The Byron Centre for the Study of Literature and Social Change

The Byron Foundation Lecture 2001

Byron and Women Novelists

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The University of Nottingham
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The annual Byron Lecture, University of Nottingham, 19 March 2001

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First published in Great Britain by the School of English Studies, University of Nottingham, 2001.

Published in 2010 by
The Byron Centre for the Study of Literature and Social Change
School of English Studies, University of Nottingham,
University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD
http://byron.nottingham.ac.uk

This electronic edition digitized and edited by Nicola Bowring
Byron Foundation Lectures Online Series Editor, Matthew J.A. Green

This is a revised version of the Byron Foundation Lecture delivered by Caroline Franklin in March 2001.

ISBN: 978-0-9555740-7-8

ISBN 0 85358 103 7

First Edition

Printed by Antony Rowe Ltd., Chippenham, Wiltshire

My thanks are due to Susan Wolfson, Joanne Wilkes and Mike Franklin, who read and commented on an earlier draft of this lecture.

Preface

Caroline Franklin's 2001 Byron lecture helps set out the course upon which the Centre for Byron Studies has embarked, examining Byron's significance for a large range of writers and cultural practices. Byron's relationship to women writers is particularly important, given that resurgence in interest in Byron and in women Romantic-period writers has occurred simultaneously over the last few decades. Caroline Franklin's previous books on Byron and on women writers makes her the ideal speaker to address the important affinities and conflicts shared by Byron and contemporary writers like Germaine de Staël and Sydney Owenson.

The Centre for Byron Studies was established in the School of English Studies in 1999 through the generosity of Joyce Prew-Smith and the support of Geoffrey Bond. Since Jerome McGann's 1999 Byron Lecture (published by the University of Nottingham as *Byron and Wordsworth),* we have also been fortunate have Michael Foot and Tom Paulin present annual Byron Lectures, and Charles Robinson present the inaugural lecture to open the Centre. We have also established several postgraduate scholarships associated with the Centre, including the Bond Byron Scholarship. Currently, we are developing a long-term research project using electronic multimedia texts to explore the influence of women writers and non-canonical writers on Byron, and vice versa. You are encouraged to visit the Centre's web pages to follow our progress: <www.nottingham.ac.uk/english/research/byron>.

Dr. Adriana Craciun
Director, Centre for Byron Studies
17 October 2001

The first decade of the nineteenth century, when Byron made his literary debut, saw a determination to professionalize the business of literature. This was masculinist in its calculated repudiation of women writers (assumed to be amateurs by definition) who had not merely dominated the novel, but even attained a commanding presence in the high art genres of poetry and drama during the last twenty years of the eighteenth century. The business premises of publishers like John Murray replaced the quasi-domestic space of salons where bluestockings had flourished. William Gifford had led the way in a wave of Juvenalian satire which targeted liberal sentimentalists such as the Della Cruscans, often spiced with misogynist personal abuse like Gifford's of Mary Robinson and Hester Thrale Piozzi. Murray's Tory *Quarterly Review* was founded in 1809 to rival the Whig *Edinburgh Review* which functioned more as a literary institution than a mere journal: paying its professional editor and essayists handsomely to act judge and jury of new publications on behalf of a largely autodidact reading public. Gifford, the *Quarterly's* editor, and the critic John Wilson Croker, prided themselves on their reputation for skewering popular women writers who intervened in politics like Sydney Owenson (later Lady Morgan) and Anna Barbauld, just as they targeted male writers without a university education - like John Keats - particularly if

they regarded their writing as effeminate. We could compare this literary climate to that which appertained in the early years of the twentieth century when the modernist repudiation of Victorian writing as sentimentalist, populist and rhetorical masked a masculinist agenda to consign the burgeoning female literary tradition to oblivion.

Byron's literary debut was shaped by this climate, for his first publication, *Hours of Idleness* (1807) was kebabbed by the *Edinburgh Review* because the dilettante pose struck in the preface and indeed implicit in publishing at the expense of the author a collection of sentimentalist occasional lyrics written to and about a circle of friends was antithetical to the new bourgeois professionalism. His second publication, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), was an attempt to gain acceptance from the new arbiters of literary orthodoxy even as it ostensibly ridiculed them. For this juvenalian satire attacked the *Edinburgh* only to praise Gifford, and, as Jerome McGann has pointed out, mocked the very sentimentalists who had particularly influenced the young poet - Thomas Moore and Charlotte Dacre.[1] The poem quickly went through four editions and made Byron's name. It also succeeded in what may have been a calculated attempt to ally himself with the *Quarterly Review* which was launched that same year, and to obtain the rising star John Murray as his publisher and Gifford as his literary advisor - despite the fact that his politics were inimical to theirs. This

alliance facilitated Byron's extraordinary popularity from 1812 to 1816 by shielding him from attacks in the *Quarterly Review* like those suffered by Owenson and Keats.

Byron's later quixotic defence of Pope and rigid adherence to the unities in his neoclassical drama show that his theoretical support for those élitist Augustan rules of taste and decorum upheld by Gifford, which his own Romantic poetry was effectively destroying, was not hypocritical so much as defensive. Gifford and Murray, too, probably felt that their premier author's aristocratic rank and classical education should have guaranteed his literary orthodoxy. But the classical allusions and the emphatic masculinity of the subject-matter of the early verse of travel and adventure scarcely distract the reader's attention away from the strong influence on Byron of contemporary sentimentalist writing in which women predominated both as writers and readers. If the relationship with Murray was the gateway then this was the real key to his popularity - but also to his later exclusion from the canon by the twentieth-century modernists.

Important work is currently appearing by Jerome McGann, Susan Wolfson, Marlon Ross, Nanora Sweet, Diego Saglia, Adriana Craciun and others on the intertextual relationship between Byron and nineteenth-century women poets and on a revaluation of the sentimental tradition, which will change not only our view of the poet but also our

whole map of Romanticism. But this paper will argue that Byron was also a central figure in the story of nineteenth-century women's fiction - that his own poetry was shaped in response to it, and that after his death his influence was seminal on British and American mid-century women novelists.

Though he routinely denigrated 'feminine trash' to other men and teased female 'scribblers' to their faces, a look at the sale catalogues of his library will confirm that Byron read all their books.[2] He possessed Madame de Staël's *Corinne, or Italy* (1807), Frances Burney's *Camilla* (1796), Mary Brunton's *Discipline* (1814), Maria Edgeworth's *Hanington, a Tale; and Ormond, a Tale* (1817), *Patronage* (1814) and *Tales of Fashionable Life* (1809), Amelia Opie's *Father and Daughter* (1801) and *Simple Tales* (1806), and *Tales of Real Iife* (1813), Hannah More's *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1808), Mary Robinson's *Walsingham* (1805), Lady Morgan's *Florence McCarthy* (1818), her travel book *France* (1818) and several novels by Marie Cottin. The poet paid tribute in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (IV, 18) to Ann Radcliffe; to de Staël as 'the first female writer of this, perhaps of any age' in a note to *The Bride of Abydos* and warmly commended Elizabeth Inchbald's *Nature and Art* (1796) and *A Simple Story* (1791) in his journal *(L&J,* III, 236). Though he mocked *The Missionary* (1811) in a *jeu d'esprit,* he later wrote to Murray protesting against the treatment of Lady Morgan in the *Quarterly Review* and asked their mutual friend Tom Moore to pass on his praise of her travel book *Italy*

(1821) as 'brave and fearless'; and was anxious to claim that a passage in *The Two Foscari* similar to her description of Venice was mere coincidence *(L&J,* VIII, 186, 189). He acknowledged in the preface that he based *Werner* on the story of 'The German's Tale' from Harriet and Sophia Lee's *Canterbury Tales* (1801). Mary Shelley was his friend and amanuensis; he instigated the ghost story competition that was the genesis of *Frankenstein* (1818). Germaine de Staël was another close friend, and he also knew Maria Edgeworth and Amelia Opie. Byron doesn't just appear in the history of the female-authored novel as a reader: he modelled for the character of the villain of his ex-lover Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon* (1816) and for Mary Shelley's anti-hero in *The Last Man* (1826): a trend that would continue through the century.

* * *

The tradition of female-authored fiction which particularly influenced the young Byron adapted the suitably 'feminine' genre of the romance of sensibility to crusade for liberal political causes. His contemporaries Madame de Staël and Sydney Owenson, later Lady Morgan, were political propagandists forging a feminine romantic patriotism oppositional to the twin male imperialisms of Napoleonic France and Britain, respectively. Staël had been banished from Paris for ten years by her arch-enemy Napoleon for her anti-Bonapartist first novel,

Delphine. She fled to Italy where she gathered materials for her second. The Napoleonic Code had in 1804 rescinded women's rights achieved by the French revolution. In 1805 Napoleon had himself crowned King of Italy. Staël defiantly wrote back by constructing a heroine symbolizing both the blighting of woman's creativity and the oppression of Italy. To Napoleon's fury, *Corinne* became a literary phenomenon with 32 French editions in 40 years. Staël's didactic heroine embodies her colonized country and teaches a male aristocratic British traveller (and also the reader) about its ancient culture. Staël may well have taken this formula, redolent of Enlightenment cultural comparativism, from Owenson's earlier popular success *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806). Owenson's heroine had been a descendant of the disinherited Irish aristocracy who teaches a visiting member of the English Ascendancy about ancient Celtic culture. But Owenson in her turn saw how Staël's *Corinne, or Italy* (1807) enlarged the significance of the female patriot by including a feminist dimension, which she now adopted in her Philhellenist romance *Woman, or, Ida of Athens* (1809). She was flattered to be then dubbed 'the Irish de Staël'. The importance of *Corinne, or Italy* and *Ida of Athens* for the emergence of Byronism was that they ask the reader to see 'Italy' and 'Greece' (and by implication Ireland) through the eyes of a British tourist as cultural entities, and even to imagine them as potential 'nations' which

could perhaps in a Utopian future be brought into being in the name of freedom from imperialism.

Corinne, or Italy (1807) is a fictionalised travelogue whose poetess heroine takes a Scottish nobleman in mourning for his father on a melancholic tour of Italy.[3] It was easy for Byron to imagine himself into the role of Oswald. He rewrote *Corinne* from the male point of view as *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.* Joanne Wilkes has traced the intertextuality of the two writer-friends in her recent excellent monograph.[4] That Byron had read *Woman: or, Ida of Athens* is shown by his ebullient note to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* II, 73, where he joshes Owenson for representing the Disdar Aga as an important noble instead of a petty bureaucrat. Byron knows the real Disdar, who is actually 'a turbulent husband, and beats his wife' and he reveals that he himself had once been 'he cause of the husband of 'Ida of Athens' nearly suffering the bastinado'. The male aristocratic poet thus demonstrates his own superiority in rank to Owenson's towering Turkish tyrant at the same time as he puts her in her place as a female Romance writer who has experienced at firsthand neither the Ottoman Empire nor sexual adventures. The note also aligns him with his publisher's *Quarterly Review* which had inadvertently signalled the novel's importance by administering a severe drubbing in their opening number. Her writing was there described as 'mischievous in tendency, and profligate in principle; licentious and irreverent in the highest degree'; she was

particularly castigated for idealizing Nature and omitting mention of 'the Creator of the universe'. She was then advised to purchase a spelling book and pocket dictionary and to take lessons in joined-hand. But Gifford and Croker concluded by hoping that she might eventually end by reading her Bible and replacing novel-writing with the more suitable vocation of dutiful wife and mother.[5]

As Malcolm Kelsall has pointed out, the numerous plot motifs from *Ida of Athens* which reappear in Byron's philhellenist Oriental tales and later in *Don Juan* show Byron's note in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* to be the defensive posturing of a rival.[6] Owenson's Osman is a prototype of the Byronic hero: a Greek patriot leader, the adopted son of the freedom-fighter Lambro Canziani, who threw off the Turkish effeminacy of his upbringing as a slave, and became a secret revolutionary, disguised sometimes as a dervish or a Janissary. After leading an unsuccessful revolt, he is freed from prison by a Turkish woman of the harem who flees with him; he fights for the Russians at the Siege of Ismail, he becomes a general at the court of Catherine the Great.

Such female-authored sentimental fiction which particularly influenced Byron and which he influenced in turn continues to be routinely denigrated by critics like Kelsall as 'trash' - self-evidently populist and inimical to masculine high art - just as it was by the *Quarterly Review*. Yet novels of sensibility were products of the feminization of the Enlightenment.

They emanated from a serious intellectual tradition based on the moral philosophies of Lord Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson, rooted in a latitudinarian attempt to find a middle ground between Puritanism and scepticism.[7] In the 1790s, Mary Wollstonecraft and Helen Maria Williams, writing from within Dissenting culture, questioned an overly rationalistic or dogmatic moral law. Protestant novelists Staël and Owenson went on to equate natural feeling with Catholic cultures and inhibition with the Protestant colonialist mentality. Moreover, such authors wrote as patriots in the eighteenth-century sense: as willing to criticize their own corrupt governments on behalf of 'the People' when necessary. It is the way Byron's texts intervened in this questioning and reformulating of the puritan heritage by women writers that I want to focus on in this essay.

Staël's Corinne was a female poet (half British and half Italian) who turned *away* from her British Protestant heritage in order to embrace the sensibility, spontaneity and freedom she associates with the Romance culture of the Mediterranean. Staël would develop and refine this dualism in her important cultural study *Germany* (1810) which characterized the Northern Protestant cultures of Britain, Germany and Scandinavia as introspective, melancholy and suspicious of pleasure; and Catholic countries such as Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal as liberal, extrovert and artistic. Byron took up Staël's Montesquieuan dichotomy between North and South as a central

feature of his own particular brand of Romanticism, of course.

Although a Parisienne, Staël had a Calvinist background like Byron. She was the daughter of the Genevan financier, Jacques Necker, who disapproved of her 'scribbling'.[8] The death of this beloved father in 1804 was in the novel fictionalised as the death of Oswald Nelvil's father. The novel therefore exorcised the guilt and grief which haunted Staël for her failure to embrace domesticity, becoming instead the foremost female intellectual of her time.[9] Nelvil senior, it will eventually emerge, had inspected Corinne as a possible wife for his son but rejected her as too lively (p. 252), choosing instead her twelve-year-old half-sister Lucile. Unconscious of this, the black-clad Oswald communes with his late father's portrait (p. 129), and - weeping with guilt - reads to Corinne from a notebook of his father's reflections on death (p. 134), and duty to parents (pp. 223-4). As Staël's notes acknowledge, these extracts were taken straight from her own father's *Treatise on Religious Ethics*. Innocent of the dreadful irony, Oswald asks Corinne to read out his father's complaint to children who (like the improvisatory poetess herself - and her author) had cast away familial tradition: '... you are so much involved with your own person, both in heart and mind, that you think you make a historic moment on your own' (p. 222). If such children could visit their dead parents in the 'sojourn of the elect ... [they] would

be wiped out in the very midst of [their] heyday...' (p. 223) by the glory of their parents' holiness.

In his sermon on death Nelvil/Necker contemplates the separation of a married couple through one of them dying. The virtuous wife - he thinks - will want to follow her husband into the afterlife as soon as possible. And as for Judgement day, he prays:

> God of goodness, waken them together, or if only one of them is to be of the number of the elect, may the other be told the news; may the other see the angels' light at the moment when the fate of the happy is announced, so that he may still have a moment's joy before falling back into eternal night. (p. 135)

This grim meditation on Election, apparently forecasting the inevitable separation of the righteous Oswald from his Catholic lover,[10] may be compared with Byron's *Manfred.* That play also dramatizes the separation of lovers by death, and through different destinations at Judgement day. Manfred chivalrically takes on damnation for himself and his sister, believing:

> ... that I do bear
> This punishment for both - that thou wilt be
> One of the blessed
> *(Manfred,* II, iv, 125- 7)

Nemesis does declare that Astarte 'belongs/ To other powers' [II, iv, 115-6] than those of the satanic Arimanes, so Manfred achieves peace when he sees her spirit disappear for ever. But rather than 'falling back into eternal night' Manfred defies the fiends who come to take him to Hell - enacting Byron's repudiation of the doctrine of eternal damnation. Compare the later plays *Cain* and *Heaven and Earth,* where the Calvinist emphasis on a small number of the Elect being saved while the majority of mankind suffer the torments of hell is dramatized as morally repugnant.

Byronic Promethean defiance is obviously a far cry from the helpless weeping of Corinne and Oswald at the decrees of the authoritarian father-God. And we see this difference in the writers themselves. When the young Byron first met the literary lioness in London in 1813 he was disappointed her scepticism wasn't more radical. He sarcastically referred to her as 'a vile antithesis of a Methodist and a Tory'[11] - and indeed *Corinne* is larded with religious 'enthusiasm' – Staël's favourite word - as well as the Anglophilia she had inherited from Necker.[12] She saw 'Romantic' art as a secularized version of spiritual fervour. But when Byron toured Switzerland, the birthplace of Calvinism, in 1816, and paid several visits to his old friend and sparring-partner at Coppet, her house near Geneva, he shocked *her.* For, according to Staël's granddaughter, he was 'bitter, sarcastic, taking pleasure in scandalizing

the puritanism of Geneva society with irreligious comments'.[13] He was writing *Manfred* at this time, of course.

Staël sees that it is its religious traditions which condition a nation's culture. Corinne rejected her father's surname, country and religion. It was like rising from the dead when she left puritan Britain and reinvented herself as an artist-performer in her feminine and Catholic *mother*land, Italy. Holy Week is the mid-point of the novel and Book 10 Chapter 5 is given over to a discussion between Oswald and his lover on the respective merits of Protestantism and Catholicism. Catholicism is criticized as overly sentimental and superstitious, whilst Protestantism is pleasure-denying and severely rationalistic in Staël's balanced comparativist approach. Northern values are apparently validated by the novel as Oswald *will* eventually desert the passionate poetess and marry her meek British half-sister, Lucile, in obedience to his father's wishes and Corinne will die. The cult of domesticity is seen as incompatible with the recognition of female genius. On the other hand this is depicted as a tragedy. Note too the glimmer of hope in that Corinne's influence lives on as she teaches her art to her sister and niece. Moreover, the fact that Lucile herself is identified with a *Catholic* image, Corregio's Madonna, signals a modification of the Protestant self-effacing wife into an religious icon which threatens to displace the patriarchal god.

Woman: or, Ida of Athens was much more traditionally Richardsonian in its staging of the confrontation between a male aristocratic libertine, Lord B--, and a moral heroine. So Ida's British tourist, unlike Staël's Oswald, was a 'devoted man of pleasure, the elegant voluptuary' (I,8). Sensuality was his motive for travelling to the East (I,59; I, 210). When Lord B--- 'gazed unobserved' at the sleeping Greek noblewoman, Ida Rosemeli, the Englishman was rewarded with a tableau of Eastern woman's famously uninhibited sensuality. However, when she is awake and employing her reason, the roles are reversed. He who feared female pedantry (I,214; 126) now becomes her pupil alongside her siblings whom she lectures on the history of ancient Greece. Combining a pseudo-maternal role with the conservative function of passing on the history of her culture allows Owenson to create an acceptably feminine mouthpiece for feminist and anti-imperialist rhetoric. The English libertine is soon admiring 'the pure spirit that ennobled [Ida's] patriot-bosom' (I,140) as well as the bosom itself:

> "She is a charming visionary;" he exclaimed; "her mind is stored with images of classic interest, and her heart is witness to circumstances of national grievance; this is true patriotism of woman" (I,79).

But he must also learn to rethink his simplistic notions about female sensuality. Making her heroine

Eastern was a way of enabling the woman author to approach such a delicate subject. Following Montesquieu there was a supposition that Southern and Eastern women were rendered more sensual than Northern women by their climate.[14] When she is showing him the site of the gardens of Epicurus, the English libertine is delighted to hear Ida approve the philosopher's doctrines as following the dictates of nature (I,118). But their discussion shows up Lord B---'s ignorance. He had thought Epicureanism consisted of pursuing 'pleasure in all its views, and to live but to enjoy' (I,121). But he is disappointed to learn from the bluestocking Ida that the philosopher actually recommended: 'frugality, public love, firmness of soul, enjoyment of life, and contempt of death' (I,119). Ida refuses to become the Englishman's mistress. Her self-respect demands not a 'roving lover' but a 'citizen husband and ... patriot father' (I,201). When she becomes an heiress and is accepted into English aristocratic society the same Lord B--- asks her to marry him, but she rejects him not just because she loves Osman, but because the role of wife must include that of active patriot.

The plot anticipates to a degree that of *Jane Eyre,* where the heroine is propositioned by the aristocratic libertine, Rochester, and refuses him. Jane then goes on to reject the marriage proposal of the Calvinist clergyman. She is situated midway between libertinism and pleasure-denying puritanism In *Ida of Athens* while the heroine repudiates the demeaning role

of mistress, she also affirms love and pleasure (Epicurus's 'enjoyment of life, ... contempt of death') not the self-denial of Protestant culture. Ida asserts, 'Enjoy, is the law of nature; restrain is the law of society; it is the perfect harmony of both that bestows felicity on man' (1,122).[15] The Greek woman even vindicates woman's right to sexual pleasure: '... why, oh! Why should she blush to acknowledge her capability to feel a passion which the Deity himself inspires? - by which he governs and supports the universe ...' (1,189).

Both Staël and Owenson were strongly influenced by Rousseau's theory of gender roles as complementary, which they tried to reconcile with validation of the exceptional female intellectual through an idealised heroine who implicitly points to the didactic author herself, bristling with footnotes. Both authors were intensely political salonnières, yet in their fictions they defensively define the particular role of woman as patriotic rather than political. For only in the effeminized context of a conquered country can her role of inspirational artist be justified, for there she does not usurp male prerogative in the public sphere.

> Yet the patriotism of the young Athenian was all a woman's sentiment. Had her country been free --- had her country been prosperous, its political state would have awakened no interest in a mind whose elevation, whose sensibility could never assimilate with the

> narrow views of a party; the low intrigues of a cabinet ... (II, 44).

Osman quotes the song of Canziani that 'it is for man to perform great actions; 'tis for women to inspire them' (III, 28) and Ida informs him that she loves him only as 'a champion of liberty' (III, 24). Thus inspired, Osman then becomes the soul of Philhellenism for his followers:

> The appearance of Osman in the cave of the conspirators was hailed with delight. It seemed as if the soul was restored to the body, after a transient suspension of its faculties (III, 72-3).

* * *

This secularized notion of the soul of a nation infuses much of Byron's verse, especially that on stateless peoples like the Greeks, the Jews and the Italians. In *The Giaour* (1813) the theme is explored through sexual politics. But Byron entirely omits Staël and Owenson's stress on woman's important role as conserver and transmitter of culture and as a patriot in her own right. Though a woman symbolizes her land in *The Giaour,* Leila is dead and only perceptible through the memory of male narrators. In other words her role has been reduced to that of traditional abstract figurehead like that of Britannia or Marianne.

Throughout, the stress is on the effeminacy of Greece and the overwhelming desire for an infusion of male heroism. This theme is realized through Byron's masculinization of sentimental style and Romantic fragmented form by driving octosyllabic metre, and the mainly masculine rhymes of the couplets.

The poem begins with a lofty tomb. The grave of Themistocles functions as a gleaming lodestar for a man to steer a skiff by. It also towers 'High o'er the land' (l.5) like the symbol of a patriotic ideal. Immediately a dichotomy is set up between the insubstantial soul of a long-dead male hero and the present-day material existence of his 'Fair clime' (l.7). The land is characterized as the realm of nature and therefore feminine. Lacking Themistocles's heritage, it has reverted to a state of savagery:

> Strange - that where Nature lov'd to trace,
> As if for Gods, a dwelling-place,
> And every charm and grace hath mix'd,
> Within the paradise she fix'd -
> There man, enamour'd of distress,
> Should mar it into wilderness ...
> (ll.46-51)

This gendered notion of a colonized land as a mere piece of earth bereft of the masculine soul of patriotism is graphically portrayed in an extended simile, when that part of the Ottoman empire which

westerners educated in dead classical languages term 'Greece' is compared to a girl's corpse:

> He who hath bent him o'er the dead
> Ere the first day of death is fled, ...
> (Before Decay's effacing fingers,
> Have swept the lines where beauty lingers),
> And mark'd the mild angelic air,
> The rapture of repose that's there,
> The fix'd yet tender traits that streak
> The languor of the placid cheek ...
> He still might doubt the tyrant's power;
> So fair, so calm, so softly seal'd,
> The first, last look by death reveal'd!
> Such is the aspect of this shore;
> 'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more!
> So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
> We start, for soul is wanting there. (ll.68-93)

This image of natural landscape as a corpse is in stark contrast to Wordsworthian pantheism and certainly with pre-Enlightenment representations, like those of Shakespeare, of nature as a vital moral force. Judith Butler has pointed out that the notion of nature as a passive object, a 'blank and lifeless page, as that which is, as it were, always already dead, is decidedly modern, linked perhaps to the emergence of technological means of domination'.[16] The male reader is specifically invited to identify with the speaker's eroticized fascination with the quiescence of the

beautiful corpse he bends over, 'the rapture of repose' and 'languor' that bespeak the 'tyrant's power' [of death] over her. (The male hero of the poem will be introduced in a contrasting storm of movement as a galloping warrior, and he later recalls, 'I loathed the languor of repose' (1.987).) Death's capacity for stilling movement ('cold Obstruction's apathy') appals the gazer on the girl's corpse, 'As if to *him* it could impart / The doom he dreads' [my italics]. He fears contamination. Greece's aura of fertility is not a true sign of immortality. 'A gilded halo hovering round decay', the icon is in a state of putrefaction.

The idea of a corpse so recently alive and, moreover, still the very picture of female fecundity, is deeply uncanny (in Freud's sense of the return of the repressed) because it renders ambiguous the borders demarcating life from death, soul from matter, growth from decay. By signalling nubility in a state of non-being the female corpse shakes the male gazer's secure sense of his own identity and the ordering of existence. Julia Kristeva asserts, 'The corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection'.[17] Kristeva goes on to suggest that the compulsion in religious ritual to separate one's own 'clean and proper' body from such defilement stems from the original abjection of the maternal body and 'the subject's fear of his very own identity sinking back irretrievably into the mother' (p.64). As Anna Smith has pointed out, Kristeva's concept of the abject maternal expresses 'not woman as such, abjected, but

woman as signifier of that which man both fears and desires - the extinction of identity itself'.[18]

This image of Greece as a soulless female body is emphasized by being repeated in the narrative itself, which centres around the ritual execution for adultery of a Circassian harem slave, Leila. Even in life she was treated as a mere body. A Moslem fisherman remembers Leila's soulful eyes but also reminds himself that such an assertion is in contradiction of Alla's pronouncement that the female form 'was nought but breathing clay'. His very refutation of this functions as a way of informing the British reader of the supposedly popular Moslem belief: 'that woman is but dust,/ A soulless toy for tyrant's lust' (489-90), and even Byron's note that this is 'a vulgar error' continues to stress that many Moslems 'cannot discern "any fitness of things" in the souls of the other sex' *(CPW:* iii.419). The Western narrator's own moralising fragments compare a sexually desirable woman like Leila to an inanimate 'toy' or a form of lower life, an 'insect', and, in particular, a suicidal scorpion which turns its poisonous sting upon itself when 'girt by fire'.

Tied up in a sack to be drowned as punishment for her adultery, Leila becomes of even less account: a mere parcel, a 'burthen', an 'it', and, to the horror of the fisherman, passively accepts her death or transition to the inanimate with equanimity:

> I watch'd it as it sank, methought
> Some motion from the current caught

> Bestirr'd it more, - 'twas but the beam
> That checker'd o'er the living stream ...
> (ll.376-79)

The female corpse that is the earth that was formerly Greece must be brought to life again. Her mere matter must be animated by the masculine will to shape her destiny: to outline and defend her borders and thus define her identity. The recuperation of masculine heroism is essential to form a nation's soul. When the Western speaker addresses a modern Greek, a 'craven crouching slave' (1.108), the present-day inhabitants are charged with effeminacy:

> The hearts within thy valleys bred,
> The fiery souls that might have led
> Thy sons to deeds sublime;
> Now crawl from cradle to the grave,
> Slaves - nay, the bondsmen of a slave ...
> (ll.147-151)

A caustic note hammers the point home:

> Athens is the property of the Kislar Aga (the slave of the seraglio and guardian of the women), who appoints the Waywode. A pandar and eunuch - these are not polite yet true appellations - now *governs* the *governor* of Athens *(CPW,* iii. 416-7).

The contemporary Romaic subjects of the Ottoman empire (Greeks) are thus reduced to the level of the odalisques themselves: lower in status than the eunuchs who govern them, mere bodies lacking in virile spirit, 'least above the brutes' (l.154).

The secularized notion of a nation's soul retains the concept of immortality, and for the Philhellenist narrator this consists of the heritage of freedom passed on to succeeding generations of men:

> Bequeathed by bleeding Sire to Son (l.124).

The heroes of the past rejected grandiose monarchial pyramids as their monuments in favour of leaving the mountains of their land, the cradle of democracy, to become Parnassus, the inspiration of poetry for the West:

> There points thy Muse to stranger's eye,
> The graves of those that cannot die! (ll.134-5)

Poetry, then, becomes the conduit of such national spirit and political idealism; indeed, the task of this poem itself is to inspire or revivify the fallen soul of Greece (l.139).

The poem is permeated throughout with the ironic disjunction between the lost soul of ancient pagan Greece and the fact that the present-day inhabitants of this part of the Ottoman empire are Christians and define themselves as bearers of

immortal souls in terms of religion. They have exchanged one sort of immortality (defined by Byron in secular patriotic terms as passing on their ideals of freedom to their culture) with another (based on notions of an afterlife). But both Moslem and Christian notions of judgement, heavenly rewards and the fear of hell are mocked in Byron's boisterous notes to lines 483, 488, 748, and 1207. Though the eponymous Western hero is regarded as a 'giaour' or pagan by the Turks, his residence with the friars at the end of his life seems only to have been introduced to demonstrate his defiance of such Christian precepts in his refusal to repent. Instead, he has made a religion of romantic love which has become a modem substitute for political or religious idealism.

* * *

We can see that Byron's poetry left behind Staël and Owenson's static Enlightenment comparativism of two cultures for a Romantic *inhabiting* of the exotic culture of the Other. Byron would also transform the Montesquieuan dichotomy between North and South into the Romantic irony of *Don Juan.* In his Oriental Tales he often uses a woman to represent her enslaved country in his own sentimental nationalism. But she's a victim or romantic rebel, never a didactic patriot. Like Staël and Owenson he repudiated sectarian divisiveness and championed religious toleration. But Byron's biting scepticism and

the Promethean defiance of orthodox Christianity in *Cain* put him far beyond the pale enclosing what women of the time were permitted to write. For that very reason he would become a figure of particular fascination after his death to later female novelists, even those who wrote in a moralistic tradition in contrast to liberal sentimentalists like Staël and Owenson.

Byron focussed the opposition of such female moralists to masculinist libertinism The outrage in high society over Byron's treatment of his wife Annabella in 1816 had seemed a symbolic moment in the nineteenth century. It marked the overthrow of Regency male aristocratic sexual mores and the official endorsement of bourgeois sexual morality as the ideal of the forthcoming Victorian age. Byron's own writing after 1816 was forged in the heat of a literary battle of the sexes: a dialectic with conservative female novelists who disapproved of liberals glamourizing the transgressive individual, and who preferred to focus on the collective nature of society and the importance of social duty. *Don Juan* went on the attack by clearly deconstructing. Don Juanism as a myth: a Richardsonian fiction necessary to sustain the ideology of pure womanhood. In Canto I the hypocritical Inez (a satiric portrait of Annabella) gains power over men by projecting a saintly image of motherhood artificially constructed from texts. Stanza 16 singles out those of the moralistic women writers Maria Edgeworth, Hannah More and Sarah Trimmer,

of whom the two latter used fiction only to propagandize on behalf of the Evangelical wing of the National Church.[19] Later satire of Inez again links her with Evangelicals like More and Trimmer who set up Sunday Schools to discipline poor children (II, 10). The portrait of the virginal Aurora Raby in the English Cantos (XV, 43-7) is an idealized version of the same virtuous heroine of such women's writing, but making her a Catholic would have been anathema to such chauvinist Protestants. Moreover, the suggestion that Don Juan will many her is a mischievous parody of nineteenth-century women's mission to reform the male sex through marriage.

> Aurora Raby, a young star who shone
> O'er life, too sweet an image for such glass
> A lovely being, scarcely form'd or moulded,
> A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded;
>
> *(Don Juan,* XV, st.43, II. 5-8)

> Early in years, and yet more infantine
> In figure, she had something of sublime
> In eyes which sadly shone, as seraphs' shine.
> All youth - but with an aspect beyond time;
> Radiant and grave - as pitying man's decline;
> Mournful - but mournful of another's crime,
> She looked as if she sat by Eden's door,
> And grieved for those who could return no more.
>
> *(Don Juan,* XV, 45)

This was the passage which came to haunt the work of mid-century American writer Harriet Beecher Stowe like no other lines of Byron's poetry: 'What can more express moral ideality of the highest kind than the exquisite descriptions of Aurora, - pure and high in thought and language, occurring, as they do, in a work full of the most utter vileness?'.[20] Stowe read the character as a portrait of Byron's wife, for when recording her meeting with Annabella she quoted the passage: 'When I was introduced to her [i.e. Lady Byron], I felt in a moment the words of her husband;- "There was awe in the homage that she drew; Her spirit seemed as seated on a throne."'[21]

The union of Byron and Annabella had been a meeting of two egotisms fuelled by conflicting ideologies: the surge of the male individualist's will to power against the rock of the female mission to reform the male sex through marriage.[22] The reason Harriet Beecher Stowe so identified with Lady Byron was because she too was imbued with this ideology of saintly womanhood. In 1869 - the year which saw the publication of John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* - Stowe reactivated the Byron debate by revealing for the first time in print that the cause of the separation had been Byron's incest with his half-sister. 'The True Story of Lady Byron's Life' published in the American *Atlantic Monthly* and British *Macmillan's Magazine* was the 'most widely discussed article dealing with a man

of letters to appear in nineteenth-century England'.[23] Stowe expanded it into a book: *Lady Byron Vindicated: A History of the Byron Controversy* (1870). For Stowe, and many Victorian women, the separation story illustrated the feminist case against the inequity of the marriage laws.

> Much of the beautiful patience and forgiveness of women is made possible to them by that utter *deadness to the sense of justice* which the laws, literature, and misunderstood religion of England have sought to induce in woman as a special grace and virtue. The lesson to woman in this pathetic piece of special pleading is, that man may sink himself below the brute, may wallow in filth like the swine, may turn his home into a hell, beat and torture his children, forsake the marriage-bed for foul rivals; yet all this does *not* dissolve the marriage-vow on her part, nor free his bounden serf from her obligation to honour his memory, - nay, to sacrifice to it the honour due to a kind father and mother, slandered in their silent graves.[24]

The account of the separation in Moore's *Life of Byron* also inspired Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848). This Christian feminist novel tells the story of a wife who left her debauched husband to protect her child from his influence, yet returned in

order to attempt (unsuccessfully) to convert him on his deathbed. Anne Brontë had been particularly struck by Lady Byron's continued hopes of reforming her husband; and by Byron's determination not to give up his legal right of custody of their child.[25]

Stowe epitomized the balancing act performed by such religious writers between conservatism and radical vision. Her sanctification of the orthodox feminine role of wife and mother justified her in taking up the pen and exposing the evils of slavery of blacks and women. She was writing to save the soul of the nation. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) was the most bestselling book of the nineteenth century; second only to the Bible. At the heart of her crusading novel, accredited by Lincoln with igniting the civil war,[26] is the pairing between a holy Virgin and the Byronic fallen male. The angelic child, Eva, is introduced by an epigraph from Canto XV stanza 43 of *Don Juan* on Aurora Raby:

> A Young star! Which shone
> O'er life - too sweet an image for such glass!
> A lovely being, scarcely formed or moulded;
> A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded
> (Slightly misquoted).[27]

Just as Aurora's virgin purity and naivety unwittingly showed up the corruption of the high society in Norman Abbey and in particular Don Juan's own tarnished innocence, so little Eva's innocent

questioning of the unthinking cruelties perpetuated by slavery throws into relief the failure of her father, St. Clare, - despite his essentially good nature - to change the system on which his lavish mansion was built. St. Clare, the most complex character in the book, is a radical visionary, yet also a religious sceptic whom the pious slave Uncle Tom attempts to convert. It will not surprise us that he is described in overtly Byronic terms:

> He had one of those natures which could better and more clearly conceive of religious things from its own perceptions and instincts, than many a matter-of-fact and practical Christian. The gift to appreciate and the sense to feel the finer shades and relations of moral things, often seems an attribute of those whose whole life shows a careless disregard of them. Hence Moore, Byron, Goethe, often speak words more wisely descriptive of the true religious sentiment, than another man, whose whole life is governed by it. In such minds, disregard of religion is a more fearful treason, - a more deadly sin (p. 440).[28]

During the triumphant author's second trip to Britain in 1856, Lady Byron had confided the incest story to her American friend. But, as Stowe's biographer has pointed out, it was thirteen years later, and only after a concerted misogynistic attack in the

Nation on novels campaigning for civil rights for blacks and for women by Anna Dickinson, Rebecca Harding Davis and herself as sentimental, didactic and bad art, that Stowe took the revelation to print.[29] Her demonization of Byron was an attempt by Stowe to lead her sister novelists to carry the war over writing into the enemy's male canonical camp. As Susan Wolstenholme has emphasized, Stowe presents the issue precisely in terms of the woman writer's right to speak, and her mission to speak *for* those who (like slaves or women) were enjoined to silence by lack of education or the coercive power of propriety.[30] But in fact her brave gesture backfired. The *Atlantic* lost a huge swathe of its readership and so did Stowe herself. Praising Lady Byron's silence and castigating Byron's seductiveness as a writer had only reinforced the existing stereotype of man as writer and woman as silent muse. The press renewed its strictures on women writers who overstepped the mark as a contemporary cartoon of Stowe shows (see cover). The statue of Byron strikes a heroic pose, while Harriet's climbing up it shows her aggressive ambition - she has her foot in Byron's groin area - and makes her adopt a sexually suggestive posture. She leaves filthy footprints on Byron's white marble. Algernon Swinburne, too, satirized her as 'Mrs. Bitcher Spew - author of Uncle Tom's Closet'.[31]

Stowe, like Lady Byron before her, was in a no-win situation. Even mentioning sexual sin like incest besmirched the Victorian woman herself,

however respectable. Instead of restoring her popularity by nailing Saint Annabella to the feminist masthead, Stowe had only hastened the eclipse of her own literary reputation. The aesthetic movement that would flower into New Criticism in the twentieth century went on to conduct a full-scale attack on sentimentalism in literature from which we still have fully to recover. Women novelists were the main target. But male romanticists like Byron who wrote rhetorically for political purposes would later *themselves* come under fire. By 1884 Swinburne was attacking his erstwhile hero:

> On the day when it shall become accepted as a canon of criticism that the political work and the political opinions of a poet are to weigh nothing in the balance which suspends his reputation - on that day the best part of the fame of Byron will fly up and vanish into air.[32]

We can see the paradox that although the freethinking and libertinism of Byron's poetry was anathema to a religious writer like Stowe, her use of the genre of sentimental romance for crusading purposes had very much been inspired by the poet's example. I now want to probe this paradox more deeply.

Byron's poetry - because he explored the theme of damnation - attracted intense interest in religious households such as that of the Reverend

Brontë and his literary children[33] and that of the New England Calvinist preacher Lyman Beecher, whose sermons on the tortures of hell regularly caused students at the Litchfield Female Academy to lose their reason. Beecher fantasized about saving the poet's soul: 'Oh if Byron could only have talked with Taylor and me, it might have got him out of his troubles'.[34] [Taylor was the Yale Professor of Theology]. On the day of Byron's death Beecher preached a sermon on the text 'The name of the just is as brightness, but the memory of the wicked shall rot'. Byron was idolized by Beecher's daughter, Harriet.[35] Her denunciation of the poet in 1869 therefore signified more than mere self-publicizing or an expression of her feminism. It was an exorcism of her own adolescent hero-worship of him: a way of defining for herself the limits of her own apostasy against her puritan heritage.[36] At a time of increasing social secularization Byronic scepticism functioned as a lightning-rod for religious women writers in their own critiques of Calvinism.

To religious readers like Harriet Beecher Stowe, Byron's protagonists were primarily aristocratic libertines in the original sense of the word - freethinkers or sceptics. His fallen heroes ranged from the arch-sceptic Childe Harold, who 'through Sin's long labyrinth had run' (I, 4) to the Giaour who refuses to participate in the monks' Christian rites (814-5); Lara who smiles scornfully on the proffered cross at his death (II, 477-81); Alp who fights for

Islam against the Christians; and Manfred who refuses the Abbot's exhortation to repent. The poet's stress on the remorse, yet refusal to repent, of Byronic heroes, his placing of them in situations where they discuss their spiritual state with abbots or mythological beings just before their imminent demise, focused all the reader's fear for the state of their souls. This preoccupation, particularly in the earlier poetry, was calculated to appeal to pious women who wanted - like Dr. Beecher - to save the poet's own soul. Annabella Milbanke, typical of many young readers of *Childe Harold I and II* when it first came out, had identified the author with his protagonists: 'His poem sufficiently proves that he can feel nobly, but he has discouraged his own goodness'.[37] Byron had artfully manipulated such female readers. His membership of an aristocratic family notorious for its libertinism for three generations had meant he could not only recreate but even seem to inhabit the persona of a sentimentalized version of the Richardsonian aristocratic seducer who needed to be saved by the virtue of the middle-class heroine.

More than this, outright Byronic scepticism particularly functioned to focus their own doubts about Calvinism for women writers like Stowe and the Brontë sisters. These mid-century writers were in the process of casting off their religious heritage. Their fiction was itself a sign of the secularisation of their social vision.[38] Byron's poetry articulated the outright rebellion against Calvinism which they most feared

within themselves: in its obsession with original sin and imagery of the fall; but most particularly in its resistance to the doctrine of eternal damnation which we find in the refusal to send the Don off to hell as in the original myth; in the toleration of even George III who is allowed to slip into heaven in *The Vision of Judgment;* in Cain's rebellion against an authoritarian God; and in the humanist protest against the Calvinist doctrines of predestination of only a few Elect to heaven in the drama on Noah's flood, *Heaven and Earth.*[39] Although his protagonists are heroic in their defiance and repudiation of Calvinist doctrine, Byron places them in a metaphysical universe, especially in the Biblical plays, in which the existence of God and the literal truth of the Bible are unquestioned. The protagonist's sinfulness is fully acknowledged. Byron's preoccupation with predestined damnation as tragedy, and tragedy unmitigated, thus particularly resonated with those, like Stowe, struggling to shake off the same Calvinist mindset.

Stowe's *Vindication* quoted from a letter of Lady Byron asserting that Byron:

> was a believer in the inspiration of the Bible, and had the gloomiest Calvinistic tenets. To that unhappy view of the relation of the creature to the Creator I have always ascribed the misery of his life ... Judge, then, how I must hate the creed that made him see God as an Avenger, but not as a Father!

Stowe herself asserted that Lord Byron's life illustrated a passage from the Thirty-nine Articles, revised by Calvin himself: '[F]or curious and carnal persons, lacking the spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into recklessness of most unclean living, - no less perilous than desperation'.[40]

It is difficult to realize in the twenty-first century that Stowe's novel challenging the Calvinist doctrines of Jonathan Edwards and his followers, *The Minister's Wooing* (1859), was as brave in its own way as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. For here was a Northern writer, herself the daughter and sister of prominent Calvinist ministers and wife of a Calvinist theologian (Calvin Stowe), portraying the heritage of 'the New England theology' as 'the effect of a slow poison' (p. 197) in what amounts to a feminist critique.[41] Central to this novel is the celebration of the angel of the house as Protestant Madonna whose religion of love contrasts with the deathly dogma of the patriarchal priesthood. Mary Scudder, this heroine, puts her cousin/lover in mind of Byron's description of Aurora Raby *(Don Juan,* Canto 15 stanza 45):

> Her eyes filled with tears, her face kindled with a sad earnestness, and James thought, as he looked, of a picture he had once seen in a

European cathedral, where the youthful
Mother of Sorrows is represented,
"Radiant and grave, as pitying man's
decline;
All youth, but with an aspect beyond time;
Mournful of another's crime;
She looked as if she sat by Eden's door,
And grieved for those who should return no
more". [42]

Mary's spiritual opposite is Dr. Samuel Hopkins (a fictionalisation of the famous Calvinist theologian). When her sweetheart, James, is believed to be lost at sea, Mary is asked to become the wife of this minister, whose stern God ordains the damnation of the greater part of the human race to demonstrate the evil nature of sin and its consequences. For this most principled man, doubt over James's election had made it quite impossible to offer the mourners any comfort at all. Only the black servant Candace dares to contradict Hopkins's doctrines, comforting James's mother, who is in danger of losing both her faith and her reason through grief: 'Honey, darlin', ye a'n't right, - dar's a dreful mistake somewhar ... Why, de Lord a'n't like what ye tink, - He *loves* ye, honey! (p. 201). [43] Candace, together with Mary and her Catholic friend Virginie, as the names of the latter indicate, embody Stowe's call for a *female* ministry of New Testament maternal love: a modem Protestant adaptation of the Catholic cult of the Virgin Mary. This reminds us of

Staël's association of Protestant Lucile with the Madonna.[44]

If Dr. Hopkins is Mary's too severe religious counterpart, then she must also combat the secular snare of Byronism. This is embodied by Stowe's characterization of the historical Aaron Burr, hero of the American Revolution, but also the degenerate grandson of Calvinist preacher Jonathan Edwards. His appearance is distinctly Byronic, with: '[h]is beautifully-formed head, delicate profile, fascinating sweetness of smile, and, above all, an eye which seemed to have an almost mesmeric power of attraction ...' (p. 124).[45] It is made clear that, as in the case of Byron, it was not despite but actually *because* of his Calvinist upbringing that Burr, with all his capacity for deep feelings, has become a heartless seducer.[46] He is pictured deliberating over then setting aside the severe 'Resolutions' in which his grandfather, Jonathan Edwards, outlined the rigours of Calvinist faith. The spiritual despair produced by his inability to conform had left Burr: '... with all his beautiful capabilities, as the slave of the fleeting and the temporary, which sent him at last, a shipwrecked man, to a nameless, dishonoured grave' (p. 159).

Like Don Juan on meeting the infantine Aurora Raby, Burr found it a 'new sensation' to be calmly measured by Mary's thoughtful blue eyes (p. 155). She reminds him of the description of his grandmother Sarah Pierpoint at the age of thirteen written by her future husband, Jonathan Edwards (pp.

155, 342). The novel makes clear that had his puritan heritage given more weight to the feminine religion of mercy represented by his *foremothers* and less to the male system-makers then Burr might have been saved and with him the new nation he helped to establish. To emphasize the point, Mary's dashing sweetheart James, is *also* portrayed as a Byronic character, with his 'high forehead shaded by rings of the blackest hair' (p. 21) and sceptical questioning of the doctrine of election. But he is a younger version - who *will* be saved through Mary's love for him and anxiety for his soul. 'There be soul-artists, who go through this world ... as one looks amid the dust and rubbish of old shops for hidden works of Titian and Leonardo', comments the narrator. 'Such be God's real priests ... Many such priests there be among women' (p. 78).

* * *

Byron's depictions of the soul in torment following his own rejection of Calvinism seemed to anticipate the spiritual crisis of New England in the throes of repudiating its Edwardsean puritan legacy. According to Alice C. Crozier, his poems were 'ultimately of vastly more importance for Americans of the first half of the nineteenth century than were Wordsworth's consolations and pieties'.[47] In both Britain and America literary historians have focused overmuch on the way a latitudinarian or Unitarian religious sensibility, metamorphosed through

secularisation into the serene Romanticism of a Wordsworth or an Emerson. But it was Byronism, I suggest, which resonated with the majority of Victorians – still wrestling with the darker religious heritage of Dissent. Byron, Madame de Staël and Owenson were liberals influenced by the Scottish school of moral philosophy which sought a negotiation between orthodox Calvinism and utilitarian rationalism. But even conservative and deeply religious writers like Harriet Beecher Stowe and Anne Brontë were to throw off a puritan heritage of fatalism and obedience in favour of free will and practical Christianity. The sceptical Byron functioned for such nineteenth-century women novelists as the serpent in the Calvinist garden - tempting them to rebel against their minister-fathers and even against the father-God himself.

[1] '"My Brain is feminine": Byron and the poetry of deception', in Andrew Rutherford (ed.), *Byron: Augustan and Romantic* (Basingstoke, 1990), pp. 26-51, p.29.

[2] W.H. Marshall, 'The Catalogues for Sale of Byron's Books', *Library Chronicle,* 34 (1968), 24-50; and A.N.L. Munby (ed.), *Sale Catalogues of the Libraries of Eminent Persons* (London, 1971), vol.I.

[3] *Corinne, or Italy,* tr. Sylvia Raphael, (Oxford, 1998). From henceforth quotations will be referenced in the text in parenthesis.

[4] *Lord Byron and Madame de Staël: Born for Opposition* (Aldershot, 1999).

[5] *Quarterly Review,* 1 (Feb. 1809), 50-52.

[6] Malcolm Kelsall, 'Reading Orientalism: *Woman: or Ida of Athens',* in Anna Paolucci (ed.), *Review of National Literatures and World Report* (Wilmington, Delaware, 1998), pp. 11-20.

[7] The relevance of this for Harriet Beecher Stowe, with whom I deal later, is explored by Gregg Camfield, 'The Moral Aesthetics of Sentimentality: A Missing Key to *Uncle Tom's Cabin', Nineteenth-Century Literature,* 43:3 (Dec. 1988),319-345,324. Gregg D. Crane adds

that Stowe's belief in the merit of an individual's critique of law through his or her moral sensitivity positions her legal theory squarely within the natural rights tradition of Locke and the Scottish common sense philosophers, in 'Dangerous Sentiments: Sympathy, Rights, and Revolution in Stowe's Antislavery Novels' in *Nineteenth-Century Literature,* 51:2 (Sept. 1996),176-204,183.

[8] Madelyn Gutwirth, *Madame de Staë/, Novelist: The Emergence of the Artist as Woman* (Urbana, Ill., 1978), p. 39.

[9] A Freudian view of this theme is taken by Margaret Cohen in 'Melancholia, Mania, and the Reproduction of the Dead', in *The Novel's Seductions: Staël's* Corinne *in Critical Inquiry,* ed. Karyna Szmurlo (Lewisburg and London, 1999), 95-116. See also Charlotte Hogsett, *The Literary Existence of Germaine de Staël* (Carbondale and Edwardsvill, Ill., 1987), pp. 94-102.

[10] In her swansong, Corinne exclaims, 'Oh, if I had loved only the divine, if I had raised my head to heaven when I would be shielded from passionate affections, I would not be prematurely destroyed...', p. 401.

[11] *Byron's Letters and Journals,* ed. Leslie A. Marchand (13 vols, London, 1973-94), III. 66.

[12] Britain's admired parliamentary government is directly linked with a patriarchal, Protestant, bourgeois culture where influence and corruption are minimized by rigorous division of the public world from the private and familial, through rigid gender roles and the exclusion of women from the public sphere.

[13] *Les Dernière Années de Lord Byron (Les Rives du Lac de Genève - L'Italie - La Grèce),* 2ème Edition, revue et augmentée (Paris, 1874), p. 82. Quoted by and translated by Joanne Wilkes, *Lord Byron and Madame de Staël: Born for Opposition,* p. 7.

[14] Ida is made to say, "It is thus I often feel; ... a mere creature of the atmosphere, my enjoyments are regulated by a sun-beam or a cloud" (I, 89).

[15] Like Staël, Owenson (though a Protestant herself) had challenged anti-Catholicism by making her *Wild Irish Girl* a Catholic. Here, Ida's espousal of Epicureanism implicitly challenges the ethics of doctrines of eternal punishment by situating the dangers of pleasure in a purely social context '... so finely has she [Nature] regulated her laws, inseparably blending the selfish gratification with the social good, that the intemperate pursuit of any enjoyment, while it injures the community to which we belong, inevitably re-acts upon ourselves. It is politically illustrated in my dear, native country; where the tyrant lives in daily dread of the slave he oppresses (1,121). Byron's own

tale *The Giaour* illustrates exactly this secular stress on remorse as an earthly punishment as morally superior to Christian notions of hellfire.

[16] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (London and New York, 1993), p. 4.

[17] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection,* trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York, 1982), p. 4.

[18] Anna Smith, *Julia Kristeva's Readings of Exile and Estrangement* (Basingstoke, 1996), p. 152.

[19] Hannah More, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1808) was written to refute Staël's *Corinne* and to reaffirm the Christian domestic feminine role.

[20] Stowe, *Lady Byron Vindicated;* p. 265.

[21] Stowe, *Lady Byron Vindicated;* p. 135.

[22] Stowe asserts that Lady Byron kept silent on the reasons she left him in order to facilitate Byron's repentance, *Lady Byron Vindicated,* p. 49.

[23] Cecil Lang, 'Swinburne and American Literature: With Six Hitherto Unpublished Letters', *American Literature,* 19:4 (Jan 1948), 336-350, 345.

[24] *Lady Byron Vindicated,* p. 79.

[25] F .B. Pinion, *A Brontë Companion: Literary Assessment, Background and Reference* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, 1975), p. 245.

[26] During the Kansas struggle of 1855, a prelude to the Civil War, Henry Ward Beecher openly favoured arming the colonists, saying the Sharps rifle was 'a truly moral agency' thus causing them to be nicknamed 'Beecher' Bibles'. Lady Byron sent sixty-five pounds to Mrs Stowe, not to be spent on arms, but relief for those who had resisted oppression. See, W.H. Islely, 'The Sharps Rifle Episode in Kansas History', *American Historical Review,,* 12:3 (Apr., 1907), 546-566.

[27] Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin or, Life Among the Lowly* (Harmondsworth, 1987), p. 226. Another Byron quotation is used as the epigraph for Ch. 34, p. 524.

[28] There is an excellent discussion of the character of St. Clare, and the importance of his disturbing millennial vision, by Joshua D. Bellin, 'Up to Heaven's gate, Down in earth's Dust: The Politics of Judgement in *Uncle Tom's Cabin', American Literature* 65:2 (June 1993), 275-95.

[29] D. Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life* (Oxford and New York, 1994), pp. 353-4.

[30] Susan Wolstenholme, 'Voice of the Voiceless: Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Byron Controversy', *American Literary Realism,* 19:2 (Winter 1987), 48-65, 54.

[31] Cecil Lang, 'Swinburne and American Literature', 336-350, 345. On the other hand, according to Paul Baender, Mark Twain defended Stowe in six unsigned editorials in the *Buffalo Express:* 'Mark Twain and the Byron Scandal', *American Literature* 30:4 (Jan 1959), 467-85.

[32] Algernon Charles Swinburne, 'Wordsworth and Byron', *Nineteenth Century,* 15 (Apri11884), reprinted in Caroline Franklin (ed.), *The Wellesley Series IV: British Romantic Poets,* 6 vols (London, 1998), ii.794-816, 799.

[33] The Revd Bronte was influenced by Methodism, and though he repudiated the most extreme Calvinist doctrines of Election, his own sermons and poetry stressed hellfire more than redemption. Charlotte Brontë suffered a religious crisis in 1836, writing to Ellen Nussey, 'In writing at this moment I feel an irksome disgust at the idea of using a single phrase that sounds like religious cant - I abhor myself - I despise myself - if the Doctrine of Calvin be true I am already an outcast - you cannot imagine how hard rebellious and intractable all my feelings are - When I begin to study on the subject I almost grow blasphemous, atheistical in my sentiment…' See *The*

Shakespeare Head Brontë: The Brontës: Their Lives, Friendships and Correspondence, ed. Thomas James Wise and John Alexander Symington, 2 vo1s (Oxford, 1933), I**,** 143.

[34] Charles H. Foster, *The Rungless Ladder: Harriet Beecher Stowe and New England Puritanism* (New York, 1970), pp. 220-2; Joan D. Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life,* p. 21-2; and Alice B. Crozier, 'Harriet Beecher Stowe and Byron', in Elizabeth Ammons (ed), *Critical Essays on Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Boston, Massachusetts, 1980), pp. 190-202, 195.

[35] At fourteen she began a verse drama, *Cleon,* imagining Byron being converted. Foster, *The Rungless Ladder,* p. 221.

[36] Stowe flattered herself that her friendship with his wife was a mode of relationship with the poet: 'I told her that I had been from childhood powerfully influenced by him; and began to tell her how much, as a child, I had been affected by the news of his death,-giving up all my plays, and going off to a lonely hillside, where I spent the afternoon thinking of him She interrupted me before I had quite finished, with a quick impulsive movement 'I know all that,' she said: 'I heard it all from Mrs ----; and it was one of the things that made me wish to *know* you. I think *you* could understand him'; *Lady Byron Vindicated: A History of the Byron Controversy* (London, 1870), pp. 143-4; see

also p. 171. On the intensity of her feelings for Lady Byron herself, see p. 168.

[37] Malcolm Elwin, *Lord Byron's Wife* (London, 1962), p.l06. Stowe recounts her conversation with Lady Byron on whether Byron had repented on his deathbed and whether he had been saved: *Lady Byron Vindicated,* p.163.

[38] In the preface to an early work, *The Incarnation; or, Pictures of the Virgin and Her Son* (1849), a fictionalized biography of Christ, Stowe justified the use of 'romance' in a good cause, to combat the attraction for readers of 'the strains of a Byron, or the glowing pictures of a Bulwer or a Sue'. See Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe, a Life,* p. 188.

[39] On Byron's anti-Calvinistic resistance to the doctrine of eternal damnation, see Wolf Z. Hirst, 'Byron's Revisionary Struggle with the Bible', in Wolf Z. Hirst (ed), *Byron, the Bible and Religion: Essays from the Twelfth International Byron Seminar* (Newark, London and Toronto, 1991), pp.77-100, p. 87.

[40] Stowe, *Lady Byron Vindicated,* p.263-4; See also p.164.

[41] Susan K Harris reads the images of the novel as 'a female imaginary that resisted the androcentrism not simply of Calvinism but of secular and heterosexual

American life', in 'The Female Imaginary in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Minister's Wooing', New England Quarterly,* 66:2 (1993), 179-98, 98. Dorothy Z. Baker has illustrated how the novel, serialized in the *Atlantic Monthly,* engaged in a larger discussion within the magazine's fiction and non-fiction on political, religious and social issues. See 'Harriet Beecher Stowe's Conversation with the *Atlantic Monthly:* the Construction of *The Minister's Wooing', Studies in American Fiction,* 28:1 (2000), 27-38.

[42] Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Minister's Wooing* (Harmondsworth, 1999), p. 23. From henceforth references will be cited in parenthesis. This passage from *Don Juan* is paraphrased again on p. 264: 'Mary sat as placid and disengaged as the new moon, and listened to the chatter of old and young with the easy quietness of a young heart that has early outlived life, and looks on everything in the world from some gentle, restful eminence far on towards a better home.' Mary later paraphrases the famous passage from Julia's letter *(Don Juan,* 1.194-5) when reproaching the Byronic would-be seducer Burr for his treatment of Madame de Frontignac: 'You men can have everything, - ambition, wealth, power; a thousand ways are open to you: women have nothing but their heart; and when that is gone, all is gone' (p. 275).

[43] Jean Lebedun has suggested the character is based on the crusading feminist Sojourner Truth in 'Harriet

Beecher Stowe's Interest in Sojourner Truth, Black Feminist', *American Literature,* 46:3 (Nov. 1974), 359-363.

[44] Hopkins himself is made to endorse this: 'Yet if we consider that the Son of God, as to his human nature, was made of a woman, it leads us to see that in matters of grace God sets a special honour upon it. Accordingly, there have been in the Church, in all ages, holy women who have received the Spirit and been called to a ministration in the things of God, - such as Deborah, Huldah, and Anna, the prophetess,' *The Minister's Wooing,* p. 211.

[45] Burr is also associated with the arts. C.P. Wilson has commented on the paradox that Stowe herself, nevertheless, endorses romance in 'Tempests and Teapots: Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Minister's Wooing*', *New England Quarterly,* 58:4 (1985), 554-77, 575. I would suggest that Stowe situates her own didactic romance as a median between the dichotomy she sets up between Byron's poetry and 'Edwards on the Affections' on p. 73.

[46] On Burr as estranged from his forefather's religious doctrines, see Edward Tang, 'Making Declarations of Her Own: Harriet Beecher Stowe as New England Historian', *New England Quarterly,* 71:1 (1998), 77-96, 94.

[47] Alice C. Crozier, 'Harriet Beecher Stowe and Byron', p. 198. See also, Paul John Eakin, *The New England Girl: Cultural Ideals in Hawthorne, Stowe, Howells and James* (Athens, Georgia, 1976), p. 40; and Lawrence Buell, 'Calvinism Romanticized: Harriet Beecher Stowe, Samuel Hopkins, and *The Minister's Wooing', ESQ,* 24:3 (1978), 119-32.