

ABSTRACT

As the aim of the thesis is to follow the development of Lord Byron's satirical voice, I have chosen to analyze three of his shorter satirical works (the analysis of *Don Juan* is omitted on purpose, since it has been thoroughly examined by many scholars) significantly different from each other both in form and content, and thus allowing me to map Byron's satirical technique and to contrast the texts.

The following works will be analyzed: *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), *Beppo: A Venetian Story* (1817) and *The Vision of Judgment* (1822). To understand satire it is essential not only to analyze the texts, but also to put them into context, which will also be part of the discussion. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* – his first published satire – presents Byron's sharp opinion on his contemporaries (including the Lake poets) and serves as the poet's defence against literary reviewers. It follows the tradition of the Neo-Classical satire represented by e.g. Alexander Pope whose legacy is very apparent in *English Bards*.

Beppo marks a new approach – it shows a strong Italian influence – not only is the anecdote set in Italy and thus allows the author to satirize both Italian and English society, but Byron also adopts the form of ottava rima typical of Italian literature. It is argued that the ottava rima is Byron's finest verse form. *Beppo* has a fictional plot and characters that serve as a background for the narrator's satirical remarks whose target is both Britain and Italy.

The form of ottava rima and the Italian influence are also present in *The Vision of Judgment*, one of Byron's last works. As the poem is Byron's reaction on Robert Southey's *A Vision of Judgement*, it modifies and further develops Byron's critical approach presented in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. Byron's long-standing offensive attitude towards Southey will be examined as well, since it is a theme that reappears throughout his writing career. *The Vision of Judgment* requires an analysis with regard to Byron's other works of

similar motifs published at approximately the same time, i.e. the mysteries *Cain* and *Heaven and Earth* and the Dedication of *Don Juan*.

Last but not least, Byron was conscious of the political situation both in Britain and in the countries he exiled to. As satire provides space to express political remarks, attention will also be given to the issue of interrelating Byron's satirical works with politics which will be the case particularly of *The Vision of Judgment*. Byron's political views developed and he grew more sceptical and critical in his late works and this feature of his writings will also be examined. The thesis shall highlight the major themes covered in the three texts and thus provide a coherent image of Byron's satire. Furthermore, I aim to discover both the connecting and diverging features of the works in terms of their use of satire. This will be achieved by close textual analysis as well as by putting the poems in the historical context.