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The Development of Lord Byron's Satire

Vývoj satiry lorda Byrona

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

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Prague, 10 August 2015

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Souhlasím se zapůjčením bakalářské práce ke studijním účelům.

I have no objections to the BA thesis being borrowed and used for study purposes.

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.

ABSTRAKT

Cílem práce je sledovat vývoj satirického díla lorda Byrona. Pro tento účel jsem zvolila tři kratší satirické básně (*Don Juan* je z analýzy vynechán úmyslně, jelikož tomuto dílu již byla věnována značná kritická pozornost), které se od sebe liší jak stylem, tak i formou a obsahem, a umožňují tak definovat, jakými způsoby Byron se satirou zachází.

Analýza se bude týkat následujících děl: *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), *Beppo: A Venetian Story* (1817) a *The Vision of Judgment* (1822). Pro důkladné porozumění je nutné nejen rozebrat texty samotné, ale také je zasadit do kontextu, což je jedním z cílů této práce. *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers,* Byronova první publikovaná satira, obsahuje Byronovy vyhraněné názory na jeho současníky (včetně např. básníků Jezerní školy) a nese se silně v duchu neoklasické satiry Byronova zásadního básnického vzoru Alexandra Popea.

V *Beppovi* se poprvé objevuje nový přístup, v němž jsou jasně patrné italské vlivy. Nejen, že se satira odehrává v Itálii, a umožňuje tak satirické srovnání italské a britské společnosti, ale Byron také používá tzv. ottavu rimu (česky též stanca), typickou italskou básnickou formu, která je považována za Byronovu nejlepší. V tomto díle na pozadí děje vystupuje vypravěč, který vyjadřuje jak satirické poznámky na adresu Britů, tak Italů. Ottava rima a italský vliv se objevují rovněž v další zkoumané básni, *The Vision of Judgment,* která se řadí do Byronova pozdního díla. Jelikož báseň reaguje na skladbu *A Vision of Judgment* od Roberta Southeyho, vrací se zde Byron k některým svým názorům vyjádřeným dříve v *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers.* Práce se podrobně věnuje Byronovu přetrvávajícímu nenávistnému postoji vůči Southeymu, jelikož je to téma, které se u Byrona objevuje v průběhu jeho tvůrčích let často. *The Vision of Judgment* vyžaduje rovněž analýzu Byronových dalších děl publikovaných přibližně ve stejnou dobu, jako je *Cain, Heaven and Earth* a Dedication of *Don Juan.*

V neposlední řadě si Byron byl vědom politické situace jak v Británii, tak v zemích, v nichž trávil léta v exilu. Jelikož satira ze své podstaty poskytuje prostor pro politické komentáře, práce se zaměřuje na propojení Byronova díla s politikou, a to zejména v *The Vision of Judgment.* Byronovy politické názory vykazují v pozdějších dílech značnou skepsi, jíž bude také věnována pozornost. Práce si klade za cíl definovat hlavní témata významná pro tři zkoumané básně, a poskytnout tak ucelený obraz Byronova satirického díla. Pozornost bude věnována jak společným, tak odlišným znakům analyzovaných básnických skladeb, a to skrze detailní analýzu textů a jejich zasazení do historického kontextu.

1 Introduction

Regarding the use of satire in Romanticism, Marilyn Butler wrote: "The so-called Romantics did not know at the time that they were supposed to do without satire," adding that "future generations have become convinced that the Spirit of the Age was very different."[1] Out of all the canonical authors of the Romantic era, Lord Byron's satires are certainly the most widely known; the genre has a unique position in the Byronic corpus as is apparent not only from the primary texts – be it his satires per se such as e.g. *Beppo*, *Don Juan* or the works with satirical features such as *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* – but also from the degree of critical attention given to them.

It is particularly interesting to observe the different styles and verse forms Byron employs and adjusts for his purposes – they aptly correspond with the tone and spirit of each of the three analysed works. In *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers,* concerned with the unpleasant state of literature as formed by his fellow poets and reviewers, Byron employs the heroic couplet of Alexander Pope in order to point out the problematic aspects of contemporary poetics on the background of Neo-Classicist literature. *Beppo* marks a departure to the verse form that is generally considered the most fitting for Byron – the Italian ottava rima. *The Vision of Judgment* continues in the Beppoesque form while also incorporating political elements and views.

Satire is a genre that allows for artistic expression of its author's views ranging from politics to aesthetics, from the state of society to personal issues. In this exact spirit, Byron makes the most of the possibilities the genre provides; his satirical work is extensive and diverse and includes a wide range of poetic styles, themes and forms – from the first published *English Bards, and Scotch Reviews* to his most famous satire *Don Juan.* He wrote his first – unpublished – satires at school and even though he ventured into different forms and genres,

[1] Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 209.

too, he would repeatedly return to satire throughout the whole of his writing career which enables tracing the development of his approach.

The three satires discussed in the following chapters – *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers, Beppo* and *The Vision of Judgment* have been chosen to each represent a certain stage of Byron's satirical voice from the very beginning to *Don Juan,* in other words from Byron's take on the Augustan tradition of the heroic couplets in *English Bards* to the Italy-inspired *Beppo* and *The Vision of Judgment,* both in ottava rima and both important for understanding the origins of *Don Juan* properly.

Besides being an account of Byron's literary development, the satires also provide a wider context for the events of the period, and therefore offer a valuable and to a certain degree authentic insight into the society of the Romantic era, such as the changing position of a satirist, the transformation of the notion of authorship or the increasing institutionalization of the society.

2 English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers

2.1 Publication History

English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers was published anonymously in March 1809 by James Cawthorn in London and the work marks Byron's satirical debut. The upmost impulse for the poem's composition was given to Byron by *The Edinburgh Review* – the influential and much respected literary magazine whose attitude to poetry was rather conservative and their political views were Whig. The magazine was founded in 1802 by Sidney Smith, Francis Jeffrey, Francis Horner and Henry Brougham.[2] In its January 1808 issue *The Edinburgh Review* published a fairly critical review of Byron's first published poetry collection *Hours of Idleness* (1807).[3]

At that time, Byron had been working on a poem called *British Bards* which was originally intended as a mere critique of Byron's fellow poets. Once the article in *The Edinburgh Review* was published, Byron changed the title and extended the satire to include a critique of the reviewers too. Byron thought the Scottish literary critic Francis Jeffrey to be the author of the review and, therefore, Jeffrey became one of the chief objects of the satirical attack. Jeffrey was the leading figure of *The Edinburgh Review* – apart from publishing his own articles he was also revising the majority of the magazine's submissions and, therefore, had a significant influence on the critical scene of the time.[4] The actual author of the review, h

[2] Muriel J. Mellown ,"Francis Jeffrey, Lord Byron, and English *Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*," *Studies in Scottish Literature*: Vol.16: Iss. 1., 80 <http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol16/iss1/8> 3 May 2015. All subsequent references are to this edition. Mellown provides an interesting comparison of Byron's and Jeffrey's views and points out a number of similarities between the two writers.

[3] E.H. Coleridge explains the origin of *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* in his "Introductory Memoir" included in: Byron, George G. B, and Hartley Coleridge, *The Poetical Works of Lord Byron* (London: John Murray, 1905), xvi. All subsequent references are to this edition.

[4] Mellown 80.

owever, was Jeffrey's fellow editor, Henry Brougham, which was only revealed later.[5]

In October 1809, a second, enlarged, edition of the poem was published, this time not anonymously.[6] By the time of the publication of the second edition, Byron had already left England to travel the Continental Europe promising he would reply to those who slandered him. There had been constant demand for the satire and so two more editions followed. The Fifth Edition, however, was suppressed by Byron himself in 1811. In that time, having returned from his travels to, among other countries, Albania, Spain and Greece,[7] Byron had changed his mind regarding some of the statements in the poem and he had also improved his relationship with Lady and Lord Holland. Therefore, he regretted the remarks he had made against them in the satire, originally supposing they had instigated the harsh article in *The Edinburgh Review*. Byron had asked his publisher James Cawthorn to burn the edition. Cawthorn, however, attempted to publish the work again without Byron's consent in 1816 which forced Byron to take legal action.[8] The suppressed Fifth Edition is the one that is the most commonly published in present time, together with the "Preface" which was written for the First Edition and then meant to be excluded from the Fifth Edition.[9]

2.2 Form

English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers comprises of over one thousand lines and it includes "Preface" and "Postscript". For his first published satire, Byron had chosen the form of

[5] Mellown 80–81.
[6] Claude M. Fuess, *Byron as a Satirist in Verse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912), 49. All subsequent references are to this edition.
[7] Andrew Rutherford, *Byron: the Critical Heritage* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), 35. All subsequent references are to this edition.
[8] *English Literature of the 19th & 20th Centuries: Part I* (London: Maggs Bros, 1923), 91, Google Books < https://books.google.cz/books?id=AHtOAAAAIAAJ&dq=English+Literature+of+the+19th+%26+20th+Centuries&source=gbs_navlinks_s > 3 May 2015.
[9] Coleridge 84.

the heroic couplet. It is formed by two rhymed lines, each of which is decasyllabic, i.e. consisting of ten syllables. The couplets are most commonly written in iambic pentameter and are employed prevalently in epic and narrative poetry. Apart from *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers,* Byron also employed the same verse form in his other satirical works, the first of which is the 1811 "Hints from Horace" intended by Byron as a sequel to *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers.* The poem is Byron's adaptation of Horace's *Ars Poetica* which he pairs with literary parallels of his own time.[10] In 1813 he wrote "The Waltz."[11] Another poem written in the heroic couplet is *The Age of Bronze*, arguably one of Byron's most unacknowledged poems. It is in part a satire that contemplates on the 1822 Veronese Congress of the Holy Alliance.[12]

To understand Byron's choice of the verse form in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*, it is necessary to consider its role in the English literary history. According to J.A. Cuddon's *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, the origin of the heroic couplet dates back to Geoffrey Chaucer's time, although the form might as well be based on the transformation of the alliterative verse typical for the Old English poetry. Since Chaucer who wrote the most part of his *Canterbury Tales* in the heroic couplet, it became tightly rooted in the English literary canon and had been used by generations of significant poets over the centuries, such as William Shakespeare, John Donne, John Dryden and Alexander Pope.[13] Pope's influence on Byron's satire will be addressed in more detail in the subsequent chapters.

With the mid to late 18th century's emergence of Romanticism, the golden era of the heroic couplet seems to be over – the Romantics are famous for their rejection of the genera-

[10] Jane Stabler, *Byron, Poetics, and History* (Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 76. The chapter (titled "'Hints from Horace' and the Trouble with Decency") offers more information on the poem.

[11] Drummond Bone, ed, *The Cambridge Companion to Byron* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), xvi. All subsequent references are to this edition.

[12] Michael Scrivener, "The 'Black Dwarf' Review of Byron's 'The Age of Bronze,'" *Keats-Shelley Journal* vol. 41 (1992) 42, JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30210428> 10 June 2015.

[13] J.A. Cuddon and Claire Preston, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 378–380. All subsequent references are to this edition.

tion of authors who had preceded them. This applied also to the verse form, although there was a number of Romantics besides Byron who would let the heroic couplet make its way into their poetry. John Keats, for example, used it in his poem "Lamia" and "Endymion" and Percy Bysshe Shelley in his "Epipsychidion."[14] Their use of the heroic couplet was not, however, as strict as that of Pope who had been praised for his so called closed couplets; they are not only connected metrically by rhyming, but also syntactically, conveying a mutual idea.

As had been stated above, as a part of their opposition to the strictness of Classicism, the Romantic authors tended to vary their verse forms and the couplets are no exception; therefore, the open couplet is often found in their writings. In contrast to the closed couplet, it is not limited to the two lines and its message can be concluded in the third or forth line or even in further lines.[15]

The best way to illustrate the aforementioned definitions is to provide examples of the closed and open couplets. Since Alexander Pope was an inspiration for Byron, his verse will be used. Following is an excerpt from the opening passage of "An Essay on Criticism:"[16]

> 'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill
> Appear in writing or in judging ill;
> But, of the two, less dangerous is th' offence
> To tire our patience, than mislead our sense.
> Some few in that, but numbers err in this,
> Ten censure wrong for one who writes amiss; (1–6)

[14] Percy Bysshe Shelley and C.H. Herford, *The Narrative Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, *Volume 1*, "Introduction" (Wildside Press LLC, 2008), 10. The introductory passage offers a good overview of the metrical patterns and themes employed in Romanticism.
[15] Cuddon 615–616.
[16] Alexander Pope and Pat Rogers, *The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 18. All subsequent references are to this edition and will be marked by line numbers following the quotation. Emphasis mine.

The chosen passage of six lines consists of three closed couplets with each of them rhyming (the rhymes are underlined in the text). The couplets form closed units that make sense of their own – they do not even require a pre-existing knowledge of the context in much detail.

The second excerpt is taken from Pope's "First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace, Imitated:"[17]

> O you! Whom vanity's light bark conveys
> On fame's mad voyage by the wind of praise,
> With what a shifting gale your course you ply,
> For ever sunk too low, or borne too high! (296–99)

The given example includes open couplets – the first couplet is not semantically closed – for the idea to be meaningful it is essential to read on to the third and fourth lines. The fact that the message runs on to the following lines is marked by punctuation which differs from the first excerpt.

2.3 Michel Foucault and Satire

It is essential to discuss the changing position and significance of satire in the 18th century. Jerome Christensen in his article "'Marino Faliero' and the Fault of Byron's Satire"[18] explores Byron's satire in the light of a turning point in the contemporary society and links satire with Michel Foucault's concept of punishment.

Professor Christensen explains that the 18th century saw a key shift from what Foucault calls the monarchic punishment and which was used by the monarch as a means to en-

[17] Pope 381.

[18] Jerome Christensen, "'Marino Faliero' and the Fault of Byron's Satire", *Studies in Romanticism.* Vol. 24, No. 3, Lord Byron (Fall, 1985), pp. 313-333, JSTOR < http://www.jstor.org/stable/25600545> 3 July 2015. All subsequent references are to this edition.

sure his sovereignty; the exemplary punishment was turned into a spectacle for the public to see and also to participate in imposing the justice upon the accused criminal.[19]

The 18th century brought a transformation of such punishment – it was performed by law and it followed a set of fixed rules. As Michel Foucault argues with reference to the French philosopher de Mably, the new form of punishment should be a applied to soul rather than body as used to be the case of public executions.[20]

Jerome Christensen states that an 18th century equivalent to murder and its consequent torturous punishment was fraud.[21] This is where the concept connects with literature and particularly satire. Professor Christensen claims that the emergence of what Foucault calls the generalized punishment enabled satire to gain its prominence in the course of the 18th century; it was an era in which crimes were brought out of anonymity and the criminals were pointed at.

In Jerome Christensen words, "the artfully managed representations of the satirist were as effective instruments of punishment as any other."[22] He illustrates the fact on the example of Alexander Pope's satire *The Dunciad.* One of Pope's targets, Edward Oldmixion, had to face a decrease of his reputation based on the way he was depicted in the satire which, among other consequences, had a major impact on his economical situation.[23]

The post-revolutionary age, i.e. Byron's age, however, witnessed further changes which prevented Byron from having the same position as Pope. According to Foucault, the society had transformed to a panoptical disciplinary model. Foucault illustrates his concept as a prison with its cells facing the central tower, i.e. the Panopticon; the key feature of such

[19] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995). All subsequent references are to this edition.
[20] Foucault 16.
[21] Christensen 315.
[22] Christensen 315.
[23] Christensen 317.

society is that the prisoners cannot see whether they are currently being watched, or not, and that sole fact imposes power upon them.[24]

Moreover, the 19th century saw the birth of a normality-driven society. Norms became ever-present and the respective institutions – another key aspect – would ensure the norms were adhered to. The aforementioned facts, Professor Christensen further claims, weakened the power of satire.[25] Literature was no exception as for the new institutional order – reviewers and reviews gained enormous influence on the shaping of the public opinion which the very existence of Byron's *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* proves;[26] Jerome Christensen explains that "Byron's aberrations would serve the socially useful purpose of defining a norm to which there was no opposition, only different adjustment."[27]

In other words, paradoxically, with *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers,* Byron contributes to the newly established (or rather still establishing) institutional character of literature; with norms that become vital for the society, it is not possible for a satirist to be the chief vehicle of improvement, as was illustrated on the example of Alexander Pope. Such a significant shift that occurred with the emergence of the disciplinary society provided a new thematic venture for a satirist, i.e. to criticize the Panopticon, and that is exactly what *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* does.

[24] Foucault explains that the main effect of the Panopticon is to "induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic function of power. [...] the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it." Foucault 201.

[25] Christensen 318.

[26] A more detailed account on the change in literary criticism as such will be given in chapter "The Change in Literary Criticism."

[27] Christensen 319.

2.4 Reviewers

Of all literary critics and reviewers appearing in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers,* Francis Jeffrey is the one who is, for obvious reasons, dedicated the most space – he is the supposed author of the scathing review of Byron's previous poetry collection. Jeffrey is also the victim of the harshest criticism that appears in the poem – his judging of literature is likened Satan's methods: "Some think that Satan has resign'd his trust / [...] To sentence letters, as he sentenced men / With hand less mighty, but with heart as black" (441, 443–44).[28] Byron also points out that the poets Jeffrey attacks in his reviews may rise against the critic; it is a reference to the duel between Jeffrey and Thomas Moore which had been suppressed by the authorities.[29] At the same time, in an almost hymn-like passage ironically praising Jeffrey as a saint, Byron stresses the critic's unwavering position in the literary sphere especially that based in Scotland:

> Health to great Jeffrey! Heaven preserve his life,
> To flourish on the fertile shores of Fife,
> And guard it sacred in its future wars,
> Since authors sometimes seek the field of Mars! (460–64)

Byron goes on in a similar tone that mockingly names Jeffrey the God of the critics (505) and calls for the English writers not to let the Scotsman influence their writing:

> For as long as Albion's heedless sons submit,
> Or Scottish taste decides on English wit,

[28] For note on primary sources list, see the "Bibliography" section of the thesis.
[29] George Gordon Byron, *The Poetical Works of Lord Byron,* "Notes on *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*" (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), 847.

So long shall last thine unmolested reign,
Nor any dare to take thy name in vain. (502–505)

Other, even occasional, critics, such as Sydney Smith, William Herbert, Lord Holland and Henry Brougham – the actual author of the *Edinburgh Review* critique of *Hours of Idleness* are addressed too; Byron highlights especially their corruptness – "Blest be the banquets spread at Holland House / Where Scotchmen feed, and critics may carouse!" (544–45)

2.5 The Change in Literary Criticism

Since a major part of *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* as has been shown above is concerned with reviewers, is essential to investigate the state of literary criticism in the time of publication of the poem. Perhaps the most powerful change in the field was marked by the emergence of periodical literature. Before 1750s which marked the foundation of the *Monthly Review* and the *Critical Review*, literary criticism was limited and there were no periodicals specialising in reviewing all kinds of literature. James Basker in his essay "Criticism and the Rise of Periodical Literature" explains that "review criticism and the review journal would have been all but unrecognizable to Dryden and his contemporaries."[30]

Criticism before 1700 appeared in forms of prefaces, dedications, prologues etc.[31] The period between 1660 until 1800 as described by Professor Basker saw the development from the newspaper and the learned journal[32] to the periodicals whose number had increased significantly throughout the period. The reviewer culture soon gained unprecedented influence over both its audience and the authors and enabled a much wider audience to take part in discus-

[30] James Basker, "Criticism and the Rise of Periodical Literature," *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume IV, The Eighteenth Century*, edited by H.B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 316. All further references are to this edition.
[31] Basker 320.
[32] Basker 317.

sions on literature. This fact did not go unnoticed by the publishers who started to use quotations from reviews to promote their books. The reviewers, then, became the influencers of public opinion and authors would even edit their works in a way suggested to them in the periodicals.[33]

This tendency unavoidably led to the increasing institutionalization of criticism.[34] Professor Jon Klancher argues that "the formerly authoritative 'man of letters' began to be seen as a slavish creature of the market."[35] The publishers would demand a specific genre, tone, theme from the authors based on the demand of the market which was largely induced by reviewers. Such trend literally called the author to react against the reviewers and their domination – an example of which is Byron's *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers.*

2.6 The (Neo-)Classical Heritage vs. Contemporary Practice

The core of *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* consists of both sharp criticism of the reviewers and of certain poets – this will be addressed in chapters to follow – and of praise of the poets that Byron admired and was inspired by; such a method of contrasting the old, specifically Neo-Classical order with the current practice in literature – namely that of the Lake Poets – is one of Byron's devices to stress the satirized facts even more strikingly.

The ultimate source of Byron's inspiration by Pope was the mock-heroic epic *The Dunciad* which shares a number of features with *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* – it is written in the heroic couplet, a form that was widely used by Pope and he was praised for its cultivation nearly to perfection; the epic was first published anonymously merely as Pope's

[33] Basker 327.
[34] Jon Klancher, "The Vocation of Criticism and the Crisis of the Republic of Letters," *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume V, Romanticism,* ed. By Marshall Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 297. All further references are to this edition.
[35] Klancher 297.

response to harsh criticism he had received from the Shakespearean editor Lewis Theobald in reaction to the publication of Pope's edition of Shakespeare. Pope took the opportunity to satirize the state of contemporary literature and to pick on his fellow poets. Theobald was cast as the King of the Dunce to be in a later edition replaced by Colley Cibber, an influential poet and actor. He was appointed the Poet Laureate, a fact that Alexander Pope found unrighteous.[36]

The similarity in form is more than apparent as is shown in the following examples from both works. The first excerpt is from *The Dunciad.* The three couplets, written in iambic pentameter – the first two open and the last closed – bitterly remark on some of the poets Pope despised (line 2–3 of the excerpt) and also point out the doubtful position of Cibber at the court. The satirical point lies in the fact that the lines seemingly concern the fictional court Pope had created for the poem's purpose while in fact it is the actual British court:

> Safe, where no critics damn, no duns molest,
> Where wretched Withers, Ward, and Gildon rest,
> And high-born Howard, more majestic sire,
> With fool of quality completes the quire.
> Thou Cibber! thou, his laurel shalt support,
> Folly, my son, has still a friend at court. (295–300)

The excerpt which follows is from *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*. Similarly to Pope, Byron reproves the authors whose writings he considers low – at this point even Walter Scott. (With whom he was later to become a close friend as is apparent from their correspondence.) What also links Byron to Pope is the remark about the Grub Street, a London street which became synonymous for "spiritual and sometimes literal home for hack writers"[37] and was also an object of Pope's mockery a number of times in *The Dunciad:* "Not with less glory

[36] From the "Introduction" to Pat Rogers's edition of Pope, xx.
[37] Paul Baines, *The Complete Critical Guide to Alexander Pope* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 132.

mighty Dulness crowned, / Shall take through Grub Street her triumphant round" (135–6), "One from all Grub Street will my fame defend, / And more abusive, calls himself my friend" (109–10).

> Let sonneteering Bowles his strains refine,
> And whine and whimper to the fourteenth line;
> Let Stott, Carlisle, Matilda, and the rest
> Of Grub Street, and of Grosvenor Place the best,
> Scrawl on, till death release us from the strain,
> Or common Sense assert her rights again. (*English Bards*, 925–930)

Together with a quote from Pope's "Essay on Criticism:" "Such shameless bards we have; and yet 'tis true, / There are as mad, abandon'd critics too," that opens the poem, Byron also includes other explicit accounts of his admiration for Pope, such as the line from the opening part of the satire: "Better to err with Pope, than shine with Pye" (102). Furthermore, Byron points out that the poets of his generation whom he considers low dictate the course of literature and the popular taste yield to their unworthy creations while those who should be admired fall into oblivion: "But why these names, or greater still, retrace, / When all to feebler bards resign their place?" (117–18)

2.7 Commercial Writing

Apart from their writing style what Byron also criticizes about his contemporaries is being paid for their works. In Byron's era, the practice of writing for money was relatively new and, especially until the 18th century it was even shameful. Writing was not considered a profession but rather a mission which only changed with the establishment of authorship and

copyright.[38] In order to preserve the gist of the passage on paid-for – who would nowadays be called professional writers – it is quoted here in full:

> And think'st thou, Scott! by vain conceit perchance,
> On public taste to foist thy stale romance,
> Though Murray with his Miller may combine
> To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?
> No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
> Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade.
> Let such forego the poet's sacred name,
> Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame:
> Still for stern Mammon may they toil in vain!
> And sadly gaze on gold they cannot gain!
> Such be their meed, such still the just reward
> Of prostituted muse and hireling bard! (*English Bards*, 171–182)

In the quoted passage Byron advocates the earlier view on authorship which he shares with Pope. Professor of English and Law Martha Woodmansee in her essay "The Genius and the Copyright" outlines the history of the copyright law in the English context and explains that "in the Renaissance and in the heritage of the Renaissance in the first half of the eighteenth century the 'author' was [...] first and foremost a craftsman [...]. When a writer was said to be inspired – by some muse, or even by God."[39]

The notions of inspiration and muses is acknowledged in Byron's *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers,* too in one of his critical remarks on the minor poet Nathaniel Bloomfield: "Him too the mania, not the muse, has seized / Not inspiration, but a mind diseased" (783–84). Mrs Woodmansee further claims that the writer was perceived only as a "vehicle or an

[38] Martha Woodmansee, "The Genius and the Copyright," *Intellectual Property Rights: Critical Concepts in Law, Volume 2,* ed. David Vaver, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 48. All subsequent references are to this edition.
[39] Woodmansee 48.

instrument", never "personally responsible for his creation."[40] Professor Woodmansee adds that Pope, despite being the first writer to be able to earn his living exclusively thanks to the income from his writing, still promoted the view that can be recognized in the above quoted excerpt *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers.*

Moreover, Professor Woodmansee claims that in Pope's view expressed in his *Essay on Criticism* it was not desired that a writer would be inventing new concepts. Quite on the contrary, he should present the universally known truths in a new light.[41] Byron is in accord with this opinion – "Thus saith the Preacher: "Nought beneath the sun / Is new"; yet still from change to change we run" (129–30). He goes on to extend the Biblical quote to poetry, too, and makes it one of his major points when evaluating the practice of fellow poets: "Nor less new schools of Poetry arise, / Where dull pretenders grapple for the prize: / O'er taste awhile these pseudo-bards prevail" (135–37).

2.8 The Bowles-Pope Controversy

In the poem there are numerous references to William Lisle Bowles. He was the editor of a new edition of Pope's works published in 1806 where he expressed severe criticism of Pope's moral and poetic qualities, and stressed out that Pope did not equal the proficiency of Shakespeare and Milton. The Bowles-Pope Controversy began in 1819 when the poet Thomas Campbell expressed his disagreement with Bowles; the Controversy developed into a pamphlet war which Byron joined in 1821 – he wrote several letters to Bowles to defend Pope.

Byron's aversion to Bowles, however, started much earlier than the Controversy, and it is apparent in a significant part of *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*. Byron views Bowles's poetry as childish and immature – similarly to Wordsworth's – as the following ex-

[40] Woodmansee 48.
[41] Woodmansee 49.

cerpt shows: "Delightful Bowles! still blessing and still blest, / All love thy strain, but children like it best [...] With thee our nursery damsels shed their tears." (341–42, 345)

Bowles was known for composing sonnets in a sentimental tone and as Byron stresses out they tend to be similar to each other regardless their theme – be it "the fall of empire or a yellow leaf" (333). Following is what Byron had to say about this aspect of Bowles's poetry. The remarks on Oxford bells refer to Bowles's sonnets "Bereavement," "Oxford Revisited" and "The Bells of Ostend," all written in the sentimental spirit that Byron criticizes:

> Art thou not their prince, harmonious Bowles!
> Thou first, great oracle of tender souls?
> Whether thou sing'st with equal ease, and grief,
> The fall of empires, or a yellow leaf:
> Whether thy muse most lamentably tells
> What merry sounds proceed from Oxford bells,
> Or, still in bells delighting, finds a friend
> In every chime that jingled from Ostend (*English Bards,* 330–38)

The sonnet form which keeps reoccurring in Bowles's works is addressed too: "Let sonneteering Bowles his strains refine, / And whine and whimper to the fourteenth line" (925–26). Regarding the verse form, Bowles is advised to "Stick to thy Sonnets, man! at least they sell" (362) a remark aimed not only at Bowles but to the general state of things. Byron also satirizes the readership and the fact that Bowles's poetry, however weak would still be popular with readers. The comments also play on a more personal note – Bowles is accused of being envious of Pope while pretending to be objective and honest: "Clothe envy in the garb of honest zeal" (376).

Although Byron is known for regretting having published the majority of *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers,* it is also known from his letters that he did not regret having written the passage on Bowles.[42]

[42] Fuess 63.

2.9 The Case of the Lake Poets

A frequent satirical target in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* are the Lake School representatives – William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey. One of Byron's arguments against the group is the fact that they did not follow in the footsteps of the poets Byron admired, such as Alexander Pope and John Dryden. The departure from the Classicist tradition is one of the foundations of Romantic literature in general and it does not apply on the Lake Poets only. Byron stresses out that by not following in the footsteps of Pope, the Lakists rob literature of the last remaining aspects of quality.

Such an approach makes Byron as a Classicist, as had been shown previously in this chapter. His Classicist view, however, does not serve as a mere account of the bygone era. Quite the opposite, he uses it to criticize the prominent features of Romantic literature; in the words of Jerome McGann, thanks to Byron's criticism "we can trace some of the volatile contradictions that organize the Romantic movement in England;"[43] although the quote is concerned with Wordsworth's works, it can by extension apply to all Lake Poets.

Andrew Rutherford provides a summary of the technical aspects that Byron criticizes about the Lakists: "defects in diction, [...] in versification – obscurity, affected simplicity, over-ornateness, metrical looseness or irregularity." Here, it is necessary to further address the "affected simplicity" suggested by Professor Rutherford. The Lake Poets are indeed known for the simplicity of their language and themes, perhaps best explained in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads.* Byron, for one, perceives their simplicity pretentious as is apparent from the tone he chooses to employ; here it is useful to look beyond *English Bards, and Scotch Re-*

[43] Jerome J. McGann, *Byron and Wordsworth: The Annual Byron Lecture, Given in the University of Nottingham on 27 May 1998* (Nottingham: School of English Studies, University of Nottingham, 1999), 11. All further references are to this edition.

viewers and draw connections with *Don Juan* – especially "The Dedication" and Canto I – in order to provide a more coherent image of Byron's view of the poetics of the Lake Poets.

Of particular interest in this regard are Stanzas 90 and 91 of Canto I in which Byron – while hinting on the Lakists's frequent use of Nature as the source of inspiration – accuses Wordsworth of being "unintelligible" despite his attempt – according to Byron a failed one – for his "plan and prosody" to be "eligible." What needs to be pointed out here is Wordsworth's claim from The Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* that poetry is the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."[44] This, as is apparent from Stanzas 90 and 91, is considered by Byron also pretentious.

Professor Rutherford further argues that one of the key reasons for Byron's aversion to the Lakists is based on their choice of their "subject matter and content."[45] Byron strives to "see poetry reconciled with truth and wisdom, asserting values and expressing attitudes to life acceptable to a civilised and cultured gentleman of his own day." The Lake Poets, however, give priority to dream visions, praise of nature and the rural environment. Professor Rutherford claims that Byron "condemned [...] the lowness and triviality of some of Wordsworth's anecdotes in verse"[46] – as is more than apparent from the text of *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers.* It can be extended to trivial poetry in general which is also a feature of Bowles's poetry, as Byron stresses out. Byron considered the aforementioned sins of his contemporaries "opposed to the urban wit and mature good sense of Pope [...] and he felt it his duty as a critic and a satirist to attach such aberrations."[47]

[44] S.T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads, Project Gutenberg* <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/8905/pg8905.html> Aug 1, 2015.
[45] Rutherford, *A Critical Study,* 105.
[46] All quotations from this paragraph are cited from: Andrew Rutherford's *Byron: A Critical Study,* 105.
[47] Rutherford, *A Critical Study,* 105.

2.9.1 William Wordsworth

Byron believed that Wordsworth was talented but also misusing his talent.[48] It comes as no surprise that one of the issues Byron considered irritating about Wordsworth is his politics. After the disillusion from the situation in France, Wordsworth's political views had changed and he became considerably more conservative.[49] Byron believed that Wordsworth's reactionary politics was damaging to his earlier poetry.

A sharp difference between Byron and Wordsworth, Professor McGann argues, is in their understanding of Nature. While for Wordsworth Nature is one of the key concepts and it reoccurs in his works, Byron employs it to a considerably lesser extent and in a very different way. In this respect, critics often refer to Canto III of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* which is frequently analysed for its arguably Wordsworthian tinge. Professor McGann, however, explains that "[Byron's] reflexive structure is energetic and existential, not meditative and conceptual [as in Wordsworth]."[50] He adds that "the form asks us to receive the poem as if it were an experimental record [and] a dream sequence offers itself to the reader as an immediate experience rather than a recollective construction."[51]

As for his poetic language, Wordsworth in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* claims that the language employed in poetry should be "the real language of men"[52] and he also highlights the importance of Nature – these are the two points that Byron finds irritating in Wordsworth's poetry. Wordsworth is further accused of composing simple, childish verse: "The simple Wordsworth, framer of a lay / As soft as evening in his favourite May," (238–37)

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[48] William Dean Brewer, "In Switzerland: Wordsworth and Science", *The Shelley Byron Conversation* (Florida: The University Press of Florida, 1994), 23. The chapter provides a more detailed account on the role of Shelley in introducing Byron to Wordsworth's works. All further references are to this edition.

[49] Dennis Taylor, "Wordsworth's Abbey Ruins", *William Wordsworth*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 2007), 217.

[50] McGann 12.

[51] McGann 12.

[52] William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads,* Project Gutenberg <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/8905/pg8905.html> 18 June 2015.

– the remark on soft May is clearly a parody of Wordsworth's praise of nature which Byron considers plain and childish. This criticized aspect of Wordsworth's poetry is similar to Byron's comments on Bowles as had been shown previously in this chapter.

The above quoted lines relate to Wordsworth's poem "The Idiot Boy" which is a part of the *Lyrical Ballads* and tells a story of a disabled village boy. Apart from criticism of his poetry, Wordsworth is also attacked on a more personal level and is called "the dull disciple of [the Lake] school" (235) and "the meanest object of the lowly [Lake Poets] group" (904). This might be further related to *Don Juan,* Stanza 91, Canto I where Wordsworth is accused of being self-centred, quoted here in full:

> He, Juan (and not Wordsworth) so pursued
> His Self–Communion with his own high Soul
> Until his mighty heart, in its great mood,
> Had mitigated part, though not the whole
> Of its disease; he did the best he could
> With things not very subject to Controul,
> And turned, without perceiving his condition,
> Like Coleridge, into a Metaphysician. (*Don Juan,* I, 91)

The stanza is a summary of aspects that Byron criticizes about Wordsworth. The first two lines comment on Wordsworth's self-centeredness which John Keats calls the "egotistical sublime"[53] and which determines the exaggerated focus on himself. The latter part of the stanza is a hint on Wordsworth's poetics of the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."

[53] Duncan Wu, "Keats and the 'Cockney School'," *The Cambridge Companion to Keats,* ed. Susan J. Wolfson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 40.

2.9.2 Samuel Taylor Coleridge

As for Coleridge, Byron hints especially at the poems[54] "Songs of the Pixies" – in which Coleridge proclaims himself a bard and which presents fairies – and "To a Young Ass", a compassionate account about a donkey. Byron connects the two poems to mock Coleridge's choice of themes: "The bard who soars to elegize an ass / So well the subject suits his noble mind / He brays the laureat of the long-ear'd kind" (262–64). The famous friendship of Coleridge and Wordsworth does not go unnoticed either – Byron mockingly calls the two poets brothers and makes yet another ironic remark about their poetry: "Let simple Wordsworth chime his childish verse / And brother Coleridge lull the babe at nurse" (917–18). The line on "lulling the babe" is a reference to one of Coleridge's most anthologised poems "Frost at Midnight," a meditative account of Coleridge's son Hartley who is sleeping in his cradle by Coleridge's side. Following is the passage about his sleeping child from Coleridge's poem:

> Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
> Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
> Fill up the interspersèd vacancies
> And momentary pauses of the thought!
> My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
> With tender gladness, thus to look at thee[55] (45–50)

This is not the only reference to the poem and the theme of childhood in Byron's works – it reappears much later in his drama *Cain* in a revisited, more tolerant interpretation and ap-

[54] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,* Project Gutenberg <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/29090/29090-h/29090-h.htm> 18 June 2015.

[55] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge Vol I and II,* Project Gutenberg <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/29090/29090-h/29090-h.htm> 240, 5 August 2015.

proach towards Coleridge's poem. The relevant passage in *Cain* is in Act I in the scene where Cain and his wife Adah dispute over the cradle where their sons is asleep. Cain is returned from his tour with Lucifer where he saw the doomed worlds and he is convinced that generation after generation of humans is predestined for suffering. The Lake Poets, however, see a child a blissful existence in whose innocence is wisdom and happiness, as can be observed in Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality." Regarding Enoch, Cain's son, Wordsworth mockingly writes to Coleridge in a letter: "Don't wake little Enoch, / Or he'll give you a wee knock! / For the pretty sweet lad / As he lies in his Cradle / Is more like to his Dad / Than Spoon to a Ladle."[56]

As had been already stated, Byron had later – to some extent – altered his opinion about Coleridge whose poetry he had read and even enjoyed. From Coleridge's works it is particularly his narrative poem *Christabel* that influenced Byron significantly. Byron was introduced to the poem by Walter Scott whom the style of the poem inspired to write *The Lay of the Ministrel, Marmion* and *The Bridal of Triermain.* Byron was no exception in adopting the style with the examples such as *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos* and *The Siege of Corinth.*[57]

[56] The letter is quoted in Peter Cochran's edition of *Cain*, p. 16, footnote 31 available at <https://petercochran.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/cain1.pdf> 9 August 2015.

[57] Catherine Addison, "Byronic Free Verse: The Tetrameter Romances", *Byron's Poetry*, Peter Cochran, ed. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge University Publishing, 2012), 85.

2.10 Robert Southey

Last but by no means least of the Lake Poets, Robert Southey, is more than familiar in the Byronic context. Southey was the Poet Laureate since 1813 until his death in 1843 – for the majority of Byron's life[58] and Byron often attacked him for his unctuous government-bound writings and opinions. *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* is the first of Byron's works in which Southey is attacked – followed by *The Vision of Judgment* and the "Dedication" of *Don Juan.* These works will be considered in the following chapters.

In *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* Byron's hatred is not yet as extreme – it avoids personal attacks, unlike the later works. Southey is called the "ballad monger" (202) which clearly hints on him being paid for writing. Byron also criticizes Southey's "mass" production of low quality verse and appeals on him to stop writing: "Oh Southey! Southey! cease thy varied song! / A bard may chant too often and too long" (225–26).

2.11 Criticism of Minor Poets

Apart from criticising the major literary figures, Byron did not spare the minor poets either. To name all of them would lead to a simple annotation of the poem. Therefore, only a selection of Byron's main objections will follow. A theme that is common in Byron's criticism of both major and minor poets is money obtained for literary works (addressed in more detail in chapter 2.6 "The (Neo-)Classical Heritage vs. Contemporary Practice."

[58] David Scott Kastan, *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of British Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 47, 244.

In a stanza dedicated to the Cottle brothers, Joseph and Amos, the criticism is extended to publishers, too. Besides writing his own poetry, Joseph Cottle[59] published e.g. the *Lyrical Ballads.* He is known for financing numerous publications of the Lake Poets which is one of the sources of Byron's mocking remarks; he provides a lively depiction of a scene from a local market, complete with the trader's song: "Lines forty thousand, cantos twenty-five! / Fresh fish from Helicon! who'll buy, who'll buy?" (390–91) Only the fish are poems and the trader is Cottle who "Imports old stories from the Cambrian coast / And sends his goods to market – all alive!" (388–89) The Cambrian coast remark refers to the Lake Poets.

Another object of Byron's derision – also connected with money – are the working-class poets. Nigel Cross in his book *The Common Writer* argues that although some of the radical working-class writers believed Byron would support their cause, he did not "reciprocate"[60] their admiration. One of the reasons for such writers to pursue a writing career, Nigel Cross claims, was the possibility of them finding a patron who would support their financial needs. On that note, Byron writes: "Genius must guide when wits admire the rhyme / And Capel Lofft declares 'tis quite sublime" (773–74). Capel Lofft[61] was the benefactor of Robert Bloomfield. Byron mocks the connection of poetry and working-class jobs, such as that of a shoemaker – the profession of Robert Bloomfield. The poet is criticized in the passage where Byron ponders upon what happens when such a poet:

> Leaves his snug shop, forsakes his store of shoes,
> St. Crispin quits, and cobbles for the muse,
> Heavens! how the vulgar stare! how crowds applaud!
> How ladies read, and literati laud! (*English Bards*, 767–770)

[59] The text on Joseph Cotton is based on the Annotation to his *Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[60] Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 129. All subsequent references are to this edition.
[61] George Gordon Byron, *The Poetical Works of Lord Byron,* "Notes on *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*" (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), 849.

Nigel Cross adds that the working-class poets would often take up poetry since it was less time consuming than prose and it enabled them to manage both their day jobs and their writing careers. This fact is also an object of Byron's mockery: "Ye tuneful cobblers! still your notes prolong / Compose at once a slipper and a song" (791–92).

2.12 English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers – Conclusion

After his return from Continental Europe, Byron came to dislike a significant part of *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers,* notably the passages concerning Walter Scott with whom he was soon to become close friends as proves the two poets' frequent correspondence, and the ones concerning Lord Holland. Indeed the satire – rather virulent at times, especially regarding the Lake Poets – was an attempt of a young poet to find his poetic voice and above all to defend his previous work, *Hours of Idleness*.

The poem, however, carries out much more than a mere act of Byron's self-defence projected in the critique of the poet's enemies. It is important on a more general level as it in a way chronicles and mirrors the change in the society, especially in contrast with the Neo-classical ideals.

Indeed, there is significant connection between Byron and Pope – be it the verse form, the criticism of contemporaries, or the reluctance to accept the concept of paid authorship that was becoming more prominent in Byron's age than ever before. A comparison of the two, however, brings evidence that Byron's 19th century satire could not be of the same effect as that of Pope and his fellow satirists in the century before.

The satire is, therefore, a witness of the changes of the time. Regarding literature, perhaps the most significant is the change in literary criticism and its emergence as an institution.

The authors started to be highly influenced by the reviewers who possessed increasing power, especially when compared to the times before 1750s – in which the review periodicals were yet to emerge – are taken into account and it was an opportunity for Byron to protest against such establishment.

A part that is of high significance for a better understanding of Byron's work is that concerned with the Lake Poets. A close reading provides an outline of what Byron considers problematic in the group's poetry. The main objects of his discontent are sentimentalism that is found particularly in Wordsworth's and Bowles's works, the preoccupation with self as seen in Wordsworth and also the simple language as promoted in *Lyrical Ballads.* Byron is also unable to come to terms with one of the emblems of Romanticism, the notion of Nature and rural life.

Moreover, *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* has a special place in the Byronic literary canon – it provides a very good account of his early satire and enables the critics to position his later works into a fitting column and to trace the development of his satirical voice. In *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* Byron articulates his key critical and aesthetic attitudes – such as his approach to the Lake Poets, particularly Wordsworth – that reappear in his later works, notably in *Don Juan*, and play a crucial role in them.

3 *Beppo*

3.1 Publication History and Context

Beppo: A Venetian Story[62] was issued in 1818 by Byron's publisher John Murray in London and Byron asked Murray to publish it anonymously.[63] While *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* is an early work by a young and inexperienced writer, *Beppo,* written nine years after, is a part of a different context. By the time of writing *Beppo,* Byron had already been in exile for almost two years – he left England forever in April 1816 after the formal separation from his wife.[64]

Following the major success of the first two Cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* published in 1812, Byron enjoyed enormous interest of the public which was also the case after the publication of the remaining two Cantos – Canto III in 1816 and Canto IV in 1818. To illustrate the extent of his popularity, particularly in the commercial sense, it is worth mentioning that *The Corsair,* published in 1814 sold ten thousand copies on the day of its first publication which was completely unprecedented.[65]

The period between the publication of *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* and *Beppo* saw Byron publishing a number of his significant works, such as *The Prisoner of Chillon, Manfred* and particularly his Oriental Tales, i.e. *The Giaour, The Bride of Abydos, The Corsair, Lara, Parisina, The Siege of Corinth, Hebrew Melodies* which in Peter Cochran's words "consolidated"[66] Byron's fame. Therefore, it could be expected from his following works to be

[62] The poem will be further referenced to as *Beppo.*
[63] Mary O'Connell, *Byron and John Murray: A Poet and His Publisher* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), 163. All subsequent references are to this edition.
[64] John Galt, *The Life of Lord Byron,* Chapter XXXI, Project Gutenberg <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10421/10421-h/10421-h.htm> 6 July 2015.
[65] O'Connell 128.
[66] Peter Cochran, "Byron's 'Turkish Tales': An Introduction", <https://petercochran.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/turkish_tales_introduction.pdf> 6 July 2015.

of a similar effect and, in a rather ironic contradiction with Byron's early critical opinion about authorship expressed in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers,* the success was almost granted based on his fame.

Byron included *Beppo* in the copyright for Canto IV of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and Mary O'Connell in her book *Byron and John Murray: A Poet and His Publisher* claims that it was apparent from Byron's correspondence "[it would seem like] an insurance policy in case *Childe Harold IV* failed to sell."[67] The success of Byron's previous works connected with the idea of composing *Beppo* – as Mary O'Connell points out, Byron's publisher John Murray asked him to compose a poem set in Venice.[68]

Murray's request, however, was by no means the sole impulse for the composition of *Beppo.* Based on his correspondence with both Murray and Thomas Moore, Byron intended to write an epic of six cantos whose hero would be a young Venetian. The poem, however, was never finished and there are only fragments of what might have been a part of it – "The Monk of Athos" and "Il Diavolo Innamorato"; besides the two poems, Byron projected the idea into many of his further writings, among them *Beppo.*[69]

As for Byron's satires in general, they are often divided by critics into two groups.[70] The first, framed by approximately the first half of Byron's writing career, includes *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers, Hints from Horace, The Curse of Minerva,* and *The Waltz.* The connecting feature of the first group is Byron's emphasis on tradition; the works immediately call for association with the great satirists like Pope whose form Byron uses and to whom he also frequently refers both in his writing and correspondence.

The other group, commencing with *Beppo* and developed particularly in *Don Juan* and *The Vision of Judgment* are Byron's exile works. Claude Fuess describes them as being writ-

[67] O'Connell 163.
[68] O'Connell 162.
[69] Martin Procházka, *Romantismus a osobnost* (Praha: Kruh moderních filologů, 1996) 175.
[70] This division is found e.g. in Claude Fuess' *Byron as a Satirist in Verse,* 8.

ten in "the Italian burlesque spirit."[71] *Beppo* is a significant poem in the Byronic context since it makes the transition between the poet's two satirical modes and also because it is considered an antecedent of *Don Juan* in which Byron largely builds on the "Italian tradition of oral improvised performance poetry."[72]

In *Beppo,* a narrator or rather an observer is introduced and his first person narrative is rich with satirical remarks. The poem tells a simple story of a Venetian lady Laura – one of Byron's references to the gems of Italian literature – whose husband, merchant Giuseppe, or Beppo goes missing when venturing to the ocean on one of his ships. Laura is quick to find a lover, a wealthy Count. After some years, Beppo returns back home, disguised as a Turk, and he and Laura are eventually reunited. Beppo and the Count even become friends.

3.2 The Oriental Tales Influence

As is apparent from the synopsis, *Beppo* echoes the huge interest in the Oriental motifs in British Romantic literature and above all Byron's own Oriental tales. The beginning of the trend of Orientalism in British literature is generally ascribed to the first translation of *The Arabian Nights* that dates back to early 18th century. From that time on, there has been increased popularity of Orient-themed writings that featured exotic settings, unusual heroes and plots, either being translated from the French or written by British authors, such as Samuel Johnson's *History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia.*[73]

In *Beppo,* however, the references to Orientalism are in accord with the satirical tone of the poem which is what makes it different it from Byron's Oriental poems per se. Perhaps

[71] Fuess 8.
[72] Simon Bainbridge, "The Poetic Conversations of Byron and Shelley", *A Companion to Romantic Poetry,* Charles Mahoney, ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011) 215.
[73] Arthur Pike Connant, *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 1967) 2.

the most obvious connection might be made with *Lara* with which *Beppo* shares the theme of a hero returning to his homeland – Count Lara, the hero of the narrative, spends years in the East and then makes a return to Britain where he has almost been forgotten by the people – and Beppo has a similar story. His wife Laura, however, gives him a rather comic welcome – she asks him trivial questions that show her stereotypes – and perhaps the stereotypes of the majority of people present at the ball – mainly about the Eastern customs. It is apparent that her knowledge of them is limited to those vague bits. Laura's rather frivolous conversational tone – certainly not appropriate to welcome a long-lost husband – is a satirical account of the scanty knowledge the people from the West generally have about the East as is clear from Stanza 92, quoted here in full:

> And are you really, truly, now a Turk?
> With any other women did you wive?
> Is 't true they use their fingers for a fork?
> Well, that's the prettiest shawl - as I'm alive!
> You'll give it me? They say you eat no pork.
> And how so many years did you contrive
> To - Bless me! did I ever? No, I never
> Saw a man grown so yellow! How's your liver?

The passage is a good example of Byron's so to say trademark ability to present a double-edged phenomenon, in this case an apt parody of his own writing style – the Oriental tales – that had gained him wide recognition. The double-edged quality of *Beppo* shall be further addressed.

3.3 Ottava Rima

One of the most obvious differences between the likes of *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* – that is the first group of Byron's satires – and the "Beppoesque" works is their form which is an important feature in making the satire attractive for its readers. In *Beppo,*

consisting of 99 stanzas, Byron draws inspiration from Italian literature and introduces the ottava rima verse into his poetry for the first time.

While the heroic couplet of his previous satires is more than familiar to the eye of the English reader, ottava rima has an exotic feel. It is an eight-line stanza rhyming abababcc and written (in the English context) in the iambic pentameter. In Italian it used to be hendecasyllabic as is apparent from the works of Giovanni Boccaccio in the 14th century and Ludovico Ariosto in the 16th century. The form was used primarily in narrative poems. Byron, however, was not the first English writer to employ the verse; it was used before him by Thomas Wyatt in as early as the 16th century, by Edmund Spenser, and also by Byron's fellow Romantics Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats.[74] An example of a stanza from *Beppo* follows, with "/" marking the unstressed syllables, "U" marking the stressed ones:

You'd better walk about begirt with briars,	a
Instead of coat and smallclothes, than put *on*	b
A single stitch reflecting upon friars,	a
Although you swore it only was in *fun*;	b
They'd haul you o'er the coals, and stir the fires	a
Of Phlegethon with every mother's *son*,	b
Nor say one mass to cool the caldron's bubble	c
That boil'd your bones, unless you paid them double.	c

/ U / U / U / U / U

(*Beppo*, IV)

Professor Drummond Bone in *The Cambridge Companion to Byron* explains that Byron's desired exotic effect is achieved chiefly by weak or mis-stressed rhyme in the final couplet of the stanzas. There are also polysyllabic rhymes which spread over words, usually over

[74] Text on ottava rima based on Cuddon 625 and Baldick 179.

two or three.[75] This feature together with an almost song-like quality of some of the stanzas – the language is playful and vivid – echoes the carnival setting the narrator takes the readers to at the beginning of the poem; this is achieved for example by alliteration that often runs through a number of lines. That is the case of the following excerpt from Stanza 16: "Sighs wishes, wishes words, and words a letter, / Which flies on wings of light-heel'd Mercuries." The form enables building the accurateness of the descriptions in the poem which is essential particularly with regard of its travelogue nature.

3.4 The Italian Influence

Besides from the new form, the overall satirical tone of *Beppo* also changes strikingly when compared to *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers.* While the earlier satire adopts a tone that is harsh and offensive, *Beppo* is softer, while still retaining its satirical quality. It is clearly an example of Bernesque poetry named after the 16th century Italian poet Francesco Berni. He was famous for a peculiar satirical style characterised by "grotesque caricature of manners in which paradox, fantasy and bizarre comparisons are the commonest elements."[76] Concerning Byron's style in *Beppo*, Professor Robson notes: "these new associations, together with his interest in the comic poetry of the Italian Renaissance, certainly colour the lively and picturesque surface of those [*Beppo, Don Juan*] poems."[77]

[75] Drummond Bone, ed., "*Childe Harold IV, Don Juan* and *Beppo*" *The Cambridge Companion to Byron* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 167.
[76] Cuddon 785.
[77] William Wallace Robson, "Byron as Poet," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. 43 (London: Oxford University Press, 1957) 46.

Byron's inspiration reaches even further as he had good knowledge of Italian literature.[78] He was inspired, among others sources, by the burlesques of Luigi Pulci, the 15th century Italian poet whose epic *Morgante Maggiore* he began translating. There is also evidence he studied the works of Ludovico Ariosto who is known for his anti-clerical satire which is reflected in *Beppo,* too. Ariosto's most significant work is *Orlando Furioso.* Catherine Addison in her essay "Heritage and Innovation in Byron's Narrative Stanzas" explains which features of Ariosto's poetry occur in Byron, particularly in *Don Juan* – but having their roots in *Beppo*; she claims that Ariosto in his *Orlando Furioso* "controls [...] a huge variety of characters and strands of story and rejoices in the folly and fecundity of life while remaining conscious of its cruelties and [remains] tolerant, amused and sympathetic [...]"[79] *Orlando Furioso* draws upon the poem *Orlando Innamorato* by Matteo Maria Boiardo who was also an inspiration for Byron. Another Italian author who was one of Byron's sources is Torquato Tasso and his famous epic poem *Jerusalem Delivered.*

3.5 Whistlecraft

Besides the Italian authors, *Beppo* was influenced by the English writer John Hookham Frere's satire *Whistlecraft* written also in ottava rima. It is an Arthurian mock-heroic epic. What makes *Whistlecraft* so significant for contextualization of Byron's satire is the fact that it was written in English and therefore it would necessarily alter its Italian model; it would give Byron an idea of how the form might be transferred to the English language.

[78] The following passage on Byron's Italian inspiration is based on Peter Cochran's *Byron and Italy* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 4–6, and Caroline Franklin's *Byron: Routledge Guides to Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2007) 63.

[79] Catherine Addison, "Heritage and Innovation in Byron's Narrative Stanzas," *Byron: Heritage and Legacy*, ed. Cheryl A. Wilson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 134.

Naturally, *Whistlecraft* could not imitate the Italian form in its entirety and so there are features in the poem that differ from the Italian models and these are adapted by Byron in his own way in *Beppo.* One of the features is the speech of *Whistlecraft* which is "more consistently colloquial than that of any of the Italian"[80] and which Byron takes even further. Also, *Whistlecraft* is more lax than the Italian form and it is this very quality that enables Byron to express the energy of his stanzas and to find his easy-flowing conversational tone.

Byron himself admits the importance of *Whistlecraft* in his correspondence with his publisher John Murray.[81] Peter Cochran argues that *Whistlecraft* was Byron's "immediate inspiration"[82] for writing *Beppo.* Andrew Rutherford in his book *Byron: A Critical Study* points out that "Frere's *jeu d'esprit* [...] transformed Byron's satirical technique, which up to this time had been based on false assumptions about his own talents and his affinity with the best poets of the eighteenth century."[83]

Professor Rutherford further claims that although Byron "had a deep and genuine regard for Pope, he lacked [...] the moral poise, the subtlety of wit and feeling, and the artistic economy, which made possible the best of Pope's work." Therefore, Professor Rutherford appreciates Byron's turn to a different mode inspired by *Whistlecraft* that "kept him from further vain attempts at realising his ideal of Augustan satire".[84]

Frere was, however, not the first poet to bring ottava rima into the English language poetry. There were various attempts to write in ottava rima from as early as the 16th century

[80] A more detailed account on the differences and similarities between the style of *Whistlecraft* and *Beppo* can be found in John Hookham Frere and Ross Douglas Waller, *The Monks and the Giants* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1926) 48–52. All further references are to this edition. The quote is to be found on page 50.
[81] M. Phillipson, "Alteration in Exile," *Nineteenth-Century Literature,* Vol. 58, No. 3, December 2003, p. 296, JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/ncl.2003.58.3.291> July 9, 2015.
[82] Peter Cochran, *Why We Need a New Text of Beppo,*
<http://www.newsteadabbeybyronsociety.org/works/downloads/beppo.pdf>, p. 1, 16 July, 2015
[83] Andrew Rutherford, *Byron: A Critical Study* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961) 109. All subsequent references are to this edition and the title will be referred to as *A Critical Study*.
[84] Rutherford, *A Critical Study, 109.*

by Thomas Wyatt, Earl of Surrey, Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton, Thomas Heywood followed by e.g. John Milton.[85]

3.6 The Commercial Aspect and Authorship

Another difference from *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers,* is the commercial aspect of *Beppo*. As is apparent from the previous comments, *Beppo* is designed to please its audience and Byron wrote it at least partly on request from John Murray who, as a publisher, would have decent knowledge of what might turn into a commercially successful work. Although Byron was interested in the business side of his writing, it is apparent from both *Beppo* and from his correspondence that he was not at ease with writing for money – a fact he had also stressed out in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers.* Yet, writing made it possible for him to stabilize his finances and he was even negotiating about money with Murray,[86] a thing that would probably be unimaginable for him at an earlier stage of his career.

Similarly to *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers, Beppo* also features several notes on authorship. The core of Byron's criticism – although considerably milder in its tone than *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* – lies in the fact that the majority of writers who write for living have a rather limited world view: "One hates an author that's *all author*, fellows / In foolscap uniforms turn'd up with ink" (75). Byron goes on to make his point and he praises the authors for whom writing is not the centre of interest: "Men of the world, who know the world like men / Scott, Rogers, Moore, and all the better brothers / Who think of something else besides the pen" (76).

Among the authors who are given satirical attention is also Byron himself which is new compared to *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* where he would mainly defend him-

[85] Frere and Waller, ed. 30.
[86] O'Connell 163.

self against critics. He writes about himself – or to be precise about the narrator of the poem – in connection with the commercial output of Byron's writing in the following way (51):

> Oh that I had the art of easy writing
> What should be easy reading! Could I scale
> Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
> Those pretty poems never known to fail,
> How quickly would I print (the world delighting)
> A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale;
> And sell you, mix'd with western sentimentalism,
> Some samples of the finest Orientalism!

The commercial aspect that is present in the Stanza refers particularly to the success of Byron's Oriental Tales which has been explained earlier in the chapter "Publication History and Context." The struggle with writing poems that yield to popular taste is more than apparent. The narrator points out the extreme pace with which the Oriental tales – such as *The Bride of Abydos, The Giaour* and others were printed. He also shows discomfort with the fact that such tales are sure to be popular with the readership. It is ironic particularly with regard to the opinion about professional writers that is expressed in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers.* He remarks on the mass production and the speed which his works underwent in order to meet the demand of the readership – and that is exactly what he had criticized about Robert Southey in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers;* he remarked on Southey's works being published one after another in a short period of time:

> Oh Southey! Southey! cease thy varied song!
> A bard may chant too often and too long:
> As thou art strong in verse, in mercy, spare!
> A fourth, alas! were more than we could bear.
>
> (*English Bards*, 225–228)

With this all taken into account, it is obvious that the Stanza is not a mere reflection of Byron's position as a writer. It points at a phenomenon that applied on writers in the era in general. Whereas Pope, as has been shown in the chapter on *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers,* had the power to influence the society in a way that would have actual consequences, in Byron's times the position of the author was being transformed in a way that the was necessarily becoming a part of a newly formed system – that was one of the consequences of the institutionalization of the society – and which would, through the literary magazines and their reviewers – include literature, too.

3.7 The Matter of England and Venice

Digression – a word almost synonymous to some of his works – frequently leads Byron back to England and his approach is that of a distant, yet an engaged and concerned observer. The narrator – who is in the role of the mediator between Italy and the English readership – often employs the motif of Venice to highlight and satirize certain features of the English society. These are double-edged comments typical of any expatriate – on the one hand they are critical of their homeland but at the same time they in a way show nostalgic affection for it. The same applies to the narrator's descriptions of Italy – it is both praised for things that the narrator thinks England lacks but at the same time he struggles to understand some of the customs (such as the fact that a lover is a tolerated "member" of a marriage as is the case of Laura).

Moreover, the narrator makes comments about the English language which he describes in the following way: "[...] our harsh northern whistling, grunting guttural / Which we're obliged to hiss, and spit, and sputter all" (44). The alliterative quality of the excerpts adds to the effect of the verse. Italian, on the other hand, is called "the soft bastard Latin" (43)

which is one of the examples of the new style – the remark is at the same time critical when commenting on Italian being a "bastard" version of Latin, but at the same time it is a playful teasing of a beloved and "soft" language that "sounds as if it should be writ on satin / With syllables which breathe of the sweet South" (44).

In the scene that takes place at a Venetian ball, the narrator compares the dancing hall to London's Vauxhall and makes remarks about the superficiality of the society: "The company is 'mix'd' (the phrase I quote is / As much as saying they're below your notice)" (58) and continues in Stanza 59:

> For a "mix'd company"implies that, save
> Yourself and friends, and half a hundred more,
> Whom you may bow to without looking grave,
> The rest are but a vulgar set, the bore
> Of public places, where they basely brave
> The fashionable stare of twenty score
> Of well-bred persons, call'd "The World;" but I,
> Although I know them, really don't know why.

In the next Stanza, the narrator adds that this applies to England. Although the Stanza is not particularly positive for the English, the tone in which it is written prevents the reader from being insulted since, as the narrator explicitly says, the unflattering comments do not concern the narrator, the reader and their friends; naturally, it is meant ironically and it reflects the superficiality of the conversations that can be overheard at such events as the ball depicted in *Beppo*. The way in which the narrator chooses to describe it is a smart move – he pleases the reader while still making his point in satirizing the vice of the high society of which the reader is likely a part – it is yet another example of the double-edged comments typical of Byron's later satire.

Venice, on the other hand, represents a completely different universe from England. It is a place that allows its inhabitants to indulge in the pleasures life has to offer. Although the narrator's preference of Venice to the coldness of England is more than evident – both in terms of the environment and the people – it does not prevent him from observing and noting down the peccadilloes of the Venetian society.

One of the vices the narrator stresses out the most is the fact that married women are allowed to have a lover which is what the protagonist Laura does. With regard to the literary history of the name Laura, Byron's Laura is the direct opposite of Petrarch's ideal and unattainable Laura. The two sides of Laura – she is admired and praised for her beauty and at the same time is the symbol of the perhaps too relaxed Venetian morale – is another example of Byron's new satirical weapon – incorporating two paradoxes into one through praising and ridiculing at the same time.

3.8 *Beppo* and Bakhtin

The critical discourse on Byron's work and particularly *Don Juan* has been frequently seen through the theories of the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin.[87] Since *Beppo* is considered an antecedent of *Don Juan,* it is useful to relate the poem to Bakhtin's work, too. One of the core concepts that Bakhtin introduces is heteroglossia. It is differentiated speech is concerned with what is nowadays called the sociolect and register – Bakhtin did not have the terms available, however, he defined what is now known under these terms in sociolinguistics.[88]

Bakhtin is concerned with the application of heteroglossia into the literary context and traces what happens to a certain mode of language when it enters, through its author, a text. He emphasizes the gap between the actual author and the narrator. Heteroglossia is double-edged – it is both historical and normative which means that is reflects both the variable and the constant state of affairs.[89] This creates a complex mixture of genres, tones, language specificities of various social strata etc. that influence each other in a myriad of ways.

In Byron's work there is this precise employment of a number of worlds presented in a single work, or even a single utterance. An example might be Childe Harold's "travelling" through the ceased civilisations. In *Beppo,* the combination of various worlds is not that apparent at the first sight but it still is present; it is evident from the very existence of the narrator who is a combination of a fictitious character and of what the reader, based on facts known about Byron's life, might assume to be Byron himself, or rather his public image. A significant part of Byron's satirical power from *Beppo* on is based on his double-voicedness as ex-

[87] See e.g. Michael S. Macovski, *Dialogue and Critical Discourse: Language, Culture, Critical Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), or Martin Procházka, *Romantismus a osobnost* which has been previously referred to. See footnote 69.
[88] Susan Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997) 18. All further references are to this edition.
[89] Vice 18.

plained by Bakhtin. Satire is a genre that is often based on presenting two opposite ideas and intertwining them; that is also one of the main features of heteroglossia. In Bakhtin's own words, heteroglossia

> [...] constitutes a special type of double-voiced discourse. It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author. In such discourse there are two voices, two meanings and two expressions. Examples of this would be comic, ironic or parodic discourse [...][90]

Beppo contains a great many examples of such "double-voicedness." One of them is the relationship of the narrator – who himself is an example of heteroglossia as Bakhtin also points out when describing the function and position of the narrator in a literary text – with his readers. The narrator's aim – and this applies on narrators in general, not exclusively on *Beppo* – is to attract his readers. In Italy, there is the tradition of the Improvisatori. They were poets able to perform longer, yet improvised poetry which is also a quality of the Count as told by the narrator in *Beppo:* "He patronised the Improvisatori /Nay, could himself extemporise some stanzas / Wrote rhymes, sang songs, could also tell a story" (33). The second voice of the narrator of *Beppo,* however, as opposed to the attempt to amuse the reader, satirizes the audience.

In the frequently quoted stanzas 47 and 48 that consist of a "list" of what the narrator is missing about England, he in fact addresses rather the opinions of a common Englishman[91] than his own which is apparent from his expressions of uncritical support of the "Regent, Church, and King" and particularly by the concluding exclamation "I like all and everything." What is also relevant about *Beppo* with regard to Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia is

[90] Mikhail M. Bakhtin and Michael Holquist, "Discourse in the Novel", *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays,* transl. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 324.
[91] Procházka 212.

that Bakhtin suggests that this particular concept is to be found primarily in "informal everyday kinds of language."[92]

This fact is connected with another key concept by Bakhtin, the carnivalesque. Bakhtin emphasizes the double-voicedness of carnival which is based on the fact that ordinary people have dual existence – one that they employ in what might be called unofficial situations and the other that they employ in the discourse of the church. It is the carnival – which Bakhtin traces back to the Middle Ages – that gives way to the unofficial, humorous side of life; and it is the carnival time which Byron chooses for the opening of *Beppo.* The dual quality in his case is both the difference between the life in the carnivalesque mode and the ordinary life.

Bakhtin points out that carnival exists "without a division into performers and spectators. In carnival everyone is an active participant. Carnival is not contemplated and, strictly speaking, not even performed; its participants *live* in it."[93] The carnival in *Beppo*, however, stands also for emphasizing the difference between the English and the Italian customs and people – it is as if the Italians were a symbol of life during the carnival, and the English stood for the ordinary times.

Furthermore, Bakhtin stresses the importance of folk humour in the carnivalesque tradition which brings us back to the conversational tone typical of *Beppo* and which might be considered an opposition to the speech employed by the carnival attendees after the festivities come to an end. Bakhtin stresses out that there is "free and familiar contact among people. People who in life are separated by impenetrable hierarchical barriers enter into free familiar contact on the carnival square."[94] This is also one of the aspects of *Beppo* and it is referred to by the narrator in stanzas 58 and 59 as "mix'd" company and this blurring of the

[92] Vice 21.
[93] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, and Caryl Emerson, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 122. All further references are to this edition.
[94] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 123.

hierarchical edges enables the narrator to pursue his satirical intentions and to satirize both the attendees of the carnival and the reader to whom the poem is addressed and who represents the society as a whole. As Professor Procházka stresses out[95], the satirist in Byron's era is no longer able to pursue the actual improvement of the issues he satirizes – this is a role ascribed to the institutions responsible for maintaining order in the area of their competence.

3.9 *Beppo* – Conclusion

Although *Beppo* is perhaps not a poem that comes on one's mind when Byron's name is mentioned, it has very unique position in Byronic context for a number of reasons. It is a work which marks the transformation from immature and offensive satire seen in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* to a new poetic voice for which Byron is widely praised and which is given further treatment and development in *Don Juan* and *The Vision of Judgment.* Where *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* is based on insulting comments, the later satires rely on witty, conversational humour which appears to have a much stronger effect.

As for the relation between *Beppo* and *Don Juan,* Professor Drummond Bone argues that "if *Don Juan* is Byron's 'great work', *Beppo* is the tuning of the lyre, and the voice of both poems is unmistakably the same."[96] Professor Bone further claims that the tone lies in Byron's "construction of opposites held together, as it were, bitonality,"[97] and *Beppo* is a perfect example of it; Byron managed to create a peculiar balance between praise and critique, be it the Venetian morale or the nostalgia of an expatriate who had to bid farewell to his homeland, or the contrast between his actual successful writing career and his uneasiness about it expressed

[95] Procházka 201.
[96] Bone 157.
[97] Bone 158.

in the poem with new lightness and playfulness which *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* lacks.

Such playfulness is possible partly due to Byron's use of ottava rima, the traditional Italian verse form which he had studied thoroughly both in the Italian original and the English alternation by John Hookham Frere whose work *Whistlecraft* had a seminal role in the composition of *Beppo*. The conversational tone with witty, double-edged remarks is produced by the narrator who represents a powerful combination of Byron's public image and an observer of both the Venetian and the English society, and the teller of the story.

For a better understanding of the poem, and particularly the intentions of the narrator and their effect, it is convenient to use the concepts of Mikhail Bakhtin, namely his heteroglossia and the carnivalesque. The carnivalesque setting is essential since all the guests are positioned on more or less the same level and the differences between the strata of the society disappear which enables the narrator to observe them without regard to the roles that the society – or themselves – ascribe to them and therefore to attempt to view them in a clear light.

The carnivalesque tone also illustrates the transforming role of the satirist in the time that saw the emergence of literary institutions embodied in the reviewers and literary magazines. These together with the increasing institutionalization of the society would remove the satirist from the position that was typical in e.g. the Augustan era and which would allow satire have actual consequences. While taking on the mask[98] of a flippant narrator, the satirist in fact denies to accept the role that the institutions expect from him to perform.

Last but not least, Byron was well aware of the commercial aspect of his works, and of literature in general. While making rather caustic remarks on the enormous success of his Oriental Tales, he at the same time makes use of the Oriental motif again by employing the Eastern story-line in the character of Beppo. Although he appears discontented with the way

[98] More on the narrator's refusal of the new role of the satirist can be found in Martin Procházka's *Romantismus a osobnost* in the chapter "Byron – možnosti a meze romantické epiky" on p. 213.

the fast-paced success of the stories is taking him to, it is not possible for him to ignore the demand for his works from the readership and also from his publisher.

4 *The Vision of Judgment*

4.1 Publication History – the New Publisher

The Vision of Judgment was published under the pseudonym of Quevedo Redivivus in 1822[99] as Byron's reaction to Robert Southey's 1821 poem *A Vision of Judgement.* As for Byron's writing career, the years between the publication of *Beppo* (1817) and *The Vision of Judgment* saw, most notably, the publication of the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* the epic tale *Mazeppa,* the so called Venetian plays *Marino Faliero* and *The Two Foscari,* the mystery plays *Cain* and *Heaven and Earth,* and the first Cantos of *Don Juan. Don Juan* also brought serious disagreement between Byron and his publisher John Murray with whom he had been working since 1811, i.e. the year of the publication of the first Cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.*

It is important to note that Murray was a Tory-oriented publisher with connections to the government. He published the *Quarterly Review,* an influential and respected periodical. Murray's respectability, Caroline Franklin argues,[100] would provide positive reviews for Byron's work, more or less regardless the political views of the reviewers. Murray kept encouraging Byron to alter some of the stanzas in *Don Juan* which initiated their quarrel that would eventually lead to the break of their friendship and professional cooperation – Murray would even first publish *Don Juan* without the publisher's name, anticipating what the reaction of the reviewers and readership would be.[101]

Also important for the relationship between Byron and Murray was the outrage that appeared after the publication of Byron's drama *Cain* in 1821. Murray was accused[102] for is-

[99] Bone xix.
[100] Franklin, *Byron, Routledge Guides to Literature* 11.
[101] O'Connell 196.
[102] O'Connell 187–88.

suing such a "blasphemous" work and he became cautious about Byron's further works ever since; he hesitated with the publication of both *Heaven and Earth* and *The Vision of Judgment.*

Therefore, Byron approached a new publisher, the radical John Hunt who printed *The Vision of Judgment* in the first issue of his new periodical *The Liberal;* for this issue, Byron wrote also the Letter to the Editor and epigrams on Lord Castlereagh, and Hunt was fined for publishing *The Vision of Judgment.*[103] The change of publisher, however, did not end Byron's complicated relationship with Murray, quite on the contrary. *The Vision of Judgment* as published in *The Liberal* did not include the Preface in which Byron explains the intention of the poem – a counter action to Southey's *A Vision of Judgment* – and it was also lacking corrections, Byron assumed it was Murray's fault. It is probable, however, that it was Byron's friend Douglas Kinnaird who lost the text.[104]

In a sense, *The Vision of Judgment* marks Byron's return to *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* in the passages that are a parody of a certain poet's style, such as the simplicity of Wordsworth and Bowles as shown in the chapter dedicated to the satire. Gary Dyer in his book *British Satire and the Politics of Style, 1789 – 1832* relates *The Vision of Judgment* to other works of similar style i.e. the parodies of a certain work of other poet, such as P.B. Shelley's *Peter Bell the Third* and Thomas Love Peacock's *Proteus.* In these works, Professor Dyer suggests, "burlesque subsumes caricature"[105] and they have roots in Augustan satire. In *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers,* for example, the passage about Wordsworth's "Idiot Boy" is written in such spirit.

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[103] Leslie P. Pickering, *Lord Byron, Leigh Hunt, and the Liberal* (New York: Haskell House, 1966) 17.
[104] O'Connell 191.
[105] Gary Dyer, *British Satire and the Politics of Style, 1789-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 88. All further references are to this edition.

4.2 Form and Inspiration

The Vision of Judgment is a continuation of Byron's ottava rima verse – arguably his finest verse form employed for the first time in *Beppo* and refined in *Don Juan* – and consists of the Preface and a hundred and six stanzas. Formally, the poem is a travesty – a satire "mockingly undignified or trivializing treatment of a dignified subject, usually as a kind of parody."[106] An example is *Don Quixote*, a travesty of chivalric romances. Regarding the form, Andrew Rutherford claims that "[Byron] does not attempt to imitate the Laureate's style, but makes his plot appear ridiculous by presenting it in a completely different style, transforming the whole tone, feeling, and significance of the original work."[107] It is noteworthy to consider the title as well – Peter Cochran observes[108] Byron's "confident" definite article as opposed to Southey's indefinite.

Although the immediate inspiration for the poem was provided by Southey, it must be noted that there is also pre-Christian evidence for the motif of judgement which, as Peter Cochran explains, is found in the final book of Plato's *Republic*, addressed in more detail in the following chapter. As for the post-Christian account, Peter Cochran gives the example of the Book of Revelation.[109] Emrys Jones in the essay "Byron's Visions of Judgment" proposes two other sources – the *Ludus* de morte Claudii or the Apocolocyntosis probably written by Seneca the Younger and Erasmus's *Julius Excludus*.[110] Byron himself in the Postscript to *The*

[106] Baldick 262.
[107] Rutherford, *A Critical Study* 226.
[108] Peter Cochran, "Why Did Byron Hate Southey," p. 10 <http://www.newsteadabbeybyronsociety.org/works/downloads/byron_southy.pdf> 1 August 2015. All further references are to this edition.
[109] Peter Cochran, "Antecedents of *The Vision of Judgement*," *Byron: Heritage and Legacy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 117.
[110] Emrys Jones, "Byron's Visions of Judgment," *The Modern Language Review* Vol. 76, No. 1, January 1981, JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3727007> p. 3–6, 1 August 2015. All further references are to this edition.

Vision of Judgment mentions the influence of Henry Fielding's *Journey from This World to the Next* and of the Spanish writer Francisco de Quevedo whose influence on *The Vision of Judgment* will be the subject of a following chapter.

4.3 The Classical Influence

The employment of visions, dreams and the images of afterlife appears as early as the literature of the Ancient Greece and Rome, and is connected with the expressions of prophecies, i.e. the writing which "present doom-laden visions of the world and [...] predictions of mankind's destiny."[111] In Book X, the final section of his *Republic* called "The Myth of Er," Plato provides an account of a cosmic vision; its hero, Er, was killed in a battle but while the bodies of the other dead from the battle decay, his is found intact. He returns to life to tell the story of his afterlife journey. He presents an account of a place where souls of the dead are sorted by the judges either to Heaven or Hell, depending on their earthly morale and deeds, suggesting that the life lead on Earth is the sole thing that is able to lift the soul to Heaven.[112]

Plato provides a great inspiration for Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis (The Dream of Scipio* in the English translation). The Second Punic War general Scipio has a dream in which he is shown the nine spheres of the Universe and the five zones of Earth, and is also informed on the condition upon which the soul of the dead might be sorted to Heaven.[113] The dream vision was a popular genre in the Middle Ages, too, and as J.A. Cuddon explains it became the "ev-

[111] Cuddon 48.

[112]Radcliffe G. Edmonds, *Myths of the Underworld Journey Plato, Aristophanes, and the "Orphic" Gold Tablets* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 51.

[113]Michael Albrecht , Gareth L. Schmeling, Frances S. Newman, John K. Newman, Ruth R. Caston, and Francis R. Schwartz, *A History of Roman Literature: From Livius Andronicus to Boethius: with Special Regard to Its Influence on World Literature* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997) 532 and 541.

ergreen"[114] of literature ever since, although the later works did not hold to the allegorical structure of the Classical accounts too strongly.

4.4 Francisco de Quevedo

Francisco de Quevedo[115] whose name Byron used as his pseudonym for *The Vision of Judgment* was a Spanish Baroque writer. The work that reflects the most in *The Vision of Judgment* is his Los Sueños, *Dreams and Visions* in English, particularly his *Sueño del Juicio Final* which employs similar satirical techniques to that used by Byron. It follows in the footsteps of Virgil, Homer, Petronius who all used the concept of a dream in their works. Similarly to Byron, Quevedo's work also features a witty narrator. Furthermore, Byron also approaches the issue of deity in the same manner as Quevedo – God is represented by Archangel Michael and Saint Peter and he does not directly intervene to the story, in contrast to Southey's version.

A key aspect of Quevedo's writing is his complex language – Spanish Baroque writers would rely rather strongly on Latin syntax, i.e. the use of complicated word order, and on complex conceits so that their text would be very dense which naturally makes a clear explanation of his works rather complicated.[116] Byron makes use of similar devices and they add to the satirical power of *The Vision of Judgment.*[117]

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[114] Cuddon 242.

[115] The passage on Quevedo is based on María Losada Friend, "Byron, Quevedo Redivivus," Universidad de Huelva <http://rabida.uhu.es/dspace/bitstream/handle/10272/1736/b11980989.pdf?sequence=1> 6 August 2015.

[116] For more on Quevedo's style see David T. Gies (*The Cambridge History of Spanish Literature*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 143.

[117] There are many accounts of such language, particularly in the passages concerned with the corrupted politics. An example is Stanza LXXXI which includes an ironic passage on "writing letters without heads."

4.5 Synopsis

The Vision of Judgment draws essentially on two sections of Southey's poem – "The Gate of Heaven" and "The Accusers." The poem opens with a glance to the Gate of Heaven where cherubs – all of them Tories – have nothing to do but Sathan[118] and the angel whose job it is to write down the names of the souls that belong to Hell are busy. George III enters the Gate of Heaven and it is to be decided by Archangel Michael and Sathan whether he shall be admitted to Heaven or rather descend to Hell.

Also present are two witnesses John Wilkes, a politician, and Junius, an author of pamphlets[119] (both appear in Southey's version, too, but they fall back to Hell). Southey himself is to read his *A Vision of Judgement* but the poem is so awful that everyone present attempts to escape and Southey is taken to Saint Peter's lake. This is the cause of a chaotic situation during which the King, unobserved, slips into Heaven. Gary Dyer argues that Southey enters in a function of deus ex machina – his hideous poetry provides George with the chance to sneak in Heaven.[120]

4.6 Southey

4.6.1 Byron and Southey – Personal Hatred

The relationship between the two poets is very complex, their hatred long-standing and understanding its aspects is essential for an deeper understanding of Byron's work since references to Southey are frequent at various stages of his career – they might be found in

[118] Byron's spelling.
[119] Junius was a pseudonym for a critic of George III's politics in America, and of his approach to civil liberties. It is not known what his real identity was. See Peter Cochran's edition of *The Vision of Judgment,* 40. <https://petercochran.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/the_vision_of_judgement3.pdf> 6 August 2015.
[120] Dyer 90.

English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers where, however, they stay on impersonal ground. *The Vision of Judgment* introduces a more personal tone. Peter Cochran provides the principal reasons for Byron's hatred of Southey, one of them being Southey spreading rumours about what he called the "League of Incest"[121] of Byron and Shelley during their stay in Switzerland. This naturally angered Byron and it was probably the final reason for the slide from remarks on Southey's poetry to that targeted personally at the poet.

A further reason, Peter Cochran explains, was the success of Byron's Oriental Tales, a genre also pursued by Southey. Byron was inspired to write the Oriental Tales of his own, but given their immense popularity would eventually become ashamed of their success[122] which is apparent from e.g. the lines in *Beppo*.[123] Peter Cochran aptly sums up that "Byron had ruined English poetry in trying successfully to emulate him [Southey]."[124] There are, however, also less hateful aspects about their relationship; the two poets met and, apparently, were struck by the way each other looked. Also, Byron appeared to be impressed, as Peter Cochran suggests, by the aims of Southey's work.[125] The political as well as poetical antagonism between the Byron and Southey shall be discussed in the following chapters.

4.6.2 Southey's A Vision of Judgement

A Vision of Judgement is written in hexameter – the use of which Southey lengthily explains in the Preface – which is a form neither common nor popular in English. Susan J.

[121] Cochran, "Why Did Byron Hate Southey," 6.
[122] Ibid 2–3.
[123] See chapter 3.1 "The Commercial Aspect and Authorship" for more on the Oriental Tales and their reflection in *Beppo.*
[124] Cochran, "Why Did Byron Hate Southey," 3.
[125] Cochran, "Why Did Byron Hate Southey," 2. The essay provides a valuable and more detailed study of the relationship between the two poets, including evidence from their correspondence and poetry.

Wolfson calls Southey's hexameters "strenuous [and] proudly advertised"[126] and generally the form received negative reactions. The main plot line is naturally similar to Byron's version, only ideologically reversed. The principal difference is found in the treatment of politics and of King George III. For Southey, the Poet Laureate, it was a duty to be in accordance with the court and to praise the dead monarch – and perhaps even more his successor George IV to whom the poem is dedicated. The Dedication is an absolutely non-critical account of the new King and dubs him the "munificent Patron of science, art, and literature."[127] Southey's approach, Peter Cochran argues, is so sycophantic that it was too much even for some supporters of the government.[128]

J. D. Jump in the essay "Byron's *Vision of Judgment*" argues that "Southey seems to have confused membership of the heavenly host with membership of the Tory party. At the same time he must have suspected that others would find the identification irreverent, or absurd"[129] for the problem with the very concept of judgment is inevitably the question of whether a poet, or for that matter any human being has the right to interfere with the will of God. Even Southey's son marked such approach as "too daring."[130] Byron, too, objects to the issue in the Postscript to *The Vision of Judgment* saying that Southey had adopted God's voice. When Southey appears at the Gate to Heaven, following is what Asphodel has to say about him: "he anticipates /The very business you are now upon / And scribbles as if head clerk to the Fates" (LXXXIX, 706–708) – the "business" involves the question whether to

[126] Susan J. Wolfson, "*The Vision of Judgment* and the visions of 'author,'" *The Cambridge Companion to Byron,* ed. Drummond Bone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 171.

[127] Robert Southey, "A Vision of Judgment" (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1821), vi, Archive.org < https://archive.org/details/visionofjudgemen00sout> 1 August 2015. All further references are to this edition.

[128] Peter Cochran, " One Ton per Square Foot: The Antecedents of *The Vision of Judgement,*" *Byron: Heritage and Legacy,* ed. by Cheryl A. Wilson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 116. All subsequent references are to this edition.

[129] J. D. Jump, "Byron's Vision of Judgment," Manchester eScholar Services < https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:1m2944&datastreamId=POST-PEER-REVIEW-PUBLISHERS-DOCUMENT.PDF> 127, 6 August 2015. All further references are to this edition.

[130] Jump 127.

admit George to Heaven or not. Byron's *The Vision of Judgment* indeed refers to God, too, but unlike Southey, does not adopt God's right for the decision as to King George's admission to Heaven. Byron's George III slips in by coincidence – rather ironically – caused by Southey. On the other hand, Southey acquires the role assigned to God and lets George enter Heaven deliberately.

4.6.3 Southey's Authority

A problem closely bound with the notion of interfering with God's will is the question of authority. Southey was indeed a part of the establishment and such figures would inevitably present their voice full of confident authority which indeed is apparent from *A Vision of Judgement*. Jerome McGann argues that Southey would "speak with authority of what is right and wrong, good and evil, angelic and satanic."[131] Byron, on the other hand, "undercuts and renders ironic every voice which pretends to assume this kind of authority."[132]

Southey's authority is provided to him by the government and he can "choose [his] own reviewers" which is an attack targeted not exclusively at Southey but also at the reviewers, a reoccurring theme in Byron's satires. Moreover, Southey's poem is "pervaded by a tone of arrogance and self-satisfaction which was exceedingly offensive to Byron."[133] Another point which is contradictory to Byron's beliefs is the fact that George III is met in Heaven by the great personages of the English history, such as Chaucer, Elizabeth I and Shakespeare but the Augustan figures – such as Pope – are missing.

[131] McGann, *Byron and Romanticism*, 49.
[132] McGann, *Byron and Romanticism*, 49.
[133] Fuess 191.

4.6.4 Southey vs *Don Juan* – "The Dedication"

"The Dedication" was written in 1818[134] and is addressed to Robert Southey, although it was not a part of the first edition and was only published after Byron's death, in 1830. It certainly, opinion-wise, anticipates *The Vision of Judgment* and addresses also the other Lakists. Byron argues that "For me who, wandering with Pedestrian Muses / Contend not with you on the winged Steed / I wish your Fate may yield ye, when she chooses" (VIII) which, as Peter Cochran suggests,[135] mockingly references to the notion of the sublime employed by both Southey and Wordsworth. It might, however, also point at Southey's function as the Poet Laureate who considers himself somewhat elevated from the rest of the poets owing to his position. Related to the aforementioned lines is also the passage on Southey's supposed wish "To supersede all warblers here below / And be the only Blackbird in the dish" (III) – in other words to outplace his fellow poets, followed by the famous remark that like the flying fish, Southey is "Gasping on deck, because you soar too high, Bob / And fall, for Lack of moisture, quite adry, Bob!" (III) Apart from its rather lewd connotations.[136] It also points to Southey's poetic clumsiness that Byron later on imitates in *The Vision of Judgment* when Southey gets to read his version of the poem.

4.6.5 Southey and the Venetian Plays *The Two Foscari* and *Marino Faliero*

The Two Foscari is Byron's 1821 Venetian play that has an important connection with *The Vision of Judgment* – it includes an Appendix written in prose in which Byron replies to Southey's accusation that Byron and Shelley are a part of what Southey in *A Vision of Judge-*

[134] Peter Cochran, ed., *Don Juan* Dedication <https://petercochran.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/don_juan_dedication.pdf> 6 August 2015

[135] Cochran, *Don Juan Dedication*, 6.

[136] Peter Cochran in his edition of The Dedication explains that dry-Bob meant intercourse without ejaculation, 3.

ment calls the Satanic School. The text is Byron's defence against Southey's accusation that the works of the Satanic School are to blame for the revolutionary tendencies in the society; Southey writes: "The publication of a lascivious book is one of the worst offences which can be committed against the well-being of society."[137] The statement refers to Byron's 1821 play *Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice* in which the Doge faces a nasty libel concerning his wife against which he plots a revenge – he joins in the rebellion cast against the oligarchy ruling in Venice. As a representative of the government, Southey naturally objects to Faliero's plotting of an upheaval which challenges the corrupted rulers who abuse the authority ascribed to them. Southey further calls the publication of such a book a "sin."

As a defence, Byron provides the example of French writers and argues that any authors possessing any freedom of writing would be persecuted by the government and would not be able to stir up such tendencies; on the contrary, it is the government of which Southey as the Poet Laureate is a representative that forces people to act in a revolutionary way since there is no other possible option for them.

Furthermore, Byron objects to Southey's rumours concerning what Southey calls the "League of Incest." After his stay in Europe in 1817, Southey would refer to Byron's and Shelley's free and dissolute relationship with Mary Godwin and her step-sister Claire Clairmont at the Villa Diodati in Switzerland.[138] As for evidence in the works of Shelley, the remarks on incest are quite frequent, be it his 1819 drama *The Cenci* in which the heroine Beatrice is sexually abused by her father and eventually murders him, or further accounts in *Laon and Cythna* or in "Letter to Maria Gisborne" in which Shelley defines incest as a poetic issue in a sense.[139]

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[137] Southey xviii.

[138] Kim Wheatley, *Romantic Feuds: Transcending the "Age of Personality"* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), section "Lord Byron's *Vision*."

[139] For more on Shelley's treatment of incest, see Michael O'Neill and Mark Sandy, *Romanticism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 2006) 224.

Byron revisits the famous "One hates an *author* that's *all author*" line from *Beppo* and argues that he, Byron, has done more deeds he can be proud of in any year of his life more than Southey throughout his whole life. This goes against Southey's accusation from the Preface to *A Vision of Judgement* that the poets would indulge in "Satanic pride." Southey did not leave Byron's address without a reaction and challenged Byron to attack him in verse next time. He also denied spreading the "League of Incest" rumours.[140]

4.6.6 Politics, Monarchy and Southey

Undoubtedly, politics is one of the focal points of Byron's disagreement with Southey. In "The Dedication" to *Don Juan* – addressed to Southey, Byron remarks on Southey's "Apostasy's so fashionable, too / To keep one creed's a task grown quite Herculean / Is it not so, my Tory, ultra-Julian?" (XVII) Similarly to Wordsworth – criticized for his politics in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* – Southey underwent a fundamental transformation of his political views from an eager Republican early in his career to the devoted Tory depicted in *The Vision of Judgment.*[141] Southey's political apostasy is, as Professor McGann explains, "elaborated into a general 'literary character,' a Grub Street avatar formed in the image of his own time."[142]

A further point of Byron's criticism of Southey is the way the Laureate changes his political views following Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in order to gain personal profit and to yield to currently popular opinion which is perhaps best seen in Stanzas 96 – 99; Southey's oppositional (not only) political views throughout time are described by Byron in the following way:

[140] J. D. Jump 124.
[141] McGann, *Byron and Romanticism*, 41.
[142] McGann, *Byron and Romanticism*, 41.

He had written praises of a Regicide;
He had written praises of all kings whatever;
He had written for republics far and wide,
And then against them bitterer than ever (Stanza 97)

To highlight the degree of the Poet Laureate's inconsistency, Byron adds his depiction of Southey meeting Satan and immediately offering him to write a book about his life:

He had written Wesley's life:—here turning round
To Satan, "Sir, I'm ready to write yours,
In two octavo volumes, nicely bound,
With notes and preface, all that most allures
The pious purchaser; and there's no ground
For fear, for I can choose my own reviewers:
So let me have the proper documents,
That I may add you to my other saints.
(Stanza 99)

It is a clear sign that Southey is perceived as someone who would be in accord with any representative of the contemporary establishment no matter what his personal preferences might be and his depiction would be taken to an ad absurdum admiration of his benefactors, in the poem called his "other saints." A particularly bitter and ironic is the fact that Southey was "ready to persecute those who had remained true to the liberal cause" which is, as J. D. Jump observes in the essay "Byron's *Vision of Judgment*," would make Byron see Southey as a renegade.[143]

[143] J. D. Jump 122.

For a more complex understanding of Southey's political transformation[144] from a radical to a Tory, and its reflection in his literary career, it is necessary to go back to 1817, the year of the publication of his dramatic poem *Wat Tyler*. The poem was written as early as 1794, i.e. deep in Southey's republican period and its pirated publication was carried out by his opponents with the intention to embarrass him. The publication naturally caused a great uproar and Southey's chief argument for his defence was the fact that the poem was written in his youth and had it been published immediately after its composition, such turmoil would not have happened.

After Southey had finished *Wat Tyler*, he delegated it to Robert Lovell, his brother-in-law; Lovell gave it to the radical publisher Samuel Ridgeway who initially offered to publish the poem anonymously, but eventually would abandon the plan to issue it – there was an increased pressure against the radicals and Ridgeway, having been previously imprisoned, probably did not want to risk further punishment. It is indeed interesting to note that the estimated number of copies sold is about sixty thousand and by 1827 there were seventeen editions of the poem. The principal motivation of such wide interest was the poem's power to embarrass Southey. It was used by the radicals to point at the "governmental hypocrisy."[145]

In *The Vision of Judgment,* the account of *Wat Tyler* appears on the title page which reads: "Suggested by the Composition so entitled by the Author of *Wat Tyler*" and thus anticipates the major target of the satire. The critical response to *A Vision of Judgment* is certainly not limited to Byron's satirical account. Southey received scathing comments even from his supporters, such as *The Literary Gazette* in which the poem was described as a mass of ab-

[144] It is also of interest to note that Southey was contributing to John Murray's *Quarterly Review.* See Lionel Madden, *Southey: The Critical Heritage* (New York: Routledge, 2002). All further references are to this edition

[145] For more on the controversy of *Wat Tyler,* see Matt Hill's online edition for Romantic Circles, <http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/wattyler/index.html>. The present text is based on Matt Hill's "A Brief Publication History of *Wat Tyler*," <http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/wattyler/contexts/publication_history.html>, 5 August 2015.

surdity. *A Vision of Judgement* severely worsened his position as a writer and it was his penultimate poetic work, followed only by *A Tale of Paraguay* in 1825.[146]

The politics in *The Vision of Judgment*, however, do not comprise exclusively of the dominant issue of Southey's apostasy. At least of the same importance are the reflections on the dead Hanoverian King George III who was on the throne for sixty years. For the last nine years, however, England was in the hands of George's son acting as the Prince Regent until becoming King George IV in 1820 – George III suffered from severe mental illness and became blind in the last years of his life which disabled him from acting as the King. His reign marked the loss of the American Colonies – these two facts are probably the most remembered of the time he spent on the English throne. George's legacy is in *The Vision of Judgment* recorded in the following way:

> A better farmer ne'er brushed dew from lawn,
> A worse king never left a realm undone!
> He died — but left his subjects still behind,
> One half as mad — and t'other no less blind (VIII)

George's nickname was the "Farmer" due to his interest in agriculture – he even wrote articles to the Agricultural Magazine, besides, the name George is of Greek origin meaning farmer. The name attributed to him had, however, also a deeper and at the same time more mocking basis – it denoted George's rather parsimonious handling of finance in contrast to his son George IV.[147]

The next stanza is a recollection of George's funeral which is described as attracting the hypocritical society who did not mourn for the King himself but were hungry for the pompous lustre surrounding such an event: "He died! his death made no great stir on earth: /

[146] Madden, "*Wat Tyler"* section of the Introduction.
[147] Ann Gaines and Arthur M. Schlesinger, *King George III: English Monarch* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2001), 33.

His burial made some pomp; there was profusion / Of velvet [...]" (Stanza IX, lines 65–67). Yet another passage regarding the King's death suggests that "It seemed the mockery of hell to fold / The rottenness of eighty years in gold" (Stanza X, lines 59–60).

Despite the aforementioned reservations about the King, the first person narrator also to a certain degree sympathizes with him. He calls him a puppet or the tool of George IV's and other close advisors's manipulation[148] which is also apparent from Wilkes's denial to convict the King.

4.7 The Image of the Gate to Heaven

Before George III enters the scene, The Gate to Heaven, an inseparable element of the judgemental scene, is introduced. It is in a sense a truly bureaucratic setting – and also a court, from the very nature of the act of judgment – angels work as clerks, Archangel Michael and Satan dispute over the fate of the accused King. It gives an image of the earthly world more than of the heavenly one – the black angel, taking records of the bad deeds is the only busy "employee" of the office. The language is also bureaucratic, employing terms such as "business" and "bureau":

> The Guardian Seraphs had retired on high,
> Finding their charges past all care below;
> Terrestrial business filled nought in the sky
> Save the Recording Angel's black bureau;
> Who found, indeed, the facts to multiply
> With such rapidity of vice and woe,
> That he had stripped off both his wings in quills,
> And yet was in arrear of human ills. (Stanza III)

[148]See lines XXII and XLIV.

Stanza IV, then, stresses out that the black angel's agenda has recently been so extensive that "Six Angels and twelve Saints were named his clerks" (Stanza IV, line 3). In the postscript to *The Vision of Judgment*, Quevedo Redivivus – Byron – remarks on the colloquialism of the heavenly ensemble, quoted here in full:

> It is possible that some readers may object, in these objectionable times, to the freedom with which saints, angels, and spiritual persons discourse in this *Vision*. But, for precedents upon such points, I must refer him to Fielding's *Journey from this World to the next*, and to the Visions of myself, the said Quevedo, in Spanish or translated. The reader is also requested to observe, that no doctrinal tenets are insisted upon or discussed; that the person of the Deity is carefully withheld sight, which is more than can be said for the Laureate, who hath thought proper to make him talk, not "like a school-divine," but like the unscholarlike Mr. Southey.

The quoted passage from the Postscript is not only an account of Byron's inspiration, or rather acknowledgement of the works in similar tone and the defence against possible criticism, but also an opposition against Southey's approach of an authority that he imposes on himself based on his position of the Poet Laureate, as is apparent in his *A Vision of Judgement.* An important comment of the Postscript is also that on the appearance of Deity in Southey's versus Byron's heaven – it is a defence from the accusations of blasphemy that would certainly come from the conservative critics. The use of a more colloquial way of communication between the Saints and Satan adds to the satirical strength of the work and is a source of humorous situations.

In the treatment of George III, there is a passage that contemplates whether George shall be eternally damned; the passage is concluded with the notion that it simply encoded in human nature to attempt to prevent suffering. With regard to this, Peter Schock argues that it is an act of defence against Southey's remarks on the Satanic School – while Southey consid-

ers the poets "impious," Byron suggests that the desire not to suffer does not oppose God but is a natural aspect of human being.[149] Following is the relevant Stanza XIII from *The Vision of Judgment:*

> 'God save the king!' It is a large economy
> In God to save the like; but if he will
> Be saving, all the better; for not one am I
> Of those who think damnation better still …
> I know this is unpopular; I know
> 'Tis blasphemous; I know one may be damn'd
> For hoping no one else may e'er be so

4.8 Satanism

In the Preface to *A Vision of Judgement* Southey coins the term "Satanic school" characterised by "a Satanic spirit of pride and audacious impiety, which still betrays the wretched feeling of hopelessness wherewith it is allied. The evil is political as well as moral, for indeed moral and political evils are inseparably connected."[150]

The accusation of Satanism as Byron makes clear in the Preface substantially contributed to the composition of the poem. Byron suggests that the principal motive for Southey to invent the existence of the "Satanic School" was that "Mr. S. [outhey] has been laughed at a little in some recent publications, as he was of yore in the 'Anti-jacobin,' by his present patrons. Hence all this 'skimble-scamble stuff' about 'Satanic' [...]."

It seems apt that the best possible reply to an accusation of Satanism is a work contemplating upon the diabolic concepts. Peter Schock in his book *Romantic Satanism: Myth and the Historical Moment in Blake, Byron, and Shelley* argues that Byron "develops a satanic

[149] Peter Schock, *Myth and the Historical Moment in Blake, Byron, and Shelley* (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 158. All further references are to this edition.
[150] Robert Southey, *A Vision of Judgement*, xxi.

persona to mock Tory reaction and its said prophet."[151] Professor Schock further claims that "because it accepts the conservative political appropriation of Christian diabology, the opening of *The Vision of Judgment* appears to concede a great deal – though in facetious term – to Southey"[152] which is based on the presumption that "historical process is presented as an eternal tug-of-war between heaven and hell,"[153] seen e.g. in Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell.* As for tradition, Satan also performs the roles normally assigned to him – he raises accusations against the dead King and acts as the Emperor of Hell.[154]

The accusations of Satanism, however, were by not Southey's invention and it is, again, tightly connected with politics. The increased degree of upheavals in the society after the Waterloo defeat saw the Tory government forced to prosecute any antireligious acts, such as anti-Christian or anti-clerical writings.[155] Such a state of the society naturally calls for authors to produce writings that test the boundaries of the government's acts. Among such works are Shelley's "On the Devil, and Devils," *The Cenci* and Byron's *Cain.*

Byron's 1821 mystery play *Cain* undoubtedly must be addressed to better understand Byron's connection to Satanism – Byron worked on the drama at approximately the same time as *The Vision of Judgment.* As the title suggests, *Cain* tells the story of Abel and Cain from the point of view of the latter. One of the characters of the play is also Lucifer. The drama was called blasphemous by the critics and to defend himself, Byron uses the example of Milton's *Paradise Lost* where Satan is also present.[156]

[151] Schock 156.
[152] Schock 157.
[153] Schock 157.
[154] Schock 159.
[155] Schock 86. Peter Schock also provides various instances of the persecutions of blasphemy in the last years of the Regency era.
[156] See Jerome McGann's *Byron and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 20 for more on Byron and Milton. All further references are to this edition.

Lucifer's purely traditional role as the bearer of evil is transformed and he is depicted as a "sceptical commentator who unsettles Christian myth."[157] The motivation behind the composition of *Cain* as for the employment of the Satanic theme is thought – both by Peter Schock and Marilyn Butler – to be an exercise testing the limits of the press and indeed, Byron faced problems having *Cain* published by Murray (as well as *The Vision of Judgment*) and also his 1823 drama with Biblical aspects *Heaven and Earth.* The Satanic motif reappears also in his unfinished play *The Deformed Transformed* and although it is not as confrontational as his other Satanic writings, it would still receive accusations of blasphemy.[158] Byron's ventures into this territory are also significant for the later Cantos of *Don Juan* with similarly "combative" passages.[159]

Despite this traditional view that is indeed initially found in *The Vision of Judgment,* Byron's satirical and ironic image of the matters between Heaven and Hell gives this view a twist since Heaven is presented as "morally enervated, governed by arbitrary prescription and precedent"[160] which is particularly apparent in the opening where the depiction of the heavenly practice is shown; as had been already suggested in the passage on the politics of *The Vision of Judgment,* the setting is in a sense an earthly bureau transferred to the heavenly background.

Jerome McGann explains that although Byron was in the light of the events presented above accused from blasphemous writing, his Lucifer – and this applies both to *Cain* and to Sathan in *The Vision of Judgment,* is not a "moral exemplar; on the contrary, Byron clearly (and sincerely) represented Lucifer in a critical light. But if he gave his diabolic prince certain

[157] Schock 93.
[158] Schock 112.
[159] Peter Schock suggests the passage on Siege of Ismail and the partisan preface, 112.
[160] Schock 157.

negative qualities, he also created for him a number of sympathetic contexts, as well as several powerful speeches."[161]

Professor McGann further argues that in the 18th century literary criticism, Lucifer of Milton's *Paradise Lost* would be seen as the hero of the poem. Although Byron also presents negative aspects of the figure in *Cain* and his inspiration from Milton is merely based on technical aspect, it is apparent from the drama that he was aware the critical heritage of Lucifer that gave birth to the Romantic heroic notion of Lucifer. His interpretation of Lucifer is through the optics of a fallen angel. It can be presumed that his dark heroes are based on this notion.[162]

In the Preface to *Cain,* Byron refers to the French naturalist Georges Cuvier and his *Discours sur les revolutions de la surface du globe* in which Cuvier establishes his cataclysm theory through which he explains the layers of the fossils on Earth – he claims that life is regularly destroyed by periodic catastrophes. Byron incorporates the theory to *Cain's* cosmic travel that Lucifer takes him to and in which he is shown the remains of the past worlds. Lucifer's point is to teach Cain about the imperfection of the worlds created by God – Cain is shown monstrous creatures that make him aware of the fact. Such an approach woke a negative reaction of some of the conservative critics – while Byron's intention was to point at the authoritarianism of the Church of England, they would interpret it as an attack on Christianity. The radicals, on the other hand, discovered Cuvier's theories and began to incorporate them into their objections against the clergy.[163]

Besides *Cain,* Byron also wrote the poem "The Devil's Drive" in 1813, although it was published only after his death – perhaps for its satirical comments on Byron's contemporaries.

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[161] McGann, *Byron and Romanticism,* 21.

[162] McGann, *Byron and Romanticism*, 21-23.

[163] For more on Cuvier in *Cain,* see Michael Simpson, *Closet Performances: Political Exhibition and Prohibition in the Dramas of Byron and Shelley* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1998) 269–272; Ben Mardsen, *Uncommon Contexts: Encounters Between Science and Literature, 1800–1914* (London: Routledge, 2015) 71–72; and Peter Cochran, *Byron's Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011) 63.

Peter Cochran notes that the poem is not of very high quality but it is still significant for it anticipates *The Vision of Judgment.*[164] Byron draws on two previous satirical poems of his contemporaries – "The Devil's Thoughts," written in 1799[165] by Coleridge and Southey, in 1827 retitled (and with reduced political appeal) "The Devil's Walk" and "The Devil's Walk, A Ballad" by Shelley which is an imitation of the one by Coleridge and Southey. "The Devil's Thoughts" is a radical satire which involves remarks on the current state of the English society and politics – such as lawyers, prisons and slave trade. The poem is an evidence of Southey's and Coleridge's youthful radicalism which is quite ironic given the poem was not published under their names, but under Professor Richard Porson, an esteemed Classical literature Professor. The poem is in sharp contrast with the poets's later political views.

Shelley's version is very much an imitation of Coleridge's and Southey's poem. It follows Beelzebub on the day he spends on Earth. He is pleased to see that its inhabitants are unconsciously obeying his rules. The elements Shelley criticizes are e.g. the war against France. His imitation of the style of the poetical ballads of the time suggests he planned to link his poetry to the radicalism demonstrated by the previous generation.[166] Although Shelley was significantly inspired by Coleridge's and Southey's version, it was also the time when Shelley started to be aware of the political differences between him and Southey. Shelley transforms the earlier poem into a more radical work – Coleridge's and Southey's poem was to a certain degree politically neutral – and attacks the monarchy, the Prime Minister and also clergy.[167] What is of further interest is his treatment of Satan whose role in the major event of the era Shelley explains. He also presents his Satan in a human light, making him look the same way as the rest of the men in the streets. Shelley, as Peter Schock explains, introduces

[164] Peter Cochran, "The Devil's Drive," 1 <https://petercochran.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/the_devils_drive.pdf> 3 August 2015.
[165] Carol Bolton, *Writing the Empire: Robert Southey and Romantic Colonialism* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007) 171.
[166] Sally West, *Coleridge and Shelley: Textual Engagement* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Pub. Co, 2007) 27.
[167] Schock 82.

Satan as the key element for the representatives of oppressive power – it is Satan that can hide the true source of evil on earth – the evil caused by the men of power.[168]

4.9 The Vision of Judgement – Conclusion

The Vision of Judgment is one of the most political works Byron wrote. The poem connects some of Byron's most significant tendencies of the past years, both technical – the successful and artfully mastered ottava rima – and political. *The Vision of Judgment* reflects upon the politics of its time and serves Byron as a space for expression of his opinion on the then-current state of the society, i.e. during the aftermath of Napoleon's defeat which brought many a change to Britain, including limitation of press and persecution of antireligious tendencies. Byron, although in exile, experienced the problems himself when John Murray hesitated with the publication of *The Vision of Judgment.* He also uses the opportunity to highlight his despise of Southey's change of politics from the early republican beliefs to as close to the Tories as his position of the Poet Laureate would make him. Closely bound with politics is the notion of Satanism that Byron uses as a means of testing the power of the Tory government who were, very careful about what would be issued in the post-Napoleonic society and which might stir up the tendencies of people to call for revolution.

In the context of Byron's works, *The Vision of Judgment,* together with *Cain,* represents Byron's scepticism regarding politics, history, and cosmology which is first apparent in *Manfred* with the victory of the evil, and also in Canto IV of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* which points at the endless and absurd cycles of revolutionary tendencies and increasing degree of oppression which are repeated periodically throughout history.[169] Byron's sceptical

[168] Schock 82.

[169] The absurd historical cycles are addressed in detail in Martin Procházka, *Romantismus a osobnost* (Praha: Kruh moderních filologů, 1996) 141–142. An evidence for this can be found in Canto IV of *Childe Harold's*

worldview lasts until the later Cantos of *Don Juan* and the unfinished drama *The Deformed Transformed* in which the scepticism is dealt with also by means of irony and humour.

Pilgrimage, Stanza 94 which contemplates on the transfer of the hereditarily doomed existence from fathers to their sons.

5 Conclusion

Lord Byron's satires are not only unique due to their scope and Byron's extraordinary satiric abilities that develop considerably through the course of his literary career and that lead to *Don Juan*, Byron's grand œuvre, but they also provide an invaluable insight into the Romantic era's society, politics, religion and the overall state of Britain. In the thesis, three of Byron's satires were discussed with regard to both their literary heritage and the context surrounding their production, with regard to other relevant works, events and tendencies in the society.

English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers is an attempt to pay homage to Alexander Pope, the author whom Byron admired and used his example to point at the problems of the Romantic period; e.g. the increasing institutionalization of all layers of the British society ranging from law to the way of evaluating literary works through influential periodicals, and to the increasing potential of authorship and its commercial aspects. The institutionalization is analyzed through the work of Michel Foucault.

In *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers,* Byron also laid foundation for his opposition to the Lake Poets – Wordsworth, Shelley and Coleridge – and other contemporaries, such as Walter Scott and William Lisle Bowles. Although he would re-evaluate some of his opinions expressed in *English Bards,* some of his comments remain relevant even in his later works.

In contrast with *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers, Beppo* appears to be a much more mature work which is caused chiefly by the change of tone and form. Byron makes use of his stay in Italy to learn from the great Italian writers and to rediscover and revive the ottava rima for English use; a verse that will from that time on be a kind of Byronic trademark, bringing a seemingly effortless blend of powerful and always on point satirical remarks in a playful, reader-attractive form. The English society is aptly contrasted with the Italian man-

ners and Byron manages to point out the best – and also the worst – of both and present it through his expatriate eyes. It is worth mentioning that although he had left England for good by the time of composing *Beppo*, his homeland would still have a stable position in his works to come. Byron is also concerned with another re-occurring theme in his works, the notion of an author and his – newly commercial – role in the society. For a better understanding, *Beppo* is in the thesis seen through the optics of Mikhail Bakhtin whose concepts of heteroglossia and the carnivalesque play a significant role in *Beppo.* What also appears in the poem is Byron's duality which can be identified throughout the whole poem and perhaps most strongly seen in the notion of the carnivalesque as suggested by Bakhtin by the fact that the people lead dual existence – the "official" of the church and that involving everyday life.

The Vision of Judgment is arguably Byron's most politically involved work and also an anticipation of the later Cantos of *Don Juan.* In *The Vision of Judgment,* Byron presents his scepticism which is typical also for e.g. *Manfred* and the first Cantos of *Don Juan.* He attacks Robert Southey, who was both Byron's personal foe and a representative of the Tory government that Byron opposed extensively. Byron brings a valuable evidence of the post-Waterloo era in which the revolutionary views were oppressed and also re-evaluated by some, notably by Robert Southey who is severely attacked for his apostasy, i.e. his political transformation from a republican to the representative of the Tory government. Last but not least, *The Vision of Judgment* is a continuation of Byron's Satanic verse – generally popular in that time – which he used to depict and ridicule the corrupted, hypocritical government. This is also what makes the satire so powerful – its main strength is in Byron's comparison of God's justice with the corrupted establishment – the regime is accused of misusing religion in the name of securing the immense power that is in their hands.

As is evident from the analyses of the three works and their context, the figure of the satirist and his role in the society is transformed, too. The Popean satirist has the power to

influence the phenomenon he satirizes and he is also the moral ideal regarding both literature and society. The satire in *Beppo* and particularly in *The Vision of Judgment* is framed by modern reflexive poetry which involves sharp criticism of the current establishment via inter-linking history, philosophy and science.

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