealing with his broader assumptions.

Overemphasizing the acknowledged but incidental influence of Prometheus upon Manfred, Chew argues that it is the Shelleyan rather than the Aeschylean Prometheus who is the closer prototype. Great difficulty arises in reconciling the quite accurate observation that, "In Manfred there is nothing of the high self-sacrifice of Prometheus,"¹⁸ with a later effort to show the resemblance of Manfred to Shelley's Prometheus, who is "the suffering fore-seer, the martyr for humanity."¹⁹ And it is more difficult still to accept what is presented as the point of closest resemblance. "For just as Prometheus is not in revolt with Demogorgon, but rather in harmony with him, so Manfred breathes no defiance against the 'overruling Infinite.'"²⁰ The curious logic that two things must be alike if neither has

a particular property makes little headway against the compelling points of direct contrast. Manfred's reverence for the "overruling Infinite" is inspired by an entirely different cosmic scheme from that which confronts Prometheus. In Shelley's scheme, Zeus, until deposed at the end of the drama, is the ruling, though evil deity. He has no counterpart in Manfred, for Arimanes, though powerful and evil, does not inflict pain upon Manfred, nor does any other supernatural being. Manfred, though defiant of the power of evil spirits, manifests no desire to depose them. Then, too, there is a fundamental difference in the attitudes of the two protagonists toward the deeds for which they suffer. Prometheus knows that he has done good, whereas Manfred knows that he has done evil. The question might also be raised of whether there was at the time Manfred was written any clear Shelleyan concept of Prometheus, since Shelley's drama did not appear until 1818. If there was, Byron would be more disposed to reply to the concept rather than borrow it.

Underlying the centrifugal emphases of Chew's explication of Manfred is his outright dismissal of the remorse motive:

E. H. Coleridge (P. [Poetical works of Lord Byron] IV, 82) declares that the central motive is remorse for inextinguishable crime, a statement that exalts the autobiographical interpretation of the piece out of all due proportion. The crime-element is a concession to literary fashion; Manfred follows the long line

of Byronic heroes --

'A heterogeneous mass of glorious blame,
Half virtues and whole vices being combined.'

[Don Juan, XV, lvii.]

But the philosophic conception would have been the same had Manfred been portrayed as free from any stain of sin.²¹

It is inevitable that, having elected to avoid the essential compelling and directing force of the drama, Chew is obliged to stress minor elements or pursue non-essentials. The excursion he departs on at this point is a further illustration. He observes rightly that Manfred bears a resemblance to Faust because of his "inherited feelings of caste," his aloofness, and his intellectual power. But in going beyond what these resemblances justify, Chew assumes that a more important and sweeping likeness must exist. "Manfred, like Faust, exhibits it [his intellect] in the ceaseless quest after knowledge." Acceptance of the obvious remorse motive would have obviated this error. Manfred, in the stage of his life upon which the drama concentrates, seeks knowledge, not for its own sake, but for the purpose of relieving his remorse; and the quest is not ceaseless; it ceases temporarily when he learns in the first scene that death is no escape. Thenceforth, he expresses less detached metaphysical curiosity than an immediate desire for the inner strength to bear his agony.

Professor Quinlan's recent study, like Professor Chew's chapter, attacks the problem of meaning through an examination of sources and parallels. There is a difference, however, in its scrupulous attentiveness to the text. Besides marshalling the external evidence of Byron's interest in Zoroastrianism, it demonstrates by citation of passages that this interest manifests itself in the astrology, demonology, and theology of the play. Specifically, Manfred's worship of the Sun, his meditations on the moon and the stars, and his belief that his natal star is a blasted and wandering world are linked with Zoroastrian concepts regarding Ormazd as the god of light and the heavenly bodies as portentous and effective influences on worldly affairs. Manfred's star, unmistakably a comet, reflects the Zoroastrian belief that such bodies are evil influences. The name of Arimanes and the allusions to Magi and magicians, Quinlan also reveals, come out of Zoroastrian lore, as does the association of darkness with the evil spirits, particularly the sixth demon summoned by Manfred.²²

Though Quinlan denies that the recognition of the Zoroastrian strain changes the interpretation of Manfred, it is clear that it does much more than "emphasize the fundamental conflict between good and evil in the main character."²³ If the fundamental cosmic order is not Christian, the Faust dilemma is not possible, for supernatural knowledge is not forbidden and repentance is not a means of salvation; and if the basis is not humanistic the Prometheus theme is also excluded. The Zoroastrian

cosmos is much more sharply dualistic than that posited in Prometheus, bound or unbound, or Faust, Marlovian or Goethean. Evil has a real and inviolable place, both in the world around and the spirit within each man. Ormazd is more powerful than is Ariman, but his strength will prevail only after he has achieved a millennial conquest. Meanwhile, he has no power to intervene in the individual's short-term struggle in a world poised on the boundary between light and darkness. Though the individual spirit may delude and degrade itself by soliciting celestial aid or placing responsibility upon infernal temptations, it is, in fact, alone in bearing the sharp conflict of innate good and evil within itself. P. E. More's pronouncement that Manfred "is the perfect and ever memorable tragedy of the spirit of revolution"²⁴ should be very sharply qualified, for it is, regardless of what can be made of it as a statement of individualism, pronouncedly a formula for accepting with dignity the immutable limitations of the human condition.

Byron seems to regard the mass of humanity as too weak or blind to lift themselves to the level of confrontation with these limitations. Willing to attribute their sins and virtues to the influences of external spiritual influences, they evade the responsibility that is really theirs. His recognition of his own attempts at evading the consequences of his guilt, especially his recent venture into a palliative religion of nature, played a large part in his discovery of this human weakness.

The reflection that there are degrees of spiritual perception and honesty underlies part of the interesting concept of hierarchy implicit in the play. Manfred's pride, his misanthropy, his crime, his powers over the spirits are all functions of his place in that hierarchy. He is sensitive to his superiors, which are represented by the sun, the moon, the stars, and the eagle. But he condescends, with varying degrees of sympathy to his inferiors. His one equal, the only one with whom he can commune, tragically is one with whom intimacy is forbidden. Beneath Manfred are spirits who are willing and intelligent agents of evil and the Abbot and the chamois hunter who live by spiritual resignation, shrinking from the independent exercise of spirit. When Manfred speaks of himself as a beast of prey (II, i, l. 36), he means that his superior spiritual strength enables him to exploit his inferiors; but it is clear that his exercise of his powers over the earth spirits, and Arimanes himself, is the only predatoriness which he actually manifests. Manfred's declaration to the Abbot that he will not submit to men as intercessors between him and God is unfortunately expressed as a sophomoric platitude, but behind it lies more than the village atheist's objection to priesthood. And his refusal to stoop beneath the place he has earned by "superior science -- penance, daring,/ And length of watching, strength of mind, and skill/ In knowledge of our fathers" (III, iv, ll. 115-117) is elsewhere expressed by his defiance of the Witch of the Alps, Arimanes, and the demons who come to

claim him.

The Zoroastrian background also clarifies the anti-pantheistic sentiments in the play, and constitutes the core of Byron's reaction to Shelley. Wordsworth's Spirit who is in the "light of setting suns, and the round ocean and the living air" is a unity informing all nature. But once Byron searched his own earlier beliefs and saw in them truths more clearly confirmed by his own empirical observations, he concluded that the Zoroastrian belief that the world was at least partially the work of the devil was undeniable. And his attack on monism went to a far extreme of pluralism. Besides breaking Shelley's and Wordsworth's unity into small fragments by assuming local and specialized informing spirits of places and elements, Byron presents most of these spirits as destructive and evil.

The demonology in Manfred is a mixture of Oriental, Greek, and (considering the resemblance between the destinies and the weird sisters of Macbeth) Scottish. There are also strong Old-Testament overtones, felt especially in Manfred's recollection of the Witch of Endor as he prepares himself for the ordeal of facing the apparition of Astarte. This profusion has been objected to as somewhat incongruous, especially in an Alpine setting, but the real cause of dissatisfaction with the scheme lies, I believe, elsewhere. Combinations of Christian and Pagan mythology are not ill matched in Paradise Lost or The Divine Comedy. And if Switzerland is a strange environment

for Persian devotions, its appropriateness in Byron's mind is expressed in an observation made in Childe Harold III:

Not vainly did the early Persian make
 His altar the high places and the peak
 Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
 A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
 The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak
 Uprear'd of human hands. (XCI.)

The real trouble with Byron's mixture and displacement of mythologies is the indefiniteness and overlapping of the functions of the several spirits. The impulse to introduce a large number of spirits came from his desire to demolish any concept of spiritual unity. But in doing so he created unnecessary confusion. His naming one of the male deities Ash-toreth shows that he was extremely careless in working out the demonology, for this is another name for the Assyrian goddess Astarte.²⁵ Another confusingly careless stroke is the appearance of the "genius of this mortal" in Act III. Its nature and function are left impenetrably vague. It is the evil spirit which is apparently assigned to claim Manfred's soul; but since it is not either internally or externally an influence upon him his title misrepresents his function. The one spirit that is an influence is that of Manfred's star. The scheme would also be more comprehensible in detail if there were a clearer separation between the functions of this spirit and that of Nemesis and the destinies. But, though it is

vague in detail, the demonology by and large accomplishes its purpose of showing Manfred's firmly held place in the spiritual hierarchy.

The position taken in Manfred on the freedom of the will is not clear, but the implications are that Manfred, in spite of the great power of his astrological nativity, does exercise choice. It would seem that determinism imposes limits which cannot be overcome but within which the individual enjoys considerable latitude. When Manfred speaks of himself as "fated and fatal," the sense of fatal is made ambiguous; yet it is safe to assume that it is intended to mean something distinct from predestined, the obvious meaning of fated. If it is recalled that Manfred elsewhere confesses that his "embrace was fatal," he would seem to mean that he was the involuntary instrument employed by fate upon Astarte, not always intending but nevertheless producing evil.²⁶ But another likely meaning is that he is "of fate" because of his voluntary participation in its workings. By forcing the issue, by speeding up the process of destruction and retribution, Manfred seems to be exerting his will to the purpose of carrying out the general design of fate. Though his "soul was scorch'd already," it did not follow that he should of necessity hasten the approach of doom. But he does intentionally seek out Nemesis and Arimanes, and in so doing wills his destiny. Manfred's impetuosity is here representative of Byron's seizure of opportunities to fulfill his conception of his destiny, a tendency developed at

length in the previous chapter. His innate spirit, determined by his star, is a mixture of jarring elements; but it is so intense as to give him great potentiality for good or evil. The place to which he has risen among the spirits was, however, permitted rather than predetermined. He could have contented himself with less than the realization of his spiritual capacities. He declines choices which are offered him: he could have become a Christian penitent or a slave to the witch, he also could have been tempted and claimed by fiends, or he might not have "disdain'd to mingle with/ A herd, though to be a leader." (III, 1. 11. 121-122.) In choosing such alternatives to guilt and remorse, however, he would not be expanding to the full scope permitted him by fate, which presented him with capacities for both good and evil. Therefore, it could be said that his destiny is willed as well as fated.²⁷

The accession of guilt would seem also to have been brought about by his will acting in concert with fate, for remorse has no place in the mind of a complete fatalist. The acceptance of responsibility for an act to which his character and circumstances strongly impelled him implies that he could have chosen otherwise.²⁸ The key to the relationship between necessity and choice is in the awed remark of the spirit who witnesses the critical struggle in which Manfred "makes his torture tributary to his will."

It is at this point that Manfred demonstrates his rank in the spiritual hierarchy of the play. He shows that "he would

have made an awful spirit." He has clearly given up his desire for self-oblivion, earlier because it was shown to be impossible, but now because of his proven courage to accept the fatal order which makes it impossible. In the previous scene, the Witch of the Alps had passed judgment on the ignobility of his desire for degrading escape:

And for this --

A being of the race thou dost despise,
The order which thine own would rise above,
Mingling with us and ours, thou dost forgo
The gifts of our great knowledge, and shrink'st back
To recreant mortality -- Away! (II, ii, ll. 121-126.)

"Sorrow is knowledge" becomes much more than a threadbare platitude in the light of Manfred's experience. It is true that Manfred had pursued esoteric lore before being tortured by remorse; but it is clear that guilt brought him a deeper awareness of his spiritual powers. He has reached through guilt the limits to which a bold and energetic soul can go. The conflict within him creates such a ceaseless and intense activity of spirit that he learns of the virtue and strength he can command against evil. Although complete self-knowledge brings suffering it also brings assurance of his ascendancy over the earth spirits, who in turn rule nature and most of mankind. Manfred's satisfaction with this painful eminence explains his serenity in Act III. He is shut out of heaven, as his farewell to the sun demonstrates; but he has found in himself the strength to be

free of earth.

The concept of immortality which is implied is thus highly unorthodox, for Manfred's soul is to go neither to hell nor to heaven, though there is no doubt of their accessibility to some souls. But of the soul's continued existence there are obvious assurances. Having achieved eternal identity through its intense and unceasing activity, it will continue to maintain an outcast but inviolable station above worldly and infernal spirits. The concept is diametrically opposed, therefore, to Chew's belief that Manfred seeks unity with the whole. Because Zoroastrian doctrine anticipates the eventual conquest of the forces of Ariman by Ormazd, Quinlan infers that Manfred looks forward to eventual deliverance. But there is no indication that Manfred has any such hope; there is, in fact, a strong indication to the contrary in Manfred's apostrophe to the sun, as the "material God": "Fare thee well! / I ne'er shall see the more." (III, ii, ll. 195-196.) Before Manfred, then, is an eternity alone with the internal conflict which tormented him in life, resisting with disdainful confidence the spirits beneath him and accepting with courage his exclusion from the world of the spirits above, he will extend what has been his mortal condition: "The lion is alone, and so am I." (III, i, l. 123.)

The one advantage of the future state over the present is that the spirit is freed of the burden of the flesh. Manfred's feeling that he is restrained by mortality is first expressed

by:

But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we
 Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
 To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence make
 A conflict of its elements, and breathe
 The breath of degradation and of pride,
 Contending with low wants and lofty will,
 Till our mortality predominates,
 And men are -- what they name not to themselves,
 And trust not to each other. (I, ii, ll. 300-308.)

And the same consciousness of this degrading link continues, especially as the spirits attempt to assert their superiority by calling him a "creature of clay." But the advantage to Manfred of shedding the mortal coil should not be overemphasized. For degrading as it is, the tie with the order of mankind which, because of its weak resistance to bodily appetite, is low in the spiritual hierarchy, does not enter into the central conflict in Manfred, which is spiritual. The crime which he has committed, while it was encouraged by fleshly weakness, was motivated by intellectual and spiritual desires. Manfred and Astarte, "though it were/ The deadliest sin to love as [they] have loved," (II, iv. ll. 492-493) were drawn together by affinities of mind and spirit:

She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,
 The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind
 To comprehend the universe. (II, ii, ll. 109-111.)

And since "that all nameless hour," Manfred has almost entirely been separated from the flesh, because his all-absorbing torment has preoccupied him spiritually and because his grief has blighted his sensual responses to mortal experience:

I have no dread,
 And feel the curse to have no natural fear,
 Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes or wishes,
 Or lurking love of something on the earth.

(I, i, ll. 24-27.)

Thus, though there is some comfort in breaking the link with mortality, the link has already been so greatly weakened that death brings a slight but welcome degree of further liberation. Manfred would seem to have a consciousness of the small release it will bring a soul already almost free of mortal restriction when he says, not that it is a satisfaction to die, but rather, "It is not difficult to die." The new state is preferable to the old, but it does not promise any abatement of the real cause of his agony. He has reached in life as much intensity and power of spirit as he expects from death:

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

(I, i, ll. 154-157.)

Two elements in Byron's own experience which inform these conclusions may be recalled here to show that his concept of

immortality and of the ascendancy of spirit over flesh were confirmed articles of belief with him. The unremitting pang of remorse, the "continuance of enduring thought," which he could not resist, was proof to him that spirit was unextinguishable. As he put the belief five years later in his "Detached Thoughts": "Of the immortality of the soul there can be little doubt, if we attend the action of the mind; it is in perpetual activity. I used to doubt it, but reflection has taught me better."²⁹ In support of the conclusion that the real conflict between good and evil takes place in the spirit, I refer to the argument in the previous chapter in support of the idea that Byron steered rather than drifted toward calamity.

Like the demonology, the attitude toward Nature implicit in Manfred does not have the clarity and consistency to permit absolute confidence in any generalization. But of the three or four distinct, if not contradictory, pronouncements on the subject, it might be said that these reflect a progression to a final position. Recalling his youth Manfred speaks of a headlong joy in the wilderness, which reminds one of Wordsworth's account of his responses on his first visit to the Wye. There is also in Manfred's account as in Wordsworth's a testimony to the function of Nature as a restorative retreat from the ugliness of society:

I said, with men, and with the thoughts of men
I held but slight communion; but instead,

My joy was in the Wilderness, to breathe
 The difficult air of the iced mountain's top.
 Where the birds dare not build, nor insect's wing
 Flit o'er the herbless granite; or to plunge
 Into the torrent, and to roll along
 On the swift whirl of the new breaking wave
 Of river-stream, or ocean, in their flow.

.

These were my pastimes, and to be alone;
 For if the beings, of whom I was one, --
 Hating to be so, -- cross'd me in my path
 I felt myself degraded back to them,

And all was clay again. (II, i, ll. 154-162, 169-173.)

But guilt and knowledge of the supernatural have destroyed his exuberance. In I, ii, there are faint deistic overtones accompanied by a fleeting suggestion of the "Zeluco theme":

My mother Earth!

And thou fresh breaking Day, and you, ye Mountains,

Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye. (I, ii, ll. 7-9.)

This attitude toward the purity and beauty of terrestrial Nature is inconsistent with that which pervades the rest of Manfred, and represents a mood very quickly dispelled by observations of the destructive and terrifying aspects of the scenery. The world which seems at one moment "glorious in its action and itself" is in the next moment contemplated as the scene on which natural forces wreak destruction on innocent things:

Ye toppling crags of ice!
 Ye avalanches, whom a breath draws down
 In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush me!
 I hear ye momentarily above, beneath,
 Crash with a frequent conflict; but ye pass,
 And only fall on things that still would live;
 On the young flourishing forest, or the hut
 And hamlet of the harmless villager. (I, ii, ll. 74-81.)

It seems therefore that, although one who was searching for manifestation of deism and the "Zeluco theme" might seize upon the earlier lines, he would be ill-advised not to take into consideration the quick change to a mood and attitude that are predominant in the play.

The one deistic concept that prevails throughout is that God remains aloof from the affairs of men; but in this respect the deist and the Zoroastrian would agree. But deism is emphatically set aside by the introduction of spirits that do assert their power in worldly events. And this power is malignant. The implications of the Witch of the Alps scene has already been pointed out as a manifestation of another example of an attitude toward Nature, which is temporarily entertained but soon rejected when Manfred is unwilling to pay the price of continued absorption in the delight of natural beauty.

The dominant strain in the treatment of Nature in Manfred, then, is not pantheistic, deistic, or Christian. Natural beauty and perfection are not rational or mystical instructors. On the

contrary, they conceal the propensities of the spirits which inform them. Nature is divided into celestial and sublunary realms. The sun and the stars are the only visible manifestations of God. And the realm below, though in many ways beautiful, is the domain of evil spirits. It is to emphasize this point that Byron convened Nemesis and the Destinies on the Jungfrau. Even here where the earth juts high into the empyrean, the earth spirits are in command; and they boast of their great power over the affairs of men. The spirits around Arimanes attribute to him omnipotence within his realm: "Life is his,/ With all its infinite of agonies --/ And his the spirit of whatever is!" (II, iv, ll. 384-386.) In the opening scene a spirit tells Manfred, "We have no forms, beyond the elements/ Of which we are the mind and principle." (ll. 181-182.) It should be noted that while Manfred expresses the Zoroastrian concept of the rule of evil in terrestrial Nature, he does not accept along with it the corollary that Arimanes is, like God, uncreated and pre-existent. Manfred's rebuke to Arimanes' attendant:

Bid him [Arimanes] bow down to that which is above him,
 The overruling Infinite, the Maker
 Who made him not for worship -- let him kneel,
 And we will kneel together. (II, iv, ll. 46-49.)

But the point of difference does not affect Manfred's contest with evil; it is clear that, whether created by God or not, Arimanes is in command of his own realm. Byron revealed in a

negative fashion some seven years after composing Manfred that he had seriously held the belief that the devil was not subject to the will of God. At Cephalonia, in the course of his conversations on religion with James Kennedy, Byron remarked on being assured that in the Book of Job the devil appeared before God when commanded, "It gives one a much higher idea of the majesty, power, and wisdom of God to believe that the Devils themselves are at his nod."³⁰ And if the idea of dualistic independence is somewhat softened by the belief that God created Arimanes, it is nevertheless made more severe than it is presented in Zoroastrian myth by the absence of hope in the eventual victory of God. The view of Nature that is most firmly insisted upon in Manfred is the reverse of that which Shelley offered Byron; though perhaps created by a ruling principle of love, Nature is firmly in the possession of other powers.

The search for parallels with philosophical positions taken in Manfred leads one as much to works written subsequently as to those which might have served as sources. R. M. Smith saw a strong likeness between Manfred's courage and that expressed in Henley's Invictus.³¹ But other comparisons, deeper and more complex, could be developed with the works of Conrad and Hemingway and with Nietzsche and existentialism. Comparisons like these argue less that Byron was influential in the development of these later views than that he perceived the facts of existence in a way which put him ahead of his time. It was unfortunate that his only disciples chose to

imitate those features of his work which belong to the period before he reached intellectual maturity.³² This process of imitation did the great disservice of concealing or debasing the imperishable conclusions that he reached. The verdicts implied in Arnold's "pageant of the bleeding heart" and Carlyle's "Everlasting No" have been assented to by most readers and critics of all poems written in the Byronic manner. *Manfred* resembles the Hero of the Tales, and Byron has admitted that the play is too much in his old style. Therefore, it is disregarded -- even by those who would argue that Byron, the Byron of Don Juan, Beppo, and The Vision of Judgment is modern in spirit. But in Manfred is as much of an explanation as we get from Byron of the process by which a mind freed itself from its disposition to take too seriously the conceptual foundations of Romantic extravagance. In *Manfred's* determination to be no less than what he is, regardless of the spiritual price, is Byron's attainment of the formula of his personality. The experimentation with one personality or another, with one philosophy or another is at an end. And the vain yearnings to become the Byronic image and to escape from it give way to a mature confidence in his capability to judge the world and himself, by standards which his experience had confirmed. Manfred is the bridge by which Byron crossed from Romantic delusion to hard realism, though even he seems not to have clearly recognized its function.

"Byron's modernity," says Marchand, "rests in his clinging to an ideal without deluding himself with a transcendental

belief in 'dreaming true,' and in his insistence upon seeing the world as it is . . . without losing interest in the romantic dream or discounting it. The most completely realistic of all the romantics, he accepted the romantic urge as part of human nature without pretending it was more than a dream."³³

But it is unlikely that Marchand intends to imply that certain romantic ideals did not continue to remain effective in Byron's mature actions and poetry. In "seeing the world as it is" Byron held firmly to the perspective of the Romantic by implying contrasts with the world as it ought to be. Although Byron did not believe in the perfectibility of man, he continued to believe that a love of justice and a moral sense of shame in conflict with an equally natural depravity were inherent in, though certainly not equally distributed among, humanity. It is upon this point that the resemblance between him and Conrad and Hemingway rests. Like them he believes that in a hopelessly corrupt world, there are individuals with conscience who abhor, and others with conscience and strength to resist, the prevalent evil. In none of the three is there any naturalistic explanation of the origin of this moral sensibility. It is scarcely different from Kant's categorical imperative.³⁴ In Manfred, we find Byron testing and confirming its power. And, whatever way his subsequent skepticism took him, his appraisal of evil as evil was not disturbed. There is a correspondence between Byron surrounded by the selfish cynicism, the pettiness, and the incompetence of his cohorts and Missolonghi, and Robert Jordan in similar surroundings

in the guerilla camp. Both remain devoted to ideals for which they are willing to die, and both maintain their devotion in spite of experience which would sour the idealist unbaptized in the harsh realities of human nature. Hemingway does not explore the origins of his durable faith, and Conrad is hardly more explicit. He, like Byron, knew of the power of evil and of the rare and dignifying strength to combat it. But he ventures to attribute this strength to an a priori sense. Speaking of the appeal of the ugly rites of African savages, Conrad says through Marlow:

Let the fool gape and shudder -- the man nows,
and can look on without a wink. But he must at
least be as much of a man as these on the shore.
He must meet that truth with his own true stuff
-- with his own inborn strength. Principles won't
do. Acquisitions, clothes, pretty rags -- rags
that would fly off at the first good shake. No;
you want a deliberate belief.³⁵

Besides sharing Byron's belief that moral strength was innate, Conrad also made similar use of remorse, the "psychic wound," to demonstrate the existence and potency of that force. Lord Jim's guilt, like Manfred's, is a burden only because he has a conscience which must struggle under its weight.

Hemingway, Conrad, and Byron, therefore, are in close agreement on the depravity of the world and the lonely eminence of men strong enough to oppose it, if not by deeds of resistance,

at least by a loathing of the evil they find around and within them. That such men are rare and admirable implies that they are superior beings. And their independence and strength are qualities which the three share with the Übermensch and the existentialist. However, the important difference is that all three accept the more or less traditional concepts of what the moral man ought to be and assume that these concepts are innate and absolute in the individual. Nietzsche and Sartre, on the other hand, see the individual as unrestrained by any prior concepts.

There is no doubt that Manfred is presented as a superman, capable of maintaining his place above most men by virtue of his power over the earth spirits who rule them. Byron's and Nietzsche's mutual interest in Zoroastrianism seems to have led them both to some similar conclusions about the potentialities of the human spirit. Certainly that religion places more responsibility on the individual man than does Christianity, stressing, as it does, the continuance of strife between almost equally balanced divine and diabolic forces. Because Ormazd's power cannot be asserted in Ariman's domain, the struggle of the human soul demands more self-reliance than in a scheme in which Satan has been vanquished, and in which the submissive human soul can look to God to intercede in the struggle.

The relationship of Manfred to the existentialist is also remarkable. In two respects, Byron's thought opposes existentialist doctrine: his fatalism and belief in an innate moral sense

are irreconcilable with the fundamental doctrine that existence precedes essence. But, feeling estranged from God and emancipated from the devil, he faced alone the problem of discovering and realizing his own essential identity, of finding what the existentialists term "the courage to be." And, in his own way, he experienced the guilt, anguish, and despair which constitute the ordeal by which this courage is achieved.³⁶ Manfred perfectly pronounces for Byron the end of his "chameleon" character and the assumption of a role imperishably his own:

The mind which is immortal makes itself
 Requitall for its good or evil thoughts,
 Is its own origin of ill and end,
 And its own place and time; its innate sense,
 When stripp'd of this mortality, derives
 No colour from the fleeting things without,
 But is absorb'd in sufferance or in joy,
 Born from the knowledge of its own desert.

(III, iv, ll. 129-136.)

There can be no disagreement with Marjaram's assertion that "an abstract of [Byron's] beliefs is not to contribute a noteworthy chapter to the history of human thought."³⁷ But it is fair to say that in Manfred he wrote a link between chapters, which is noteworthy, though largely disregarded. Byron's estrangement from the cult of his contemporary admirers began with Manfred; and his appeal to moderns seems to begin with

Beppo. Manfred and Childe Harold IV represent a step into a view to which others were to come by other avenues. In Childe Harold III he had written:

I do believe,
 Though I have found them not, that there may be
 Words which are things, hopes which will not deceive,
 And virtues which are merciful nor weave
 Snares for the failing: I would also deem
 O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve;
 That two, or one, are almost what they seem,
 That goodness is no name and happiness no dream.

(CXIV.)

Here is the Romantic who confronts the wish to believe with the disappointments of reality. In Manfred the indestructibility of the belief is proven. Byron does not respond to realities with vain regrets and self-pity. He knows that no act of legislature has guaranteed happiness. He responds with an affirmation of the moral integrity of the human spirit. Manfred's defiance exceeds even that of Prometheus because it outfaces all threats of external punishment. But like that of Prometheus it is positive assertion rather than negative opposition. Chew's statement that Manfred carries a message of hope and encouragement is somewhat wide of the mark, considering the limits imposed on what can be hoped for.³⁸ It offers no hope for relief from the conflict and agony of the human spirit, no hope of a better temporal or spiritual day. What

hope there is is the joyless one that men, or at least a few men, are capable of facing the world and themselves as they are without losing the will to live by their ideals.

Conclusion

Beyond combining the motives of earlier Byronism, Manfred works a change upon them that raises them to the level of myth. The Giaour, Selim, Conrad, and Lara were heroically defiant of their world, but their world was Society and Nature. Manfred wins his triumph on a cosmic battleground. However, the transfer of the hero from natural to supernatural surroundings would not, in itself, make convincing Manfred's transcendence over the earlier heroes. This, Byron has accomplished by imparting to his spirits and scenery a grand and terrifying magnitude. His success is attributable to his violent spiritual ferment, of which his symbols and demons are direct reflexes. Some of the imagery had struck him as he viewed the Bernese Alps and conveyed his impressions to Augusta, but all of it seems to have sprung without being summoned from the depths beneath rationality. If he had paused to recollect in tranquility or to work out a logically significant scheme, the gain in clarity might not have been worth the loss in intensity. Manfred is real in the same sense as a nightmare, beneath surface logic, is real: it images compellingly the terrors of immense and deeply rooted fears. And it is in contention with symbols of excruciating torment that Manfred confirms his titanism.

The transfiguration of the Byronic hero is represented in the action of Manfred, whose protagonist at first proclaims his power to defy the spirit world, only to discover that he then lacks the strength of will to be their equal. Later, after recovery from despair, he finds the strength to prove himself their superior. Almost inextricable from the protagonist's experience is the transfiguration which Byron himself undergoes. The heroic image which he had attempted to live up to required a courage which he doubted he would be able to sum on. Once embarked upon his experimental imitation of the hero, he fervently sought to evade the test of courage which lay at the end of his course by escaping the psychological consequences of his experiment. In the fall of 1816, with all hope of escape abandoned, he had, like Manfred, to confront these consequences; and, like Manfred, he found the strength to outface them.

The transfiguration in Byron greatly abated the needs which had obsessed him while he lived and wrote in the most characteristically Byronic manner. He was able to conclude the quests for the formula of his personality, for relief from remorse, and for secure tenets of philosophic faith. The first two were ended, partially by the cathartic expression of them and partially by the confirmation of his courage to live by a formula of his own and to preserve his self-esteem, which had been endangered by an almost overpowering remorse. The quest for belief, always a concern to him because

of conflicting impulses toward orthodoxy and skepticism, reached its highest pitch because of Shelley's stimulation; and this quest also lost its urgency once a cosmic and moral order was formulated in Manfred.

Almost all of the attempts at escape detailed in Chapter I are symbolically or directly represented in the drama, and quite concentratedly represented in Manfred's confession to the Witch of the Alps. (II, ii.) The notable exceptions are his marriage, no more than hinted at in the first scene, and his experiments at trying to fall in love with someone who would supplant Augusta. The technical difficulty of introducing these experiences into the drama I have observed in Chapter III. Thus the impulse which drove him to write the drama -- the desire to escape his own "wretched identity" -- finds expression in it. And the ultimate frustration of that impulse also is part of the action. With this frustration came an unexpected solution to his need for relief -- a cathartic cleansing of his feelings of guilt.

The appearance of the dark hero in his last and most compelling form marks the end of the quest for a formula for personality. The strong attraction to the type was compounded of Byron's early and sincere fascination with it, and also of the belief that the world, sharing this fascination, would be awed by the appearance of such a figure in the flesh. Byron came to regret his success in fulfilling the formula, partly because he had learned that the world reacted quite differently to the

actuality than to the sentimental fiction, but largely because events made him feel that he had become inextricably fated to continue the pattern to its disastrous conclusion. As long as the hope for escape remained alive, he could feel that the ultimate catastrophe could be avoided -- that he might swerve in time away from the formulated consequences of guilt. But because of the collapse of his marriage and of his attempt to find a spiritual reorientation in pantheism, he believed himself irretrievably identified with the dark hero. While he had some hope of stopping short of complete identification, his detachment enabled him to portray the Byronic heroes, and even their heroic deaths, at a romantic distance, which made them vehicles of escape. But from Manfred there could be no such detachment. His own agony carried him to within a step of the catastrophe which would complete the formula. Though he stopped short of death, he experienced with Manfred the surge of pride and courage which freed him from the fear of retributive disaster. In conquering the fears that the formula entailed he was also able to cure his obsession with other aspects of it. He was not thereafter a "devil of a mannerist" in life or in poetry, and the purgation of his gloomy obsession all but ended his much-discussed duality.

The quest for faith did not by any means end in Manfred; Byron remained a troubled combination of the seeker and the skeptic throughout his life. Marjarum believes that there is

no clear progression toward or away from belief in Byron's lifelong philosophical and religious speculation, and that "conflict was the essence of his experience and the permanent inspiration of his poetry."¹ Broadly speaking, this is true; but it makes all the more important the charting of whatever small islands of faith stand above the tide of Byron's intellectual restlessness. In Manfred, which Marjaram scans too casually,² there are a few fundamental beliefs, strengthened rather than threatened by skepticism, to which Byron remained constant. His belief in the rectitude of conscience, in the fateful power of evil, in the potentiality of the human will, and in the immortality of the soul had their origins in faith; but to Byron's satisfaction, at least, they successfully met the skeptic's test of validity -- corroboration by experience.

All three of the Byronic quests which meet in Manfred are actuated by experimentalism. In disclaiming authorship of a poem falsely attributed to him, Byron declared: "How the devil should I write about Jerusalem, never having yet been there?"³ In this he was revealing the pragmatism that ruled his life. He was impelled to visit the realms of spiritual experience in the same fashion before he felt able to render the experience authentically in his poetry. And in Manfred he vividly provides an unparalleled account of a dangerous journey of spiritual discovery.

Footnotes to Introduction

¹Samuel C. Chew, The Dramas of Lord Byron (Göttingen, 1915), p. 59.

²The changing attitude toward the Astarte charges are reflected in Professor Chew's chief works on Byron. In 1915, he rejected the charges and argued, as did Richard Edgcumbe, that Mary Chaworth, not Augusta Leigh, was the autobiographical counterpart of Astarte. (The Dramas, pp. 69-74.) In 1924, in spite of a justifiable resentment against Lord Lovelace's motives and methods and in spite of a lingering loyalty to Edgcumbe, he concluded that the "only judicial attitude is that of suspended judgment." Byron in England (London, 1924), pp. 335-341. But in 1936, in an excellent assessment of Byron's character and its expression in his works, he wrote: "It is needless at this time of day to emphasize the point that that sense of guilt was caused by his incestuous relationship with his half-sister, Augusta Leigh." Childe Harold and Other Romantic Poems (Garden City, N. Y., 1936), pp. xxvi-xxvii. See also p. 350.

³Manfred, according to Lovelace, is "a special guillotine axe to shear away [Augusta's] vainly whimpering head." Ralph Milbanke, Earl of Lovelace, Astarte (New York, 1921), p. 68.

⁴Herbert Kupferberg, "Record World: Schumann's Music for Byron's Hero," Herald Tribune Book Review, March 2, 1958, p. 15.

⁵Gordon N. Ray and others (eds.), Masters of British Literature (Cambridge, Mass., 1958).

⁶Frederick A. Pottle, "The Case of Shelley," PMLA, LXVII (1952), 589-608.

⁷This is the point of Bertrand Evans' "Manfred's Remorse and Dramatic Tradition," PMLA, LXII (1947), 752-773.

⁸For example, John Drinkwater, The Pilgrim of Eternity (New York, 1925), pp. 201-202.

⁹Ethel C. Mayne, Byron (London, 1924), I, 274.

¹⁰Translated thus in Mayne, II, 185.

Footnotes to Chapter I

¹Milbanke, pp. 71-78. The extracts chosen are III, iii, 35-48 and the line which had followed in Byron's rejected draft; I, i, 184-191; II, i, 21-22, 24-30, 83-87; II, ii, 56-59, 100-104, 105-117, 118-121, 127, 130-131, 192-197; II, iv, 81-84, 96-110, 114-156; III, iv, 62-66, 75-78, 80-81, 88-90, 110-113, 121-124, 127-148.

²Milbanke, p. 69.

³Milbanke, p. 71.

⁴Milbanke, p. 78.

⁵Drinkwater, pp. 65-66.

⁶John Galt, The Life of Lord Byron (London, 1830), pp. 216-218.

⁷Mayne, I, xvi.

⁸Mayne, I, 53.

⁹Leslie A. Marchand, Byron, a Biography (New York, 1957), II, 637 (fn.).

¹⁰Marchand, I, 62.

¹¹André Maurois, Byron (New York, 1930), p. 284.

¹²Rowland E. Prothero (ed.), The Works of Lord Byron. . . , Letters and Journals, 6 vols. (London, 1898-1901), abbreviated hereafter as LJ, IV, 339-341.

¹³A fainting fit that is recorded in a letter to Augusta, October 1, 1816, resulted from intense physical pain. Milbanke, p. 274. Coming as it did while Byron was writing Manfred, it may possibly be connected with Manfred's falling senseless in the first scene of the drama; but a more likely source of the fictitious incident is Byron's well-known tendency to suffer from "a determination of blood to the brain" under strong emotional stress. It is decidedly possible, considering the violent stress that he was under, that he had a very recent fit of this sort in mind. See J. D. Symon,

Byron in Perspective (London, 1925), p. 69, and LJ, II, 386, (fn.).

¹⁴LJ, III, 364.

¹⁵LJ, IV, 49-52.

¹⁶LJ, IV, 110.

¹⁷LJ, V, 37.

¹⁸Milbanke, p. 67.

¹⁹John Murray (ed.), Lord Byron's Correspondence (London, 1922), II, 61.

²⁰Milbanke, p. 70.

²¹Marchand, I, 404 (fn.).

²²Sir John C. Fox, The Byron Mystery (London, 1924).

²³Mayne, I, xiii.

²⁴Richard Edgcumbe, Byron: the Last Phase (London, 1909).

²⁵G. Wilson Knight, Lord Byron's Marriage: The Evidence of Asterisks (London, 1957).

²⁶Chew, The Dramas, pp. 69-73.

²⁷Chew, The Dramas, pp. 73-74 (fn.).

²⁸For example: "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. . . ." Marchand, II, 654.

²⁹Marchand, I, 408-409. The passage reveals that Marchand employs escape and catharsis as interchangeable terms. Certainly both of them are often applicable to the same work, but the distinction between them should not be obscured. It is extraordinarily important in understanding Byron's creative life.

³⁰LJ, II, 321.

³¹LJ, II, 361.

³²Ernest J. Lovell, Byron: the Record of a Quest (Austin, Texas, 1949), p. 22.

³³Lovell, pp. 138-141.

³⁴Milbanke, pp. 34-36.

³⁵Marchand, I, 451 (fn.).

³⁶"Lines on Hearing That Lady Byron was Ill," l. 15;
Manfred, II, iv.

³⁷Milbanke, p. 33.

³⁸Murray, I, 177.

³⁹11. 7-8.

⁴⁰Murray, I, 251.

⁴¹Murray, I, 203.

⁴²Milbanke, p. 267.

⁴³Murray, I, 274.

⁴⁴Milbanke, p. 65.

⁴⁵Milbanke, p. 111.

⁴⁶Ethel C. Mayne, The Life and Letters of Anne Isabella Lady Noel Byron (New York, 1929), p. 162. I will continue to use Mayne as the short form for her Byron.

⁴⁷Marchand, II, 513.

⁴⁸Murray, I, 270.

⁴⁹Murray, I, 283.

⁵⁰LJ, III, 158.

⁵¹LJ, III, 316.

⁵²LJ, III, 273.

⁵³Marchand, II, 644-645.

⁵⁴Thomas Moore recorded in his journal that Wordsworth "spoke of Byron's plagiarisms" from "Tintern Abbey the source of it all." In retailing this from Lord John Russell's Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence of Thomas Moore (Boston, 1853), III, 161, Chew quotes Russell's footnote in a footnote of his own. The temptation to do the same here is irresistible: "If he [Wordsworth] wrote the third canto of Childe Harold, it is his best work." S. C. Chew, Byron in England (London, 1924), p. 122.

⁵⁵Stanza LXXXIX.

⁵⁶Lovell, p. 117.

⁵⁷ll. 81-88.

⁵⁸ll. 49-53, 93-95.

⁵⁹Maurois, p. 347.

⁶⁰Lovell employs Byron's own definition of mobilité: "an excessive susceptibility of immediate impressions -- at the same time without losing the past." The note from which this comes explains mobilité as it is used to characterize Adeline. That Byron had in mind a like quality in himself is not so clearly implied in the note as Lovell assumes. Lovell, p. 25. For "sense of fact" see p. 23.

⁶¹David V. Erdman in "The Romantic Movement: A Bibliography," Philological Quarterly, XXX (1951), 110.

⁶²Claire-Elaine Engel, Byron et Shelley en Suisse et en Savoie (Chambéry, 1930), p. 73.

⁶³"He seems as happy . . . as it is consistent for a man of honour and feeling to be after the occurrence of a calamity involving . . . a charge against his honour and his feeling." Hobhouse was too observant not to sense that Byron was taking pains to conceal his real feelings, but he does not seem to perceive how turbulent and dangerous these were: "The uniformly tranquil and guarded manner shows the effort which it is meant to hide." LJ, III, 348 (fn.).

⁶⁴It has been difficult to come to grips with Lovell's argument at this point because he does not offer any explicit reason, other than Shelley's departure, for the drastic shift in Byron's attitude toward nature. If he had, he would have been forced to face the inconsistencies between some of his own very sound observations and the conclusions which follow inescapably from his attachment to concepts more easily labeled than reconciled with fact -- mobilité and the "Zeluco theme." Observing the alternation of mood in the poems written in the summer of 1816, he says: "Of the man who could . . . write, in all probability during the same month, that 'love . . . is the great principle of the universe' and then speak of 'the ruling principle of Hate' elsewhere, it is difficult to know what to say. Reduced to its very simplest form, an acceptable explanation would seem to

be that the one statement represents the wish, the other the fact, as it appeared to Byron's deepest consciousness." p. 126. If Lovell knows how to juggle mobilité and a "deepest consciousness" at the same time, he should explain the art to his readers. The strength of Byron's susceptibility is rather conveniently intermittent. He is susceptible to Shelley but not to Hobhouse. He is susceptible to Lake Geneva, but not to the Bernese Alps. And, for reasons not explained he reverts to susceptibility in Italian society. The facts are sound: there were two irreconcilable tendencies in the poetry written in Switzerland, undoubtedly Shelley did lead Byron into an uncharacteristic enthusiasm, and Byron's attitudes, particularly toward nature, did change in the fall of 1816; but these facts are better explained in terms of Byron's fixed tendencies and needs as they reacted with his environment and found release in his poetry than in the more limited terms Lovell has chosen. He has also rightly observed, though he is unaware of the dualism in Manfred, that the "ruling principle of hate" finds expression in the drama, but the inconsistency of this with the "Zeluco theme" escapes him. In disagreeing with him, then, I have no fault to find with his thorough, and often helpful, assembly of facts. What I have been left to grapple with is the empty air of his omissions, the "clankless" links toward the end of his chain of logic.

⁶⁵ Heinrich Straumann, Byron and Switzerland, Byron Foundation Lecture, 1948 (Nottingham, 1949).

⁶⁶ Galt, pp. 206-209.

⁶⁷ LJ, II, 351.

⁶⁸ This parallel is one of several drawn between The Prisoner of Chillon and The Rime of the Ancient Mariner in an article by Edwin M. Everett, "Lord Byron's Lakist Interlude," SP, LV (1958), 62-75.

⁶⁹ LJ, II, 323.

⁷⁰ Besides Manfred and "Darkness" "a romance founded upon the story of the marriage of Belphegor, and intended to shadow out his matrimonial fate." Thomas Moore, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron: with Notices of His Life (New York, 1830), 2 vols., II, 26.

⁷¹ Marchand, II, 654.

⁷² Robert Metcalf Smith, Types of Philosophic Drama (New York, 1928), p. 287.

⁷³ Typical specimens may be found in LJ, II, 19, 22, 35, 36, 72, III, 402-403, 408.

⁷⁴ LJ, II, 83; The flippant note reappears in the Dedication to Don Juan, ll. 13-16:

And Coleridge, too, has lately taken wing,
But like a hawk encumbered with his hood,--

Explaining metaphysics to the nation--
I wish he would explain his Explanation.

⁷⁵Of several accounts of this incident, I choose one of Byron's written nearly three years later, because it best demonstrates the vividness and permanence of the impression made upon him. LJ, IV, 296-297.

⁷⁶How close this issue came to causing a rupture may be seen in Shelley's letter to Claire (undated), "It is of vital importance to me and to yourself, to Allegra even, that I should put a period to my intimacy with L. B." Percy Bysshe Shelley, Complete Works, Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck (eds.) (London, 1929), X, 367.

⁷⁷Shelley, Works, IX, 326-327.

⁷⁸Preface to Julian and Maddalo; see also Shelley, Works, X, 319-320, 303-304.

⁷⁹LJ, VI, 99.

⁸⁰Marchand, II, 656.

⁸¹Milbanke, p. 275.

⁸²Marchand, II, 679.

⁸³John William Polidori, The Diary of John William Polidori, William Michael Rossetti (ed.) (London, 1911), p. 97.

- 84 LJ, IV, 26-27.
- 85 Milbanke, p. 279.
- 86 LJ, IV, 54-55, 57, 59, 64, 68.
- 87 III, 1, 9-14.
- 88 LJ, IV, 110 and fn.
- 89 LJ, IV, 72.
- 90 Milbanke, p. 278.
- 91 LJ, IV, 58.
- 92 LJ, IV, 81.
- 93 11. 175-177.
- 94 11. 45-46.
- 95 1. 5.
- 96 11. 164-165.
- 97 11. 198-200.
- 98 Successful love may sate itself away,
The wretched are the faithful, tis their fate
To have all feeling save the one decay. 11.59-61.
- 99 III, 1. 98.
- 100 III, iv, 5-43.

¹⁰¹LJ, IV, 115.

¹⁰²Stanza LXXVIII, Canto IV.

¹⁰³Stanza CXXXVII, Canto IV.

Footnotes to Chapter II

¹Mayne, II, 110.

²LJ, IV, 177.

³François Auguste René Chateaubriand, Atala.
René, translated by Irving Putter (Berkeley, Calif., 1952),
p. 90.

⁴Marchand, I, 38.

⁵Drinkwater's approximation. Drinkwater, p. 136.

⁶Bertrand Evans, Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley
(Berkeley, Calif., 1947), pp. 36-37.

⁷Chew, The Dramas, p. 63.

⁸Chew, The Dramas, p. 61.

⁹Chew, The Dramas, p. 61.

¹⁰Chew, The Dramas, p. 61.

¹¹Chew, The Dramas, p. 64.

¹²Evans, "Manfred's Remorse." See f.n. 6 to Introduction.

¹³Villainous characters with pathetic qualities are, although the proportions are reversed, mixtures reminiscent of those offered by the sentimental dramatists. One of Goldsmith's objections to the characters of sentimental comedy was that, "If they happen to have faults or foibles, the spectator is taught not only to pardon, but to applaud them, in consideration of the goodness of their hearts." "A Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy," The Works of Oliver Goldsmith, Peter Cunningham (ed.), (London, 1854), III, 343.

¹⁴Preface to Childe Harold.

¹⁵Evidence of his identifying himself with the characters of the novels will be presented below. It should be granted that he speaks favorably of Maturin's Bertram (LJ, IV, 90), apparently one of some five hundred plays he read in manuscript (LJ, IV, 31) while he was a director of the Drury Lane Theater; but the fact remains that he does not allude to individual characters from Gothic dramas.

¹⁶LJ, V, 42.

¹⁷11. 50-54.

¹⁸CXIII, 1. 1057.

¹⁹Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle (London, 1927), p. 219.

- ²⁰Galt, p. 2.
- ²¹Mayne, I, 29.
- ²²Moore, I, 38.
- ²³LJ, I, 30-31.
- ²⁴Karl Elze, Lord Byron (London, 1872), pp. 20-21.
- ²⁵Maurois, p. 227.
- ²⁶Moore, I, 30.
- ²⁷Moore, I, 49.
- ²⁸Clara Reeve, The Old English Baron (London, 1883), p. 32.
- ²⁹Reeve, p. 32.
- ³⁰Edith Birkhead, The Tale of Terror (London, 1921), p. 40.
- ³¹Drinkwater, p. 98.
- ³²Arthur Symons, The Romantic Movement in English Poetry
(New York, 1909), p. 239.
- ³³Marchand, I, 94.
- ³⁴Marchand, I, 50.
- ³⁵Moore, I, 55.
- ^{35a}Railo, p. 219.

³⁶ Samuel Smiles, A Publisher and His Friends: Memoir and Correspondence of the Late John Murray (London, 1891), I, 383-384.

³⁷ From Hobhouse's parody of "Stanzas to Augusta," LJ, IV, 74, f.n.

³⁸ For example: "What a fool I am -- I have been interrupted by a visitor who is just gone, and have been laughing at a thousand absurdities, as if I had nothing serious to think about." Letter to Lady Melbourne, January 13, 1814, Murray, I, 233. See also Letter to Miss Milbanke, September 26, 1813, in which he admits she is correct in finding his laughter "false to the heart." LJ, III, 402. And also LJ, IV, 73, f.n.

³⁹ Murray, I, 81.

⁴⁰ "The impression of that evening was not agreeable, but it was interesting; and that forehead mark, the frown, was calculated to arouse curiosity, and beget conjectures. . . ." "Byron held himself aloof, and sat on the rail, leaning on the mizzen shrouds, inhaling, as it were poetical sympathy, from the gloomy rock, then dark and stern in the twilight." Galt, p. 61.

⁴¹ Moore, I, 163.

⁴² His first account of the feat is in a letter to Henry Drury, May 3, 1810, the day on which he accomplished it. Moore, I, 169. The last of a number of accounts to his correspondents occurs in another letter to Drury, July 17, 1811. Moore, I, 190.

⁴³ LJ, II, 313.

⁴⁴ Mayne, I, 151-152.

⁴⁵ Mayne, I, 148-149.

⁴⁶ Mayne, I, 149.

⁴⁷ LJ, I, 288, f.n.

⁴⁸ Drinkwater, p. 159,

⁴⁹ LJ, I, 288, f.n.

⁵⁰ His use of and comment on the following quotation is revealing. "'Many people have the reputation of being wicked, with whom we should be too happy to pass our lives.' I need not add it is a woman's saying -- a Mademoiselle de Sommary's." LJ, II, 303-304.

⁵¹ Milbanke, p. 117.

⁵² "These flagrancies of character are still within the compass of normal human complexity. His alleged relations with Augusta are beyond it." Drinkwater, p. 46. The difficulty of placing "flagrancies" within a "normal" pattern,

however complex, creates doubt as to what is meant by "normal." But even if it were granted that in this context the word designates some precise boundary between one kind of eccentricity and another, there would remain the question of why Byron's whole personality must be confined within that boundary.

⁵³Maurois, pp. 217-218.

⁵⁴Mayne, II, 111. Italics are hers.

⁵⁵Charles Du Bos, Byron and the Need of Fatality, translated by Ethel C. Mayne (New York and London, 1932), p. 16.

⁵⁶Marchand, I, 39.

⁵⁷Murray, I, 256-257.

⁵⁸LJ, II, 309.

⁵⁹LJ, II, 305.

⁶⁰Murray, I, 254.

⁶¹Du Bos, p. 131.

⁶²Murray, I, 283.

⁶³John Moore, The Works of John Moore, M.D. (Edinburgh, 1820), V, 337-338.

⁶⁴John Moore, V, 368-369.

⁶⁵Maurois, p. 227.

⁶⁶William Godwin, Adventures of Caleb Williams (New York, 1870), p. 170.

⁶⁷Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lady Byron Vindicated (Boston, 1870), p. 243.

⁶⁸Preface to Cloudesley.

⁶⁹LJ, II, 41, 45.

⁷⁰LJ, II, 368.

Footnotes to Chapter III

¹Byron spoke of it as being "of a very wild, metaphysical, inexplicable kind." LJ, IV, 54-55.

²See appendix for an appraisal of other Faustian influences.

³For commentary on Byron's impatience with philosophy see above, p. 48 and notes. To this might be added that he uses metaphysics in contexts which associate it with madness and delusion. See note 1 to this chapter and the remark cited on page about his being "half mad between metaphysics, mountains," etc. Manfred (III, 1, l. 10) speaks of philosophy as "of all our vanities the motliest."

Edward Marjarum in his fine study of Byron's thinking traces one strain of philosophic thought, his cosmopolitan

skepticism, not to the philosophers of the eighteenth century, but rather to Pope, Gibbon, Lady Wortley Montague, and Goldsmith. But Marjarum ignores the sensational subliterate as an influence which worked in the same fashion on Byron's fundamental ethical assumptions. Edward W. Marjarum, Byron as Skeptic and Believer (Princeton, 1938), pp. 26-27.

⁴The Countess of Blessington (Marguerite P. F. Gardiner), A Journal of the Conversations of Lord Byron (London, 1893), p. 390.

⁵Knight observes and cites examples of Byron's conviction that until deflected by society man's natural tendencies are good. He calls this belief Byron's "central human metaphysic." G. Wilson Knight, Lord Byron, Christian Virtues (New York, 1953, p. 67).

⁶Perhaps the most conspicuously silly manifestation of sentimental morality is to be found in Conrad's stern disapprobation of Gulnare; she is "a homicide" because she has killed Seyd, Conrad's mortal enemy. Although the "crime" was necessary in effecting Conrad's escape from the executioner, Conrad is able to tolerate her only after conquering his revulsion. The impression of his cruelty is somewhat softened by his taking much of the blame himself, but his fantastic scrupulosity makes one wonder whether his "thousand crimes" did not belong on the docket of a juvenile

court. The Corsair, VIII-XVLL.

⁷Maurice J. Quinlan, "Byron's Manfred and Zoroastrianism," JEGP, LVII (1958), 726-738.

⁸Ernest H. Coleridge (ed.), The Works of Lord Byron . . ., Poetry, 7 vols. (London, 1901), noted hereafter as Poetry, IV, 91, f.n.

⁹Chew, Childe Harold, etc., p. 357-358, f.n.

¹⁰Chew's opinion is that "The Incantation . . . fits but imperfectly into the context in Manfred." He also notes: "Professor Verhagen [H. Verhagen, De Rebus quibusdam Compositionem Byronis Dramatis quod Manfred inscribitur, Erlangen, 1909] finds that one part of the Incantation is closely identified in theme and phrase with the rest of Manfred, while the other part (stanzas 5, 6, and two lines of 7), metrically distinct from its context, is evidently directed against Lady Byron." Chew, The Dramas, p. 59 and f.n. Marchand succinctly disposes of the problem: "The language of parts of it parallels some of Byron's diatribes against his wife in his letters to Augusta. But in another mood he could also see it as applicable to his alter ego, Manfred." Marchand II, 656, f.n.

¹¹See also:

I have affronted Death, but in the war
Of elements the waters shrunk from me,

And fatal things passed harmless -- the cold hand
 Of an all-pitiless demon held me back,
 Back by a single hair, which would not break.

II, ii, ll. 229-233.

¹²Chew, The Dramas, p. 58.

¹³Manfred's intellectual pursuits are exemplified in
 note 17 below; his imaginative efforts are expressed in his
 declaration to the witch that he had "plunged deep"

In Fantasy, Imagination, all
 The affluence of /his/ soul -- which one day was
 A Croesus in creation (II, ii, 140-142);

his attempt to quell his remorse through experience is also
 implicit in the same passage:

I plunged amidst mankind -- Forgetfulness
 I sought in all save where 't is to be found,
 And that I have to learn. (II, ii, 145-147.)

¹⁴LJ, III, 355.

¹⁵Chew, The Dramas, pp. 79-80. Except where otherwise
 noted, all quotations in this paragraph are from this passage.

¹⁶Chew, The Dramas, p. 84.

¹⁷I do not consider as an inclusive statement of his
 method and object:

And then I dived,
 In my lone wanderings, to the caves of death,
 Searchings its cause in its effect; and drew
 From withered bones, and skulls, and heaped up dust,
 Conclusions most forbidden. II, ii, ll. 173-177.

The remainder of the passage makes clear that this stage of his investigations was superseded by more occult and purely spiritual searching, by which he made his "eyes familiar with Eternity,/ Such as, before [him] the Magi." ll. 184-185. Moreover, he is no longer involved even in this later search within the limits of the dramatic action. His satisfaction with it ended with the fatal crime.

¹⁸Chew, The Dramas, p. 75.

¹⁹Chew, The Dramas, p. 76.

²⁰Chew, The Dramas, p. 76.

²¹Chew, The Dramas, p. 78.

²²Quinlan, pp. 729-734.

²³Quinlan, p. 735.

²⁴More, p. xxi.

²⁵Quinlan, pp. 734-735.

²⁶"I could not tame my nature down; for he
 Must serve who fain would sway -- and soothe, and sue,

And watch all time, and pry into all place,
And be a living lie." III, 1, ll. 116-119.

"Like the wind,
The red-hot breath of the most lone Simoom,
Which dwells but in the desert and sweeps o'er
The barren sands which bear no shrubs to blast,
And revels o'er their wild and arid waves,
And seeketh not, so that it is not sought,
But being met is deadly, -- such hath been
The course of my existence; but there came
Things in my path which are no more." III, 1, ll. 127-135.

²⁷ Chew declares that "Manfred is absolutely anti-fatalistic," citing Manfred's defiance of the fiends who come to claim him. But it is questionable whether these fiends are clear representatives of fate or whether they are there to intervene should Manfred's resolve to retain his fated place weaken. That Manfred does in several passages -- dealt with above -- acknowledge the power of fate makes inadequate the citation of one ambiguous passage as evidence of absolute anti-fatalism. Chew, The Dramas, p. 83.

²⁸ Marjarum's sound view is that "It seems unlikely that Byron ever solved the old dilemma implied between the doctrines of predestination and free will." Marjarum, p. 9. He and Chew both find "the sense of moral responsibility in Manfred."

Marjarum, p. 9. Cf. Chew, The Dramas, p. 84.

²⁹LJ, II, 21.

³⁰James Kennedy, Conversations on Religion with Lord Byron . . . (London, 1830), p. 145.

³¹Smith, p. 289.

³²"His imitators, however, were engaged in undermining his prestige by wearying people with echoes of his more obvious cadences and by apeing insincerely his more easily reproduced characteristics."

"It was of one of Bulwer's 'rooks' that The Athenæum wrote:

This is one of the poems which the Laras, the Conrads, the Alps, and the Mazeppas of Byron have to answer for It is much easier to imitate his weakness than his strength. We have in the works of his imitators, imposing attitudes, fierce chiefs, turbaned hordes, banished princes, wandering dervishes, strolling virgins, descriptions of rocks and isles, and ruined temples -- plenty of love and abundance of bloodshed; but not of that scorching sarcasm, fiery sentiment, whirlwind passion, and wit withering as the glance of Beelzebub, which marked the moody Lord." Chew, Byron in

England, p. 240-243. Chew notes that the article quoted was from The Athenæum, December 31, 1831, p. 846.

³³ Leslie A. Marchand, "Byron and the Modern Spirit," The Major English Romantic Poets, C. D. Thorpe, Carlos Baker, and Bennet Weaver (eds.) (Carbondale, Ill., 1957), p. 164.

³⁴ Chew, The Dramas, p. 84.

³⁵ Joseph Conrad, Three Great Tales (New York, n.d.), p. 257.

³⁶ Walter Kaufmann in his provocative study, From Shakespere to Existentialism (Garden City, N. Y., 1960), regrettably does not turn seriously to Byron, to whom a chapter could be most illuminatingly devoted.

³⁷ Marjarum, p. viii.

³⁸ Chew, The Dramas, p. 84.

Footnotes to Conclusion

¹ Marjarum, p. xi.

² Marjarum, pp. 31-32.

³ LJ, IV, 22.

Appendix

Literary Relationships

Goethe's Faust: External evidence of influence, despite Byron's denial, is quite compelling. Besides the well-known oral translation by Monk Lewis, conversations with Shelley probably helped to impress Byron with Goethe's play. Elze, though subsequent commentators seem to have ignored him, bases the belief that the two poets discussed Faust mainly on the existence of translations of the Prologue on "Heaven" and "Walpurgis-Night" among Shelley's poems. "Both Shelley and Byron were profoundly impressed by Goethe's masterpiece; they had already learnt from their own experience, that the tree of knowledge is not the tree of life, and Goethe's 'Faust' led them into the world of spirits, where they hoped to find the inward tumult of their own minds either expressed or soothed." (Elze, p. 411.) Unblurred correspondences between Goethe's play and Manfred are difficult to find. (See Chew's appendix, "Manfred and Faust," The Dramas, pp. 174-178.) The best that can be made out are in the first scenes of Acts I and II in Manfred. (Byron himself conceded that "the first scene, and that of Faustus are very similar." LJ, V, 36.) But, although the settings of these are reminiscent of Faust's study and the summit of the Brocken, and although they deal similarly with the invocation of and communication with spirits,

the motivation and the moods are strikingly different. Because of these differences, the influence of Goethe on the broad conception of the hero dissatisfied with the earthly experience and endowed with the boldness to transcend it would seem unlikely were there not clear external evidence. Marchand, as usual, brings the complex situation within the scope of a short, judicious pronouncement. "Byron was fascinated by Lewis's verbal translation of portions of Goethe's Faust. Stored in his retentive memory, it gave him the unconscious framework for his poetic drama of Manfred, composed a few weeks later." (II, 644.)

Prometheus Bound: In his review of Manfred (Edinburgh Review, XXVII [1817], 431.), Jeffrey observed: "In the tone and pitch of the composition, as well as in the character and the diction in the more solemn parts, Manfred reminds us more of the Prometheus of Aeschylus than of any more modern performance." Byron, always priding himself on the soundness of his literary tastes, agreed: "The Prometheus, if not exactly in my plan, has always been so much in my head, that I can easily conceive its influence over all or any thing that I have written; -- but I deny Marlow (sic) and his progeny, and beg that you will do the same." (Letter to John Murray, October 12, 1817, LJ, IV, 174-175.) In Byron's "Prometheus," written in July, 1816, appear the beginnings of a process by which Prometheus is absorbed into

the heroic Byron. In attributing to Prometheus an "impenetrable Spirit," Byron foreshadows Manfred's immunity to the claims of the fiends upon him. And in viewing Prometheus as an example to mankind rather than the bestower of a gift, Byron is able to reconcile his misanthropy with his admiration for a figure, who, seen in another light, sacrifices himself for the benefit of all -- the undeserving as well as the deserving -- ; who serves as an inspiration to the strong rather than a savior of the weak. The terms in which Prometheus's ordeal are described also parallel those at the climax of Manfred's struggle: "Titan! to thee the strife was given/ Between the suffering and the will." (ll. 15-16.) In ascribing the power of creation to "The ruling principle of Hate," Byron is touching upon one of the basic Zoroastrian principles underlying Manfred. Other sentiments which echo quite clearly in the drama are in:

Like thee, Man is in part divine,
 A troubled stream from a pure source;
 And Man in portions can foresee
 His own funereal destiny,
 His wretchedness, and his resistance,
 And his sad unallied existence:
 To which his Spirit may oppose
 Itself -- and equal to all woes,
 And a firm will, and a deep sense,
 Which even in torture can descry

Its own concenter'd recompense,
 Triumphant where it dares defy,
 And making Death a Victory. (ll. 49-61.)

Perhaps Shelley and Byron did discuss Prometheus; it would be odd if they did not at a time when Byron was creating a poem on the subject. But the Byronic stamp of pessimism, so clearly evident in the lines just quoted, makes it highly unlikely that Shelley's view of the myth, assuming that the view he then held was much the same as that taken in his Prometheus Unbound, made much of an impression on Byron.

Marlowe's Dr. Faustus: The suggestion that "the general conception of this piece [Manfred], and much of what is excellent in the manner of its execution have been borrowed from the Tragical History of Dr. Faustus of Marlow [sic]" appeared in The Edinburgh Monthly Magazine, July, 1817. (Poetry, p. 80.) There is no reason to doubt Byron's word that he had never read the play. The last act, because of the presence of the holy man and of diabolic spirits, is reminiscent of Marlowe's last act. But without external evidence of direct influence to offset the more immediate precedents of the appearance of fiends in The Monk and Vathek, it is impossible to establish any indebtedness to Marlowe. Byron's acquaintance with medieval drama is shown in his choosing to call Cain a mystery play. But I have been unable to find any evidence that he might have been acquainted with morality plays as well. Such

evidence might have revealed that the resemblances between his closing scenes and Marlowe's sprang independently from the same heritage.

M. G. Lewis's The Monk: Though in most particulars The Monk is inextricable from the Gothic complex, Byron had re-read it during the summer of 1816. (LJ, II, 14-45.) The broad similarities of the incest motive and the practicing of necromantic arts would not otherwise signify. Closer correspondence is apparent in the protagonist's encounter with evil spirits, though these spirits are successful in claiming Ambrosio. Closer still is the attitude toward Nature in Manfred, Act II, and in The Monk, when Ambrosio's guilt begins to terrify him:

The monk, supported by his infernal guide, traversed the air with the rapidity of an arrow; and a few moments placed him upon a precipice's brink, the steepest in Sierra Morena.

Though rescued from the Inquisition, Ambrosio as yet was insensible of the blessings of liberty. The damning contract weighed heavy upon his mind; and the scenes in which he had been a principal actor, had left behind them such impressions as rendered his heart the seat of anarchy and confusion. The objects now before his eyes, and

which the full moon sailing through clouds permitted him to examine, were ill calculated to inspire that calm, of which he stood so much in need. The disorder of his imagination was increased by the wildness of the surrounding scenery; by the gloomy caverns and steep rocks, rising above each other, and dividing the passing clouds; solitary clusters of trees scattered here and there, among whose thick-twined branches the wind of night sighed hoarsely and mournfully; the shrill cry of mountain eagles, who had built their nests among these lonely deserts; the stunning roar of torrents, as swelled by late rains they rushed violently down tremendous precipices; and the dark waters of a silent sluggish stream, which faintly reflected the moonbeams, and bathed the rock's base on which Ambrosio stood. The abbot cast round him a look of terror.

(M. G. Lewis, The Monk, 2 vols. [London, n.d.], II, 211-212.)

Though Manfred, unlike the monk, is not terrified by the scenery beneath and around him, Byron's interest, like Lewis's, concentrates upon the menacing or destructive objects in view. Of the attitude toward nature in the Journal-Letter whose spirit permeates Manfred, Quennell remarks:

"His sense of beauty was instinct with a sense of terror."
 (Peter Quennell, Byron in Italy (New York, 1951), p. 46.)
 And, as is noted in Chapter I, the response to scenery is
 much darker than the neutral tones of the "Zeluco theme."

Beckford's Vathek: E. H. Coleridge notes specifically com-
 parable phraseology: "Child of Clay," the seventh spirit's
 epithet for Manfred, is reminiscent of Eblis's greeting to
 Vathek and his followers, "Creatures of clay, I receive you
 into mine empire." (Poetry, IV, 89.) And the throne of
 Arimanes, like that of Eblis, is a "Globe of Fire." (Poetry,
 IV, 112.) It is so apparent that the terrific elements of
 Manfred's audience with Arimanes are supplied largely by
 the infernal scenes of Vathek that the absence of proof
 that Byron had recently returned to this book is unimportant.

Shakespeare's Macbeth: Although Faust took Byron into the
 world of spirits, it is clear that he had entered this world
 before with other guides, and that from his childhood he had
 been fascinated by the lore and literature of the supernatural.
 Evans, considering briefly the relationship of Macbeth with
 the Gothic tradition, observes that there is in it "an assort-
 ment of elements that have long helped to identify the Gothic
 novel . . . Besides ghosts and prophecies, Macbeth has a
 variety of apparitions, a signal bell, a forest, thunder and
 lightning, a cavern, a castle, a murder done in the night to

the accompaniment of supernatural sounds, and other striking elements of the same sort." (Evans, Gothic Drama, p. 17.) And he is justified in concluding that "Macbeth is not a Gothic play and cannot be claimed as an antecedent of the species," because "It is not elements alone, but the attitude toward them and the uses made of them that distinguish the Gothic kind." (P. 18.) But the evidence that I have offered of Byron's fascination with Macbeth does, I believe, provide reason for believing that it exerted at least as much of an influence on the supernatural element in Manfred as that exerted by the Gothic literature and by Goethe's Faust. The songs of Hecate and the witches in Macbeth, although not strikingly similar in content with the songs of the Spirits in Manfred, touch several times on the exercise of malignant power in the affairs of men. The first witch's plan to torment the sailor whose wife has affronted her suggests, though her powers are not so great as those of her counterparts in Manfred, the boast of the fifth spirit that the fleet it met "will sink ere night be passed," (I, i, ll. 100-107.), and to that of the third destiny's boast that she has caused a shipwreck from which she saved only one man "a traitor on land, and a pirate at sea." (II, iii, ll. 324-331.) The broad resemblance lies in the reports some of the spirits make of their recent actions and those made by the witches. Though the parallels between the Hall of Arimanes and the infernal

scenes in Vathek are closer, resemblances exist between Macbeth's motive for going to the cavern and his demeanor toward Hecate and the witches there, and Manfred's determination to be satisfied.

But the closest parallel, both with the Gothic pattern and Manfred, is one which Evans fails to take into consideration -- the remorse motive in Macbeth, expressed in Macbeth's well-known plea to the physician:

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written trouble of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart? (V, iii, ll. 40-45.)

Although Macbeth is asking for a cure for Lady Macbeth's madness, it is evident that he would welcome such a remedy for his own soul. Another influence traceable to Macbeth rather than to Faust, is the underlying cause of the protagonist's world weariness. Macbeth, like Manfred, comes to feel the futility of life through guilt to a greater extent than through a thirst for transcendent experience.

Shakespeare's Hamlet: In Chapter II, I remarked on the similarity between the Gothic hero and Hamlet in respect, not to remorse, but to internal struggle and self-accusation. Further

similarities, which come into focus in two passages, are expressions of misanthropy and on death. Coleridge (Poetry, IV, 95, f.n.) observes the comparison between Manfred, (I, ii, ll. 34, ff. -- "Beautiful! How beautiful is all this visible world!" etc. -- and Hamlet's speech to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (Hamlet, II, ii, ll. 286, ff.) "What a piece of work is man!" etc. But though alike in the spirit of misanthropic dismay, the two passages are different in that Manfred laments the meanness of man in comparison with earthly grandeur -- a theme which was to find expression in Cain -- whereas Hamlet laments the failure of man to fulfill his magnificent capabilities.

Manfred, to be sure, concedes that man is "half deity," but he is "unfit . . . to soar." Hamlet less pessimistically emphasizes the fitness of man, if he so chose. A relationship which seems closer obtains between Manfred's world-weary speculation about death beginning "We are the fools of time and terror" (II, ii, ll. 164, ff.) and the "To be or not to be" soliloquy; (III, i, ll. 56, ff.) but there is a difference in that conscience does not make a coward of Manfred, who already knows something of what lies beyond death and is resolved to discover more.

Even though specific comparisons with Macbeth and Hamlet recede into impressionism, similarities of diction, tone, and sentiment are, as in the dramas of other English Romantics, pervasive and insistent. Chew devotes an appendix to

"Shakespearean Echoes in Marino Faliero" (See also P. H. Churchman, "Byron and Shakespeare," MLN, XXIV (1909), 126-127 and Ernst Zabel, Byrons Kenntnis von Shakespeare. . . [Halle, 1904]), but it would be extremely difficult to find any such parallels in phraseology in Manfred. The impression that the voice, if not distinct words, is echoed justifiably remains strong.

Minor Influences: Quinlan follows the lead of Alois Brandl ("Die Herkunft von Manfreds Astarte," Anglia, LX [1936], 197-202) in arguing well that Byron borrowed the name Astarte from Montesquieu's Persian Letters: "In Letter 67 Ibben relates the story of a brother and sister, Apheridon and Astarte . . . who have been in love since childhood [and] wish to marry." (Quinlan, p. 734).

Marchand suggests that Byron's reading of Voltaire while he was cogitating on Act III of Manfred had "made more acute" "the metaphysical problems which had long been troubling him." In a letter to Hobhouse, April 14, 1817, Byron reveals how stimulating he found Voltaire:

What I dislike is his extreme inaccuracy; if his citations were correct he might have upset a hundred ____s. Upon that point I do not know what to believe, or what to disbelieve; which is the devil; to have no religion at all! all sense, and senses are against it; but all belief

and much evidence is for it.

In the same letter there is a hint that Frederick's example might have inspired Manfred's defiance:

The most consistent infidel was the Prussian Frederick -- because, during all the disaster of the seven years' war, he was as full of his materialism as when in quiet at Potsdam -- and like his friend La Metrie, who died "denying G-d and the physicians." (LBC, II, 46.)

Byron speaks of Schiller's Armenian (Geisterseher) as "a novel which took a great hold of me when a boy." (LJ, IV, 92-93.) This testimony, along with his mention of reading a French translation of Schiller in September of 1816 (LJ, III, 356) makes the vague generic resemblances worth noting. The novel does present a mysterious character possessed of occult powers and a necromantic scene.

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Abbreviations used are from the "Master List and Table of Abbreviations," "Annual Bibliography for 1960," Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, LXXVI (1961), 101-111.

Vita

William A. Neville was born in Manchester, New Hampshire, on December 7, 1924. He is the first of four sons of Joseph P. Neville, deceased, and Anna E. Neville. From 1943 until 1946, he served in the Army and saw action as a combat infantryman in Europe. In 1950, he married Sally C. Carlton of Manchester. Their children are Anne, born in 1954 and Jane, born in 1957.

He received his primary and secondary education in the Manchester public schools, graduating from Central High School in 1942. While in the Army in 1943 and 1944, he attended North Carolina State College. In 1946, he entered the University of New Hampshire; and in 1949 he received his B.A. degree there. Since 1949, he has attended Lehigh University, where he received his M.A. degree in 1952.

In 1949, he became a graduate assistant and in 1951, an instructor in English at Lehigh. In 1961, he was appointed to an assistant professorship at the State University College of Education at Fredonia, New York.