A League of Extraordinary Byrons: The Poet's Many Embodied Selves as Vehicles of Anxious Rebellion

by

Thomas Sclafani

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Sponsor: Gaura Narayan

Second Reader: Paul Megna

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Introduction

"Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth."- Oscar Wilde

The poet Lord Byron is most easily described as one who evades an all-encompassing description. He is at once a poet, a political radical, an early example of celebrity, and a world traveler (MacCarthy). This multiplicity is illustrated consistently in his works as the Byronic Hero is most definable by his inability to fit the pre-existing structures imposed upon him, whether these be moral, cultural, religious, or literary structures. Renowned Byron scholar, Jerome McGann, in his book *Byron and Romanticism* applies a famous Oscar Wilde quotation to the poet. He goes as far as to state, "Perhaps no English writer, not even Wilde himself, executed this theory of the mask so completely as Byron" (McGann). As we see Byron through the frame of this quotation we find that the poet constructs characters, or masks, as a performative way to convey authentic aspects of his interiority. We can find characters in each of Byron's major works that each embody an aspect of the poet's versatile and ever-changing self. Ultimately the theme that emerges as these characters are held next to each other is that they each display, not only an aspect of Byron's multifaceted self, but moreover anxieties of the poet regarding subjects such as public persona, the confinement of identity through categorization, impermanence and the decay of beauty, and authority as displayed through the paternal structure of faith and colonialism by its parallels.

This project seeks to locate those characters in Byron's major texts that embody parts of Byron based on McGann's concept. The purpose these characters serve is to communicate Byron's anxieties centralized as the themes that each respective text explores. In the chapters that follow I examine selections from Byron's four major works, *Don Juan, Manfred, Childe*

Harold's Pilgrimage, and *Cain.* In each I designate one, or multiple characters who most represent the anxiety Byron seeks to express in the given text. Additionally, I find that Byron takes on a wide array of forms to convey these anxieties, including the epic, dramatic poems, and even a medieval mystery play. As Byron's heroes are too large for the preexisting categories that are imposed on them, they appear too big as well for the actual poetic forms they find themselves within. I will, therefore, seek out moments in these texts where Byron's characters, as they break from conventions within their text, actually break from and innovate upon the traditions of these poetic forms.

In the first chapter I find that Byron innovates upon the form of the epic poem through his *Don Juan*. I name the anxiety Byron explores in this text to be a public-perception-anxiety. This essentially generates a layer of performative morality that the nobles of the text such as Don Juan and his family are expected to function within to avoid the ultimate realization of this public-perception-anxiety, scandal. The main voice of the text belongs to an iconoclastic narrator who Byron builds to be informal in tone and often unreliable. This narrator, through his allusion to rumor and hear-say, democratizes and undermines the authority of the epic bard one expects of a poem such as this. Byron is perceivable in both the narrator and the nobles, crafting the voice of the poem through the narrator while also resembling Don Juan and his parents through references to his own biography and his status as a public figure. In the chapter that follows I examine *Manfred* as a text essentially concerned with the confusion of categories. It expresses an anxiety, and ultimately, an anguish deriving from Manfred's inability to fully embody any one category, human or spiritual. Even the value of knowledge is questioned in this text as knowledge seems intrinsically tied to suffering. Manfred and his fallen beloved, Astarte, are bound in their ambition for hidden knowledge but the bond they form ultimately undoes Astarte.

In the wake of her death Manfred seeks oblivion and his powers, as manifestations of his knowledge, fail to aid him in that pursuit. All that his ambitious nature, made up of the warring elements of clay and the Promethean spark, leads him to is an inability to belong in a designated place or category without his beloved. In the third chapter, I follow the theme of impermanence in Canto II of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.* The poem is saturated with images of beauty in varying states of decay. Harold's anxiety about impermanence, through touring Ottoman occupied Greece and Albania, extends to art, youth, religion, and love. Byron openly criticizes Britain's involvement in the theft of the Elgin Marbles and portrays the thievery implicit in imperialism to be another force responsible for the undoing of Greece's former beauty. This early criticism of England's Imperialism preludes a more central point of my fourth chapter on Byron's *Cain*. In *Cain,* Byron uses the medieval format of the biblical mystery play, often put on by guilds, but innovates it by taking a more sympathetic view towards Cain and Lucifer. This play expresses an anxiety towards authority as Cain finds himself not suited to the structure of his family, and their obedience to God. His nature is inquisitive and set ablaze by the words of Lucifer. We find in Lucifer's reframing of God as a conqueror that a striking parallel emerges between God's relationship to Adam and Eve and the relationship between a colonizer and the colonized. Based on this parallel, Byron's anxiety regarding authority becomes overtly political and Cain becomes a revolutionary figure.

I. *Don Juan* and the Beast in the Jungle of Public Image

In Canto I of Lord Byron's *Don Juan*, we see the poet perform a hyper-aware self as narrator to the lives of characters who live before the judgment of not only the reader and narrator, but also the rumor mill that surrounds them in the text. Through this performance and from this scenario, we get to see characters battling with their own public-perception-anxiety. In this Canto, Byron details the early life of the legendary libertine Don Juan, also paying great attention to the lives of his family. In Byron's telling, Don Juan is raised under his mother's watchful eye and is given an education highly mediated by her. However, this sheltered upbringing crumbles when the young hero becomes intimate with his mother's friend, Donna Julia. Byron meticulously constructs the narrator of this text to appear casual or unassuming as a means to establish intimacy with the reader. He also chases after the nature of scandal and public perception by satisfying his readership's lust for shock and intrigue through the story of a young Don Juan and those around him. This commentary is a projection by Byron of his life in the public eye onto his characters. Byron's role as an early celebrity was an accepted part of his image, even at the time he was alive. As Kurt Heinzelman states, "Byron's peers recognized celebrity as part of Byron's personal aura" (Heinzelman 490). While the poetic voice of Byron in this text rests with the narrator, there are also notable parallels between Byron's life and that of Don Juan and his parents. Considering this, we find that the poem is a vehicle for Byron to comment on and satirize a lifestyle, and culture or celebrity that he himself is familiar with. He shows the reader his characters as they wrestle not only with morality and the impact on those involved, but also the perception of those actions to a larger group and the scandal it may bring. There is a veneer of performative morality which takes priority over the true intentions of these characters. This depiction of heroes who are slightly less than heroic, and a narrator who is just

as susceptible to hear-say as anyone else, serves to transform the model of the epic poem to be more suitable to Byron's vision of Don Juan and himself by extension. The abundantly apparent subjectivity of the everyman narrator, who seems at moments to voice public opinion, leads the reader to question the objectivity of public image as it is perpetuated through rumor. With *Don Juan*, Lord Byron confronts his own existence as a public figure through the frame of a historical icon and the poet exists as both the subject and its commentator.

There are centrally two audiences to consider, the reader, and the public of Seville which spectates and spreads rumors regarding the nobles who serve as central characters. This in-text audience is alluded to by Byron's iconoclastic narrator. The impression we get of this narrator is less that of the all-knowing epic bard who will serve as our objective purveyor of history, and more as someone speaking to us at a bar or party, reciting a story he heard from others just like him. Byron creates a sense of intimacy between the narrator and the reader by repeatedly having the narrator interject his own thoughts or anecdotes into the story which raises awareness of the roles both he and the reader play in the text. It is not possible to lose oneself in the poem as every time one may begin to, our narrator addresses us directly once again. One such example of this comes when describing Donna Julia. At regular intervals the narrator feels compelled to interject his own preferences into the main text. This can be seen when he states, "(I'm very fond of handsome eyes)" (473) and "-- I hate a dumpy woman" (488). The narrator expressing his preferences in women seems uncharacteristic of an epic poem or the tone such a poem seeks to achieve, yet these persist regardless. Of course, the matter is not that Byron's editor fell asleep but rather that these interjections serve a dual-purpose of both calling upon and enticing the reader. Byron is, to some degree, trafficking in objectification as a means to relate to a readership that, considering these comments about women, he anticipates to be male. Tonally they are

intentionally informal and crude as to provide a sense of intimacy, and even fraternity between the narrator and the reader. Byron is crafting an epic poem, and yet the tone, at least in these places where Byron experiments with the genre of the epic poem, is much like that of a story told in a bar between friends. In this sense, form fits content as Byron comments on rumor and scandal by using the same sensational devices used by someone gossiping. In his article "Renunciations of Rhyme in Byron's Don Juan," Jim Cocola describes this tone as a "calculation of casualness" (Cocola 842). Cocola also finds this same intimate or informal tone in the narrator's, and by extension Byron's, experimentations and seeming conflict with rhyme in the text. Crucially Cocola casts this relationship to rhyme and the tone it creates as a part of an "elaborate formal apparatus" that innovates the epic form and liberates it while also creating a commentary on the different ways in which we tell stories (Cocola 842). The informal quality which could potentially be seen by the less attentive as amateurish is noted by Cocola as not only intentional, but complex and nuanced. More specifically, Byron's appropriation of this informal, at times conversational tone, serves the greater purpose of presenting the voice of a nosey populace, in this case that of the people of Seville, and the mechanism by which scandal can grow. The attention paid to that process of rumor dissemination points glaringly to Byron's own obsession with public opinion in relation to image and the anxiety which arises from this. Additionally, other critics such as Ourania Chatsiou have argued that with his interjections, Byron invites the reader to consider their own subjective view of idealized beauty. Ourania Chatsiou states, "Byron privileges his reader as enlightened and encourages a lingering contemplation upon the readers -necessarily and essentially- individual ideal of beauty, briefly halting the narrative" (646). Chatsiou claims this while addressing Byron's *The Bride of Abydos,* but I believe it is a core element of many of Byron's interjections of his own voice. Byron

seemingly "lowers" himself to a voice more like that of his readership and asks them to come to terms with their own subjectivity. This also further highlights the intimacy created between the reader and the narrator. We see Byron synthesizing "high culture" and "low culture" to the point of being nearly indistinguishable as he merges the expected lofty ambitions of the epic poem with the more democratized but less respected verbal form of rumor and hear-say. The parenthesis used in the first quotation or the dash before the following may as well indicate a hushed tone of voice or a nudge. The crudeness of the remarks and their plain language is meant to evoke the language and sensibilities of a common person. The visual markers, together with the informal tone, transform a written text into a spoken one that mimics the voice of rumor and scandal.

This intimacy that I have noted is also, perhaps paradoxically, a defense mechanism. While connecting to his readership through misogyny as a means to make himself appear more common, Byron separates himself from the central characters who become subjects of public rumor and ridicule such as Don Juan and Donna Inez. This is, of course a performance, as Byron, a literary celebrity of his own time after the publication of the first two Cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* shares a far greater likeness to Don Juan and his parents than the nameless masses he looks to be pandering to (MacCarthy x). We can find echoes of Byron in these characters as biographical details of Byron's life emerges in theirs. The narrator states, regarding Don Juan's upbringing, that "An only son left with an only mother / Is brought up much more wisely than another" (295-296). This could very clearly parallel Byron's own upbringing without a father, with John Byron dying in 1791 when the poet was only a child (MacCarthy 6). With this context the reader gains a sense of the conflicting way in which Byron both draws parallels between himself and Juan while also distancing himself from him as the narrator. This

detail is additionally intriguing because with knowledge of Byron's childhood this line regarding an "only son" becomes somewhat humorous as Byron knowingly pats himself on the back as wise. Byron cannibalizes an aspect of his own biography to comedic effect in order to please his readership. This exhibition of the personal life as entertainment is similar to the general structure of public scandal; however the relationship between Byron's publication of his life and the public intrigue surrounding aspects of his life like his divorce, as we will see next in my discussion of Don José and Donna Inez, is complex and multi-faceted.

Byron draws from his life when describing Don José and Donna Inez's marital strife. First, we must note that the importance of public perception in Byron's telling. We see that the period of time in which the two are unhappy but manage to keep up the appearances of a contented marriage is somewhat passed over while the true drama and cataclysm emerge only once their marital problems become public. Their unhappy married life only receives a handful of lines Byron states "Wishing each other, not divorced, but dead / They lived respectably as man and wife" (203-204). Byron, with some satire through dissonance, makes marriage appear farcical as a union in which both people are miserable but can still be seen by others as respectable or even exemplary. Additionally, the attempt shown by the two to maintain the appearance of an acceptable marriage despite wishing each other dead suggests that the scandal of divorce would actually be a fate worse than the ongoing misery of being in the marriage. In these lines Byron shows his anxiety towards the public circus of being a well-known figure through his construction of the looming beast of scandal as a threat not to be taken lightly. Once the "smother'd fire" finally erupts into a blaze, Byron inserts his own biographical details once more, claiming that Donna Inez first seeks to prove Juan's father is "mad" only later to resolve that he is "bad" (210-212). This turn of phrase evokes the famous quotation about Byron made

by Lady Caroline Lamb that the poet was “Mad, bad, and dangerous to know” (MacCarthy 164). For Byron’s readership at the time of this Canto’s publication, a scene of marital dissolution like this would have likely brought to mind the widely publicized divorce of Lord Byron from Lady Byron. Despite this fact, Byron’s blatant reference to Lady Lamb’s famous quotation indicates that he actually desires for the reader to recall his personal life. Further, in a mirrored reflection of the narrator’s painstaking construction of an everyman identity, Byron is aiding in the construction of his own mythos, furthering that “mad, bad” perception of him by including it in his verse. This reference to Lamb’s quotation is vital to the evolution of Byron’s public-perception-anxiety as it clearly shows the poet trying to take agency over his image.

The desire for agency leads Byron who, through the narrator, displays some resentment towards those who are external to the marriage yet spread the story of its disintegration. He states, “The hearers of her case became repeaters / Then advocates, inquisitors, and judges / Some for amusement, others for old grudges” (222-224). This quotation superbly lays out the process by which scandal spreads and comments on the ulterior motives behind those who proliferate it. There is a somewhat mocking tone in the way the narrator uses terms that are used within law to describe a group we learn is “All of Seville” Byron, in crediting the people of Seville with titles such as Judge that many of them could not be qualified for, draws out both some absurdity in their invested attention in the scandal and suggests venom towards others like them on the part of the poet. This combined absurdity and venom is punctuated as he then discredits those hearers who become repeaters stating that they are biased and only interested in the conflict because of their own desires. When considering the public intrigue surrounding the telling of the details of someone’s personal life, specifically for amusement, a crucial question rears its head. Are we as readers not amused? Moreover, are we not amused as Byron trudges up

the scandals of his life and delights us with his witty remarks about these events, filtered through the lives of Don Juan's parents? This possibility and the attendant parallel is, unsurprisingly, not lost on the poet. It is for this reason that we see the narrator so frequently speaking out of both sides of his mouth, reproaching many who engage in salacious rumor spreading while simultaneously citing such rumors and telling the hero's story in the language we may anticipate those same rumors are delivered in. A prime example of this pivoting between commentary on and engagement in gossip is detectable when the narrator states, "I loathe that low vice—curiosity" (181). He states this in reference to those who wanted to learn why Don José and Donna Inez quarreled, and it would serve as an outright condemnation of the inquisitiveness that drives rumor, were the narrator not to tell the story of Don Juan using techniques intended specifically to manufacture curiosity. We see this when he makes a judgment on how the young Don Juan should be raised, nearly withholding his opinion, and then divulging. He states, "For my part I say nothing—nothing—but / This I will say—" (409-410). This technique of performative deliberation as to whether this information will be given to the reader naturally sparks curiosity and makes the information more desirable through a sense of exclusivity. It also reinforces the unconventional tone of this narrator, as he appears to consider an attempt at objectivity, but then dives into his own subjectivity. The fallibility of the narrator, particularly in his objectivity, leaves few unquestionable truths in the narrative. This, of course, only serves the overarching dread regarding scandal and its connection to public image even more. We would expect the narrator to exert an authority over the story, to be above the temptation of salacious hear-say and the format and techniques that rumor takes, but he is not. Being that he is not entirely trust worthy, we find a nightmarish breeding ground for precisely what Byron displays discomfort with.

The layer of public rumor is a persistent specter in the text as conjured by the narrator. The way in which the narrator frames the story within an exclusivity, as constructed by his textual mimicking of whispers and utterances, speaks to the intrigue and common satisfaction that perpetuates rumors and their spread. It is not uncommon to hear him recite different variants of, “there’s a rumour which I fain would hush” (462). In this case, he goes on to claim that Donna Julia’s grandmother had children outside of her marriage. Here the hushed tone perceivable in the previous quotation is now plainly stated. Moreover, he states that he finds pleasure in doing so. The narrator not only addresses rumors surrounding the characters, but relishes in continuing those rumors. This can be seen again when he states “Some people whisper (but, no doubt, they lie / For malice still imputes some private end) / That Inez had, ere Don Alfonso’s marriage / Forgot with him her very prudent carriage” (525-528). Suddenly the narrator who gleefully informed the reader of Donna Julia’s lineage as it was whispered to him, criticizes the validity of such a means for information. He rightfully claims once more that personal vendettas can inform stories spread by word of mouth yet he still goes on to tell us what he declares as lies. We have seen him share this same revelation that those most interested in the scandalous conflict between Donna Inez and Don José were there due to grudges, or their own desires. It is notable that he skillfully references the whispers before acknowledging any potential falsehood. We again find his authority becomes questionable. Alternatively, the narrator could have begun with questioning the rumor’s authenticity, but instead he is aware that to provide the reader with the image of whispering will undoubtedly ensnare their curiosity to see what follows. The way in which the exclusivity of information, implied by whispers, creates a curiosity that negates the potential falsehood of the information speaks to the nature of how such stories spread and public opinion is sometimes formed. With this quotation regarding

Donna Julia's lineage, the narrator further contributes to the ongoing pattern in the text of the manufacturing and indulgence of intrigue. Byron is both somewhat critical of this process, while also profiting from it and this is why we find the narrator doing the same. The citizens of Saville, often presented as a faceless mass, share a certain likeness to Byron's contemporary and ongoing readership, in addition to those who told and heard the story of Don Juan long before Byron chose to write this poem. In this regard, Byron turns the mirror on his public and also on himself.

The presence of such a public is addressed directly in the text, "And if she could not (who can?) silence scandal / At least she left it a more slender handle" (535-536). The textual reality that Donna Inez, Don Alfonso, and Donna Julia are nobility mean that their affairs (pun not intended, but fitting) are on some form of a public stage. For further evidence of the judging public of Saville we can recall the hearers who become repeaters (222). Directly because of this judging public, avoidance of scandal is a major motivation for Donna Inez. Looking to Inez's attempt to limit the degree of scandal possible from her affair with Alfonso, it is possible, even implied that she becomes close with Julia primarily as a form of damage control. In this sense, the authenticity of her relationship with Julia is questionable if Inez is mainly concerned with circumventing what is equivalent in a modern context to bad press. It is with this reference to giving scandal a "slender handle" that we find evidence of a performative morality that is brought about through public-perception-anxiety and manifested as the fear of scandal. The actions of Donna Inez, such as befriending Julia become intertwined in their motivation with a consciousness of how those actions will look externally. A similar performative morality is seen in the marriage of Don Juan's parents, as both wished the other dead, yet they kept up a respectable but false public image of the relationship in order to avoid, at least for a time, the scandal that followed. Returning to the narrator's quotation, we find a substantial fingerprint of

Byron's in the parenthesis. The narrator suggests that he can relate to being powerless in the face of scandal. By asking "who can?" the implication would be that he certainly could not silence it himself either. The question of "who can?" is another allusion back to the poet's life and experience with scandal, particularly surrounding his divorce. Byron was keenly aware of the way in which control of one's public image can slip between the fingers once information becomes public. In fact, at this stage in the poem, even after Alfonso's raiding of Julia's room, the most significant antagonist is not Alfonso, but public opinion, or the larger beast of scandal.

Donna Inez further exemplifies performative morality as she exercises control over her son's education. Removing large chunks of the texts which she deems immoral seems to mark an attempt at raising a son who will not be marked by scandal. The text supports this, claiming she desires a son who is morally perfect or a "paragon" as the text describes (298). A mother looking to raise her son with solid morals is not unusual but these desires take on a performative quality not only in their severity, a desire for moral perfection, but in her love of declaring his moral excellence. The text states, "and his mother's joy / Was to *declare* how sage, and still, and steady / Her young philosopher had grown already" (398-400. emphasis added). Rather than acknowledging her personal satisfaction in her son, it is essential that the text specifies her joy is in actually declaring his virtue. This crucial word choice evokes the image of Inez at parties or with guests externally lavishing praise upon the boy, seemingly to convince those listening. In this respect, we find that the way others perceive Juan is important to Inez. Being that Inez has been subject to some scandal in her own life time thus far, her marriage, and potentially her affair with Alfonso, her mediation of the young Juan's education seems an attempt to break that pattern of scandal. The text also ties Juan's education to the moral shortcomings of his parents. In response to Inez's declaration the narrator states, "I had my doubts, perhaps I have them still"

and additionally, “but it would not be fair / From sire to son to augur good or ill” (404-405). We find the narrator speaking from both sides of his mouth once again; himself evoking the thought of Juan’s father, only to claim he will not take it as an omen for Juan. It is vital, though the narrator then tries to refute it, that this quotation suggests a possible moral (or immoral) inheritance on the part of Juan. This theme is not unlike that of Byron’s Cain (subject of a later chapter) who is the direct inheritor of original sin. It is this history of moral failings, and the public intrusion into one’s private life that comes with them that Inez strives to prevent in Juan. The mother’s desire for others to see her son as a “young philosopher” stems from the expectation, shown by the narrator, that he could be adulterous like his parents. Despite her efforts to shield him from the judging eyes of Seville, Juan engages in an affair with Donna Julia and scandal comes knocking.

Scandal accompanies Alfonso who comes to raid Julia’s chamber and we see the observing and judgmental masses become a tangible presence when Alfonso pursues his suspicion “with more than half the city at his back--” (1090). This brings to a climax the public perception anxiety which has been building throughout the Canto. Alfonso finding out about the affair is, of course, not good news but there is an added tension and fear that Alfonso is bringing an audience. Beyond interpersonal problems, the conflict transcends to one of public perception and scandal as a militia of judging husbands are also present to witness the conflict and spread word of what they see. Byron pays great attention to illustrating in detail precisely how eager the men in the crowd are to expose and ridicule Julia. The text states, “The major part of them had long been wived / And therefore paused not to disturb the slumber/ Of any wicked woman, who contrived / By stealth her husband's temples to encumber” (1100-1103). The reference to the men's wives is to indicate their rage enacted off their own personal ability to consider if the

situation was their own, but the rage they feel speaks to the potential pubic reaction at large. It is unlikely many of those men will not retell what they see to their wives and friends, as we can again recall the public nature of other conflicts in Juan's family. Why would the public treat the marital troubles of Julia and Alfonso any differently from those of Inez and José? The vigor they are described as having implies that they, in some small way at least, want to see that scandalous scene which they are expecting. Responsibility can be placed on their marriage status but ultimately, as the whispers cause one to read past the questionable authenticity of the earlier anecdote (525), the spectacle of betrayal and embarrassment is likely irresistible to them.

The ravenous masses who pursue Juan with Alfonso and the public scandal they represent are ultimately a product of the moral expectations of public figures. The vicious delight those hearers and repeaters, as they are earlier described, seek is to see the prestigious fall. This is reflected by the incredibly high moral standard Inez looks to impose on Juan. In the same stanza when we learn Inez foresees her son as a paragon, the text also states he should be "worthy of the noblest pedigree" (299). This line is essential as it draws a clear parallel between their nobility and an expectation of morality. It is because the nobility is expected to be so morally pristine that the general public indulges in their failures. This is represented by the conflicting descriptions of several of the poem's characters. We find many of the nobles in the poem introduced with descriptions that are generous in compliments to the point of idolization. The poem's description of Juan's mother is oddly close to perfect early in the Canto. She is given flaws, but her assets are conveyed with such admiration and zeal by the narrator that it gives the impression that those with public attention paid to them are in some way personally extraordinary. Without much thought one can call to mind current celebrities who seem remarkable in little beyond their fame itself, but the poem provides evidence that Byron finds

certain objects of fame to fall in some intersection between character flaws and exceptional qualities. We learn of Donna Inez, “Oh! she was perfect past all parallel - / Of any modern female saints comparison; / So far above the cunning powers of Hell, her guardian angel had given up his garrison" (131- 133). There is a cutting irony in the description of her as "above the cunning powers of Hell" as she would allegedly later have an affair with Don Alfonso, husband of Donna Julia, which of course would be deemed a sin. Note as well the idolizing tone, explicitly calling her a saint. Intrinsic to our understanding of this once near morally perfect character is Byron's claim in the next stanza that perfection ultimately cannot last in this world, or exists only to eventually be tainted. He illustrates this beautifully by stating, “Don José, like a lineal son of Eve / went plucking various fruit without her leave” (144-145). The comparison of her husband to Eve not only intriguingly reverses the gender roles established by the biblical story in which the woman falls first to temptation, but also puts blame for the marriage's demise, and possibly Inez’s future moral decay on his initial infidelity. As Eve brought about the fall of humanity, Don José brought about the fall of their relationship, and of Inez’s innocence in some regard. Additionally, if we analyze what this means for Don Juan, we find further proof that Inez was looking to avoid a familial lineage of scandal and moral failings with her education of Juan. Calling upon the original sinners, those who themselves began a legacy of moral failure, Juan himself also bears the weight of an original sinner. Of course, as we will later analyze Byron’s *Cain* it is worth noting that the use of Adam and Eve in addition to the theme of inherited sin will be used by Byron to address his own anxiety towards inheritance.

The use of Adam and Eve additionally illuminates an aspect of Byron’s writing that not only serves his commentary about scandal and public image in this poem, but will remerge in every poem in the following chapters of this project regarding his flawed heroes. These

characters, in this text, who are initially described in a fantastic light nearly all fall to some moral failure and because of this one gets the sense that purity is doomed to tarnish. We can see as much in the example of the young Don Juan, who despite his mother's best efforts, ultimately becomes involved in adultery. It appears that impurity is implicit with aging. The text states, "And everybody but his mother deem'd / Him almost man; but she flew in a rage / And bit her lips (for else she might have scream'd)" (428-430). Of course, Inez does not want her son to become a man because it means the temptation of sex. However, her denial of his maturity also speaks to her eventual loss of control over his public image. Contrasting this to the quotation where Inez boasts about her son's sageness, we see that Ines's ideal relationship to her son is when she is in control and she can maintain his presence as a pure and pious young lad. The notion of Juan becoming a man, in other words someone who is responsible for their own actions, causes her dismay because she can no longer protect him. What he is ultimately up against is a world that Byron, through the narrator, repeatedly describes to exist in opposition to purity. This is apparent as early as the introduction of José and Inez's marital issues. The text states, "The world, as usual, wickedly inclined / To see a kingdom or a house o'erturn'd" (149-150). This line, evoking a kingdom, establishes early in the poem the pattern of lofty figures struck down. This possibility of loftiness being vulnerable is cohesive with the inconsistent descriptions the characters receive as the text continues and their histories are more thoroughly revealed. The revelation of their flawed character and histories returns the reader to the themes of scandal and public image as each moment of a supposedly pristine character falling, the marital dissolution of Juan's parents, the chase in Julia's bedchamber, is coincided by the presence of the people of Seville, not personally involved in these conflicts origins, but deeply invested in them none the less. The crucial "why" of this spectator dynamic is answered in another description by

Byron of the world's tarnishing capability. He states, "Perfect she was, but perfection is / Insipid in this naughty world of ours" (137-138). The perfection which previously seemed so noble and even worthy of idolizing, becomes boring after some time. Immediately in the narrative, the notion of perfection seems to give some explanation of José's infidelity. In the context of this poem with an ongoing commentary about the telling and repeating of stories, the dullness of perfection and purity by extension, provides a textual explanation of the gossip and moral tarnishing which saturates *Don Juan*. Byron and the poem's bard are synthesized once again as we find why both the people of Seville are enrapt by scandal, and Byron cannibalizes his own for the poem, for the same essential reason. Not only does purity not last, it seems that the narratives which invest the listener or reader must operate around flawed or impure characters. As Don Juan and his mother fail to fit gracefully into the social order around them, diverging from the expected morals imposed on them, characters such as Manfred and Cain also fail to fit comfortably within the natural order around them. Of course, in the poem these deviations from standard morality are seen as failures to some degree, but it is also these deviations that make them suitable of Byron's pen.

Likely as he sees himself, Byron portrays extraordinary but flawed characters of public fascination whose daily lives are fractured by the reality that they are, in a sense, being watched. With this, he achieves a sense of cohesion as he holds a mirror to the reader in order to ask them how different they really are from the text's whispering, inquiring locals, seduced by the intrigue of scandal or drama. Meanwhile, he also turns that mirror on himself, as many of the techniques he uses in the text are analogous to those used by those who spread rumors. He mimics public discourse in language, in intimacy, and in sometimes questionable reliability. As we would expect of Byron and his perpetual dualities, he exists as both the gossiping bard and the

controversial celebrity. The self which Byron presents in this Canto is the public figure and poet, reckoning with the only beast left in the jungle which can knock him from his pedestal, his fame.

II. *Manfred*, The Anguish of Categorization

In *Manfred* Lord Byron wrestles with the theme of identity in the face of being an outlier to the structural dualities which may be imposed upon us as human beings. The suffering or anguish that may emerge from an individual's innate inability to fit the larger structure they find themselves within is not an unfamiliar realm to Byron or many of his other characters, as we previously saw with Don Juan and Donna Inez's individual inability to fit the moral structure imposed upon them. In this chapter, and in *Manfred* we find an anxiety towards categorization. What ultimately makes Manfred such an outsider from any preexisting category is his Promethean spark which is entombed within a casing of mortal clay. The conflicted essence between Manfred's nature as human, as evident by his mortality, and his supernatural capacity, leaves him in unprecedented territory within the poem. Manfred inhabits a high place in the power structure of the supernatural world, often commanding spirits, but is still mortal and therefore unable to properly transcend into the realm of the supernatural. The only other figure in the text who arguably shares Manfred's ability to fulfill and confuse multiple such categories is his beloved Astarte. He is in a complex and guilt-stricken relationship to this woman, someone whom critics such as Jerome McGann speculate to be analogous to Byron's sister and lover. This marks a turning point in the roles of women in Byron's poems. McGann states, "The 1816-1817 poems written to and about his wife and sister, including Manfred, involve a culminant and critical turn upon the entire pattern, and establish the ground on which the last six years of Byron's poetry was written" (60). This poem's focus on Manfred's interiority, particularly in its darker and more anguished moments, in addition to the incestuous parallels to Byron's real life, makes it stand out amongst Byron's many works as the poem in which the poet is most vulnerable. As Manfred strains between the categories of human and supernatural, Byron evades

the exclusive category of brother or lover in regards to step-sister Augusta Leigh (MacCarthy 7). Additionally, at the end of his life, Manfred is unable to find a fate in heaven or hell which would equally give him a definitive place. Fundamentally, this lack of belonging to either ends of a given polarity, (i.e. heaven or hell, spiritual or terrestrial) is indicative of an anxiety towards categorization which encompasses nearly every facet of Manfred’s life. One of the few definable traits of the character is that he often evades definition. He is tragic in that the place he does find for himself, as the one who loves Astarte, results in all-encompassing suffering in the wake of her death. If we view *Don Juan* as a reckoning of Lord Byron with his stature as a public figure, in *Manfred* we find the poet reckoning with categorization, his interiority and the past.

One profound duality that Manfred straddles is that of the earthly and the supernatural. Manfred is a mortal who has command over the immortals and this confusion of categories is a key aspect of his inner conflict. He inhabits roles that conflict with each other, as he finds himself unable to relate to other mortals, save for his beloved Astarte, but remains chained to the rock of our mortal experience regardless as he is still human. As evidence of his largely non-existent human relationships, we turn to the Abbot who arrives at Manfred’s castle in an attempt to save his life and soul, providing us with a rare external view of the Count. The Abbot states, “I know that with mankind / Thy fellows in creation, thou dost rarely / Exchange thy thoughts, and that thy solitude / Is an anchorite's were it but holy"(3.1. 39-42). Those who know of Manfred are aware of his social and emotional alienation from others and the statement suggests they find it odd at minimum and more likely worrisome or frightening. The choice of the Abbot to address other people as Manfred’s “fellows in creation” connotes an expected kinship that we never see in Manfred’s passing references to other human beings. It is indicative of a social structure that he is too big for. This detail at once suggests that the Abbot and the institution he represents, not

only that of the church but that of the human culture as a whole, anticipates a relationship to be inherent between those of the same creation, while also perhaps inadvertently drawing attention to the fact that this seems to be all Manfred shares with them. In following the likely beliefs of the Abbot, Manfred as a human does share in the same creation as all humans, being born of clay and endowed with life by God, but Manfred's tremendous powers and frequent consultation with spirits remove him so significantly from the commonly inhabited realms of humans that these humans hold his fellowship in creation alone. We find that in Manfred's nature there is an ambition to transcend his humanity which creates a solitary existence for him, beyond the expectations or confines of human faith or culture, especially in the wake of Astarte's death.

The divergence of Manfred's current life trajectory from that of other mortal contemporaries is more evident in that his solitude is compared to that of a religious hermit, indicating that there is some acceptable precedent for solitude, but that his is lacking in the same holy stature (3.1. 39-42). The resulting assumption is that Manfred's solitude and practice is, by comparison, unholy and therefore an element of strain on his small remaining connections to the human world and any Christian structure. The possible solace and salvation of faith is of no use to Manfred as he does not fear hell. Instead, Manfred lives in a suffering he describes as greater than that of hell. He states: "The innate tortures of that deep despair / Which is remorse without the fear of hell / But all in all sufficient to itself / Would make a hell of heaven-" (3.1.70-73). This quotation draws a clear connection between Manfred's lack of placement or categorization and his suffering. Hell is a destination while Manfred's self-torture is movable and will follow him through any placement, serene or horrific. It transcends location. His despair, without fear of hell will follow him and dictate that he is miserable, an aspect he claims is innate to this suffering specifically. This quotation is also an allusion to Milton's Satan, who states, "The mind

is its own place, and in it self / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (*Paradise Lost*, I. 234-235). This parallel is crucial as in these lines Satan speaks with satisfaction regarding his placement in hell, claiming that the mind and its independence can negate one's actual surroundings. Satan also views Hell as a place of liberation for him from God, stating, "Here at least / We shall be free" (PL, I.) In this regard we see the placement cast positively as allowing some agency through the mind. Manfred's relationship to this claim is complex. As Dennis Weiβenfels states in his essay "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord': Byron's Miltonic Manfred and Wordsworthian Temptations" regarding another allusion to Milton in this text, "As it is typically the case with Byron, the allusion is never that easy" (Weiβenfels, 56). Manfred inverts Satan's intent in that his mind does not provide him liberation, rather it is his inescapable prison. For Satan, the mind and interiority with it, may provide sufficient freedom from a designated placement, but for Manfred the mind, is his torture. Manfred answers to no one but himself due to his powers and fits within neither the category of heaven or hell, yet in this he ultimately suffers more as the source from which he is most imprisoned in guilt and misery, his mind, is the location Milton's Satan casts as a source of liberation. Satan's tyrant is external, in the form of God, Manfred's tyrant is himself and therefore unavoidable. In this sense we may say that while *Don Juan* shows us Byron coming to terms with the public self, *Manfred* shows us the poet wrestling with the private self. To return to Weiβenfels' essay, we see that he has spotted connections between this text and Milton's *Paradise Lost,* and as Weiβenfels display's opposing forces of temptation pulling at Manfred in a way that is Christ-like, we too find in the text that Manfred is pulled ceaselessly between the opposing realms of the human and the supernatural. Weiβenfels argues that Byron imbues Manfred with references to Milton's Christ and Satan but, as we would come to suspect, neither are completely suitable to Manfred. He states, "Yet both

possible frames of reference are revealed to be unsuitable for Manfred's solipsistic outlook. Instead, he manages to utilize both Satan's and Christ's rhetoric to point out the shortcomings of external mechanisms of salvation and damnation, while at the same time he leaves ultimate judgements on his own part open to doubt" (Weiβenfels, 55). This quotation, though referring to a specific reading of the text, applies to countless aspects of *Manfred* which can be viewed in ongoing dichotomies. It taps into the characters nature. Most immediately, Byron cannot be contained within the limits of salvation or damnation, as we will later discuss when he begs Astarte for judgment near the dramatic poem's conclusion. However, we can also find this to apply to the failure of the "external mechanisms" of power in the text, as Manfred refuses to submit himself to the Christian god, represented in the text through mortals like the Abbot, or the supernatural beings we see Manfred engage with.

Byron, with his introduction of the Abbot, presents a keen sense of the magnetism of the supernatural which pulls on Manfred, removing him further and further from the opposing mortal realm. However, due to his inescapable mortality, he can never fully remove himself from the latter and remains sprawled between the two. This is distinctly where the anxiety towards categorization weighs on the character, as without Astarte he has no category or place of belonging. The perceived unholy nature of Manfred's magic in addition to the aspirations it results from draw Manfred away from common spaces where people form connections and into places out of the reach and sight of others. Manfred says this much himself; "My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers/ Made me a stranger; though I wore the form / I had no sympathy with breathing flesh" (2.2.55-57). Despite wearing the "form" of a human, he is unable to relate to his fellow humans. Note that he has no sympathy for "breathing flesh" which the text supports, most often by showing Manfred holding council with spirits rather than people.

Implicitly, Manfred's nature and practices withhold him from ever being able to embrace the humanity to which he is bound (this is not to say that he even regularly expresses a desire to, in a social capacity). Yet, in spite of his apparent issues with his humanity, his self-administered role as one who commands supernatural forces is similarly contentious as we see a human with such powers in unprecedented and therefore has no defined place amongst the supernatural. When holding council with the Seven Spirits, Manfred finds that his mortality alienates him from the supernatural entities, and actually negates the incredible power he wields over them. When Manfred asks if death may provide him the oblivion he seeks, they reply that it is beyond their knowledge or experience as they do not die. The Spirit states; "We are immortal and do not forget; / We are eternal; and to us the past / Is, as the future, present. Art thou answered?" (1.1.149-151). They also crucially state, "the thing / Mortals call death has nought to do with us" (1.1. 162-163). In the earlier statement, the Spirit's perception of all time as present seems novel and distinctly supernatural. Yet Manfred, spending every waking hour in the shadow of the death of Astarte, makes his own past present as well. This is a substantial part of the movable hell of the mind which is alluded to in the earlier Milton reference (3.1.70-73). Manfred seems to strive for knowledge which brings him closer to the supernatural, and yet an element the Spirit describes as being essential to their supernatural existence is antithetical to Manfred's desire for forgetfulness. They state plainly that they "do not forget." In this respect in both the realms of mundanity and magic, Manfred is an outlier. To conjure Weiβenfels phrasing, the confines of the mortal world or that of the spirits are "external mechanisms" which fail him. The earthly and humane, or clay, is a category which Manfred is reluctantly bound to, but simultaneously too large for.

We begin to see “knowledge” take on a useless or even sinister presence for Manfred’s consciousness. The first example of this emerges in Manfred’s previously stated desire for oblivion; his own thoughts in the wake of Astarte’s death are so overwhelming that he seeks to have no memory, or even to die and no longer hold thought. This is furthered by the ineffectiveness the powers he displays have towards helping him. His powers, such as summoning the spirits, are manifestations of his knowledge, gained in his studies with Astarte (3,3). It is this knowledge that brought Manfred to his location as an outlier and it is clear that his knowledge and his innate ambition do not aid him and in fact harm him. Emily A. Bernhard-Jackson argues in her essay “Manfred, Mental Theater, and the Construction of Knowledge” that not only does a cynicism towards knowledge exist in this play, but form meets function as the vagueness of information surrounding Manfred leaves the reader uncertain if it holds any objective truths, forcing them to make decisions about Manfred and therefore contribute their own subjectivity. For our purposes, we necessarily see that as Manfred evades clear definition in the pre-existing structures of the poem, he too evades a total definition from the reader. Bernhard-Jackson states; “The reader must “choose a Manfred” in order to read, but the choice will never be wrong. Then again, it will also never be right” (Bernhard-Jackson 803). This lack of objectivity in a definitive reading of the work falls perfectly in line with the sense of “neither this or that” which encompasses Manfred in the text. We as readers cannot solidly define Manfred as promethean spark or clay, spirit or human, deserving of salvation or damnation, Manfred himself, along with the others in the poem cannot either. Further, much like the way Manfred’s supernatural powers pull him away from the realm of humanity via the Abbot, deciding any one definition for Manfred, as a reader, at least briefly forgoes an equally valid alternative. One pole opposes the other. The pivoting within the reader between different

possibilities for the character, as more information about him is given, at least partially provides a small sense of the listlessness Manfred embodies as he inhabits the liminal space between categories. Bernhard-Jackson states of Byron, “For even when he offers an apparently graspable definition of Manfred, Byron makes it multiple—and thus always elusive” (Bernhard-Jackson 806). Viewing this text next to *Don Juan,* another text which presents a distinctive lack of objectivity, we may say that the anxiety expressed in that poem, as it relates to scandal, centered on a lack of objective truths designating the public self. One’s image in that text is subject to rumor and the crossing of the private life with the public. In *Manfred* however, we find anxiety which arises from a lack of objectivity regarding the self. Astarte was Manfred’s objective purpose, and then she is lost. In the wake of this, only misery awaits Manfred as his place of belonging goes with her.

Manfred’s confusion of categories as well as his lack of a defined place in any natural order is not only supported by the perspective of other humans, but also seen in his interactions with magical beings. The Witch of the Alps indicates to us that Manfred is not as removed from the human realm as even he may lead us to believe. The Witch draws out the one factor that connected Manfred to his humanity along with his mortality, his beloved Astarte. The Witch says of her death and its effect on Manfred, “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 forego / The gifts of our great knowledge, and shrink’st back / To recreant mortality- Away” (2.2.122-126). If the Abbot’s appearance revealed to us how Manfred's engagement with the spiritual realm held him back from finding a place amongst humans, here we see the Witch claim that Manfred’s connection to the human realm creates a ceiling he cannot break through to fully belong among spirits either. The Witch claims that Manfred has risen above the potential of most humans in his

ability to "mingle" with spirits but asserts that it is in spite of the extraordinary knowledge he achieved in doing so that he is caught up in such earthly concerns. Specifically we note the language of "shrink'st back to recreant mortality." This indicates a hierarchical scale of significance in the Witch's view of nature and super-nature's categories. The realm this witch inhabits, along with those like the Seven Spirits and the Destinies, is seen by these spirits as fundamentally loftier than that of the human and mundane. Mortality is described by the Witch as "recreant" or cowardly. By wielding these spirits, Manfred is enlarging himself and his place in this order, but is made "smaller" once more by his ties to humanity. Of course, this is to the standards and priorities of a supernatural being, rather than an actual human. The entities which seem to represent an unmediated form of the spark Manfred harnesses, such as the spirits, the Witch of the Alps, and the Destinies, reject him. This contributes to Manfred's solitude as previously discussed. Manfred's humanity, which begins to emerge from these interactions, is similarly noted by William D. Melaney in his essay "Ambiguous Difference: Ethical Concern's in Byron's Manfred" in which he states, "Perhaps less obviously, these interactions are aspects of a mental drama that displays the protagonist's complex nature and human frailties" (Melaney 461). Melaney's observation is essential to this chapter as it contributes the basis on which we look primarily to Manfred's external interactions for greater clarity on his personal nature and psyche. His division between categories, as well as the suffering he experiences because of this aspect of his nature, are most identifiable in his interactions with the spirits and humans like the Abbot.

The Witch of the Alps strikes on a matter which informs the rest of the text, that Astarte is intrinsically tied to Manfred's humanity, yet she was arguably as engaged in the unearthly endeavors of the noble magician. She was both a partner in the studies that aided Manfred in

ascending above his peers, while also being the lone earthly concern which chains him to humanity. Astarte is the only figure of the poem who engages both with Manfred's clay and spark. Ultimately, she will give him a judgement by a lack of one, in that by neither condemning or forgiving Manfred the two lovers will be together once more in Purgatory. Manfred describes Astarte as sharing the "same lone thoughts and wanderings / The quest for hidden knowledge, and a mind / to comprehend the universe" (2.2.110-111). These details confirm her aid in his studies which would eventually grant him his powers. Her hand in such matters is also supported by Manuel's recounting of her joining Manfred in his tower where it is presumed he practices his magic, "but with him / The sole companion of his wanderings / And watchings… The lady Astarte, his--" (3.3.42-43,47). Considering Astarte's connection to the studies which would grant Manfred his powers, it is also ironic but revealing that the Witch sees Manfred's misery over her death as an indicator of his inescapable humanity. Perhaps the suggestion is that an impersonal solitude is necessary or just natural to the spirits. If the magic performed by Manfred alienates him to a great degree from most of his community, as illustrated by his interaction with the Abbot, we can read his interaction with the Witch as an indication that magic and humanity do not mix. What designates Manfred as an outlier however is that his love for Astarte, and the aspirations they share, permits full entry into neither realm in the same way as she will later deny him entry into either heaven or hell. The knowledge and ambitions he pursued with Astarte, as alluded to by Manuel, withholds Manfred from the worlds encompassed by the Abbot, of the Holy and human, while the love and pain for her that the Witch recognizes as distinctly human alienates him from the supernatural. Knowledge as a foundation for his doomed love for Astarte is a key aspect of Manfred's suffering, and we see its role in his transcendence of categories. Manfred and Astarte connect through their chase of knowledge yet by transcending the

conventions of a larger structure Astarte is killed and Manfred bears some responsibility. Manfred states, "I loved her, and destroy'd her!" and "Not with my hand, but heart—which broke her heart / It gazed on mine, and wither'd. I have shed / Blood, but not hers—and yet her blood was shed—" (2.2. 124, 126-128). By juxtaposing Manfred's love of Astarte with his destruction of her, Byron suggests that one came of the other. This is further substantiated in that his responsibility in death falls to his heart. The convention breaking nature of their relationship is also referenced when Manfred states, "though it were / The deadliest sin to love as we have loved" (2.4.142-143). This quotation cements that their love broke from an imposed morality, in this language it would be that of the church, and that this transgression is fatal. Though the precise details regarding Astarte's death are never fully disclosed, this quotation states clearly that Astarte is a casualty of their transcendence of convention and categorization. We can discern from this that the anxiety towards categorization we have marked thus far derives from Byron's depiction that one cannot truly break loose from imposing structures without immanent trauma. Those with the ambitions to attain great knowledge and defy convention will also find suffering. We will find in a later chapter that Byron explores this theme once more in *Cain.*

The exploration of Manfred's all-encompassing state of in-betweenness climaxes when he is faced with the ghost of Astarte. Manfred pleads for some form of judgment from Astarte, whether it be forgiveness or a condemnation. This is the product of the building anxiety towards categorization we have been tracking. In begging for any judgment above a specifically positive or negative one, it appears Manfred is desperate to escape the solitary trauma of being undefinable and in that ambiguity, totally alone. His singular place in the structures of the play only offers him agony, and his soul desires an escape and a reunion with Astarte, as both are crucially tied together. Manfred states, "Forgive me or condemn me" seemingly willing to accept

either. His indifference to either state conveys the restless turmoil of his living, decidedly in-between state. This desire for forgiveness from Astarte reappropriates the judgment narrative a Christian may anticipate in death, looking to God to dictate their damnation or salvation. The key difference is that Manfred does not look to God for judgment, he looks to his beloved. Manfred asks, "Yet one word more-- am I forgiven?" (2.4.156). This concept of forgiveness for the sinner is a central facet of Christianity and in this context speaks to the distance of Manfred from the church of the Abbot. Manfred does not receive the salvation the Abbot wants for him or the damnation he fears for him. Astarte answers instead with one final prolongation, "Manfred! To-morrow ends thine earthly ills. Farewell!" (2.4.155). In her lack of forgiveness or condemnation the only remaining middle realm is Purgatory. Not only is this significant as a state of flux between the duality of Heaven and Hell, but it mirrors Manfred's struggles in life with his promethean spark. He is to inhabit Purgatory because his life has been something of a purgatory, never being fully suited to the realm of humans or spirits, being both promethean fire and clay. This flux is captured by the Abbot, stating of Manfred, "It is an awful chaos -light and darkness- / And mind and dust -and passions and pure thoughts/ Mix'd, and contending without end or order/ All dormant or destructive: he will perish/ And yet he must not" (3,3,64-68). The ultimate difference between the purgatory of Manfred's life and his afterlife, is that he will finally be reunited with Astarte. Again paralleling Christianity, Christians seek to reunite with their God after death while Manfred seeks reunion with Astarte.

Ultimately, the once space in which Manfred belongs is with Astarte. If they are as similar as Manfred suggests, they both share the spark which drives them towards forbidden knowledge and in life inhabited an idiosyncratic place, sequestered in Manfred's tower (3,3). Therefore, as Astarte's soul remains in flux, she dictates Manfred's to be as well. This is rather

fitting being that the location Manfred places justifiably within, his final placement, is outside the duality of heaven or hell and mortal or magic. Previously, either ends of the text's polarities are indicators of a community or set of relationships. Being firmly engaged in human concerns categorizes one in relation to that group. The same can be said for the supernatural; the spirits have a commonality in their immortality and capacity for supernatural power. The core of Manfred as an outlier rests in his attributes being spread among these categories, leaving us with the question: who can we relate Manfred to? Astarte, in her likeness to Manfred, becomes the one figure Manfred can relate to. Manfred states this, likening Astarte to himself, actually seeing her as an improved version of his best traits, "But softened all, and temper'd into beauty" (2.2. 108). Irony emerges in that they categorically relate to each other in their shared lack of placement in an obvious category. Rather poetically, the implied fate of both to remain together in purgatory is a narrative actualization of this concept. If we are to recall Manfred's assertion that his mind can make a heaven hellish, Astarte is the liberation, as the mind is for Satan, which may make a movable heaven. They remain together in their shared lack of place and find identity in each other as reaffirmation of the self.

If we partly construct our sense of identity by looking to others and internalizing shared attributes or values as indications of groups we belong to, the confusion of categories illustrated by Manfred is undoubtedly a matter of identity. Manfred, the man, contains more than is suitable to the polar "this or that" structure which human thought, and seemingly the world of the supernatural the poem would suggest, seems to default to. This undoubtedly reflects back on Byron as he creates Manfred, arguably as a means to be his most vulnerable. A similar view is expressed by Jerome McGann as he says regarding *Manfred,* "There is a power working upon Byron forcing him to display those aspects of the imagination that are seldom exposed to view:

the self-justifying desires and needs that constitute, according to this penetrating text, a person's ultimate barrenness of spirit" (McGann 148). If there is a universal truth of Manfred it is that we all are more complex and nuanced than the systems in place to categorize us would find convenient. It is for this reason that Byron's major characters, nearly all in some way transcendent, may be relatable to us. We all hold some desire for autonomy from the authoritative structures that surround us, but ultimately any distance from those structures causes strife, and as we see with Manfred, the degree by which one strays from convention produces equally increasing degrees of strife. With this poem, Byron addresses a certain anxiety in regards to categories in the sense of being pinned down to any one given role.

III. Impermanence and Imperialism in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

The second canto of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* deals largely with the passing of time as a force that undoes beauty. This sense of entropy acts as a catalyst to both Harold and the narrator's disillusionment. As *Don Juan* depicts a public perception anxiety and *Manfred* depicts an anxiety regarding categorization, this portion of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* presents us with an anxiety regarding impermanence. Moreover, we also find an idealism towards that which is lost. Specifically, this idealism is aimed towards Greece, but we find that Greece too is ravaged by time and Imperialism. Its religion has become mythology, its relics stolen, and its freedom only a memory. Harold's idealism wanes somewhat as the text progresses and it seems that this idealism associated with youth is also a beautiful thing doomed to tarnish with time. In this canto Harold sets sail towards Albania and Greece, armed with Grecian mythos, in pursuit of that which is lost yet still abides. The narrator embarks on his journey to Greece believing that though the classical Greece is no more, its influence remains.

The poem is consistently engaged with figures of Greek myth while also acknowledging the fallen state of the civilization which birthed them. Early in the poem we are given abundant imagery of decay and a statement of time's relationship with religious influence. The narrator states, "Abode of gods, whose shrines no longer burn. / Even gods must yield-- religions take their turn:/ 'Twas Jove's -- 'tis Mahomet's -- and other creeds/ Will rise with other years" (III, 21-24). Byron creates a procession of gods stepping into, and then receding back from the global spotlight of influence. Jove, or Jupiter, was once a revered and powerful figure who became a relic of antiquity and, with the rise of Islam, particularly the Ottoman Empire's conquering of Greece, Muhammad has taken his place in some respect. In this regard, these gods who were or continue to be thought of as immortal are actually at the mercy of time as they become fashions

determined by the rising or falling of political power of empires. We see images associated with religious practice and worship in a state of disuse in the form of the shrines that no longer burn. Note that the "abode of the gods" may be the ancient temples or Greece itself. Greece as a country has a geographically deep connection to its gods as it was believed these gods lived on Mount Olympus, an actual physical location in Greece. Unlike a Judeo-Christian view in which God resides in heaven, the Greek gods are themselves inhabitants of Greece and therefore more intrinsically tied to the landscape and to the country. Byron's choice to mark a transition from Jove to Muhammad clearly seeks to remark on Ottoman conquering of Greece and by extension the somewhat unified nature of countries with a faith. Greece becomes the most concentrated example of this relationship between a country and faith as the land that has been conquered is itself the presumed home of its gods. Though the ancient Greek gods may no longer live in ongoing religious practice, we cannot proclaim them as truly dead. Byron, his contemporaries, and other poets who precede and will follow him regularly engage the mythology and the form which spread its stories, poetry. The gods who fall from religious practice and worship into the antiquity of mythology ultimately get appropriated as an aesthetic practice by poets. The shrine's no longer burn, but their mythos and influence continue in poems such as this. Though he mourns the loss of Greece as it once was, he prolongs the relevance and life of its mythic figures by regularly citing its heroes, gods, and myths.

Perhaps it is only through Faith's function as poetic muse that the narrator may value religion as he proceeds to use a mythological image to criticize humanity's impulse for faith. He states, "Bound to the earth, he lifts his eye to heaven -- / Is't not enough, unhappy thing! to know / Thou art? Is this a boon so kindly given / That being, thou would'st be again?" (IV, 28-30). Echoing allusions he would later make in *Manfred*, Byron once again uses Prometheus as a

subject for mortal sympathy. As punishment for gifting humanity fire, the Titan is bound to a rock and pecked at by an eagle. In addition, as we will later see through Byron's resentment of the Ottoman occupation of Greece, and his larger anxieties regarding imperialism as a whole, Prometheus acts as an image of Greece. Greece too is metaphorically in chains as it is not self-governing. This is described most blatantly as Byron states, "Trembling beneath the scourge of Turkish hand / From birth till death enslaved" (LXXIV, 709-710). Prometheus as an image for Greece indicates that Byron sees the country as a source of tremendous contribution to human history and culture as Prometheus' fire was. We may even venture to say that the way in which Prometheus is picked at indefinitely by birds of prey mirrors the prolonged theft of artifacts from Greece in its then compromised state. We find evidence of this as Byron states, "Thy walls defaced, thy mouldering shrines removed / By British hands" (XV, 130-131). Of course, the crucial difference between Prometheus and Greece is that the Titan's organs grow back, extending the punishment indefinitely, while Greek relics are limited in number. In a poem so concerned with impermanence and the decay of former beauty, this finite degradation may actually present a more fearful fate for Greece. Returning to Prometheus as a part of Greece's mythology, the reappropriation of this mythological image as a poetic image by Byron may also present the poet's alternative use for religion. Since the narrator asserts the incense burns "in vain"; the remaining option, if we are to follow by example, is to not worship gods, but to use them as a muse. Rather than a placement on an unreachable pedestal, this view positions gods as communicators of human truths. Prometheus is the ideal figure for this as he exists as a mediator between the humans and the gods. In bringing them fire he is fundamentally in closer sympathetic proximity to humanity and makes an ideal image for the use of faiths which have fallen out of practice. In his essay, "'And Making Death a Victory': Skepticism and Personal

Conflict in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage I-II and Prometheus" Francesco Marchionni focuses on Byron's personal reappropriation of the Prometheus myth as a means of self-identity and expression of Byron's own dissolution. Vitally, he also attributes the image of Prometheus as relating to Byron's ongoing anxiety towards impermanence. Regarding Byron's poem *Prometheus*, he states, "Thus, in the entropy of the titan's fate, Byron traces the contours of the contingences of existence, marked by a fall into despair and grief as a result of idealistic ambition" (50). We can find that Byron's purpose for Prometheus translates to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* as his perceptions of the titan and Greece, as I argue the titan represents, are rich in mourning over past glory and bitterness towards the entropic effects of time. As this chapter continues we will see that the external disillusionment found in Greece and its decaying monuments by Harold are reflective of an internal disillusionment felt by the young poet as he finds love is also subject to the same decay of time. Considering the "idealistic ambition" Marchionni observes in both *Prometheus* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, a comparison to Manfred seems inherent as we found he too suffers despair as a product of his ambition, ambitions which partially lead to Astarte's demise. Similarly, we may draw another parallel between this poem and *Manfred* based on Marchionni's observations. He states, "Thus, the depiction of Greece as fragmented and history as chaotic impedes Byron from discerning any order in the world" (49). The lineage of countries and gods rising and falling from prominence, Marchionni argues, is chaotic and leaves an ambiguity regarding objective truths. A similar lack of objectivity is noted by Emily A. Jackson in her essay "Manfred's Mental Theater and the Construction of Knowledge" as I referenced in my previous chapter on *Manfred*. What we may derive from this is the way in which Byron communicates anxieties through creating ambiguity. We found a similar struggle for objective truths amidst the rumor of *Don Juan*. Ultimately Byron

generates a sense of anxiety around a given subject, the public self, the interiority, or impermanence, by allowing ambiguity in his poetry.

Though the poem illustrates its own discontent with impermanence, as we will later see, the fear-driven desire to escape life's impermanence in an afterlife is here argued as being selfish and misguided. This points to the canto's earliest sign of disillusionment. Not only do we find a certain disillusionment with faith as it is generally worshipped, but we find suggestions of disillusionment with life itself. When the narrator asks, "Is this a boon so kindly given / That being, thou would'st be again" using "being" to mean "existing" he questions why one would want existence a second time, asking if existence is truly such a gift. He proceeds to state, "Regard and weigh yon dust before it flies: / That little urn saith more than thousand homilies" (III, 35-36). The urn is likely referring to Grecian urns which often have mythological images on them. Its favor by the poet could suggest two possibilities, one being a re-affirming of his loyalty to Greek mythology over the sermons of the Judeo-Christian world, or a recognition of its value as a physical manifestation of the way we use religion to paint a, at times, gentler image over death. It may be decorated in the faces of immortals, but this only punctuates the fallen state of Greece, and moreover the ever-degrading state of all that is mortal. These lines easily evoke John Keats' famous *Ode on a Grecian Urn,* another poem that explores the relationship between beauty and impermanence. Keats' "Still unravish'd bride of quietness" represents a beauty frozen in time, undamaged by the passing age. This Keats poem also serves to show the ongoing engagement with Greek myth and legend in the literary sphere, further illuminating the transition from faith to mythology and religious practice to literary influence.

Another area of disillusionment in the text is love. As with the cultures and gods Byron discusses throughout the text, love is also a beautiful thing that can fade or decay from its former

vibrance. We learn that Harold is scorned by love. The narrator states, "When all is won that all desire to woo / The paltry prize is hardly worth the cost: / Youth wasted, minds degraded, honour lost / These are thy fruits, successful Passion! These!" (XXXV, 310-312). The young Harold's experience in love may be more akin to lust, being described by the terms "passion" and "desire." Nonetheless, much like the previous description of worship, the poem shows that the end does not justify its means. The fruits of Passion are equitable to signs of decay, degradation, waste, and loss. Moreover, there is supreme bitterness to be found in that these are the fruits of *successful* passion, products of the supposedly best outcome. The poem seems to portray both the pursuit of passion for another and the pursuit of faith as fruitless ambitions, as neither result in an escape from temporality. Note specifically the "youth lost" marks a loss of time. The pursuers of passion find themselves degraded and lost, and the pursuers of faith, according to the text, finds themselves as dust nonetheless. It is at this point we see the narration blur with the perspective of Harold not merely in the narrator's positing assertions to support Harold's feelings, but the perspective on love and passion feels distinctly young. The tone is more fitting of Harold than a bard or mature narrator. We can find evidence of this youthful perspective in the resemblance of passion in these lines to a game or sport. The beloved in question, or perhaps just the subject of lust, is described as a prize to be won. Additionally, the impulse to "woo" or impress the other person also carries a certain juvenile quality. Other critics have also seen Harold as a gauge by which to chart the progress of the narrator, seemingly becoming more and more like the titular character. Jerome McGann states in his book *Fiery Dust,* "the definition of his anxiety at the beginning introduces into the poem right away a sensibility against which we can measure changes taking place in the narrator, and a moral context in which that sensibility has significance" (71). Harold's persistently disillusioned outlook, as McGann acknowledges, has a

consistency by which we can more clearly view the increasingly ambiguous line of separation between he and the narrator.

This same image of love, though through a more mature lens, as subject to the ravaging winds of time and mortality is central to the poem's final stanzas. In these lines we find that Harold not only looks to the past in terms of mythology but also his lost loved ones. Harold states,

> But Time shall tear thy shadow for me last
>
> All thou couldst have of mine, stern Death! thou hast;
>
> The parent, friend, and now the more than friend:
>
> Ne'er yet for one thine arrows flew so fast
>
> And grief with grief continuing still to blend
>
> Hath snatch'd the little joy that life had yet to lend (XCVI, 903-908).

Harold positions himself as Time's most frequent and wearied victim. The kinship that Harold feels to Greece and its lost relics appears to stem from his sense that he too has been pillaged by time, claiming that Death and Time by extension have taken from him all that there is to take. In these lines Death seems to do the dirty work but Time is the force which drives Death. He goes on to ask, "What is the worst of woes that wait on age? / What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow? / To view each loved one blotted from life's page / And be alone on earth, as I am now" (XCVIII, 918-921). Here we see further that love is a force that binds individuals only to be torn apart by time and death. Physically aging is cited in this stanza as only being the fingerprint of Time's theft of loved ones. The ongoing themes of time and aging stand in contrast to the poems title of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* indicating a certain youth. This is why the

theme of disillusionment weighs as heavily as it does; it seems to be about the spiritual aging that coincides with the physical aging that steals our beloveds from us.

With little remaining ties to love and faith, Harold is presented as an ideal traveler, seemingly having little that chains him to his home. Britain too has lost any luster to him and moreover actively contributes to the crumbling of the physical existence of the idealized Greece he pines for. The text states, “The last, the worst, dull spoiler, who was he? / Blush, Caledonia! such thy son could be! / England! I joy no child he was of thine: / Thy free-born men should spare what once was free;/ Yet they could violate each saddening shrine” (XI, 94-98). England is cast not merely as being a factor in the withering state of Byron’s Greece but also a belated and oafish one. Here we find reference to the Elgin marbles and the Scotsman, Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin, who removed them from the Parthenon (Esterhammer 29). In acquiring them, Britain falls on the wrong side of Byron’s pen, as he criticizes his home country’s participation in the demise and abuse of Greece. Aiding Bruce, the last and dullest of the pillagers, argues that England was not even novel in its theft from Greece and the actual fruits of that theft are lost on them. The British are described as “free-born” and for this they should respect what remains of the birthplace of free men. This refers to England’s autonomy, not being controlled by a foreign power, but also may suggest an ideological lineage from Greece to Britain, though it must be noted that England was not yet fully democratic. Regardless, Byron seeks to imply an intellectual inheritance in England, from Greece. This once again conjures the image of Prometheus as a representation of Greece, bringing some form of enlightenment to the world through its intellectual influence, only to later be in chains. Crucially, it is because of Prometheus’ gift of fire to humanity that he is punished and the same can be argued for Greece. Greece’s contributions are valuable and therefore desirable if we are to once again recall the quotation,

“Thy walls defaced, thy mouldering shrines removed / By British hands which it had best behov'd / To guard those relics ne'er to be restored” (130-132). England’s claim in defacing these walls is an intent to protect and conserve them. The ethics of this claim are questionable, but it does denote a perceived value by England in these Greek relics and therefore makes the Promethean image all the more appropriate, confirming that their contributions to human culture are, unjustly, part of the ongoing pillaging of the country and its degraded state at the time of the poem. Examining further we find Byron argues that his home country is not a protector of Greece or its history but rather another pillager. We are given a procession of nations to steal from Greece while England and Scotland are depicted as scavenging the left-overs, “To rive what Goth, and Turk, and Time hath spared” (XII, 101). Though we momentarily find England set as the prime culprit, plundering what was left by other nations and time, their placement in a list highlights their intertwining nature with Time and the other empires it props up. Time ravages an ancient civilization, and with its passage other nations will rise and often contribute to the fall of the previous ones. In this sense, the physical prosperity of a nation or civilization is not unlike that of the rise and fall from influence of religions and their gods. In a final knot between time, nations, and faith, many countries associate themselves and their law with a certain faith and as these nations rise to prominence, so too do their gods. In the earlier quote from stanza III the narrator states that it was once Jove’s turn (the Roman interpretation of Greece’s Zeus) and it is now “Mahomet’s.” This directly addresses the shift of influence in Turkish ruled Greece where Islam had become far more influential than the ancient Greek Gods.

In the face of disillusionment at all that is fleeting, we do find moments of appreciation and infatuation with what remains. These moments provide a brief relief from the text’s over-arching obsession with impermanence, yet are unavoidably attached to that theme as his journey

for that which lasts is driven by his discomfort with that which does not. When Harold is on the beach with the Suliotes he stands at a distance both figuratively and literally but the manner in which their chanting and singing is described shows that Harold has some appreciation for their song, while its inclusion and formatting in the text speaks to a deeper respect held by Byron. The narrator states;

> In sooth, it was no vulgar sight to see
> Their barbarous, yet their not indecent, glee;
> And, as the flames along their faces gleam'd
> Their gestures nimble, dark eyes flashing free
> The long wild locks that to their girdles stream'd
> While thus in concert they this lay half sang, half scream'd (LXXII, 644-649).

This narration pivots between two perspectives which captures echoes and presumptions of a prejudiced western perspective while also displaying a certain openness to the experience. The purpose of introducing and then largely dismissing terms like “vulgar,” “barbarous,” and “indecent” serves to acknowledge the presumptions either made by Harold, or the reader at the time of the poem’s release, that the Suliotes would be savages. The sight is *not* vulgar. Not to be mistaken, elements of western judgment still remain he describes their hair as “wild.” The significant evidence of this respect for the Suliotes and their song falls to Byron as poet however as he includes their song directly in his verse. The stanzas of verse are numbered differently as to indicate its beginning and end before returning to the main poetic voice, but its primarily regular meter and placement in the main text implies a relationship between the song of the Suliotes and the song of Byron. Considering the epics of poets like Homer, the lineage of poetry is partially one of sung verse and this format was the main way of spreading Harold’s beloved stories of

Greek legend. With this, there is little reason for Harold and Byron by extension not to be enrapt by their song as it is in some lineage to the Greek myth they so dearly admire. Further, by including it in the text of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* Byron physically inserts it into a lineage of English poetry which would otherwise neglect the song of the Suliotes. He does not simply cannibalize this culture as an aesthetic for his own purpose but includes its own expression on the same platform as his.

Arguably, this poem seeks to illuminate Greece and Albania for an English readership as an attempt against the degradation that is implicit in the cultural ignorance of imperialism. As it applies to impermanence, we have seen the imperialism of the British and the Ottomans cast as driving factors in the fleeting nature of the beauty Byron finds in Greece and Albania. In her essay "'Who shall now lead?' The Politics of Paratexts in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Cantos I–II" Julia Coole argues that Byron uses footnotes as well as notes in the margins of the text as a means by which to inform and politically engage his English readership. Specifically, she states that Byron uses these notes to correct misinformation regarding the countries he has experienced, and additionally to hold England accountable for its role in oppression. In one note Coole selects, Byron first declares oppression as a practice that is "barbarous" yet still practiced in many nations, and states directly "The English have at last compassionated their negroes, and under a less bigoted government, may probably one day release their Catholic brethren" (Levine qtd. in Coole 153). Notably Byron seems to invert the common western narrative of the Other as uncivilized by illustrating oppression as barbaric and outdated, only to then attribute some of this oppression to England. Byron of course goes on to discuss the occupation and oppression of the people of Greece but also crucially thrusts responsibility onto Britain, presenting a call to action for British involvement in Greek independence. He states, "but the interposition of foreigners

alone can emancipate the Greeks, who, otherwise, appear to have as small a chance of redemption from the Turks, as the Jews have from mankind in general" (Levine qtd. in Coole 153). Byron displays an array of oppressed groups in this note and, in his insistence that British aid is required for Greek independence, shows his hand somewhat in terms of his intention with this poem. The poet's political ambitions within this poem stand in direct opposition to the impermanence which troubles Harold so greatly. Coole claims that the goal of the footnotes, and I would add the goal of several sections of the main text such as Harold's encounter with the Suliotes, is "advancing cultural understanding of areas either neglected or misrepresented by previous writers" (Coole 148). With his inclusion of the song of the Suliotes in the main text of his poem, Byron uses his status and influence to prolong and expand the reach of their song and to some extent their expressive voice. Additionally, by righting the perceived wrongs of British perspectives of both Greece and Albania, Byron is working against the entropic effects of imperialism as they relate to impermanence.

The same fervor for that which remains can be found at the poems end when Harold resolves that though so much of his idealized Greece has crumbled or been pillaged, the landscape remains. In spite of time and its ability to wash away what humans build, nature lasts as unsullied beauty. The text states, "Apollo still thy long, long summer gilds / Still in his beam Mendeli's marbles glare; / Art, Glory, Freedom fail, but Nature still is fair" (LXXXVII, 825-827). A great deal of verse is spent describing the beauty of the Greek landscape but this section is vital for its unifying of the mythos Harold admires with the nature he may actually experience. As shown, so many of the temples and structures built to those gods have cracked and crumbled, but the final temple in which Harold may feel a connection to those figures of Greek myth is perhaps the oldest of all, nature. The summer is brilliant as it is Apollo's and in this relationship

these figures of antiquity still have a home. These lines acknowledge Harold's disillusionment but provide relief. Though glory, freedom, and even art have failed Greece, Nature remains a force that provides some hope of continuity to Harold. Regarding what is left of relics and remains from ancient Greece, the text states, "Revere the remnants nations once revered: / So may our country's name be undisgraced / So may'st thou prosper where thy youth was rear'd / By every honest joy of love and life endear'd!" (XCIII, 878-881). There is a notable change in tone from previous passages in which life is now discussed as having joy and love. This is rather different from the disillusioned Harold we encounter earlier in the text. There is a note of hope with its proposition that should a country revere the relics of others, its young people will not be ashamed to live and thrive in their native land as Harold was. This serves as Byron's parting statement, for this Canto, regarding the pillaging of Greece with imperialist intent.

In spite of the brief lift in mood that nature's supposed permanence provides, the canto concludes on a note far more cohesive with its themes of aging and disillusionment. Harold states, "Roll on, vain days! full reckless may ye flow / Since Time hath reft whate'er my soul enjoy'd / And with the ills of Eld mine earlier years alloy'd" (XCVIII, 924-926). This reasserts a loss of the idealism of youth as the worries of mortality which generally concern those much older than Harold have tainted his still early years. In this sense we find echoes of *Manfred* in Harold as, in the wake of losing his beloved, Manfred also feels existence has nothing left to offer him. Byron offers us life as only so pleasurable as the people we enrich it with and without those connections he struggles to name what may hold us to it. However, Harold is importantly distinguished from Manfred as his titular text follows him once his ambition has entirely waned, while despite Harold's disillusionment, his comments regarding the Greek relics (878) denote his ambitions still burn.

IV. *Cain,* Authority, and Colonialism

In Lord Byron's *Cain* the poet presents the titular historical pariah as a figure of sympathy, and by extension, presents Lucifer's viewpoint of the biblical narrative. As we found in the chapter exploring Manfred, this immediately evokes Milton's *Paradise Lost.* At the core of this text is an analysis of power and authority. The family structure of its human characters to some degree models the patriarchal and authoritative implications of humanity's relationship to God. The authority which God presents is also connected to death which is a primary source of dread for Cain. In this respect, he is not unlike us in his uncertainty of what death holds. Ultimately the play humanizes Cain and conveys that in spite of the murder he commits, he is not remorseless. The play is fully titled, *Cain: A Mystery* which carries two functions. Firstly, it reveals that Byron is creating a biblical mystery play of the variety put on by guilds in the Medieval period. The play also functions in an ironic sense as due to the play's fixation with questions and curiosity, there is little in the play which is not mysterious. One may ask, "Why did Cain kill Abel? Why does God destroy what he creates? Are Lucifer's intentions with Cain purely benevolent?" The Medieval mystery plays were not themselves actual mysteries, yet in a play so saturated with questions, one is left with the feeling that its classification as a "mystery" functions at multiple levels. The narrative which emerges from these questions is primarily tragic as Cain, in his search of death, brings it home to his sibling.

The most condensed and direct expression of anti-authoritarian sentiment in the text is given to Cain by Lucifer just before the two part ways. Lucifer states, "Think and endure,—and form an inner world / In your own bosom—where the outward fails / So shall you nearer be the spiritual / Nature, and war triumphant with your own" (Act II, 463-466). This quotation is a perfect summation of the views Lucifer provides throughout the text as he values critical

thought, individuality, and knowledge, while casting God as a tyrannical figure. The endurance emphatically commanded in the phrase "think and endure" can refer to the weight of influence authoritative figures impose over the individual. Under a figure of complete power, like God, one's own autonomy can feel compromised. Yet in thought or in one's own interiority, the individual cannot fully be conquered. We also note that Lucifer repeatedly refers to God as a conqueror (Act II, 443). The protest against authority these lines call for, paired with the context of its release into an age of imperialism, gives the poem a strong Anti-Imperialist resonance. We find in Byron's other texts, namely *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* that this Anti-Imperialist flame in the poet was likely sparked by Byron's fervent stance on Greek independence. His devotion to this cause is well documented as he died while fighting in the war for Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire (MacCarthy 520). The encroaching Ottoman Empire presented a clear threat in its enslavement of the Greeks, yet Byron himself was living in Britain, an empire whose colonizing tendrils spanned much of the world. Crucially, this was not lost on Byron, and the poet was not afraid to hold his own country accountable. As we found in the previous chapter on Canto II of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* Byron criticizes the British Empire's purchasing of artifacts taken from Greece. The poet refers to Thomas Bruce, the 7th Earl of Elgin, indicated by "Caledonia! such thy son could be! / England! I joy no child he was of thine" (XI. 95-96). Here Byron alludes to Bruce being Scottish and seems to find some relief in the fact that he was not from, or a child of, England. Yet that relief is expediently disposed of as Byron goes on to address England's role in supporting Bruce. He states, "The ocean queen, the free Britannia, bears / The last poor plunder from a bleeding land: / Yes, she, whose generous aid her name endears, / Tore down those remnants with a harpy's hand" (XIII, 113-116). This "last poor plunder" references the Elgin Marbles, as discussed in Chapter III, which Bruce took from

Greece and were ultimately housed in England (Esterhammer 29). Here Byron paints the name "free Britannia" as ironic. With the country's complacency in the pillaging of Greece, it seems to only be assisting the tyranny that the Greeks find themselves subject to. This quotation resonates with a reading of *Cain,* not only for the criticism of imperialism as an entity of authority, but in that the specific issues Cain has with God's methods are parallels in some regard to the injustices that occur as a direct result of imperialism.

One of Cain's primary conflicts with the faith of his other family members is the cruelty he perceives in the sacrifices Abel carries out. Cain cannot justify causing an animal pain as an offering to God, or even explain why a benevolent being would want such a thing. Cain states that he will not build alters, as Abel has, "To cast down yon vile flatterer of the clouds / The smoky harbinger of thy dull prayers— / Thine altar, with its blood of lambs and kids / Which fed on milk, to be destroyed in blood" (Act III, 290-293). Cain's framing of the "lambs and kids" with their drinking of milk emphasizes their youth and innocence, and in doing so, draws out the cruelty of such sacrifice. We should note as well that, as Abel is a shepherd, these lambs are the fruits of his labor and this offering of labor and what that labor yields is the essential offering which God asks of them. This is why Cain is expected to offer part of his harvest. Within this relationship of an authoritative figure taking the product of a subjugated person's labor, we find the core relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Cain must work and produce for himself and his family, but this central refusal to relinquish that harvest to an imposing power casts Cain as a revolutionary and anti-colonial figure. We have already seen God referred to as a conqueror, and now with Cain as a revolutionary, their very existences seem naturally at odds.

Returning to Lucifer's call for Cain to "think and endure" we may see the endurance as a vital second step to the thought Lucifer references in the quotation. We find in the text that

knowledge is deeply tied to unhappiness, as Lucifer states, “And yet that grief is knowledge—so he lied not” (Act I, 414). If grief is knowledge then one must endure grief if one is to think and pursue knowledge. The text seems to frame happiness as a sedative which dulls aspiration into contentedness. Here we can find a connection to *Manfred* and the complex relationship between knowledge and suffering that poem offers. Lucifer’s feelings towards mental autonomy and his valuation of knowledge over happiness echo the quotation by Milton’s Lucifer which Manfred also alludes to, “The mind is its own place, and in it self / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n"(Paradise Lost I. 233-234). We recognized in Chapter II that Manfred’s interiority is not a place of liberation but one of ongoing turmoil. However, there is constancy between *Manfred* and *Cain* in that the connection between ambition and unhappiness is shared. Both Manfred and Cain are highly ambitious and share in having ambitions which specifically break them from their expected molds. Yet this transgression does not arrive without trauma. Manfred’s bond with Astarte, founded in their shared ambition, plays a role her death which becomes the source of his ongoing anguish. Cain too famously loses a beloved as he breaks loose from the structure around him, his brother. Recalling the key difference between Milton’s Satan and Byron’s Manfred, Satan seeks liberation from the external authority of God, while Manfred lives in the prison of his own internal authority and punishment for his part in the death of his beloved. The same distinction of Milton’s Lucifer from Manfred also separates Cain from Manfred for a time as Cain’s primary authorities are external. Cain, who thirsts to know so much, states, “I will have nought to do with happiness/ Which humbles me and mine” (Act I 466-467). Cain addressing “me and mine” conveys his discontent with the subservience he sees in his parents and his siblings who are content to hold faith in God while remaining in some degree ignorant regarding the mysteries around them like death. The dynamic this alludes to within the family of Adam and

Eve leads us towards recognizing how the paternal authority of their family structure in some way mimics the paternal language used towards God.

God's place as patriarch is established immediately in the text by Adam, calling him "God, the Eternal! Parent of all things" (Act I, 15). Adam, who Christians could consider the father of mankind, refers to God as a parental figure thus making the Creator a father of fathers. The authority represented by God is here displayed as dictating a faith which supersedes the mysteries still left unanswered regarding good and evil. Intriguingly we find Adam asks a question that would be befitting of Cain's hungry mind as well. Adam asks, "Oh God! why didst thou plant the tree of knowledge?" (Act I, 34). This inquiry holds a different context however from those of Cain as Adam nonetheless prays and frequently displays his worship of God. Adam is framed by Eve to be a role model for Cain in his subservience. She seems to call upon Cain to obey his father and by extension obey God. Eve states, "Behold thy father cheerful and resigned- / And do as he doth" (I.52-53). Through Adam's cheerful acceptance of his circumstances we are reminded of the contentment that deflates ambition as previously discussed. Adam's question of why the Tree of Knowledge was planted does not inspire him to stray from God or question God's goodness because he is content in some regard. We find the father figure presented as a form of role model to be mimicked yet this father is also subservient to the higher father of God. In this sense there are layers and varying degrees of authority. Additionally, if we consider the text once more as Anti-Imperial, and further Anti-Colonial, the parental power structure imposed by God, and its infantilizing effects on Adam, reflect the same dynamic one can find in the power structure of a colony and the empire to which it belongs. Adam and his family carry out their labor themselves, but they, excluding Cain, regularly acknowledge that they can only do so through the seemingly vague power of God. The

undermining of their confidence in their own autonomy feels strikingly colonialist. An almost identical sentiment is noted by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism*. While analyzing and paraphrasing a lecture on Egypt given to the House of Commons in 1910 by Arthur James Balfour, Said states, "they are a subject race, dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves" (Said 15). This perspective, one at the heart of Colonialism, is nearly identical to Adam and Eve's relationship with God. They show mercy to God because they are made to believe that they are lost without him. Their trust in God implicitly states that they believe he knows what is best for them. Further cementing Cain as a revolutionary, he is the only one among them who sees this structure as unjust and acts against it, ultimately concluding in his killing of Abel.

It seems Adam's primary authority is in passing along that of God. There is however another perspective on Adam's worship of God. According to Lucifer, it derives from fear. Lucifer states,"the doom / Of thy fond parents, for their daring, proves. / Choose betwixt Love and Knowledge—since there is / No other choice: your sire hath chosen already / His worship is but fear" (Act I, 428-431). If Lucifer is to be believed, Adam's worship of the Eternal Father is not one of adulation but rather self-preservation. A Christian's relationship to God is anticipated to be one of love and fear, however this fear component parallels tyranny none the less. Since this statement is addressed towards Cain, it introduces the idea of inheritance. Cain's inheritance from his parents is not only his eventual death but also his fear regarding it and other mysteries of the, still new, earth. That inherited fear provides both a fundamental similarity and divergence between the first father and son. Cain makes clear that the fear he has towards the unknown is part of his cause for inquisitiveness and hesitance to accept the authoritative figures of both Adam and God. The inception of his journey with Lucifer is the spirit's claim that he knows all

things and fears nothing, leading Cain to follow in hopes of learning more and fearing less (Act I, 298-299). Once more, should we believe Lucifer, this reveals that the same root fear of the unknown exists in both Adam and Cain yet it hurls one in the direction of piety and the other towards the individualism proposed by Lucifer. That deeply human fear transcends the biblical story or the time of the play's publication and taps into a universal dread. That universality embeds a humanity in Cain which complicates his infamy. Undoing biblical myth and received wisdom, Byron portrays Cain, not as evil, but as incredibly feeling.

Cain's humanization continues as we see his love for his son. His feelings for his son will inevitably be complex as he resents his own inheritance of suffering and can only pass this on to his son. Because of his love for the infant, he mourns that his son will have to experience death. Cain states, "'Twere better that he ceased to live, than give / Life to so much of sorrow as he must/ Endure, and, harder still, bequeath" (Act III, 132-134). We see the concept of endurance addressed once more, perhaps showing the extent to which Lucifer's words have penetrated Cain. His love for his son is boundless enough and his resentment towards their fate strong enough that he believes the child would be better off not living and therefore not having to "endure" that agony of existence. There is a moment of dark foreshadowing towards Cain's famous fratricide within this same scene yet I feel even in this we may find an empathy that distances Cain from the image of a cold-blooded killer. Cain states, "better 'twere / I snatched him in his sleep, and dashed him 'gainst / The rocks, than let him live to-" (Act III, 124-126). This is, of course, a grotesque thing to say. Yet these words are not a statement of intent from Cain but rather a candid insight into his nihilistic outlook. As troublesome as this statement is as an expression of love, it is from some will to protect the child from the intense and prolonged toil before him that Cain seems to believe the baby's immediate death would mean less suffering for

the child. Once more, the exclamation leaves the reader to recoil in horror but it also seems that Byron invests Cain with great emotion and, thereby, gives him significant depth. This is crucially not blood lust.

The same remorse can be seen in the wake of the deed which renders Cain a pariah at all. Fittingly the killing itself results from a power struggle as Abel repeatedly requests that Cain make an offering to God and Cain repeatedly refuses or trudges forward with reluctance. At its core, Cain does not desire to kneel to an authority he does not wholly agree with or understand. He questions Abel's willingness to slaughter other creatures for God's pleasure and states, "...what was his high pressure in / The fumes of scorching flesh and smoking blood/ To the pain of the bleating mothers, which / Still yearn for their dead offspring?" (Act III, 289-301). The image of the slaughtered lamb may crystalize the larger arc the play depicts of God creating only to destroy. The lamb, created for the slaughter, may also allude to Jesus who the Bible shows as also being created by God with the fate of being killed. In the lamb Cain may see the plethora of former worlds and creatures Lucifer showed him in Hades, once all God's nurtured creations, now forgotten and deceased (Act II, 188). The living things are God's creation but just as all that he created eventually die, the lamb is slaughtered in service to him. His thought for the "bleating mothers" also suggests this sight evokes in Cain that deep mourning he has, as a parent, knowing his son will eventually suffer and die as well. The play has a tragic turn, as Cain so greatly mourns that lamb, taken from its mother and killed, but he ultimately kills his own brother, leaving Eve in a state much like that of the lamb's mother, and considering the lamb's likeness to Christ, much like the Virgin Mary.

Cain appears to have a tremendous capacity for feeling so one aspect of the questions of *Cain: A Mystery* is precisely what made Cain kill his brother. This question is in some respect

made more confusing by Byron's efforts to humanize Cain. We see him enraged by a creature killed and the thought of its mourning mother and yet he leaves his own mother to mourn after he kills her son and his brother. When we look to Cain's reaction to the ordeal we only find further evidence of his capacity for feeling as he appears shocked and horrified by his actions and the sight of his deceased brother. Since Abel was the first man to die, Cain's confusion and initial denial of his brother's state only adds to the tragedy. Cain states, "His eyes are open! Then he is not dead! / Death is like sleep; and sleep shuts our lids / His lips, too are apart; why then he breathes; / And yet I feel it not" (Act III, 337-340). The innocence towards death displayed here conjures a sympathy towards Cain even after his treacherous act as he appears to do everything in his power to convince himself that his brother is not truly dead. The quotation also illuminates the depths of experience Lucifer did not show Cain as, despite his visions of other planets and former Leviathans, death finally appears before Cain's eyes and he does not fully recognize it. Cain furthers this point stating, "I- who abhor / the name of Death so deeply, that the thought / emposioned all my life, before I knew / His aspect- I have led him here, and given / My brother to his cold and still embrace" (Act III, 371-375). Cain personifies Death and states that his pursuit has been inverted. For the majority of the play Cain has been pursuing a clearer understanding of Death, yet regarding his brother he claims he has led Death. Additionally, focusing once more on power or authority, Death was previously seen as an authority because of its inevitably, yet in killing his brother Cain has seemingly yielded death and, intentionally or unintentionally, called him to his brother. His description of Death empoisoning his life echoes *Manfred* in the sense that both characters shared an obsession which consumed their waking hours and tainted their ability to find value in life. I also previously noted the distinguishing factor between Manfred and Cain to be Manfred's interior authority as he suffers in some degree

of autonomy, while Cain primarily struggles against authorities that are external. With the killing of his brother, Cain mirrors Manfred's killing of Astarte who was like him in "her eyes / Her hair, her features, all" (2.2.112-113). The two are alike, not merely in their killing of a beloved, but also in that the death of their beloveds are tied directly to their personal transcendence of external authorities. As we acknowledged in Chapter II, it is through knowledge that Manfred gains his powers and becomes too large for the imposed duality of spirit or human. Yet by their love, which is similarly transgressive, Astarte meets her demise. With Cain we find an even more direct example of this as his struggle to break free of the system of beliefs and worship imposed on him, his refusal to fully participate in the sacrifice, directly leads to the murder of Abel. We see the weight of Abel's death on Cain's conscious as he states, "I think thou wilt forgive him, whom his God / Can ne'er forgive, nor his own soul.—Farewell!" (Act III, 533-534). Here Cain considers if Abel would forgive him. This bears striking a resemblance to *Manfred* in its question is the dead will forgive the living. Moreover, the guilt that poisons Manfred's existence is suggested to now exist in Cain as he claims he will never forgive his own soul. Almost exactly like Manfred, the external structures Cain sought freedom from have been transcended but that process of transgressive liberation is not without casualty and this loss has a tangible effect on the hero. Consistent with the theme of death, Cain then states, "I am awake at last- a dreary dream / Had maddened me; -but *he* shall ne'er awake!" (Act III, 378-379). The nature of this dream-like state may be the obsession with death, now shattered by seeing death in action. Cain recognizes that his experience with death was merely a flirtation, or a second-hand experience, while his brother's is final. He asked Lucifer repeatedly to show him death and ultimately he found it himself. His awakening from that dream is his recognition that for that experience he sacrificed the life of Abel, not unlike the lamb killed as an offering. The metaphor of the

dreaming and waking state also illustrates Byron once more attaching knowledge to suffering. Before the death of Abel, Cain argues he was not fully conscious or aware, but only gains this after Abel's death. That consciousness of the full reality of death is, itself, knowledge. Yet, as we saw with the pursuit of the forbidden in Manfred, it creates a great degree of misery.

Lucifer's influence in Cain's killing of his brother is complex and similar to Lucifer's own description of the serpent's influence in Eve's biting of the apple. Though Lucifer hesitates in displaying kinship with the serpent, he mirrors it as Cain ultimately mirrors his mother. Lucifer rejects the notion that the snake was false or misleading as he states, "And yet that grief is / knowledge—so he lied not / And if he did betray you, 'twas with Truth / And Truth in its own essence cannot be / But good" (Act I, 356-355). We return to the point, once more expressed in this quotation, of the relationship between knowledge and suffering. Lucifer is correct to say the Serpent was truthful. Mirroring this, Lucifer does not lie to Cain, only showing him how small he is in the universe and the repeating nature of creation and destruction (Act II, 420). Eve's similar curiosity for knowledge exists within Cain and causes the majority of his suffering in the wake of killing Abel. Cain now, to a greater extent, knows Death, but at what cost? The root fear and curiosity is ultimately what causes him to travel with Lucifer and the broadened perspective this gives him radicalizes his questioning of authority further, increasing the philosophical alienation between he and his brother Abel, finally ending in the murder. Yet in spite of this, it still seemed Cain loved Abel, and was horrified with himself and his act.

Lord Byron's Cain is saturated with questions. Cain asks an unending stream of questions and Lucifer often responds only with further leading questions. As previously stated, the medieval plays the "mystery" subtitle refers to were not mysterious. Yet it does nonetheless function as the play is riddled with skepticism. Despite the reality that the original story of Cain

is known to most of the world, Byron reframes the story to sympathize with Cain and in doing so creates considerable uncertainty in the text. As we previously recognized, Byron's undermining of objectivity, in this case the authoritative biblical reading of the Bible, serves to encompass the anxiety on the part of the poet regarding the trauma and loss faced as one wrestles with confining structures. Breaking from biblical tradition also diverges from the conventional rules of a medieval mystery play. We once more see Byron innovating within form as contorts the mystery play to meet is function. Byron's ultimate purpose in evoking the old form seems to put greater pressure on the unlikely hero's transcendence. The text functions around an anxiety towards authority, manifested to their highest degree by God and Death. In Cain, Byron fashions an inquisitive mind with little concern for what is sacred. Given Byron's own rejections of authority and totalitarianism it is clear he intended to make the reader of his play have some sympathy for Cain and view, with some depth, one of the first sinners. The role this serves our larger argument regarding Byron's work is that in this work we can track the full process of rebellion from an external authority, moving towards an autonomy that ultimately brings with it a tremendous weight of personal responsibility. In the characters of Harold and Don Juan we find young men who are transgressive; they primarily act in opposition to external forces whether they be morality or international politics or their relationship to the impermanence of beauty. In Manfred we find the central character primarily *after* his primary authority has become internal and he is consumed by guilt. *Cain* is essential as it follows the full arc of the ambitious Byronic hero who suffers by his own rebellion.

Conclusion

In the perusal of Byron's many embodied selves, as McGann puts it, we find that these selves, Don Juan, Manfred, Childe Harold, and Cain, all address different anxieties of the poet. Additionally, tracking the poet's expression and unpacking of these anxieties reveals strategies and themes which connect these titular selves. By our findings, Byron as he explores these given subjects of his anxieties, often creates a haze of ambiguity in which narrative authority is questioned and objective truths are rare. We may recall the hear-say of *Don Juan,* the ambiguity of information and categorization in *Manfred*, the chaotic nature of international politics and imperialism in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* and the abundant obscurity of the world to Cain along with his inquisitiveness towards authority. Knowledge or objectivity itself becomes its own authority and therefore is also questioned and undermined as a means to expose a far more expansive, autonomous, and perhaps more anxiety inducing, subjectivity. Manfred may serve as our most embodied example of transcending any structural authority through evading categorization, yet all of the central characters we have considered in the previous four chapters transcend larger structures of authority. Don Juan transgresses against expectations of morality, Manfred breaks from the qualifications of spirit or flesh through forbidden knowledge, Childe Harold in his love of Greece and Albania goes against the derivative perspectives of cloistered British perspectives, and Cain shakes loose the authority of faith, inheritance, symbolically colonialism. The anxiety and much of the pathos of these characters emerges in Byron's consistent portrayal of the suffering that also arises from the act transgression. The defiance Byron gives his characters comprises a big part of their nature yet he also illustrates that a life of transgression is fundamentally not an easy one. As we found most significantly in *Manfred* and *Cain* and perhaps more subtly in *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* each of these major

works contains a character who echoes the poet, transcends convention or categorization, and ultimately suffers some emotional trauma for it as authoritative structures are rare to release one from their grip cleanly or easily. Such objects of suffering in relation to transgression are Manfred's Astarte, the looming threat of scandal in *Don Juan,* Harold's loss of idealism, and Cain's brother Abel. As Byron attributes these anti-authoritarian traits to his heroes, there is undoubtedly some virtue in transgression and it certainly mirrors the poet's progressive political beliefs (Coole). Yet the anguish or anxiety we have noted in Byron's characters, part of what makes them notably Byronic, is the ongoing conflict of identity and loss which is implicit in breaking from tradition.

The anti-authoritarian impulse which is at the heart of the anxiety we name in these poems transcends the confines of the poems or even the Romantic Movement itself, finding its way into popular culture and media. Specifically, the rise to prominence of rock music in the second half of the twentieth century carries the transgressive ethos of Byron. One band indebted to Byron is The Rolling Stones who famously formed their identity around a darker, even satanic form of expression than many of their contemporaries in the late nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies. Considering Byron's use of Satan and Lucifer as vehicles of expression and autonomy in *Manfred* and *Cain*, indebted to Milton, the famous Rolling Stones single "Sympathy for the Devil" displays echoes of Byron's, and Milton's, repurposing of Satan. Note specifically that the song's narrator is Satan, but is sung in a first-person perspective, "Please allow me to introduce myself, I'm a man of wealth and taste" (Jagger/Richards). Another iconic example of figures in popular music modeling Byron can be seen in the many personas of David Bowie. Byron and Bowie share McGann's observed plethora of selves with the singer similarly dawning a varied array of costumes or faces to express a complex and multifaceted self. Further evidence of this

can be found in Emily A. Bernhard-Jackson's essay "Sometimes I feel like the whole human race.': Lord Byron and David Bowie Consider Identity." She states of the larger connection between Byron and rock music, "The symbols of rebellion and sexual freedom often associated with Romanticism, and specifically with Byron, remained vivid and potent in the cultural imagination in the hundred and fifty years between Byron and Bowie" (Bernhard-Jackson 114). Specifically, we can find that as Bowie moved though his many identities, from Ziggy Stardust, to Aladdin Sane, to the Thin White Duke, the singer displays an overt expression through performance that falls perfectly in line with Byron. We see aesthetic influence in the open collared shirts and loose sleeves of those like Elvis and Bowie himself, but the construction of identity Bowie engages in is most intrinsically Byronic. Bernhard-Jackson states, "The real Lord Byron consists of a multiplicity of Lord Byrons, each the product of and appropriate to its moment and each real in that moment" (Bernhard-Jackson 117). Looking to Bernard-Jackson's claim that each Lord Byron represented through his performances in text is "real" we find further confirmation that Byron's creation of these poems, all notably named after their hero, is a self-creating endeavor. This multiplicity in the poet is precisely why imposing structures of authority and categorization evoke anxieties such as we have seen. The structures which Manfred, Harold, Don Juan, Cain, and ultimately Byron struggle against are all minimizing and confining to a nature that seems inherently vast and multiple.

The multiplicity of Byron seen by both McGann and Bernhard-Jackson necessarily evades easy answers. The anxiety in Byron's work emerges when the multifaceted characters he creates are met by structures that attempt to define them, yet anxiety is also found when these characters must reckon with their identities once they, in some regard, transcend those authorities. The conflict at the core of these works by Byron are conflicts relating to the self,

both conflict of the self and the other, but also interior conflict of the self by its own nature. We have encountered many anxieties in these varied texts but the central anxiety which concerns them all is identity and the fashioning of the self. Byron's performance of multiple selves is not exclusively expressive but also inquisitive as the poet explores the liberation but also the tortures of these selves. Byron connects to his readership as his exploration of his full capacity of self is somewhat anguished. As we all come into our full selves, we struggle against external expectations in addition to our own internal struggles. In this regard self-fashioning, as Byron portrays it, is a war on two fronts. This two-fold battle of self-creation lies at the heart of *Don Juan, Manfred, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, and Cain,* and within the poet himself.

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