Captured by Time: The Ageing Transformation of Byron Embodied by His Characters in His Literary Works

Yuliia Benderska

Universitat de Lleida

TESI DOCTORAL

Captured by Time: The Ageing Transformation of Byron Embodied by His Characters in His Literary Works

Yuliia Benderska

Memòria presentada per optar al grau de Doctor per la Universitat de Lleida
Programa de Doctorat en Territori, Patrimoni i Cultura

Directors
Dr. Maricel Oró-Piqueras and Dr. Olha Dovbush

Tutor
Dr. Maricel Oró-Piqueras

2023

To my parents , Oksana and Pavlo,

my grandparents, Halyna and Ivan,

my husband Roman —

you are my biggest support.

And also to my Motherland,

the country forged out of liberty and steel.

To Ukraine —

home of the brave

Table of contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To say that this journey has been a rocky road would be an understatement. It has been truly enjoyable yet daunting at the same time. Right now I am full of gratitude to all those who have supported me through these years of research.

I greatly thank my thesis supervisors, Dr Maricel Oró-Piqueras and Dr Olha Dovbush, for their guidance, patience, and all the invaluable advice they gave me along the way. Our numerous draft revisions, comments, and corrections of this thesis led me to where I am now. Thank you for believing in me and helping me grow as a researcher.

I am also thankful to my family, my dearest parents Oksana and Pavlo for their kind words of support and understanding through these years, my beloved husband Roman for his encouragement and unshakeable faith in me; my beautiful grandma Halyna for being my beam of light in the times of obscurity and my sweet grandpa Ivan who is constantly watching over me from heaven.

I also want to express gratitude to my Motherland Ukraine for standing tall in the hour of darkness fighting for its freedom. The year 2022 was especially difficult, but my thesis in some miraculous way gave me strength. It contains an analysis of a poem inspired by a great Ukrainian leader who centuries ago was doing exactly what Ukrainians are doing now — fighting for the freedom of his country.

This thesis is my way of fighting for Ukraine, the front that I am holding. Quoting Lord Byron, “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same”.

ABSTRACT

The poetry of George Gordon Byron represented great interest for the investigators of Romanticism. Nevertheless, it is fair to admit that ageing studies were rarely used to shed light on the Romantic literature in Britain. Byron was a prolific author who dealt with topics such as time and ageing, youth, and beauty, among others. He introduced the vision of a life course as it was seen in the Romantic period with the help of his characters.

Taking into consideration the fact that Lord Byron died at a relatively young age, when he was approaching his forties, his real life cannot be analysed through the prism of different stages of a person's life: youth, puberty, adulthood, and old age. Byronic heroes mirror the author's philosophy and his vision of ageing. The spirit of the Romantic period is present in all his works thanks to the vivid representation of time and its devouring power over the life of humans. Like many other writers of his time, Lord Byron was obsessed with the idea of staying young forever. His lifestyle and meticulous self-care undoubtedly prove how deeply Byron was concerned with beauty and grace. This doctoral thesis focuses on how critical analysis and representation of the life course in the literature of the Romantic period contributes to a better understanding of growing old. With the help of Byron's works written in a semi-biographical manner, it is possible to plunge into his inner world and his vision of life. Furthermore, through this research, it will be possible to get a vision of time and ageing in the Romantic period.

RESUM

La poesia de George Gordon Byron va representar un gran interès per als investigadors del romanticisme. No obstant això, és normal admetre que els estudis sobre l'envelliment poques vegades es van utilitzar per donar llum a la literatura romàntica a Gran Bretanya. Byron va ser un autor molt prolífic que va tractar temes com el temps i l'envelliment, la joventut i la bellesa, entre d'altres. A través dels seus personatges va introduir la visió d'un recorregut vital tal com es veia en l'època romàntica.

Tenint en compte que Lord Byron va morir en una edat relativament jove, quan s'acostava als quaranta anys, la seva vida real no es pot analitzar des del prisma de les diferents etapes de la vida d'una persona: joventut, pubertat, edat adulta i vellesa. Els herois de Byronic reflecteixen la filosofia de l'autor i la seva visió de l'envelliment. L'esperit romàntic és present en totes les seves obres gràcies a la viva representació del temps i el seu poder devorador sobre la vida dels humans. Com molts altres escriptors de la seva època, Lord Byron estava obsessionat amb la idea de mantenir-se jove per sempre. El seu estil de vida i la seva meticulosa cura de si mateix demostren, sens dubte, fins a quin punt Byron estava preocupat per la bellesa i la gràcia. Aquesta tesi doctoral se centra en com l'anàlisi crítica i la representació del curs de la vida en la literatura del període romàntic contribueix a una millor comprensió de l'envelliment.

Amb l'ajuda de les obres de Byron escrites de manera semibiogràfica, és possible endinsar-se en el seu món interior i la seva visió de la vida. A més, a través d'aquesta recerca, es podrà tenir una visió del temps i l'envelliment en l'època romàntica.

RESUMEN

La poesía de George Gordon Byron representó un gran interés para los investigadores del romanticismo. Sin embargo, es justo admitir que los estudios sobre el envejecimiento rara vez se utilizaron para arrojar luz sobre la literatura romántica en Gran Bretaña. Byron fue un autor muy prolífico que abordó temas como el tiempo y el envejecimiento, la juventud y la belleza, entre otros. Introdujo la visión del curso de la vida tal como se veía en el período romántico con la ayuda de sus personajes.

Teniendo en cuenta que Lord Byron murió a una edad relativamente joven, cuando se acercaba a los cuarenta, su vida real no puede analizarse a través del prisma de las diferentes etapas de la vida de una persona: juventud, pubertad, adultez y vejez. Los héroes de Byron reflejan la filosofía del autor y su visión del envejecimiento. El espíritu del período romántico está presente en todas sus obras gracias a la vívida representación del tiempo y su poder devorador sobre la vida de los humanos. Como muchos otros escritores de su tiempo, Lord Byron estaba obsesionado con la idea de mantenerse joven para siempre. Su estilo de vida y cuidado personal meticuloso sin duda prueban cuán profundamente Byron estaba preocupado por la belleza y la gracia. Esta tesis doctoral se centra en cómo el análisis crítico y la representación del curso de la vida en la literatura del período romántico contribuyen a una mejor comprensión del envejecimiento.

Con la ayuda de las obras de Byron escritas de manera semibiográfica, es posible sumergirse en su mundo interior y su visión de la vida. Además, a través de esta investigación, se podrá obtener una visión del tiempo y del envejecimiento en el período romántico.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Великий інтерес для дослідників романтизму становила поезія Джорджа Гордона Байрона. Тим не менш, слід визнати, що дослідження старіння рідко використовувалися, щоб пролити світло на романтичну літературу в Британії. Байрон був дуже плідним автором, який займався такими темами, як час і старіння, молодість і краса, серед інших. За допомогою своїх персонажів він представив бачення життєвого шляху, яким його бачили в період романтизму.

Зважаючи на те, що лорд Байрон помер у відносно молодому віці, коли йому вже було близько сорока, його справжнє життя не можна аналізувати крізь призму різних етапів життя людини: молодості, зрілості та старості. Байронічні герої віддзеркалюють філософію автора та його бачення старіння. Дух романтизму присутній у всіх його творах завдяки яскравому зображенню часу та його всепоглинаючої влади над життям людей. Як і багато інших письменників свого часу, лорд Байрон був одержимий ідеєю залишатися вічно молодим. Його спосіб життя та ретельний догляд за собою, безсумнівно, доводять, наскільки глибоко Байрон був стурбований красою та витонченістю. Ця докторська дисертація зосереджена на тому, як критичний аналіз і представлення життєвого шляху в літературі періоду романтизму сприяє кращому розумінню старіння.

За допомогою творів Байрона, написаних у напівбіографічній манері, можна зануритися у його внутрішній світ і його бачення життя. Крім того, завдяки цьому дослідженню можна буде отримати бачення часу та старіння в період романтизму.

Introduction

I have no one to be remembered in England,
& I wish to hear nothing from it but that you
[mother] is well, & a letter or two on business
from Hanson, whom you may tell to write. […]
I will write when I can, & beg you to believe me,
yr affect. Son Byron
(Lord Byron, The Major Works, 2008: 975)

Lord Byron's poetry, popular back in its time, presents itself as mysterious to the contemporary reader. According to Jerome McGann (2001), Lord Byron's poetry did not receive much attention from academics who were investigating Romanticism in British literature, "Byron has always been a kind of magical being, his writing — his prose and his poetry — remains relatively neglected — when compared, say, with the kind of attention that Wordsworth's or Keats's writings continue to draw from academics" (48). He vividly explains why Byron's works are not at the peak of popularity when it comes to studying Romanticism. The first and major reason is that Byron laid depth-psychological models in his works which, in McGann's opinion, is a rather thankless task. McGann takes the works of Shelley, Wordsworth and Byron to track any possible resemblance in their writing,

> Tracking Wordsworth's poetry will inevitably take you back to the mysteries of God and divinely constituted worlds, where human beings work out their salvation in fear and trembling. Tracking Byron's and Shelley's verses always ends in the complexities of mortally ordered worlds, where God and the gods are, like the pursuits of science, natural forms of human desire and imagination. (2011: 49)

McGann openly speaks about Byron's radical approach to writing and highlights one of his most distinct features — resistance. This is understandable from the perspective

that Byron was a representative of the second generation of romantics, hence his views and writing style were received with caution and suspicion; furthermore, the writer had to oppose and resist the opinion of society. McGann also speaks about the first Byronic hero and compares him to the author himself.

With the help of a witty combination of good and evil, comic and sad, Byron managed to get deep inside the souls of his readers. McGann compares his consciousness to Goethe's and Mozart's, saying that his writing certainly was "the marriage of Heaven and Hell" (1970: 34). An amazing ability to successfully implement irony — in particular self-irony — with a pinch of salt, is a pivotal phenomenon in the world of English Romanticism.

Susan Wolfson (2009) observes that Byron himself was aware of the intimacy he had with his readers. According to Wolfson, Byron's writing may be characterized in the following terms: "he likes very much to be listened to, and seems to observe the effect he produces on his hearer" (2009: 763). Byron certainly is a plotter of his period, a vivid rebel who is not afraid to publicly express his position. His stubborn rule-breaking led him to that critical point of his life when he had a love-hate relationship with his readers and literary critics of the period. He had nothing against self-mockery and was perfectly aware of his drawbacks. Wolfson succinctly puts in her article: "It's a familiar comic gambit, one Lord Byron himself deployed at the end of *Mazeppa*, where a tempestuous tale, told to distract a battle-defeated king, achieves its end by lulling him to sleep — Byron's self-satire" (2009: 769).

Above all this, his rebellious nature made him critical of the classics, including Shakespeare, whose works were instantly criticised by Byron. Wolfson provides us with

a distinct example on this issue: "Having spent the morning with Hamlet, Byron complains of "a nightmare sensation of impotence and vain endeavour," not sure whether this is Shakespeare's nightmare or his" (2009: 769). This common vision of things concerning rule-breaking and rebelling was rather normal among the first writers of the Romantic period. They had a tremendous responsibility on their shoulders — to challenge the old stereotypes and introduce a brand-new literary style.

Despite being a representative of the second generation of romantic poets (a generation of rebels and rule-breakers), Byron did respect certain rules and dogmas in the literary world. Nina Diakonova reflects on Byron's vision of genres and limits imposed on writers by critics and readers, "In the earlier period of his work (1807-1815) Byron adhered to the classicist theory of rigid discrimination between accepted genres. He recognised special laws for each kind of poetry. His *Letters and Journals*, however, are characterised by a most anti-classicist mixture of styles – lyrical and satirical, lofty and low, oratorical and colloquial" (1976: 548). This work could be considered a sign of disagreement, a desperate step to make a change and set the literature of the time free. Diakonova shifts the centre of attention from Byron's literary achievements to his journals and letters. She was deeply concerned that one may find Byron's true self only in his intimate and very personal writings.

One may point to the fact that Lord Byron's fame had its dark side and brought many misfortunes upon the poet, but the ideas which he intended to transmit through his writings do not lose their weight and importance even nowadays. As it will be demonstrated in this dissertation, Byron remains a beacon of hope for those seeking liberation from the limits imposed by society, a rebellious author who voices the

concerns of men whose sexual interests are not necessarily oriented on women; and men who do not want to hide from their wrinkles or not-so-perfect bodies, which Lord Byron courageously explores in his works. At the same time, the poet profoundly explores the issues of male ageing and tries to undermine the idea of time being unstoppable. He provides society with two solutions for how to face ageing. In his early works, Byron speaks of rebellion and strong opposition to everything that a liberated soul does not agree with. In his later works, burdened with his gained experience and wisdom, Byron strongly promotes the idea of escapism, both physical and mental, strengthening the effect of his writings by his example of forsaking his beloved England.

Nina Diakonova cleverly mentions the influence of travelling on Byron's unique personal style of writing, "After Byron left England, his attitude towards the language of poetry underwent a very gradual change" (1976: 550). It can be stated that travelling served as the source of inspiration for Lord Byron and it echoes in his most popular poems. One may easily spot the tremendous impact of Mediterranean and Oriental culture on his numerous works. However, Diakonova claims that neither Mediterranean nor Oriental culture had the biggest importance for Byron's poetry, "The Swiss period proved to have a lasting importance. When Byron resumed his *Childe Harold* he was less obedient to the classical tradition" (1976: 551). During his journey to Switzerland, he made friends with Percy Bysshe Shelley; Camilla Grobe (1953) cleverly points out that under the influence of Shelley and the grandeur of the Swiss Alps, Byron sought recompense in nature for society's failure. Though he professed that nature revealed to him new dimensions, new horizons and new ways of communication, it was not Byron's native tongue, nor could it yield to him an explanation of his disappointment in society. Byron was specifically strict in his criticism of aristocracy and corruption. He was

concerned that their profound extortion was hidden in their tremendous insolence, "They are morally blameable because they manipulate the power system to benefit only their class, without concern for the larger body of individuals who comprise the state. As rulers they disseminate and uphold values which ostensibly represent the best interests of everyone, but which in reality do not recognise the needs or the integrity of private citizens" (Watkins, 1981: 799). The way Lord Byron shows us the social classes in his works is quite clear and investigators may trace these descriptions in various cultures. However, as the poet grew older, he started to take cautious steps in his actions and writings, incorporating the idea of distancing oneself from the unbearable reality rather than to oppose to it. As this thesis intends to demonstrate, Lord Byron's poems can reveal new and different aspects of the experience of ageing from the literary perspective which have not been given much attention yet and which can be relevant to understand the contemporary realities of ageing.

This thesis is aimed to shed light on conceptions of ageing and the transformations that time brings with it, and related to that, living and dying. It intends to demonstrate that Lord Byron's works are as necessary now as they were during the period of the second generation of Romantic writers in England. Revealing the flaws of British society, describing adultery, eroticism and rebellion through the prism of ageing with the help of his characters' transformations Byron undressed disclosed information back in the Romantic period and broke the stereotypical thinking about literature (by writing about controversial and sometimes scandalous topics such as adultery, revenge, extramarital amorous adventures and explicit sexual scenes) not only in Britain but in Europe as well. The Romantic movement in England coincided chronologically with the Industrial Revolution, one of the pivoting historical events in Britain that marked the

course of history. According to Joseph Heath, "Romanticism was a direct response to the Industrial Revolution which began in about 1760 in England" (2014: 2). The loss of innocence has a much more profound meaning in the works of British Romantic writers. They were used as symbols to explain that the Industrial Revolution also meant the loss of "an innocent way of life" (Beck, 2002: 80). In this sense, the people who moved from the country to increasingly industrialised cities were also losing their innocence in a certain way. A. Sultana develops this issue in her thesis and highlights that the rapid growth of industries during the 18th century provided a vast range of products that amazed the people of that time. Through their literary works, British Romantic writers responded towards industrial growth. The reflection of the industrial revolution found in literary pieces was more of a social criticism (Sultana, 2016: 37). This thesis, therefore, develops a close examination of Lord Byron's poems and literary characters with the hope to show how the poet's writings reveal the significant moments of growing old in a society that was different from nowadays society and what alternatives one may come up with to survive and to successfully age in those conditions.

According to Monk Prayogshala, the factory system made human beings replaceable parts in it, and mass political movements, like the French Revolution, diminished individual accomplishment (2013: 1). The impact of the French Revolution on Lord Byron was negative as he stood firmly against violence. According to Sheikh,

> By the time the younger Romantics came on the scene the full significance of the French Revolution was lost to the people in general. Byron was only one year old when the French Revolution broke out. Naturally, he could not have the revolutionary enthusiasm of Wordsworth. But being a true Romantic he was against all sorts of tyranny and oppression. He was deeply and abidingly influenced by the revolutionary philosophy. Although the political fallout of the French Revolution was considered disastrous by Byron, yet he was impressed by its social ideas. He was a scion of a noble family yet he was against privileges. He idolized the common man in his poetry. (2014: 1-2)

Lord Byron explores the problems of inequality in society, oppression and limitations of human rights as he continues his research on ageing. The present dissertation is intended to analyse the transformation of Lord Byron's literary characters through the prism of the author's ageing process and how those transformations were manifested in his early- and later-life works. To explore these issues, this thesis sets three specific objectives:

1. To examine how the reception of Lord Byron's literary works shaped him as a poet and personality and how his works were accepted.

2. To explore and analyse how Byron dealt with physical decline and what it means to live in a not-so-perfect body and struggle every day trying to show evidence to the contrary. It also questions how life circumstances and certain pivoting moments in life influence the development of Byron and his characters' antisocial behaviour or suffering from personality dualism; this chapter will also lead us to answer how Byron and his characters respond to the pressures, limitations and prejudices of society.

3. To examine whether there are significant transformations in Lord Byron's characters and their attitude to ageing in connection to Lord Byron's own growing older, wiser and more experienced. Also, to interrogate the role and involvement of Byron's characters-rebels and characters-escapists into social life and their ways to escape death, growing old or even slowing down time.

The specific theoretical framework of this thesis is literary gerontology, with a special focus on transformations of a personality through the life course (and also due to

certain life circumstances) concerning the idea of losing physical attraction and avoiding the merciless velocity of time. The analysis of Lord Byron's works from an age-studies perspective is especially important nowadays since our society currently struggles with the "beauty revolution" and a "forever young" syndrome. Humanity stands as a witness to pivoting changes in the conception of old age (Butler, 2008).

to better understand the complex process of ageing during the last four decades, new gerontological research has appeared, and thus literary gerontology has become an influential field of study. As shown by such scholars as Anne M. Wyatt-Brown (1993) and Kathleen E. Woodward (1991), a literary and cultural approach can shed more light on what ageing means beyond medicine and scientific understandings of this process. Literary gerontology reveals hidden ideas about ageing that fellow Romantic poets, Byron being among them, expressed in the hope to transmit them onto the pages of real life. Byron's position about ageing and the life course is especially valuable given that the representatives of their mid-thirties onwards are now exposed to extreme pressure and challenging tasks to maintain their physical youth which is imposed by contemporary society, which very much resembles the difficulties that Byron himself faced during his writer's career. The Romantic period in history stood before major changes and Lord Byron happened to be the pioneer carrying the torch towards the new and mysterious at the time. Being one of the first poets vocalising the issues of ageing, a decaying body and the desire to liberate oneself from the burden of the old rules, the poet himself fell victim to severe judgement and criticism, transforming from a rebel into an outcast, as a consequence.

This dissertation is organised into four chapters, which correspond to the specific objectives of this study. Lord Byron's three major works, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,*

Mazeppa and *Don Juan*, will be closely studied in Chapter 1. As was expected, Byron's attempts to introduce his revolutionary and rebellious ideas which were not well accepted by society and pushed him towards the life of an outcast in his own country. Despite the controversies and scandals around his poems and his private life, Byron continued to vocalise the needs and concerns of people seeking liberation from social standards and imposed norms when it came to the question of age, beauty, body sexuality and sexual orientation. Byron's works also demonstrate the transformation and development of Lord Byron's personality, specifically through his early and late literary works as well as the figure of Byron presented in his letters and journals.

The second chapter establishes the theoretical framework of ageing studies in light of historical and sociocultural perspectives of old age. It gives a special focus on two important issues in our investigation — personality transformation through the life course as well as the literary character transformation and the factors causing the changes along with ways how to deal with age to age well. We intend to explore how pivoting events in the author's personal life and global historical events trigger the metamorphoses in the Byronic Heroes selected for this dissertation. Given the importance of the flow of time and its inevitability in Byron's works, the second chapter uncovers the complexities of a Romantic Persona and its personality dualism about facing the merciless time. The figure of the Byronic Hero and his transformation along with the poet's transformation are central to this chapter. It also examines how the Byronic Heroes of Byron's late and early works challenge time and ageing providing two polar-different philosophies combined in one mind.

Chapter three investigates the *Byronic universe*, dedicating special attention to the poems selected for this dissertation, along with various stylistic and poetic devices

which highlight and bring forward the true identity of the poet. These instruments contribute to the fuller picture of Byron's persona during different stages of his life, which is reflected in each of the selected poems. Special attention is given to two key figures: the narrator and the Byronic Hero, who to a greater or a lesser extent reflect Lord Byron's voice. This chapter also emphasizes the stages of ageing transformation of the selected Byronic Heroes and the way Byron's persona is reflected in each of them. Suffering is presented as an inevitable element of growing old and gaining valuable experience.

In the final chapter, we investigate certain ageing concepts which are tightly connected to Lord Byron's characters and the experiences they had to undergo in the selected poems. The chapter dwells on how love, desire, physical beauty and flaws can uniquely shape a character. Death and its anticipation are also discussed in this part of the dissertation to demonstrate the tight link between life, ageing and dying, and, most importantly, how the idea of death, the only thought about it, may influence the decisions taken by Byronic Heroes and the consequences that follow. We intend to demonstrate death as a part of a life journey which leads the Byronic Heroes to eternity and culminates rather than terminates their accomplishments transferring and keeping them safe on the book pages. This chapter also reveals two more concepts that Lord Byron was obsessed with in his literary quest trying to find ways to "live forever". The idea of a fresh start, which was demonstrated in all three poems selected for this thesis, emerges from Byron's escapist views after he became an outcast in English society. We look at it as a symbol of hope, the poet's inexhaustible optimism and firm credence in a better future. An opportunity for the literary work to outlive its author, on the other hand, is viewed as something that comes to both Byron and his Byronic Heroes with a

price and certain sacrifices. We intend to exhibit the notion of topics that attract readers of all times and nations as one of Byron's brilliant solutions to how to stay "alive" even when death does come to finally take him. As one may observe, the poet achieved his goal, since he stays "alive" on the pages of his poems up to this day.

Taken collectively, these chapters reveal a broader picture of how Lord Byron and his literary characters manage the complex process of ageing and the pivoting moments in their lives as they get older. We have selected three major poems by Lord Byron: *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Mazeppa* and *Don Juan* because these three literary works were created during the most important moments of Byron's life, such as adultery and escape to Europe, and we believe that they serve as reflections of his true self and hence draw a more accurate picture of both Byron and the Byronic Hero along their rocky roads of ageing transformations.

When addressing his fears and concerns through his characters, the poet shows that many of the issues dealt with within his works can be transferred into real life. As will be proved in this thesis, Lord Byron is a human rights advocate, the voice of liberation and sexual freedom, the one who challenges time, as a poet and creator, and finally, against all odds, wins triumphantly. His popularity and recognition came to him only after his tragic death at the age of thirty-six, yet he remained to live on the pages of his books for generations of readers into the future. Through his works and, most importantly, through his characters, the poet speaks loudly for the outcasts, people who refuse to live and age by the rules, but who deserve happiness in the same amount as the rest of the people.

CHAPTER I: Lord Byron and the Reception of His Works

Introduction

This chapter intends to investigate Lord Byron's poetry at different stages of his life with a focus on three poems — *Mazeppa* (1819), *Don Juan* (1819) and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812). Despite polar-different vectors laid out in his early and later works, Lord Byron never abandoned his confrontation with time and ageing. As shall be demonstrated in this dissertation, Byron showed signs of preoccupation with the signs of physical ageing. He was also in constant search of eternal life embodied in literary fame and recognition. A close analysis of his poems can help understand better his wild spirit of liberty and forever-young mind; it also can help to see closer what a human being has to go through in his or her transformation due to the natural ageing process both physically and psychologically, under the constant pressure of significant sociocultural factors.

Lord Byron was reluctant to admit that there was a strong similitude between himself and Childe Harold, the protagonist of one of his most popular poems. In the poem, a young man, not-so-perfect, with hopes and dreams, burdened with numerous sins and bad deeds decides to try his luck somewhere beyond England, to search for a better life. Through the poem, the protagonist faces numerous facts of injustice, and cruelty, and raises to public attention the political situation in the Mediterranean and Oriental parts of the world, making sure to exhibit his political views for which he later paid with his own life. The poem is a bitter summary of Byron's intentions to search for the inexistent "utopia", a place where there would be no rules. Lord Byron's decision to call his protagonist "child" was not met with approval from critics since in medieval times this

title was given to men who were to become knights. This title was not well accepted due to Childe Harold's behaviour which was contrary to what the knights were said to do in the middle ages. The poet expressed satisfaction with the term "childe" supporting his choice with a strong claim that the past was being severely romanticised.

In the next poem, *Mazeppa*, the readers follow the rocky path of a great Ukrainian warrior who suffers punishment for adultery. The poem tells a story of a helpless and exhausted warrior Mazeppa who represents human beings, unable to escape from their fate. His nostalgia and bittersweet memories of the good days of youth, while being tied up and riding on the wild horse, remind readers of the way old people speak of the times they were young. Lord Byron here refers to the topic of suffering and makes his readers sympathise with the protagonist despite his well-deserved punishment. Furthermore, with this special meticulous technique of implementing suffering and torture in this poem, Byron introduces a new literary method of time manipulation, creating an illusion of time moving slower for the readers as it will be shown later in the analysis. With *Mazeppa,* the poet makes a scandalous introduction of his original version of the Byronic Hero: sinful, imperfect and yet, lovable.

Another thought-provoking poem, *Don Juan*, narrates a story of a character who very much resembles Lord Byron himself. The poet received numerous harsh reviews concerning this controversial story, where a man of very questionable morals becomes a protagonist. The poem, however, became instantly popular, raising discussions of Byron's persona all over Europe. Obscenity, adultery and eroticism which are present in *Don Juan* made it scandalous and Byron faced criticism. His courageousness cost him a reputation in both literary circles and among the wide readership groups who were not ready to accept the changing face of British Romantic poetry.

Byron's ideas have provoked heated disputes and discussions among literary scholars. Byron's poems gave birth to numerous scandals in academic circles and raised the poet to unthinkable popularity in Europe. Due to the poet's liberal ideas explicitly exhibited in his poems, Byron became an object of religious and gender-based attacks, provoked by the defenders of traditional values. Because of the autobiographical nature of his poems, with references to Byron's numerous love adventures, the poet became the provocative voice of his time, forbidden and tempting simultaneously.

After Lord Byron's tragic death in 1824, his popularity instantly rose to unthinkable heights. However, due to many scandals around his name and literary works, it took quite some time to have him reburied at Westminster Abbey, side by side with the rest of the prominent British writers. Taking into consideration the changing realities of our society, Byron's ideas no longer sound obscene or scandalous, contrarily, they serve as guides to the contemporary readership. And especially now, with the ageing of the worldwide population, the light that Byron's works may shed on ageing transformation throughout the life course may have a renovated value. By exploring these issues along with Byron's literary techniques of creating an illusion of slowing down time in his poems, the author has yet again reawakened interest in his persona and has become an important influence figure in the European literary background and society.

1.1 An Overview of Lord Byron's Career

George Gordon Byron, who was born in 1788, was the son of Captain John "Mad Jack" Byron, and Catherine Gordon[1]. His mother, who was interested in books and reading, was the first one to develop Byron's life-long relationship with literature. Yet, it took quite some time for him to acquire a personal writing style. As Wright states, "Byron began writing seriously whilst at Cambridge in 1805 - though, unlike many of his contemporaries, he often felt that writing could never really be the serious undertaking of a gentleman and a man of action" (1995:9).

Lord Byron's poetic path began in his adolescent years. *Fugitive Pieces* (1806), and *Hours of Idleness* (1807), were collections of poems which Byron wrote when he was 17 years old. In 1815, he married Annabella Millbanke, a heiress of her wealthy uncle. However, this marriage broke down due to his liaisons with other women. Byron, just like his father, accumulated debts through his financial irresponsibility. To avoid debts and ward off rumours of an incestuous relationship with his half-sister, he left England in 1816 and never returned. While travelling, Byron produced a highly creative work, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* which made him very popular. Byron published works frequently from 1813 to 1816, taking his inspiration from his travels to Greece and Turkey. *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos* were presented to the public in 1813. Then *Corsair* and *Lara* followed in 1814. Two years later Byron published *Parisina* and *The Siege of Corinth.* The creation of the poem *Don Juan* marked an important moment in Byron's literary career and was met with nods of approval from the literary society of

[1] Catherine was the second wife of John Byron, and the heiress of an estate in Scotland. To claim Catherine's estate, Byron's father adopted the additional surname of Gordon, and became John Byron Gordon. Thus, Byron also used his father's surname, "George Byron Gordon" for some time.

the time. Apart from literature, Byron was interested in politics and had a seat in the House of Lords. He strongly advocated for social reforms. Byron was only 36 when he died on April 19, 1824. Literary circles in England and Byron's friends and followers in Europe and beyond deeply felt the loss, which, however, was soured by the fact that his body was not buried at Westminster abbey as other great men due to the scandals that followed Byron's name until his death.

Byron is seen nowadays as the ultimate Romantic, whose name is associated with a man of heated passion (McGann, 2000: 3). Apart from his massive poetic masterpieces, there are many other shorter poems. In addition, there is a selection from Byron's inimitable letters, extracts from his journals and conversations, as well as more formal writings. Byron's plays, however, did not receive as much recognition as his poetry, which is considered his signature genre. Nowadays, Lord Byron's literary figure and his works continue to grasp readers' attention all around the world.

1.2. Lord Byron: Rise to Popularity

Lord Byron's talent for writing made him a popular man. Nevertheless, his lifestyle, amorous adventures, and financial and marital problems also contributed to this, bringing yet a shade of infamy to his name. As Moore claims, Lord Byron's personality was a "mixture of affectionate sweetness and playfulness, by which it was impossible not to be attached", and later Moore adds that Byron demonstrated "silent rages, moody sullenness and revenge with a precocious bent for attachment and obsession" (Moore, 1835: 265). According to Christopher Hitchens's review of Fiona McCarthy's biography, "Byron's career is more like a comet than the meteor to which it is usually compared" (2012). For Hitchens, the poet "comes around, again and again, to be reviewed and revisited, and it has become indissoluble from his work" (2012: 2). Lord Byron has become an icon in history and literature, and not just thanks to his beautiful and unparalleled command of the English language. Lord Byron's character was not suitable for politics, but it gained him popularity as a scandalous figure, therefore critics spoke not only about his poetry but also about his private life. According to Elizabeth Wasserman (2002), Byron's infamous deeds in his personal life attracted more attention than his writings. Katherine Gerould (1922) has extensively researched Byron's life and work and when comparing him to the reception of his contemporary poets, states: "In the nonacademic world of letters no one either knows or cares whether Byron was a great poet" (1922: 136). Lord Byron's irresistible personality was impossible to ignore and made him stand out in the literary circles of those times. As Gerould argues, "Byron is so real, so vivid, so persistent, as a human being, that you cannot down him. Byron is not dead. He evokes the same kind of adoration, of contempt, of loyalty, that he would

evoke if he walked down Piccadilly today" (1922: 138). Researchers on Byron differ from Gerould's views. "Byron's genius and his insane popularity", in More's view, "consisted of an extraordinary mixture of revolutionary spirit and classical art" (Moore, 1998: 301-303). "Byron was intellectual, not in the manner of a philosopher", More admitted, "but in the impulsive way of a child. This approach gave his poetry the simplicity and tangibility that made it timeless" (Moore, 1963: 69). According to J. F. A. Pyre (1923), whose ideas are similar to those of More, should not be too strict with Byron. Pyre claims that the poet's flaws originate from his impulsive individuality: "He was for fanning the coal of life into a blaze. He may have been a weak philosopher and dramatist, but he would have scorned the proposition that philosophy and scholarship, and art are the most important things in life" (Pyre, 1923: 86). Lord Byron's readers also found themselves under the spell of the poet's character, which had an impact on the way they saw his literary works, too. Literary critic Jacques Barzun (1953) wrote *Byron and the Byronic* in an attempt to draw a line between Byron's literary persona and the scandals in his personal life. According to Barzun (1953), Lord Byron's true figure somewhat lacked true honour and aristocracy. However, Barzun believed that Byron possessed qualities of natural chivalry; as the critic states: "He wanted above all to be what his title implied, a lord among men," and was one of "those few influential men of rank who have taken the aristocratic ideal seriously" (1953: 64).

Lord Byron enjoyed the shine of popularity at the beginning of his literary path, but later he became an outcast and had to leave Britain. Readers did not have an opportunity to get acquainted with some priceless pages from Byron's full biography due to the fire in the office of John Murray, the poet's publisher. In the middle of the 20th century, Leslie Marchard failed to receive permission to publish materials about Byron's

bisexuality which could have helped in further exploration of certain mysterious parts of his biography and thus deepening our understanding of the man who wrote eternal masterpieces. In the early 1970s, the Byron Society resumed its work, which resulted in rekindling the interest in Byron's literary works and the appearance of academic research groups and conferences, eager to continue the studies of Byron's poetry.

1.3 Lord Byron's Career Dawn: His Early Works

Although Lord Byron is rather frequently associated with his famous poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* he has many other written works that deserve attention. Byron's first two books of poetry, *Fugitive Pieces* and *Poems on Various Occasions*, were published in 1806. There are in total 86 poems in both volumes. These books of poetry contain very intimate love messages from Lord Byron, the majority are strictly heterosexual; however, there were a few ones with a clear homosexual hint, which resulted in harsh criticism towards Byron's persona (Cochran, 2009). According to Cochran's observation, Byron tends to explore homosexuality more deeply in his second volume of poetry — Poems on Various Occasions.

The next book of poetry, *Hours of Idleness*, *a Series of Poems*, *Original and Translated,* was published in 1807. This time Byron was clear about using his real name. Compared to his first published volume, *Hours of Idleness* contain less romantic poems, but focuses more on translation[2]; in *Hours of Idleness* Byron celebrates male bonding, fraternal treachery and eroticism. This volume of poetry had good criticism and appeared to become a financial success for the author.

Lord Byron's debut as a writer was not received completely positively. Among the reviews, some reflected dissatisfaction and strong opposition to his liberal ideas. One of his early major works, *Childish Recollections*, that initially was supposed to be a part of *Hours of Idleness,* was finally deleted. Byron expressed doubts and concerns about the

[2] from Greek and Latin in particular.

poem being too revealing[3]. According to Jerome McGann (2000), *Childish Recollections* demonstrates Byron's ambitions as a poet at the dawn of his literary path. Germaine Greer (2005) and Jerome McGann (2000) express concerns about the boundaries imposed on Byron by the public of those times. Both scholars agree that social and emotional factors forced Byron to censor himself. Due to Lord Byron's initial success, he became known as a poet in pursuit of success and ambition, but only after the poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* his name started to be treated seriously in literary groups. It turned out to be Lord Byron's best-recognised poem that remains popular nowadays, and it certainly was the first one that shaped Byron as a prominent and professional writer.

[3] Feb 11, 1808, from Byron's letter to Ridge:

"You must go back and cut out the whole poem of Childish Recollections. Of course you will be surprised at this, and perhaps displeased, but it must be done. I cannot help it's detaining you a month longer, but there will be enough in the volume without it, and as I am now reconciled to Dr. Butler I cannot allow any Satire to appear, against him, nor can I alter that part relating to him without spoiling the whole. – You will therefore omit the whole poem…" (Bernard G. Beatty, 2008).

1.4 *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*: The Poem of a Life's Journey

"I awoke one morning and found myself famous" (Byron, 1812: 16). These were Lord Byron's words after *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Cantos I and II appeared before his readers. Hossein Pirnajmuddin (2013), finds this information predictable and rather not surprising. Lord Byron's rise to fame began with the publication of his first Oriental tale, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. The publication of Cantos I and II brought Byron instant fame. This poem can be called that driving force which as a result helped him to build up his popular figure in the literary world. It appears that Childe Harold's Pilgrimage pushed Byron towards further exploration of Oriental themes in his works. According to Keith Walker, "At that time, the poem was seen as a descriptive poem of travel and was praised for its accuracy" (Walker,1979: 2-7). Walker states that "in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Byron reveals a great deal of awareness about his contemporary world" (Walker,1979: 2-7). Leslie Marchand also states that *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* "served as a picturesque travelogue for people who could not travel" (Marchand, 1974: 217). Muhammad Sharafuddin admits the accuracy with which Byron reflected the culture of Islam in his works (1994: 243). Robert Gleckner, in his turn, expresses the following idea concerning Canto I and II:

> It is perhaps logical that […] at the beginning of canto ii the poet should invoke Athena, the goddess of wisdom, as his muse; for he will tell no fairy tales nor gloss over reality but, seeing the world in all its factuality and truth, he will present us finally with the totality of its truth, the vision of the wise. (Gleckner, 1967: 69)

Truthfulness is what readers and critics notice in the way Byron describes Eastern ways of life. Bagabas states the following, "in his elaborate description of Ali and of Ionnina's court, captures the glamour and splendour of oriental life" (Bagabas, 1993:

174). Stronger criticism, however, may be observed nowadays, when one begins to explore Byron's Orient. According to Blackstone, Byron's contemporaries basically "saw his interest in Islam as eccentric, or, at best, picturesque" (Blackstone, 1974: 325). McGann contributes to this position by stating that he doubts whether Byron fully understands the necessity to be authentic and truthful in his Oriental stories. "This should be especially true for a person who has spent only a brief period in this land, does not even speak the language, and admits to his slight experience" (McGann, 1983: 209). We believe that due to the passion which Lord Byron felt towards oriental culture many of his works possess his special signature style inspired by faraway lands. With certainty, one may state that *Mazeppa*, the selected poem for the analysis of this dissertation, was brought to the readers because of Lord Byron's interest in Eastern Europe. However not completely accurate, Byron's reflections on the Orient bring his readers closer to this exotic and mysterious world of Western civilisation. One should not treat his oriental writings as historical sources, but rather as a unique opportunity to see these eastern realms through Byron's creative prism.

After his ventures in the East, Byron produced his first major work of poetry, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. His friend, R.C. Dallas, read the work and encouraged the young man to publish it, despite the failure of *Hours of Idleness*, published when Byron was eighteen, and the nasty aftermath of *English Bards and Scots Reviewers*, his attack in verse upon all critics, still smarted. Dallas also showed the manuscript to publisher John Murray. Byron was not quite sure whether it was acceptable for him to publish Cantos I and II because of the number of details they unveiled about Byron himself. Nevertheless, with a certain amount of encouragement from his close circle of friends, the poem was presented to the public in 1812. The poem became a success almost

immediately. “Published in March 1812, the first run of 500 quarto copies sold out in three days. There were ten editions of the work within three years. From its very first reviews, *Childe Harold* has suffered both the praise and odium of various critics” (Caminita, 1998: 34). Critics at the *Edinburgh Review* who were merciless to the teenager’s first publication in 1808 of *Hours of Idleness*, praised the poem’s vigour and originality while others complained of the seeming lack of point of a poem whose subtitle, *A Romaunt*[4], led readers to believe that Byron had produced a typical romance quest. Critics also had several problems with *Childe Harold*’s claim of being a verse romance. Andrew Rutherford, for example, finds Byron’s labelling of his poem to be the poet’s pandering to his public to enter into the society that was to lionise him in 1812. According to Rutherford, the poem received its recognition and its author — his well-deserved praise because “he was so successful with the common reader because he was such a common man himself . . . and the consequent limitations of his romantic poetry contributed in fact to its popular success since they made it so immediately acceptable to ordinary readers” (Rutherford, 1962: 27). Many critics saw Byron’s genre experimentation as a “disadvantage,” not understanding why a romance, in the traditional definition of the term, treated current events and lacked the religious pilgrimage or quest romance so often associated with the genre. Caminita (1998) shrewdly points to the fact that critics also had a very serious objection to the characterisation of Harold, who seems to float through the poem as a gloomy misanthrope (21). These are the words which Lord Byron addresses in response to the criticism he received:

[4] Byron used this title for *Childe Harolds Pilgrimage* when he only had Canto I and II. When he wrote Canto III and IV, the name of the poem changed to the one we know well up to this day.

> . . . on one point alone I shall venture an observation. Amongst the many objections justly urged to the very indifferent character of the 'vagrant Childe' (whom, notwithstanding many hints to the contrary, I still maintain to be a fictitious personage), it has been stated, that, besides the anachronism, he is very unknightly, as the times of the Knights were times of Love, Honour, and so forth. Now, it so happens that the good old times, when "l'amour du bon temps, l'amour antique" flourished, were the most profligate of all possible centuries. Those who have any doubts on this subject may consult Sainte-Palaye. Whatever other objection may be urged to that most unamiable personage Childe Harold, he was so far perfectly knightly in his attributes—"No waiter, but a knight templar." By the by, I fear that Sir Tristram and Sir Lancelot were no better than they should be, although very poetical personages and true knights "sans peur," though not "sans reproche." If the story of the institution of the "Garter" be not a fable, the knights of that order have for several decades borne the badge of a Countess of Salisbury, of indifferent memory. So much for chivalry… (Byron, 1812)

Having defended his character in such a way, Byron demonstrates that Childe Harold should not be looked at through the prism of the traditional understanding of who a knight is. The poet made a statement and established a set of new rules and ways to treat a character by creating his version of who a knight may be. Falling from grace and capitulating one's reputation is not a theme strange to Lord Byron; by attributing not-so-complementary characteristics to the figure of a knight, Byron demonstrates that he is only but a human and there is a place for mistakes, poor choices and regrets. Such courage could not be left unnoticed and further followed the reactions of Byron's contemporaries, which were rather different in tone and perception. There is a statement by another successful writer who happened to be Lord Byron's contemporary — Sir Walter Scott. According to Scott, the poem was "the novelty of an author speaking in his own person" (Brinkley, Hanley, 1992: 12). But according to Caminita, this assessment was not quite accurate in determining the originality of Byron's work (1998: 34). In Hill's research one may find a few lines which William Wordsworth addressed to his wife in 1812, "Yesterday I dined alone with Lady B.— and we read Lord Byron's

new poem which is not destitute of merit; though ill-planned, and often unpleasing in the sentiments, and almost always perplexed in the construction" (Hill, 1967: 80). Wordsworth put pen to paper to express his concern that Lord Byron's literary style gave an impression of a rather harsh one, scandalous and perplexing for the readership of the time. If we compare Wordsworth's and Scott's impressions of Lord Byron's poem, it is clear that Scott seemed more positively impressed. This is what he wrote to Murray in 1812: "I hope he will not consider it as intrusive in a veteran author to pay my debt of gratitude for the high pleasure I have received from the perusal of 'Childe Harold,' which is certainly the most original poem which we have had this many a day" (Smiles, 2014: 214). Another letter which drew our attention was the one Scott sent to J. Baillie with a recommendation to read the poem, but this time adding a note of bitterness to his previous review:

> Have you seen The Pilgrimage of Childe Harold, by Lord Byron? It is, I think, a very clever poem, but gives no good symptom of the writer's heart or morals. His hero, notwithstanding the affected antiquity of the style in some parts, is a modern man of fashion and fortune, worn out and satiated with the pursuits of dissipation, and although there is a caution against it in the preface, you cannot for your soul avoid concluding that the author, as he gives an account of his travels, is also doing so in his character. Now really this is too bad...Yet with all this conceit and assurance, there is much poetical merit in the book, and I wish you would read it. (Bloom, 2009: 143)

One person who exhibited an interest in these reviews was Lord Byron's publisher Murray. He was putting a lot of effort to attract Byron's interest in the reviews, too: "I have the pleasure of sending Twenty-Nine Letters – and a packet of Newspapers – & a Volume containing the best of all criticisms upon Childe Harold – Extracts from it – for the instruction of the rising generation." Despite these efforts, Byron did not pay attention to the reviews (McClay, 2000: 71).

Byron named the work “my best” in 1817. The quote for the first page of the poem was chosen from *Le Cosmopolite, ou, le Citoyen du Monde* (1753), by Louis-Charles Fougeret de Monbron and it was in French. This quote reflects Byron’s feelings towards his Motherland which he discovered through the pleasure of travelling the world:

> The universe is a kind of book in which one has read only the first page when one has seen only one's own country. I have leafed through a large enough number, which I have found equally bad. This examination was not at all fruitless for me. I hated my country. All the impertinence of the different peoples among whom I have lived has reconciled me to her. If I had not drawn any other benefit from my travels than that, I would regret neither the expense nor the fatigue. (Monbron, 1753: 16)

However, Childe Harold is not the only rebellious character whose head was turned towards a long and rocky road of travelling. *Mazeppa*, another best-selling poem by Lord Byron, tells a story of a young Ukrainian aristocrat who suffers during the entire poem, and undergoes tremendous pangs but never loses his spirit. The reawakening of faith, travelling through mountains and valleys almost getting caught in the cold embrace of death — with these verbal brush strokes Byron paints a picture of transformation. An ashamed young man caught in the arms of a married woman is sentenced to death and tied to the wild horse — his fate is almost certain. And yet he refuses to die. Having fallen from grace, and kicked away from the aristocratic circles, Mazeppa takes the road of atonement, thinking of freedom and revenge. “The central idea of the poem is a passion for liberty” (Drobot, 2018: 124). Just like a man needs to breathe, he needs to be free — this is the right granted to all men regardless of their social class. “Byron was looking for plain people, who had not turned victims of the influence of the bourgeois class, praising them for their greatness and courage” (Anixt, 1965: 341). We believe that *Mazeppa* had an impact on the development and strengthening of revolutionary tone in poetry. “The Romantics were situated within the

aristocratic class facing decline, and they took over from Byron his pessimism and disappointment; furthermore, the progressive poets developed the revolutionary and realist traditions he had established" (Anixt, 1965: 160). Lord Byron challenges the British way of life and encourages the liberation of individuals from the imposed boundaries:

> Thus the vain fool who strove to glut
> His rage, refining my pain,
> Sent me forth to the Wilderness
> Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone
> To pass the desert to a throne –
> What Mortal his doom may guess?
> Let none despond – let none despair –
> Tomorrow the Borysthenes
> May see our coursers graze at ease (*Mazeppa*, 20.848-856)

By denying sadness and despair in Mazeppa, Byron pushes forward with strength and stamina, demonstrating his readiness to stand his ground. In real life, the poet appeared to be just as courageous, "Byron dressed splendidly, went to fight for the freedom of Greece, satirized many sides of English life, and hated all false and insincere talk" (Thornley and Roberts, 1984). It seems that criticising the British way of life is not enough for Byron, therefore he moves on to criticising more global ideas and individuals who influenced history. "Byron is our one great interpreter of the mood of disillusion, cynicism, and unrest which, all over Europe, accompanied the reaction against the Revolution" (Buchan, 1923: 18). Byron's influence on the spreading of the ideas of freedom in literature are hard to ignore:

> Byron was associated with liberty, rebellion, and revolution throughout the nineteenth century, and writers such as Thomas Carlyle and John Stuart Mill considered him seriously as a political poet in the early Victorian period. Mill's progressive liberalism did not stretch to Byron's *transgressive eloquence*, however, a poetics that spoke to, instead of on behalf of, the masses. (Wootton, 2016: 58)

It seems that in a way *Childe Harold* encourages readers to question the established norms in society. "After publishing this work, Byron regretted the violence of language, sarcasm and fury" (Bălu, 2013: 92). Clifford (1992) also investigates this issue in his research and uses *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* as one of his sources. Wohlgemut wrote a review of Clifford's research where he focuses on the issue of patriotism in Byron's works, "Byron turned to the eighteenth-century notion of the cosmopolitan or *philosophical traveller* to counter the domestic model of the patriot in native poets like Southey and Wordsworth" (Wohlgemut, 2009: 96). Childe Harold is a very cosmopolite character, he belongs nowhere and everywhere at the same time. Byron's travelling adventures shaped his personality beyond recognition: "Byron's tours of 1809 to 1811 and, further, his exile from England in 1816 tended to render him, as he later termed himself, a citizen of the world'" (Grobe, 1953: 49). Similar to Lord Byron, Childe Harold crosses frontiers of countries and his mind, enriching his spirit and broadening his views of the world. The main character can see different cultures and learn about their experiences of freedom and oppression, which appears to be revealing for his outlook. This helps him to truly appreciate the notion of liberty. "The concept reveals that the dominance of the love of freedom in the past citizens of a country makes present submission to tyranny even more ignominious" (Grobe, 1953: 28). Grobe also speaks of Byron's travelling experiences: "In every country, Byron marked the relationship of the spirit of liberty in the individual to political liberty in the state. Byron suggests, thus, that there is a direct connection between the way a state functions and the way an individual thinks. He shows how the ideology promoted by the state affects the individuals' lifestyles and ways of thinking, as they are the products of the values it promotes" (Grobe, 1953: 49).

The contemporary relevance of Byron's work *Childe Harold* reaches even further. Vianu (Bălu, 2013) writes about the Byron phenomenon, whose life and work are significant and represent a symbol for the entire European culture preparing its political scene for modernity. Bălu tries to reconstruct the cultural road towards the European Union, with all the languages which are used within it. According to Bălu, "The journey of Childe Harold goes on according to the contemporary aspirations of the period, as the travelogues from the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century revealed a wish to know other geographical spaces and other cultures" (Bălu, 2013: 92). Leaving England was upsetting at the time, but the reason was to take a distance from the aristocratic society which had become a subject of despising, with its negative influence. The poet is involved passionately in his story, and the things that Harold experiences in the poem are merely reflections of the poet's personal views. Byron's hero is running away from his women, and he is escaping from his patriarchal responsibilities to his women, tenants and servants as Byron himself was doing at the time:

> His house, his home, his heritage, his lands,
> The laughing dames in whom he did delight.
> Whose large blue eyes, fair locks and snowy hands,
> Might shake the saintship of an anchorite,
> And long had fed his youthful appetite;
> His goblets brimmed with every costly wine,
> And all that mote to luxury invite,
> Without a sigh he left, to cross the brine,
> And traverse Paynim shores, and pass Earth's central line. (I.11)

Harold is not searching for a wife or mistress, or a soulmate to keep him company. Harold does not quite know what he is searching for. But he does know that he is fleeing the conservative societal pressures of Regency England, its boundaries, such as

the duty to the church, children and all that makes no sense to him anymore, and the opportunities for pleasure in England have been exhausted:

> The last, the worst, dull spoiler, who was he?
> Blush, Caledonia! such thy son could be!
> England! I joy no child he was of thine:
> Thy free-born men should spare what once was free. (II.11. 94-97)

Camilla Grobe (1953) reinforces this idea claiming that many of Byron's attitudes toward society during the Childe Harold period revolve around the "exile from society, "which embodies the feelings of estrangement. Grobe also stresses that the distinguishing characteristic of the exile is his [Childe Harold's] pride and his independent nature; however, she also admits that travel does not bring resolution of the conflict with society" (Grobe, 1953: 3). "Pilgrimage" is probably an inappropriate word for this journey. Harold is never searching for anything specific; rather, he is running away from his past and trying, in the process, to find some meaning in life. L. Marchand (1965) highlights that many critics have insisted that in Childe Harold, Byron was merely fictionalising his own life. While this is not true — the two have much in common — Harold is more of a literary device than a real human being. The main character of the poem clearly understood his status as an outcast: "It is that settled, ceaseless gloom/ The fabled Hebrew Wanderer bore; / That will not look beyond the tomb, / But cannot hope for rest before" (I.86. 26-29).

We believe that Childe Harold marked a crucial moment in literary history, since he was considered the first Byronic Hero and because the poem was breaking several stereotypes. This served as an extra trigger for critics to be sharp in their reviews of the poem. Hentshell claims that "The Byronic Hero is a tripartite individual" (1978: 139). Hentshell also claims that "He is satanic, a descendant of Prometheus-Lucifer, and

sadistic, in the shadow of the divine Marquis" (1978: 144). According to Hentshell, "The sadistic element is disguised in vampirism, in his fondness for ruins as a poetic background. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is a necrophylistic orgy" (1978: 147).

In any case, the poem did not leave the readers indifferent. Despite some serious criticism he received, Lord Byron continued to explore topics of self-discovery and life exploration; he continued to raise concerns about sexual freedom, human rights and the need to change the political climate to improve the lives of people.

1.5 *Mazeppa*: The Poem that Encapsulated Lord Byron's Life Experience and Wilderness of the Spirit

The poem *Mazeppa* belongs to Byron's later period because it was finished just a few years before the poet's death. He spent almost a year and a half writing it, which at first glance seems surprising since the poem is quite short. Byron needed more time to finish *Mazeppa* because, at the same time, he was working on the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Beppo* and *Don Juan*. According to the draft manuscript, Byron started writing *Mazeppa* in April 1817, two months before starting Childe Harold IV and finished it on September 26th, 1818 – a long time to be writing such a relatively short poem. The composition of *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, *Beppo* and *Don Juan* interrupted its progress. Byron's letter to Murray points to the poet's haste in finishing the poem, "[I] have *Mazeppa* to finish besides"[5], and two days later he had finished it.

After the poem was published in 1819, it left many of its readers and critics perplexed by the final scene where Charles XII fell asleep while Mazeppa was narrating his tragic story of suffering and endurance. Some saw it as a symbol of emotional exhaustion, others seemed to be disappointed by such anecdotal and disrespectful treatment of Mazeppa's painful memories. Regardless of the disputes among critics over the final scene, *Mazeppa* was admired for its "vigour of style and its sharp realisation of the feelings of suffering and endurance" (Marchand, 1968: 70). Indeed, the pain theme is the central one in the poem, and perhaps its sincerity and tight connection to Byron's autobiographical life events attracted so many readers. After only three years of *Mazeppa's* publication, thousands of copies of the poem were sold. Amadée Pichot translated *Mazeppa* into French in 1819, which turned into another success.

---

[5] BLJ , VI 71 (letter to Murray, 24 September 1818).

Donald A. Low believes that "There are subtly drawn connections between the autobiographical tale which Mazeppa tells and this earlier poetic portrait of Swedish Charles. In *Mazeppa*, as elsewhere, Byron is keenly interested in the theme of survival: "Mazeppa is a likeable fellow, one of Byron's wryly self-aware survivors" (Low, 1992: 135). In addition to that, Low also shrewdly points out, "But what matters more than Charles' had fallen asleep is that Mazeppa's first-person narrative has won the reader's sympathy and admiration. His vivid experiences live in the imagination. According to Low, "The entire poem is an outstanding example of what I have called Byron's poetry of experience" (Low, 1992: 136). We are concerned that this is relevant not only for Mazeppa but for all works that we chose for this dissertation since through experience, Byron reflects on the passing of time and the changes that his characters undergo. Marshall's vision of the poem is very much in tune with that of D. A. Low. The scholar claims that "Byron's *Mazeppa* is at once a more serious and more humorous poem than has been suggested" (1961: 120). Indeed, the poem transmits the bittersweet and wild spirit of its author. Jerome McGann (1973), in his turn, continues the thought claiming that of all the romantic tales, *Mazeppa* is closest in spirit to *Don Juan*. W.H. Marshall claims that Mazeppa is: a "garrulous and egoistic old man who never atones for his crime and whose hackneyed description of his passion for Teresa "becomes tedious at once" (1961: 120). However, this might be argued against, since the entire description of the ride can be considered a metaphorical atonement. Jerome McGann (1968) believes that Mazeppa's wild ride: "acts as an initiation process which makes him into a mature hero who can restrain his passions, unlike King Charles" (McGann, 1968: 177). Hubert Babinski underlines Mazeppa's kindness and loyalty, the hetman's treatment of King Charles and the symbolism of a horse in the poem. As Babinski claims: "Mazeppa

is one of Byron's most realistic creations, heroic within the bounds of human potential. He is a fine specimen of a man" (1974: 33). He further argues that Mazeppa's death-in-life experiences during his wild ride "are central to the poem's meaning and symbolic of the possibilities of human transformation and rebirth. The French painters who took up the *Mazeppa* theme further developed this idea" (Babinski, 1974: 46). These heated discussions over Byron's literary creation point to the complexity of the character and obvious possession of many features associated with an authentic *Byronic Hero.* Mazeppa's uncertain position concerning good and evil also hints at the dualism of personality; we also suggest that Mazeppa has clear features of both types of *Byronic Heroes — The Rebel* and *The Escapist*, which are going to be analysed in the following chapters of the dissertation.

The source of inspiration for writing *Mazeppa* was Voltaire's *History of Charles XII*. Ivan Mazepa[6] is a real historical figure, a Cossack hetman[7] from Ukraine who was defending his Motherland from blood-thirsty imperialistic Russia. The famous Battle of Poltava in 1709, shoulder to shoulder with the Swedish army, made Mazepa a living legend due to his heroism on the battlefield. Ivan Mazepa is a national hero in Ukraine, included in history books and printed on the 10-hryvnia[8] banknotes while Russia, from anger and impotence, announced him an anathema[9]. Voltaire did not write volumes about Mazepa's adventures — this was a brief description of adultery — a young page caught in the arms of a married woman. His punishment was strict — tied to a wild

[6] the real Ivan Mazepa's surname only has one "p".

[7] a military title in Ukraine of Cossack times.

[8] the national currency of Kyivan Rus (Russia's real historical name is Moscovia, the name Rus (Russia) was stolen in 1721 when Piotr I proclaimed Moscovia a Russian empire.) With the course of history Kyivan Rus became Zaporizhs'ka Sich (The Cossack Land) and then Ukraine — the name world knows nowadays. Hryvnia is still the national currency of Ukraine.

[9] an official curse by Church.

horse, and sentenced to a brutal death in the vast fields of Ukraine. But those lines sparkled Lord Byron's imagination and thus *Mazeppa* was born. "Several critics have also speculated that Byron was familiar with the novel *Memoires d'Azema* (1764) by the French writer André Dorville, as there are significant similarities between the plot of this novel and Byron's poem" (Babinski, 1974: 28).

There is a chance that Lord Byron found his reflection in the controversial historical personality of Ivan Mazepa and transmitted him from history books to his poetic world. In Lord Byron's poem, the main character falls in love with a married woman, and once caught, he cannot go unpunished. They prepare a wild beast for him — a horse that has never been ridden before, and death seems inevitable. The entire poem tells readers of the wild ride and they suffer through it together with Mazeppa. On some pages, the descriptions are so detailed, that the pain is almost real. Mazeppa's near-death experience is a mixture of his passion and wild sexuality, sinfulness and atonement — these elements form a very Romantic poem with a character who is not perfect, but his magnetism is undeniable. The wild horse is another crucial symbol in *Mazeppa*, we believe its fearlessness is a reflection of the author's wild character. "In the early centuries of the first millennium BCE, when, somewhere on the broad plains between the Danube and Amur rivers, the riding horse appeared" (Voss, 2012: 112). Voss also gives a detailed explanation of the complexity of feelings represented by the wild ride of Mazeppa:

> The "wild ride" of Byron's poem follows adultery, a story which was modified for the bourgeois and working-class audiences of the hippodromes, where Mazeppa is neither a Pole nor a Ukrainian but a Tartar foundling, captured as a child in the defeat of his people by the Poles, and brought up in the Lawrinski household, where he is rebaptised Casimir and falls in love with Olinska,[15] the Castellan's daughter, betrothed to Premislas the Count Palatine (who is no longer an old man cuckolded by the young Mazeppa). The wild ride

> comes as Casimir's punishment for challenging his rival. The horse takes Mazeppa back to Tartary, where he is mistaken by the peasants for the Volpas, a Tartarean phantom horseman. (Voss, 2012: 115-116)

This wild ride is drawn by Voss as such that gives Mazeppa his true identity back. Not only does he cleanse himself from the sins of the past, but also undergoes the ride of suffering to become someone he was supposed to be from the very beginning. Phillipson also suggests a profound observation of the way the figure of a horse is represented in Mazeppa: "Not only is Mazeppa's wild horse often drenched, but it is also constantly compared to water: a strange comparison in many ways, but one that brings the tale right into line with a surprising amount of horse-and-water combinations to be found galloping and swimming through Byron's writing during the first two years of his life as an exile" (Phillipson, 2003: 301). Byron's obsession with symbolism is rather obviously exhibited in *Mazeppa,* and what Phillipson wisely noticed concerning the symbol of water, can be referred to as a flow of time. Since the horse symbolises Byron's wild spirit, the horse-and-water combination can mean the poet's battle with time. Phillipson promotes another bright idea on the topic of this symbolism:

> Water, then, is intrinsic to the portrait of the horse in Mazeppa, though not in a stable way. Using variation that mimics fluidity even as he explores the correspondence of water with equine movement, Byron employs several imagistic and metaphorical combinations of the two entities. Mazeppa's horse, in its efforts, gushes sweat as it plunges through water—the element laps it within and without. Yet at times, quite apart from its surroundings, the creature seems to embody a property of water itself, as do its brethren, grouped up into a sea. Even so, the wild river, as the gateway to this horse's native land, all but overwhelms the reeling beast, which emerges onto land only to die — leaving Mazeppa "rebaptised" (l. 589), yet suddenly alone. In short, no easy equation governs this imagistic interplay. Instead, we can say of horse and water what LeighHunt observed of the contrasting tonal modes of Don Juan: the entities "are mingled together and push one another about in a strange way". (Phillipson, 2003: 303)

Mazeppa carried into exile, lives on; the horse that has borne him, having reached its homeland, dies. Even after this fate, Mazeppa remains bound to the horse, "the dying on the dead" (17. 715). This arresting formula highlights another unwieldy partnership in Mazeppa: lashed onto each other, man and beast form a relationship every bit as improbable as horse and water, one that is quite similarly unsettled and persistent.

Later readings of the poem prove a strong connection that the readers see between Mazeppa's endurance and animal nature. Graham Hough's mid-twentieth-century interpretation is a good example:

> Mazeppa has sinned through passion; he is given a punishment that fits the crime— delivered over to a force more wild and tameless than himself; his own will and power of control are completely suspended. His wild horse carries him to the land of the wild horses—the realm that is to say where the untamed passions are at home. (2003: 305)

Mazeppa became a symbolic poem, whose wilderness, sexuality and burning passion encourages other writers and artists to explore the depth of Mazeppa's personality. Hugo, Delacroix and Liszt were among those who fell under his seductive spell. Nowadays Mazeppa is still the symbol of passion and strength in literature and continues to inspire readers worldwide.

1.6 *Don Juan*: Accurate Reflection of Lord Byron's Personality

Don Juan is Lord Byron's most famous poem, which tells the story of Don Juan. Byron sees Juan as someone who likes to seduce, but at the same time does not object to being tempted himself. The poet himself called it an "Epic Satire" (*Don Juan*, XIV. 99). He completed 16 Cantos, leaving an unfinished 17th Canto before he died in 1824. He claimed that he had no ideas in his mind as to what would happen in subsequent Cantos as he wrote his work. It took Byron many years to finish his poem: The first Canto was written in 1818 and it was in 1823 that he was still working on Canto VII. It is said that due to disapproval from his friends and editor Byron's writing speed somewhat declined. When Byron decided, "after mature consideration", that he would have *Don Juan* published despite the "damned preachments from Hobhouse about public opinion", he found that John Murray was inclining more to the idea of publishing the poem after all. "Mr Hobhouse, Mr Kinnaird, and I have consulted, and unite in entreaties that you will let us publish one magnificent Canto of *Don Juan*, about which the greatest expectations prevail, and which I long to realize" (Murray, 1819: 282).

In 1819 Lord Byron was ready to publish Canto I and II of Don Juan. Yet it seems that he could sense that there will follow judgement for its lack of morality because he preferred to publish them as an anonymous writer. Indeed, the poem was criticised for its "immoral content". This poem is Byron's "criticism of life". For Murray's part, he was unwilling to run any undue risk in the course of publishing the poem and even less he wanted to risk his work and status. Accordingly, Murray took careful steps to reduce the possibility that *Don Juan* would gain the attention of the courts. However, Byron was not as cooperative as it was expected: "I will have none of your damned cutting and

slashing" (Byron, 1821: 471). But he did agree to the omission of the two sections which were the most bitter in politics. Murray's refusal to place his name on the volume, together with his dilatoriness in publishing it, made it obvious that he feared prosecution (Luke, 1965: 201). At the same time, Luke (1965) gives a lot of credit to Murray for his professional publishing skills. "There is little to admire in John Murray's handling of *Don Juan*, there is much that demands sympathy or, at least, understanding. Murray was caught between the forces of reaction and the forces of revolution, with the attacks from the righteous and the implicit threat of prosecution, on the one hand, and the piratical incursions from the London radicals on the other" (Luke, 1965: 205). He received no sympathy from Byron on either score: "You have played the stepmother to *D[on] J[uan]* throughout, either ashamed or afraid, or negligent, to your loss and nobody's credit. Some travelling Englishmen whom I met the other day at Bologna told me, that you affect to wish to be considered as not having anything to do with that work, which, by the way, is sad half and half dealing-for you will be a long time before you publish a better poem" (Byron, 1821: 471).

Don Juan appeared to be a poem which suffered a lot of criticism due to its immoral sides. "The young and innocent will do well to leave altogether unread" (Klaver, 1853: 323). "It is dangerous because it ignores resistance and presumes submission to passion; it is dangerous because, as Byron admitted, it is "now and then voluptuous" (Whistle, 2009: 61). The book was a threat to traditional values and had to become an outcast in the realm of poetry. Criticism of that time was seen as mere protection of common sense and tradition, the established norms. There were lines which Byron crossed, having written *Don Juan*, and he could not be left unpunished.

The first response to *Don Juan* by the radicals was a pamphlet published by William Hone. On 19 July, just four days after the appearance of Byron's poem, Hone issued "*Don John", or Don Juan Unmasked; being a Key to the Mystery, Attending that Remarkable Publication*, *with a Descriptive Review of the Poem, and Extracts. Don Juan* is circled adultery from its very first stanzas. Other writers in Byron's time would indeed have portrayed adultery in their works. The difference is that they would have brutally punished the hero or heroine for committing such a sin. Byron, on the other hand, just makes fun of adultery and portrays it humorously. Goethe wrote that *Don Juan* was "a work of boundless genius" (Goethe, 1824: 637) and many critics have tended to agree ever since. Bernard Beatty (1985), however, claims that though the reputation of *Don Juan* has never stood higher than it does at present, the poem is not habitually grasped as a whole of a particular kind. The possible reasons for this might lie in the changes in taste and critical thinking which occurred about the time of his book's publication and have lasted until nowadays. In other words, Beatty refers to the rise of two movements, New Historicism and deconstructive Post-Modernism, which were strongly opposed to New Criticism but equally opposed to one another. Walter Scott (1824) in Edinburg Weekly Journal maintained that Byron "has embraced every topic of human life, and sounded every string of the divine harp, from its slightest to its most powerful and heart-astounding tones." In the book edited by Coleridge (2020), the scholar mentions a few quotes by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1821) concerning Cantos III, IV, and V, where the poet admits to his admiration of Byron's work: "This poem carries with it at once the stamp of originality and defiance of imitation. Nothing has ever been written like it in English, nor, if I may venture to prophesy, will there be, unless carrying upon it the mark of a secondary and borrowed light... You are building up a drama," he

adds, “such as England has not yet seen, and the task is sufficiently noble and worthy of you” (Coleridge, 2020: 141). And this is what Shelley says about Canto V: “Every word has the stamp of immortality. ... It fulfils, in a certain degree, what I have long preached of producing—something wholly new and relative to the age, and yet surpassingly beautiful” (Coleridge, 2020: 144).

The novelty of *Don Juan* is marked by the rightly established balance between the sophistication of language and an astonishing mixture of emotions that somehow, twist together into a duo of mystery and satisfaction one gets from reading the poem. Algernon Charles Swinburne adds that “Across the stanzas, we swim forward as over the broad backs of the sea. They break and glitter, hiss and laugh, murmur and move like waves that sound or that subside. There is in them a delicious resistance, an elastic motion, which salt water has and freshwater has not. There is about them a wide wholesome air, full of vivid light and constant wind, which is only felt at sea. Life undulates and Death palpitates in the splendid verse. ... This gift of life and variety is the supreme quality of Byron’s chief poem” (Coleridge, 2020: 148). Coleridge believes that *Don Juan* demonstrates an impressive metamorphosis of the main hero. This thesis intends to support the idea and tracks down the transformation of Don Juan throughout the unveiling of the poem’s storyline.

These positive reviews yet leave the readers wondering why *Don Juan* was subjected to some very harsh criticism in the first place. Edward Dudley Hume Johnson (1944) assumed that English society could not stand being unmasked, and so-called in cant and hypocrisy to its support and damned outright the poem whose author had dared to make good his claim. Johnson makes an even stronger claim to support his point of view, “Here is everywhere present however, the consciousness that *Don Juan* is something out

of the ordinary, and this gives to the invective bestowed on it an unmistakable ring of sincerity" (Johnson, 1944: 135). Indeed, Byron's open narratives about the bold truths of marriage, love and adultery tore off the mask covering the reality of British society. "In this anxious protest against Byron's raillery at such sacred institutions as marriage or established religion is to be found the quality which distinguishes the reviews of *Don Juan* from the general run of critical attacks in the pages of contemporary periodicals" (Johnson, 1944: 135-136). The bitter truthfulness of *Don Juan* hid in the fact that the fate of the protagonist was not unique, and many of his readers along with the critics could relate to the topics of jealousy, adultery and treachery. The fact that no one was disposed to admit that was a completely different question, yet quite well foreseen by the poet. Byron was called "a cool unconcerned friend, laughing with detestable glee," (Stowe, H.B., 2012: 295) as he paraded "a calm careless ferociousness of contented and satisfied depravity" (Byron, 1822: 122). Johnson develops his idea by thinking about possible ways to justify the motives that pushed Lord Byron to create such a controversial poem:

> Allowing for the verbal licence of a hard-hitting age, there is something very arresting in the implication of such comments. Is it possible that they were the expression of truly outraged feelings, rather than false modesty as Byron would have us believe? Is it possible, in other words, that the poet was under serious misapprehensions concerning the moral standards of the race which he thought he understood so well? (Johnson, 1944: 136)

Don Juan reveals to us a dying order, one whose members were blindly following an inherited way of living when the economic and political systems which had produced that lifestyle had lost their validity. In other words, England of those times seemed to be too reserved and old-fashioned, not open to exploring new opportunities. Due to his harsh disagreement and conflict with the English society, Byron had to a certain extent

cut himself off from vital contact with the times in which he lived. When Byron went up to Cambridge in 1805, the tenor of undergraduate life had altered in no important respect for more than half a century. This is what the poet wrote about his life at Trinity College in a letter to Hanson later published in *Letters and Journals*:

> ... this Place is the *Devil* or at least his principal residence. They call it the University, but any other Appellation would have suited it much better, for Study is the last pursuit of the Society; the Master eats, drinks, and sleeps, the Fellows Drink, dispute and pun; the Employment of the Undergraduates [sic] you will probably conjecture without my description. I sit down to write with a Head confused with Dissipation which, tho' I hate, I cannot avoid. (Chainey, 1995: 120)

Byron would resort to a singular defence when faced with the vehement accusations of lasciviousness targeted towards the literary work, *Don Juan*. He posed a query regarding the apparent incongruity of a society's purported shock at his poem, given their supposed familiarity with the works of seventeenth-century playwrights and the prosaic writings of Voltaire, Fielding, and Smollett. In essence, Byron implied that such a reaction would reveal society's blatant hypocrisy. Lord Byron received negative reviews from William Hone who published *Don John or Don Juan Unmasked* in 1819. Hone was specifically frustrated with Murray (the expression "Don John" was addressed to him) for publishing such an immoral poem. In addition to Hone's acridity, an additional austere criticism was presented in the form of an anonymous pamphlet entitled *A Critique on the Genius and Writings of Lord Byron, with Remarks on Don Juan*, which was published in 1820. The individual, who remains unidentified, cautions the esteemed author regarding the potential vulgarity of Don Juan, articulating the subsequent points:

> It is incredible how females can peruse Byron's works. I know nothing easier than to compose a poem a la Byron: take a (not) human being, load him

> with every vice […]. borrow as much pride, malignity, and blasphemy, as Satan can afford [….] let him have a mistress [….] let her [….] be insinuated to be his sister; there must be no narrative, and the essence of the poem must be wholly physical [….] I have detained public attention too long with a subject which derives its importance only from its mischief. (Stacy, 1820: 381)

The opinion expressed in the pamphlet also reflected the wide audience's judgement of those times. Its voice of criticism was hard for Byron to hear and it only deepened that rim between the poet and society. "Throughout his career pamphleteers followed Byron as jackals trail after a wounded lion" (Chew, 1919: 120). The satirical poem *Apology for Don Juan* was also full of anger and criticism towards Byron. The poem draws a parallel between Byron and the devil, explaining his use of immorality as a way to make more money. The author — J.W. Thomas — remained anonymous until Byron's death and later revealed his name.

The third, fourth, and fifth Cantos of Don Juan exhibited such an outstanding level of success that "[t]he booksellers' messengers filled the street in front of the house in Albemarle Street, and the parcels of books were given out of the window in answer to their obstreperous demands" (Smiles, 1891: 413). Why did the poet's popularity and recognition begin to decline with the poem that is now usually regarded as his masterpiece? One may assume that Byron's audience was scared off by the obvious immorality of his satire. Leigh Hunt expressed concern that Byron was the victim "of a series of false positions in society" (Hunt, 2018: 38). Lady Blessington wrote:

> Byron has not lived sufficiently long in England and has left it at too young an age, to be able to form an impartial and just estimate of his compatriots... In his hatred of what he calls cant and hypocrisy, he is apt to denounce as such all that has the air of severity; and which, though often painful in individual cases, is, on the whole, salutary for the general good of society. This error of Byron's proceeds from a want of actual personal observation . . . Byron sees not that much of what he calls the usages of cant and hypocrisy are the fences that

> protect propriety, and that they cannot be invaded without exposing what it is the interest of all to preserve. (1834: 38)

Although they approach the matter from slightly different angles, Smiles, Hunt and Blessington were equally aware of Byron's limitations as a critic of English society. He could not possess full freedom of expressing himself concerning criticism, yet staying silent on the matter was torturing the poet, too. So, he had to look for alternative ways to bring his truth to the public. We believe that Byron's sincerity with his readers led him to a place where his vulnerability was exposed; this was done on purpose with a view to awakening society and breaking the common views on certain limitations.

Byron could feel truly free only in the company of the men who shared his views and scandal-prone writing style. However, as far as we are concerned, his primary intention was not to offend others with his writings but rather to become free himself by putting pen to paper and disregarding any limits imposed by society. Johnson (1944) claims that Byron could never have thought that his work had offended solely because of verbal indecorum and undue latitude of subject matter. The trouble went much deeper than this, as Parry suggests the following, "In his lighter poems, which have been so much censured, no other virtues but these are ridiculed... It was his misfortune, I repeat, to be nobly born…Unfortunately, his enemies and those who have spoken against him with most zeal and talent, have been taken from the middling classes" (Parry, 1825: 262-4). Class differences and tension have deepened the existing conflict making it even more complicated to find a compromise or at least points for understanding between Byron and British society.

Byron spoke incomparably well the language of the upper-class society, but he would never have been at home in the parlours of those well-off people. The charges of

immorality directed at *Don Juan* were sincere, but Byron's satire was equally sincere in its intentions. As Johnson has stated, "In the environment where he had learned almost all that he knew about English society, hypocrisy masked untold corruption and in *Don Juan,* he conscientiously set about demolishing the false exterior behind which degradation maintained itself in a high place" (1944: 153). Byron opposed the falseness of society, its lies and its absence of desire to be less reserved and prejudiced. Byron's liberal and modern views could not spread their wings within that kind of society, hence *Don Juan* resulted to be the consequence of living in a cage of censure imposed on Byron. However, in *Aristocratic Individualism*, Robertson (1977) suggests "the apparent weakness of Byron as a satirist" (639). In other words, Robertson is concerned that "unlike Horace or Pope, Byron does not seem to be proceeding at least ostensibly based on a generally accepted system of norms, principles, and attitudes" (639). We believe that Byron's error was hidden in the fact that he tried to read to a whole nation the lecture which was meant for a delinquent minority. "Byron's failure to reflect the norms of his audience vitiates his satire because, failing to connect with his readers' standards, he does not establish his values within the poem itself. He may be a notorious rebel, but he is not a consistent rebel" (Robertson, 1977: 639). What is then Byron's views on women or aristocracy? In both areas his opinions "seem to undergo such remarkable shifts in the course of sixteen Cantos that it is not easy to say" (Robertson, 1977: 639).

According to Robertson, "The Byron of *Don Juan*, in asserting his individualism, can perform many "aristocratic" actions which, if done by another, would constitute conformity, because Byron neglects the essential but relatively inconspicuous acts, such as marrying and fathering heirs, through which an aristocrat subordinates himself to

society" (1977: 642). Robertson firmly believes that Byron could easily establish his separation from the aristocratic world and thus his general individuality by making clear in the text what Don Juan's bulk already attests; that its composition represents prodigious, "professional" labour. Yet Byron frequently belittles the act of composition even as he composes. As Deen argues, Byron "expresses in the poem a kind of contempt for the poem itself" (1966: 353). Seen in the context of aristocratic ideas toward literature, Byron is certainly sacrificing individuality to satisfy the social standard and this causes him to suffer. Yet such is not the dominant impression that most readers carry away from *Don Juan* (Robertson, 1977: 644-645). His gracious and elegant violation of rules certainly confused many critics who divided their opinions on *Don Juan*, ranging from pure admiration to livid hatred. There is a thought stating that in his *Letters and Journals* and *Don Juan*, Byron is "the last great writer to use it [aristocracy] greatly" (1977: 204). Byron's Don Juan does not fit under the usual perception of an aristocrat, yet he remains likeable. How does Don Juan's scepticism, which seems to encourage disdain for and separation from mankind, suggest an aristocratic poet? Norman Philips says in his article that scepticism logically implies an aristocrat: "The sceptic tends to be more aristocratic than the traditional conservative because scepticism in effect results in the acceptance of a spiritual dichotomy between those whose function it is to believe and follow and those who question and lead" (1956: 33). Questioning everything that did not seem clear or logical was in Byron's nature, scepticism arose as a natural reaction to the British society's limited and censured views on life which seemed not enough for the poet. Robertson (1977) adds that apart from scepticism, nothing is more characteristic of a thriving aristocracy than its cynicism. Herbert Grierson says of the historical Byron:

> …his cynicism was . . . an aristocratic canker, part of the pose which his class consciousness demanded, for cynicism is an almost necessary product of such a privileged, self-centred society. ... Chesterfield, Walpole, la Rochefoucald-all in a different fashion express the cynical contempt for humanity which is begotten of the egoism of a life in which everything must yield to personal ambition: begotten also, one imagines, of the consciousness of enjoying privileges altogether independent of, or out of proportion to any sense of personal merit. If one enjoys endless advantages for which one can claim no personal merit, it is a comfort to reflect that there is no such thing as real merit. An aristocrat, I speak, of course, of a real aristocracy, privileged and governing, can hardly become an idealist, an enthusiast for humanity, without practically or theoretically forgoing his privileges and claim of superiority. (Grierson, 1960: 178)

Unfortunately, many critics of Byron are not very certain of his position concerning aristocracy. Andrew Rutherford suggests that the poet's point of view is unclear. "He exposes the snobbery and malice which the aristocracy shows toward them [the squirearchy], but he has a good share of the same feelings and he too laughs at the squires as dunces and unfashionable boors" (1962: 211). Robertson (1977), on the other hand, sees this as a positive thing, "Byron does indeed frequently manage in Don Juan to combine aristocracy and individualism" (Robertson, 1977: 651). According to Robertson, "*Don Juan* is not a traditional satire because of the limits Byron sets on truth, but it frequently manifests the satiric attitude as it points out emphatically some truths which can be recognised and acted upon" (1977: 654). He later also adds that Byron's aristocracy is the guarantee of the truth and wisdom of both his denunciation of and separation from the aristocratic community; it is also an attraction that makes the reader proud to be in the confidence of so doubly elevated a poet. We believe that Byron had a unique picture of what aristocracy means. The poet possessed an alternative vision of society's class system and believed that the virtues characterising upper classes appeared to be utopian and nonexistent, hence, we reckon that his rebellious nature was

a conscious act of expressing his judgement and disagreement with the established society's norms.

Despite the controversy circulating the notorious *Don Juan,* Lord Byron continued to explore scandalous and brand-new issues to write about in his poems. To give him justice, *Don Juan* left no one indifferent: there were many passionate supporters of the rebellious Byron and even a bigger circle of those who nurtured pure hatred towards the poet. Byron's point is not that his readers cannot understand aristocratic society, but that *without him* they can never appreciate it. As the author himself once said:

> My music has some mystic diapasons;
> And there is much which could not be appreciated
> In any manner by the uninitiated. (XIV.22)

With the creation of *Don Juan*, Byron managed to approach his readers and shorten the distance between himself and the wider public; the poem's intimate and scandalous motifs do not mask, but rather disrobe Byron's true self, permitting him to be as honest with his readers as he possibly could be.

1.7 Lord Byron's Later Works

I cannot exist without some object of Love

(Lord Byron to Lady Melbourne, 9 November 1812)

Lord Byron retraced his steps to London in July of 1811, following his mother's death. Her passing had a profound effect on him, prompting a period of intense mourning. Byron's disposition experienced a notable resurgence due to the esteemed commendation he received from London's societal circles. Additionally, his affectionate entanglements with Lady Caroline Lamb characterised as passionate and unconventional, and later with Lady Oxford, proved instrumental in furthering his advocacy for radicalism. Lady Lamb went on to describe Byron in a now famous quote as "mad, bad and dangerous to know". In the summer of 1813, it appears that Lord Byron engaged in a close personal relationship with his half-sister Augusta, who was at that time wed to Colonel George Leigh. Subsequently, he engaged in a dalliance with Lady Frances Webster as a means of diverting his attention from the potentially perilous love affair. The tumultuous experiences of the two romantic entanglements and the complex emotions of guilt and elation that they elicited in Byron are manifested in a succession of sombre and contrite narrative poems infused with Orientalism: *The Giaour* (1813); *The Bride of Abydos* (1813); *The Corsair* (1814) and *Lara* (1814). According to Daniel P. Watkins (1985), Byron's period in England, 1811-1816, was not fruitful enough for Lord Byron, who was convinced that his poetry of the period left much to be desired. *The Giaour* was "foolish fragments" (*BLJ* 3: 105), *The Bride of Abydos* was "horrible enough" (*BLJ* 3: 160), and *Lara* was "too little narrative - and too metaphysical" (*BLJ* 4: 295). Watkins argues that *The Giaour* is the most difficult of Byron's poems to discuss satisfactorily, not simply because it is excessively

melodramatic and overly escapist, nor even because in its final form it remains disturbingly fragmented; instead, the scholar accuses Byron of turning the reader's attention almost entirely to the poem's fictive and personal ingredients (Watkins, 1985: 114). As a result, this tends to reduce the poem's flexibility, so that deep-stated psychological confusion or, at the other extreme, personal reflections on the eternal "human condition" seem to constitute its entire aesthetic dimension. Michael Sundell (1969) shares the same opinion as Watkins on *The Giaour* being "disturbingly fragmented" claiming that "*The Giaour* grew from 407 lines in manuscript to 1334 lines in the seventh edition only to show that the result is not a whole that can be pieced together" (Sundell, 1969: 588). Occasionally critics worthy of attention have praised the finished poem. G. Wilson Knight finds it Shakespearean. T. S. Eliot, ranking its composer next to Chaucer for his "readability" as a narrative poet, cited *The Giaour* to exemplify his abilities. Even Matthew Arnold, though he called the poem fragmentary in the Preface to his edition of Byron, seems to have been influenced by it some thirty years earlier in the construction of his own best narrative, *Tristram and Iseult*.

Byron's adventurous and rebellious spirit was noticed by critics in connection to some of those works. Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud (2011), for instance, saw Byron as a pirate. According to Cohen-Vrignaud, "Lord Byron was famously associated with maritime piracy throughout his literary career, thanks to his dashing depictions of corsairs and their swashbuckling at sea" (Cohen-Vrignaud, 2011: 685). The topic of piracy was introduced succinctly in several works, including *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), *The Giaour* (1813), *Manfred* (1817), and *Beppo* (1818). However, it is in *The Bride of Abydos* (1813) where that the subject is explored in greater depth. In this work, the main character, Selim, seeks retribution for a childhood of indignities

inflicted upon him by his uncle, a pasha, by engaging in acts of piracy on the open seas. According to Cohen-Vrignaug, "The passion for piracy in Byron's *oeuvre* generated such interest in the author and in the audience that turned *The Corsair* into one of the best-selling poetical works of the Romantic period" (Cohen-Vrignaud, 2011: 685). *The Byronic Pirate*, as a subtype of *The Byronic Hero/Rebel,* will be analysed in detail in the following chapters of this dissertation; notwithstanding, it would be appropriate to acknowledge that certain critics contend that the Byronic Pirate is heavily influenced by the prevalent convention of the medieval outlaw, who is celebrated in the realm of rural legends and lyrical narrative poetry centred around peasant life. It is directly connected with the figure of *Rebel* which is a part of the Byronic *personality dualism* (represented by the *Byronic Hero* in Byron's works) deriving from Byron's life transformation and later becoming an *Escapist*.

The creation of the new figure of a hero was triggered by Byron's views of British society back then and his interest in literary periods of the past. By comparing and contrasting different literary periods, Byron was looking for a balanced model of a protagonist that would be free and more "humane" and realistic. Nina Diakonova (1976) argues that in this period of his work (1807-1815), Byron adhered to the classicist theory of rigid discrimination between accepted genres. He recognised special laws for each kind of poetry (Diakonova, 1976: 548). H. Heathcote Statham (1923) points out that Byron had a very impulsive nature, a keen interest in life, and a great facility in writing verse. The scholar insisted that Byron wrote a good deal of verse which was not the best that he could have written, which was not prompted so much by a strong feeling for his subject as by the sheer enjoyment of the faculty of versifying (Statham, 1923: 299). The poem *The Bride of Abydos* was composed within a mere four-day span, while

The Corsair was accomplished within a slightly lengthier timeframe of ten days; and Byron says, with a remarkable honesty of confession for a man of his proud nature, and at that time the spoiled darling of the public: "This shows my want of judgment in publishing, and the public's in reading, things which cannot have the stamina for permanence" (A. Rutherford, 2013: 445). Matthew Arnold thought that Byron was unjust to himself in this conclusion, as he states that "[t]he author of such poems could not but publish them, the public could not but read them" (Arnold, 2018: 84). Byron achieved one of the highest points in his literary career, mesmerising his readership with the sophistication of language. Albeit, he failed to completely understand and value his talent and popularity, it certainly was not underestimated by critics and readers and made him a renowned poet of the Romantic period.

In the spring of 1816, Lord Byron departed from his homeland of England, subsequently relinquishing any intention of returning. And here Diakonova makes another important remark claiming that after Byron left England his attitude towards the language of poetry underwent a very gradual change (Diakonova, 1976: 550). According to Statham: "Byron's poetry never dealt with any intellectual problems of thought or expression; what he [Byron] means to say, whether he says it well or ill, is always clear and definite in intent and language" (Statham, 1923: 297). During his time in Switzerland, Lord Byron composed several significant works, including *Darkness* (1816), *The Dream* (1816), *Prometheus* (1816), and *Stanzas to Augusta* (1816). These pieces mark a noteworthy shift in his poetic evolution, as they showcase a dialectical interplay of emotion and an emerging simplicity in his language. The Swiss period proved to have lasting importance. When Byron resumed his *Childe Harold* he was less obedient to the classical tradition (Diakonova, 1976: 551).

On a trip to the Bernese Oberland, Byron was inspired to write the Faustian poetic drama, *Manfred*. In October 1816, Byron sailed for Italy. While Byron progressed as a writer, he persisted in his licentious behaviour with numerous women and depicted these occurrences within his magnum opus, *Don Juan*. The poem in question constituted a display of Byron's wit and satire, as well as a departure from the melancholic tone of *Childe Harold*, thereby exposing additional traits of his multifaceted character. In May 1818, an entirely new Byron appeared before the world, through the publication of *Beppo: A Venetian Story*. Statham (1923) excitedly notes that if what may be called *picaresque* poetry is to have a place in literature, *Beppo* is truly a little masterpiece. As Professor Nichol argues in his fine biographical and critical essay:

> It aims at comparatively little, but is perfectly successful in its aim, and unsurpassed for the incisiveness of its sidestrokes, and the courtly ease of a manner that never degenerates into mannerism. (Nichol, 1880: 126)

Beppo, wherein the protagonist is essentially a reflection of the author, must not be viewed merely as a playful and critical monologue on the subject of poets and their craft. According to Markovitz: "Above all, it is a lesson in how to take pleasure from life" (2008: 2). Byron endeavoured to encapsulate the essence of his lifestyle in Venice through *Beppo*. Markovitz makes an insightful comment on Byron's criticism, which contains polar different opinions:

> There's a kind of chicken and egg argument, in Byron's criticism, about the roles of irony and sentiment in his work. It is clear that his first public read him for his "love"; later critics tried to reclaim the sentimental stuff by making it part of some ironic and post-Romantic strategy. I sense that his contemporaries were nearer the truth. Irony, in Byron, is a kind of investment he makes, to build up his capital of sincerity. What he wants to spend it on is sentiment, earned sentiment. (Markovitz, 2008: 4-5)

The difference in opinions concerning criticism of Byron may be explained by the elements of shock, scandal and novelty in his literary works. His explicit way of describing passion left no one indifferent — the readers of that time either admired or hated the poet. But Markovitz claims that: "Yet something certainly changed in his writing as he grew older, and *Beppo* marks the turning point" (2008: 6). In our thesis, we investigate this ageing transformation and we believe that this change might be caused by the experiences obtained through his life course, certain pivoting moments in the poet's life might have caused him to transform from a rebel into an escapist and this left a footprint on Byron's works, too, as will be demonstrated in this thesis.

Regarding its literary style, *Beppo* served as a fundamental stride towards its illustrious follower, *Don Juan*, which certain individuals deem an unethical composition that should have never come to fruition. It is nothing of the sort; it is a moral satire on the vices, follies, and hypocrisies of society, interspersed here and there with splendid passages of poetry (Statham, 1923: 305). The reputation of the legendary Don Juan has probably misled many people as to the real scope of Byron's poem. The inception of initial two Cantos of *Don Juan* occurred in 1818, with their subsequent publication in July of 1819. Statham concludes his analysis by admitting that *Don Juan* is Byron's greatest work and one of the most notable literary productions of the nineteenth century. Many lines in it sum up a truth, or a reflection on life, in so forcible a manner, that they have almost passed into proverbs, and are often quoted by those who perhaps hardly know where they come from (Statham, 1923: 308).

At the beginning of 1820, Lord Byron made a journey to Ravenna. While residing in Ravenna, Lord Byron composed several notable literary works including *The Prophecy of Dante*, Cantos III, IV, and V of *Don Juan*, and a series of poetic dramas which

included *Marino Faliero, Sardanapalus, The Two Foscari*, and *Cain*. All of these writings were published in 1821. Moreover, during his stay in Ravenna, Lord Byron also authored a satire aimed at the poet Robert Southey, entitled *The Vision of Judgement*.

The literary works of Byron exhibit a conspicuously autobiographical nature that surpasses even the introspective tendencies observed in his contemporaries belonging to the Romantic literary movement. In light of Byron's later career, it seemed appropriate to stress the fact that he began his literary life "in contention: a state of obligatory reciprocity between the aristocratic poet and the self-confirmed arbiters of culture" (O'Connell, 2014: 61). The close relationship with his publishers is a key issue in this dissertation since it will provide insight into Byron's transformation as a writer since his publishers, in a way, also encouraged him to bring his many works to the public eye. Murray was the one who published Byron's earlier works and the union turned out to be rather fruitful. However, after several annoying experiences of Murray's interference and one serious quarrel, Byron finally decided to withdraw all his manuscripts from his former publisher. Additional explanations from Murray did not make Byron change his mind about withdrawing from him as a publisher, "on every account, even on your own, and I wish you good luck elsewhere" (Byron, 1822: 138). This divorce resulted in a new professional cooperation, with a publisher John Hunt. Byron himself claimed, "With what prospects of success I know not, nor does it very much matter, as far as I am concerned' but I hope it may be of use to him [John Hunt], for he is a stiff, sturdy, conscientious man, and I like him: he is such a one as Prynne or Pym might be" (Byron, 1822: 25). In the field of literary scholarship, it has been established that the complete set of Byron's later literary works, comprising *The Age of Bronze, The Island*, and

Cantos VI-XVI of *Don Juan*, were published by John Hunt. This publication occurred over a period of four consecutive volumes, which were made available to the public during the years 1823 and 1824.

Byron's first communications with John Hunt were carried on indirectly through his brother Leigh soon after the latter had arrived in Italy at the beginning of July 1822 and had been installed on the ground floor of Byron's Casa Lanfranchi in Pisa. The formation of the said union undoubtedly proved to be a source of great dissatisfaction for Murray, who had previously taken pride in identifying himself as the publisher of Lord Byron. Byron had not cut his ties with Murray as completely as the Hunts imagined. Moreover, in his many letters to Murray, Byron expressed his views on the Hunts with the same frankness he had always used: "I am afraid the Journal is a bad business, and won't do, but in it, I am sacrificing myself for others — I can have no advantage in it. I believe the brothers H. to be honest men; I am sure they are poor ones. They have not a rap: they pressed me to engage in this work, and in an evil hour I consented: still I shall not repent if I can do them the least service" (1822: 122-124). This complex relationship between Byron and his editors, fortunately, did not affect the quality of his writing, which continued to develop and transform as the author grew spiritually. Lord Byron maintained a persistent investigation of various themes including love, passion, politics, sexuality, liberty, social concerns, and artistic craftsmanship in composing outstanding poetry up until his passing in 1824.

1.8 Lord Byron's Letters

Letters make a funny kind of legacy.
It's not easy to know what we are admiring.
The life or the art? With Byron, the two
were always difficult to distinguish,
even in the published poems
(Markovits, 2015, The Telegraph)

The epistolary correspondences of Lord Byron, spanning from 1798 to 1824, garnered exceptional acclaim for their veracity, profundity, and candidness. "Many rate Byron as the greatest letter-writer in English literature and consider his letters comparable or superior to his poems as literary achievements" (Donoghue, 2016: 100). These works have been referred to as: "one of the three great informal autobiographies in English, alongside the diaries of Samuel Pepys and James Boswell" (Lansdown, 2015: 11).

Byron's epistolary works have been published in two significant collections. The work entitled *Moore's Life* which was published in the year 1830, contains a collection of five hundred and sixty poems. Roland E. Prothero (2015) suggests that "Byron's letters appeal on three special grounds to all lovers of English literature. They offer the most suggestive commentary on his poetry; they give the truest portrait of the man; they possess freshness and racy vigour; a very high literary value" (2015: 6). Prothero's observation asserts that: "The picture which the letters give of Byron, is, it is believed, unique in its completeness, while the portrait has the additional value of being painted by his hand" (Prothero, 2015: 8). According to Lord Macaulay's essay, the letters

authored by Byron "are less affected than those of Pope and Walpole, [and] have more matter in them than those of Cowper; if literary art was employed, it was that highest art which cannot be distinguished from nature" (Macaulay, 1843: 312).

"Although Byron's life was cut short at the age of only 36, almost 3000 letters of his are known" (Marchand, 1981: 1). The magnitude of Byron's written works can be attributed to three primary factors. Firstly, Byron derived enjoyment from the art of composition. Secondly, his extended sojourns in self-imposed exile across Italy and Greece dictated the necessity of written correspondence as a means of maintaining communication with acquaintances residing in England. Lastly, the overwhelming triumph of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage bestowed upon him national and subsequently global renown, thereby elevating his letters to the status of prized artefacts that were covetously collected rather than thoughtlessly discarded. There are certain groups of persons to whom Byron wrote his letters. In his adolescent years, he wrote to the close members of his family: his mother and half-sister among them. In his letters to Mrs. Byron, the poet sounded more relaxed; therefore the letters tended to be rather descriptive and sincere. One such letter is the one written by Byron on Nov. 12th, 1809, parts of which, we believe, unveil the poet's true personality:

> My dear Mother,
>
> I have now been some time in Turkey: this place is on the coast, but I have traversed the interior of the province of Albania on a visit to the Pacha […] I have a Greek interpreter for general use, but a physician of Ali's, named Femlario, who understands Latin, acted for me on this occasion. His first question was, why, at so early an age, I left my country?—(the Turks have no idea of travelling for amusement.) […] I shall not enter into Asia for a year or two, as I have much to see in Greece, and I may perhaps cross into Africa, at least the Egyptian part. Fletcher, like all Englishmen, is very much dissatisfied, though a little reconciled to the Turks by a present of eighty piastres from the vizier, which, if you consider everything, and the value of specie here, is nearly worth ten guineas English. He has suffered nothing but from cold, heat, and vermin, which those who lie in cottages and cross mountains in a cold country must undergo, and of which I have

> equally partaken with himself; but he is not valiant and is afraid of robbers and tempests. I have no one to be remembered to in England and wish to hear nothing from it, but that you are well, and a letter or two on business from H, whom you may tell to write. I will write when I can, and beg you to believe me,
>
> Your affectionate son,
>
> Byron
>
> (McGann, 1986: 971-975)

Here the reader may observe the layout of Byron's authentic personality as well as the accurate description of a Byronic Hero's nature: a passion for travelling, a homeland left behind, no desire to return home and a thirst for adventures. The poet's letters serve as a demonstration of his spirit and face covered with no mask, exhibiting Byron's true colours.

At first, Byron's group of friends and acquaintances was a rather limited one. At the location of Southwell, co-residing were John Pigot, and his sibling, Elizabeth. At the academic institution, Byron was affiliated with several individuals who were his companions, including Scrope Davies and Francis Hodgson. *Childe Harold's* publication opened for Byron an opportunity to get to know the poets Robert Charles Dallas, Thomas Moore, Samuel Rogers and his publisher John Murray. After that, there was a group of women who developed an amorous inclination towards him: Lady Caroline Lamb, Lady Frances Webster, Annabella Milbancke and Lady Melbourne.

Passion seemed to dominate Lord Byron's spirit and the way he opened himself to Lady Melbourne echoes in the way his Byronic Heroes expose their hearts and souls for the women they love (quite often paying a high price for that, which is a case for Lord Byron as well). Letter exchange with his old and new friends unveils a picture of a true and unmasked Lord Byron, exposing his inner fears, concerns about the issues that are being investigated in this dissertation, and ageing along with its mental and physical

transformations amongst them. The impression he made on Lady Blessington, with whom he exchanged letters, represented the poet as a man, who appeared to be much older than he was, “To hear Byron talk of himself, one would suppose that instead of thirty-six he was sixty years old: there is no affectation in this, as he says he feels all the languor and exhaustion of age” (Shears, 1834: 229). This idea very well reflects an argument of this thesis, where we try to demonstrate not only the physical changes of ageing but also mental ones. Byron’s discourse on ageing in his letters demonstrates how differently the poet thought of ageing and how boyishly he tended to treat it with disregard in one of his letters to his publisher Murray, “I will work the mine of my youth to the last veins of the ore” (Moore, 1860:11). Shears expresses an observation which confirms the idea expressed above, “Byron’s regular habit of self-identifying as a prematurely old man should be distinguished from merely worrying about encroaching age” (2018: 4-5). Thus, one may see how letters to friends and colleagues serve as an additional and powerful contribution to Byron’s position towards ageing.

In Switzerland, Byron was associated with a cohort consisting of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Shelley (his wife), and Claire Clairmont (Shelley’s sister-in-law), who were all poets and literary figures of note. Byron maintained contact with certain individuals who were members of the Shelley circle, among whom were Thomas Medwin, Edward Williams, and Leigh Hunt. “Byron’s Greek adventure brought him into contact with a new circle: the rebel leader Prince Mavrokordatos, the banker Samuel Barff, and members of the London Philhellenic Committee, including Colonel Leicester Stanhope” (Maurois, 1936: 10-11).

Byron was an exceptional writer of letters: almost all his letters, whatever the subject or whomever the recipient, are enlivened by his wit, his irony, his honesty, and the

sharpness of his observation of people. The aforementioned writings offer a vivid portrayal of an individual who, among his peers, exhibits a notable affinity towards attitudes and sentiments that align with those prevalent throughout the twentieth century. Due to such personal writings, Byron's inner psychological ageing transformations are exhibited to a broader readership. Through his letters, one may find out about the poet's concern with his body and mind changes. As Byron records his thoughts as a schoolboy, adult man and womaniser, literary sensation, and poet in exile, he reveals the rebellious, warm-hearted, disorderly, fun-loving, and neurotic sides to his private character thus giving his readers a broader vision of his character's development, and above all the life transformation of the *Byronic Hero* as a direct reflection of the poet's personality.

Conclusions

This chapter has provided an overview of the evolution of Lord Byron's literary career with an emphasis on the works that have received greater attention. It has discussed Byron's early years and intentions to put pen to paper as a poet in British literary circles, which soon were overshadowed by his successful and controversial works: *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Mazeppa* and *Don Juan*. This chapter has also argued that these poems can be regarded as the outcomes of significant social transformations, marked by the rebellious Second Generation of the Romantic poets' movement, Byron being the brightest representative, and other important events, such as the Industrial and French Revolutions that were especially relevant to the Europeans restricted by the society rules against sexual, verbal and ideological freedom. Those poems gave the young poet worldwide popularity and granted him celebrity status. The present chapter has shown that, even if Byron received a lot of attention in European literary circles, the uneven reception of his works made an important impact on his career and his reputation as a literary outsider. By openly addressing sexual freedom and promoting the destruction of social boundaries, Lord Byron was accused of being a rebel and literary troublemaker and received numerous attacks from critics, reviewers and the press.

The author always maintained a fragile balance between success and failure. Although this imbalance and ambiguity in his literary career kept him visible for a long time, they also surely exhausted the poet. This issue led to the disqualification of his numerous works, many of them reveal Byron's true face and his personality transformation during his life through his characters. To fill in this gap and to analyse Byron's *oeuvre* from the perspective that reveals the poet's contribution to literary and

social spheres, it is necessary to introduce the theoretical framework of ageing studies and literary gerontology. This is the aim of the next chapter.

CHAPTER II: Ageing Studies: A Theoretical Framework

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a thriving expansion within the field of ageing studies, characterised by an increasing number of scholars who are giving significant consideration to the cultural and societal ramifications resulting from the process of population ageing. (Gilleard, 2014; Gullette, 2004; Looser, 2014). The field of ageing studies has emerged from the traditional discipline of gerontology, with a focus on exploring the cultural constructs that mediate biological ageing and placing particular emphasis on how elderly individuals choose to represent themselves. Riley (2000) posits that the study of ageing is an interdisciplinary field that may be associated with broader initiatives in cultural, gender, media, and film studies. Academics conducting research in this field analyze the cultural narratives and actions which shape the interpretation of the phenomenon of ageing. The study examines the impact of public portrayals of ageing in Western societies, including representations of senior citizens in news media, films, and television, on the formation of limited conceptions of old age. Such stereotyped depictions give rise to prejudiced attitudes towards older adults, as well as a lack of appreciation for age diversity and a fostering of intergenerational misperceptions and rifts. (Jennings, Gardner, 2012; Dolan, Tincknell, 2012). Cruikshank (2003) demonstrates that from this vantage point, the concept of ageing is recognised as more than just a physical phenomenon, but rather as a personally lived encounter, shaped and influenced by distinctive environmental and sociocultural contexts.

The primary objective of this chapter is to construct a sound theoretical groundwork for the appraisal of ageing studies, with the ultimate goal of gaining more

comprehension of the ageing occurrences of both Byron and his literary personae. These ageing experiences were greatly influenced by the dynamically shifting sociocultural and political circumstances of the era. This chapter starts by looking at several concepts within ageing studies, which will be reflected in the analysis of Byron and his characters. This chapter posits that the notions of age and the process of ageing cannot be solely discerned using chronological age, due to their considerably intricate nature. It provides an overview of how ageing has been seen in Western cultures and demonstrates the popular understanding of ageing in Lord Byron's time. This chapter places significant emphasis on the poet's metamorphoses throughout his life trajectory and the inescapable alterations of both physical and mental states resulting from those metamorphoses. This chapter argues that age, like gender or race, is crucial when considering people's lives and their experiences of ageing. Kendig and Browning (2016) contend that a social perspective offers an advancement over the traditional approach to ageing, as it concentrates on the societal influence on an individual's developmental trajectory throughout their lifespan. Currently, this approach is emerging as a complementary and occasionally confrontational force to the prevailing biomedical conceptualisations of the ageing process.

To illustrate how narrative is exhibited in literature, this chapter pays special attention to literary gerontology, which is a specific framework of this dissertation. This chapter argues that literary gerontology does not focus on why we grow older, but on what growing older means culturally, socially, and politically; it can contribute to fostering productive interdisciplinary dialogue on how ageing as a lifelong process is understood and experienced (Kriebernegg, 2015: 39). Anne M.Wyatt-Brown (1990) adds that literary scholars recognise the importance of ageing in the creative process and

to make significant contributions to gerontological theory (301). To that end, they are examining the impact of ageing on literature, both in creative works and in the lives of the creators.

Finally, the chapter shows that Lord Byron's works reveal new understandings of ageing and help to discover new dimensions of this process from various perspectives. This thesis will intend to show that Byron's outstanding literary works reveal new insights into ageing concepts and the complexities of the process of growing older. The writer's rebellious spirit empowers and gives voice to brand new ideas that break stereotypical and old-fashioned thinking that has been oppressing progressive ideas for centuries. This study, thus, will reveal how some views on ageing call for the strong necessity to rethink Byron's works and start a new approach to study and understand them better.

2.1 The Concept of Time and Ageing

Oh, Time! The beautifier of the dead,
Adorner of the ruin, comforter
And only healer when the heart hath bled;
Time! the corrector where our judgments err,
The test of truth, love, — sole philosopher,
For all beside are sophists — from thy thrift,
Which never loses though it doth defer --
Time, the Avenger! unto thee I lift
My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave of thee a gift…

(Lord Byron, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage)

Interdisciplinary inquiries into ageing and literature constitute a nascent field of research, which offers novel and clear perspectives on comprehending literary works. As human ageing is living in time, time is a fundamental, but also an uncomfortably uprooting concept for ageing studies. This is due to the impossibility to control or change time; it is omnipresent yet barely perceptible at the same time. It is dogmatic and mysterious all at once, which puzzles scholars when they try to define it. Jan Baars develops this idea in his article where he also states that quite frequently time is usually reduced to chronometric time (2012: 143).

As a concept, *time* is rather difficult to define. It is a fundamental concept like *nature* or *life* in the sense that we are part of what we try to understand through these concepts. Henk Visser (2007) supports this idea claiming that chronological (calendar) time is not always the best measure of time (199). Baars and Visser (2012, 2007) both agree that chronological time is indispensable, but a one-sided focus ignores the meaning of time and ageing. One of the ways to understand time begins with the experience of change: we begin to notice *time* or begin to think about it when we experience change. Concepts of chronometric time are the products of searching for regular change: its earliest forms

were grounded in basic rhythmical movements of the earth and the moon. For ages, even such forms of measuring time have been saturated with meaning; when, for instance, seasons or changing astronomical configurations were seen as inherently meaningful and connected with seasons of life or life stages (Burrow, 1986; Sears, 1986). An important transition in the understanding of time takes place when the concept of time is redefined by early contemporary philosophers such as Descartes and Kant as a mere form of instrumental knowledge (Baars, 2012: 146).

However, the time that is used to measure human ageing is not based on the rhythms of living nature, but on the *movements* of dead material such as oscillations of caesium or aluminium atoms (Baars, 2012; Yates, 2007). For studies of ageing, the problem is not that chronometric measurements are not reliable enough; the problem is that precise measurements of somebody's chronometric age are not very informative about that person's ageing processes unless chronometric age is used by social institutions to organise and structure ageing processes. Interdisciplinary inquiries into ageing and literature constitute a nascent field of research, which offers novel and comprehensive perspectives on comprehending literary works. *Kendig, McDonald and Piggott have classified ageing into three distinct categories, namely individual ageing, population ageing, and societal ageing:*

> *Individual ageing* involves complex bio-psychosocial developments embedded in the family, community, work, and social institutions in which individuals negotiate changing social relationships as they move through the life course. *Population ageing* is fundamentally about the forces behind demographic change and the consequences of changing age structures. *Societal ageing* extends beyond individual and demographic ageing to encompass the social constructions of ageing and the treatment of older people in wider social, cultural, economic, and political life (Kendig, McDonald, Piggott, 2016: 4-5)

The foremost profoundly situated psychosocial introductions, values, and states of mind are to a great extent taught from a young age and these understandings are essential in forming consequent life activities and encounters. Kendig and Nazroo (2016) believe that recent development in research regarding human development across the lifespan is based upon the utilisation of life history principles and techniques. This study scrutinises the ramifications of antecedent life experiences on subsequent stages of life. Research on the phenomenon of ageing must take into consideration the presence of younger individuals and inter-generational distinctions and associations. Jean Martin's seminal work, *The Migrant Presence* (1978), illustrated that a profound understanding of a particular subgroup within a society, as well as the social obstacles they face, can be attained by analysing predominant attitudes towards them.

Jan Pakulski (2016) shrewdly admits the shaking situation nowadays concerning ageing in society. By scientific discourse, it has been observed that the global population has undergone the process of ageing since the mid-twentieth century. This phenomenon has been most prominently observed in highly-developed societies, and has resulted in social repercussions of such a magnitude as to warrant the formulation of the construct of the "ageing society". The prevalence of an ageing population can be attributed primarily to reduced fertility rates, declining mortality rates, and extended lifespans. According to Cardwell (2016), scholars within the disciplines of sociology and social demography perceive such a society as a precursor to the onset of the "fourth stage" of the demographic transition. This stage is signified by the attainment of an equilibrium point in birth and death rates at a low level, coupled with a rise in life expectancy. Pakulski (2016), offers insight into the concept of an "ageing society" which pertains to a distinctive type of community that arises as a consequence of

demographic transition, characterised by a significant proportion of the populace advancing in age and attaining a status of advanced senescence. As societies undergo the process of ageing, they tend to encounter a multitude of common challenges, including but not limited to issues about suboptimal health, isolation, loneliness, social exclusion, and financial hardship experienced by elderly individuals. “It is estimated that the proportion of such older (60+) people worldwide — at present around 12 per cent — will nearly double by 2050” (Pakulski, 2016: 112).

According to Eugenio Mantovani and Bruno Turnheim (2016), ageing and the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are two defining trends of our times. It can be contended with reasonable certainty that the process of ageing, as it pertains to social dynamics, was brought to the forefront of policy deliberations after the industrial revolution and the gradual implementation of state-sponsored welfare provisions, as evidenced by prominent sociological works of scholars such as Durkheim (1938), Searle (1995), de Beauvoir (1970) and Laslett (1991). Demographic ageing is now recognised as a social issue of prime importance alongside energy and climate change (Beblavy; Maselli; Veselkova, 2014). As a consequence of the increase in life expectancy and low fertility rates, the fastest growing ageing group is the aged 80+, the oldest old (Eurostat 2010).

Despite the two centuries that distance our present society from the Romantic one, the conceptions of time and ageing have not changed that much. One must bear in mind that life expectancy a few centuries ago was shorter than nowadays, all due to the absence of the advanced technologies in medicine that we possess today. Hence, the contemporaries of Lord Byron treated life differently, understanding that death could meet them at any moment and they had fewer chances of curing the diseases we can

easily treat nowadays. The figures we bring to our readers' attention in this section were much different in the 19th century.

The following section looks at the importance of time and ageing and their tremendous impact on our society through the prism of literary gerontology. The second generation of Romantic poets had a dramatic view of the concept of time; its mercilessness was seen as something ominous and inevitable. This darkness along with ageing preoccupations resulted in being reflected in their literary works. The concept of time was not a secondary idea for the Romantics, it was a central element explaining the most crucial moments in poetry of that time. Leni Marshall in her book *Age Becomes Us* (2017) speaks about the advantages of literature when studying ageing. According to her, literature offers ready access to ideas and feelings—to the interior dialogue people have as they consider things happening around them. Waxman (2015) agrees with Marshall on the matter, adding that storytelling can bridge the gap between the inner and the outer self to show the richness, complexity, and history embodied in an aged physique, as well as the self-perceived age that often belies the chronology written on the body (Waxman, 2015: 9). As Kay Heath has argued, "To exclude the concept of age is not only to ignore, but also to deny, its pervasive influence on the way culture constructs our identity as humans and by such denial to remain unconscious of and therefore vulnerable to age's hegemonic intensity" (Heath, 2009: 4). Alice Crossley (2017) shares the same position; she claims that the consciousness of ageing and its cultural influence, as it emerges across the texts, biographical accounts, and historical data consequently informs the construction and development of views on human identities in the period. The scholar further argues that the phenomenon of ageing, along with the evolving societal values linked to distinct stages of life during this era,

elucidates the complexities and concerns that are concomitant with the gendered notions of maturation and senescence. The next section critically examines the issue of personality transformations during different stages of life in literature and Lord Byron's works in particular, since his characters undergo major changes throughout the storyline in his selected works which sheds more light onto the ageing peculiarities of the poet too.

2.2 Literary Gerontology: looking at Ageing from the Inside

Literary gerontology is a multidimensional field of research which offers the possibility to explore internal views of the meanings of ageing and old age (Birren, 2001; Cohen-Shalev, 1989, 1992, 2008; Hepworth, 2000; Ruth and Kenyon, 1996; Waxman, 1990; Worsfold, 2000, 2007; Gullette, 2004). Anne Wyatt-Brown highlights the importance of combining ageing studies and literature and brings into light several difficulties for the researchers which resulted in slow recognition of the fields. She suggests that literary gerontology represents a challenging task for literary critics to "study gerontological issues and theories, master an unfamiliar social science vocabulary, and attract an interdisciplinary audience capable of responding intelligently and critically to their insights" (Wyatt-Brown, 1992: 331). Wyatt-Brown was one of the first scholars to work on this, but the field has been expanding since then. Nevertheless, Wyatt-Brown's ideas remained a guiding light for literary gerontologists. One of the ways to reach the given objective, according to Wyatt-Brown, is to give place to important literary works, "In future, it would be desirable if all writers on literature could learn to combine gerontological and literary theories in language that is accessible to all" (1992: 306). Wyatt-Brown in *Aging and Gender in Literature* sees "ageing as one of those "voices" in which writers and characters speak" (1993: 1). One of the positive outcomes of this study's growing popularity and demand in gerontological and literary circles is that "Not only can we expect more studies of writers and their work, but our standards of judgment will surely become more demanding" (1992: 310). In this dissertation, we are trying to interpret different symbols and notions from the perspective of time and ageing to get a better vision of what Lord Byron thought about the process of getting older and how it was reflected in his selected works. In previous

subsections, we were exploring the concepts of time and ageing and here our objective is to demonstrate how intricately they are intertwined in the works of Byron and how well literary works illuminate the most important issues of this field of studies. This step bridges the gap between literary studies and gerontology, thus permitting us to see ageing from a new perspective.

According to Kriebernegg (2015), "literary gerontology does not focus on why we grow older, but on what growing older means culturally, socially, and politically; thus, it can contribute to fostering productive interdisciplinary dialogue on how ageing as a lifelong process is understood and experienced" (839). The aim of literature focusing on ageing is not only to expand knowledge broadly and to gain insights into old age but also, specifically, to address issues such as ageism, elder abuse, life course, death, health in later life and dementia.

We also find it important to underline that the contribution of the Romantic period in our investigation is invaluable, because only by understanding sociocultural processes of that time, can we fully see the perception of ageing both in Lord Byron's life and literary works. Literature of the period reflects the spirit and ambience of British society, thus it is easier for a researcher to unite the threads which fiction gives us, the insight into the cultural conceptions of the body, ageing and time that the romantics had, helping us understand the nuances of this intricate connection and conduct a much more profound analysis.

As it was mentioned above, many scholars believe that literary gerontology offers the possibility to explore internal views of the meanings of ageing and old age, furthermore, it bridges two different fields of studies to demonstrate how many levels of ageing might affect an individual, concerning various stages of a person's life, important

milestones and pivoting events that shape a person in a very much unique and original way (Birren, 2001; Cohen-Shalev, 1989, 1992, 2008; Hepworth, 2003; Ruth and Kenyon, 1996; Waxman, 1990; M. Vidal, N. Casado, 2004; M. O'Neill, C. Zamorano, 2002). Barbara Frey Waxman highlights that novelists can talk about ageing "in a way that gerontologists and psychologists cannot" (1990: 18). Anne M. Wyatt-Brown (1990) states that until very recently, even those literary critics who would not dream of ignoring matters of race, class, or gender have slighted the importance of ageing as a variable in the creative process. In her article "Coming of Age of Literary Gerontology", Wyatt-Brown points out how the situation is gradually beginning to change. At first, only a few pioneers, like Kathleen Woodward (1980) and Janice Sokoloff (1987), discussed ageing in their literary articles (Woodward 1978; Sokoloff 1986). Kathleen Woodward (1991, 1999), Margaret Moganroth Gullette (1988) and Mike Hepworth (2000) were among the first critics who considered literary texts to be the new perspectives from which the ageing process could be studied at a social and cultural level. The objective of their works was to demonstrate that literary texts can be seen as vast and precious sources of data which help understand the complexities of ageing outside scientific studies. Woodward sees the potential for literature to be an essential tool offering new and profound views about ageing (2012: 6). It liberates ageing from old limitations imposed on it, namely, stereotypes and prejudice, and offers in return a powerful platform for experimenting, investigating and learning from one's own experience and also from others' experiences. Literary gerontology does not only focus on the reflection of important cultural changes but also has the power to change attitudes and make us more conscious of our lives and belief systems (Waxman, 2010: 83). With the help of literary gerontology one may broaden his or her vision of the factors that influence the ageing process and the experiences that one may undergo

along this journey. Literature, and Lord Byron's chosen poems in particular, may reveal the details of experiences that serve as triggers of inner change of a person along his or her life path which in its turn becomes reflected on the outside. We see this as a valuable opportunity to explore ageing through the prism of literature to see how unique this journey is. It holds the power to shake certain viewpoints in response to the experiences that individuals undergo during their ageing transformations.

Literary scholars first began to speak of ageing in 1975, at the Conference on Human Values and Ageing, organised by David Van Tassel of Case Western Reserve University. Several literary scholars expressed interest in Neugarten's (1973) theory that one can predict the nature of one's ageing from behaviour at midlife (47). Elliott Jaques (1965) pushed forward his work on the midlife crisis, exhibiting it in a rather obscure and negative light. Nonetheless, the research conducted by Margaret Gullette in 1988 on the midlife progress novel, *Safe at Last in the Middle Years*, effectively refuted Jaques' pessimistic stance on the topic of midlife. According to J. Twigg and W. Martin (2015), literary gerontology is a prominent content-based study of representations of ageing within fiction. At the same time in history (the 1980s - 1990s), Anne M. Wyatt-Brown and J. Rossen developed research on late-life creativity in literary gerontology. Following the works of these pioneers, another figure engaged in literary gerontology was Mike Hepworth, whose work, *Stories of Ageing* (2000), brought into light the combination of literature and sociology with his use of symbolic interactionism in readings of selected literary texts. Hepworth was the one who recognised the complexities of relationships between the reader, author, text and world.

Jon Hendricks and Cynthia A. Leedham in their article "Making Sense of Literary Aging: Relevance of Recent Gerontological Theory" state that one of the primary

means of gaining an appreciation of the texture of ageing in other times and places is an analysis of literature set in those times and places (1987: 187). This idea is also supported by Hannah Zeilig, who believes that narrative, literary and critical gerontology all share an ability to confront the ambiguities and complexities of age, ageing and later life and an interest in quizzing the cultural norms of ageing via non-scientific forms of knowing (2011: 8-9). Some scholars even proved literary gerontology useful for treatment, claiming that it is a form of therapy (Biggs 2004, Eum, Yim, Choi 2014, Fernandes, Barone, Siqueira de Andrade 2018, Zeilig 2011). Its therapeutic qualities are demonstrated through a new and broader view of ageing and the benefits one obtains along the life journey. One may find out the important nuances of transformations that humans undergo in the pivoting moments of life. Not only does literary gerontology show the natural process of the human body and mind transformations and how they interact with cultural and social expectations, but it also intends to explain how one may feel at a certain stage of life and how to use that knowledge to get a better knowledge of one's self.

Other scholars believe that literary gerontology helps to define ageing as a development through time (Swinnen, 2019). According to Julia Twigg and Wendy Martin (2015), literary gerontology is energised by the intersectional approach. The dialogue between ageing and literary studies opens a new horizon for an investigation that can lead us to understand the complexities of the ageing experience. Shenk (2008) speaks of literary gerontology as a technique of connecting a reader and a story about ageing. Zeilig (2011) makes the argument stronger by calling it a pedagogical instrument. According to her:

> It is a methodology as well as an effective heuristic. It is a means of querying the content of the tales being told to us about later life and a technique

> for interpreting the disconnect between the surface appearance of these tales and the underlying trajectory they insidiously follow. It is therefore inherently critical and challenging, a call for change. And the need to radically re-think how age and ageing have been culturally configured is a central impulse in critical gerontology, which aims to unsettle our habitual and comfortable frameworks and needle us towards personal and cultural transformation. (H. Zeilig, 2011: 16)

This assumes that literary gerontology can engage our critical and imaginative thinking in the consideration of literary texts about ageing. In a certain way, it completes the picture and reveals yet another way of seeing life and its pace. Literary gerontology looks at what is missing — those details of personality and body transformations that tend to be underestimated — it opposes what is known or thought to be known about ageing, trying to demonstrate that the ageing process is triggered by various events that occur in one's life and it is reflected on the person's mind, not only the body. We argue that literary gerontology permits both readers and scholars to observe closely the ageing process of the characters through their crucial and pivoting experiences which contribute to their inner and outer transformations. Some investigators believe that literary critics' studies of ageing tend to fall within the other focus, which turns its attention to literature as expressive of an individual's creative response to ageing (Hendricks, Leedham, 1987; Cohen-Shalev, A., 2007). Images of ageing in literature, and their impact on multicultural readership, will be influenced by the literary medium of the author, his or her contemporaries, and the social and political circumstances of the time. It is essential to consider these dimensions in making sense of cross-cultural literature on ageing.

Thus, artistic representations of older people both shape and have the potential to counter our ideas about age and ageing (S.P. Wallace, 2011: 8). A novel, poem, play, painting or photograph, film or television series, or even a piece of music may allow us

imaginatively to engage with the fact of our ageing. This priceless experience brings us closer to a new understanding of the transformations that our bodies and minds undergo during the life course. The next section is going to focus on the representations of ageing during the Romantic Period in Europe, which will hopefully reveal to our readership the period of Lord Byron's life and the ideas about ageing which appeared during this historical period.

2.3 Ageing and the Romantic Period in Britain

The Romantic Period in English literature began around 1798 and lasted until 1837. The political and economic shifts and transformations at the time dramatically influenced this period, with many writers looking for the source of inspiration in the French Revolution. There was also a lot of social change during this period. The Romantic movement was a reaction against the spread of industrialism, as well as a criticism of the aristocratic social and political norms and a call for more attention to nature. Although writers of this time did not consider themselves Romantics, Victorian writers later classified them in this way because of their ability to capture the emotion and tenderness of mankind. One defining feature of this era, as viewed through the lens of literary gerontology, pertains to the prevalence of Romanticism as a literary movement, notable for its youthful, non-conformist proponents who met with untimely demises. In particular, the Second Generation of Romantics, inclusive of figures like Lord Byron, John Keats, and Percy Shelley, exemplify this trend. In his book *The Meaning of Life in Romantic Poetry and Poetics* (2009), Ross Wilson speaks extensively on the issue and brings to the readers' attention the facts that the issue of life became one of the major problems for the Romantic poets in England. Wilson positions life as a Romantic problematisation and the way it is shaped by society, politics, death, history, autobiography and ethics. According to the scholar, Romantics view life as a continuous battle for self-definition, survival and reaffirmation of one's personality. The second generation of Romantic poets voiced the problems of life perception by society and demanded changes. This goes in tune with the ideas represented in this dissertation and presented by Byron in the selected works, which have been demonstrated in the previous sections of the thesis.

Literary works of the Second Generation of Romanticism focused on eternal issues such as life, death and ageing. Keats was preoccupied with death and ageing throughout his life, which is vividly reflected in his works. *Ode to a Nightingale* (1819) discusses the temporary status of life and beauty, whereas in *Ode on a Grecian Urn* (1819), he explores the artistic permanence of the images on the urn. Byron's literary work *Manfred* (1817) features a protagonist whose emotional experiences of ageing are not reflected in his chronological age or physical appearance, as examined by Fallon and Shears (2019) in their analysis. Upon being challenged by the Chamois Hunter, who questions, "Why, on thy brow the seal of middle age / Hath scarce been set" (II, ii, 49-50), Manfred retorts with a response,

> Thinkest thou existence doth depend on time?
> It doth; but actions are our epochs: mine
> Have made my days and nights imperishable,
> Endless, and all alike, as sands on the shore. (II.2. 51-4)

According to Fallon and Shears' (2019) contention, the purported offences and ensuing culpability of Manfred preclude any precise quantification of his ageing process in terms of conventional time measurement. Manfred perceives the picturesque Alpine surroundings in his vicinity, endeavouring to externalise his vague anxieties of ageing onto an object that is more tangible yet less intimate: "To be thus— / Grey-hair'd with anguish, like these blasted pines" (I.1.65-6). According to Yallop (2013), the normative standards associated with ageing are believed to have originated from the medical and behavioural literature of a particular epoch. During this time, ageing was considered an intrinsic component of the indivisible nature of personal identity, which was analogous to socially constructed categories such as class, race or gender. Manfred's comprehension of the process of ageing is concealed within his being, as his physical form fails to outwardly manifest the substantial impact of his life experiences. As a

result, the awareness he possesses regarding this phenomenon remains largely unidentified by wider society. Nevertheless, the poem (as well as many others written by Byron) can be used as a tool to understand Byron's perception of ageing. Macaulay explained this phenomenon in the following way:

> It is always difficult to separate the literary character of a man who lives in our own time from his character. It is peculiarly difficult to make this separation in the case of Lord Byron. For it is scarcely too much to say, that Lord Byron never wrote without some reference, direct or indirect, to himself. The interest excited by the events of his life mingles itself in our minds, and probably in the minds of almost all our readers, with the interest which properly belongs to his works. A generation must pass away before it will be possible to form a fair judgment of his books, considered merely as books. At present, they are not only books but relics. (Macaulay, 1860: 59)

The protagonists of the Second Generation of Romantics poems are often sinful and rejected by society due to their controversial lifestyles and their refusal to age in a way society expects them to. The Byronic Heroes (Manfred being among them) are quite thick-skinned to resist the public criticism of their ways to deal with ageing, understanding their bodies and listening to their inner voice. We tend to believe that they prefer an inner dialogue rather than succumbing to public judgement and limitations. However, in Lore Metzger's article in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (1993) it is stated that the fact that Byronic heroes quite often challenged accepted behaviour, in no way makes the readers want to stop admiring them. The short and abrupt, yet dynamic and bright lives of the representatives of the Second Generation of Romantic poets set the tone of their works, where they promoted life as an instance, a temporary moment which had to be used to the fullest before it finished.

This period in history, however, was noted by some critics as the one which diminished the role of women in literature. Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1845)

expressed her deep disappointment and frustration at the fact that older female writers of the Romantic period risked becoming invisible in later life even when they continued to write or publish. Browning admitted to being "fruitlessly looking for the literary grandmothers" (Kenyon, 2010: 93) and claimed that paying attention to age and ageing means considering female authorship from cradle to grave. A possible explanation of this could be the cult of youth and beauty during the Romantic period. Women underwent numerous traumatising body and mind changes through their experience of becoming older, all because ageing was not well accepted in social circles; however, not only female writers became victims of public oblivion.

The present study posits that during the Romantic era, the notions surrounding the process of ageing were intricately entwined with the concepts of physiological and psychological transformation that affected individuals of both genders. Concerns with the changes in one's outer beauty and intelligence of the mind led many romantics to search for a way to learn more about the concepts of physical and non-physical decline, dying and death. Although the apprehension of death might have seemed foreign to many, it's mysteriousness and romanticised treatment turned the romantics' heads towards the idea of investigating its essence more closely.

James Rovira (2018) in his book *Rock and Romanticism* speaks about the Romantic desire to die young and the desire to flirt with death which were both present in the wild spirit of British Romantic poets. Rovira explains flirtation with death in Romanticism as a sign of depression and also of bored self-destructiveness. Coleridge was a drug addict, Byron went to war, and Shelley — who could not swim — went sailing while it was known that dangerous weather was soon to come. This fragile balance between life and death, danger and safety made a great impression; however, the reasons suggested by

Rovira were much less honourable: from hopelessness for the future to rebellion against conventionalism.

Romantic poets also portrayed death as a new beginning. The utilisation of death as a form of rebirth is a notable feature in Percy Bysshe Shelley's poetic compositions, specifically evident in his work entitled *Ode to the West Wind*. The West Wind represents the spirit of autumn, as it blows in and marks the death of summer (Greenblatt, 2000: 791). British Romantic writers use religious references that imply new beginnings after death, even when the poem isn't about death. William Blake's *The Lamb* has the Christian references of Jesus, pure and without sin, sacrificed for the sins of his people. "For he calls himself a Lamb/ He is meek & he is mild/ He became a little child/ I a child & thou a lamb/ We are called by his name" (Greenblatt, 728). Also, from Blake, in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, "Energy is eternal delight/ Eternity is in love with the productions of time/ God only Acts and Is, in existing beings or Men" (Wu, 2012: 208).

Death was a common, mysterious and intriguing subject in the literary world during the 1700s and 1800s (Berlin, 1). The Romantic Period in literature brought new and fascinating views on death. British Romantic poets turned to emotion and imagination, the expression of life, and new beginnings when writing about ageing transformations and death. Richard Rutherford Johnston (2013) expresses concern regarding the correlation between the Romantic era and a significant transformation in the Occidental perception of mortality and end-of-life experiences. The aforementioned phenomenon denotes a transition from the notion of individual mortality, referred to as the "death of the self", to that of communal bereavement, known as the "death of the other". In this context, the state of mortality pertains less to the subject who has passed or is passing

away and is instead experienced predominantly by their loved ones and acquaintances. The conspicuous shift observed in the literary works of Byron, Shelley, and Keats can be attributed, in large part, to a prevalent manifestation of religious scepticism. This scepticism is discernable by various means and is seen as a significant influence on the aforementioned writers. The concept of romantic mortal consciousness is introduced by Johnston, representing a specific form of self-reflection among mortal beings, particularly evident in English Romantic literature. This term is intricately linked to the emotions of profound disillusionment and exasperation stemming from the erosion of utopian ideologies. The prevailing sentiment of disenchantment towards the societal constructs of Romanticism is expertly examined by Johnston, who contends that the preeminent example of this phenomenon in poetic expression can be found in Byron's enigmatic theatrical work, *Cain*, which presents a distinct reinterpretation of the familiar biblical narrative of the fraternal conflict between Cain and Abel. An essential element of Lord Byron's *Cain* is that it takes place within a realm after the biblical fall of humankind that predates the advent of mortality. The poetic composition establishes a clear correlation between the emergence of societal and governmental awareness and the inception of limited lifespan awareness.

The perception that the romantic human psyche may surpass cultural constraints or emerge despite them is occasionally discerned within academic discourse. The contemplations about mortality within Romantic literature appear to manifest themselves most profoundly during instances where the characters experience either physical or psychological solitude. These figures frequently become preoccupied with profound philosophical quandaries that erect a barrier between them and the broader social milieu. The concept of mortality is the root cause of Cain's profound

discontentment with existence and the surrounding environment. Furthermore, it serves as a prominent cause for significant animosity within his immediate kin. Cain's dissatisfaction derives from the enigmatic nature of his fate. The individual in question has never encountered death, rendering them unfamiliar with its nature. "What is death?" In Act I, Cain inquires of Lucifer "I fear, / I feel, it is a dreadful thing, but what, / I cannot compass" (I.1. 284-6). But Lucifer responds that death possesses "no shape" (I.1. 262), and Cain is astonished. "I thought it was a being," continues Cain with a sigh and proceeds with the next question: "Who could do / Such evil things to being save a being?" (I.1.262. 264-5). According to Byron's perspective, the portrayal of death in Cain primarily constitutes an affront to his sense of self-importance. "Cain is a proud man," states Byron in his communication with Murray. Thus, if Lucifer "promised him kingdoms" by the biblical narrative, as Satan resorted to temptation when Christ retreated to the wilderness, "it would elate him." Rather, "the object of the demon is to depress [Cain] still further in his own estimation than he was before" (BLJ VI, 282).

The Romantic aesthetic movement was inextricably linked with the discernment and understanding of the human mortal state characteristic of the Romantic era. The origins of this phenomenon can be traced back to spiritual scepticism, which was subsequently reinforced by concurrent academic and scientific investigations. The consciousness of individuals about romanticism is inherently socio-political in essence. Being under the impact of both, the romantic society investigated closely the essence of ageing, decline and death. These measures considerably broadened society's understanding of all stages of human life and revealed new horizons in the investigation of the mentioned concepts. According to Johnston (2013), the Romantic perception of mortality reveals a noteworthy unease regarding the potential extinction of the self. Additionally, this

outlook also encourages individuals to transcend their concerns and take into account the conditions of those who have, presently, or will inhabit the planet.

2.4 Memories and Ageing

Memory. A term used for a variety of systems in the brain with different characteristics. In all cases, however, it implies the ability to reinvoke or repeat a specific mental image or a physical act. It is a system property that depends on changes in synaptic strengths. (Gerald Edelman, Wider than the Sky: The Phenomenal Gift of Consciousness)

Memory is always problematic, usually deceptive, sometimes treacherous. Proust knew this and the English reader is deprived of the full force of his title which conveys, not the blandly reassuring Remembrance of Things Past of the Moncrieff translation, but an initially darker and more anxious search for a time that has been lost. We ourselves are periodically aware that memory is among the most fragile and capricious of our faculties (Yosef Hayim Yerusha)

The present dissertation endeavours to explore vital aspects of memories and ageing research, with a focus on comprehending the evolving perspective of the chosen Byronic personages towards their lived experiences and the process of senescence. In literary gerontology, memories serve as a record of the past experiences of a character which connects him to the present, permitting us to take a critical approach to his personality metamorphoses throughout the literary work. We intend to use this gerontological unit to analyse the selected Byronic character's evolution towards their old age and how they integrate memories of their wild youth into the present personas to go deeper into their – and Byron's – conceptions of ageing and old age. We will further develop this idea of a character change in the next chapter of this thesis, using a literary

approach[10], but in this subsection, we shall speak from the perspective of literary gerontology to get a better understanding of memories in literature, and in the selected poems in particular.

Different creators and directors have reflected on memory within human lives. According to Charles Fernyhough, *The Guardian*, 2012, "Memory is our past and future. To know who you are as a person, you need to have some idea of who you have been. And, for better or worse, your remembered life story is a pretty good guide to what you will do tomorrow". "Our memory is our coherence," wrote Spanish-born filmmaker, Luis Buñuel, "our reason, our feeling, even our action" (1983: 7). Lose your memory and you lose a basic connection with who you are. "You can scare a fifty-year-old rigid by saying: 'You surely can't have forgotten that!'" (2013: 83) writes Douwe Draaisma in his latest book, *The Nostalgia Factory* (2013). This "unit of time" appears to preoccupy scholars from different areas as its impact seems to be present in our lives. Indeed, memory is the 'presence of the past,' as Richard Terdiman (1993) once defined it.

According to Stavans, only through remembering, starting with a dialogue between an ancient and primitive past and an unknown but promising future, is it possible to carve a permanent place in history. History is the living manifestation of memory, claims the scholar. Stavans suggests a theory in his work, where he claims the following, "The individual does not remember personal scenes but foreign ones; and more than remember, he invents them. For this reason, imagination and memory are mental faculties which are closely linked: to remember is to recreate. Remembering is not a return to the past but the adaptation of a past event to the circumstances of the

[10] See subsections 3.4, 3.5.

present; it is a reorganisation and the giving of new meaning to what was lost" (2000: 84). In ageing studies, memories serve as a guide to lead an investigator/reader through the lifepath of transformations that occur to him or her during life. In literary gerontology and ageing studies, memories help individuals navigate from their past experiences along the way towards growing old and help them build a whole sense of identity (Randall & Kenyon, 1999). Moreover, they do not let them *forget* about certain mistakes of the past, serving as ever-shining reminders of the things that should not be repeated in the years to come. Those memories represent valuable opportunities; they permit characters to take important lessons from their bygones and move on to the next stage in life. Scholars have underlined certain remarks that should be said about the link between literature and memory. Stavans, for example, dwells on the idea and points out the following:

> Western man hunger for reflection and entertainment. We confront mortality and wish to dominate the universe via the powers of the mind and through discovery. But we do not want to go without leaving behind traces of who we were and are and even what we dream. These two veins, the epistemological and the historiographic, are intimately linked. When writing and reading a poem or story or novel, we transform ourselves into inhabitants of time: we search the dreams of the past for the answer to existential hunger and, in passing, we fight boredom. Knowledge, amusement, and shivering go hand in hand. This vision of narrative art, its obsession for leaving tracks of its vicissitudes in fantasies that are rarely recorded by the scientific historian, although they are by the collective memory, is the product of the nineteenth century, in which, after the French Revolution and as a result of the Enlightenment, the book forever abandoned ecclesiastic enclosures and became popular and democratic. (2000: 87)

Indeed, memory and literature are tightly linked. The printed page has the power of making fantasy perpetual and transforming it into a historic document. Gullette (2004) continues Stavans's arguments, pointing out that premature decline is not caused by biological processes, but rather depends on social contexts. She claims that "ageing is a

narrative where each person has physiology, personal life experiences and societal influences that affect their stories" (2004: 5). Being rather different from other arts and before television and other means of entertainment, literature already possessed an incredible feature: ubiquity and immortality, and it had the possibility of being everywhere at all times. Literature can be looked at as a laboratory for the workings of the mind and shed more light on how the human memory functions (Suzanne Nalbantian, 2003; E. Ender, 2005). With memory being used as a literary and gerontological tool, we may discover a different shade in the personality of literary characters. Certain elements from the past drive the actions of the selected Byronic Heroes, thus we cannot omit the influence of the past on the actions of Lord Byron's protagonists in the present. If it was not for Byron's painful and partially scandalous past and his memory of it, several actions and decisions taken by the selected Byron's Heroes would never have been transmitted onto the pages of Lord Byron's poems. So, we believe that memories, as both an ageing and literary tool, contribute to a better understanding of time and ageing for Romantics, and Byron in particular.

The use and significance of memory and dreams in the Romantic period helped to strengthen the inner emotions within writings, represent ideas outside of traditional boundaries, and exhibit the authors' creativity and individuality through their writings. Poets such as Coleridge and Wordsworth contributed to the movement of memory and dreams in the writings of the Romantic period. Wordsworth, for instance, frequently presents his poetry as an outgrowth of occasions on which objects or events trigger the renewal of feelings that he [the poet] had experienced once in the past. The work *Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798* stands as a remarkable testament to his extensive investigations of

memory. Through his experience within *Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth presents his view that memory is a powerful balm that can allow its bearer some degree of relief from the adverse situations that a person may face throughout life. Wordsworth, in many ways, was an inspiration to Lord Byron, and the importance of memories in the literature mentioned by Wordsworth seems to have had a big impact on Byron. On the other hand, Byron uses memories as a tool of empowerment in his selected works. *Mazeppa* exemplifies a prominent illustration: by dwelling on a story of his youth, an old Ukrainian hetman reminds all surrounding him and himself of the tremendous inner strength and stamina he still possesses. His memory of the bitter adventure at the Polish court is pinched with suffering, pain and loss, and yet the reader does not feel the protagonist's weakness, but quite the opposite. One may look at an old military leader, but see an adventurous and passionate ever young man. This immense strength and a powerful ageing transformation owe quite a lot to the impact of memories which the main character fed in the most challenging moments of the poem. His ageing metamorphosis and personality growth would not be complete and rounded if he had not integrated the past into the present. Consequently, the concluding segment of the poetic composition introduces an alternative iteration of Mazeppa, one that is wielded with a decreased degree of sentimentality and naivety, however unbound from preceding errors and poised to engage in a struggle for survival,

> They brought me into life again –
> Me – one day o'er their realm to reign. –
> Thus the vain fool who strove to glut
> His rage, refining my pain,
> Sent me forth to the Wilderness
> Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone
> To pass the desert to a throne –
> What Mortal his own doom may guess?
> Let none despond – let none despair –
> Tomorrow the Borysthenes

May see our coursers graze at ease
Upon his Turkish banks, and never
Had I such welcome for a river… (20. 846-858)

Having accepted and learnt from his memories, Mazeppa finally became free and prepared to set his vision for the future, he was not wandering in uncertainty through the past anymore. Byron consciously links old age with accomplishment, experience and wisdom, when in *Mazeppa* he refers to his aged character with respect and admiration by calling him "old" in the moment of discussing memories from Hetman's past,

Mazeppa answered – "I'll betide
"The school wherein I learned to ride." –
Quoth Charles – "Old Hetman, wherefore so,
Since thou hast learned the art so well?" (4. 107-110)

Readers here find neither mockery nor prejudice, but a picture of an elderly man who has seen and suffered a lot in the past. Now, however, his age does not serve as a reason to be considered weak or powerless, Charles's respectful tone serves as a confirmation of this. An aged image of Mazeppa embodies wisdom and strength that originates from the pain he underwent in his youth. Concurrently, Mazeppa acknowledges the relinquishment of his corporeal attractiveness and vigour. The character reflects on said features with a tinge of animosity, however, in the face of inescapable alteration, acquiesces to the circumstances at hand,

I was a goodly stripling then
At seventy years I so may say
That there were few, or boys or men,
Who in my dawning time of day,
Of vassal or knight's degree,
Could vie in vanities with me;
For I had strength, youth, gaiety –
A port not like to this ye see,
But smooth, as all are rugged now;
For time, and war, and care have ploughed
My very soul from out my brow;
And thus I should be disavowed

By all my kind and kin, could they
Compare my day and yesterday;
This change was wrought, too, long e'er Age
Had taken my features for his page.
With years, ye know, have not declined
My strength, my courage, or my mind,
Or at this hour I should not be
Telling old tales beneath a tree,
With starless skies my canopy (5. 181-201)

Mazeppa is nostalgic about his physical beauty and one may trace the voice of Byron here who, as the reader knows from the previous chapter, was very preoccupied with his appearance. These memories bring back the sweetness and passion of youth which fuel Mazeppa's aged spirit. Comparable guidance through the influence of potent memories can be discerned in the literary works of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*. Both characters move forward, at the same time keeping in mind certain scenes of their past. Memories that they carry may at times serve as their tormentors, as both Byronic Heroes sinned plentifully in their youth, yet they do not let go of those past events. Childe Harold's conduct on several past occasions was not reflective of a chivalrous and admirable demeanour, but he presents a desire to distance himself from those actions and consign them to his history,

For pleasures past I do not grieve,
Nor perils gathering near;
My greatest grief is that I leave
Nothing that claims a tear. (1.8. 178-181)

Don Juan, in his turn, could not boast of fidelity and high morality,

Tormented with a wound he could not know,
His, like all deep grief, plunged in solitude… (1.87. 691-2)

Carrying painful memories teaches a valuable lesson, atones their sins and opens a new door to a hopefully better future, all at the same time. As Nalbantian argues, "The Romantic writers gave special prominence to memory through their natural inclination

for nostalgia, a reverence for childhood as the pristine, Edenic state, and their tendency toward daydreaming, solitary walking, musing, reverie and meditation" (2003: 24). In this dissertation, we want to demonstrate that there is much depth related to the notion of memories and Romanticism in British literature. It is a powerful tool, capable of provoking tremendous personality changes. In various instances, with a few present in the lines above in this section, memories drove the selected Byronic Heroes to serious transformations of personality. This leads us to the idea that Lord Byron, just like his characters, found much to learn from the past. The passing of time is not completely negative for him, and this certainly influences his life choices and writing.

2.5 Death and Its Place in Ageing Studies and Literature

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there; I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glints on snow,
I am the sun on ripened grain,
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there; I did not die.
(Mary Elizabeth Frye)

One cannot look directly at either the sun or death.
(La Rochefoucauld)

Death—unto itself—Exception—Is exempt from Change
(Emily Dickinson)

When we talk about ageing another word keeps asserting itself. The other word, the word underneath the word ageing, is death. To speak of death is to address the absolute centre of human existence (Klement, 1994: 73), since death and dying belong to a natural course of life. Paul Fry (1986) speaks of the notions of death in the Romantic period and argues that both sides of the Atlantic underwent literary transformations during the period and acquired a more romantic and rhetorical treatment of death. We

believe that this section can help in our investigation and bring a wider perspective on the connections between ageing studies and literature. Because the second generation of Romantic poets in Britain was preoccupied with the question of escapism, which we bring to analysis in this dissertation as well, death is also viewed as an unknown, mysterious place where one might hide never to be found again. Subsection 2.3 will deal in detail with the romanticised figure of death, which was created by romantic poets. They treated death as a puzzle, they even saw beauty in it, though admitted its devouring power. There was fear, but Romantic poets managed to combine it with beauty, mystery, flirtation, dreaming and escapism. Representations of death in literature during this period obtained a new form, very much due to the rebellious spirit of the young writers, as has been pointed out in section 2 of this chapter, Lord Byron being one of the most prominent figures among them. These literary visions of death have not faded away and continue to exist in contemporary society as well as in contemporary literature. Oró-Piqueras (2014) argues that "fictional texts are not only useful for observing and understanding concerns about the ageing experience as expressed by a specific author in terms of his or her cultural and social background; they also help to negate preconceived beliefs about old age and death, questioning and subverting expected ways of acting and living by characters entering or in old age" (p.194).

Norbert Elias (1985) speaks of the mistake typical for prosperous and advanced societies who due to advances in biology and technology distance themselves from the question of dying and death, they start to believe that life is more secure and predictable, "life grows longer, death is further postponed. The sight of dying and dead people is no longer commonplace. It is easier in the normal course of life to forget

death" (p. 8). Elias confirms the ideas mentioned above that it is not dead, but the knowledge of death, that creates problems for human beings. Because of changes in today's society, claims Elias, the dying are often isolated, lonely and pushed backstage. The scholar admits that "the sight of a dying person shakes the defensive fantasies that people are apt to build like a wall against the idea of their death. Self-love whispers that they are immortal: too-close contact with the dying threatens the wish-dream" (1985: 10). Elias also highlights how the nowadays society consciously ignores ageing and death, "never before in the history of humanity have the dying been removed so hygienically behind the scenes of social life" (1985: 23). This is an issue of concern because our refusal to face the inevitable does not resolve the problem but rather deepens it, hence it is a question of utmost importance to educate the society about ageing and death and how to deal with both. Literary gerontology represents a gradual and consistent way of bringing these issues to public attention and raising awareness among different age groups about these relevant topics.

Death seems to be distant and almost surreal when one does not think about it. It becomes the centre of our concern once life circumstances bring us forehead to forehead with it. Barbara Ann Day (1992) argues that that the experience of death and loss, like the presence of our ageing population, is often screened off from the affluent lifestyle of the successful middle classes. Not only is death a question that we have not dealt with in Western culture, but ageing and death are rarely a concern until we are faced with an immediate experience of physical limitation or tragedy (Day, 1992: 688). Vera Klement very well reflects this fear in her article by saying the following, "We have, in our culture, an unspoken agreement not to speak about our death. Mention of it is withheld lest we appear tactless, self-indulgent, neurotic, morbid, or even cowardly. There is no

precise language to name death, to accept death and our dead" (Klement, 1994: 73). This issue has been relevant since the times of Romanticism. Shears and Fallon (2019) point out that "the popular construction of Romanticism as a movement typified by young rebellious writers who died tragically" (p.217). Both scholars agree that the "Romantic period holds particular interest for those working at the intersection of literary criticism and the field of age studies" (2019: 218). Shear and Fallon (2019) have emphasised the significant role played by Romanticism in shaping the field of ageing studies and literary gerontology, highlighting the inherent value of this movement. It is therefore imperative to recognise and acknowledge the profound impact that Romanticism has had on the advancement of these disciplines,

> Historically, each category, and indeed the need to rethink categorisations of age, owes much to the social and political upheavals of the Romantic period. While it was not unusual at the end of the eighteenth century for discussions of old age to anchor themselves in Cicero's model of old age as a reward for a virtuous life or to take the Bible as a starting point for thinking about ageing – the extreme longevity of the biblical antediluvians and patriarchs was often judged at face value – by the end of the Romantic period, medicine and political economy were firmly entrenched as the primary discourses through which questions of ageing and longevity were publicly discussed. (2019: 218)

As far as both scholars are concerned, the "Romantic period represents, interrogates, interprets, and shapes notions of ageing. Previously marginalised writers and texts take centre stage when age, rather than youth, is the lens through which we read, while the well-known work of some writers begins to yield up hitherto unnoticed or under-appreciated aspects" (2019: 123-4). For centuries, there have been attempts to give death a face and to "bring it to life" on the pages of books. Its presence in literature adds more depth and sense to everything that literary heroes do, it introduces a richer palette of feelings and encourages the characters to act. The process was started and the issues of ageing and death began to appear in literature bearing a specific mission. Fallon and

Shears argue that “The imperative to bring new attention to ageing in public life sits in tension with Romantic literature’s increased interest in psychological states and the dynamic and uneven processes of individual, phenomenological experience” (2019: 219). Indeed, death came onto the pages of literature with success and elevated status as a significant literary symbol. “We have no reliable information about death as an experience, and this emphasizes death’s nature as a secret and mysterious event” (Hakola, Kivistö, 2014: 41). “While death is the most trustworthy experience in human life, death remains inexplicable and unknown” (Bauman, 1992: 11). Hakola and Kivistö conducted a scholarly inquiry into the death, as portrayed in literary works, offering valuable insights into various approaches to and perspectives on envisioning death. As postulated by academic scholars, certain literary fatalities exhibit greater enigmatic qualities and are less prone to the attainment of a resolution, while certain literary protagonists exhibit more pronounced and dramatic experiences during their departure from life. “In comedy, violence may hurt but the victim always survives, whereas tragedy typically represents a meaningful and dramatic grand-scale death that prolongs the scene of death, as is the case in Shakespeare’s *King Lear”* (Kermode 2000: 82). We believe that death in the Romantic poetry in particular, is not presented as the “final destination of a life’s journey” but as a place of escape and tranquillity. Byron’s characters are not chased by death. Death is static in both writers’ literary works: it is not a path, but one of the destinations in life which they sooner or later will stumble upon. Yet the Romantics do not describe death as a depiction of menace, they rather take the idea to another dimension. The Romantic poets of the second generation introduce their readers to a new kind of death: it is no longer only a sinister shadow that devours everyone and dooms to oblivion, but rather a multidimensional literary tool

which may transform a character beyond recognition, making him reconsider previously made life choices and even pushes him to become a different man.

One of the literary figures who expounded considerably on the subject matter of death was none other than Lord Byron. Byron extensively portrays precarious encounters with death in *Mazeppa*,

> And yet I do suppose we must
> Feel far more ere we turn to dust;
> No matter — I have bared my brow
> Full in death's face –- before, and now. (13. 565-568)

Here the poet demonstrates his readiness to face death and his inner strength. Simultaneously, he embraces the notion that death is a phenomenon of such magnitude that it remains impervious to any terrestrial influence. Byron thus exhibits sagacity and tranquillity as he acknowledges the inescapable nature of mortality,

> I know no more –- my latest dream
> Is something of a lovely star
> Which fixed my dull eyes from afar,
> And went and came with wandering beam;
> And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense
> Sensation of recurring Sense,
> And then subsiding back to death,
> And then again a little breath –-
> A little thrill –- a short suspense –-
> An icy sickness curdling o'er
> My heart, and sparks that crossed my brain –-
> A gasp –- a throb –- a start of pain –-
> A sigh, and nothing more. (18. 783-795)

Byron makes sure his readers understand how he treats death — it is always around, omnipresent, inevitable; similar to the lines above, when it comes to taking you, it is a matter of an instance, a short abrupt gasp of air before a human being is gone. In his other works, the poet underlines that death is not always "romantic" and "beautiful"; many treat the deaths of others as a source of personal profit and enrichment. The

artistry displayed in the rendition of these verses from *Don Juan* serves as a device for grounding the reader in the realm of reality,

> Sweet is a legacy, and passing sweet
> The unexpected death of some old lady
> Or gentleman of seventy years complete,
> Who 've made 'us youth' wait toóótoo long already
> For an estate, or cash, or country seat… (I.125. 993-997)

As Campbell states, "Death is a pervasive theme in Lord Byron's major works" (1991: 3). Campbell (1991) states that before 1815, Lord Byron did not subscribe to the concept of the immortality of the Soul. However, his literary output after this year, and particularly after his acquaintance with Shelley in 1816, indicates a developing fascination with the idea of continuity of identity, albeit in a certain manifestation. The works of Lord Byron, specifically *Manfred* and *Cain*, revolve around existential inquiries. The central query in *Manfred* centres on the contemplation of post-mortem existence, while Cain explores the raison d'être behind the inevitability of death. Byron's literary oeuvre, commencing with the publication of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage in 1812, traverses his emerging perspective regarding the essence and imperative of mortality. The aforementioned occurrence is posited to be attributable to the untimely demise of individuals who held a significant place in the affections of Lord Byron. In 1811, Byron was apprised of the passing of his mother, as well as two of his close acquaintances. In a subsequent correspondence addressed to Hobhouse on August 10th, 1811, Lord Byron articulated the following sentiments, "There is to me something so incomprehensible in death, that I can neither speak nor think on the subject"; as Campbell states, "Death is Byron's exclusive concern, but it is one that he returns to again and again, in a way that no other Romantic poet does" (1991: 5). The character of Childe Harold occupies a significant position as the first Byronic hero to convey a sense

of apprehension towards the concept of the Judgement Day in his poetic work titled *To Inez*, which appears in Canto I dating back to 1812 :

> And dost thou ask, what secret woe
> I bear, corroding joy and youth?
>
> It is that weariness which springs
> From all I meet, or hear, or see:
>
> It is that settled, ceaseless gloom
> The fabled Hebrew wanderer bore;
> That will not look beyond the tomb,
> But cannot hope for rest before.
> What Exile from himself can flee?
> To Zones, though more and more remote,
> Still, still pursues, where-e'er I be,
> The blight of life--the demon, Thought. (I. 841-42, 849-50, 853-60)

Throughout the entire poem, readers may trace the poet's concerns with death and its endeavouring power. Byron uses metaphors in abundance to paint a verbal picture of Death, and the readers get the chance to see its shadow through his eyes. For instance, here is what the poet says about it later in Canto IV:

> We wither from our youth, we gasp away-
> Sick-sick; unfound the boon-unslaked the thirst,
> Though to the last, on verge of our decay,
> Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first-
> But all too late, -So we are doubly curst.
> Love, fame, ambition, avarice—'tis the same
> Each idle-and all ill—and none the worst-
> For all meteors with different names,
> And Death the sable smoke, where vanishes the flame. (IV.24. 1108-1116)

Numerous insights into the concepts of death, dying, and mortality can be derived from literature. It can be argued that death holds significant value in the realm of literature (Hakola & Kivistö, 2014). According to Guthke (1999), Western artistic and folkloric traditions have opted to anthropomorphise the abstract notion of death, employing a human form as a personification of such a concept despite the availability

of numerous alternatives. According to Bauman: "Society finds death abnormal and dangerous because death is an end to existence" (Bauman, 1992: 127). And literature, from its perspective, as if trying to establish some kind of balance, imposes a structure on life and death, giving meaning to both (Skelton, 2003: 213). Klara Charlotte Schroth (2017) continues the development of the idea by stating that literary representations of death, dying and bereavement are of special significance since, as Bradbury argues, "our talk about death has a very real impact on how we die, what we do with our dead and how we experience our bereavements" (1999: 2). As James claims, "as human beings, we are arguably the only creatures able to reflect on this knowledge about our mortality, making death a topic unlike any other" (2009: 1). In *On Death and Dying* (1969) Kübler-Ross describes denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance as the five fundamental stages of both the realisation of one's mortality and of bereavement (cf. 1997).

In literature, death is frequently used as a metaphor; thus, its meaning in every story can be different; at the same time, it remains rather obvious that the way one sees death in various books is the reflection of the way it is treated or seen by the author who wrote that book. Michael Neill has argued, "Death is not something that can be imagined once and for all, but an idea that has to be constantly re-imagined across cultures and through time; which is to say that, like most human experiences that we think of as "natural", it is culturally defined" (Neill, 1999: 81). Adriana Teodorescu in her book *Death Representations in Literature* is deeply concerned with the following question, "Are metaphors and literary representations of death expressions of death denial or, on the contrary, a more insightful way of capturing the meaning of death?" (Teodorescu, 2015: 4). Teodorescu places the representation of death in the literature between the cultural

illusion of taming and conquering death and the deconstruction of the theoretical principles that underpin these illusions.

Acknowledging that death is an important element in both ageing studies and literature can provide our readership with a wider spectrum of ideas and understandings of this phenomenon. Moreover, scientific and cultural representations of death contribute to a better understanding of life itself. As it has been established in this section, Lord Byron expressed interest in the concept of death and its significance, therefore, this issue can contribute to a fuller image of his chosen works and the way ageing was described on their pages. The following section discusses the significance of ageing and its interpretations in the Romantic period in Europe to provide our readership with the historical and cultural background of the concept of ageing and what it meant in Lord Byron's times.

Conclusions

As shown in this chapter, literary gerontology examines life, ageing transformations and death from different perspectives to exhibit the ways people accept all the metamorphoses that happen to their minds and bodies during their life journeys. Ascending social and cultural concerns about these issues have provoked various new theories on age and ageing during the last century. Memories as a powerful tool of the human mind and its role in psychological ageing are discussed in Chapter Two to reveal what inner changes happen to a person through their life journey; this issue also exhibits how different and intimate this experience is for each individual, however, some common features of the process are shown as well. Another popular and widely discussed phenomenon — gerascophobia — is discussed in this chapter to argue about fears and concerns of both, contemporary society and of Lord Byron's times; these two periods of history are mentioned to trace the changes in values or possible shifts of a mindset concerning ageing problems. Special attention is given to the issue of ageing during the Romantic period in Britain to create a better vision of the world in which Lord Byron lived. Sociocultural elements had a direct impact on his works and on the way he spoke about ageing with the readers.

The following chapters of this dissertation will integrate the critical approaches investigated in the present chapter, seeding more light on Byron's concern associated with ageing. As it will be shown, Lord Byron's works, frequently with many autobiographical elements present, serve as a valuable source on how to examine the narrative of decline and successful ageing discourse. Byron's own experiences and fears about growing old and the ones of his characters help to create a better picture of the realities in which he lived. The following chapters of this dissertation will reveal how

Byron's works shed light on the contemporary experience of growing old by analysing ageing male protagonists who also show Lord Byron's views on the topic of ageing. Given the importance of the figure of the well-known *Byronic Hero* and its tremendous influence on the perception of Lord Byron's works, the following chapter starts with its analysis and the way it was introduced by Lord Byron.

CHAPTER III: Byron's Reflection on His Characters

Introduction

Lord Byron's character and bravery to express his true self in poetry turned the heads of scholars and literary critics towards him. "Byron was a painter and a thinker; but if he was the greatest Briton of modern times (perhaps of all time), he can be considered Germanic for the boldness of his imagination. However, his character makes him different from German authors, whose little active and uniform lives display themselves in their works[11]", wrote Francisco Maria Bordalo. The distinctiveness of Byron and his divergence from his contemporaries become evident when the poet is characterised as a pariah, underscoring his failure to conform to the cultural norms of British society during his era. Byron was true to himself and wished to do the same for his poetry, which was courageous, if not daring, step in his literary career.

As happens with many writers, chiefly those of the Romantic period, they had a strong tendency to incorporate elements of biography, admits Richard A. Cardwell (2004). Based on Cardwell's (2004) analysis, it can be posited that Byron's protagonists are portrayed as manifestations of his persona. The objective of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive portrait of Lord Byron's character, as depicted to his audience through the perspective of his literary protagonists. We also intend to demonstrate how the Byronic Heroes in Byron's selected words dealt with time and transformed during its course; this transformation in the end crafts a figure of a unique individual created by Byron and shares many of the author's characteristics. "He [Byron] is therefore just as

[11] "Byron era pintor e pensador; mas se foi o maior poeta britânico dos tempos modernos (talvez de todos os tempos), pode considerar-se germânico pela ousadia da imaginação. Todavia, o seu caracter individual o distingue dos autores alemães, cuja vida pouco activa e uniforme se revela nas propinas obras" (*O Panorama* [Lisbon], 1 (1857): 164-65).

wicked as Manfred, the Corsair or Lara" (Cardwell, 2004: 171). In Thomas Babington Macaulay's biography, which was written rather as a commentary to Thomas Moore's *Life of Byron*, we also find a strong argument supporting the idea expressed in a Lisbon journal, "Harold, Lara, Manfred, most of his characters, were usually considered the transparent incognitos who disguised Lord Byron's persona: and there is every reason to believe that they should be considered that way."[12] Many critics saw this as a sign of deep personal despair. For instance, Macaulay's text was published in a translation of António Pedro Lopes de Mendonça, who was strongly influenced by Byron and his works. In one of the articles translated by him, we may find a section dedicated to Lord Byron and his portrait. The text mostly refers to dark problems in Byron's family and the last sentence mentions him as "Lord Byron, who would be the poet of despair" ("Lord Byron, sue será o poeta de desesperação"). The emphasis on despair can also be traced in Macaulay's text: "There never was a writer who had in a higher degree the whole eloquence of contempt, misanthropy and despair" (1843: 172). This formed an image that remains nowadays, the dark side of Byron's soul that characterises his portrayal, both as a man and a poet.

The second wave of the Romantic movement in the early 19th century was a reaction to many cultural, social and political processes. Great political movements (e.g. the French Revolution) diminished individual accomplishment whereas the representatives of the Second Generation of the Romantic poets intended to stress individuality and uniqueness. As a result, characters of the works of Romantic poets served as reflections of their attitudes, standing in confrontation with society, fighting their battle that only a

[12] Harold, Lara, Manfredo, o maior numero dos seus caracteres, eram geralmente considerados como os transparentes incognitos que dissimulavam a pessoa de lord Byron: e ha toda a razão para acreditar que assim deviam ser considerados (*Archivo Pittoresco* [Lisbon], I April 1858) : 31 ff.).

few were ready to fight; in this sense, Anamika states that "The idea of the individual is embraced and perfected by Lord George Gordon Byron in his creation of the Byronic hero who is the archetype of all the dark and brooding antiheroes of subsequent fiction" (2013: 1). This period made crucial changes in the views of the readers, presenting to them demonic characters whom they, nonetheless, admired. Only after the American and French Revolutions, more than a century after Milton wrote *Paradise Lost*, readers started to sympathise with Satan in the war between Heaven and Hell, treating him as a rebel and calling him the true hero of the poem.

The analysis of Byron's personality and his characters is of paramount importance to this dissertation because it uncovers significant details of his character as well as the unknown dimensions of his creation — the Byronic Hero, which is considered by many Lord Byron's alter ego. The primary focus of the initial segment of this chapter concerns the matter of the Byronic Hero as introduced by Byron, and more importantly, its influence on the presentation of character traits to the audience. Following the same line, it reveals Byron's characters from rather different angles and more profound dimensions, breaking the stereotypical picture of them being rather irresponsible, childish and obsessed with lust. The following sections of this chapter point to two different sides of the Byronic Characters that reveal themselves during the journey of ageing, and the phenomenon of "Personality Dualism" present in both, Byron's life and poetry. Byron's selected poems (especially *Mazeppa* and *Don Juan*) show that men struggle to perceive themselves and their ageing bodies in terms of sexual desires. The final sections of this chapter reveal Byron's dark side, and suffering in particular, which is connected with how the poet sieves his experiences through his poetry. By comparing certain parts of his poetry with the events that happened in Byron's real life, we intend

to trace the autobiographical elements in the poet's literary works and how these elements influenced Byron's life and literary career. By drawing on Byron's chosen works and his letters, we intend to illustrate the complexity of his literary heroes and the strong bond that exists between the author and his creations.

3.1 Autobiographical elements in Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*

"Founded on fragments of memory and experience,
as well as mediatory gaps, the poetry of Byron
illuminates the autobiographical poet's struggle
with textual self-representation and the sustention
of a poetic subjectivity that often substitutes for the
poet's own. Through the rhetorical device of
prosopopoeia, Byron finds distinct ways to create
a voice that will continue to "speak" for him
in the lines of his works".
(Kaila Rose Nicholl)

Lord Byron's life is of great importance due to the writer's tendency to project some of its elements onto his characters, thus revealing a faithful image of his personality to readers and critics. According to Boyd, "It is necessary and right that Byron's poetry, so intensely autobiographical, should never be considered apart from the story of his life. But if we are to pluck out the heart of his mystery, we must approach him directly through his poetry, the nearest way to the essential Byron" (Boyd, 1958: 6). Viewed through the lens of literary gerontology, the exploration of Byron's protagonists now presents novel research possibilities. If each of his characters is connected with a certain period of his life, this brings us closer to the writer himself — through his characters. This projection is also important because it was done by Lord Byron himself, so the words that he puts into his characters' mouths and the actions he made them do come from the writer. In every poem, there is always his voice present in the background. By whispering utterances through his characters, Byron opens a rare window into his

world, something very intimate and special, perhaps something obscene, that he never intended to show, but yet it came out naturally and unintentionally as if the poet was torn between a wish to keep everything to himself or leave a message for the future generations. Autobiographical elements in Lord Byron's poetry are indeed of paramount importance for this dissertation since the poet's ageing transformations emphasise how his characters mature not just over time, but also due to the dramatic and ground-shaking events that shaped both Lord Byron's real life and his poetical realm. The parallelism between the two worlds is rather vivid, thus the ageing metamorphoses[13] undergone by the selected Byronic Heroes in the poems bring a new understanding of how Byron grew as a personality through the medium of his protagonists. We intend to speak about his chosen works and the way Byron's life was reflected in them.

For Byron it was a natural and quite logical step to connect his real-life experiences with literary creativity; he made sure to state this clearly in his poetry, "Tis to create, and in creating life /A being more intense, that we endow /With form our fancy, gaining as we give /The life we image, even as I do now" (*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, III.6. 46-9). Lord Byron's literary output attests to the critical importance of the interplay between his artistic persona and his fictional creations, which fundamentally underpinned and propelled his accomplished career. According to Nicholl, "The association between Byron and Harold was not purely a "filling" to express "truth" but rather an elaborate cultural and poetic construction to establish an image" (2012: 16). Byron called for "a new voice in the world of poetry," which he completed with the voice of Childe Harold (Mason, 2002: 429). "By both disavowing any link between

[13] This thesis intends to demonstrate that physiological ageing is only one side of the matter, and the mental changes that occur to the characters due to some pivoting events in their lives contribute to the personality growth in a tremendous way.

Lord Byron and Childe Harold and simultaneously emphasising Byron's name in the advertising of the poem, the cumulative success of both poem and the figure of the poet created the most consciously autobiographical/non-autobiographical poem of the nineteenth century" (Mason, 2002: 438). Once the first two Cantos were published, the association between Harold and Byron was inevitable. Consequently, for Byron to maintain his poetic success, he had to be linked to "some character" with whose "soul" he could live. If Harold gained "life" through Byron's "creating," "Lord Byron" was contiguously born. Byron may have initially created Childe Harold as an autobiographic exploration of the perpetuation of a persona, but his project proves more complex than a man's desire for fame. As Nicholl states, "The souls Byron occupies are constituted by the cultural identification or link between his image — Lord Byron — and the voice of his poem" (2012: 17). In Canto III, Byron turns toward some "other Being, distinct from Harold, who can more successfully mediate to him a truer sense of his poetic identity after his association with Harold proved to be so complicated" (Hertz, 1972: 115). "In stanza 6, the speaker not only mediates Byron's relationship to the self-exiled Harold, but he is the active participant in both Harold's and the poem's creation: "we give," "we endow," "we image," "even as I do now" (Nicholl, 2012: 18). The reader may observe the poet's alignment with the speaker, commonly referred to as the "I," as a result of the shift of identification with the speaker's voice. Such a shift elicits an impression of unity between these two entities:

> What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,
> Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
> Invisible but gazing, as I glow
> Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,
> And feeling still with thee in my crush'd feelings' dearth. (III.6. 50-4)

Byron directs our focus towards the vacuity of his first-person perspective, as well as the amalgamation and detachment that exist between his cognitive faculties and his

soul. In contrast to Harold, whose presence is now rendered inconspicuous, the persona in Cantos III and IV operates solely within the first-person perspective. However, rather than leveraging the association between the persona and Lord Byron, who ostensibly fills the role of the “I”, the author highlights the divergence and thus underscores the necessity for intervention, as the “I” symbolising Byron's subjectivity is called into question and exposed as void.

In the initial stanzas of Canto III, Byron successfully establishes a clear sense of detachment not only from a personal standpoint but also from a particular entity that is expected to hold some degree of his essential being — his daughter. This distancing is notably evident in the text. The stanza pertains to Byron’s divergence from Augusta Ada. Commencing with an interrogative inquiry — “Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child!” — and culminating with Byron's, as opposed to Harold’s, departure from England, Canto III endeavours to position the historical allusion within the context of the speaker’s linguistic ambiguity and estrangement:

> Could I embody and unbosom now
> That which is most within me, — could I wreak
> My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
> Soul, heart, mind, passion, feelings, strong or weak,
> All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
> Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe—into one word,
> And that one word were Lightning, I would speak;
> But at it is, I live and die unheard,
> With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.
> (III.97. 905-913)

In the concluding remarks of Canto III, Byron emphasises the vital role of mediation in the depiction of poetic representation. Upon contemplation of the Canto III project, the orator provides a concise overview:

> Thus far have I proceeded in a theme
> Renew’d with no kind auspices:—to feel

We are not what we have been, and to deem
We are not what we should be,—and to steel
The heart against itself; and to conceal,
With a proud caution, love, or hate, or aught,—
Passion or feeling, purpose, grief, or zeal,—
Which is the tyrant spirit of our thought,
Is a stern task of soul:—No matter,—it is taught. (III.111. 1031-39)

Once the reader continues the literary journey through the pages of the poem, he gets to know the Byronic Hero and witnesses the rises and failures. Byron and his character seem to be perplexed due to their confusion about whom they used to be and who they should become at this point in the Canto. The poet tries to emphasize the difficulty of managing the "tyrant spirit," and puts to question the trustworthiness of the words themselves:

And for these words, thus woven into song,
It may be that they are harmless wile,—
The colouring of the scenes which fleet along,
Which I would seize, in passing, to beguile
My breast, or that of others, for a while. (III.112. 1040-44)

The fourth canto commences with a distinctive depiction of Byron and his "other Being" consolidated within the first-person singular pronoun, situated on a bridge. Instead of drawing attention to the inherent emptiness of the subject, the emphasis is shifted towards the concept of instability. The initial utterance of "I stood" presents a forceful declaration, and the physical foundation of the speaker is the Bridge of Sighs which served as a pathway for conveying incarcerated individuals towards judgment or execution, as indicated by Byron's annotation. To effectively express his poetic sensibilities, Byron must navigate and bridge his association with the first-person singular pronoun. As the protagonist surveys the vista of Venice, the bridge assumes the role of a reflective surface, serving to illustrate the gap present in autobiographical poetic intervention. According to Hertz, "The gap that is created through the use of the

mediating other Being is a result of the splitting of the self into a poet existing in the present and some other Being who acts as a mediating figure" (1972: 111). The scholar also adds, "The gap created through mediation may be bridged but is not thereby removed" (Hertz, 1972: 111). As the Canto unfolds, the directional paths established by the bridges visited by the first-person narrator influence its ontological stability. The narrator's existence is contingent upon a precarious terrain leading towards an indeterminate ultimate destination, and much like in the case of stanza 112, the divergent prospects awaiting the narrator are inexorably intertwined with the destiny of the poetic work. As far as Nicholl is concerned, "The tyrant spirit evades accurate articulation Byron immortalises the silent voice of the "I", with which he could never truly merge. Strengthening his own "I" is better than having the whole self disappear completely. In the ruin, Byron finds an image that will illustrate his representational predicament allowing him to explore his self as a ruin" (2012: 10):

> But my soul wanders; I demand it back
> To meditate amongst decay, and stand
> A ruin amidst ruins; there to track
> Fall'n states and buried greatness [. . .] (IV.25. 217-9)

Lord Byron begins his search for greatness that was fallen and hidden, and his literary characters lead him to it and help him clear the vision:

> Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
> Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene
> Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear
> That we become a part of what has been,
> And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen. (138. 1238-42)

"The other Being may not have been able to precisely pin down Byron's tyrant spirits, but he has established an image that will remain immortalised in the text and will be reborn with each new reading guiding us through the journey of his pilgrimage"

(Nicholl, 2012: 29). This reflection of the poet was destined to stay alive forever; the image created by Byron became his beacon of hope in search of endless youth and immortality. Byron took the traditional figure — a knight — and presented his version of it, breaking the stereotypical way of seeing the knighthood. The poet demonstrated several flaws in the character of Childe Harold thus bringing him closer to his readership; he created a hero that people could relate to — Childe Harold was not polished to perfection, on the contrary, he was real and thus believable. His journey served as an inspiration for many on their quest for endless youth and freedom from the prejudices of society.

Childe Harold was not the only story where autobiographical elements were used by the author. Even though all of Byron's poetry is a blending of autobiographical elements and echoes of the literature he has absorbed over the years, *Don Juan* is considered the most autobiographical of his works. *Don Juan*, a literary work comprising of a sequence of sixteen Cantos written during the period of 1819 and 1823, is often perceived as being predominantly autobiographical in essence. It is discernible that this artistic masterpiece is influenced by a diverse range of literary and theatrical undertones. The veracity of Byron's work, Don Juan, is recognised by the author himself in a letter addressed to Murray, dated 1821. Byron admits that almost all of the content in this work is derived from either his own life experiences or those of individuals known to him. Later, in 1958, Elizabeth French Boyd in her book developed the idea of the importance of semi-biographical elements in *Don Juan*, "*Don Juan* is the most independent product of Byron's pen, a novel in verse written in defiance of the world, in an atmosphere of increasing intellectual freedom…*Don Juan* is an epic satire based on legend, on history, and Byron's personal experience" (VI). According to Boyd, the

autobiography of *Don Juan* is based squarely on the universal human experience represented in the stories, poems, and reflective writings that Byron imitated. However, the character of Don Juan may as well represent Lord Byron's encapsulated youth which he was so afraid to lose one day. The character's exaggerated lust for love adventures reflects Byron's concern about his masculine strength and the possibility of losing his physical beauty one day. The characterisation provided by Byron initially portrays the protagonist as a naive individual, who yet evolves to reflect the negative implications of exposure to worldly encounters. Juan, a member of a distinguished lineage in Spain, was sent abroad following the discovery by his mother and her paramour, Don Alphonso, of his extramarital relationship with Julia, Alphonso's spouse who is 23 years of age.

Having acquired numerous routines to slow down his natural processes of growing old and losing his physical attractiveness, Byron was willing to experiment with similar nature to his book character, Don Juan, who was supposed to become Byron's self-portrait in a text form and save this image for generations of readers. However, this task revealed itself as rather challenging for Lord Byron — all due to the controversy and the scandalous nature of the story.

The initial release of the first and second Cantos in the year 1818 engendered noteworthy public disapprobation and censure for the writer. Despite the absence of publisher and author identification on the title page, Byron's identity was discernible. Even though Byron's peers, including Hobhouse and others, acknowledged the artistic merit of his work, they expressed disapproval towards its language and content, prompting concern amongst them. Byron maintained an unwavering stance against the editing and censoring of his work by asserting that it was, in fact, "the most moral of

poems". The aforementioned piece obtained substantial critical acclaim from eminent literary figures including Percy Bysshe Shelley and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Byron derived considerable fortitude and perseverance from these positive expressions of support.

The literary composition assumes a more grave and sombre disposition in Cantos VII and VIII, primarily due to the marked alterations in Byron's personal life after the issuance of the antecedent Cantos. Byron's philosophical perplexity in Don Juan appears to stem from his inherent inclination towards idealistic perspectives, which has been suppressed by the force of realism that possesses both transparency and perspicacity to acknowledge. The perspective that Byron espouses on human nature closely aligns with his intricate perception of natural entities. Individuals are capable of experiencing instances of achievement, moral uprightness, and selflessness. As an illustration, Juan, an individual new to such situations, exhibits a remarkable sense of courage in the face of the terrifying nature of warfare. Despite being afflicted by starvation, he abstains from engaging in cannibalism. Furthermore, he steadfastly declines to be coerced into reciprocating the feelings of the sultana and instead chooses to prioritise his own will. Notably, Juan also demonstrates a willingness to put his own life at risk to ensure the safety of beautiful Leila.

Byron's freedom was demonstrated through the events from his own life meticulously camouflaged in the poem. The Julia episode's final sequence exhibits characteristics of an autobiographical remembrance through Juan's manifestation of seasickness when reading Julia's letter. The aforementioned correspondence, which emphasises the exclusiveness of Julia's affection, which is now unrecoverable and gone, evokes recollections of Byron's series of parting poems addressed to Mary Chaworth

during his departure from England in 1809. After the bittersweet farewell, Byron discovers many European countries, which also left traces on the pages of *Don Juan* thus shaping the character he created. According to Quennell's (1958) observations, Byron tended to associate Greece with youthful vigour. In 1816, Byron had come to believe that he had exhausted all his reflections on Greece. The recollection of the country's landscapes had begun to dissipate and merge in his memory, and he harboured apprehension regarding the tendency, denounced by Voltaire, of over-elaborating on the subject matter. However, among the former depictions of Greece by the mentioned author, it can be argued that *Don Juan*, Cantos II-IV, particularly stands out for its exceptional aesthetic appeal and verisimilitude. Speculating on the autobiographical recollections that are prevalent and plentiful within these writings would be an exercise in futility.

Although incorporating elements of historical fantasy that interlace actual events with fictional components, the depictions of Don Juan's experiences are substantially derived from the personal encounters of Lord Byron. Byron's features and life experiences are intricately depicted through the portrayal of Juan's domineering maternal figure, his substantial inheritance, his father's inadequacy, and his controversial liaisons. Significantly, these elements manifest the protagonist's transformative character development throughout his maturation process. Readers can observe how lust and desire conquer his body and mind and the way the character and the author are tormented by the choices they need to make in their lives.

The poem is not only a testament to what a fascinating life Byron led, but what a profound and detailed perspective he had on it. "In all of Byron's poetry, therefore, purely autobiographical elements are blended with echoes of the literature he had

absorbed so deeply as to make it part of himself. Thus, his poetry has both personal and cultural qualities to appeal to his readers" (E.F. Boyd, 1958: 112). Boyd concedes that the first and second Cantos of *Don Juan* may have contributed to the public perception that Byron engaged in a frank autobiographical undertaking, as is evident from Byron's account. The quotation, "Difficile est proprie communia dicere" ("It is hard to treat in your way what is common") by Horace in his *Ars Poetica*, was deliberately chosen by Byron. This decision was interpreted by his acquaintances as an admission that his literary works pertained to his personal and domestic affairs, which were widely known amongst his social circle.

Byron's philosophical stance, notwithstanding its austere tone and indecorousness, entails an embracing of life by striving to heighten and invigorate every ephemeral and irreversible moment. Lord Byron understands the value of each moment and cherishes his youth and beauty. Understanding the inevitability of ageing, the poet intends to make his years of youth memorable. Within the context of this poetic piece, the incorporation of personal elements intricately intertwined with literary ones effectively reinstates the complete literary essence of the poem for contemporary readers. Byron advocates for a multitude of affirmative principles within the narrative of *Don Juan*, ideals which he upheld and valued. The individual posits that ephemeral sensation of joyful fulfilment, the attainment of high status, as well as enduring affection, are preferable reasons for existing. Although "A day of gold from out an age of iron / Is all that life allows the luckiest sinner," (III.35. 67-68). This assertion is superior to an absolute absence of any action or provision. The need for humanity to persevere in its struggle, despite the awareness of its ultimate inability to fully restore the world and the inevitability of defeat and mortality, remains a vital imperative. The moral transgression

of hypocrisy has long been acknowledged as a severe wrongdoing. Individuals are urged to uphold sincerity and authenticity in their actions and words. Nevertheless, it has been observed that the attribute of hypocrisy seems to contribute to one's survival. This can be attributed to the restrictions of societal expectations and self-imposed limitations that may limit an individual's ability to express their genuine self. Byron holds the belief that the creative process holds a paramount significance in enabling humanity's ability to surpass the limitations of mortality. Byron's philosophical perspective, despite its severity, adopts an embracement of life, striving to heighten and invigorate each transitory and unalterable instance.

3.2 Reliable and Unreliable Narrator in Byron's Chosen Works

The narrative is itself an event — more specifically,
a multidimensional purposive communication
from a teller to an audience.
(James Phelan, 2017)

The technique of writing from the voice of a reliable and unreliable narrator has been studied widely. One of the critics that have lately defined the use of reliable and unreliable narrators is James Phelan who says the following concerning narrators in literary texts, "Reliable and unreliable narration are neither binary opposites nor single phenomena but rather broad terms and concepts that each cover a wide range of author-narrator-audience relationships in the narrative" (2017: 94). Manfred gives a detailed explanation of the narrator's functions, basing his definition on the works of other prominent scholars in the respective field, "He or she is the agent who establishes communicative contact with an addressee (the narratee), who manages the exposition, who decides what is to be told, how it is to be told (especially, from what point of view, and in what sequence), and what is to be left out. If necessary, the narrator will defend the reliability of the story and comment on its lesson, purpose, or message" (Labov, 1972: 28). According to Jakobson, "Narratorial discourse can serve a variety of objectives, mainly an addressee-oriented phatic function (maintaining contact with the addressee), an appellative function (persuading the addressee to believe or do something), and an emotive or expressive function (expressing his/her subjectivity). All of these functions are indicative of a text's projection of narratorial voice" (1960: 362).

Using different types of narration brings more layers and depth to the character, it permits readers to the hero from various angles, and Lord Byron uses different types of

narrators in his selected poems being aware of this. *Don Juan*, for instance, is partially written from the first-person perspective of a narrator who meticulously tries to conceal the fact that he is Lord Byron himself. Manfred characterises this type of narration as "overt",

> An overt narrator refers to him/herself in the first person, one who directly or indirectly addresses the narratee, one who offers reader-friendly exposition whenever it is needed, one who exhibits a "discoursal stance" or "slant" toward characters and events, especially in his/her use of rhetorical figures, imagery, evaluative phrases and emotive or subjective expressions (Jakobson's "expressive function"), one who "intrudes" into the story to pass philosophical or metanarrative comments, one who has a distinctive voice. (2005: 28)

Byron is a charismatic and entertaining figure who is happy to distract himself with feuds, politics, poetry, and his personal views on things. Byron's voice is a strong presence in the narrative to the point where he is almost as important as Don Juan himself. The narrative voice of *Don Juan* is rather detailed. The narrative of the protagonist is related through the first-person narration in the past tense and could almost be considered a simple tale of a hero going on an exciting adventure. In Canto I, for example, Don Juan frequently vocalises his thoughts, like in these lines, "Ambition was my idol, which was broken/ Before the shrines of Sorrow and of Pleasure" (1.217. 1729-1730). This voice is frequently sidelined, however, and Byron interrupts with his present tense views and opinions. In the second Canto, readers can discern a distinct variation in the mode of narration, as Byron's voice becomes discernible,

> And thus they left him to his lone repose:
> Juan slept like a top, or like the dead,
> Who slept at last, perhaps, (God only knows)
> Just for the present; and in his lull'd head
> Not even a vision of his former woes
> Throbb'd in accused dreams, which sometimes spread
> Unwelcome visions of our former years,
> Till the eye, cheated, opens thick with tears (II.2. 134)

The objectivity of the narration of Don Juan's life gives way to the subjectivity of Byron's narration. The voice that narrates the story is conventional while the voice that interjects pushes expectations to the point where the publisher refused to include the opening verses. This binary form of narrative voice creates a unique tone in the poem where Byron fights to control his own opinions and cannot help but become the centre of attention in a fictional story.

For the modern reader, the narrative voice is established in the dedication. The opening of the poem was upheld from publication during Lord Byron's life because his publisher considered the remarks too scandalous to print[14]. The establishment of the poem's tone through the narrator's use of Byron's resolute inclination to satirise and censure other celebrated poets can be observed. Byron emphasises his disagreements by directly addressing poet Robert Southey (1774–1843) rather than setting the scene for the story of Don Juan. Byron makes his priorities clear. He is just as interested in using the poem as a vehicle to settle personal objections as he is interested in telling the story of Don Juan,

> Most epic poets plunge "in media's res"
> (Horace makes this the heroic turnpike road),
> And then your hero tells, whene'er you please,
> What went before – by way of episode,
> While seated after dinner at his ease,
> Beside his mistress in some soft abode,
> Palace, or garden, paradise, or cavern,
> Which serves the happy couple for a tavern (I.6. 41-48)

Byron draws a picture in these lines where one may trace a voice from the real world. No matter how scandalous the scene may be presented to the readers, the poet is determined to keep all details the way he intended them to be in the poem. Any

[14] see Chapter one for more information on the topic.

discussion of the narrative voice of the poem is based on the fundamental acknowledgement of Byron's determination to make the poem as much about himself as his characters, or, in other words, to reflect himself in the characters he created.

Another significant work that reflects Byron's personality through the voice of the narrator is *Mazeppa*. Byron continued to work on *Mazeppa* even as he wrote the first Cantos of *Don Juan.* Similar to *Don Juan*, *Mazeppa* is written in the first-person, overt narration. Phillipson (2003) observes an interesting similarity between the narration in *Don Juan* and *Mazeppa*, claiming that in both poems there is a deliberately set distance between the narrator and audience as if the poet is not inclined to trust his readership, so he treads cautiously without revealing all his cards. Simultaneously, the poem is perceived as exceptionally intimate, with the usage of first-person narration amplifying the level of distress that Mazeppa experiences throughout the narrative. This observation highlights the immersive and emotional impact of the work. From a certain perspective, this particular approach fosters an inclination towards compassion within the readership,

> I loved her then – I love her still –
> And such as I am love indeed
> In fierce extremes – in good and ill.
> But still we love even in our rage,
> And haunted to our very age
> With the vain shadow of the past –
> As is Mazeppa to the last. (5. 225-231)

Such openness and sincerity ensure readers the "reliability" of the narrator and they subconsciously "take his side" regardless of his being right or wrong in the story of adultery. Mazeppa tells the story in his voice, with Byron adding his one in certain parts of the poem, thus we see the case of punishment through his perspective and the

character's sentiments of sorrow and self-pity transform into an expanding group of sympathetic readers.

In another poem chosen for this dissertation, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, one can observe a similar manoeuvre made by the author. "*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage I and II* (1812) fractiously pairs a provocatively impassive protagonist and an insistently nostalgic narrator[15]". This fact, however, was camouflaged for quite some time until it was revealed. Byron opted for the Spenserian stanza and an archaic dialect reminiscent of *The Faerie Queene* for the extensive poem he was contemplating. The first three stanzas of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* exhibit the usage of archaic and somewhat obsolete terms such as "mote" (the past tense of "might"), "whilome" (signifying "once upon a time"), "ne" (meaning "not"), "hight" (referring to "named"), and "losel" (carrying the connotation of "good-for-nothing"). The stylistic artificiality, presumably intended to engender a sense of detachment between the protagonist and the author, proved to be ineffective. Immediately after perusing the literary composition, Walter Scott proceeded to express his observations thereon in a confidential epistle addressed to Joanna Baillie, "the hero, notwithstanding the affected antiquity of the style in some parts, is a modern man of fashion and fortune, worn out and satiated with the pursuits of dissipation, and although there is a caution against it in the preface, you cannot for your soul avoid concluding that the author, as he gives an account of his travels, is also doing so in his character" (Lockhart, 1837: 31). As Scott states, Byron reflects many experiences from his real life in his poems, so a part of Byron's character is always present in each Byronic Hero.

---

[15] For a full reading of this tension, see William H. Galperin, *The Return of the Visible in British Romanticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1993), pp. 244–70.

The *Anti-Jacobin Review* arrived at a similar conclusion within the domain of public discourse, stating that Childe Harold "appears to be nothing but the dull, inanimate, instrument for conveying his poetical creator's sentiments to the public. Lord Byron avows the intent of this hero's introduction to be "giving some connection to the piece" (Unknown Author, 1800: 344). Despite widespread scepticism, Byron abandoned his pretence and ultimately revealed his admission in a letter addressed to his companion, John Hobhouse. The aforementioned letter served as a preface to Canto IV: "About the conduct of the last Canto, there will be found less of the pilgrim than in any of the preceding, and that little slightly, if at all, separated from the author speaking in his person. The fact is, that I had become weary of drawing a line which everyone seemed determined not to perceive" (Byron, 1899: 99). In other words, Byron demonstrates the bond between himself and the protagonist, highlighting the fact that closer to the poem's ending he is determined to make it more visible to the readers.

All in all, Lord Byron's voice and his narrator's voice in the poems chosen for this thesis unite in a powerful tool used by the author for the propaganda of his ideas. Though intending to camouflage certain aspects in the narration, Byron makes it possible for his readers to come closer to his persona and decode the hidden motifs. By building up an enigma around his narrator's essence, Byron by no means wished to be misunderstood or abstracted from his characters, but quite the contrary. By analysing the poem and deciphering the expressions he used, we can conclude that one may rely on the narrator in Byron's chosen poems, however, he or she needs to look for deeper meanings of the messages the narrator transmits to them.

3.3 The Byronic Hero

As to the estimation of the English which you talk of,
let them calculate what it is worth, before they insult
me with their insolent condescension. I have not written
for their pleasure. If they are pleased, it is that they
chose to be so; I have never flattered their opinions,
nor their pride; nor will I .....
I have written from the fulness of my mind, from passion,
from impulse, from many motives,
but not for their "sweet voices"
(Byron to John Murray, 1819)

The character archetype known as the Byronic Hero, which derives its name from the works and influence of Lord Byron in the Romantic Period of English literature, is a highly notable and prevalent literary construct. Byronic Hero is considered by many a romanticised antihero who possesses a wicked and moody character. He has many features shared with his creator — Lord Byron — who was characterised by one of his lovers Lady Caroline Lamb as "mad, bad and dangerous to know". Retta Aleen Sandgren (1973) highlights that Lord Byron borrowed ideas and searched for information from numerous sources for the creation of his characters. Amid various literary works, the author highlights notable pieces that include Goethe's *Faust* or *The Sorrows of Young Wierther*, Rousseau's *La Nouvelle d'Heloise*, MacPherson's *Ossian*, Scott's *Marmion* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Moore's *Zeluco*, to mention but a few. We believe that the Byronic hero is key to this dissertation since he is the most prominent creation of Lord Byron whose essence lives in all of Byron's literary characters. By revealing the nature of the Byronic hero through the analysis of three selected characters for this dissertation — Childe Harold, Mazeppa and Don Juan — we

intend to demonstrate the metamorphoses of the author's figure and voice embodied by the selected Byronic heroes. Furthermore, by taking into consideration the years of writing and publishing of each poem, we want to trace the ageing transformations that the poet had to undergo along with his literary characters and the way those transformations shaped the characters and made them true reflections of the man who created them.

As far as we are concerned, the Byronic hero is always chased by the halo of a plotter. Cristina Gabriela Marin states that "a Byronic hero exhibits several characteristic traits, and in many ways, he can be considered a rebel". The Byronic hero does not possess "heroic virtue" in the usual sense, instead, he has many dark qualities. He is usually isolated from society as a wanderer or is in exile of some kind" (2008: 81). Marin asserts that the displacement of the Byronic Hero can also stem from either extrinsic factors or self-imposed actions. Zhao Wei's (2015) standpoint advocates that the Byronic Hero embodies Lord Byron's internal paradoxes. According to Wei, "…the Byronic hero presents an idealised, but flawed character whose external attributes include: rebellion, great passion, great talent, lacking respect for rank and privilege, an unsavoury secret past, arrogance, overconfidence or lack of foresight and ultimately a self-destructive manner" (2015: 30). Gabriele Poole (2010) posits in his essay entitled *The Byronic Hero Theatricality and Leadership* that there exists a strong correlation between Lord Byron and his literary personae. Poole contends that there exists a divergence between the personalities of the author and his characters. Rather, it is posited that Byron's public persona was formed using criteria similar to those utilised in the construction of his heroic figures. The author posits that the perception of Byron's protagonists among the masses was influenced by the public persona of Byron himself;

Byron, as a literary figure, was interpreted in light of his fictional characters. This study aims to examine the key attributes of the Byronic Hero and Lord Byron himself during various stages of his life. The analysis will focus on specific characters, including Childe Harold, with a particular emphasis on his inclination towards escapism in search of tranquillity and contentment in a new environment. The character of Mazeppa will also be scrutinised, this time with an emphasis on how escapism serves as a means of redemption. Finally, Don Juan will be examined through the lens of his rebellion against societal norms, as he seeks to escape the constraints imposed upon him by the society he inhabits. As will be proved, these three characters highlight Lord Byron's ageing experiences and the way he treats the ageing process. These Byronic Heroes are of great importance for this dissertation because they reflect Lord Byron's courage and originality when dealing with the ageing processes which will hopefully reveal their creator from a brand new perspective of ageing studies.

Numerous character traits are considered typical of the Byronic Hero. According to the scholarly work of Natalia Pop Zarieva and Krste Iliev, (2016), it is noteworthy that the archetype of the traveller, as depicted in the literary works of Byron, also serves as a defining characteristic of the Byronic Hero. The Childe Harold features a character known as the Byronic Hero, who is depicted as wandering in a state of disillusionment or enduring intense emotional agony while traversing the globe. Zarieva and Iliev postulate that the act of wandering may connote an aspiring desire for a metaphysical dwelling place that could potentially signify deliverance or atonement, as posited by their metaphorical interpretation. Childe Harold as well as Giaour, the protagonist of the literary work of the same name, both share a set of good examples of these features. The features of these characters set them as having some of the main traits in Byron's heroes

because they are represented as projections of emotions which are based on Lord Byron's own life, where he was torn between his motherland and adventures in Europe, at the same time as searching a safe place where he could just be. A prominent illustration of the itinerant Byronic hero in this thesis is exemplified by Childe Harold, who likens himself to the legendary figure of the Wandering Jew: "It is that settled, ceaseless gloom/ The fabled Hebrew Wanderer bore; / That will not look beyond the tomb, / But cannot hope for rest before" (I.86.26-29). Outcast from the home where he was born, Harold was wandering like a jew around the world in search of a corner of comfort to cling to. This figure represents both Harold and Lord Byron who lost their original homes due to their liberal views and were forced to look for a place to live and stay elsewhere. Ann Gelder also pinpoints some Biblical traces in Byron's references to wandering in his selected poems. As far as the scholar is concerned, "Wandering is a punishment of exile," simultaneously, she articulates the subsequent viewpoint:

> It also implies, however, that the man and woman may now choose their path, either to life (salvation) or to death (eternal punishment, eternal wandering). The Fall gives a new dignity to human beings in this freedom of choice: one may assert one's will by choosing the forbidden fruit, knowing that this indulgence leads to death; or one may reject the desire for that which one cannot have, and by this sacrifice, survive. (1990: 319)

These pangs of choice are inevitable for the wandering Byronic Hero. They serve as triggers to his inner transformation and fragile balance between rebellion and escape, thus bringing us fellow readers one step closer to understanding the ageing nuances of the poet himself. Lord Byron elaborates on the idea of fall in sin, positioning it as a possible consequence of wandering for his protagonist in *Don Juan*:

> You know, or don't know, that great Bacon saith,
> "Fling up a straw, 'twill show the way the wind blows;"
> And such a straw, borne on by human breath,
> Is poesy, according as the mind glows;
> A paper kite which flies 'twixt life and death,

A shadow which the onward soul behind throws:
And mine's a bubble, not blown up for praise,
But just to play with, as an infant (XII.8. 57-64)

Byron here shows how fragile and vulnerable his character's mind can be reflected in the poetry. Byron's language in the poem gives the readers some very clear hints: "fling up a straw" or "a paper kite"; these expressions reflect the essence of the Byronic Character — he wants to seem strong, but deep inside he is tender and longs for love and understanding. Gelder states that this stanza is a variant of Byron's obsessive returns to the problem of the fall in *Don Juan* (1990: 320). She also believes that "Byron sees himself, his character, and his text as trapped in a complex web of reaction and rebellion equivalent, in his view, to slavery" (325). The chaos of eternal rebellion drives Byron's poetry in an attempt to reconstruct something that was once lost. Gelder's point circulates the idea that Byron, similar to his protagonists, is exiled — allowed to "live", but in suspension "twixt life and death" (1990: 332). There exists a popular belief that it is Don Juan that is the first true Byronic Hero. But despite Don Juan's popularity in literary circles, literary critics claim that it is Childe Harold that marks the origin of the famous Byronic Hero who possesses a wide variety of features of the Gothic villain (R. A.Sandgren, 1973). Thus, we shall begin our analysis of this character.

Once *Childe Harold* was published, the public immediately associated Byron with his gloomy character, wandering throughout Europe in search of new adventures. Despite some quite harsh criticism, Byron admits that Childe Harold is "unknightly", but he defends his choice of this unchivalrous hero:

> I now leave Childe Harold to live his day, such as he is; it had been more agreeable and certainly more easy, to have drawn an amiable character. It had been easy to varnish over his faults, to make him do more and express less, but

> he never was intended as an example, further than to show that early perversion of mind and morals leads to satiety of past pleasures and disappointment in new ones, and that even the beauties of nature ... are lost on a soul so constituted, or rather misdirected. Had I proceeded with this poem, this character would have deepened as he drew to a close; for the outline which I once meant to fill up for him was, with some exceptions, the sketch of a modern Timon, perhaps a poetical Zeluco. (Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* New Line Publishing, 1818: 2)

The iconic figure of the Byronic Hero portrayed in Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* undergoes a marked transformation in its characterisation. This metamorphosis has been extensively analysed by numerous scholars, including Sandgren, who propose that the publication of Cantos I and II preceded Byron's ultimate disenchantment towards English society and, therefore, significantly influenced the development of the protagonist's persona. Being a young activist with numerous progressive ideas, Byron was yet not taken seriously and his words and deeds were frowned upon. We see Childe Harold as a young revolutionary engaged in a prison cell of hypocrisy and prejudice of the society, desperately trying to break free; as Sandgren states, "Cantos III and IV, written after his supposedly incestuous relationship with Augusta, his disastrous marriage, and his voluntary exile when his political career was ruined, move him much closer to an affinity with his embittered hero, Childe Harold" (1973: 2). In Canto IV, Childe Harold rather seems to be in a search for solitude:

> There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
> There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
> There is society, where none intrudes,
> By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
> I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
> From these our interviews, in which I steal
> From all I may be, or have been before,
> To mingle with the Universe, and feel
> What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal. (IV.178. 1594-1602)

In many ways, as the readers may observe from the passage, Childe Harold is dark and gothic, all due to his negative response to Nature and a Satanic feature of suffering from an unknown sin. The present study identifies Byronic characteristics exhibited by the protagonist in Canto I of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, whereby the Byronic Hero, despite harbouring an inward sense of obscurity, exhibits an absence of contrition,

> For he through Sin's long labyrinth had run,
> Nor made atonement when he did amiss,
> Had sighed to many, though he loved but one,
> And that loved one, alas, could ne'er be his (I.5. 37-40)

Byron here paints a verbal portrait of a character who tries to conceal his true feelings as a way of protecting himself. It may be posited that the state of bereavement may serve as a mechanism to assuage previous emotional agony. Byron postulates that the Byronic protagonist is, at times, plagued by troubling reminiscences despite their involuntary nature, as evidenced by subsequent verses,

> Yet ofttimes in his maddest mirthful mood,
> Strange pangs would flash along Childe Harold's brow,
> As if the memory of some deadly feud
> Or disappointed passion lurked below:
> But this none knew, nor haply cared to know;
> For his was not a that open, artless soul
> That feels relief by bidding sorrow flow;
> Nor sought he friend to counsel or condole,
> Whate'er this grief mote be, which he could not control (I.8)

Byron relates Childe Harold to a difficult mood, passion and darkness that coexist inside his mind, reflecting Byron's disillusionment with the lack of understanding from those around him and his suffering from having difficulty getting accustomed to the realities in which he lives. As far as we are concerned, being a young maximalist and perfectionist, Childe Harold, just like his creator Lord Byron, stepped onto the path of rebellion to manifest his disagreement and judgement of the society's values of the time.

Francis Jeffrey (1812) wrote a criticism of Childe Harold as a character in *Edinburg Review* stating that the European venture turned out quite bitter for the protagonist due to his disappointment with mankind. According to Jeffrey, the motive behind Childe Harold's initial embarkation on his journey was to seek out new experiences to alleviate his despondent state of mind,

> My greatest grief is that I leave
> Nothing that claims a tear (I.8. 180-181).
> Nor care what land thou bearest me to,
> So not again to mine (I.10. 192-193)

Later the character would torture his inner self for beholding the experience with so little emotion and the frustration caused by too high expectations which is also reflected in Canto IV of the poem:

> Oh! that the Desert were my dwelling place,
> With one fair Spirit for my minister,
> That I might all forget the human race,
> And hating no one, love but only her! (IV.178. 1585-1588)

Sandren believes that "There seems to be a connection between Byron and his protagonist, judging from the narrator's knowledge of Childe Harold's background as a member of the English nobility, perhaps the last of his line, who has committed some secret sin for which there is no forgiveness" (Sandren, 1973: 4). Because of this melancholy and painful secret conceived inside, Childe Harold seeks solitude, "With pleasure drugged he almost long'd for woe, /And e'en for change of scene seek the shades below" (I.VI. 52-53). However, Lord Byron has left several traces concerning self-pity in the poem, having permitted the narrator to express sympathy for the unhappy pilgrim. Harold admits his desperate condition when he sighs "And now I'm in the world alone, /Upon the wide, wide sea…" (L.13. 182-183). When the ship arrives in

Lisbon, Childe Harold feels brief delight due to the beauty of the land which he can observe from a distance:

> What beauties doth Lisboa first unfold!
> Her image floating on the noble tide,
> Which poets vainly pave with sands of gold,
> But now whereon a thousand keels did ride
> Of mighty strength, since Albion was allied,
> And to the Lusians did her aid afford:
> A nation swoln with ignorance and pride,
> Who lick yet loathe the hand that waves the sword
> To save them from the wrath of Gaul's unsparing lord. (I.16. 216-224)

This experience can be compared to the young Lord Byron's brief love adventures which made him happy, but only for a short time. Disappointed by the imperfections of humanity and the world in which he lived, Lord Byron, like many Romantic poets before and after him, faced reality. Having faced a crucial moment in his personal and professional life, the young poet underwent personal growth and obtained new experience and wisdom, which point him to new ways of developing his adventure. Byron suffered moments of crisis, rejection and humiliation in both fields which pushed him to move forward, grow stronger and more thick-skinned and thus — transform himself. His Byronic Hero attempted to escape to a better place but soon discovered that there is no place perfect enough to be completely satisfied with it. Ernest H. Coleridge (1904) draws a parallel between the downfall of society with Childe Harold's fall from grace which we see, again, as an echo of the young Lord Byron's life experiences and his disillusionment with the harsh realities. Childe Harold knew only one solution for his troubled soul — to continue his pilgrimage to calm down his inner demons. The protagonist's struggle to reconcile reason and emotions, as well as the conflicting stages of adolescence and adulthood, was not always a straightforward feat,

> Though here while he learned to moralize,

For Meditation fix'd at times on him;
And conscious Reason whisper'd to despise
His early youth, misspent in maddest whim;
But as he gaz'd on truth his aching eyes grew dim. (1.27. 319-323)

Mazeppa is another character who is regarded as a quintessential representation of the Byronic Hero archetype. In this dissertation, we look at both Childe Harold and Mazeppa through the ageing studies prism, and we believe that these characters are the ones that undergo a radical ageing transformation due to a very painful yet pivoting experience described in both poems. Unlike Childe Harold, Mazeppa set off on his journey against his own will, and soon discovered the pain and beauty of the path of escapism which fell onto his destiny; thus, Childe Harold underwent a self-imposed exile whilst Mazeppa became a victim of forced expulsion. Rolf P. Lessenich has noticed various sides of the poem that help the readers reveal the true persona of the Byronic Hero: "Mazeppa's long tale of his experience of injustice and contingency bears the mark of distanced self-irony, which explains the poem's mixture of styles, the exterior narrator's romantic mood, and the interior narrator's colloquial mood" (2017: 280). Lord Byron describes in detail Mazeppa's punishment for his falling in love with Polish Palantine's wife Teresa:

I could neither sigh nor pray,
And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
Upon the courser's bristling mane;
But, snorting still with rage and fear,
He flew upon his far career.
At times I almost thought, indeed,
He must have slackened in his speed –
But no – my bound and slender frame
Was nothing to his angry Might,
And merely like a spur became.
Each motion which I made to free
My swoln limbs from their agony… . (11. 443-454)

The nakedness of Mazeppa represents his wilderness of the spirit, his rather animal and even instinctive nature at times. The figure of the horse intensifies the metaphor intended by Byron: “Blame it or praise it, there is no denying the wild horse in us. To gallop intemperately; fall on the sand tired out; to feel the earth spin…there is no getting over the fact that this desire seizes up pretty often” (Woolf, 1922: 100). This Byronic Hero’s mind helplessly succumbed under the pressure of passion. The exile imposed on Mazeppa partially reminds them of Lord Byron’s exile after the notorious affair with his half-sister. His character’s nakedness also represents a firm denial to pretend or wear any sort of a mask to fit into society’s norms which later made it impossible for them (Byron vs Society) to co-exist. Lessenich (2017) brings to the public attention the fact that Mazeppa is full of vain hope for another rise for glory and success (281). This finds an echo in Lord Byron’s wishful thinking in exile; being still not mature enough, he failed to realise that the scandals that had occurred to his name in England would make it tremendously difficult for him to return there with a clean and glorious name. Meanwhile, the Byronic Hero’s adamant refusal to succumb to mortality exemplifies the depth of his intrinsic fortitude to persevere and his fervent attitude towards relinquishing defeat:

> The strong Oak, and the hardy Pine –
> But far apart – and well it were,
> Or else a different lot were mine;
> The boughs gave way, and did not tear
> My limbs; and I found strength to bear
> My wounds, already seared with cold;
> My bonds forbade to loose my hold… . (12. 484-490)

The moment of uselessness and inability to alter his destiny, in the end, serves as a strong motivation for the Byronic Hero to maintain the opposing nature of his spirit.

One may also trace the transformation of the character's attitude and the growing desire for revenge that appears as the character (along with Lord Byron himself) matures:

> That one day I should come again,
> With twice five thousand horse, to thank
> The Count for his uncourteous ride.
> They played me there a bitter prank
> When, with the wild horse for my guide,
> They bound me to his foaming flank;
> At length I played them one as frank –
> For Time at last sets all things even,
> And if we do but watch the hour,
> There never yet was human power
> Which could evade, if unforgiven,
> The patient search – and vigil long –
> Of him who treasures up a wrong… (10. 410-422)

As far as we are concerned, this part of the poem provides more insight into the portrayal of the authentic Byronic spirit portrayal — "unbent, unbowed, unbroken"[16]. It may age, get wounded and fall numerous times, but the fight continues against all odds.

While portraying Mazeppa's endurance in exile, Byron sets up several interactive oppositions (Phillipson, 2003: 297) (e.g. man and horse, home and wilderness, *life and death*), to highlight his character's opposing nature mentioned above. *Mazeppa* is considered by many to be a semi-autobiographical literary work where Byron slyly camouflaged his deeds and ventures, thus his character may be considered the reflection of the author himself. During his travels to Italy, it is documented that Lord Byron engaged in a romantic liaison with a married woman. Meanwhile, his literary protagonist Mazeppa similarly experienced an amorous affection for Theresa, who was described as possessing "the Asiatic eye". In 1819, in Venice, Byron began an affair with Teresa Guiccioli, the wife of an Italian nobleman. Mazeppa, the historic figure, was a famous Cossack leader protecting the interests of his Motherland Ukraine in

[16] The House Martell motto from George Martin's fantasy saga *Game of Thrones*.

battles against Russia. In the West, Mazeppa is admired and seen as a true hero, however, in the East, he is treated rather differently. This fact draws a parallel between Mazeppa and Byron who also is someone who cannot be described as a pure saint or helpless sinner and has a big number of those who adore him and the same number of people who detest him. As Romanyshyn N.I. (2010) concluded:

> The image of Mazeppa fits with the nature of a "Byronic hero", which pervades much of his work, and Byron himself is considered to epitomize many of the characteristics of this literary figure. The Byronic hero presents an idealised, but flawed character whose attributes include: great talent; great passion; a distaste for society and social institutions; a lack of respect for rank and privilege; being thwarted in love by social constraint or death; rebellion; exile; an unsavoury secret past; arrogance; overconfidence or lack of foresight; and, ultimately, a self-destructive manner. (147)

The analysis of this poem within the context of the thesis supports the idea that his flaws not only made him stronger, but immensely wiser; just like Lord Byron, Mazeppa grew more experienced and aged not just due to the course of chronological time, but also because of the pivoting life experiences that occurred to him. Mazeppa's imperfections made him look real to the wide readership circles and that's how he along with his creator gained popularity.

It is claimed that Lord Byron relied on "flesh and blood" characters who could resemble real people, far from any ideals. One detail, though, was essential to the writer — a Byronic Hero had to be handsome and adventurous. This combination made the character irresistible to both men and women and shaped a figure that remains an iconic example of a typical Byronic character up until nowadays — Don Juan. *Don Juan* is considered to be a poem of retrospect, written by an exceptional yet forlorn genius, who looks back upon an entire era (Barton, 1998: 195). Don Juan is a character who

encapsulates the eternal youth and Byron's longing for physical perfection which was not to come true. This hero's physical attractiveness is revealed in Canto I:

> Young Juan now was sixteen years of age,
> Tall, handsome, slender, but well knit; he seems deemed
> Active, though not so sprightly, as a page… (I.54. 425-427)

In the first Canto, Byron writes, "I want a hero: an uncommon want, /When every month and year sends forth a new one…" (I.1. 747). His [Don Juan's] good looks, however, do not fool everybody. Colton points out that, "The beauties of Don Juan do not atone for his evil character. Don Juan is a bold experiment, made by a daring and determined hand, on the moral patience of the public" (Colton, 1819: 120). This beauty altogether mixed with the scandalous and rather immoral behaviour inspired critics to consider Don Juan's figure as dangerous and truly demonic(Strand, 2004). It is believed that there exists a certain degree of veracity in Don Juan's diabolical disposition, and the character possesses an acute understanding of the peril that accompanies his alluring countenance. The first reference to Don Juan as a demonic figure was traced in Tirso de Molina's *El Burlador de Sevilla y Convivado de Piedra* (1616) where the author draws the character as a helpless womanizer. Ernest H. Coleridge (1905) in his *Introduction to Don Juan* claimed that Byron had seen *El Burlador de Sevilla* on stage which served as an inspiration to write his version of *Don Juan*. R. A. Sandgren argues that Byron improved and enhanced the figure of his hero rather than spoiled him, "By a process of selection of more human characteristics, he rejects the evil nature of the real Don Juan and creates, instead, a hero, played upon by fate" (1973: 56-57). Don Juan embodies the archetype of the Byronic Hero, characteristically characterised by his moral transgressions and earthy disposition, yet nonetheless esteemed as a paragon of unwavering resilience, perseverance, and self-assurance,

Brave men were living before Agamemnon
And since, exceeding valorous and sage,
A good deal like him too, though quite the same none;
But then they shone not on the poet's page,
And so have been forgotten: – I condemn none,
But can't find any in the present age
Fit for my poem (that is, for my new one);
So, as I said, I'll take my friend Don Juan (1.5. 32-40)

This opinion is also supported by Guy Steffan who says the following about this Byronic Hero:

> …a natural man, whose illusions and impulses are sound and normal, or because he is an ideal. The mean and sordid things which happen to him are real and in an ordinary physical sense, but they cannot corrupt or destroy his spirit. He participates in many of the vices and abuses of society, and although he is not often an unwilling sinner, he is never a self-tormented one, never defiled or contaminated, and never really guilty… (1957: 280)

Sandgren and Steffan (1973, 1957) intend to justify Don Juan's bad deeds using instincts. They are concerned that Don Juan is ruled by human passion due to Byron's use of physical experiences of love which sometimes idealise the character and sometimes make him look corrupt. Sandgren also adds that "although he [Don Juan] is a wanderer and an exile like Childe Harold and the outlaw heroes, he travels for experience rather than for an opportunity to escape from society" (1973: 57). We can trace how these two Byronic Heroes part in the poems. In Lord Byron's poem, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, the act of saying farewell was imbued with both an acute sense of sorrow as well as a fervent longing for departure,

Childe Harold had a mother—not forgot,
Though parting from that mother he did shun;
A sister whom he loved, but saw her not
Before his weary pilgrimage begun:
If friends he had, he bade adieu to none.
Yet deem not thence his breast a breast of steel;
Ye, who have known what 'tis to dote upon
A few dear objects, will in sadness feel
Such partings break the heart they fondly hope to heal. (I.10. 81-90)

Lord Byron highlights the age of his characters making certain generalisations such as mentioning the members of his heroes' families, leading the readers to think that one needs to reach a certain maturity to have a wife or a group of good friends. The aforementioned broad statements can also be observed in a section from *Don Juan*. However, the nature of the connection between a Byronic protagonist and their acquaintances and kin is distinct, as it aligns with the concept discussed by Sandgren earlier,

> But Juan had got many things to leave,
> His mother, and a mistress, and no wife,
> So that he had much better cause to grieve
> Than many persons more advanced in life;
> And if we now and then a sigh must heave
> At quitting even those we quit in strife,
> No doubt we weep for those the heart endears —
> That is, till deeper griefs congeal our tears.
>
> So Juan wept, as wept the captive Jews
> By Babel's waters, still remembering Sion:
> I'd weep — but mine is not a weeping Muse,
> And such light griefs are not a thing to die on;
> Young men should travel, if but to amuse
> Themselves; and the next time their servants tie on
> Behind their carriages their new portmanteau,
> Perhaps it may be lined with this my canto (II.15-16)

Don Juan's acceptance of his destiny and his sense of humour let him endure or laugh at his exigencies, even when his dreams are overshadowed by reality. Although he

manages to escape the melancholic aspects of the romantic heroes[17], he is "Byronized" by the autobiographical events from Byron's life and experiences in English society, in his love affairs, and his many travels to Spain, Greece, and other countries. In many ways, Don Juan is the reflection of Lord Byron's unsuccessful attempts at commitment with a woman, since his character is a victim of two failed marriages. In some parts of the poem, a resemblance can be found between two Byronic Heroes: Mazeppa and Don Juan. When discovered by a jealous husband in the bed of his lover Julia, Don Juan runs naked through the night:

> 'T was midnight — Donna Julia was in bed,
> Sleeping, most probably — when at her door
> Arose a clatter might awake the dead,
> If they had never been awaking before,
> And that they have been so we all have read,
> And are to be so, at the least, once more; —
> The door was fasten'd, but with voice and fist
> First knocks were heard, then 'Madam — Madam — hist!
>
> 'For God's sake, Madam — Madam — here 's my master,
> With more than half the city at his back —
> Was ever heard of such a curst disaster!
> 'T is not my fault — I kept good watch — Alack!
> Do pray undo the bolt a little faster —
> They 're on the stair just now, and in a crack
> Will all be here; perhaps he yet may fly —
> Surely the window 's not so very high!'
>
> By this time Don Alfonso was arrived,
> With torches, friends, and servants in great number… (I.136-138. 1081-1098)

[17] A line of differentiation should be drawn separating the Byronic Hero from the Romantic Hero. The Byronic Hero is a literary figure who shares many features of character with Lord Byron himself. A Byronic Hero is a gloomy individual who clashes with the rest of the world. He is often dangerously handsome and has a painful and shameful past that has resulted in his decision to distance himself from the society in present. He travels the world and matures as a man, finding little satisfaction in life. Women find this type of figure incredibly seductive. Byronic heroes are hence characters capable of both good and evil, and are overcast in mystery. The Romantic hero shares many aspects of a Byronic Hero. Byron was a poet in the Romantic literary movement, and a Romantic Hero in a certain sense developed in part due to his writing. The one difference might be the element of danger that is present in a Byronic Hero. Romantic hero is less dark and more of a hopeful figure, being seen as the triumph of the individual over common restraints.

Don Juan's nakedness and the discovery of the adultery resemble, in many ways, Mazeppa's ride on a horse, the punishment mentioned in the previous analysis of this Byronic Hero. The naked escape is also a metaphor — an intent to start the life yet again; an experience underwent by Lord Byron himself after his scandalous relationship with his half-sister.

In another passage of the poem, a tribute is paid to Napoleon by saying, "But Juan was my Moscow" (XI.56.441); having said so, Byron underlined how desirable and simultaneously dangerous his character, and that anybody who would try to conquer him was doomed to fail. Luis Fernando Moreno Claros (2009) from *El Pais* tries to convince his readers that the figures of Byron and Don Juan do not represent the same personality. Don Juan, in his opinion, is someone Byron would like to become, but never could; he also states the clear difference between them[18]. Peter Cochran (2012) dwells on the idea that Don Juan represents a Byronic Figure that is in all senses anti-idealistic, anti-spiritual, and anti-romantic. The scandal which could not be pursued by Byron in real life was compensated on the pages of *Don Juan*. Additionally, by making his character irresistibly handsome, he intended to make up for his imperfections: "Byron's problems with his own body — part beautiful, part deformed — functioning very well in matters of sport and sex, a lot less well in matters of stress-management, nail-biting, digestion and obesity — are doubtless" (Cochran, 2012: 8). The elucidation of this matter is provided at the commencement of the second Canto of *Don Juan*:

> When I am gay, I'm all agog for Spirit;
> When I am sober, then comes heavy Matter;
> My very thought so clogged that I can't bear it –

[18] "Byron es un "gentil mozalbete" español, valiente y de sangre fogosa, enamoradizo y seducible más que seductor, capaz de ternura y embeleso" (L.F. Moreno Claros, 2009).

My nerves so lumpish – thoughts are torn to a tatter –
Their every shred's a Mountain, but I wear it,
And them, as well's I can; and as the
Water Sustains all ships, I bear the usual bore
Till I can drown, or dash it on the shore.

Forever and anon comes Indigestion
(Not the most "dainty Ariel") and perplexes
Our soarings with another sort of question –
And that which after all my Spirit vexes
Is, that I find no spot where Man can rest eye on,
Without the confusion of the sorts and sexes –
Of Being – Stars – and this unriddled Wonder
The World – which at the worst's a Glorious blunder,

If it is Chance; or if it be according
To the Old Text, still better; lest it should
Turn out so, we'll say nothing 'gainst the wording,
As several people think such hazards rude;
They're right – our days are too brief for affording
Space to dispute what no one ever could
Decide, and everybody one day will
Know very clearly, or, at least, lie still. –

And therefore will I leave off
Metaphysical Discussion, which is neither here nor there –
If I agree that what is, is, then this I call
Being quite perspicuous and extremely fair;
The truth is, I've grown lately rather Phthisical –
I don't know what the reason is – the air,
Perhaps – but as I suffer from the shocks
Of Illness, I grow much more orthodox:

The first attack at once proved the Divinity
(But that I never doubted – nor the devil);
The next, the Virgin's mystical Virginity;
The third, the usual Origin of Evil;
The fourth at once established the whole
Trinity On so uncontrovertible a level,
That I devoutly wished the three were four,
On purpose to believe so much the more (XI, deleted stanza and sts.3-6)

A character blessed with divine beauty and exclusive talents puts to doubt the existence of the divine itself, thus once more demonstrating his rebellious nature. In his poetic work, Byron presents a vivid depiction of a character embodying the archetypal

traits of a Byronic Hero. This individual is characterised by his striking physical appearance, although concurrently bearing an aspect of volatility and sinfulness, thus exhibiting a curious likeness to the author himself. Dreams and reality bring completely different experiences to the main character; nonetheless, he does not evince a readiness to acknowledge the objective truth and instead seems to demonstrate a greater affinity for idealised fantasies. This is a trait of an escapist Byronic Hero, who denies the real world, detesting and judging its flaws; not willing to abide by its laws and age by its rules. The poet highlights his confusion and a sensation of being lost, "neither here nor there…", and he is accusing the society in which he lives, "I don't know what the reason is — the air,/Perhaps — but as I suffer from the shocks / Of Illness, I grow much more orthodox".

The examination of the character of the Byronic hero assumes particular significance when scrutinising the life of Lord Byron himself. From a literary perspective, an exploration of Lord Byron's principal characters, namely Childe Harold, Don Juan, and Mazeppa, as depicted in selected literary works, can unveil the fundamental traits and ethos of the Byronic Hero archetype. Additionally, through an analysis of the characters' perspectives on ageing, it is possible to discern the nuances in Lord Byron's persona, which he subtly wove into his literary portrayals. In this section of the dissertation, prominent Byronic figures are presented to the readers, with a focus on their defining attributes aimed at fostering a connection between the poet and his literary works. This engenders an enhanced understanding of Byron's perspective on the world, as well as his fundamental ideals and convictions. Namely, through Childe Harold, Byron dwells on the idea of national and individual liberty. With the help of Don Juan, Byron destroys society's mask for hypocrisy, proving that his not-so-flawless character deserves love

and respect because he is just as much of a sinner as the rest of the people around him. And, finally, by bringing the character of Mazeppa onto the pages of his books, Byron victimises the character, revealing the painful walk of atonement which he survived. In the subsequent section of this thesis, we will undertake a detailed examination of the nonconformist disposition inherent in Byronic Heroes, as well as their encounters with societal norms and conventions, to elucidate a fresh and unconventional concept of the Byronic Hero.

3.4 Byronic Characters: Rebellious and Free

Modest I am- yet with some slight assurance;…
Patient-but not enamoured of endurance;…
Mild-but at times a sort of 'Hercules Furens':
So that I almost think that the same skin
For one without-has two or three within
Don Juan (17.2)

As a member of the Second Generation of poets within the Romantic movement, Lord Byron assumed a prominent role in the propagation of rebellion, thus paving the pathway for his contemporaries and successors. The pioneer in the field, his innovational views were met with scandal and criticism. Many expressed doubt about the writer's sanity. Even in the modern days, some suggest this idea. Robert Matthews, the science correspondent of *The Telegraph* wrote an article where he dwelled on the fact that "Lord Byron, the poet who scandalised England with his hellraising exploits, was a psychopath, according to new research by a leading psychiatrist" (2001: 3). However, the so-called "insanity" finds its explanation when analysed within Byron's time frame.

Lord Byron protected the ideas of both personal and national liberty. Noorbakhsh Hooti (2011) argues that his [Byron's] views were determined by a powerful and positive belief in the work of individual man; because of this, the Byronic hero is often shown as the symbol of rebellion against the tyrannical government and its institutions. Byron traditionally draws a picture of a battle: a solitary man against the whole world which he claimed to be an empty place with nothing but loneliness to offer. This notion is articulated with clarity and depth in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*:

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean;
This is not solitude, 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unrolled.

But midst of the crowd, the hurry, the shock of men,
To hear, to see, to feel and to possess,
And roam alone, the world's tired denizen,
With none who bless us, none whom we can bless;
Minions of splendour shrinking from distress!
None that, with kindred consciousness endued,
If we were not, would seem to smile the less
Of all the flattered, followed, sought and sued;
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude! (II.25-26)

The poet's solitude was partially caused by his strong disagreement with society's "values" and principles, but it also was self-imposed to a certain extent. In this passage, Byron introduces a figurative meaning of solitude: being alone with nature does not seem to discourage his spirit, but brings the poet closer to immortal notions, permitting him to "converse" with mother nature and discover his true self. He seems to be better understood and accepted for being who he truly is. Finding himself surrounded by people, however, diminishes Byron's liberty, since strong disagreements with the imposed norms leave the poet alone on a battlefield, hence totally unsupported and forsaken. Byron expressed revolutionary outlooks on the topics of aristocracy, monarchy, hypocrisy, cruelty, snobbery, and fraud, which compelled him to confront the norms and values upheld by the society in which he existed. This ideological stance can be likened to that of a battlefield, where Byron was at the forefront of a crusade for reform. This solitude is projected on Childe Harold as well; this desire for solitude can be treated as his way to protest and exhibit his disagreement with society.

When one argues about *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, it is also necessary to admit that Childe Harold himself, without having done anything, represents Lord Byron's manifest of rebellion. Audrey Rose (2019) is concerned that "Lord Byron uses a character of favourable class to embody rebellious and inimical traits that were originally unprecedented for a prospective knight, the Childe Harold" (168). By doing so, Byron challenges society and makes a statement of his freedom in writing. Having offered an alternative opinion, his controversial character in a rebellion to tradition, Byron makes a bold attempt to eliminate the social class injustices. Cristina M. Caminita (2002) supports Rose's argument by stating that "the former social order could not be relied upon to serve and protect the upper classes when the lower classes had assumed power through the logic of reason, a campaign for the improvement of rank and class had begun as many assumed their own rights and class outside of authority" (13). Byron's conceptualisation, especially in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, exhibited the progression of his revolutionary political and social beliefs. According to Rose (1965), travel and the new landscape introduced in the poem represent change both in social politics and ideology. These ideas underwent powerful promotion in both literary works and Lord Byron's own life.

Being in strong opposition to social conventions and institutions, Byron himself did all within his power to support the ideas of liberty, spending his final years in Greece, fighting for its Independence. The aforementioned notion is exemplified within the ninth Canto of *Don Juan*,

> It is not that I adulate the people:
> Without me, there are Demagogues enough,
> And Infidels, to pull down every steeple
> And set up in their stead some proper stuff.
>
> Whether they may sow Scepticism to reap Hell,

As is the Christian dogma rather rough,
I do not know; — I wish men to be free
As much from mobs as kings — from you as me.

The consequence is, being of no party,
I shall offend all parties: — never mind!
My words, at least, are more sincere and hearty
Than if I sought to sail before the wind.
He who has nought to gain can have small art: he
Whom neither wishes to be bound nor bind,
May still expatiate freely, as will I,
Nor give my voice to Slavery's Jackal cry (IX.25-26)

In the eleventh Canto of *Don Juan*, Lord Byron mentions seven intense years of dramatical political changes which happened to the monarchy and aristocracy, diminishing their influence and power:

Talk not of seventy years as age; in seven
I have seen more changes, down from monarchs to
The humblest individual under heaven,
Than might suffice a moderate century through. (XI.82. 1-4)

The events alluded to by Byron signify the culmination of the 18th century and the emergence of a subsequent era that embraced greater progressivity. N. Hooti (2011) argues that "although Byron himself was an aristocrat, he was affected by the new ideas preached against his class" (1024). J. Michael Robertson (1977) stares at Hooti's position on the topic claiming that Byron's attitude toward the English aristocracy is a challenging one. In the fourteenth canto of *Don Juan*, Lord Byron contemplates the gradual decline of aristocracy with a sense of nostalgia, while simultaneously critiquing its monotonous and predictable lifestyle:

Sometimes, indeed, like soldiers off parade
They break their ranks and gladly leave the drill,
But then the roll call draws them back afraid,
And they must be or seem what they were: still
Doubtless it is a brilliant masquerade:

But when of the first sight you have had your fill,

It palls-at least it did so upon me,
This paradise of Pleasure and Ennui.

When we have made our love, and gamed our gaming,
Dressed, voted, shone, and maybe, something more-
With dandies dined-heard senators declaiming-
Seen beauties brought to market by the score,
Sad rakes to sadder husbands chastely taming-
There's little left but to be bored or bore… (XIV.17-18)

Byron saw how estranged aristocracy felt from traditions and duties, being on the verge of leaving all the masks behind; as he writes in *Don Juan*, "They break their ranks and gladly leave the drill…but they did not appear to be courageous enough. But then the roll-call draws them back afraid, /And they must be or seem what they were: still / Doubtless it is a brilliant masquerade" (XIV.17. 130-133). The tone of the poem strengthens into the next stanza, where Byron prints it quite clear that all entertainments of the world no longer amuse the high-rolling audience, "When we have made our love, and gamed our gaming….[…]… There's little left but to be bored or bore…". Robertson, though, based on Byron's writings, accuses the poet of inconsistency. He claims that "His denunciation of aristocratic conformity is absolute; his separation from aristocratic stultification is only partial" (1977: 640). However, this statement can be overemphasised, taking into consideration the proper inconsistency and the complex nature of aristocratic society. Additionally, Robertson, also justifies Byron in his article, stating that Byron can appear both an individualist and an aristocrat without betraying his essential individualism because the typical English aristocrat was an individualist as well, but with a remark that the typical aristocrat's individualism was only superficial, to conceal his true self in the eyes of the society.

With the help of his character, Don Juan, Byron stands in an open rebellion against society and its principles, refusing to "play by the rules". Don Juan refuses to perform

certain aristocratic duties, expected from him, such as marrying and fathering his heirs. Many critics consider *Don Juan* as a manifest with which Lord Byron firmly distances himself from the limits imposed on the poets by society. Furthermore, through his literary characters, and Don Juan in particular, he highlights his uniqueness within aristocratic society. In his poem, Byron promotes principles of freedom, rather than a meticulously choreographed and artificially utopian scenario:

> And never straining hard to versify,
>
> I rattle on exactly as I'd talk
> With anybody in a ride or walk.
>
> I don't know that there may be much ability
> Shown in this sort of desultory rhyme;
> But there's a conversational facility,
> Which may round off an hour upon a time.
> Of this I'm sure at least, there's no servility
> In mine irregularity of chime,
> Which rings what's uppermost of new or hoary,
> Just as I feel the improvisatore. (XV.19-20)

Apart from this, Byron sometimes presents his character as a master of improvisation in the sphere of conversation. Some examples are: "I have forgotten what I meant to say" (IX.36). "'I never know the word that will come next" (IX.41. 327-8). "I cannot stop the words once written" (IX.77.612). Byron is the master of words, but at times they have a power that stands above him and is difficult to control. "I'm at my old lunes — digression and forget/ The Lady Adeline Amundeville" (XIII.12). Bostetter (1951) suggests that Byron is using his:

> …license to develop the device of incongruity, the lightning shift of one state of mind to its opposite, usually from the sublime to the ridiculous. In its simplest form, the device takes on something of the characteristics of the practical joke. Byron leads us to make all the proper psychological responses to a stock situation; then by a phrase or rime — his favorite weapon is the end couplet of the stanza —he whips the situation, like a chair, out from under us. (400)

Such an innovative and astonishing manner of writing secured Byron's rebellious reputation simultaneously making him a pioneer of the Second Generation of the Romantic Movement in England.

Being a rebel by spirit, Byron understood that impunity was not something for him to expect and that society's punishment was unavoidable. He projected this belief onto his characters who were subjected to a lot of suffering for their courage of self-expression and progressiveness. Mazeppa's body tied to a wild horse, for instance, is compared to the crucified Jesus Christ or as Tony Voss (2012) claims "this [Mazeppa's] body stretched on the ground in a tortuous pose forced on him by his four days' ride recalls Prometheus bound to his rock as much as it recalls Mazeppa" (112). Romanyshyn (2010) additionally addresses the subject of suffering in her scholarly article, stating that:

> The unrestrained flight of a steed causes the endless, unendurable physical and spiritual sufferings of the young man, tied to his spine. A powerless rider is doomed to death. Byron skillfully depicts as the hero losing forces, weakens, and finally nearly dying. The poet tries to reproduce the mood rather than the subject. But he also succeeded to create the central image, twofold, for in fact Mazepa is represented both in his youth and in the afternoon of his life. (142)

Indeed, in this poem, the subject of pangs and suffering is exhibited in a very gracious, almost "Rennaissance"-like manner. H. Babinski suggests that Mazeppa is "one of Byron's most realistic creations, heroic within the bounds of human potential" and that he is a "fine specimen of a man" (1974: 104). The figure of Mazeppa is also sometimes looked at through the prism of fatalism. Romanyshyn, for example, argues about the presence of Fate in the character of Mazeppa (2010: 142). In the closing

verses of the poem, Lord Byron presents his concluding remarks through the voice of Mazeppa:

> Thus the vain fool who strove to glut
> His rage, refining on my pain,
> Sent me forth to the wilderness,
> Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,
> To pass the desert to a throne, -
> What mortal his own doom may guess?
> Let none despond, let none despair!
> Tomorrow the Borysthenes
> May see our coursers graze at ease
> Upon his Turkish bank, – and never
> Had I such welcome for a river
> As I shall yield when safely there. (XX.848-859)

Mazeppa's sin and rebellious nature were forgiven due to the "ride of atonement" which brought onto Mazeppa the unthinkable pain and thoughts of death, with which he almost agreed, yet keeping a sparkle of hope kindled deep within. In the end, his life was given a chance for a new beginning, in a place free of judgement. *Mazeppa*, in many ways, represents wisdom gained by Lord Byron in his rebellious ventures: pain and suffering appeared to be integral elements of any rebellion as a result of a brutal confrontation between a solitary man and society.

All in all, Byron and his heroes' ventures reveal the ongoing confrontation that exists between them and society. The Byronic Hero embodies rebellion and the perpetual pursuit of authentic self, thereby rendering him a force of considerable significance and indelible memorability, while also endowing his character with a compelling magnetism. No matter how the poem along with the Byronic Hero was accepted, Lord Byron never succumbed to the public pressure and continued his way of writing and creating. Nevertheless, as seen in the first chapter, the author has been harshly criticised because of the explicit images of his characters, many of whom possess a wild spirit and have tried numerous scandalous things. Byron was misinterpreted in his intention to

demonstrate a necessity to change society's views and way of life through his characters; his bold manifestos were rather treated as boyish games and search for fame through obscenity and scandal. A closer analysis of his works articulates a coherent discourse about a human desire to change, a process of maturation and a search for a better life even at the cost of his reputation in the eyes of society. Byron reveals his own true revolutionary and rebellious self through the images of his characters, all of whom possess unrestrained passions, courage and curiosity to explore the new. Byron's characters reflect the author's persona in his twenties and early- and mid-thirties. The poet voiced social and political issues in his writings and significantly, as it will be demonstrated in the next sections, the essence of his Byronic Heroes as well as his reflection on them, drawing on the revolutionary spirit and the desire to change or, if the change appeared to be impossible, escape.

3.5 Byronic Characters: Escapists Coming of Age

I made a footing in the wall, —
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child — no sire — no kin and I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barr's windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye
(Lord Byron, The Prisoner of Chillon, XII)

The English Romantic Movement was characterised by a prominent theme of escapism, highlighted throughout its literary works and artistic expressions pointing to the idea that "the world is too much with us, as evidenced by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats and Byron" (Jochem, 1941: 1). However, Jochem makes it quite clear in her article that the term "escape" can be characterised by various influences, philosophies, experiences, peculiar to each poet's life and personality.

Escapist motives are frequently traced in the literary works of Lord Byron alongside the rebellious ones. The older he got, the more tired he grew of his confrontations against society and its limits. In the light of the scandal referring to his half-sister,

Byron had no other choice but to escape himself and continue doing the same to his characters — sending them away. His disappointment with England and its oppressive regime can be traced to the number of letters the poet sent to his mother during his voyage to the Orient. Byron communicated with his mother on March 19, 1810, expressing his thoughts and sentiments through written correspondence, claiming that "I promise to turn into Mussulman rather than return to it [England]" (Dallas, 2011: 113). The older Byron grew, the more tired he got from the endless confrontation with English conservatism views. Their rebellious spirit of his could not be used in full vigour due to several social and political reasons. That pushed the author beyond the borders of his motherland; and so off went his characters — in search of freedom. "Byron had the desire to expose and explore the Orient whether through travels, translations about the East, and fabricating fantasies and leaving his imagination to sweep him away from reality" (Khrisat, 2018: 62).

The poems chosen for this dissertation reveal three distinctive characters: Childe Harold, Don Juan and Mazeppa. All three of them possessed a wild rebellious character and committed many sins which were later harshly criticised by society. At a certain point in each of the three poems, the characters grow older, both in direct and figurative meaning by gaining valuable life experience. Having undergone this pivoting, life-changing experience, they decide to search for freedom somewhere else. Escaping seems a rather easy step, yet it takes them a lot of courage to take it. Some do it voluntarily, others, like Mazeppa, have no choice but to succumb to life circumstances and pray for the best. In any case, through Byron's perspective, escapism is presented as a rather desperate cry for help, an impulsive intention to start life all over again, chased by a shadow of guilt, judgement and disappointment. We do not see it as a weakness but

as the only possible decision made at a mature age for the sake of one's salvation. The journey taken by both, Byron and his characters, is the moment of the spirit metamorphosis, when due to the pressure of reality and unwillingness to get accustomed to its limits, escape seems the only way to survive.

The comprehensive edition of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* was released in 1818, two years after the commencement of Lord Byron's period of exile. However, the poet started working on the poem in 1809, during his Grand Tour (1809-1811). In *Childe Harold*, Lord Byron exhibits his detachment from English society: "He felt the fulness of satiety: / Then loath'd he in his native land to dwell, / which seemed to him more lone than Eremite's sad cell" (I. 4:7-10), "And now Childe Harold was sore sick at heart, / and from his fellow bacchanals would flee" (I.6. 1-2). England becomes a metaphor representing everything he has grown tired of. Byron's comparison of England to a prison intensifies his strong disappointment and lack of freedom: "Apart he stalk'd in joyless reverie, / and from his native land resolv'd to go, / and visit his scorching climes beyond the sea" (I.6. 5-7). Nevertheless, Childe Harold's escapism is represented in the light of goodwill and decision made by the character himself, quite contrary to the author who was forced to leave England due to several scandals connected with his persona. Childe Harold's decision was inspired by alienation that tormented him: "I stood / among them, but not of them" (III.113). It was the year 1809 and Byron had already defined the figure that became iconic in the world literature — the Byronic Hero. Thus, having constructed his character — Childe Harold — Byron makes a bold attempt to ease his pain and suffering from the new life in exile through his adventures. This stage in Byron's life can be considered a stage of maturity; having changed lifestyle and having overcome the complications that had haunted him in

England, Byron grew wiser and stronger while developing a brand-new chapter for his grown self and Childe Harold. This, in a way, permitted the poet to reconsider his attachments to England and learn new ways to love it: "But my soul wanders; I demand it back" (IV.25). Indeed, Byron partially lost his identity in the new land — as a stranger who finds himself among other nationalities, he had to continue the struggle. According to Cristina M. Caminita (2002), Byron makes his protagonist an aimless wanderer who is unable to reach a specific goal because Byron will not allow him to choose one (54). Byron's hesitations and uncertainty are projected onto his character, thus "Harold himself is adrift in the world, doing his best job to avoid making the absolute choice between his inherited aristocratic duties and a life spent perpetually unattached to any system of ideas" (Caminita, 2002: 55-56). However, this time, thanks to his changed and mature spirit, instead of a rebellion, Lord Byron began to explore inner peace and balance, in such a way trying to find, or rather to rediscover himself again, this time as a grown man who knows life and has learnt how to coexist within its stormy nature. The wilderness described by Byron in *Childe Harold* serves as a mirror of the protagonist's tormented soul:

> Awaking with a start,
> The waters heave around me; and on high
> The winds lift their voices: I depart,
> Whither I know not, but the hour's gone by,
> When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.
>
> Once more upon the waters! Yet once more!
> And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
> That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar!
> Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead!
>
> Though the strain'd mast should quiver as a reed,
> And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,
> Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
> Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam, to sail
> Where'er the surge may sweep, or tempest's breath prevail (...) (III. 5-18)

In *The Romantic Ideology*, Jerome McGann posits that an examination of any poem from the Romantic era, and particularly those of Byron, necessitates the engagement of the critic with the historical context surrounding its creation and culmination. In addition, the author's inner mental and emotional state, as well as their level of maturity at the time of creation, holds great significance in the shaping of the characters depicted in the work at a particular juncture in history. Byron's literary work *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* represents the poet's endeavour to locate his identity and sense of belonging in the world. As such, the protagonist of the narrative functions as a mirror of the author's journey during that particular period of his life. Travelling with no particular aim, but for one reason — fleeing from home to find another one; this dramatical change certainly made Byron's (and Childe Harold's) inner self grow much older, bringing for both the author and the character the necessary wisdom after undergoing numerous challenges and suffering.

Another narrative of escape, *Mazeppa*, is considered by many the author's confession. In his twenties, Byron explored his passionate and rebellious sides, having committed many scandalous actions. Mazeppa, his fictional character, is the author's reflection intensified by an image of a wild horse, sending a message that this character was impossible to tame:

> "Bring forth the horse!"
> The horse was brought;
> In truth, he was a noble Steed,
> A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,
> Who looked as though the Speed of thought
> Were in his limbs – but he was wild,
> Wild as the wild-deer, and untaught,
> With spur and bridle undefiled. (IX.358-364)

By identifying the horse's origins, Byron hints that the horse is going to take him back home. His own experience, however, tells a story that is quite opposite to the one in *Mazeppa;* that is because Byron was forced to leave his motherland; however, the circumstances exhibit the uncanny similarity of the scandalous situation involved in both fictional and real cases. As Tony Voss observes, the "ride is charged with symbolic power" (Voss, 2012: 111). Mazeppa, like Géricault's chasseur, in Kenneth Clark's words, "does not so much dominate and control his horse as unite himself with its elemental energy; he is immersed in it and part of it," and, as Clark states, "Through this union he becomes heroic" (Clark, 1974: 132). This union of the physical and the psychological within a character was celebrated by Byron in *Mazeppa* through pain:

> Onward we went, but slack and slow;
> His savage force at length o'erspent,
> The drooping courser faint and low
> All feebly foaming went –
> A sickly infant had had power
> To guide him forward in that hour –
> But useless all to me,
> His new born tameness nought availed –
> My limbs were bound — my force had failed… (XVI.625-633)

Byron, through the character of Mazeppa, embraces his fate. By giving visibility to the importance of finding peace with your inner self at a mature age, Byron shows the complexities of ageing and the transformations of his characters along with his one. Having reached his thirties, Byron was not concerned any longer about rebellions in England but was seeking freedom elsewhere. By sending his character away, Byron questions the idea of "home", suggesting that this can be any place in the world where one's soul is free from judgement and genuinely happy.

As a horse, with Mazeppa tied to him, gallops through steppes and forests, one may observe a rather painful and surely strong connection with nature: still, wise and

everlasting. Byron, in his mature age, finds his path of wisdom, right into the arms of perfect beauty of the world. This comes with a price: just like the author himself, Mazeppa suffers and lives through his pain, letting it possess his body, he almost gives in to it, but yet keeps his tiny grain of hope kindled. Lord Byron projects his hopes of a brand-new life onto his character. Mazeppa, the sinner, takes the "ride of atonement". Through suffering, he gets the necessary wisdom, growing older and more mature from the inside while remaining in a young man's body. The experience of an outcast makes the hero more aware of the difficulties one has to go through when maturing as a personality and opposing society's pressure.

In his most famous and controversial work, *Don Juan*, Byron does not abandon the theme of ageing. He even partially projected his ageing self onto the character of Don Juan. Goode explored this topic through Byron's letters to his publisher Murray, in one of which the poet wrote, "But I hate things all fiction, there should always be some foundation of fact for the airiest fabric — and the pure invention is but the talent of a liar" (Goode, 1964: 93). These lines confirm the author's desire to get his inspiration from real life. In *Don Juan*, Byron makes his character repeat the same mistake as in *Mazeppa*. At the age of 16, he engaged in a romantic involvement with a married individual, namely Donna Julia. His mother, Donna Inez, sends him away from his native Seville, and once again, like so many times before, he becomes an outcast. Perhaps, this is Byron's way to say that no matter what he does and how much older he grows, he cannot change and become someone else. He continues making the same mistakes over and over again, admitting this in his books and real life. Nevertheless, he still achieves some knowledge of himself along with some maturity and wisdom. Escapism was an intention to start a new chapter in his life, but in reality, it happened to

be less effective than expected. Don Juan is not the hero of Byron's poem: rather, the key character is the poem's narrator[19]. The voice of Lord Byron permeates throughout his entire body of work, rendering his authorial identity inextricably linked to the texts he produced. There exists an inexplicable likeness between a loquacious and sophisticated member of the aristocracy who espouses satirical perspectives and the renowned literary figure, Lord Byron. The disillusioned tone is evident in Byron's work is indicative of his profound sense of disappointment and frustration regarding the very matters that initially attracted him to leave England. *Don Juan* gave him scope to tackle a range of his concerns; criticise and ridicule society and attack literary, political and religious figures. The poem's narrator stresses his age. Nevertheless, throughout *Don Juan,* there is a deliberate representation of the narrator/poet as a hero. Byron plays with his readers by exploiting the identification of the poem with its creator. In Canto XI stanza 55 he writes:

> Even I – albeit I'm sure I did not know it,
> Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be king, —
> Was reckon'd, a considerable time,
> The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.

Don Juan seems to be Byron's attempt to identify himself and vocalise his character by giving him more realistic than fictional features. This task, however, resulted in many complications. Judy Faye Smith admits that the study of Lord Byron's personality and works have proven perplexing both to his contemporaries and contemporary scholars (1964: 4). Smith, however, is concerned that the poet's beliefs are revealed in *Don Juan*. Lord Byron was plagued by an uncompromising Idealism, and this served as a source of additional problems and sufferings during his life. Byron tended to

[19] See subsection 3.2.

philosophise, as he willingly admitted, “On all things, from a tyrant to a tree.” But it seemed to the poet that knowledge of the eternal questions was elusive:

> What are we? and whence came we? what shall be
> Our ultimate existence? what’s our present?
> Ire questions answerless, and yet incessant. (VI.63. 501-504)

Repeatedly, the poet pondered the question of the essence of being. The concrete was so elusive that Byron wondered whether doubt itself was doubting. There was only one certainty in life — man was doomed from birth to death. Except for this one fact, the poet felt that humanity could ascertain nothing. He admitted, “For me, I know nought; nothing I deny,/ Admit, reject, contemn…and what know you,/ Except perhaps that you were born to die?” (XIV.3) With such an attitude, fatalism towards the world was inevitable for Byron. But, as the poet admitted, as he grew older, he found himself growing more orthodox and metaphysical. He wrote in the letter to Thomas Moore: “I am no enemy to religion, but the contrary. As proof, I am educating my natural daughter a strict Catholic in a convent of Romagna; for I think people can never have enough of religion if they are to have any. I incline, myself, very much to Catholic doctrines…” (Barzun, 1822: 358). Within the text of *Don Juan*, there are hardly any allusions to Jesus Christ. The poet remarked that all great men had been misunderstood: “Was It, not so, great Locke? And thou, Diviner still,/ Whose lot it is by man to be mistaken,/ And thy pure creed made sanction of all ill?/ Bedeeming worlds to be by bigots shaken,/ How was thy toil rewarded?” (XV.18. 137-142). There is considerable evidence that he also believed in hell. According to Marchand’s account (1957), Lady Byron recounted an occurrence on the evening of their nuptials, wherein Byron abruptly arose from the bed in the middle of the night, informing her that he had experienced a vivid and distressing dream in which he was immersed in Hell and could feel the searing heat of

flames engulfing him. Don Juan seems to reflect Byron's concerns about life and death as if he sensed the approaching closeness of the latter. The ageing author's devotion to his ideas of freedom remained firm, yet he could not avoid thinking about the future and the things it held for him. When the poet contemplated death, it was inevitable that he should think of his moral condition. "The opinion of Byron's contemporaries was that he was a bad man and a good poet" (Battenhouse, 1958: 165). As seen in the following sections of the thesis, Byron was suffering an emotional inner battle. Although Byron warns about the dangers of viral love adventures and rebellious attitudes, his ageing heroes are not depicted as limited or sex-blinded men, but as experienced hopeful characters. Their escape is not a manifesto of surrender, but rather an opportunity to get new possibilities to experiment in search of freedom.

3.6 Crucial Stages of Lord Byron's *Mazeppa*: Rebellion and Escapism Resulting in Suffering

Sometimes it feels like I have done
everything that I can do
The pain in my life at times is so deep it
makes me feel like can't move
Why do my past actions sneak up me from
the past?
These are things that I know will never go
away and will always seem to last
I only wish I knew why my actions seem
like my life is full of vain
It is driving me insane (Frank Pulver)

Suffering as a tool used in Romantic literature reveals the most intimate side of poets, showing their true selves and adding grace and sophistication to the overall image. Lord Byron uses suffering extensively in his works which helps him to come to closer terms with his readers, for example in *Mazeppa* with the use of suffering as a literary means, Byron acknowledges his pains and sorrows which he had to undergo throughout his ageing transformation. As Carl Thompson claims, "In pre-Romantic voyage narratives the first person singular had to take a back seat to suffering that was not to be considered as a personal experience, rather as an affliction corporately endured and publicly enjoyed. This was what the reader was interested in" (2007: 8).

Byron was dwelling on his adventures intertwined with those of his Byronic Heroes. They were so meticulously merged in his poetry that the readers could not spot where the real experience ended and fiction began, "Lord Byron was known among the sailors as a Traveller and not a poet…an odd young man…who was of a resolute temper found

of bathing in the sea and going ashore to see ruins in a rough sea when it required six hands to manage the boat…" (Clare, 1986: 53-54). Lord Byron took ship to find in danger and adversity the sensations that reminded him most keenly of his existence. Concurrently, he ensured that these sensations were mirrored within his poetic compositions. Carl Thompson (2007) develops the idea, claiming that Byron had a reputation not only as a poet but also as a great traveller and as someone whose poetry often was inspired by his travelling (233). In this dissertation, travelling is presented as a symbol of escapism and a desire to change, hence we tend to believe that this issue contributes to a better vision of the ageing transformation of both Byron and the figure of a Byronic hero. This approach, however, was not completely supported by the literary community. Wordsworth, for instance, accused Byron of excessive recklessness and sensation-seeking (Curtis, 1993: 69). His criticism comes from the traditional ideas of the first generation of Romantic poets in England, who were not as rebellious as the representatives of the Second Generation, the member of which Lord Byron was. The idea, shrewdly hidden behind Wordsworth's words, points to the tremendous risks taken by Byron, which late resulted in pain and suffering which he saw as a mere payment for the sensations received from each venture abroad.

In his late verse-tale *Mazeppa*, Byron offered a spectacular depiction of torture, making it the central topic of the literary work. In this dissertation, special attention is paid to the notion of suffering in *Mazeppa* in particular, for, as far as we are concerned, this literary work represents it most vividly, thus letting us, fellow readers, see more clearly Byron's vision of escape and punishment, rather than just slightly hinting to ideas. The majority of the poetic composition entails a depiction of the harrowing odyssey of the protagonist tied to a wild horse. The poem has been praised for its

"vigour of style and its sharp realisation of the feelings of suffering and endurance" (Marchand, Leslie, 1968: 70). Many critics see *Mazeppa* as a transitional work in Byron's *œuvre*. The inquiry concerning whether the audience is anticipated to engender compassionate identification with Mazeppa has been a persistent topic of scholarly discourse. W. H. Marshall (1961) argues that Mazeppa is entirely unsympathetic: a "garrulous and egoistic old man" who never atones for his crime and whose hackneyed description of his passion for Teresa "becomes tedious at once" (Marshall, 1961: 76). In contrast to opposing viewpoints, Jerome McGann (1968) posits that Mazeppa's tumultuous ride serves as a rite of passage, ultimately transforming him into a poised and judicious hero, distinct from King Charles, who failed to temper his desires. He compares Mazeppa to Meursault, the existentialist hero of Albert Camus' novel *The Stranger* (1942) (McGann, 1968: 177-184). McGann gives Mazeppa the characteristic of a true Byronic Hero, but at the same time lovable and possesses irresistible magnetism.

Babinski (1974) presents a compassionate interpretation of the persona of Mazeppa, highlighting his benevolence towards Charles and the equines in the initial and final chapter. Babinski claims that Mazeppa is "one of Byron's most realistic creations, heroic within the bounds of human potential a fine specimen of a man" (Babinski, 1974: 33–36). He further argues that Mazeppa's death-in-life experiences during his "wild ride" are central to the poem's meaning and symbolic of the possibilities of human transformation and rebirth. The figure of Mazeppa and his pangs symbolise Byron's painful ageing transformations. *Mazeppa*, one of Byron's late poems, offers a "tired, lost and aged overnight" hero whose life changed due to one crucial mistake. Suffering, however, helped the character gain inner maturity and purify his soul. In this way,

Byron visualises and verbalises an example of ageing non-dependent on chronological time. According to his hero's transformation, we reveal another dimension of growing — the one being born through suffering. Byron's literary ageing underwent a powerful acceleration due to the internal and external pain he caused for his character. The poet offered a spectacular depiction of torture that outraged or confounded most of his periodical reviewers. As Franson states, "Seeming to shift attention from the internal agonies of heart and mind to the external agonies of a pained body, the "revolutionary" poem challenged the era's poetic conventions along with its understanding of human nature" (2012: 727). This idea is further developed by Chris Gilleard, who states that "The pain and suffering associated with age tend to be neglected as subject experiences" (2018: 28). Numerous endeavours have been made to classify justifications for affliction, and frequently, literary works, particularly poetry, serve as a conduit for authors to articulate such explanations while allowing their audience to comprehend them. Pain may bring wisdom and emotional growth; a catharsis necessary for further growth. On many occasions, pain carries a crucial transforming role in the ageing process for the author and his characters. Learning and growing through pain is something that Byron makes explicit in his works. In his philosophical discourse in 1840, Schopenhauer posited that suffering encompasses not only the manifestation of pain and wretchedness but also encompasses the deprivation of pleasure and overall welfare. The notion that human suffering serves as the basis for human morality was posited by the philosopher. Byron, however, saw it deeper, more as a justification of human growth and ageing. Byron's ambition to bring physical agony and internal pangs into the higher spheres of poetic sentiment gave birth not only to a poem but also to another vision of growing older, where physical appearance is not the key element.

Due to numerous semi-biographical elements in *Mazeppa*, we can take the poem as a source providing us with Lord Byron's transformation and growth as an older man. Many events in the poem were inspired by Lord Byron's romantic adventures during his stay in Italy[20]. His letters to Murray, his publisher, serve as bright examples of many unsettling things happening to the writer at the time:

> So altered since last year his pen is —
> I think he's lost his wits at Venice —
> Or drained his brains away at Stallion
> To some dark-eyed & warm Italians. (1973: 94)

Murray strongly suggests that Byron's writing has changed since he departed from England. Within his literary oeuvre *Mazeppa*, Lord Byron expertly weaves together a collection of thematically relevant motifs which bear significant personal resonance, namely that of imprudent romanticism, a spirited equine companion, the gradual descent into madness, enigmatic and brooding eyes, as well as a foreign romantic partner. Furthermore, since Byron continued to work on *Mazeppa* even as he wrote the first Cantos of *Don Juan*, their connection to Byron's own experiences should encourage us to consider these poems as significant turns, more sustained alterations in Byron's writings. Both poems depict survival in exile through pain and suffering. It is appropriate to acknowledge that the subject of human suffering constitutes a prominent theme within Lord Byron's literary work, specifically in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*,

> All suffering doth destroy, or is destroy'd,
> Even by the sufferer; and, in each event
> Ends:—Some, with hope replenished and rebuoy'd,
> Return to whence they came—with like intent,
> And weave their web again; some, bow'd and bent,
> Wax grey and ghastly, withering ere their time,
> And perish with the reed on which they leant;

[20] see Chapter 1.

Some seek devotion, toil, war, good or crime,
According as their souls were formed to sink or climb (IV.22)

By bowing to the devouring power of suffering and its immense impact on a person's fate, Byron admits the ageing transformation that his heroes undergo after experiencing its painful grip. However, only in *Mazeppa*, Byron exposes suffering as the pivotal element of the poem, not permitting his reader to forget about it even for a second. *Mazeppa*'s young hero was caught in the most *Don Juan*-like situation — in the arms of a nobleman's wife, his lover. Having been strapped onto a Ukrainian wild horse and sent off to die, Mazeppa becomes a part of Byron's interactive oppositions — present and past, fear and courage, life and death. Framing Mazeppa's tale of survival is significant for the ageing studies investigation: a much older Mazeppa dwells on his story to King Charles XII after his humiliating defeat to the Russian army which strongly reflects the poet's feelings. Patricia Mainardi (2003) suggests that Mazeppa's self-identification as a victim brings us to the idea that Byron was rather disappointed and tortured by his thoughts (204).

This idea was also developed by Gilleard (2018) who is concerned that "suffering is not just a matter of physical pain; it poses a threat to the integrity of the self" (32). "Suffering is associated with threats to integrity, and good ageing is realised through and within a sense of integrity, thus the failure to realise integrity with age is a mark both of suffering and of failing to age well" (Erikson, 1984: 61). Though the occurrence of distress during end-stage diseases may not differentiate concerning any underlying etiological factors, it is apparent that the idea of termination is more agitating for certain individuals compared to others (Abraham, Kutner & Beaty, 2006). Gilleard unequivocally asserts that suffering does not serve as the exclusive foundation or defining feature of any particular point or phase in the human experience. The

aforementioned phenomenon serves to contextualise an individual's existence but does not necessarily serve as an absolute determinant of it. Gilleard presents a critical appraisal of gerontology's tendency to largely sidestep the subject at hand. As far as the scholar is concerned, "suffering however is not lessened by ignoring it; it risks making it worse. Treating suffering as synonymous with pain or social disadvantage reduces its relevance and implies a framework of meaning and signification that denies the very claim of unbearably" (2018: 32). The presence of suffering pervades various registers, ranging from an all-encompassing, individualised and subjective internal experience, to the outwardly manifested, collective origins of anguish and ignominy. The inquiry into disease processes and outcomes, quality of life, and decisions regarding end-of-life care warrants both practical and philosophical consideration. Theoretical significance is essential for research on ageing, particularly in addressing societal misconceptions about the negative aspects of old age and in examining the broader ontological implications of the social and subjective experiences associated with advanced age. Lord Byron's poetry, and *Mazeppa* in particular, exhibits an example of suffering at the crucial transformation in a character's life. Having made suffering one of the central issues in *Mazeppa*, Byron pushed forward a powerful message — getting older can be painful, however, it may also signify growth and profound internal alterations. By making his characters suffer, Byron makes them wiser and more experienced. Internal growth has proven to be more important in Byron's vision than the external one. This fact is rather symbolic due to Byron's obsession with physical beauty — his desire to change or at least to reconsider his values is well-represented in *Mazeppa*.

Conclusions

This chapter aimed to demonstrate how the representation of autobiographical elements in the chosen works of Lord Byron reflect the poet's vision of growing old and undergoing important changes both mentally and physically during life. Byron's literary works, including his poems *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*, indicate that the youthful figures featured therein harbour a profound appreciation for the temporality of existence. As Lord Byron grows older, he reflects a more open and liberal perception of life and its pleasures. If, in his earlier works Byron romanticised nature, in his later work, he believes that sinfulness and lust are as natural as any other feature of a human being that should not be hidden or disgusted, but embraced and accepted as a part of a human being. Byron's later works also display his critical position towards hypocrisy which, according to him, makes one lose his true self. Thus, the writer acknowledges the importance of sexual freedom and liberation from imposed social limitations, as reflected in Byron's poems, the privilege of being young and attractive can jeopardise a man's identity and lead him to live in exile to free himself from imposed social constraints. By realistically reflecting on the experience of sexual magnetism and physical beauty, Byron, like other representatives of the Second Generation of Romantic Poets, calls for the need to establish freedom in all its meanings. All in all, his later writings highlight that youth is a powerful tool that can give one immense power across different times and cultures.

This chapter has also examined the complexity of Byronic Heroes in Byron's selected poems. The writer reveals that the process of growing older helps to gain the necessary wisdom and experience to survive in the world. Byron's later writings also

attest to the fact that ageing provokes men to create new forms of self-expression and domination as passionate lovers, fighters, rebels, adventurers and politicians.

Finally, his later works, like *Mazeppa*, reveal the joys of the role of traveller and convey positive aspects of dramatic life changes. Byron's exiled characters do not regard exile as a social burden or punishment, but as a priceless opportunity, an awakening or rebirth that arouses new emotions and provides a better understanding of the ageing process. By offering positive and strong representations of ageing transformations through the Byronic Heroes, Byron makes an important contribution to the Romantic and ageing scholarship. Due to his transforming characters, we are presented with an opportunity to discover literary gerontology from a new perspective and get a fresher view of the issues discussed in the previous chapter of the dissertation. Through his later works, the author calls for the need to create new cultural models of ageing men through the transformative experience of travelling. In summary, by using the trope of travelling adventures in his literary universe, Byron demonstrates how, over time, the perceptions about sexual freedom, homosexuality, adultery, the husband-wife relationship, and fatherhood undergo significant changes and generate new understandings of ageing and old age. Other important turning phenomena in life that greatly influence Byron's characters' social and individual identity, their creativity, romantic relationships, and the meanings attached to the process of growing older are explored in the last chapter of the present study.

CHAPTER IV: Ageing Transformations in the Byronic Heroes

Ageing is a lifelong process of growing up
and growing old. It begins at conception
and ends with death. In our infant years,
we call ageing "growth and development."
In our teenage and young adult years,
we refer to aging as "maturation." After age 30,
our physical body begins to wear out and our
functioning declines. (Hom Nath Chalise, 2019)

Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to the exploration of certain concepts of ageing studies from the perspective of literary gerontology, such as love and desire, lameness, physical beauty and gerascophobia, and their effect on Byronic Heroes in the works selected in this dissertation as reflection of Lord Byron's fears and concerns. We argue that these concepts are crucial since they shaped Lord Byron's personal life and his poetry also reflected his passions, amorous adventures, the suffering from physical lameness and the poet's aspirations for physical perfection at any age.

As was mentioned in the previous chapters, ageing can be provoked not only by natural processes but also by some pivoting events in a person's life, his or her psychological state and certain ideas revolving around his or her actions. We apply this methodology to Lord Byron and his characters to receive a better understanding of the poet's ageing about the way he depicted his characters in his literary works. Thus, ageing studies represent a valuable asset which may help us to deepen the analysis of Byronic Heroes. According to Hannah Zeilig (2011), literary gerontology possesses an

ability to confront (rather than shirk) the ambiguities and complexities of age, ageing and later life and an interest in quizzing the cultural norms of ageing via non-scientific forms of knowing (32).

Apart from literary gerontology, we also draw the readers' attention to specific concepts within this field of studies which can be traced in the selected poems of Byron — *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Mazeppa* and *Don Juan,* and due to these concepts, one may see the numerous layers of the main characters' essence. For instance, rebirth in literature can mean several things — reinvention, a change of heart, or literal death and rising again. Whether it's a literal or metaphorical rebirth for a character, it signifies a momentous occasion in their life and a moment of great change and development. Rebirth in literature involves a struggle that leads to a new realisation of self (Herz and Gallo, 1996: 65). As it will be analysed in this chapter, characters are spiritually reborn as a result of the trials they endure and the challenges that they must overcome.

Following the approach to analyse Byron's oeuvre through specific concepts, we also focus on atonement. Lord Byron led his characters through certain difficulties to transform them spiritually, the poet's objective, as the analysis of the heroes has shown so far, can be well defined as being determined to cleanse his Byronic Heroes and liberate them from the emotional baggage they were made to carry because of the "sins" which they were accused of by society. Rebirth in combination with atonement, are the essential concepts of Romantic literature, they are powerful tools to explore the figures of Byron and his Byronic Heroes from the perspective of ageing studies in a much deeper way. Contrary to real life, they demonstrate a unique possibility to get hold of time and ageing as a way to step into eternity.

To strengthen the previously mentioned approach, we shall observe Lord Byron's path into life which was not subordinate to the laws of time — he did all he could to make his name a living legend and to transform his characters into heroes. The appearance of a Byronic Hero marked a monumental event in Romantic literature and secured him a firm place among the most crucial literary figures. In this chapter, we shall look into details of the concept of rebirth through the prism of Byron's chosen works to see which devices and symbols were used by the poet to give his characters another chance to "start yet again" and to leave their painful bygones behind (something Byron tried to do himself for many years). Rebirth will prove to be one of the effective devices to demonstrate triumph over death and decay. In this chapter, the objective is to investigate the specific ways in which Byron represented the rebirth of Childe Harold, Mazeppa and Don Juan and what this rebirth meant to them in perspective. We believe that these literary characters depict the poet's desire to cleanse his reputation and receive another chance to begin a new life taking a fresh start.

Another important aspect which will be analysed in this chapter is the concept of eternal fame which will provide further insight into how Lord Byron managed to capture time and eternalise his figure through his literary characters. His discourses and preoccupations about death also meant that he was searching for a way to stay longer in people's memory and to turn his characters into immortal figures. The scandals in which he was involved due to his personal life and literary works only emphasised how determined he was on the matter. With the help of literary gerontology and Byron's unique talent for writing, it will be possible to see how he constructed himself a monument of eternal fame thus receiving a convincing victory over death.

We intend to reveal Lord Byron's ideas towards eternal life and glory that would survive centuries. Regardless of human life being a temporary thing, our deeds and

accomplishments can live much longer and in such a way preserve memories about the person responsible for them.

4.1 Love and Desire

Love is a desire of the whole being to be united
to something or some being, felt necessary
to its completeness.
(Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Notebooks)

And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on.
(George Gordon Byron)

Oh, Love ! no habitant of earth thou art-
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee,
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart,
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be:
The mind has made thee, as it peopled heaven,
Even with its own desiring phantasy,
And to a thought such shape and image given;
.. As haunts the unquench'd soul—parch'd--wearied wrung
— and riven.
(Lord Byron, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage)

Love is a concept which may be traced through numerous works of Byron; its power and the inevitable impact left their audible echo in the works chosen for this dissertation. As a popular saying goes, "To love all ages yield surrender", thus we wish to conduct a close analysis of the impact this feeling has on Byron and his Byronic Heroes at different stages of their lives. We consider this concept a chief one since love and passion were the driving force and crucial decision-making trigger throughout his short yet very bright life; thus, it might be shown from different perspectives during Lord Byron's ageing.

Critics have noticed how tightly united march together love and passion are, especially in *Mazeppa* and *Don Juan*. Byron's attempts to draw an ideal picture of desire as a natural part of human existence presented readers with poems containing elements of eroticism[21]. As Beaty claims, "Byron's imagery of passion is quite appropriate to his concept of "natural" love, for it derives largely from the kinetic energies of nature" (1963: 45). However, as it was mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, the society of Byron's period was not ready for the progressive views offered by the poet; as Smith states, "Adherents of sexual pessimism view fornication as demeaning to human nature and the sex drive as a threat to morality" (Smith, 2017: 14). Instead of becoming a hero, Byron became an outcast.

In the present-day world, these ideas are treated in a more open-minded way. *Like Love*, Irving Singer (1984) wrote, "There is nothing like sexuality as such that necessarily . . . reduces persons to things (382). On the contrary, sex may be seen as an instinctual agency by which persons respond to one another through their bodies" (65). Byron was aware of this back in his time and used these concepts in his poetry. In *Mazeppa*, for example, Byron speaks of John Casimir's desire in a way which points to the fact that Mazeppa was punished for something which was widely committed by others without the judgement of society:

> He loved the Muses and the Sex,
> And sometimes these so froward are,
> They made him wish himself at war;
> But soon, his wrath being o'er, he took
> Another mistress – or new book;
> And then he gave prodigious fêtes –
> All Warsaw gathered round his gates… (IV. 138-144. 1818)

[21] Mazeppa's naked body tied to a wild horse represents the character's (and the poet's) wild sexual character; Don Juan's handsomeness and sexual magnetism play a similar role in the poem of the same name.

Byron criticises his society for a double-faced and a "blind-eye" judgement concerning adultery. Mazeppa atones for not only the crime he had committed but also represents a figure of a martyr who takes the punishment for those who had committed the same crime. A similar situation may be traced in *Don Juan* (1819), where Don Jose is described as a type of man who does not promise eternal loyalty to a woman, yet he is not the one who is found guilty by society:

> He was a mortal of the careless kind,
> With no great love for learning or the learn'd,
> Who chose to go where'er he had a mind,
> And never dream'd his lady was concern'd;
> The world, as usual, wickedly inclined
> To see a kingdom or a house o'erturn'd
> Whisper'd he had a mistress, some said *two* –
> But for domestic quarrels one will do. (I.19. 382)

Thus, for Lord Byron, judging from the way he lays out the portrait of Don Juan, there seems to be a difference between marriage and love. Byron intensifies the idea by claiming that adultery was quite common at those times among both men and women and "sinfulness" detested and judged by the common folk was a trivial, everyday thing:

> This heathenish cross restored the breed again,
> Ruin'd its blood, but much improved its flesh;
> For from a root the ugliest in Old Spain
> Sprung up a branch as beautiful as fresh;
> The sons no more were short, the daughters plain:
> But there's a rumour which I fain would hush,
> 'Tis said that Donna Julia's grandmamma
> Produced her Don more heirs at love than law. (I.58)

Byron argues that marriage imposes boundaries and puts to doubt the fact that the offspring of such marriage can be a fruit of love, and then the poet suggests that extramarital relations grant more love than the ones set and agreed upon by the law. The present analysis observes that the poetic fragments extracted from *Don Juan* are

significantly buttressed by Lord Byron's own experiences of both marital and extramarital affairs. Consequently, the themes of marriage and love brilliantly delineated in this piece are rooted in autobiographical elements drawn from the poet's life voyage. While being married to Annabella Milbanke, Lord Byron continued the relationship with his half-sister and began a new affair with Susan Boyce, an actress at the Drury Lane Theatre. The burning power of passion is well-illustrated in *Mazeppa* in which Byron depicts the non-verbal communication between the characters where glances and timid movements spoke louder than words and brought those two young characters together:

> We met, we gazed, I saw and sighed –
> She did not speak, and yet replied –
> There are ten thousand tones and signs
> We hear and see, but none defines –
> Involuntary sparks of thought
> Which strike from out the heart o'erwrought,
> And form a strange intelligence,
> Alike mysterious and intense,
> Which link the burning chain that binds,
> Without their will, young hearts and minds,
> Conveying, as the electric wire,
> We know not how, the absorbing fire. (XI.232-243)

The devouring power of passion drove Mazeppa in the same way it conducted Lord Byron's actions in life; the poet willingly succumbed to its omnipotence. A similar idea is expressed in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* where the character is mesmerised and tempted by beauty and finds it difficult to resist the temptation:

> Alas! our young affections run to waste,
> Or water but the desert; whence arise
> But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
> Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes,
> Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,
> And trees whose gums are poisons; such the plants
> Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
> O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants

For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants.
(IV.120. 1072-1080)

By these lines, Lord Byron demonstrates once again that both to him and his Byronic Hero the most desirable thing is the one that is usually forbidden. He gets bored with his everyday life and concludes that the beauty he observes regularly, such as flowers, trees and other plants, no longer seems that attractive to him. In the 121st stanza, the poet suggests that love is so heavenly, that simply by merely touching it or getting closer to its divine light makes one closer to God. The kind of passionate magnetism laid out in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* once again finds its echo in *Mazeppa* where Byron speaks of the forbidden love that survived through decades of pain:

A brow like a Midsummer lake,
Transparent with the Sun therein,
When waves no murmur dare to make,
And Heaven beholds her face within –
A cheek and lip – but why proceed? –
I loved her then – I love her still –
And such as I am love indeed
In fierce extremes – in good and ill.
But still we love even in our rage,
And haunted to our very age
With the vain shadow of the past
As is Mazeppa to the last. (5. 220-231)

Having drawn Mazeppa in a light of a martyr devoted to his young love, Byron glorifies and dignifies the figure of this character. Byron also refers to love as an irresistible power in *Mazeppa* saying that it was a "link the burning chain that binds, / Without their will, young hearts and minds, / Conveying, as the electric wire, / We know not how the absorbing fire" (6.240-243).

We believe that the theme of a young mistake and passionate love of a young man that is brutally condemned by society is autobiographical and hence stands as a rather painful topic that is preoccupying the poet's thoughts, that is why it is present not only

in one but in all of the selected poems for this dissertation. For instance, in *Don Juan,* one may also find lines that refer to the price they must pay for the forbidden pleasure if they succumb to it:

> Dear is the helpless creature we defend
> Against the world; and dear the schoolboy spot
> We ne'er forget, though there we are forgot.
> But sweeter still than this, than these, than all,
> Is first and passionate love — it stands alone,
> Like Adam's recollection of his fall…(I.126-127. 1006-1011)

Through his conduct and the manifestation of a congruent philosophy in his literary works, Lord Byron delineates a boundary that separates love/passion from the institution of marriage. He posits that marriage is merely a utilitarian arrangement between two parties aimed at ensuring a harmonious coexistence, while romantic love demands independence and freedom.

We argue that love is an important element (along with sexual desire) that shapes the personalities of Byronic Heroes. As far as Beaty is concerned, Byron describes the possibilities of love under ideal circumstances and sharpens the vision with contrasting situations in contemporary society (1963: 37). According to Paul Gifford (2006), "European literature and theory have been intensely preoccupied with questions of "Desire", whereas "Love" has increasingly represented a fractured and strange, if not suspect, proposal: this is a prime symptom of an age of deep cultural mutation and uncertainty" (51). This idea suggests the vulnerability to which one might be exposed once trapped by the feeling of love on the pages of poems by Romantic writers, and Lord Byron in particular.

Drawn in detail in Chapter One of this dissertation, Lord Byron's love path does seem to be sprinkled with the thorns of suffering: his marriage resulted in a painful

breakup and the first homosexual relationship from the university times left him with nothing but bittersweet memories and a bracelet to keep as a souvenir. This was also reflected in *Don Juan*, where Byron in detail explains what love means to him and his characters:

> Oh! Beautiful! – and rare as beautiful!
> But theirs was Love in which the Mind delights
> To lose itself when the old World grows dull,
> And we are sick of its hack sounds and sights,
> Intrigues, adventures of the common School,
> Its petty passions, marriages, and flights,
> Where Hymen's Torch but brands one Strumpet more,
> Whose Husband only knows her not a Whore. (IV.15. 129-136)

For Don Juan, love seems to be there to entertain, to make one feel free whereas matrimony and all that comes with it is just a dull page, or rather an interval of a play, but not its main part. The examples analysed prove that love, once let inside Lord Byron's head and heart, served as a trigger to many misfortunes in his life, that later served not only as personality-shaping but also as an ageing tool. As Peter V. Zima claims, "Although both emotions [love and desire] are erotic in character, they differ substantially in that love is directed towards an object, whereas longing is of narcissistic origin and is directed towards the subject itself" (2016: 77). Being a person of an egoistic nature[22], Byron felt trapped within institutes like love, matrimonial fidelity and matrimony itself. H.W. Auden was aware of Byron's private life and how it invaded his work, affecting it for good and bad, and concluded that once Byron learned to work with his egoism, he became a better man and poet (Padilla, 2002: 24). We develop this idea by suggesting that once Lord Byron escaped from love and matrimony, thus becoming a free man, he found his so much desired peace in faraway European lands. In a way, one may claim that Byron found his second youth in the south of Europe, for

[22] see Chapter 1.

passion turned out to be the leading feeling during that period in both his life and in his works. This passage from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* serves as a quite suitable illustration of the given idea:

> Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,
> Streams like the thunder-storm against the wind;
> Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
> The loudest still the Tempest leaves behind;
> Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
> Chopped by the axe, looks rough and a little worth,
> But the sap lasts,—and still the seed we find
> Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;
> So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth. (IV.98. 874-882)

These lines are impregnated with Byron's optimistic spirit for a better future. He fully trusts his inner voice and lets the voice of intuition lead him forward. We see Childe Harold not as a man of passion, but rather as a man who is passionate about freedom. Eventually, in Canto I, the protagonist weighs the importance of both love and freedom in an attempt to understand what truly liberates his spirit:

> Oh! many a time and oft had Harold loved,
> Or dreamed he loved, since rapture is a dream;
> But now his wayward bosom was unmoved,
> For not yet had he drunk of Lethe's stream:
> And lately, had he learned with truth to deem
> Love has no gift so grateful as his wings:
> How fair, how young, how soft soe'er he seem,
> Full from the fount of joy's delicious springs
> Some bitter o'er the flowers its bubbling venom flings. (I.82. 810-818)

Those moments of hesitation happen rather frequently to Childe Harold, due to his initial decision to search for a better fortune in faraway lands, but even so, he fully understands the power and divinity of love. This idea is well illustrated in the following lines of Canto IV:

> Glowing, and circumfused in speechless love

Their full divinity inadequate
That feeling to express, or to improve,
The gods become as mortals, and man's fate
Has moments like their brightest; but the weight
Of earth recoils upon us; -- let it go!
We can recall such visions, and create,
From what has been, or might be, things which grow
Into thy statue's form, and look like gods below. (IV.52. 460-468)

Indeed, comparing love to the godly luxury is the highest praise Lord Byron could ever grant to love, and he is very consistent about this idea in Canto IV of the poem, where a few stanzas later he says the following:

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,
Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating
For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover;
The purple Midnight veil'd that mystic meeting
With her most starry canopy, and seating
Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?
This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting
Of an enamour'd Goddess, and the cell
Haunted by holy Love — the earliest oracle! (IV.118.1054-1062)

Byron here sees love as something unearthly, one may even dare to say — divine. The use of the adjectives "enchanted", "heavenly", "mystic", "starry" and "holy" demonstrates that Byron appreciated love as one of the most sacred and special feelings. Romantic literature emphasizes feelings, passions and intuitions; as Brovo et al. state, "The Romantics cultivated love and worship of nature, along with its simplicity and richness" (Bravo, del Pilar, M., 2007: 138). This approach is different from the one in the 18th century, which was based on reason and reflection. Passion is one of the dynamic elements of Romanticism, and it reveals, in this dissertation in particular, Lord Byron's naked soul and the wilderness of his forever-youthful spirit. The Byronic Heroes frequently experience suffering as a direct result of their intense passions, which constitute a major contributing factor[23]. Through the experiences of passion and later

[23] Mazeppa in particular, since he was punished in a rather brutal manner for his amorous adventure with a married woman.

being punished for succumbing to its irresistible magnetism, the Byronic Heroes along with Lord Byron himself grow as personalities and age under the impact of those experiences. Passion is also extremely changing: nothing is closer to love than hate. It wanders between eminence and melancholy, between remorse and optimism. This love-hate relationship is present in Lord Byron's social life[24], private romantic conquests and professional ventures.

Many critics, Seth Thomas Reno amongst them, argue that love is the central concept through which it is necessary to think about and understand British poetry of the Romantic period. As far as Reno is concerned, critics have been reluctant to engage in Romantic love because it presupposes notions of transcendence, divinity, sentimentalism, and idealism that seem suspicious and ideological to the materialists and historicists that have shaped and determined the terrain of Romantic scholarship these past three decades (2011: 4). Lord Byron, as a representative of the Second Generation of the Romantic poets, transmitted love and desire into his works in a way which unclothes his Byronic Heroes in front of the readership and grants permission to an exclusive closer look to the nakedness of their souls and minds which brings us even closer to the author's inner world and the nuances and complexities of his ageing. Another important element that enhances love and passion — physical beauty — is explored in the following section.

[24] a long path from an outcast to a national hero.

4.2 Physical Beauty, Lameness and Its Impact on Body and Mind

The great art of life is sensation, to feel
that we exist, even in pain.
(Lord Byron)

Till taught by pain, men know not water's worth.
(Lord Byron)

"Will you still love me when I am no longer young and beautiful?", a question posed by Lana del Rey in her song *Young and Beautiful,* seems to have been preoccupying not only our contemporaries' minds but those of our ancestors as well, Lord Byron being among them. Beauty is one of the key elements associated with youth, however, analysis in literary gerontology has proven that many other elements make a person attractive. As elucidated by Byron's analysis of the renowned Ukrainian cossack, Ivan Mazeppa, it becomes apparent to the reader that the esteemed hetman's allure persists, despite his advanced age,

> With years, ye know, have not declined
> My strength, my courage, or my mind (V.197-198)

Romantic literature focuses on natural beauty and its importance in our lives. Lord Byron, being a representative of the Romantic poets, spoke of beauty, preached beauty in his works and intended hard to live with beauty in his life. However, the poet was far from ideal and the bare thought of it made him suffer and lose his senses. Denis Browne (1959) suggests that: "One of the main causes of this attitude was his bitter resentment of the fate that, despite all his brains and beauty, he was born a cripple" (440). The scholar admits that "It is difficult for anyone interested in the various forms of crippling

not to be fascinated by the problem of what caused Byron's lameness; that question on which so much ink has been spilt, so many inaccurate statements confidently made, and a considerable number of lies told" (1959: 440). Dr Cameron (1923) strengthens the claim by stating that neither his biographers, Moore and Galt, nor his close friends, Lady Blessington and Countess Albrizzi, could understand which foot was deformed (564). James Gamble (2016) gives a more detailed description of Lord Byron's health condition, and according to him, "Byron had a limp, or in the popular jargon of the time, he was lame" (39). According to Edward Trelawny, an intimate associate of Lord Byron, how the latter walked can be characterised as a "halting gait". (Trelawny, 1858: 24, 224, 226).

Despite his physical limitations, the poet displayed remarkable proficiency in the areas of swimming, fencing, and horseback riding. According to Moore, "The lameness of his right foot, though an obstacle to grace, but little impeded the activity of his movements"(1837: 255-6). According to Kenyon (2008), Byron displayed a profound sensitivity towards his physical deformity, leading him to experience significant distress in concealing the condition both in public and private settings[25]. "Even during his last illness, Byron refused to let the doctors apply blisters to his legs (the standard of care in 1824), telling his doctor, Millingen, that as long as he lived, he would not allow anyone to see his lame foot" (Gamble, 2016: 40). In some autobiographical notes, he tells how once, when he was a child, his mother in one of her outbursts of fury called him a lame brat, and how he quickly responded, "I was born so, mother" (Cameron, 1923: 564).

The poem *The Deformed Transformed* (1824) authored by Byron was made available to the general public precisely three years before his demise. The literary work provides

[25] see Chapter 1.

a personalised perspective of the author's cogitations and emotions about his physical impairment. Arnold, characterised as the protagonist, exhibits physical deformities in the form of a hunchback and a lame club foot that are the cause of societal detestation towards him. The protagonist enters into a bargain with an unknown individual who, unbeknownst to him, is Lucifer masquerading as Caesar, to exchange his malformed physical form for a flawless one. Bertha, Arnold's mother, similarly vociferates at him to that of Byron's maternal figure:

> *Bertha.* Out, hunchback!
> *Arnold.* I was born so, mother!
> *Bertha.* Out Thou incubus!
> Thou nightmare!
> Of seven sons,
> The sole abortion!
> *Arnold.* Would that I had been so,
> And never seen the light!
> *Bertha.* I would so, too!

And again, after these lines in the poem, come the words: "I was born so, mother". This tension in a mother-son relationship becomes more vivid as the poem unrolls. Bertha's denial of Arnold assumes a more and more appalling character when, as stated in line 24, she utters the following declaration:

> Call me not Mother;
> for if I brought thee forth, it was
> As foolish hens at times hatch vipers, by
> Sitting upon strange eggs.
> Out, urchin, out!

This tension left a stain of pain between Byron and his mother, who, in Byron's opinion, was partially responsible for his condition. Their intimacy and family closeness was never restored.

In Byron's chosen works one may face a rather challenging task to find at least a single physical flaw in the main characters' bodies. They all glow with perfection as if

silently hinting at the way Lord Byron wished to look like. Special attention should be paid to *Mazeppa* where the cult of the body is transmitted through the entire poem, it almost becomes a character of its own, to a certain extent, due to its symbolism. In these lines, for instance, we see seventy-year-old Mazeppa reflecting on his youth:

> I was a goodly stripling then –
> At seventy years I so may say
> That there were few, or boys or men,
> Who in my dawning time of day,
> Of vassal or of knight's degree,
> Could vie in vanities with me;
> For I had strength, youth, gaiety –
> A port not like to this ye see,
> But smooth, as all is rugged now;
> For time, and war, and care have ploughed
> My very soul from out my brow;
> And thus I should be disavowed
> By all my kind and kin, could they
> Compare my day and yesterday;
> This change was wrought, too, long e'er Age
> Had ta'en my features for his page (V. 181-196)

Mazeppa dwells on his youth and underlines that his spirits are still, even in his seventies, very strong, regardless of the pain and suffering that he had to undergo in the days of his youth. We argue that the suffering that Mazeppa's body had to undergo while tied to the wild horse was drawn from Lord Byron's suffering caused by his club foot. Being young, Mazeppa, similar to Byron, was a passionate man, looking for entertainment and adventures. Gifted with rare beauty, both the poet and his character used it to achieve the pleasures of life, no matter how sinful those pleasures were. As an old man, Mazeppa recognises his physical decline but reassures that his spirit stays strong. Byron did not live to his seventies, yet he exhibited the strength of his spirit as an ageing man — entering his mid-thirties and facing the first signs of physical ageing, the poet searched for ways to hide the physical decline.

Cameron pointed out, “To his lameness, Byron was exquisitely sensitive; he never for a moment forgot it, and it poisoned his whole life” (Cameron, 1923: 564-5). Research has demonstrated that an individual's dissatisfied view of their body is linked to a variety of physical and psychological health complications, including exercise dependence and eating disorders. Byron, as evidenced by Adams’ study (2005), exhibited symptoms of both of these issues. Cameron further put highlight the fact that Lord Byron was rather cold-blooded and quite stress resistant when criticised for immorality or irreligion, but the poet exposed great vulnerability when commenting on his physical disability. Here, Cameron’s views on Byron’s lameness find their echo in the work Kenyon (2008) mentioned above. The scholar also points out this extreme sensitivity of the poet who, whenever he was writing about Byronic Heroes’ physical appearance, always underlined the handsomeness of his characters and their impressive, well-built bodies — something rather unachievable for Byron in real life.

We argue that the poet’s lameness was a symbol of old age, decline of energy, strength and loss of physical beauty. Insults or undesirable curiosity from the ones who did notice something strange about his leg were unavoidable; bitter words even came from his mother: “A lame brat,” was the most brutal of the many epithets she threw at his face (Rollin, 1974: 716). This explains his attempts to conceal his imperfection from others and avoid mentioning it. Dr Julius Millingen (1800–1878) confirms this with his comment, “The lameness…was a source of actual misery to him; and it was curious to notice with how much coquetry he endeavoured, by a thousand petty tricks, to conceal from strangers this unfortunate malconformation” (Millingen, 1831: 94). Byron confided in Dr Millingen that he was unwilling to exhibit his lame foot to anyone, for the duration of his lifetime. And with his beautiful facial features, Byron managed to

distract others from his "minor imperfection" (94). While it is intriguing to note that Byron frequently donned custom footwear to obscure his distorted foot, he displayed a reluctance to utilise any form of the orthopaedic brace. Edward Trelawny, Byron's intimate friend, admitted the following:

> It was generally thought his halting gait originated in some defect of the right foot or ankle the right foot was the most distorted, and it had been made worse in his boyhood by vain efforts to set it right . . . The foot was twisted inwards, only the edge touched the ground, and that leg was shorter than the other...The peculiarity of his gait was now accounted for; he entered a room with a sort of run, as if he could not stop, then planted his best leg well forward, throwing back his body to keep his balance (Trelawny, 1858: 24, 224, 226)

One can only imagine how uncomfortable and unbearable this might have been for the poet and how meticulously he tried and hid his pain and shame simultaneously being the centre of attention everywhere he went. Byron admits this himself, "… lameness as the greatest misfortune, and I have never been able to conquer this feeling…It requires great natural goodness of disposition, as well as reflection, to conquer the corroding bitterness that deformity engenders in the mind" (Lovell, 1969: 80-2, 84). Those moments of bitterness impregnated momentous frustration and temporary loss of faith in beauty itself, which was, as far as we are concerned, the poet's instance of an inner emotional crisis. One of such bitter moments is projected onto Childe Harold in Canto I, *To Inez:*

> Nay, smile not at my sullen brow,
> Alas! I cannot smile again:
> Yet Heaven avert that ever thou
> Shouldst weep, and haply weep in vain.
>
> And dost thou ask what secret woe
> I bear, corroding joy and youth?
> And wilt thou vainly seek to know
> A pang even thou must fail to soothe?

It is not love, it is not hate,
Nor low Ambition's honours lost,
That bids me loathe my present state,
And fly from all I prized the most:

It is that weariness which springs
From all I meet, or hear, or see:
To me no pleasure Beauty brings;
Thine eyes have scarce a charm for me. (I.1-4. 837-852)

We suggest that with these lines we have an intimate view into the poet's inner pangs caused by his physical flaws. His rejection of beauty is temporary, momentous, yet quite intense, which leads us to the thought that Byron's lameness truly made him suffer very much. His suffering seems to be so potent that no one is capable of stopping it "…secret woe I bear…a pang even thou must fail to soothe…" Even beauty no longer brings him joy "To me no pleasure Beauty brings…". Byron uses several words with a negative meaning (e.g. "no", "fails", "pang", "woe", etc.) to emphasise the bitterness of the moment. As far as Drummond (2014) contends, "…with a noticeable limp due to a club foot — a disability he had suffered with from birth — and a striking face, Byron's physical presence…commanded attention" (8). The health condition afflicting the poet from birth was exceedingly arduous to conceal; from the perspective of literary gerontology, we see it as something inevitable and unconcealed, just as physical characteristics of old age. Still, Byron's physical imperfection made him feel close to the experience of physical ageing. Thus, his physical imperfections and the impotence of his body to function at its very best gave birth to the inner fear which in its turn inspired several episodes concerning a weakening body in Byron's chosen works. One such example can be found in *Mazeppa* where Byron dwells on his character's debilitated body:

Each motion which I made to free

My swoln limbs from their agony
Increased his fury and affright;
I tried my voice ' –twas faint and low,
But yet he swerved as from a blow;
And, starting to each accent, sprang
As from a sudden trumpet's Clang;
Meantime my cords were wet with gore,
Which oozing through my limbs ran o'er;
And in my tongue the thirst became
A something fierier far than flame. (11.453-463)

This is one of the examples when a Byronic Hero is suffering a moment of crisis, when his fragility, like Byron's own quite often, was exposed. But in general, the characters from Byron's chosen works can boast of their perfect bodies and irresistible physical beauty and young sexual magnetism. Similarly, the characters Childe Harold, Mazeppa and Don Juan encapsulate the experience of ageing within young bodies, because all three of them exhibit figures of men Byron transforms in his poems — they are young and strong, but simultaneously each of them carries a burden of a hard life experience and suffering, just like the author himself. It seems that Byron understood and even agreed deep within that youth was much more valued and desired in the world where he lived and he made his peace with it. Having played with the idea of eternal youth and beauty in his selected poems Byron yet again proves that his preoccupation with both notions was rather significant. This thesis argues that Byron reflects on ageing issues (both mental and physical) and gives different views on them which may be traced in his selected poems. These lines from *Don Juan* serve as a vivid example:

And what they pleased to do with the young Khan
In Heaven, I know not, nor pretend to guess;
But doubtless they prefer a fine young Man
To tough old Heroes, and can do no less;
And that's the cause, no doubt why – if we scan
A Field of Battle's ghastly Wilderness –
For one rough, weather-beaten Veteran body,
You'll find ten thousand handsome Coxcombs bloody. (VIII.112. 889-896)

These lines show that Byron did not repent or feel sorrowful for the life given to him, but he did suffer from the imperfect body he was trapped into. This is well-illustrated to the reader through the line, “In Heaven, I know not, nor pretend to guess”. Throughout his life, Byron made attempts to stay in his best shape regardless of his club foot, thus he chose to fight his way through and to age with dignity without becoming a prisoner of his own body. The poems analysed in the thesis show that an act of escapism from that body grants him freedom along with the satisfaction of being perfect (in his imperfect way) at least on the pages of his books. The forthcoming section will expound on the demeanour of Byron about death and its consequential impact on the poet and his literary personages.

4.3 Death Anxiety in Byron's Literary Works

Death, so-called, is a thing which makes men weep,
And yet a third of life is passed in sleep.
(Lord Byron)

Literature, and especially Romantic literature, make use of death for its purposes, presenting it in such a way that highlights certain traits in a character, undressing thus his mortal and sinful soul in front of the readers. According to O.Hakola and S. Kivistö (2014), "In literature death exists at many levels: it is part of the narrations, imagery, metaphors and character traits; it reaches outside literature's realm and discusses death-related social issues and emotions that are recognizable for the reader. Literature retains memories of past lives and gives them continuity" (9). The concept of Death is of great importance to this thesis for several reasons. Firstly, it is extensively used by Lord Byron in the selected poems, so we believe that it is essential to shedding more light on such a frequently appearing tool. Secondly, Death is a very important notion in the studies of literary gerontology, hence a deeper look into it might hopefully lead us to some fruitful discoveries during our investigation. Due to these steps, a clearer vision of Byron's preoccupation with death and dying in his selected poems are key topics in this dissertation which will provide a better understanding of the impact the topic of death had on the poet and his works. And finally, taking into consideration Byron's early and tragic death as well as his obsession with the concept itself, it had a great impact on the poet's writings and thus it is essential to shed more light on it in this dissertation. In the given subsection, we shall briefly look at death and its perception within Romanticism, then we shall narrow our investigation down to Lord Byron's characters and the relations they establish with Death from the poems selected for the thesis and finally

Death about literary gerontology within Byron's works. This will provide a full picture of what Death meant for Lord Byron and how he reflected it in his selected works.

In the Romantic period, death was also rather romanticised — it was considered a beautiful place where one could flee the brutality, problems and dullness of reality. The notion of escapism, which is also investigated in this dissertation, is tightly connected to the way death was seen by the Romantic poets of the second generation. Although the term "romantic death" refers to both poetry and prose, it is truly poetry that brings forward and highlights the beauty and mystery of death — a distinctive feature of the literature of the period. As far as Welch is concerned, "The poetic deaths of the romantic period established a new repertoire of tropes and figures out of these longstanding and disparate deathbed traditions, set within the emerging discursive arena of "poetry" (2017: VI). The conceptions of death which were present in the Romantic period in England speak for its importance to ageing studies. Death was a popular and mysterious subject in the literary world during the 1700 and 1800s. The Romantic period brought fascinating views on death. In the literature of that time, poets speak about emotions and imagination; they dwell on new beginnings when writing about death. Romantic poets such as William Blake, William Wordsworth, Percy Shelley and Lord Byron truly capture death in their works, liberating the given concept of brutality and pain and adding more positive notes to the process of dying; one may even say that they "beautify" death in a certain way.

We believe that death represents a significant point in the investigation of romantic poetry due to its element of mystery, to which the rebellious poets of the second generation were so irresistibly drawn. In Byron's oeuvre, death is a symbol that appears frequently in his works. Byron speaks of death in a cautious yet curious way as if he

fears it and, at the same time, is eager to discover what it represents and so are his Byronic Heroes, as will be shown in this section. Byron died, aged thirty-six, on Easter Monday, April, 19th. "Death was a present subject for Byron from the early periods of poetry, but the ideas he expresses seldom display evidence of serious thought" (Campbell, 1991: 3). After the release of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), Byron's literary oeuvre commenced reflecting his personal evolving perceptions and reflections regarding the significance and indispensability of mortality. Not only does Byron speak of death rather frequently in his poems, but he also manages to describe it as something terrifying yet beautiful at the same time in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage:*

> Beautiful! but on the verge,
> From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,
> An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,
> Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn
> Its steady dyes, while all around is torn. (IV.72. 640-644)

Here Byron combines contrasting symbols to emphasise the fragility and uniqueness of the moment. Embracing death in a very poignant way, underlining the horror, sadness and solemn beauty of death — this is what Byron is demonstrating in these lines. According to Campbell, death was for him [Byron] the particular topic engendered an inexorable preoccupation, resulting in a persistent urge to contemplate and document until his death. These thoughts can be traced throughout Byron's poetry where he thinks of the different ages when people die and what it might feel like to die young or old. The fourth canto of Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* contains several notable lines that reveal the author's profound interest in the subject of mortality and the temporal moment of its occurrence:

> Perchance she died in youth: it may be, bow'd
> With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
> That weigh'd upon her gentle dust, a cloud
> Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom

In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favourites -- early death; yet shed
A sunset charm around her, and illume
With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

Perchance she died in age -- surviving all,
Charms, kindred, children -- with the silver gray
On her long tresses, which might yet recall,
It may be, still a something of the day
When they were braided, and her proud array
And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed
By Rome -- But whither would Conjecture stray?
Thus much alone we know -- Metella died,
The wealthiest Roman's wife: Behold his love or pride! (IV.102-103. 910-927)

The austere temperament of Byron is notable in the initial section of the passage, as departing from the world in the zenith of one's existence fails to conjure appeal in the poet. Despite acknowledging that early death is often bestowed upon its favourites, the subject concedes to this notion, thus hinting that everyone dies in the time predestined for them in the heavens. However, as it was stated in the previous chapters, the concept of death was not presented in the light of a cruel destiny getting closer to the defenceless poet, since Lord Byron was afraid of another phenomenon — oblivion. Campbell dwells on the idea, by stating that "The Byronic hero seeks no paradise at all, only nothingness. The evils of this world and his past weigh so heavily on the heart of the Byronic hero that the idea of any memory by anyone of this ruined self carried beyond death would be a curse" (1991: 12). In the opening Canto of his work published in 1812, Childe Harold emerges as a significant depiction of the first Byronic hero who espouses the desire to abscond from the tyranny of death and angst, embarking on an audacious voyage to pursue the realms of youthfulness, amorousness and jubilation:

And dost thou ask, what secret woe

I bear, corroding joy and youth?

It is that weariness which springs
From all I meet, or hear, or see:

It is that settled, ceaseless gloom
The fabled Hebrew wanderer bore;
That will not look beyond the tomb,
But cannot hope for rest before.

What Exile from himself can flee?
To Zones, though more and more remote,
Still, still pursues, where-e'er I be,
The blight of life — the demon, thought.
(I.841-42, 849-50, 853-60)

Childe Harold's preoccupation with death evolves from the idea of an imperfect world and the search for a better one. The character is looking for a place to rest, but there is none such; and in his hard venture, Childe Harold is getting to more and more remote places, distancing himself from all that undermines his peace and inner balance. As one may see in the lines above, Childe Harold is balancing between hope and despair which explains the presence of contrasting details. This may be explained by the risk and fear of the unknown, so the character prepares himself for any possible outcome.

Byron's conceptualisation of mortality as a state of forgetfulness assumes dominance in his early, prominent literary productions, and the aforementioned excerpt serves as a noteworthy instance of this central idea. The perspective of the poet during the early phase of writing, which expressed the notion that death denotes the void, may be discerned through the implicit reference to *To Inez* and is observable in the poem *Euthanasia* (1812). The poem effectively conveys a distinct portrayal of mortality and discloses a particular stance concerning it, which serves as a significant marker of the Byronic Hero:

When Time, or soon or late, shall bring
The dreamless - sleep that lulls the dead,
Oblivion! may thy languid wing
Wave gently o-er my dying bed!

Then lonely be my latest hour,
Without regret, without a groan!
For thousands Death hath ceas'd to lower,
And pain been transient or unknown.

'Ay, but to die, and go', alas!
Where all have gone, and all must go!
To be the nothing that I was
Ere born to life and living woe!

Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
And know, whatever thou-hast been,
'Tis something better not to be. (I.4. 25-36)

The ultimate verse of *Euthanasia* encapsulates the concept that the state of non-existence brought about by Death is to be positively embraced. *The First Destiny* depicted in *Manfred* is reflective of such a disposition:

The blest are the dead,
Who see not the sight
Of their own desolation. (II.3.48-50)

The discourse on the concept of mortality, as distinctly articulated in the literary works of Euthanasia and notably featured in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, is proposed in a written correspondence addressed to Francis Hodgson in the year of 1811, specifically dated on the third of September:

> I will have nothing to do with your immortality; we are miserable enough in this life, without the absurdity of speculating upon another. If men are to live, why die at all? and if they die, why disturb the sweet and sound sleep that "knows no waking"? "Post mortem nihil est, ipsaque Mors nihil . . . quaris quo jaceas post obitum loco? Quo non Nata jacent". (LJ 2: 88-89)

According to Campbell (1991), Byron's subsequent literary endeavours reflect a level of scepticism towards the notion of Death being redemptive, eventually culminating in outright repudiation. Nevertheless, even amid this doubt, Byron remained captivated by the subject. The correlation between the year 1816, which witnessed the peak of Byron's cogitation on mortality, and the period of his most profound experiential adversity, is not a mere fortuity. According to Leslie Marchand's work, *Byron: A Portrait*, there exists a discernible correlation between the personal experiences of Lord Byron and the creation of his literary masterpiece, *Manfred*:

> All the unhappiness, the sense of guilt, the frustrations, and the dismal broodings which had grown out of his reflection during the summer on his relations with Augusta, his marriage, and the separation found relief in a poetic drama that had been conceived in the high Alps and now burned for expression. (252-53)

The character depicted in *Manfred* encompasses a confluence of culpability, estrangement, and a desire for oblivion that supersedes the similar thematic explorations of the heroes found in adventure-seeking writings and Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, thereby exemplifying a more profound level of character development. The chosen works in this thesis also uncover Byron's perception of death from a very specific angle. *Don Juan*, which many critics consider his most profound work in terms of relating to the question of death, is an example, to begin with. The poet's consciousness of the dynamic influences that shape his creative writing is manifested in a self-effacing manner in Canto XIV of *Don Juan* (December 1823). Here, he acknowledges in a self-deprecating tone that he "wrote in youth, because his mind was overflowing with ideas, and now, because he perceives his faculties waning" (79-80). According to Marchand's scholarly work, Byron communicated to Hobhouse as early as September 1822, the discovery that he experienced lesser emotions compared to his youth (387). In the

literary works of *Mazeppa* (June 1819) and *Don Juan* (encompassing the entirety of the work, not solely the initial five Cantos), the concept of death is presented realistically. The portrayal of death within the narrative demonstrates a distinct perspective from this mortal realm, beyond the "ebon portal".

Death is an inevitable destiny for each of us as individuals and, because of this, it has always circulated in our thoughts, sometimes even possessing them completely and generating fear of the unknown final destination that awaits each of us. This is what Byron says about this idea in *Don Juan*:

> But I being fond of true philosophy,
> Say very often to me, 'Alas!
> All things that have been born were born to die,
> And flesh (which Death mows down to hay) is grass. (I.220.1753-1756)

Numerous manifestations of mortality that confront men, along with the tragic loss of life during wars waged for the sake of honour and renown, present a noteworthy topic for discourse in *Don Juan*. These themes are exemplified by episodes such as the depictions of shipwrecks and the siege of Ismail. However, the work does not endeavour to explore the implications beyond death or contemplate its ultimate inevitability. The literary work of *Don Juan* by Lord Byron displays a recurrent motif wherein the contemplation of mortality is presented, followed by a relinquishment of such considerations due to their inscrutability. This is evidenced in the passage, "We die, you know — and then — / What then? — I do not know, no more do you — / And so good night" (I.1064-66). In the literary text, the narrator exhibits a tendency to temper statements regarding the future with a disclaimer of ambiguity. This is evident in Canto II, where the narrator employs a metaphor to describe Juan's slumber, subsequently expressing uncertainty about the possibility of Juan waking up, stating, "Who sleep at last, perhaps, (God only knows)" (1.1066-67). The literary representation

of the assassination of the commandant in *Don Juan* Canto V bears similarities to the stanzas found in Don Juan Canto IX that commence with the phrase "Death laughs", suggesting that they were derived from factual occurrences. This assertion can be confidently made. The inception of Byron's Canto IX of Don Juan commenced after the funerary rites held for Shelley and Williams, signifying an important point in the composition process. Marchand cites Trelawny's narrative regarding Byron's response to the putrefying remains of Williams, which the poet recognised based on teeth:

> Lord B. looking at it said — "Are we to resemble that?--why it might be the carcase of a sheep for all I can see" — and pointing to the black handkerchief — said "An old rag retains its form longer than a dead body--what a nauseous and degrading sight!" (P. 384)

Byron's poetic work expresses a philosophical acceptance of mortality as an innate aspect of the human experience. Byron expressed his response to this particular encounter through artistic expression in the form of *Don Juan* Canto IX, wherein the narrator portrays a sorrowful portrayal of mortality. The quoted excerpt, "Mark! how its lipless mouth grins without breath!" (9.88). This notion does not signify to Byron the culmination of a pilgrimage. According to Campbell (1991), "There can be little doubt that Byron believed in the immortality of the soul in some form" (73). Byron delineated his convictions in the journal *Detached Thoughts* (commenced on October 15, 1821), elucidating the rationale underpinning his assertions:

> Of the immortality of the Soul, it appears to me that there can be little doubt if we attend for a moment to the action of Mind. It is in perpetual activity. I used to doubt of it, but reflection has taught me better. . . . The Stoics, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, call the present state "a Soul which drags a Carcase"… a heavy chain, to be sure; but all chains, being material, may be shaken off. Matter is eternal, always changing, but reproduced, and, as far as we can comprehend Eternity, Eternal, and why not Mind? (Detached Thoughts #96 and #97)

Byron exhibits a lack of certainty about the necessity of death, as well as its outcome, as evidenced by the less definitive tone evident in his journal and poetic works. Jerome McGann's analysis of Byron's perspective on the significance of death, as presented in Fiery Dust (1968), is considered the most comprehensive treatment of the subject in recent scholarship. In the section entitled *Contentious Worlds*, McGann critically evaluates Byron's philosophical views as emphasising the essentiality of a sequence of lapses, referred to as imperatives, with death representing the fourth significant imperative (268). Despite the inherent ambiguity evident in Byron's dramatic works, McGann is undeterred in ascribing unwavering conviction to Byron's contemplations on the topic of mortality. According to McGanns (1968) perspective, Lord Byron perceives death as a significant and highly respected offering, bringing eternal repose. Without the experience of death, life remains incomplete. Furthermore, Byron asserts that individuals predestined for death, such as Cain and Adah, possess superior moral standing compared to both Lucifer and Jehovah (McGann, 1968: 269, 273).

Campbell develops this idea by speaking of existence and suffering along with death anxiety. The scholar was looking for a solid explanation of how Byron could live through all the sufferings in his life, being an outcast and with numerous ideas about death and old age in the poet's mind. He suggests another theory, "For Byron — as for all thinking men — it is uncertainty that sweetens life enough to make it bearable. As Mazeppa observes, uncertainty allows even the wretch to hope that tomorrow will be "the first / Of days no more deplored or curst" (755-56). We argue, however, that uncertainty, and the consolation that it might have given Byron was not the only phenomenon that soothed his pangs.

Paul H. Fry (1978) proposes to introduce the term “epitaph” when speaking of Byron’s perception of death and search for burial. To understand the ageing concepts in the poet’s works better, he suggests looking at it through a broader prism, considering issues which preoccupied the poet, such as a sense of accomplishment, literary inheritance and pride. Byron says Fry, wrote a great deal of commemorative verse and there is a clear connection between burial and poetry itself in Byron’s case. Byron’s preoccupation with His epitaph is the most prominent during the turbulent period around 1816. This was also reflected in some of his works of the period. For instance, Wilson Knight claims that in *Childe Harold*, Byron approaches Europe as “one vast theatre of tombstones” (Knight, 1939: 210). Indeed, one must understand that in Romantic literature what is dead and what is vital are two faces of a single poetical character. Fry suggests that for the Romantics, life and death are not primarily a temporal sequence but are equally potential in any single moment, depending on how that moment is affected by the imagination (1978: 417). The scholar is convinced that the epitaph does not fill out the space of the external world but rather empties it, leaving a void for the monumental self to cover. Indeed, memory and oblivion are important for the author because both serve him well on his way to salvation and liberation. Byron meticulously chooses symbols in his poetry which can bury one’s painful past and remember the moments which give him the strength to keep fighting. A horse in *Mazeppa* or a ship in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* is the symbol that vividly demonstrates this: both the horse and the ship take the Byronic Hero from one place (painful past) and bring him to the shore of hope, the new beginning.

Childe Harold contains another important metaphor referring to death — an all-devouring dark blue ocean which would put an end to all sufferings and wanderings of

the protagonist. The ocean is where man sinks "without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown" (IV.179). Furthermore, Byron seems to admit that the ocean alone is unfurrowed by mortality: "Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow? / Such as Creation's dawn beheld, Thou rollest now" (IV.182). The power of thought in this passage has no limits. Suddenly the ocean resembles a true Byronic Hero and Lord Byron himself: "Each Zone / Obeys thee — thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone" (IV.183). When looking at the ocean, Childe Harold does not feel afraid, but quite the contrary, he has made his peace with it; and so Byron and Childe Harold come to terms with death, too:

> And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
> Of youthful sports was on thy breasts to be
> Borne, like thy bubbles, onward; from a boy
> I wantoned with thy breakers - they to me
> Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
> Made them a terror - 'twas a pleasing fear,
> For I was as it were a child of thee,
> And trusted to thy billows far and near,
> And laid my hand upon thy mane as I do here. (IV.184. 1648-1656)

These lines demonstrate Harold's (and Byron's) readiness and willingness to meet death; they show the character's understanding of the inevitability of death as well as its ubiquity. Shelley's tribute to Byron in *Adonais* is quite well-fitting in perspective of Byron's treatment of death and what lies beyond it: "The poet of *Childe Harold* is, precisely, "the Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame / Over his living head like Heaven is bent, / An early but enduring monument."

We argue that Lord Byron's works represent great value for the investigation of the impact of death on the literary characters and writers. Byron is one of the poets who courageously explore the uncomfortable and quite frequently avoided topic of mortality; as Wass states, "Despite the positive impact of the death awareness movement there still

is much ambivalence about the topic and many people find it easier to avoid the subject than to deal with it" (1984: 1). Even our contemporaries admit that the society has distanced itself from the topic as though it is something not desirable to be dealt with or spoken about; as Johnson states, "In our world, death generally takes place outside the home, usually in hospitals, and sometimes behind curtains. We don't live with it; if we encounter it at all, it is in isolated environments. For this reason, we fear it, abhor it, or ignore it altogether. We are no longer familiar with it" (Johnston, 2013: 5). British Romantic poets, including Lord Byron, have showcased their engagement with the evolving attitudes towards death and dying. Through their literary works, they have provided readers with a distinctive chance to concede to the notion of death calmly, as they have. Therefore, their literary contributions are of great significance in shaping the readers' outlook towards the concept of mortality. In Graveyard School of Poetry, for instance, some poems dwell on real or imaginary promenades to the cemetery and speak of death in a gracious, elevating and truly romantic way. According to Johnston (2013), the writings of Byron exemplify the distinctiveness of Romantic mortality in contrast to previous eras in terms of both experience and comprehension:

> During the Renaissance, cosmology had drop-kicked the Earth from the center of the universe to its outskirts; during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the new sciences of natural history and geology were transforming a relatively young 6000-year-old planet into a gray-haired, tired, old rock estimated by one contemporary to be as many as 1.5 million years old. That is less by about three orders of magnitude than the current accepted estimate of six billion years but also three orders of magnitude greater than what Bishop Ussher had calculated using biblical genealogies. For this reason, geology contributed to the climate of religious skepticism that emerged in the wake of the Enlightenment. Death the Leveler fell from power, and Death the Crystallizer assumed its throne. Furthermore, the troubling idea of a very old earth cast the plight of the living and the unborn in a new light. The longer socioeconomic and political inequality continued to define human culture, the greater the number of souls that Death would cast to the margins of history. (Johnston, 2013: 9-10)

These facts only enhance how distanced society is from the concept of death and this makes Lord Byron's chosen works even more important, for they help us understand more about mortality, and death anxiety from the literary perspective, learning from Byron's characters and Lord Byron himself.

It is contended that Lord Byron possessed an awareness of the inescapability of death and the natural process of ageing. Nevertheless, the poet fully embraced life and its opportunities. The onset of novel and testing experiences would occupy Byron's thoughts, leaving death as a distant concern. Thus, Byron opted for life over death. It was not because Byron was not afraid but rather because he was aware of it; knowing and realising its inevitability made every day precious and brighter. His characters live their lives to the fullest while travelling (Childe Harold) or choosing to love whom they want to (Mazeppa and Don Juan), no matter the price. It is clear from both Byron's works and personal life, that death indeed scared him, but we tend to believe that he was much less afraid of physical death than of the literary one, because this would mean only one thing to him — oblivion. Byron's idea of eternal fame, the rebirth of a literary and real personality as well as survival through his works will be broadly investigated in Chapter V of this dissertation.

4.4 Rebirth and Byronic Heroes

According to Paltin Sturdza, "As situation, the archetype can express a change or an action signifying a process (the Rebirth, the Quest); as a figure, the archetype delimits an entity designating thus an agent or an actor (the Hero, the Wise Old Man, the Child, the Mother, the Trickster)" (1975: 990). In the selected poems of Lord Byron readers may witness a unique and significant process — *Rebirth of a Hero*. Literary gerontology has challenged conceptions related to life stages and time by questioning them, but it always takes into consideration that those concepts are set by human beings themselves, rebirth being one of them. Unfortunately, contemporary society is still processing the research developed in ageing studies, hence certain concepts (including rebirth) happen to have very little light shed on them. Jan Baars argues that "[a]lthough aging and old age have in a relatively short time become — even in quantitative terms — such an important part of the late modern life course, thinking about the meaning of these developments has not kept up" (2010: 1). Similarly, Cloe and Ray state that we "still lack an appropriate language for addressing basic moral and spiritual issues in our ageing society" (2010: 1). Nevertheless, Baars, along with other scholars intended to shape the term of "rebirth" in ageing studies and project it onto the literal gerontology. Baars and Arendt point out that in ageing studies one should not view rebirth as a one-time-only opportunity, but as a gift that a person receives every single day of his or her life: "Human beings are endowed with the capacity to wonder, to begin, to start something new, or to do the unexpected. Natality is not only something that happens at birth, but it qualifies human lives from birth to death, inspiring life with hope, creativity, critique, rebirth, and the emergence of new horizons" (2017; 1958: 236). Heidegger (1996) has developed similar ideas in *Being and Time*, where he emphasizes that our existence is one of being born and reborn, but he claimed that only facing death could

bring our existence to a radical understanding of our authentic possibilities. This brings us to the thought that rebirth is a chance to start one's life afresh at any point of their life path, yet one can make a new start carrying the wisdom and experience from their past.

Rebirth in literature represents a dramatic and ground-shaking character transformation due to some events that change the life of a character completely. According to Susan Hill Connor (1979), it is possible for an individual characterised as an anti-hero to ultimately transform into a hero. The author expresses a sense of optimism regarding this potential outcome. According to the scholar, in literary works of a character's rebirth, one may observe a tense combat between a human being and his opposing drive. It is argued that these characters' inner battles are based on eternal notions reflected in the oldest of scriptures. The concept of rebirth takes its roots not only from the biblical tradition — one may trace it back even to pagan times. Frazer (1990) argues that the death-rebirth myth is present in almost all cultural mythologies, and is acted out in terms of growing seasons and vegetation. The myth is symbolised by the death (i.e., final harvest) and rebirth (i.e., spring) of the god of vegetation.

According to Jung (1958), the Rebirth archetype can manifest in two distinct forms. The first is characterised by the restoration of life after death, while the second involves the magical extension and improvement of life through reparative actions. We believe that Lord Byron used rebirth as a powerful tool to demonstrate that his characters could cleanse themselves from the sins committed in the past and begin a new life, far from their motherland. It should be stated that the selected poems of Lord Byron possess several common features about the concept of rebirth; we shall analyse them in this subsection to seek some links between Byron's vision of rebirth in poetry and his search for it in his own life. His ageing transformations both psychological and physical ones,

reflected in the selected poems, will provide the readers with a more complete vision of how Byron's views on ageing changed during his life and how this affected the figure of the Byronic Hero.

When a Byronic Hero undergoes rebirth, he receives a chance to fix things in his life, to begin it in a new way, so we may also treat Byronic rebirth as an *opportunity* granted to the characters. This opportunity is something that Lord Byron himself longed for[26], but this remained only wishful thinking. Having control over time seemed a task impossible to achieve, yet the poet did not dive up his ambition. Rebirth in the selected works of Byron, as far as we are concerned, seems to be a consequence of escapism — it naturally evolves from it, like a beam of hope, a promise of a new life, with wounds from the past yet to be healed. Despite every work being unique in its way, there is a similar pattern that repeats for the selected Byronic Heroes — Childe Harold, Mazeppa and Don Juan — on their way to rebirth — they are undesirable in their homelands, they seek to escape and finally manage to do it, they overcome difficulties, suffering and many disappointments and, in the end, get to that so much desired garden of Eden with a new chapter to begin.

One of the most common Biblical symbols used by Byron in the selected works is *water*. Water may be seen in various forms in literature including waterfalls, oceans, rivers, seas and streams. The most common meanings of it are life, purity, and cleansing of one's sinfulness. It grants Byronic Heroes an opportunity to change their lives and take a fresh start. Water is crucial to life and growth and it mainly appears as a birth and rebirth symbol. Lord Byron puts a strong emphasis on the symbolism of water and the

[26] see chapter one for more information on Lord Byron's biography

impact it has on his characters. For instance, water serves as an intense symbol in Lord Byron's *Mazeppa*:

> Methought the dash of waves was nigh –
> There was a gleam too of the sky,
> Studded with stars – it is no dream –
> The Wild Horse swims the wilder stream!
> The bright broad river's gushing tide
> Sweeps winding onward far and wide,
> And we are halfway struggling o'er
> To yon unknown and silent shore –
> The waters broke my hollow trance,
> And with a temporary strength
> My stiffened limbs were rebaptized… (14. 579-589)

Here the reader may observe how water becomes Mazeppa's salvation in the moment of despair and readiness to meet death. It gives him strength and "rebaptizes" his body, which in other words may be called a spiritual rebirth. Introducing water to this poem, Byron makes a respectful nod to Biblical traditions and symbolism.

As it was mentioned before, water is used by Byron as a powerful and versatile literary instrument; therefore, its role in each of the selected poems should not be underestimated. If it was a symbol of rebaptizing and atonement in *Mazeppa*, its interpretation in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage was multifaceted. For instance, in Canto I, we may observe that water is treated as a new beginning, separating the protagonist from his bittersweet past:

> Adieu, adieu! my native shore
> Fades o'er the waters blue;
> The Night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
> And shrieks the wild seamew.
> Yon Sun that sets upon the sea
> We follow in his flight;
> Farewell awhile to him and thee,
> My native Land — Good Night! (I.1.118-125)

Childe Harold sets on a journey in search of a better life, hopeful for a bright future, leaving behind his motherland. A slight shade of nostalgia penetrates his heart; with the sour "Adieu!", it is almost apparent that Harold does not intend to ever return to England. It seems that Childe Harold made a firm decision to change his life and live it somewhere else. In the introductory segment *To Ianthe* preceding Canto I, Lord Byron conveys the arduous decision that was undertaken to pursue an alternative and more fulfilling existence through the means of escape:

> And now Childe Harold was sore sick at heart,
> And from his fellow bacchanals would flee;
> 'Tis said, at times the sullen tear would start,
> But Pride congealed the drop within his ee:
> Apart he stalked in joyless reverie,
> And from his native land resolved to go,
> And visit scorching climes beyond the sea;
> With pleasure drugged he almost longed for woe,
> And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below. (I.6. 46-54)

The decision to leave England can be considered bittersweet, because apart from escaping the sour scandals and hypocrisy, the protagonist leaves behind his friends and family, making perhaps the most difficult choice in life. The only relieving thought was that of hope for a better future awaiting over the vast blue seas and the unseen horizons. We believe that it was not only the unrestrained spirit of adventures that was driving the protagonist but rather a strong inner desire to change his life and to win another chance to live his life the way he wished. The protagonist's intentions to make a brand new start are confirmed in Canto II where he admires the solemn beauty of water surrounding him from all sides, as if welcoming the coming great changes:

> Epirus' bounds recede, and mountains fail;
> Tired of up-gazing still, the wearied eye
> Reposes gladly on as smooth a vale
> As ever Spring yclad in grassy die:
> Ev'n on a plain no humble beauties lie,
> Where some bold river breaks the long expanse,

And woods along the banks are waving high,
Whose shadows in the glassy waters dance,
Or with the moonbeam sleep in midnight's solemn trance. (II.54. 478-486)

Peter Cochran (2011) dedicated special interest to these lines and linked them to the real events from Lord Byron's life. As it appears to be, the solemnity of water was seen as the new opportunity in life welcoming Childe Harold on his venture to face his destiny as well as it was for Lord Byron. Water, here, may be compared to time which can sometimes rush in haste with its unstoppable strength and velocity or scare with its monstrous waves or it can stand still capturing the precious moments, charming and solemn in its grace.

In *Don Juan*, Byron depicts water as a means of relief; something that his character was desperately in need of, in Canto II he makes sure to emphasise the drama around it and how rapidly the water's healing virtues revive life in his character back again:

And the same night there fell a shower of rain,
For which their mouths gaped, like the cracks of earth
When dried to summer dust; till taught by pain
Men really know not what good water's worth;
If you had been in Turkey or in Spain,
Or with a famish'd boat's-crew had your berth,
Or in the desert heard the camel's bell,
You 'd wish yourself where Truth isóin a well.

It pour'd down torrents, but they were no richer
Until they found a ragged piece of sheet,
Which served them as a sort of spongy pitcher,
And when they deem'd its moisture was complete
They wrung it out, and though a thirsty ditcher
Might not have thought the scanty draught so sweet
As a full pot of porter, to their thinking
They ne'er till now had known the joys of drinking.

And their baked lips, with many a bloody crack,
Suck'd in the moisture, which like nectar stream'd;
Their throats were ovens, their swoln tongues were black,
As the rich man's in hell, who vainly scream'd
To beg the beggar, who could not rain back
A drop of dew, when every drop had seem'd

To taste of heavenó If this be true, indeed
Some Christians have a comfortable creed. (II.84-86)

Water is presented as powerful means to cleanse and heal the characters — it is apparent that they were anxiously awaiting it, unable to bare the weight on their shoulders any longer. Salvation and other Christian motives united in Canto II, revealing to the readers that Don Juan was in search of a remedy to ease his pain and receive a long-desired mercy. In *Don Juan*, rebirth is put shoulder to shoulder with atonement, for it grants the character a chance to make a new beginning.

Rebirth seems to be omnipresent in the selected poems of Byron and contributes to the literary gerontology's vision of a character's transformation. By offering positive representations of age through a rebellious hero figure, who is portrayed as a beacon of hope and martyr, Byron makes an important contribution to literary and ageing scholarship. Through his selected works, the poet calls for the need to create new cultural models for ageing men through the optimistic representation of the transformative experience of the Byronic Hero. In summary, by using the trope of rebirth in his literary world, Byron demonstrates how, over time, the perceptions of love, hatred, revenge, atonement, escape, and marital and extramarital relationships undergo significant changes and generate new understandings of ageing. Other important notions in life and literature regarding eternal life and fame will be explored in the next subsection of the present study.

4.5 Life and Death. Literary creation outlives the creator

Time's ruins built eternity's mansions.
James Joyce, Ulysses, 1922

O years! and age! farewell:
Behold I go,
Where I do know
Infinity to dwell.

And these mine eyes shall see
At all times, how they
Are lost i' th' sea
Of vast eternity: –

Where never moon shall sway
The stars; but she,
And night, shall be
Drown'd in one endless day.
Robert Herrick, Eternity

He who binds to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy
He who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sunrise.
William Blake, Eternity

Literature disposes of a unique power to control and even defeat time. Hence, if one becomes a successful writer, he or she might ask himself or herself the question of whether his or her literary work will survive through time and continue to attract readers long after the author's death. This idea echoes in some scholars' works, for instance, Jeff Alessandrelli states that,

> James Joyce wrote *Ulysses* in 1922, no doubt hoping his own work would one day occupy one of those mansions [eternity's mansions]. For Joyce the passage of time represented the elastic nature of eternality; the longer a thing is read and studied the more alive it grows. James Joyce is long dead; *Ulysses* yet lives. It further goes without saying that scores of writers, 20th century and otherwise, agreed and agree with Joyce vis-à-vis the eternality of well-crafted literature. (2016:35)

The scholar here mentions how a literary work can preserve and prolong the life and fame of its creator. We believe that these perspectives can be projected onto Lord Byron and his works as well. Due to the rising popularity of his works, one may claim that Byron and his Byronic Heroes keep on living and influencing readers throughout the centuries. Alessandrelli mentions the following idea, "What made a book come to life during its creation will hopefully retain that vivacity after its author has passed on" (2016: 35). He later underlines the importance of creating literary works that shall outlive their authors and preserve their relevance.

The unification of real-life events with fiction in poetry pushed Byron closer than ever to the idea of capturing the time by creating a literary work that could represent a figure capable of attracting readers of any historical time. By creating a halo of scandalousness, mystery, adventurousness and passion, the poet was laying the ground for his influence on future generations of readers around the world and the monument of his Byronic Hero proudly towering above the temporary and mortal. By pushing his characters to the ground, humiliating them, then punishing, cleansing and finally saving them, he hand-crafts his very own way of survival, making it possible for his works to outlive their creator. The stories about Byronic Heroes selected for this dissertation serve as examples of such a "way of survival" and prove to be substantial in different historical times. A portrait of a hero that has certain flaws yet intends to put effort into achieving the greater good for the world against all odds remains pertinent now, in the 21st century.

The question of literary relevance and impact on the future generations of readers was explored by Allan Gurganus (2012) who observes that a few notions have to be kept in mind whilst deciding upon the subject of literary works outliving their authors.

Garganus believes that to survive, a story needs to have a lasting impression on its readers and to "vote across time". It seems that this idea balances on a very fragile unity of personal writings and fiction, something that one may rather instantly associate with Lord Byron, "To qualify as immortal literature, writing must first be very personal, then almost instantly actually not" (Garganus, 2012: 148). In 1819, Keats communicates with his brother in a letter, "The great beauty of poetry is that it makes everything, every place interesting" (Keats, 1820: 112). This idea may be traced further in Garganus's article where he states the following; "The greatest writing is that which is most luminously and searchingly mortal. Us? We are in Eternity's larval stage. But our literature, that's where, at our best, we might end up. Paradise is real: you will see it plain, it's black and white" (2012: 151). Literature's straightforwardness is what brings it one step closer to eternity.

Byron's direct and explicit way of writing granted him literary immortality along with fame and admiration regardless of the scandals and whispers around his name. Byronic Hero acquires many faces, but in every one of them, Lord Byron's features can be seen and spotted. Byron finally got his moment of eternal triumph — through his meticulously constructed characters that keep their very own uniqueness, but still, keep on resembling their fellow creator — no one else but Lord Byron. Even though the poet passed away in the prime of his life, in the mid-thirties, his poetry survived and continues to carry the torch of his ideas and values, passing it on to the next generations of readers. We believe that Byron's discretion about passion presents ageing studies with some valuable materials revealing the essence of a Byronic Hero and his creator. In the poet's own words, he truly lived only when he loved. This is vividly demonstrated in *Don Juan's* Canto I:

I have no more to say, but linger still,
And dare not set my seal upon this sheet,
And yet I may as well the task fulfil,
My misery can scarce be more complete:
I had not lived till now, could sorrow kill;
Death shuns the wretch who fain the blow would meet,
And I must even survive this last adieu,
And bear with life, to love and pray for you! (I. 196)

Love is the power which drives all Byron's aspects of life and has a tremendous impact on his writings, many of which, as it was demonstrated in the previous chapters of the present study, reflect on the poet's amorous adventures. He sees that love is indeed what may survive through centuries, be it love of his literary works, love of his mysterious personality or simply love of good poetry. Byron draws a distinct boundary between the enduring emotion of love, commonly referred to as evergreen, and the transient, as expounded upon in *Don Juan* Canto II,

Wellówell, the world must turn upon its axis,
And all mankind turn with it, heads or tails,
And live and die, make love and pay our taxes,
And as the veering wind shifts, shift our sails;
The king commands us, and the doctor quacks us,
The priest instructs, and so our life exhales,
A little breath, love, wine, ambition, fame,
Fighting, devotion, dust, óperhaps a name. (II.4)

These pangs of tearing oneself apart between the eternal and temporary pleasures mix perfectly creating a picture of Byron, who managed to make the impossible possible — he demonstrated to his readers that there is only one fragile and uncertain step between death and eternity. In Canto II of *Don Juan*, the poet delves more deeply into the aforementioned topic,

It was such pleasure to behold him, such
Enlargement of existence to partake
Nature with him, to thrill beneath his touch,
To watch him slumbering, and to see him wake:

To live with him forever were too much;
But then the thought of parting made her quake;
He was her own, her ocean-treasure, cast
Like a rich wreckóher first love, and her last. (II. 173)

Passion penetrated not only Lord Byron's life but his poetry, too. We suggest that Byron firmly believed in the power of love and beauty, they seemed to be the main driving forces of his earthy and literary life. The poet also gracefully celebrates the beauty and its healing power. In *Mazeppa*, he admits that it saved his life, "But that I lived, and was released / From adding to the Vulture's feast" (19. 815-816).

Byron's messages about love and beauty define him as well as his poetry in the most prominent way possible, due to his odes to the values that can challenge and survive the time's merciless pace. Byron's works, and in particular, his selected poems, reveal that rebirth and ageing transformations serve as tools to face more effectively some painful occurrences in life and to understand them from a more profound point of view. These ideas are also reflected in the Romantic conception of creativity. Byronic Heroes age, and while that happens, they learn that, through their emotional expressions and sincerity, they can find new meanings in life, discover new possibilities and face various problems more efficiently. Thanks to their courageousness, they become wiser and more self-assured; due to the concepts of rebirth and eternity which they discover along the way, the fear of ageing or falling into oblivion no longer intrudes into their lives. This was, continues to be and certainly will be an issue of interest for the wide circles of readers around the world. If certain details of our dissertation still require further investigation, one thing remains rather clear — Byron's selected works outlived their author and are now more popular and relevant than ever.

Conclusions

This chapter has shown that Lord Byron and his characters' process of getting older unveils the reader's new understanding of life, self-confidence, maturity regardless of age, wisdom and profound inner strength. In the present study, a thorough examination was conducted on three prominent concepts that lie within the purview of ageing studies, as explored in the literary works of renowned poet George Gordon Byron, which include *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Mazeppa*, and *Don Juan*. The primary objective of this analysis was to elucidate the dynamics of the ageing process and to investigate the revelation of Byron's style and voice. These concepts are seen in his poems as the sword and shield guarding Byron's authenticity and honesty with himself and his readers; the genesis of the characters' inner transformations, which also resonates in Byron's evolution throughout his lifetime, can be attributed to his vivid portrayals. Despite the negative criticism that his works received at first, the author proceeds with his writing, bringing and distributing his ideas to a wider audience, courageously defending his position. Byron's major works and personal letters reveal that although ageing does not make the writing process easier, it brings depth to it and makes it fearless.

As reflected both in his poetry and his accounts, the author's initial fears of crossing the established societal boundaries concerning "free love" were replaced with a wild and rebellious spirit, exposing Byron's true self to society and his readership. These metamorphoses are seen in the development of his characters and his poetic voice. In his poetry, love is presented as a fruit of passion, true and naked. The reconciliation with his final years' experience as depicted in the writer's representations of the lover's passion, pain, mourning, and loss of a loved one, also shows that the ageing experience grants Byron in the mature age new perceptions of life. Byron's chosen works exhibit

how true, authentic feelings bring colours into one's life and liberate a person's spirit; they also contribute to the idea of how unique and timeless Byron's poetry is.

Byron's selected works also show how the poet was concerned about beauty and his physical defect. His desire to seem flawless only proves how much vulnerable Lord Byron was and grants us a unique insight into the mind of a Byronic Hero, permitting us to understand the reason for his creation and explaining his deeds. Byron's poems illustrate that the author was very much longing for perfection and balance between body and mind in both his life and his literary works. For Byron, reflecting on his autobiographical moments in a poetic form was both therapeutic and empowering, because it helped the author to find inner peace with himself and to leave a legacy for future generations.

The poet's preoccupation with death throughout his oeuvre undergoes some significant changes as it is reflected in the evolution of his characters. In his selected works, death is exhibited as inevitable, but, simultaneously, as a path of atonement that brings more sense to one's existence. Byron's initial fear soon transforms into a mature approach to the concept of death and he turns to the idea of celebrating life, capturing the moment and pursuing eternal fame.

On the whole, Byron's selected works contribute to the development of a more comprehensive layout of ageing studies concepts in Romantic literature, which adds more value and dimension to his poetry. Even if Byron's selected works depict a great deal of suffering and pain, the Byronic Heroes in those works are capable of finding their inner strength to carry on with their journey of self-discovery. Byron's selected poems show that growing older, despite being salted with losses and brutal challenges is a movement to a great self-discovery or even re-discovery. As the writer and his

Byronic Heroes age, they become even more determined to be completely free through the liberating power of their voices, dreams and feelings.

This chapter has also demonstrated that Byron's explorations of the ageing dilemmas in his selected works turned out to be rather fruitful, for we discovered how his characters gained wisdom, courage, maturity and self-confidence after having undergone some daunting challenges in their lives and somehow miraculously managing to survive. As reflected in both Byron's poems and his accounts (primarily his letters to friends and family members), the author's caution with the notions of time, ageing and death was replaced with a reassuring and brave exploration of the alternative ways to face them which resulted in being successful. The aforementioned alterations are perceptible as one traces the developmental trajectories of the central protagonists, delineating their metamorphosis both before and after the arduous ordeals that the poet has astutely devised for them to conquer. Specifically, the evolution of the characters Childe Harold, Mazeppa and Don Juan, before and after their respective experiences of pilgrimage, survival of a perilous horse ride across the Ukrainian steppes as a penalty for engaging in extramarital relations, and involvement in amorous escapades with a married woman, respectively, form a pertinent basis for analysing the depicted changes. Although Byron is concerned about death throughout his literary works, the perception of mortality also undergoes some dramatic changes, as is reflected in the evolution of the Byronic Heroes and his poetic voice. The poet's selected works emphasise how the preoccupation with ageing and death was pushed to the background and substituted by the celebration of life and love along with the rediscovery of one's true self.

On the whole, Byron's writings contribute to the development of a more comprehensive culture of ageing. Despite reflecting pain and suffering in his selected

works, Byron manages to lead his readers from darkness to light. His characters are capable of finding immense stamina and endurance, they demonstrate strength to carry on with their life path, fearlessly stepping onto the thorns it is sprinkled with. As the poet and his characters age, they long for liberation and their voices become stronger. By setting this example and mixing personal experiences with fiction, Byron manages to transmit and eternalise his ideas as well as challenge time.

CONCLUSIONS

Lord Byron demonstrated from his earliest literary steps a spirit of rebellion and a desire to make a statement about the freedom of being different and, most importantly, the freedom of being one's true self. This thesis has attempted to demonstrate the power of ageing transformation which three selected Byronic Heroes had to undergo as an essential part of their character's development. The analysis of Lord Byron's literary world has unveiled how his literary characters, over time, grow, mature, rebel, fall in love and escape — all to become astonishingly wise and seasoned for their relatively young age.

As it has been argued, Lord Byron's success went shoulder to shoulder with scandals, rumours and society's strict judgement. This dissertation aims to demonstrate that even if the poet's popularity was under the shadow of scandal, and openly expressing respect or admiration for Byron was frowned upon, his works never lost their importance. Byron's works display issues that maintain their relevance up to this day: male sexuality, ageing problems, and confrontations with society and its norms. Both at the dawn of his literary career and in his late works, Byron continues to promote ideas of ageing, rebellion and escapism and sheds light on issues such as death. Byron's selected works raise important questions about how a man who is an outcast can manage to preserve his identity in different social groups and how his ageing is affected by some dramatic events in his personal life as well as established ageing stereotypes and double standards. This thesis has tried to reveal that Byron's selected poems add valuable insights into the issue of male experiences of ageing, and challenge social constructions and stereotypes.

This study has established a special focus on the ageing and maturing of a person's ideas on the topic. Byron's poetry and personal letters permit us to have a closer look at how his selected characters mature and transform during the most challenging periods in their lives and how these changes affect their attitudes and self-perception. In light of the foregoing, it is worth noting that the self-perception of Byron's characters at the outset of the poem undergoes a remarkable transformation as they make progress in their journey. Through their experiences, they undergo a process of growth, acquiring fresh insights into the world around them and, significantly, into their nature and character. Each poem is a journey, where Byronic Heroes get a chance to rediscover themselves and finally see their true essence. As Lord Byron and his characters grow older, they face an inevitable conflict between their escapist and rebellious self. Their restless search of acceptance in different societies is a reflection of Lord Byron himself trying to fit in and suffering from criticism.

The poet's most successful writings turned out to be the most scandalous as well, due to the uncomfortable questions asked and difficult truths discussed. As McGann proved, Byron dared to vocalise issues on which society turned a blind eye for centuries: male sexuality in the context of ageing, sexual liberation from society's strict norms and the restless search for veracity even at the cost of his reputation and social rank. His characters, from the poems selected for this dissertation, demonstrate a stumbling resemblance to the poet himself. By bringing forward the hard issues, Byron and his poetry were very much criticised and one may even consider him a martyr of the literary world. The poet gained admiration and respect only after his death.

Although Byron never belittled the importance of sexual freedom, he also promoted the idea of true love in many of his works, especially the poems selected for this dissertation. This idea becomes stronger and more vivid in his mid- and late-life works.

This study places particular emphasis on how Byron's literary figures in their late twenties and thirties navigate the trajectory of ageing and contend with the apprehension of mortality. The examination of Byron's selected poems has revealed that human sexuality and the desire to find love have many faces which change and undergo transformations through the course of ageing of a human being. The selected Byronic Heroes emerge as sexually active individuals who explore their bodies and sexuality in ways which were frowned upon by society back in the old times, such as open extramarital relations and relations with individuals of the same gender. The poet concurrently apprises his audience that falling in love with married individuals can potentially inflict suffering and jeopardy upon men. The dangers of such sexual passions have been illustrated in the adventures that Byronic Heroes experience abroad, especially in Italy (Don Juan) and in Poland, where young and passionate Mazeppa is caught with his married lover and later brutally punished for seducing her.

One of the fears that is reflected in Byron's selected poems is that of facing the inevitable — death. This thesis has highlighted the narrative of escapism, but this is not only an escape from society's norms or one's self, but a risky, balancing-on-the-edge-of-a-knife racing with death itself. Byron's oeuvre interrogates the perceptions of the fear of death in society during the period of Romanticism and reveals how the ageing process affects the attitude with which Byronic Heroes accept the inescapable fate. Instead of treating the death as a means of destruction and pure evil, Byron and his characters demonstrate how the idea of dying shapes personalities and encourages their inner growth as individuals. This thesis has also shown that in Byron's selected poems, the rebel-escapist narrative has a logical explanation once the readers get acquainted with the protagonists' life-changing experiences. In Byron's selected works, the Byronic Heroes exhibit wisdom and courage once they face perilous, near-death struggles. Death

is not depicted as an executioner, but a ground-shaking, pivoting experience, that is capable of changing a Byronic Hero beyond recognition. To sum up, death, the narrative of dying and ageing do not diminish the selected Byronic Heroes, but, on the contrary, have an immense impact on their growth and development of their true identities and expressions.

Pain and suffering also occupy a special place in Byron's poetry. A close reading of his selected poems has revealed that pivoting points in the life of Byronic Heroes occurred when they had to undergo a period of suffering. Suffering indeed is fearful, because one is always aware that it comes with pain. Throughout his poetry, Byron invites his readership to seize the moment and enjoy every moment of their lives. Only having undergone pangs of suffering, claims Byron, can one truly appreciate the value of life. The analysis of his selected poems has revealed tight links between the process of growing older and the tormenting of one's mind and body. Pain enhances the development of wisdom along with precious life experience, making one reconsider his values in life. In sum, by confronting their pains, the Byronic Heroes truly liberate themselves and encounter new opportunities in life.

Many issues have helped in the analysis of this dissertation. We have been able to see Byron's transformation from a scandalous rebel into an escapist who has grown and become wiser with the years. Similar changes may be traced in all three selected Byronic Heroes who undergo challenges, pain, and suffering, they are outcasts and scandalous, but their spirit is never broken. Life teaches them and with the help of crucial experiences in their lives, they become reborn. As it has been proven by Woodward, Zeilig and other scholars, whose works we have used to develop this dissertation, literary gerontology brings new shades into literary analysis. Age helps literary characters to explore different sides of their personality and undergo various

transforming experiences. Age brings characters' wisdom which can be acquired if one has lived enough and experienced enough to get a wider vision of things. And, what is crucial to our thesis is, age along with time, gives literary characters a unique opportunity to reflect on their values and fix old mistakes. It is not an objective of this study to cover all aspects of gerontology but to understand literary gerontology through Lord Byron's selected poetry. Close reading and analysis of his works have opened new perspectives for further investigations in the field of literary gerontology. Among other examples, one may reveal several issues never before discussed out loud (until Lord Byron started writing about them), such as homosexuality, adultery, amorous adventures, concerns with physical signs of ageing, political disputes and discreet details of the Byronic Heroes as they aged and transformed both physically and mentally. Thus, this dissertation was written in the hope to encourage the academic world to take a new look and perspective on the studies of old age, to rethink the established ideas and to be open-minded to new innovative visions in the respective fields.

To conclude, Lord Byron's figure is the beacon of hope for those who are trying to search for new solutions and analyse the answers about time transformations proposed by the poet back in the Romantic times, which, however, do not lose their relevance up to this day. Byron's poems have proven his advocacy for the outcasts and rebels in society; the poet's support of the ones who struggle stays firm throughout the whole analysis of his poems, it proved to be his life philosophy — to protect the neglected and abandoned. However, Byron's rebellious spirit and scandalous writings turned him into an outcast, a *persona non grata* in many social circles and even in his beloved England. Byron's works gained recognition only after the poet's death thus demonstrating that during his life the society was not quite ready for his wild and free spirit. His poems

stand on two pillars of his philosophy of personality dualism — rebellion and escapism. His poetry is soaked into the pangs his Byronic Heroes experience during their transition from rebels into escapists and vice versa. It seems that Byron's calling as a poet is to reveal the hidden difficulties of ageing. The willingness to make a brand new start in a faraway land in the poems selected for this thesis is a sign that Byronic Heroes learn from their past mistakes, accept all mishaps and embrace the wisdom which comes not only with age but with the taste of bitter experiences they have to overcome during their lives. This thesis has shown how time and ageing transformations have influenced both Byron and his characters; due to his immense courage, he managed to light up the torch of liberation during the Romantic period and carry his message through criticism and exile.

WORKS CITED

PRIMARY SOURCES

Byron, George. *The Major Works including Don Juan and Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

Byron, George. *Mazeppa*. John Murray Publishing, 1819.

Byron, George. *Don Juan*. John Murray Publishing, 1819.

Byron, George. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. John Murray Publishing, 1812.

Byron, George. *Hours of Idleness.* S. and J. Ridge, 1807.

Byron, George. *Poems on Different Occasions*. S. and J. Ridge, 1807.

Byron, George. *The Giaour*. T. Davison, 1813.

Byron, George. *The Bride of Abydos*. T. Davison, 1813.

Byron, George. *The Corsair*. T. Davison, 1814.

Byron, George. *Lara*. T. Davison, 1814.

Byron, George. *Parisina*. J. Davison for J. Murray, 1816.

Byron, G. *Fugitive Pieces*. John Murray, 1898.

Byron, George. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers: A Satire*. Kessinger Publishing, 1820.

Prothero R.I., editor. *The Works Of Lord Byron, Letters and Journals,* Vol. 1, John Murray, 1822.

The Siege of Corinth. London: J. Davison for J. Murray, 1816.

Moore, T., Scott, Lord J., Sir Walter, editors. *The Works of Lord Byron: complete in one volume: with notes by multiple authors*, John Murray, 1837.

Byron, G, Lamb, Lady Caroline, Nathan Isaac. *Fugitive Pieces and Reminiscences of Lord Byron*. Wentworth Press, 2016.

OTHER SOURCES

Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, Vol.1, spring 1798.

Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, Vol. 5, summer 1800.

Edinburg Weekly Journal, 1824.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Abdel-Khalek, A. "Death anxiety in clinical and non-clinical groups." *Death Study*, vol. 29, no.3, 2005, pp. 251-9.

Abraham, A., Kutner, J.S., Beaty, B. "Suffering at the end of life in the setting of low physical symptom distress." *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, vol. 9, no,3, 2006, pp. 658-65.

Adams G, Turner H, Bucks R. "The experience of body dissatisfaction in men." *Body Image,* vol. 2, no.3, 2005, pp. 271–83.

Adler, T. "Ageism: Alive and Kicking." *Associations for Psychological Science*, vol. 1, 2013, pp. 1-3.

Alessandrelli, J. "Poem against Selfies." *Prairie Schooner,* vol. 89, no. 2, 2015, pp. 121-126.

Anamika, P. "Individualism: The Romantic Hero." *Research Gate*, 2013. *Research Gate,* www.researchgate.net/publication/258245021_Individualism_The_Romantic_Hero

Arber, S., Ginn, J. "Gender and inequalities in health in later life." *Social Science and Medicine*, vol. 36, no. 1, 1993, pp. 33-46.

Arnold, M. *Culture and Anarchy and Other Selected Prose*. Penguin UK, 2018.

Angus, J., Reeve, P. "Ageism: A Threat to "Aging Well" in the 21st Century." *Journal of Applied Gerontology,* vol. 25, no. 2, 2006, pp.137–152.

Anixt, A. *Istoria literaturii engleze.* Editura Ştiinţifică, 1965.

Assmann, J. *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination.* Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Baars, J. "Critical turns of aging, narrative and time." *International Journal of Ageing and Later Life*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2012, pp. 143-165.

Baars, J., Visser, H., editors. *Aging and Time; Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. Ed., Baywood Publishing Company, Inc. Published in the Society and Aging Series, 2007.

Babinski, H.F. The *Mazeppa Legend in European Romanticism*. Columbia University Press, 1974.

Bagabas, O.A. *Byron's Representation of the Orient in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Don Juan, and The Oriental Tales*. University of Essex, 1993.

Bălu, Andi. *George Gordon, Lord Byron. Studiu Monografic.* Contemporary Literature Press, 2013.

Barrett, A. E., Cantwell, L. E. "Drawing on stereotypes: Using undergraduates' sketches of elders as a teaching tool." *Educational Gerontology,* vol. 33, no. 4, 2007, pp. 327–348.

Barton, A. *Byron: Don Juan*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Barzun, Jacques. "Byron and the Byronic." *The Atlantic*. summer 1953, *The Atlantic,* www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1953/08/byron-and-byronic/309156/

Battenhouse, Henry. *English Romantic Writers*.Great Neck,1958.

Bauman, Z. "Survival as a Social Construct." *Sage Journals*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1992, pp. 1-36.

Beaty, F. L. "Byron's Concept of Ideal Love." *Keats-Shelley Journal*, vol. 12, 1963, pp. 37–54.

Beatty, Bernard. *Byron's Don Juan*. Barnes & Noble, 1985.

Beblavý, M., Veselkova, M., Maselli, I. "Preferential voting and the party–electorate relationship in Slovakia," *Party Politics*, vol. 20, no. 4, 2014, pp. 521-532.

Beck, C. "The Enchanted Garden : A Changing Image In Children's Literature." Nottingham University Library, 2002.

Becker, Ernest. *The Denial of Death*. Simon & Schuster, 1973.

Beeson, D. "Aging and "The Second Sex": Beauvoir's Sociological Legacy." *Simone De Beauvoir Studies,* vol. 16, 1999, pp. 69-79.

Benin, Nikola. *Romanticism*. summer 2021, Research Gate,
www.researchgate.net/publication/338030360_ROMANTICISM.

Biggs, S. "Adapting to an Ageing Society the need for cultural change." *Core*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2014, pp. 12-15.

Birren, J. E., & Schroots, J. J. F. "History of geropsychology." *Handbook of the psychology of aging*, edited by J. E. Birren & K. W. Schaie, ed., London: Academic Press, 2001, pp.3-28.

Birren, J. E., & Schaie, K. W., editors. *Handbook of the psychology of aging.* 5th ed.,Academic Press, 2001.

Black, H.K. Rubinstein, R.L. "Themes of Suffering in Later Life." *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B: Psychological sciences and social sciences*, vol. 59, no. 1, 2004, p. 17.

Blackstone, Bernard. "Byron and Islam: the Triple Eros." *Journal of European Studies,* vol. 4, 1974, pp.325-363.

Blessington, Countess of (Margaret). *Conversations of Lord Byron with the Countess of Blessington*. R Bentley for Henry Colburn, 1834.

Bloom, Harold. *Lord Byron*. Infobase Publishing, 2009.

Blunk, E., Williams, S.W. "The Effects of Curriculum on Preschool Children's Perceptions of the Elderly." *Educational Gerontology*, vol. 23, 1997, pp. 233-341.

Bostetter, E.E. *George Gordon, Lord Byron: Selected Poetry and Letters*. Rinehart & Company, 1951.

Bostridge, Mark. "On the Trail of the Real Lord Byron." *The Independent,* Nov.2, 2002. *The Independent,* www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/on-the-trail-of-the-real-lord-byron-603280.

Boyd, E.F. *Byron's Don Juan: A Critical Study*. Routledge, 2016.

Bradbury, O. "Come back to Venice, My Lord." *Alexander Scott's Letters to Lord Byron, in The Byron Journal*, vol. 29, 2001, pp. 47-61.

Bradbury, R. *Literary representation of death, dying and bereavement*. University of St Andrews, 1992.

Braun, M., Gordon, D., Uziely, B. "Associations between oncology nurses' attitudes toward death and caring for dying patients." *Oncology Nursing Forum*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2010, pp. 43-9.

Bravo, M. del P. "Literary Creation and the Supernatural in English Romanticism." *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, vol. 1, 2007, pp. 138–143.

Briggs, R. "Age and Ageing." *Oxford Academic*, vol. 19, no. 5, 1990, p. 350.

Brinkley, R., Hanley, K. *Romantic Revisions*. Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Brooks, P. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*. Routedge, 1992.

Brown, D. "Dan Brown Teaches Writing Thrillers" *Masterclass.com*, www.masterclass.com/classes/dan-brown-teaches-writing-thrillers.

Browne, D. "The Problem of Byron's Lameness." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, vol. 53, no. 6, 1960, pp. 440-442.

Buchan, J, editor. *A History of English Literature.*Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1923.

Buñuel, L. *My Last Breath*. Vintage Classics, 1983.

Butler, J. *Frames of War. When is Life Grievable*? Verso, 2009.

Calasanti, T.M., Slevin, K.F. *Age Matters: Re-Aligning Feminist Thinking*. Routledge, 2006.

Cameron, H.C. "The lameness of Lord Byron." *BMJ*, vol. 1, no. 3248, 1923, pp. 564–565.

Caminita, C.M. *Explaining the Explanation: Byron's Notes to Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Louisiana State University, 1998.

Caminita, C.M. "Explaining the explanation: Byron's notes to Childe Harold's Pilgrimage." *LSU Master's Theses,* 2002*,* p. 2117, *Digital Commons*, www.digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses/2117.

Campbell, Christopher D. "Byron on Death." *Theses and Dissertations for 1991. South Atlantic Review*, vol. 57, no. 4, 1991, pp. 169–199.

Cardwell, R. *The Reception of Byron in Europe.* A&C Black, 2004.

Carpenito-Moyet, L.J. *Handbook of Nursing Diagnosis*. Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, 2008.

Chainey, G., *A Literary History of Cambridge*. Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Chakraborti, R.D. *The Greying of India: Population Ageing in the Context of Asia*. SAGE Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2004.

Chew, S.C. "The Centenary of Don Juan." *The American Journal of Philology,* vol. 40, no. 2, 1919, pp. 117-152.

Christensen, Jerome. *Lord Byron's Strength: Romantic Writing and Commercial Society*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Clark, K. *A Personal View*. John Murray Publishers Ltd., 1974.

Clifford, James. *Travelling Cultures in Cultural Studies*, Routledge, 1992.

Cochran, Peter. *Byron's Romantic Politics: The Problem of Metahistory,* Cambridge Scholars, 2011.

Cochran, P., editor. "Byron's Correspondence with John Murray 3, 1820-1824." P*eter Cochran's Website*, 2012, *Peter Cochran Wordpress,* www.petercochran.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/byron-and-murray-1820-18241.pdf.

Cohen-Shalev, A. "Old age style: Developmental changes in creative production from a life-span perspective." *Journal of Aging Studies,* vol. 3*,* no. 1, 1989, pp. 21–37.

Cohen-Shalev, A. "The effect of aging on dramatic realization of old age: the example of Ingmar Bergman." *The Gerontologist*, vol. 32, no. 6, 1992, pp.739-43.

Cohen-Shalev, A., Marcus, E.L. "Claude Sautet's winter of discontent: The aging of a moviemaker." *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, vol. 2, no. 4, 2008, 213–220.

Cohen-Shalev, A. "Golden Years and Silver Screens: Cinematic Representations of Old Age." *Journal of Aging, Humanities, and the Arts*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2007, 85-96.

Cohen-Vrignaud, G. "Byron and Oriental Love." *Nineteenth-Century Literature,* vol. 68, no. 1, 2013, pp.1-32.

Cole, T. R., Ray, R., editors. *The humanistic study of aging past and present, or why gerontology still needs interpretive inquiry,* Johns Hopkins University Press.

Coleridge, E.H. *The Works of Lord Byron.* Octahon Books, 1966.

Collins, V. H., editor. *Lord Byron in His Letters: Selections from His Letters and Journals.* John Murray, 1927.

Colton, C.C. *Remarks critical and moral on the talents of Lord Byron, and the tendencies of Don Juan*. Printed for the author, 1819.

Connor, S.H. "From Anti-Hero to Hero: The Rebirth Archetype in 'Corpo Vivo.'" *Luso-Brazilian Review,* vol. 16, no. 2, 1979, pp. 224–32.

Crossley, A. "Introduction to age and gender: aging in the nineteenth century." *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2017.

Cruikshank, M. *Learning to be Old: Gender, Culture, and Aging*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

Curtis, Jared. *The Fenwick notes of William Wordsworth.* London, 1993.

Dallas, R. C., editor. *Correspondence of Lord Byron (vol. I)*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Day, B. A. "Representing Aging and Death in French Culture." *French Historical Studies,* vol. 17, no. 3, 1992, pp. 688-724.

Deats, S.M., Lenker, L.T. *Gender and Academe*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1994.

Deen, L. "Liberty and License in Byron's Don Juan." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 8, 1966, p. 353.

Diakonova, Nina. "Byron's Prose and Byron's Poetry." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900,* vol. 16, no. 4, 1976, pp. 548-551.

Dolan, J., Tincknell, E. *Aging Femininities: Troubling Representations*. Cambridge Scholars, 2012.

Donoghue, D. “Review of Byron’s Letters and Journals: A New Selection” *The Irish Times,* vol. 1, 2016*,* p. 10.

Draaisma, D. *The Nostalgia Factory: Memory, Time and Ageing,* Yale University Press, 2013.

Drobot, I.-A. “Byron’s Childe Harold: The Liberal Nation-State.” *Cross-Cultural Management Journal,* vol. 20, no. 2, 2018, p.124.

Drobot, I.-A. *Childe Harold by Byron: Romantic Liberalism,* Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest, 2018.

Drummond, C. “Lord Byron, 19th-century bad boy.” *British Library*, www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/lord-byron-19thcentury-bad-boy.

Elias, N. *The loneliness of the dying,* Basil, 1985.

Erikson, E. H. “Reflections on the last stage – And the first.” *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child,* vol. 39, 1984, pp. 155–165.

Ender, E. *Architexts of Memory: Literature, Science, and Autobiography*. University of Michigan Press, 2005.

Eum, Y., Yim, J., Choi, W. “Elderly Health and Literature Therapy: A Theoretical Review.” *The Tohoku Journal of Experimental Medicine*, vol. 232, no. 2, 2014, pp. 79-83.

Fallon, D., Shears, J. “Romanticism and Ageing: An Introduction.” *Romanticism*, vol. 25, no. 3, 2019, pp. 217-224.

Ferguson, L.M., Ward H., Card S., Sheppard S., McMurtry J. “Putting the “patient” back into patient-centred care: an education perspective.” *Nurse Education in Practice*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2013, pp. 283-287.

Fernandes, J.S.G., Barone, L.M.C., Andrade, M.S. “The therapeutic function literature with elderly: ressignification from memory.” *MOJ Gerontol. Ger*., vol. 3, no. 1, 2018, pp. 80-84.

Fernyhough, C. “The story of the self.” *The Guardian*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2012, p. 2.

Floud, J. “L’Evolution Pédagogique En France.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion,* vol. 4, no. 2, 1965, pp. 250-52.

Franson, C. “Those Suspended Pangs”: Romantic Reviewers and the Agony of Byron’s *Mazeppa.” European Romantic Review*, vol. 23, no. 6, 2012, pp. 727-743.

Fraser, R. *The Making of The Golden Bough: The Origins and Growth of an Argument.* Macmillan, 1990.

Fry, P. H. “The Absent Dead: Wordsworth, Byron, and the Epitaph.” *Studies in Romanticism*, vol. 17no, 4, 1978, pp. 413–33.

Fry, P. H. “Disposing of the Body: The Romantic Moment of Dying.” *Southwest Review, vol.* 71, no. 1, 1986, pp. 8–26.

Gardner, A., Jennings, R. *Aging and Popular Music in Europe*. Routledge, 2012.

Garofalo, D. “Political Seductions: The Show of War in Byron’s “Sardanapalus.” *Criticism,* vol. 44, no. 1, 2002, pp.43-63.

Gelder, A, “Wandering in Exile: Byron and Pushkin”, *Comparative Literature*, vol. 42, no. 4, autumn 1990, pp. 319-334.

Gerould, Katharine. “Men, Women, and the Byron-Complex.” *The Atlantic Monthly*. vol. 130, 1922, p.136.

Gifford, P. *Love, Desire and Transcendence in French Literature: Deciphering Eros*. Ashgate, 2006.

Gilleard, C. *Cultures of Ageing: Self, Citizen and the Body*. Routledge, 2014.

Gilleard, C. “Suffering: The darker side of ageing.” *Journal of Aging Studies,* vol. 44, 2018, pp. 28–33.

Gleckner, Robert F. *Byron and Ruins of Paradise*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967.

Goethe, J. W. *Über Kunst und Altertum, Volumen 5*. Cotta, 1824.
Goode, C.T. *Byron as Critic*. Haskell House, 1964.
Greenberg, J., Solomon, S., Pyszczynski, T. "Terror management theory of self-esteem and cultural worldviews: Empirical assessments and conceptual refinements." *Advances in experimental social psychology, v*ol. 29, 1997, pp. 61–139.
Greenblatt, S., Abrams, M.H. *The Politics of Percy Shelley*. W. W. Norton, 2000. p. 728.
Grierson, H.G.C. *The Background of English literature and other collected essays and addresses*. Chatto & Windus, 1925.
Grobe, Camilla. *Byron's Idea of Liberty in the Poetry of the Childe Harold Period*. The Rice Institute,1953.
Guthke, K.C. *The Gender of Death: A Cultural History in Art and Literature*. Cambridge UP, 1999.
Gullette, M. *Aged by Culture*. University of Chicago Press, 2004.
Gullette, M. *Safe at Last in the Middle Years.* University of California Press, 1988.
Gurganus, A. "What Makes Literature Immortal?" *The Iowa Review*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2012, pp.147-151.
Hakola, O., Kivistö, S. *Death in Literature*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014.
Heath Kay. *Aging by the Book: The Emergence of Midlife in Victorian Britain*. State University of New York Press, 2009.
Hendricks, J., Leedham, C.A. "Making sense of literary aging: Relevance of recent gerontological theory." *Journal of Aging Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1987, pp.187-208.
Hentshell, C., *The Byronic Teuton: Aspects of German Pessimism 1800-1933*. Oxford University Press, 1978.
Hepworth, M. *Ageing bodies: Aged by Culture.* Macmillan Publishers Ltd, 2003.
Hepworth, M. *Stories of Ageing*. Open University Press, 2000.
Hertz, N. *Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essay*s. Prentice-Hall, 1972, pp. 107-132.
Herz, S.K., Gallo, D.R. *From Hinton to Hamlet: Building Bridges Between Young Adult Literature and the Classics*. Greenwood, 1996.
Hitchens, Christopher. *Mortalidad*. Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial España, 2012.
Holstein, M.B. "Self, Society, and the "New Gerontology." *The Gerontologist*, vol. 43. no. 6, 2003, pp. 787–796.
Hooti, N. "Radicalism in Byron's Manfred: A Politico-religious Study." *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, vol. 2, no. 5, 2011.
Hoppit, Julian. "Counting the Industrial Revolution." *The Economic History Review,* vol. 43, no. 2, 1990, pp. 173-93.
Hough, G. *Image and Experience*: Studies in a Literary Revolution, Duckworth and Co., 1960.
Hunt, L. *The Feast of the Poets*, London, 1815.
Iranmanesh, S., Dargahi, H., Abbaszaden, A. "Attitudes of Iranian nurses toward caring for dying patients." *Pallative and Supportive Care*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2008, pp.363-9.
Jakobson, R. *Linguistics and Poetics*, M.I.T. Press, 1960.
Jaques, E. "Too Many Management Levels." *Sage Journals*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1965, p.13.
Jochem, A.M, "Escapist Tendencies as Evidenced in the Poetry of the Romantic Poets: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats and Byron." 1941, *Master's Theses, Ecommons,*
www.ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/229.
Johnson, E.D.H. "Don Juan in England." *ELH*, vol. 11, no. 2, 1944, pp. 135-53.

Johnston, R.R. "Romanticism and Mortal Consciousness." Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, Harvard University Website. www.nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:10973927.
Jung, C.G. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious,* Bollingen, 1958.
Keats, J. *The Complete Works of John Keats*, Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1820.
Kendig, H., McDonald P., Piggott J., editors. *Population ageing and Australia's future.* ANU Press, 2016.
Kenyon-Jones C. *Byron: The Image of the Poet,* University of Delaware Press, 2008.
Kenyon, F. *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning,* Nabu Press, 2010.
Kermode, F. *King Lear: A Casebook*. Macmillan, 1969.
Kesebir, P. "A quiet ego quiets death anxiety: humility as an existential anxiety buffer." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 106, no. 4, 2014, pp. 610-23.
Khrisat, A. "Experience, Fantasy, and Reality in William Beckford's Vathek." *Damascus University Journal*, vol. 27, no. 3, 4, 2011, pp.187-206.
Kriebernegg, U. "Literary Gerontology: Understanding Ageing as a Lifelong ProcessThrough Cultural Representations." *The Gerontologist*, vol. 55, no. 2, 2015, p. 39.
Klaver, J.M.I., "Chapter Twelve: Which the Young and Innocent Will Do Well to Leave Altogether Unread." *Brill*, vol. 140, 1853, pp.323-349.
Klement, V. "An artist's notes on aging and death." *Art Journal*, vol. 53, no.1, 1994, pp. 73-75.
Knight, G.W. *Burning oracle,* Oxford University Press, 1939.
Kubler-Ross, E. *On Death and Dying,* Macmillan, 1969.
Laslett, P. *A Fresh Map of Life: The Emergence of the Third Age,* Harvard University Press, 1991.
Lansdown, Richard, ed. *Byron's Letters and Journals: A New Selection,* Oxford University Press, 2015.
Lehto, R.H., Stein, K.F. "Death anxiety: an analysis of an evolving concept." *Research and Theory for Nursing Practice,* vol. 23, no. 1, 2009, pp. 23-41.
Lester, D., *Death Anxiety Handbook,* Taylor and Francis, 1994, pp. 45-60.
Levine, A. *Byron's Poetry and Prose,* Norton Critical Edition, 2010.
Levine, M. "Modeling the rate of senescence: can estimated biological age predict mortality more accurately than chronological age?" *The Journals of Gerontology Series A, Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences*, vol. 68, no. 6, 2013, pp. 667-674.
Levy, B.R., Slade, M.D., Kunkel, S.R., Kasl, S.V. "Longevity Increased by Positive Self-Perceptions of Aging." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 83, no. 2, 2002, pp. 261–270.
Lockhart, J.G. *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott,* Robert Cadell,1837.
Looser, D. "Age and Aging Studies, From Cradle to Grave." *Age, Culture, Humanities*, vol. 1, 2014, p.40.
Lovell EJ. *Lady Blessington's Conversations of Lord Byron,* Princeton University Press, 1969.
Low, D.A. "Byron and Burns." *Studies in Scottish Literature*, vol. 27, no. 1, 1992, pp.128-142.
Luke, Hugh J. "The Publishing of Byron's Don Juan." *PMLA,* vol. 80, no. 3, 1965, pp.199-209.
Macaulay, T.B. *Critical and Historical Essays*, Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1843.
Macaulay, T.B. "Moore's Life of Lord Byron." *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 53, 1831, pp. 544-572.
MacCarthy, Fiona. *Byron: Life and Legend*. John Murray Publishing, 2002.
Mainardi, P. *Husbands, Wives and Lovers: Marriage and Its Discontents in Nineteenth-Century France,* Yale University Press, 2003.

Manfred, J *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative,* English Department, University of Cologne, 2005.

Mantovani, E., Turnheim B.. "Navigating the European Landscape of Ageing and ICT: Policy, Governance, and the Role of Ethics." *Ageing and Technology: Perspectives from the Social Sciences*, edited by Domínguez-Rué Emma and Nierling Linda, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2016, pp. 227-56.

Marchand, Leslie. *Byron: A Biography*, State University of New York Press, 1957.

Marchand, Leslie. *Byron's Poetry: A Critical Introduction,* Harvard University Press, 1965.

Marchand, Leslie. *Byron's Poetry: A Critical Introduction,* Harvard University Press, 1968.

Marchand, Leslie. *Alas the Love of Women! Ed.L.A.Marchand (v. 3),* John Murray Publishers Ltd, 1974.

Marchand, Leslie, editor. *Byron, Gordon Lord. Famous in My Time (v. 2) (Letters and Journals)*, John Murray Publishers Ltd., 1973.

Marin, C.G. "The Byronic Hero." *Language and Literature – European Landmarks of Identity*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2008, pp. 81-86.

Markovitz, B. *A Quiet Adjustment,* Faber & Faber, 2008.

Marshall, L. *Age Becomes Us: Bodies and Gender in Time,* State University of New York Press, 2015.

Marshall, William H. "A Reading of Byron's Mazeppa." *Modern Language Notes*, vol. 76, no. 2, 1961, pp. 120–124.

Martin, J.I. *The Migrant Presence: Australian Responses 1947-1977*, Routledge, 1978.

Mason, N. "Building Brand Byron: Early-Nineteenth-Century Advertising and the Marketing of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage." *Modern Language Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 4, 2002, pp.411-440.

Matthews, R. "Byron the romantic rebel "was a psychopath." *The Telegraph*, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1310918/Byron-the-romantic-rebel-was-a-psychopath.html

Matsui, M., Braun, K. "Nurses' and care workers' attitudes toward death and caring for dying older adults in Japan." *International Journal of Palliative Nursing*, vol. 16, no. 12, 2010, pp. 593-8.

Maurois, A. *Lord Byron,* Aguilar Madrid, 1936.

McCarthy, J.B. *Death Anxiety: the Loss of the Self*, Gardner Press. Inc., 1980.

McClay, David. *Dear Mr Murray: Letters to a Gentleman Publisher*. John Murray, 2000.

McGann, J., editor. *The major works,* Oxford University Press, 2000.

McGann, J. *The romantic ideology: A critical investigation,* University of Chicago Press, 1983.

McGann, J. "Editing Byron's Poetry." *The Byron Journal*, 1:1, 1973

McGann, J.. *Fiery Dust: Byron's Poetic Development*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press., 1968, pp. 177–184

Meisner, B.A. "A meta-analysis of positive and negative age stereotype priming effects on behavior among older adults." *The Journals of Gerontology Series B, Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, vol. 67, no. 1, 2012, pp. 7-13.

Mendonça, A.P.L. *A Illustração* (The illustrated magazine), The Illustrated Magazine Press, 1845, pp. 115-116.

Metzger, Lore. "Satanic School" in Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan, editors. *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics,* Princeton University Press, 1993, p. 1114.

Millingen, J. *Memoirs of the Affairs of Greece,* John Rodwell, 1831.

Milton, John, *Paradise Lost,* Penguin Books, 2000.
Molina, T. *El Burlador de Sevilla y Convivado de Piedra,* Catedra, (first ed. 1616), 2016.
Moore, T, *The Works of Lord Byron: With His Letters And Journals, And His Life,* John Murray, 1835.
Moore T. *The Life, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron,* John Murray, 1837.
Moore, T. *Byron's Life, Letters, and Journals*. John Murray, 1860.
Monbron, F.L. *Le cosmopolite, ou Le citoyen du monde,* Generic, 2019.
More, Paul. "The Wholesome Revival of Byron." *The Atlantic,* www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1898/12/the-wholesome-revival-of-byron/376188/.
Moreno, Claros, L.F. "Don Juan a lo Byron." *El País*, vol. 3, 2009, p.3, *El País*, www.elpais.com/diario/2009/04/04/babelia/1238802620_850215.html.
Murphy, T. P. "Defining the reliable narrator: The marked status of first-person fiction." *Journal of Literary Semantics*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2012, pp. 67-87.
Nalbandian, S. *Memory in Literature: From Rousseau to Neuroscience,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
Neill, M. *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy,* Clarendon Press, 1999.
Neimeyer, R. A., Moore, M. K. "Validity and reliability of the Multidimensional Fear of Death Scale." *Death anxiety handbook,* edited by R. A. Neimeyer, Taylor & Francis, 1994, pp. 103-119.
Neugarten, B. L. "Personality change in late life: A developmental perspective." *The psychology of adult development and aging,* edited by C. Eisdorfer & M. P. Lawton, 1973, pp. 311–335.
Nichol, J. *Byron,* Macmillan and Company, 1880.
Nicholl, K.R. *Some Other Being: The Autobiographical Phantom in Wordsworth and Byron,* Oregon State University Press, 2012.
Nicholson, A. *The Letters of John Murray to Lord Byron,* Liverpool University Press, 2007.
O'Connell, M. *Byron and John Murray: A Poet and His Publisher,* Oxford University Press, 2014.
O'Loughlin, K., Browning, C., Kendig, H., editors. *Ageing in Australia*, Springer-Verlag New York, 2016.
O'Neill, D. "Do geriatricians truly welcome ageing?" *Age and Ageing*, vol. 45, no. 4, 2016, pp. 439–441.
O'Neill, M., Zamorano, C. *The Aesthetics of Ageing. Critical Approaches to Literary Representations of the Ageing Process*, Edicions de la Universitat de Lleida, 2002.
Orimo H., Ito H., Suzuki T., Araki A, Hosoi T., Sawabe M. "Reviewing the Definition of "Elderly". *Geriatrics & gerontology international*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2006, pp. 149-158.
Oró-Piqueras, M. "The Loneliness of the Aging in Two Contemporary Novels." *The Gerontologist*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2014, p.194.
Padilla, Elena M., "Byron and the Modernist Writers" *Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects,* Paper 1539626365, 2002, www.dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-9d9y-g992.
Pakulski, J. "Facing the challenges of an ageing society." *Popular Ageing and Australia's Culture,* edited by Kendig H., McDonald P., Piggott J., ANU Press, 2016.
Petrov, S. "An ageless question: When is someone 'old'?" *The Washington Post,* vol. 6, 2019, www.washingtonpost.com/health/an-ageless-question-when-is-someone-old/2019/06/14/9ecad1f4-87ad-11e9-98c1-e945ae5db8fb_story.html.

Phelan, J. “Reliable, Unreliable, and Deficient Narration: A Rhetorical Account.” *Narrative Culture; Detroit*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2017, pp. 89-103.

Phillips, Norman R. “The Conservative Implications of Skepticism.” *The Journal of Politics* , vol. 18, no. 1, 1956, pp. 28-38.

Phillips, J. “Water: Rebirth in Literature.” *Cent Magazine*, Sep. 17, 2021, www. centmagazine.co.uk/water-rebirth-in-literature.

Phillipson, M., “Alteration in Exile.” *Nineteenth-century literature*, vol. 58, 2003, pp. 291-325.

Pirnajmuddin, Hossein. “Childe Harold's Journey to the East and “Authenticity.” *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences,* vol. 12, 2014, pp. 14-27.

Poole, G. “The Byronic Hero, Theatricality and Leadership.” *The Byron Journal*, vol. 38, no.1, 2010.

Pop Zarieva, N., Iliev, K. “The Origins of the Seven Deadly Sins.” *Year Book 2016*, vol.80, no.82, 2016, p.49.

Preminger, A, Brogan, V.F. Terry, Warnke, Frank J., editors. *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics,* Princeton University Press, 1993.

Prothero, R.E., editor. *The Works Of Lord Byron, Letters and Journals, Vol. 1*, Roland E. Prothero, 2015.

Pyre, J.F.A. “Byron in Our Day.” *The Atlantic,* Apr. 1907. Accessed: 1 Aug. 2021, www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1907/04/byron-in-our-day/376198/.

Quennell, P. *Byron: The Years of Fame,* Reprint Society, 1943, p. 198.

Reno, S.T. *Amorous Aesthetics: The Concept of Love in British Romantic Poetry and Poetics,* Ohio State University Press, 2011.

Ridenour, M.G. *The style of Don Juan,* Yale University Press, 1960.

Riley, Jeannette E. “Reviewed Work: Figuring Age: Women, Bodies, Generations by Kathleen Woodward.” *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature,* vol.54, no.2, 2000, pp. 138–141.

Robertson, J. Michael. “Aristrocratic Individualism in Byron’s Don Juan.” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900,* vol.17, no.4, 1977, pp. 639-55.

Robinson, P. *The Influence of Ageism on Relations between Old and Young Gay Men*, Monash University Publishing, 2011.

Rollin, H.R. “Childe Harold: Father to Lord Byron?” *British Medical Journal*, vol.2, 1974, pp. 714-716.

Romanyshyn, N.I. “The Concept of Human Fate in Byron’s Poem *Mazeppa*.” *Scientific Notes. Philological Series (Наукові записки. Серія “Філологічна”)*, vol.14, 2010, pp.141-148.

Rose, A. “No Culture Created Nor Destroyed.” *Dill Pickle. Butte College Academic Magazine*, vol.1, 2019, p.168.

Rovira, J., editor. *Rock and Romanticism: Post-Punk, Goth, and Metal as Dark Romanticisms,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Rowles, G.B. “Place and personal identity in old age: Observations from Appalachia.” *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol.3, no.4, 1983, pp. 299-313.

Ruth, J. E., Kenyon, G. “Biography in adult development and aging.” *Aging and Biography. Explorations in Adult Development,* edited by Birren, J. E., Kenyon, G., Ruth, J. E., Schroots, J.J.F., Svensson, T., Springer, New York, 1996, pp. 1–20.

Rutherford, A. *Byron (a Critical Study),* Stanford University Press, 1962.

Rutherford, A. *Lord Byron: The Critical Heritage,* Routledge, 2013.

Sandgren, R.A. *The Byronic Hero in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, The Four Turkish Tales, Manfred and Don Juan,* Kansas State Teacher's College, 1973.

Schopenhauer, A. *On the Suffering of the World,* Penguin, 2006.

Schroth, K.C. "Literary Representations of Death, Dying and Bereavement in Children's Literature.", Universidade Nova de Lisboa Press, 2017.

Schulz, R., Hebert, R.S., Dew, M.A., Brown, S.L., Scheier, M.F., Beach, S.R., Czaja, S.J., Martire, L.M., Coon, D., Langa, K.M., Gitlin, L.N., Stevens, A.B., Nichols, L. "Patient suffering and caregiver compassion: new opportunities for research, practice, and policy." *The Gerontologist*, vol.47, no.1, 2007.

Sharafuddin, M. *Islam and Romantic Orientalism,* I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1994.

Sheikh, Rizwan Mohammad. "The Impact of French Revolution on Romantic Poets." *Indian Journal of Research,* vol. 3, no.8, 2014, pp.1-2.

Shenk, D., Davis, B., Murray, L. "In their own words: using narratives to teach gerontology." *Gerontology and Geriatrics Education*, vol.29, no.3, 2008, pp. 239-247.

Shilpa, A., Kalyani, S., Sabharwal, M. *Gerontology,* University of New Delhi, 2015.

Shilpa, A., Kalyani S., Sabharwal, M. "Ageing Process and Physiological Changes." *Semantic Scholar*, vol.10, 2018, p.7.

Sibona, B. *Le cheval de Mazeppa: Voltaire, Byron, Hugo : Un Cas d'Intertextualité Franco-Anglaise,* L'Harmattan, 2006.

Singer, I. *The Nature of Love: Courtly and Romantic,* University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Sinoff, G. "Thanatophobia (Death Anxiety) in the Elderly: The Problem of the Child's Inability to Assess Their Own Parent's Death Anxiety State." *Frontiers in Medicine*, vol.2, 2017, pp. 1-3.

Skelton, J. *Death and dying in literature,* Cambridge UP, 2003.

Small, Helen. *The Long Life,* Oxford UP, 2007.

Smiles, Samuel, editor. *A Publisher and His Friends: Memoir and Correspondence of John Murray; With an Account of the Origin and Progress of the House, 1768-1843*, 2 vols., J. Murray Publishing, 2014.

Smith, J. F. *Lord Byron's Self-Portrayal in Don Juan,* University of North Texas Press, August 1964.

Smith, K.B., Alford, R.J., Hibbing, R.J., Martin, N.G., Hatemi, P.K. "Intuitive Ethics and Political Orientations: Testing Moral Foundations as a Theory of Political Ideology." *American Journal of Political Science*, vol.61, no.2, 2017, pp. 424-437.

Soderholm, James, and Jerome McGann. "Byron and Romanticism: An Interview with Jerome McGann." *New Literary History,* vol.32, no.1, 2001, pp. 34-49.

Stabler, Jane. *Byron,* Routledge, 2014.

Statham, H.H. "Byron's Place in Poetry." *Sewanee Review*, vol.31, no.3, 1923.

Stavans, I. *The Essential,* Psychology Press, 2000.

Steffan, T.G., editor. *Don Juan,* University of Texas Press, 1957.

Strand, E. "Byron's Don Juan as a global allegory." *Studies in Romanticism*, vol.43, no.4, 2004, pp.503-536.

Stowe, H.B. *Lady Byron Vindicated. A history of the Byron controversy from its beginning in 1816 to the present time,* Hamburg Press, 2012.

Sturdza, P. "The Rebirth Archetype in Robbe-Grillet's L'Immortelle." *The French Review,* vol.48, no.6, 1975, pp. 990–95.

Sultana, Afreen. *Industrial Revolution in literary imagination. Responses from three phases: the Romantic, the Victorian and the Late Victorian period,* BRAC University, 2016.

Sundell, M.G. “The Development of The Giaour.” *Studies in English Literature*, vol.9, 1969, pp. 587-99.

Swinnen, A. *Encyclopedia of Gerontology and Population Aging,* Springer, 2019.

Taylor, M., Colby, S.L., Reid, K.M. “Cumulative Inequality at the End of Life? Racial Disparities in Impairment in the Time Before Death.” *Journals of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, vol.*75*, 2020, 1292–1301.

Telles, A. *Byron em Portugal,* O Panorama, 1857.

Teodorescu, A. *Death Representations in Literature: Forms and Theories*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015.

Terdiman, R. *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis,* Cornell University Press, 1993.

Termizi, A.A., Noor, N.S.M., Salim, W.I.W. “Death and Dying as a Literary Device: A Reading of Selected Works by Contemporary Malaysian Writers.” *International Journal of Languages, Literature and Linguistics*, vol.3, no.1, 2017, pp.13-16.

Thompson, C. *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination,* Clarendon Press, 2007.

Thornley, G. C., Gwyneth Roberts. *An Outline of English Literature,* Longman Group Ltd., 1984.

Trelawny, E.J. *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron,* Edward Moxon, 1858, pp. 24, 224, 226.

Twigg, J., Martin, W. “The challenge of cultural gerontology.” *The Gerontologist*, vol.55, no.3, 2015, pp.353-9.

Vidal, M., Casado, N. *The Polemics of Ageing as Reflected in Literatures in English*, Edicions de la Universitat de Lleida, 2004.

Viskovatoff, A. “Searle, Rationality, and Social Reality.” *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology,* vol.62, no.1, 2003, pp. 7-44.

Voss, T. “Mazeppa-Maseppa: Migration of a Romantic motif.” *Tydskrif Vir Letterkunde*, vol.49, no.2, 2012.

Wallace, S.P., Cochran, S.D., Durazo, E.M., Ford, C.L. “The health of aging lesbian, gay and bisexual adults in California.” *Policy Brief UCLA Cent Health Policy Res*., vol.11, no.2, 2011, pp.1-8.

Walker, Keith, Hogg, James, editors. *Byron’s Readers: A Study of Attitudes Towards Byron*. Longwood Pr Ltd, 1979.

Wasserman, Elizabeth. “The Byron Complex.” *The Atlantic*. 1Oct., 2002, www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2002/10/the-byron-complex/378504/

Watkins, D.P. “Byron and the Politics of Revolution.” *Keats-Shelley Journal, vol.*34, 1985, pp.95-130.

Waxman, S.R. “The dubbing ceremony revisited: Object naming and categorization in infancy and early childhood.” *Folkbiology,* edited by Medin, D. L., Atran, S., Cambridge, MA: Bradford, 2015, pp. 233–284.

Waxman, S. R.,Kosowski. T.D. “Nouns Mark Category Relations: Toddlers’ and Preschoolers’ Word-Learning Biases.” *Child Development,* vol.61, no.5, 1990, pp. 461-473.

Waxman, K.T. “The development of evidence-based clinical simulation scenarios: guidelines for nurse educators.” *The Journal of Nursing Education*, vol.49, no.1, 2010, pp. 29-35.

Wolfson, Susan J. “Byron’s Ghosting Authority.” *ELH,* vol.76, no.3, 2009, pp.763-769.

Wohlgemut E. *Pilgrim, Exile, Vagabond: Byron and the Citizen of the World. In: Romantic Cosmopolitanism. Palgrave Studies in the Enlightenment, Romanticism and Cultures of Print*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Wong, P.T.P., Raker, G.T., Gesser, G. "Death Attitude Profile-Revised: A Multidimensional Measure of Attitudes Toward Death." *Death Anxiety Handbook,* edited by Neimeyer R.A., Taylor and Francis, 1994.

Woodward, Kathleen. *Aging and Its Discontents – Freud and Other Fictions*, Indiana University Press, 1991.

Woodward, Kathleen. *Figuring Age: Women, Bodies, Generations,* Indiana University Press, 1999.

Woodward, Kathleen. "A Public Secret: Assisted Living, Caregivers, Globalization." *International Journal of Ageing and Later Life,* vol.7, no.2, 2012, pp. 17-51.

Wootton, S. *Byronic Heroes in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing and Screen Adaptation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

Wordsworth, W., Wordsworth, D., Hill, G.A., editors., *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: Volume VIII. A Supplement of New Letters,* Clarendon Press, 1967.

Wu, D. *Romanticism: An Anthology,* Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Wyatt-Brown, Anne M. "The coming of age of literary gerontology." *Journal of Aging Studies*, vol.4, no.3, 1990, pp.299-315.

Wyatt-Brown, Anne M.,Rossen, J., editors. *Aging and Gender in Literature: Studies in Creativity,* University of Virginia Press, 1993.

Wyatt-Brown, Anne M., Ruth Ray Karpen, Helen Q. Kivnick, and Margaret Morganroth Gullette. *The Big Move: Life Between the Turning Points*. Indiana University Press, 2016.

Yallop, H. "Representing Aged Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century England." *Cultural and Social History*, vol.10, no.2, 2013, pp. 191-210.

Yates, T.M. "The Developmental Consequences of Child Emotional Abuse: A Neurodevelopmental Perspective." *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, vol.7, no.2, 2007, pp. 19–34.

Zhao, W. "Byronic Hero and the Comparison With Other Heroes." *Studies in Literature and Language*, vol.10, no.6, 2015, p.30.

Zeilig, H. "The critical use of narrative and literature in gerontology." *International Journal of Ageing and Later Life*, vol.6, no.2, 2011, pp. 7-37.

Zima, Peter V. "Love and longing : absolute desire from romanticism to modernism." *Primerjalna književnost*, vol.39, no.1, 2016, pp. 77-89.