

44th INTERNATIONAL BYRON CONFERENCE

Improvisation and Mobility

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Abstracts:

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Improvisation as a Means of Communicative Exchange in Byron's Poetry

Improvisation plays an important role in Byron's poetry, especially in his later poems like *Beppo* and *Don Juan*. Byron's improvisation has distinct functional goals. As J. McGann argues, the structure of Byron's poetry is communicative exchange and his improvisational manner enhances the communicative intercourse between poet and audience. Following the Italian tradition of improvisation, Byron introduces a new aspect of Romantic style – unpremeditated art of light and ordinary conversation characterized by seeming naturalness and ease. Byron acts as a social and public poet who uses the art of improvisation to address his audience directly, comment on actual social and political issues, expressing his thoughts in a digressive style. Sometimes, as in *Beppo*, he even criticizes himself for deviating from the subject. Byron himself underlines his spontaneous style, especially in *Don Juan* by declaring: 'I never know the word that will come next' or 'I have forgotten what I meant to say'. Byron's improvisation promotes the conversational style and conversely his conversational style gives the effect of continual improvisation. Writing in *ottava rima*, Byron uses these structural techniques to emphasize satiric digression. Byron's conversational style makes possible the co-presence of inconsistent emotions, transitions from one poetic mode and genre to another, which helps to create a satirical effect. Byron's claim that the style of *Don Juan* is that of spontaneous conversation is supported by numerous quotations, allusions and references to other texts, which creates the effect of communicative interchange.

ADDISON, Catherine Anne

University of Zululand, SOUTH AFRICA

An Extemporary Pen: The Illusion of Improvisation in Don Juan and other Poems

The term 'improvisation' properly belongs to the performance arts. It refers to spontaneous creations or variations that come into being in the real time of any kind of dramatic presentation or musical or poetic recital. But 'making it up as you go' is not confined to these arts. Outside the demarcated arenas of performance, extemporisation is the mundane rule of our responses to what Gilbert Ryle calls the 'unprecedented, unpredictable and never to be repeated' phenomena of our world. If this 'Ad-Hockery' dominates everyday behaviour, what we specially name 'improvisation' must add a marked stylisation and degree of difficulty to an utterance or act. In other words, its artistry must be evident. Written poetry such as Byron's can only *appear* improvised, however intricately stylized it might be. The opportunities for pen-chewing and revision, not to mention the hiatus between composition and reception, preclude the read poem from the improvised genres. However, Byron admired the famous Italian *improvvisatori*, and was gifted, as W B Yeats claims, with the 'syntax and vocabulary of common personal speech,' even when his subject-matter moved him to great passion. The illusion of improvisation in written verse is dependent on a strategic balance between apparently informal irregular structures and formal structures carrying a high degree of difficulty. This paper will pursue the will o' the wisp of this illusion in Byron's poetry, not only in the *sprezzatura* of *Don Juan* but also in some earlier verse. The pursuit will cover both detailed linguistic analysis and contemporary accounts of the *improvvisatori*.

ALMEIDA-BEVERIDGE, Joselyn
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA
The Mobility of 'Mutability': Shelley's Lyric Haunting of Don Juan

The friendship between Byron and the Shelleys pervades masterpieces such as Byron's *Manfred* (1817), Shelley's *The Cenci* (1819), and perhaps most famously, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). This creative symbiosis continues to inspire critics from Alan Rawes, Michael O'Neill, Peter Cochran, and Diego Saglia to Jane Stabler and Madeleine Callaghan. Stabler observes, 'Conversation between Byron and Shelley is one of the sounds that Mary most associated with her first exile, as she recalls in the Preface to *Frankenstein*' (107), while Cochran concludes that despite the effect the writers had on one another, '[Byron] wrote no poetry to or about Shelley' after Percy's death (98).

While Byron may not have written a poem 'to or about' Shelley, he travels with him into Canto XVI of *Don Juan*. Just before sighting the Black Friar, 'Juan mused on mutability, / Or his mistress — terms synonymous' (*DJ* 16.20), directly invoking Shelley's 'Mutability', which appeared in *Alastor and Other Poems* (1816) and Byron knew intimately (Cochran 23). 'Mutability' also appears in *Frankenstein* moments before Victor speaks to the creature (M. Shelley 66). Juan's invocation of 'mutability' thus sets in motion oscillations between intertextual fields that produce a spectral effect through the lyric haunting of epic.

Shelley's uncanny presence materialises through the elements Byron borrows from 'Mutability' in the scene of Juan's reflection, and a few stanzas later, in Lady Adeline's 'lyric sound' on the Black Friar (*DJ* 16.40.1-6). Behind Juan's encounter with the ghost, readers perceive Byron's remembrance of the Shelleys through the lesson of 'Mutability': 'Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow.'

AN, Young-ok
University of St. Thomas, MN, USA
The Mobility of Passion and Art in Byron's Improvisational Poetics

Using one of Byron's Ravenna letters to Murray (1821) as a starting point for an analysis of Byron's attitude toward the (literal) mobility of art, I will open my paper with a brief discussion of what Byron called the 'poetry of art'. Byron's commentary relates back to his *The Curse of Minerva* and several stanzas of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (II. xii and xv). In these two works, Byron, using the vantage point of a cosmopolitan traveller, and operating from what we would now identify as a native-arts, anti-imperialist perspective, addresses the topic of transporting national artifacts from their native soil — which often involves contesting rationales and ideologies. To move the passion of his reader to experience the impact of the desecrated Greek arts, he deploys poetic devices such as a dream vision, personification, prophecy, and a mythical force. Further, these topoi, which I propose to be examples of Byron's improvisational poetics, provide Byron with a critical distance from his English-Scottish subjectivity, allowing him to construct his poetic identity as an oppression-fighting, radical citizen of the world.

After addressing the dialectic of mobility and rootedness found in Byron's poems, I will compare it with the poetic mode of Felicia Hemans's Byron-inspired poems such as *The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy* and *Modern Greece*. While Hemans illustrates the mobility of poetic sensibility in addressing the topic of transportations of national arts, her poetic passion and gendered position seem to displace Byron's cosmopolitan radicalism with a more 'patriotic' discourse.

BAHMAN POUR, Hamide
University of Isfahan, IRAN
The Companionship of Imagination and Reality in Naser Khosrow and Byron's Travels

Travelling is a blessing when neither body nor soul can stay in one place. It is an opportunity to see, hear, learn, and live better. In other words, it provides us with a unique opportunity to experience whatever appears to be far-fetched. Travelling is the extension of life beyond geographic borders; it is the discovery of unknown lands as well as familiarity and companionship with people from different races and cultures. For some people, traveling is an opportunity that enables them to experience a new life. For

others, it is an opportunity that enables them to objectify the heard and read. In other words, it is an opportunity to verify the known and to know more. In the course of traveling, reality and imagination are intertwined, and imagination is even represented within the framework of reality. Traveling becomes complete through writing travel books and describing every moment of it. Travel books represent a picture where reality and imagination coexist, and what is narrated is neither a complete reality nor a complete imagination, but a wave fluctuating between what eyes can see and what mind can imagine. Therefore, each travel book has so much to say, opening a window to a new world. Among Persian travel books, *Safarnameh* (book of travels) by Naser Khosrow Ghobadiyani (1004-1088), Persian poet, philosopher, and politician, is of vital importance due to its smooth prose and lively, pure pictures. Naser Khosrow Ghobadiyani, of course, lived centuries before Lord Byron and his travel routes were different from those of Byron's; he spent some time in Turkey, hosted by Turkish people. Therefore, this paper aims to compare and investigate the views, writing style, and reflection of the reality of Turkish people's lives in the works of Naser Khosrow Ghobadiyani and Lord Byron over the centuries.

BEATON, Roderick

King's College, London, UK

Ten Days that Shook Byron's World: Shelley's Visit to Ravenna in August 1821

Shelley arrived in Ravenna late in the evening of 6 August 1821. By the time he left on the morning of the 17th, Byron had embarked on commitments that would shape the course of the remainder of his life: to move to Pisa (the beginning of the famous 'Pisan Circle' of 1822) and to join with Shelley and Hunt to produce the periodical *The Liberal*. In the immediate aftermath of the visit he completed the drama *Cain*, wrote almost all of *The Vision of Judgement*, and added the polemical appendix to *The Two Foscari*. This was a pivotal moment in Byron's career, and marks a defining point in his incipient political commitment that would culminate in his final move to Greece to take part in the revolution there. This paper argues that dialogue between the two poets during these days was the catalyst that made all these developments possible. It focuses in particular on evidence that topics debated between the two included the revolution that had broken out in Greece in March of that year (drawing on the preface, text, and author's notes to Shelley's poem *Hellas*, also written shortly after the visit). The paper finally examines the attitudes of both poets to the early Christian / Byzantine monuments and art of Ravenna, and connects this with the construction of a future Greek identity founded on revival of the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, as it would later be reflected in Mary Shelley's novel *The Last Man* (1826).

BEATTY, Bernard

University of Liverpool, UK

Mobility's Associates and Adversaries: the Ravenna stanzas of Don Juan

The paper will confine itself to the Ravenna stanzas in *Don Juan*, link them with the idiom and sentiments of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* but, more particularly, note the ways in which mobility in their form and subject matter is associated with mutability and with morality. But morality is also an adversary of mobility and thus associated with mobility's other adversaries in these verses— the immemorial, the evergreen, and rest. Byron plays this out through contrasting erased and preserved memories and associating this double movement with the writing of poetry. Byron presents himself as riding past both the place where De Foix died and Dante's tomb. He derides the pillar which is the preserved memory of the hero and praises the tomb of Dante. The opposition enables clear demarcations and antitheses, strong currents of feeling, and confident judgements but, as always with Byron, there is much intricate and shifting movement across apparent contraries.

This is my main focus but I will also touch on the way that the stanzas are, in one way, anything but improvised, and yet manage not to counter too much or set themselves apart from the conversational immediacy which characterises the poem as a whole. This, I will suggest, is because of the curiously sustained syntax, itself a version of mobility, which marks all these stanzas.

CHAPMAN, Madison

University of Chicago, USA

Mobility & Intimacy in Lord Byron's 'Nisus & Euryalus'

Studies of Lord Byron's subversive depictions of masculinity rarely make mention of his early poem 'Nisus and Euryalus' (1807) from *Hours of Idleness*. As Phillip Cardinale has argued, Byron's childhood exposure to Virgil along with his references to this poem in letters suggests that this text was a significant achievement in Byron's early literary career. Taken from Virgil's vignette in the *Aeneid* about a pair of Trojan soldiers who share a loving friendship, Byron's poem originated as a writing exercise at Harrow. In this paper, I contend that the poem shows how both the anticipation of battle and actual war violence facilitate intimacy between men. I argue that, instead of regulating manliness, violent masculinity emerges simultaneously—and with conflicting effect—from the desire to survive and the desire to know the body of another man. My interest in mobility is twofold: firstly, how does the medium of 'a paraphrase of Virgil' mobilize blatant homosexual desire, and, secondly, how does the physical mobility of men in this text slip between violence and intimacy? Turning to Louis Crompton, Andrew Elfenbein and Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud, I situate the poem within other studies of Byron's displacement of male erotic desire to foreign locations and/or distant times. Ultimately, Byron's reworking of Virgil's tragic episode transforms the narrative of fatal non-normative desire in a way, which I argue, both resists and prefigures queer death tropes.

COLETES BIANCO, Agustín

University of Oviedo, SPAIN

Byron's Mobility in Immobile Spain: Byron en Venecia, by Aunós and Fernández-Shaw (1949)

On 24 May 1949 the chamber opera *Byron en Venecia* was premiered at the Fontalba Theatre in Madrid. Less than a year later it was re-staged at a different Madrid theatre, and in 1951 it was again performed, this time in Catalonia. Apparently all three stagings enjoyed wide success, both with the public and the reviewers. Paradoxically, though, this major episode of Byron's reception in Spain has been neglected in the literature: a six-word passing reference in *The Reception of Byron in Europe* is all we have. The paradox becomes even more surprising when we discover that the author, now forgotten, was a politician and music amateur who had served as a minister in two dictatorships, Primo de Rivera's and Franco's. Finally we are amazed to read the libretto and find that *libertad* is the single most important word in the dialogues. It refers both to the legendary sexual freedom of the Venetian carnival, sung by the choir, and to the longed-for political freedom of Italy and Greece, sung in arias and duos by the four-member cast: Teresa Guiccioli (soprano), Condesa Albrizzi (mezzo), Lord Byron (tenor) and Arnaldo (baritone). This happened only a decade after the Spanish Civil War had ended, in hard-line Franco's regime, when civil liberties were almost non-existent and censorship was compulsory for artistic manifestations. Did the character of Byron and Venice herself lead to some kind of mobility in Franco's very immobile Spain? In light of primary sources including the hard-to-find original MS and published libretto, censorship and copyright records, as well as contemporary press reports, this paper recovers and arguably solves the apparent paradoxes in this forgotten episode of Byronic mobility, geographical and political as well as temporal, from 1819 Venice to 1949 immobile Spain. An audio-recording of some extracts from the opera will be played.

CRAIN, Sam

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Sweetness in Flux: A Passage from Don Juan Canto I

In *Don Juan*, Canto I, stanzas 122-27, Byron's poetic narrator meditates at length over sweetness but keeps his referents constantly in flux. By stanza 122, the narrator has already cultivated a relationship with his reader, the stanza itself serving as fulfillment of the promise in the previous stanza ('[w]e'll talk of that anon'). He begins with the description of the motion of wind over water, only to shift in the next stanza to a litany of animal sweetnesses, lumping in girls and children with dogs, larks, and bees while focusing largely on auditory sensations.

In the third 'sweetness' stanza, the narrator increases the level of motion and flux, speaking of a 'Bacchanal profusion' that is amply fulfilled by a stanza stuffed full of sex and violence. Stanza 125

suggests a departure, inverting the direction of the previous stanzas by giving us a bitter one that focuses longer on the problem than the ‘sweet solution.’

Stanza 126 brings an even more dramatic turn as a stanza about the liquids by which man may earn fame gives way to an invocation rather of what is ‘dear,’ priming the reader for the final sweetness stanza, in which all appreciable movement occurs in either past or future and the narrator holds the reader in a liminal stillness between the already-occurred theft by Prometheus and the ‘ambrosial sin’ of lost virginity that is promised.

Thus, these stanzas read together suggest Byron’s ability to regulate *motion* within his poem while maintaining a constant awareness of the promise or likelihood of change, even as his narrator makes promises himself, fulfilling some and leaving others to remain tantalizingly suggested but not brought to fruition.

DAOUDA, Marie Kawthar

Paris-Sorbonne Université, FRANCE

Byronic Authority in Petticoats: Marie Corelli's Improvisations on Byron's Themes

Though her name has almost sunk into oblivion, Marie Corelli was by far the best-selling author of the end of the Victorian Era. Her novels intertwined spiritual teaching, reflections on the status of the poet and social satire. Corelli was a fervent champion of Byron from her childhood, when she would quote scandalous lines from *Don Juan* to tease her governess, to her last novels in the 1920's, in which she put the Byronic hero to the test while simultaneously advocating a Byronic love for travels and dark romance. Corelli also presented a conference on Lord Byron. It is currently part of Bryn Mawr's archives.

The purpose of the paper would be to show how Corelli shaped her own auctorial identity and authority by playing on Byronic patterns. The typical Corellian male character inherits Manfred's dissatisfaction, exile and dark past. However, the heroines, though essentially sacrificial, are musicians or writers who travel in Byron's tracks, exploring the Alps, Greece or the East through initiatory journeys. All through Corelli's production, from 1886 to her death, she rewrites the typical Byronic romance in the female voice, whether by explicitly quoting Byron or by making obvious references to his life and poems.

I intend to consider first how Corelli improvises on the theme of the Byronic hero, then how this improvisation, albeit taking the shape of poetic outbursts within the narrative, actually endorses a Byronic perception of poetry and of the poet. Corelli was all the more successful in that she managed to make the most of this cliché while displacing it.

DÁVILA CORUJO, Abraham Luis

Ohio State University, USA

'A thing of temperament and not of art': Don Juan, Mobility, and Byronic Celebrity

Don Juan's narrator defines mobility as a sort of genuine artificiality, a performance that is ‘false—though true’ (XVI.97.823). To Byron’s contemporary reviewers, *Don Juan* enacted this idea of mobility—it was, to them, a text where Byron was at his most bitingly sincere, something he achieved through the bathetic undermining of the moments of seemingly genuine beauty throughout *Don Juan*. These reviewers saw such sublime instances as evil artifice, taking their employment (and subsequent destruction) as evidence of Byron’s ‘want of heart’ (XVI.97.819).

Some recent critics of Byron have similarly approached *Don Juan* as a uniquely sincere text, one in which Byron abandons or complicates his earlier tropes. Tom Mole, for example, argues that *Don Juan* sees Byron abandoning the ‘hermeneutics of intimacy’ that he relied upon to establish his celebrity persona. This paper complicates such readings of the text, suggesting instead that the unstable confessional pose Byron adopts in this satire constitutes another celebrity construction.

While critics of celebrity culture have explored the ways in which Byron established himself as a foundational figure in the history of celebrity, *Don Juan* remains generally unexplored through the lens of celebrity studies. I therefore focus on those moments where *Don Juan* explicitly references and resists *Childe Harold*, interrogating the extent to which the former reproduces and maintains the celebrity-building ambitions first seen in the latter. Furthermore, I explore the ways in which mobility informs Byron’s celebrity by attempting to hide the artificiality of *Don Juan* behind a veneer of a genuine, if irreverent intimacy.

FEIGNIER, Olivier

French Byron Society, FRANCE

Digital Mobility and Improvisation in 19th-Century Music: a Fantasy and Variations on Byronic Themes

Byron's poetry, heroes, and life have inspired musicians since the early days of the poet's international fame. While the presence and the role of Byronic characters in 19th-century operas has been thoroughly explored and the setting to music of his poems carefully listed, the possible influence on music composition of Byron's experiments in poetry has not attracted the critics' curiosity.

Supported by music pieces inspired by Byron's works, this paper intends to explore how some characteristic features of his poetry have been transposed into music writing.

Abrupt transitions and the juxtaposition of contrasting moods create a sense of intrinsic mobility in Byron's as well as in Loewe's *Mazeppa*. When Berlioz gave the viola the role of a protagonist, a commentator, and a mere spectator in his symphony, *Harold in Italy*, he musically applied Byron's treatment of Harold's voice in the *Pilgrimage*. Virtuosity with words and sounds conveys a poem's message in the same way that digital virtuosity – the mobility of fingers on a solo instrument or a group of instruments – translates the urgency of a musical situation (Liszt's *Mazeppa*, Fanna's and Gouvy's versions of *The Giaour*). The frequent use of digressive developments gives an improvisational flavour to musical 'speech' (Nietzsche's *Manfred-Meditation*). Daring displacements of tonic accents create unexpected rhymes, as daring chords introduce unexpected modulations (Novak's *Ballad on Byron's Manfred*)...

Music writing techniques echoed Byron's writing experiments, and Byronic 'mobility and improvisation' permeated 19th-century music. Is this the result of similar aspirations to renewed artistic forms, which led to similar technical solutions in poetry and music?

GATTON, John

Bellarmino University, Louisville, USA

'Pilgrim of the Deep': Byronic Aquatics—Performance into Fact and Fiction

In addition to such athletic pursuits as cricketing, riding, shooting, sparring, and fencing, Byron excelled at swimming. His claim, in 1810, that he had been 'from [his] childhood a strong swimmer' remained valid into his thirties, with evidence spanning Harrow, Cambridge, London, Portugal, Turkey, and Italy. Dramatised accounts of his natatory prowess animate correspondence, while autobiographical elements enrich memorable swimming scenes in *The Two Foscari* and *The Island*.

Byron transforms epistolary descriptions of his intrepid swims—across the Tagus and the Hellespont, from the Lido up the length of the Grand Canal, and from shore to the *Bolivar* during Shelley's cremation—into theatrical 'performance' (a word he uses three times in a Hellespont account to John Murray), with himself in the lead role. Swimming partners become supporting players. In solo outings, Byron is his own antagonist. Currents, counter-currents, tides, winds, and large fish generate conflicts that demand improvised reactions. Shipboard sailors and people on land are his initial audiences, then, later, his correspondents. For those readers, he meticulously records, in hours, minutes, and miles, statistics for time in the water and distance, for accuracy and ego; in 'Sestos to Abydos', he claims he 'swam for Glory'. These texts, like many Byron letters, pulsate with immediacy, vitality, all seemingly set down, as he says of his writing style, 'hot & hot—just as it comes.'

The credibility of swimming scenes in *The Two Foscari* (I.i) and *The Island* (4:IV-VI) derives from Byron's European experiences as well as from school-day larks. At Harrow, his 'plaint limbs the buoyant billows bore'; at Cambridge, he dove fourteen feet to the bed of the Cam to collect plates, eggs, and shillings. For Jacopo Foscari, faint from torture on the rack, a glimpse of the lagoon rouses memories of youthful water sports: racing, mastering the 'roughened' wave 'with a swimmer's stroke', and disappearing into the 'gulfs', only to surface with 'shells and sea-weed', proof he had explored the sea bed. To escape their foes, Torquil, following Neuha, his bride, plunges into 'the ocean's hollow'. The swim submerged so long, the crew conclude they have vanished and sail away. From the depths, the couple then 'upward soar[]' and reach land.

GONSALVES, Joshua D.
American University of Beirut, LEBANON
Byron, Military Historicism and the Logistics of Mobility

A French conscription (*levée en masse*) system presided over the transition to a mobile, roving army as it replaced the precise war of manoeuvre executed by Frederick the Great's well-drilled Prussians. Napoleon transformed a 'motorized' (and no longer only 'clockwork') French Revolutionary army in which sharpshooters and skirmishers would fan out in front of precisely organized forces into a *Grande Armée* constituted of co-ordinated part-armies ('divisions and corps, combining infantry, cavalry, artillery and support services') that maximized the power to disperse, focus and concentrate for a destructive all-or-nothing blow. This *Armée* depended on a logistical 'system of living off the country' facilitating a tactical 'mobility' that extended the strategic power to 'concentrat[e]' dispersed forces without sacrificing 'security'. If Napoleon's defeat informed Byron's retreat to an endless war of manoeuvre instead of the Napoleonic combination of a tactical mobility and a destroy-the-enemy strategy, I wish to re-examine Byron's final war in Greece from the perspective of a military historicism—namely, in terms of the threefold art of war: logistics, strategy and tactics. Byron, of course, only lived long enough to engage problems of logistics: conscripting and managing divisive forces; guaranteeing funding and financing for the Greek cause; negotiating the obstructions impeding the landing of supplies. Logistics is often left out from the dramatic spectacle delineated by tactics and strategy. I contend, in contrast, that a focus on Byron's *in situ* articulation of the logistical thinking that literally empowers mobility can draw attention to how closely he read the ancient and modern military history that similarly obsessed the logistically-minded Napoleon. Once a logistical Byron concerned with, for instance, the hardiness of horses is resuscitated, I will employ this military optic to offer a fresh look at two key Byronic war texts I have previously embedded in military history—*The Deformed Transformed* and the Siege of Ismail Cantos in *Don Juan*—as well as at *Werner* vis-à-vis a military historicism of the Thirty Years War.

GROSS, Jonathan
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Mobility, Marginality, and the Hand of Byron in Teresa Guiccioli's Italian Copy of Madame de Stael's Corinne

'I have read this book in your garden ... you were absent -- or I could not have read it.' (August 23, 1819; 6:215)

My essay explores Byron's marginalia in Madame de Stael's *Corinne*, written in Teresa's Italian translation of Stael's novel. Byron used Teresa Guiccioli's copy of *Corinne* to communicate his most intimate thoughts about their relationship, doing so in her garden, when she was otherwise engaged with her husband. Stael's novel, which treats the relationship between Corinne and the Scottish peer, Lord Nelvil, allowed Byron to view his life in literary terms and to enact in figurative terms his own marginal status as a lover in Teresa's life. The epiphany in Teresa's garden, which resembles St. Augustine's *Confessions*, led Byron to commit himself to the cause of Greek Independence, repudiating the purely personal though fulfilling relationship he had enjoyed with Teresa until that time. In comparing Byron's forged marginalia in Stael's *De L'Allemagne* with Byron's actual marginalia in De Stael's *Corinne*, I show how William Lamb is the likely author of the marginalia to *De L'Allemagne* (now housed at the Houghton Library, Harvard), and that Byron's marginalia, by contrast, is never merely pedantic, but expressive of what I call a 'politics of feeling'. I conclude by suggesting that Byronism and Byronmania, the after-effects of his fame by those who tried to forge his marginalia in books (such as Captain Byron), fail to capture the fragility of the marginalized poet, whose mobility of thought depended upon his status as an outsider in English and Italian society, epitomized by his quavering hand, his frail and mobile signature in Teresa's garden and in Madame de Stael's book; far different the professional forger who would assume Byron's signature with a more self-confident hand.

HOROVÁ, Mirka
Charles University, Prague, CZECH REPUBLIC
Byron's Mobile Italian Muse: Towards a Politics of Contingency

The digressive contingency of Byron's *Don Juan* is a *sine qua non* that hardly needs highlighting. 'Mobile' in the sense of mobility but also mutability is a timely term to include in any discussion of Byron's late poetics in relation to Italian influences. Luhmann sees something as 'contingent' 'insofar as it ... is just what it is (or was or will be), though it could also be otherwise.' 'The horizon of possible variations' that he posits as inherent to contingency is something we can extend back to Byron's Italianization and Byronization of Italian influences. Byron's late style, much discussed for its discrepancies and idiosyncrasies, replete with 'a wilderness of most rare conceits' (*DJ XVI*, 3), constitutes 'a problem'. This paper will seek to illuminate the intricate ways in which Byron's flippant-yet-serious evocation of 'life', 'the Thing', in *Don Juan*, and its medley 'de rebus cunctis et quibusdam aliis' (*DJ XVI*, 3), presents a cognitive nexus, a world 'sensed, interpreted, such that organic life maintains itself in this perspective and interpretation' (Nietzsche, 'Anpassung'). In this living nexus, 'everything becomes contingent whenever what is observed depends on who is being observed' (Luhmann). Byron's mobile Italian muse shapes a living organism of a text, and this text betrays all the discrepancies and indeterminacies of the 'unsurveyable spectacle' of 'the science of universal becoming', i.e. 'history' that 'rushes in on the human being' (Nietzsche). Byron's untrammelled channelling of contingency in *Don Juan* is remarkable on all levels – not least the interrelatedness of contingency, play and history-as-spectacle: 'In play, there are two pleasures for your choosing – / The one is winning, and the other losing' (*DJ XIV*, 12).

HUBBELL, J. Andrew

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Mobilising Social Change: Byron's Radical Hedonism and the Transition Initiative's 'Arts of Living'

My take on Byron's mobility concerns his strategies for mobilising others to fight for social change, and the way these strategies can be traced to the theories and methods of social change informing New Social Movements (NSM). Drawing on qualitative and quantitative research conducted in Fall 2017 in Western Australia, I will compare Byron's *Island* to the narrative strategies and hedonistic ecotopian envisioning of the Transition Initiative, arguably the world's most influential NSM. I'll demonstrate how *The Island* establishes a 'negative archeology' of British mercantile colonialism dialogically engaged with a 'positive architecture' of hedonistic ecotopia. This allows me to classify the poem within the genre of 'practical ecotopia,' and conclude that it can be considered an improvisational thought experiment in how to mobilise social change at the crucial moment when Byron was mobilising his own resolve and resources for joining the Greek Revolution. I'll then describe the Transition Initiative's use of "Open Space" technology, permitting communities to envision their desired future collectively prior to mobilizing to resist neoliberal globalisation and build more sustainable, resilient, ecotopian communities that are dedicated to hedonistic 'arts of living.' For both Byron and the Transition Initiative, envisioning a future that is both pleasurable and ethical, sustainable and satisfying, is crucial for mobilising support for social change. Thus, my paper will place Byron as an important thinker in the development of social change strategies that continue to be relevant in today's most popular type of social change movement; and it will also show the continuing relevance of his radically hedonistic, ecotopian vision for today's ecological imaginary.

KALINOWSKA, Maria

University of Warsaw, POLAND

'...can I return, though but to die/ Unto my native soil...i (Byron, The Prophecy of Dante); Juliusz Słowacki's Le Cimetière du Père-Lachaise: The Unknown Story of Byron's Reception in Polish Romanticism

This paper discusses a poem by the Polish emigré writer Juliusz Słowacki (1809-1849), one of the most important poets of Polish Romanticism. The poem was found in an album discovered in Paris in 2009, which was a gift from Słowacki to Cora Pinard, the daughter of his French publisher. Up to its discovery, our knowledge of this album had been based exclusively on references to it in Słowacki's private correspondence. It turned out that the album contained the complete original manuscript of the poem that had hitherto only been known from second-generation fragments. Of particular importance was

the discovery that the epigraph to the French text of this poem, dedicated to Cora, was taken from Byron's *The Prophecy of Dante*.

Słowacki was fascinated by both Dante and Byron—a fascination that, as far as Dante is concerned, is evident in this text in Słowacki's reflections on the fate of exile that he and Dante shared. Another parallel relating to this common theme of exile can be seen in the fact that both Słowacki's and Byron's poems are dedications—to Teresa Guiccioli in Byron's case, and to Cora Pinard in Słowacki's. All of these contexts combine to give a special meaning to the epigraph from Byron with which Słowacki started his poem: '...can I return, though but to die / Unto my native soil...' Słowacki had often written that he would never return to his native land before the end of his life. Here, for the first time, we see how this motif linked Słowacki's fate with that of Byron at a very deep level.

KENYON JONES, Christine

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'[T]o hook my rambling verse on': Byron's Rhyme, Improvisation and Mobility

This presentation examines Byron's use of rhyme as an essential component of his improvisational techniques.

'[I] take for rhyme, to hook my rambling verse on, / The first that Walker's Lexicon unravels,' Byron claims in *Beppo* (411-12), while in *Don Juan* Canto X (327-30) he maintains that 'I never know the word which will come next. / So on I ramble, now and then narrating, / Now pondering'.

Through a reading of parts of Canto I of *Don Juan* (begun 200 years ago, on 3 July 1818) this paper scrutinises Byron's use of the multi-faceted term 'rambling' to describe his creative methods, and also gives serious consideration to his claim to have relied on John Walker's 1775 *Dictionary of the English Language, Answering at once the Purposes of Rhyming, Spelling and Pronouncing*.

It attempts to reconstruct some of the thought processes Byron may have pursued in originating, building and shaping his verse through rhyme, even while he was creating and maintaining a deliberate stylistic effect of immediacy.

'In youth I wrote, because my mind was full, / And now because I feel it growing dull', Byron commented in *Don Juan* XIV (77-80). The paper concludes that the move to *ottava rima* in *Beppo* and then *Don Juan* marks the transition from 'hot youth' to maturity in Byron's versification, as in middle age he comes to appreciate the power of rhyme to provoke creation and to generate ideas.

LASPRA RODRIGUEZ, Alicia

University of Oviedo, SPAIN

Political Mobility/Immobility: Byron and Wordsworth on Wellington

Byron's self-confessed 'mobility' is an obvious feature of his personality. In Isaiah Berlin's terminology, Wordsworth seems a 'hedgehog' holding to one central concern ('the growth of a Poet's mind') and seeking a stable identity whereas Byron seems more like a 'fox' shifting constantly in his concerns, attitudes, and personality. I will argue, however, that politically the reverse is true. For Byron was largely faithful ('immobile') in his political principles and his judgments (for example of Castlereagh, George III, and, largely, of Napoleon). In contrast, Wordsworth's shifting attitudes to politics was, paradoxically, a stable feature of his personality. Examples are his initial and final reactions to the French Revolution, and his enthusiasm for Spain during the Peninsular War, an attitude he would later significantly brand as 'a mistake'.

In this paper, I want to concentrate on a particular instance of this divergence between the two poets which reverses the usual understanding of the differences between them—their attitude to the Duke of Wellington. By and large, Byron retains the same attitude to the Duke whereas Wordsworth is much more mobile. The paper draws on Byron's numerous allusions to Wellington in his poems, notes and letters, Wordsworth's correspondence and literary work related to the Duke, and a variety of (often little-known) journals and memoirs of their contemporaries.

LENNARTZ, Norbert

University of Vechta, GERMANY

Cultural Assassination as Improvisation

Among the various speakers and ventriloquists in Byron's *œuvre* there is one that seems to be closely connected with Byron's last major poem, *Don Juan*: the improvising hack writer and dilettante that since the late 18th century, especially since Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, had become the butt of intellectual humour and wit.

As an ironic riposte to the Romantics' self-fashioning as geniuses and solitaires, the improviser stumbling and digressing through the Don Juan story, at first glance, seems to be a belated tribute to the tradition of Augustan satire. But in his guise of a Regency court jester and modern Quixote (whom Romantics such as Delacroix saw on a par with the ostracized Tasso), Byron pursues a different plan: that of being the (otherwise missing) stony guest retaliating on his culture and dragging his literary peers and predecessors into hell.

While attacks on culture became a phenomenon of the 20th century – with the Futurists clamouring for the blowing up of the Louvre or the artist Arman assaulting André Malraux (in the 1960s French Minister for Culture) with a paint-filled water pistol –, Byron transforms the assassination of his Romantic culture into a new art, into a pre-dadaist happening in which he (unlike Pope) not only smashes the conventions of epic poetry, distorts rhyme schemes and wrenches Pegasus's limbs, but also executes the cultural (and political) Establishment in an unprecedented literary *auto da fé* which (as Murray and others suspected) looked like an exotic flower, but was the stinging serpent under it.

LESSENICH, Rolf

Bonn University, GERMANY

Byron and the Romantic Concept of Inspiration

Byron has been compared to Gérard de Nerval, both poets allegedly suffering from manic depression or bipolar affective disorder, lively and productive at one time, inactive and barren at another. Such an instability, as shown by modern neurophysiology as well as by literary studies of madness and the Romantic imagination (Sandra Kluwe, Rainer M. Holm-Hadulla, Timothy Clark, Frederick Burwick, Günter Blumberger, James Whitehead), is a hypomania quite compatible with the poetic temperament. In his letters and journals as well as in his conversations and poetry, Byron connects his avowed chameleon changefulness with phases of (mad) inspiration and (sane) non-inspiration, availing himself of the multiple Romantic imagery of the inspired priest-prophet-poet (poetic mania or fit, enthusiasm, ecstasy, *estro*, *furor poeticus*, *vates*, mad rhapsodist, genius, the kiss of the Muse, the Aeolian harp, the Memnon stone, the Pythia of the Delphic oracle). In this view, the feverishly writing poet is a medium of inspiration and not himself as he is in ordinary life when he swims the Hellespont or lies inertly in bed in Genoa. On the other hand, however, Byron ironically subverts this Romantic commonplace of being 'possessed' by another than one's own spirit (*en-thou-ousía*) with his typical Romantic Irony, pathologizing his 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'. In Byron's sceptical poeology, art is as contradictory and changeable as man and the alternately sane and mad world that it represents and with which, paradoxically, the mad poet has to communicate.

LESZCZYŃSKI, Marcin

University of Warsaw, POLAND

Byron and the Transfer of Knowledge and Stories

The paper focuses on how stories and knowledge circulate in Byron's poetry. The transmission of knowledge through tales, books or personal stories will be scrutinized, with a special attention being paid to the nature of that knowledge, whether it helps to accommodate to the world or, on the contrary, to be at odds with it. In this context, as a point of interest, a critical reference will be made to a controversial literary theory called Literary Darwinism, informed by the evolutionary theory, according to which literature serves a utilitarian purpose by conveying an understanding of the world which facilitates adaptation and survival.

In order to analyse the mobility of stories and knowledge one has to look at the role of the author as translator or intermediary. For instance, *The Giaour* is formed of 'disjointed fragments' remembered by the poet as recited by a story-teller in one of the coffee-houses. Byron himself appears to be a

translator who adds to the story a non-Eastern imagery. During the process of transferring the tale to Western literature Byron accommodates it by the inclusion of footnotes which are crucial to such a contact between cultures. Together with a story itself the poet also transfers a broader context, revealing his sources, such as *Vathek*, and trying to identify further sources of this particular text. Moreover, one might argue that the story of *The Giaour* finds its further development in an analogous tale, the comic *Beppo*, being transferred thus not so much into a different cultural context as into a different literary convention: turning ‘what was once romantic to burlesque’.

LIVINGSTONE, Lee

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The Influence of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu on Lord Byron as both Poet and Traveller

Along with several male-authored travel writings, Byron had, he claimed, read Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s Turkish embassy letters ‘before [he] was *ten years old*’ (*Complete Miscellaneous Prose*, p. 220), returning to them multiple times throughout his career. On his Grand Tour, Byron visited the same locales Montagu writes about, including Belgrade (‘to see the house built on the same site as Lady Mary Wortley’s’ [*BLJ* I. 250]) and Constantinople, and in 1818 took residence at the Palazzo Mocenigo in Venice where Montagu was believed to have lived. It was here that Byron also endeavoured to recover several lost letters Montagu had written to Francesco Algarotti. In a letter to John Murray, Byron speaks reverentially about Montagu: ‘She was an extraordinary woman; she could translate Epictetus, and yet write a song worthy of Aristippus’ (*Complete Miscellaneous Prose*, p. 126). This admiration, however, contradicts some of Byron’s previously held opinions on women writers and intellectuals, which include disparaging remarks about Maria Edgeworth and Frances Burney in his letters [*BLJ* 4. 146], for example, or his satire of the Bluestockings in *The Blues* (1823). This paper thus aims to discuss Byron’s ‘mobility’ regarding his opinions on women writers, how he could dismiss women’s writing on one occasion and champion Lady Mary Wortley Montagu on another. The focus will lie particularly on Byron’s appreciation of Montagu, which indeed involves another sense of ‘mobility’ entirely, a geographical mobility, with Byron travelling the same precise regions of the Levant as this female literary predecessor.

MACKENZIE, Raymond N.

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Improvising Byron: Lamartine and Teresa Guiccioli

After Byron’s death, the Countess Guiccioli had not only to mourn him, but to try to manage both his memory and her own place in the story. In 1827, she met the man who looked as if he would be best suited to write and disseminate the story the way she wanted it written: the French poet Alphonse de Lamartine. She struck up a friendship with him, one based entirely on conversations about Byron.

At that point, Lamartine’s fame as a poet was at its height; his first published volume, the 1820 *Méditations*, had gone through nine editions. And the second poem in that volume, ‘L’homme,’ was addressed to Byron, depicting him as the rebellious, Satanic figure that so many others had. More recently, though, Lamartine had written a long poem soon after Byron’s death, *Le Dernier chant du pèlerinage d’Harold* (The Last Canto of Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage), a strange mix of autobiography, character analysis, and imitation—indeed, an example in itself of the ‘mobility’ Lady Blessington had attributed to Byron. The poem did not name Teresa, but implied she held the poet back from his destiny; nevertheless, she admired the poem and approached Lamartine with the idea of his writing a Life of Byron. The Harold poem suggested he had a deep understanding and appreciation of the poet, and indeed Lamartine had cultivated a certain reputation for being the French Byron himself. For Lamartine, the figure of Byron had become material for a species of improvisation, material to be worked on and elaborated in directions determined by the agenda of the writer.

Lamartine was intrigued by Teresa’s idea of writing a biography, especially with the inside information she could provide, but other projects—as well as an all-consuming political career—kept him from taking it up. She prodded him from time to time, and she remained within Lamartine’s general orbit, marrying the Marquis de Boissy, who had been Lamartine’s secretary, in 1847. When at long last Lamartine did write his brief biographical study of Byron, it was somewhat slapped together and offered

little that was new. But it emphasized the ‘immoral’ Byron of *Don Juan*, and in doing so it displeased Teresa, who finally wrote her own memoir, *Lord Byron in Italy*. Her memoir severely distorted Byron (a man who, she asserted, never seduced any woman, and who never drank alcohol) in order to paint their time together in as innocent colors as possible.

In tracing these tangled representations of Byron, I suggest that both Teresa and Lamartine contributed to the afterlife of Byron through their own self-fashioning—Lamartine to associate himself with his own version of the great poet, and Guiccioli both to preserve her reputation and to commemorate him. I will discuss the two main poetic texts by Lamartine in which he addresses/ventriloquizes/adapts Byron in order to fashion his own poetic persona.

MEDINA CALZADA, Sara

University of Valladolid, SPAIN

Moving across Boundaries: Fictional Byrons in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Print Culture

Byron's celebrity surpassed geographical boundaries and his works were widely read and translated in nineteenth-century Europe. His bestselling poems captivated Romantic audiences, but his fame was not only based on his literary talents. His eventful and scandalous life together with his powerful and eccentric personality attracted the attention of contemporary and future generations of readers stirring a wide variety of reactions. Spain was not immune to this transnational Byronic movement and Spanish translations of Byron's texts proliferated from the mid-1820s onwards. These translations and the influence that Byron exerted upon Spanish Romantic and post-Romantic writers have already been analysed (Shaw; Cardwell; Flitter), but scholars have basically disregarded the literary texts inspired by Byron's life that were published in Spain. They include two anonymous short stories printed in the newspaper *El Correo Nacional* in 1841, some poems by Manuel Reina published in the late nineteenth century, and the popular poem *Última lamentación de Lord Byron* (1879) by Gaspar Núñez de Arce. It is my purpose to examine these fictional recreations of Byron's life so as to provide further insight in his reception in Spain. These texts represent Byron as a Romantic—and Byronic—hero who behaves like the characters of his own poems and, by doing so, they explore the unclear boundaries between myth and reality that dominate the image of Byron created by his biographers, the critics, and by the poet himself.

MOOK, Lorne

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Not Mad Though Called Mad: Mobile Resistance to Narrative Expectations in Beppo and Don Juan

Ross Woodman has defined madness as ‘the inability of human beings to inhabit themselves,’ pointing out that when social and religious narratives are questioned and at least partially displaced (as they were before and during the Romantic age), humans improvise new narratives for themselves. This improvisation can be both liberating and daunting, since it may yield a space that suits the self better than any socially constructed narrative does or may yield a space so poorly built that it proves uninhabitable. I contend that Byron, particularly in *Beppo* and *Don Juan*, eludes limited social constructions of what it means to be sane in ways that may appear somewhat mad but that in fact represent the nimble preservation of sanity.

In *Beppo* and *Don Juan*, digressions, lists, bracketed phrases, and distractingly amusing rhymes elude narrative and readers’ socially constructed notions of what narrative should involve. Byron’s narrator comments, as he digresses, that he thinks ‘Digression is a sin’ (*Beppo* 394); in so doing, he becomes (in a small way) like hypocritical moralizing narrators in order to parody them. And when Byron’s narrator jokingly blames his stanza form for causing him to digress, saying that a ‘story slips for ever through [his] fingers, / Because, just as the stanza likes to make it, / It needs must be’ and that ‘This form of verse begun I can’t well break it’ (*Beppo* 498-501), he adopts a formal construction that parodies those social constructions which (unlike this self-imposed *ottava rima*) really do try to force people to conform to (to rhyme with) the staid and conventional.

In eluding conventional notions of sanity without embracing madness, Byron brings to mind his narrator’s poignant expression of what it is like for people (such as Haidee watching Don Juan) to ‘watch

o'er what they love while sleeping' (*Don Juan* 2.1568), love and sleep (like poetry) being realms where people can elude the social imperative to be merely sane.

MURATOVA, Iaroslava

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The Island by Byron in Terms of Intellectual Mobility and Bountiful Imagination

The paper concerns the poem *The Island* (1823), written by Byron being under the strong influence of Mariner's *Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands*, towards the end of his stay in Italy, and about one year before his death in Greece. It is interesting to look at this poem for several reasons. It is the last poem Byron managed to complete as he continued work on *Don Juan*. It is in line with the Oriental Tales as to its narrative mode, the choice of exotic setting, central conflict and principal heroes—the handsome and proud rebels, and the gentle and self-sacrificing young woman. The poem shows two opposite states of human nature: rebellion against the system and harmony between loving people. Moreover, the poem belongs to a genre that Byron, as an author constantly reporting on the degradation of European civilization and professing the times of Darkness, had never tried before: utopia. Apparently, Byron was still under the influence of Shelley at that time and multiple passages on the wild, flamboyant nature of the remote never-seen islands bear the trace of a Shelleyan idealistic vision. The core point of the paper is how the model of social anarchy presented by the mutineers from the *Bounty* leads to the picture of the heavenly paradise of nature and a natural society of savages, crowned with the image of the happy family couple – utopian indeed when considered against Byron's social and matrimonial failures, and the true story of the mutiny. *The Island* confirms Byron's mobility in many ways—for example, his constant pilgrimage or his imaginative, sensitive or intellectual pliability.

MURRAY-BERGQUIST, Karin and Jasmine

Independent scholars, CANADA

Byron: Off-the-Cuff Poet

Byron's fashion sense was, if his portraits are to be believed, subject to the influence of traditional garb in any country where he stayed. The decision both to obtain such clothing and to be painted in it reflects the principles of fashion: not only to wear, but to be seen to wear.

The aim of this study is to draw the connection between his clothes and portraiture, focusing on the reflection of geographical mobility through fashion as it exists in Byron's life and work. His Albanian garb appears in his 1813 portrait, and he wears Greek dress in 1830. He writes to his mother about Turkish clothing and the money he spent on Albanian fashion in 1809. Even his portrait in death channels the classics. Byron's seeming enjoyment of being painted as part of exotic scenes acts as a foil to his national identity, showing him to be susceptible to the influences he encountered in his travels, and reflecting the seeming contradiction present in the *Don Juan* stanza in question: sincerity and mobility at once.

Byron was equally aware of his characters' clothes, describing dress as a means of situating them in the physical world. This study will discuss the connection between including descriptions of clothing in verse and letters, and conveying changes of dress through portraiture. By investigating Byron's relationship with travel and fashion, this study will illuminate his ideas of mobility, fluidity of identity, and fascination with foreign lands and cultures, through clothing.

PAL-LAPINSKI, Piya

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Antonio Canova, Byron and the Politics of Sculpture in Post-Napoleonic Italy

In an 1821 fragment, Byron wrote: 'Sculpture the noblest of the arts because the noblest imitation of Man's own nature with a view to perfection.' During the same year, Byron himself was caught between stasis and energy as he waited for the Carbonari rebellion to begin, as chronicled in the *Ravenna Journal*: 'if ever they *will* rise, of which there is some doubt.' In this paper I explore the tension and the precarious boundary between the frozen (immobile) aesthetic gestures of sculpture and the 'mobility' of

war and revolution during the early phase of the Italian Risorgimento--- in the work of Byron and Antonio Canova. In 1816 (the year after Waterloo), Byron wrote ‘On the Bust of Helen by Canova’ after seeing the piece during his visits to Isabella Teotochi Albrizzi’s Venetian salon, a space in which both taste and politics converged. Canova’s own career and artistic production was carefully balanced between political involvement and aesthetic freedom; the artist worked for the Bonapartes and executed two important sculptures for Napoleon and his sister Pauline Borghese.

In *Childe Harold Canto IV*, Byron juxtaposes sculpture and political/historical violence in his meditations on the Venus de’ Medici at the Uffizi Gallery. The destruction of imperial Rome is punctuated by the aesthetic ‘violence’ of the Medici Venus, whose beauty almost turns the viewer to stone and ‘plucks out’ the eye. Canova, in his famous sculpture of Pauline Borghese as ‘Venus Victrix,’ (1805-8) had created a modern Venus to parallel his colossal statue of Napoleon in 1806. Beginning with Byron’s response to Canova’s ‘Helen,’ I’ll discuss conflicting impulses in both artists to aestheticize Italian politics via sculpture and the use of sculpture in turn as a commentary on political violence (including that inflicted by both Napoleonic and Austrian imperialism on Italy). I will also argue that in Byron and Canova ‘the aesthetic freezing of the historical moment’ (in the Lacanian sense) as manifested in sculpture, has an intimate relationship with the perceived ‘stasis’ of the salon culture of the Congress of Vienna and its implications for Italian nationalism and revolutionary politics in post-Napoleonic Europe.

PEACOCKE, Emma Rosalind
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Mobility as Lucifer’s Teaching Tool

Lord Byron’s 1821 tragedy *Cain: A Mystery* poses a puzzle that, as Byron wrote to Thomas Moore, hardly any of his readers would solve. I argue that we can best solve *Cain*’s mystery through looking at Lucifer’s cosmic mobility, and at the mobility that was newly becoming a part of Romantic education.

When Lucifer takes Cain through the Abyss of Space on a journey to view other worlds and extinct animals, it corresponds to the newest development in Romantic university pedagogy: the mobile classroom. Geologist William Buckland took undergraduate students on horseback excursions to see fossil specimens in the field; the historian of science Ralph O’Connor suggests that Buckland was tailoring his teaching to appeal to the hard-riding sons of the gentry – rather like the young fox-hunters in Canto XIV of *Don Juan*. Furthermore, Buckland transformed himself into a mobile natural history museum, always carrying a blue leather bag full of fossils, coprolites, and other specimens, which he would pull out to demonstrate his theories. Byron’s Lucifer treats the universe as his theatre of demonstration.

When Byron writes of Adeline’s temperamental ‘mobility’ in *Don Juan*, he concludes that ‘surely they’re sincerest / Who are strongly acted on by what is nearest.’ In *Cain*, Lucifer can slip through galaxies, and ensures that Cain will be strongly acted on by the animal specimens and by the vanished worlds that Lucifer’s mobility has brought nearest. Rather than ‘cosmopolitan visions,’ Lucifer’s mobility leads to visions that are truly cosmic.

POMARÈ, Carla
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‘Step across this line’: Mobility and the Negotiation of Borders in Byron’s Italian Years

Over the last decades Romantic studies have been keenly sensitive to the notion of crossing, responding to a plurality of suggestions that range from the geographical turn of literary scholarship to the debate about borders spurred by the flows of migrants and the recent crises of human mobility. Building on these premises, this contribution discusses Byron’s mobility as stepping across a line in the literal, moral and metaphorical terms recently envisaged by Salman Rushdie. Many are the lines that Byron crossed, especially in his Italian years: loco-geographic, cultural, linguistic, including the line separating thought and action, fact and fiction, self and other. Retracing Byron’s experience of crossing the external and internal geopolitical borders of the Italian territory, I will highlight the role played by the new technologies of control—both of individual mobility and of identity—associated with such crossing in the

post-revolutionary period, and focus on the translation of the notion of border and border crossing onto the Byronic page.

PROCHÁZKA, Martin

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Harold's Mobility as a Growth of Negativity: Childe Harold's Pilgrimage and Nietzsche's Untimely Meditations

The poem 'To Inez,' Harold's 'unpremeditated lay' towards the close of Canto I of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* can be interpreted as an expression of the growing negativity of the hero, whom in the Preface to Canto I and II Byron calls '[a] fictitious character [...] introduced for the sake of giving some connexion to the piece.' Already in the course of the first two cantos it becomes evident that Harold is a mere structural device used to increase tension between the poem's descriptive and static features and the dynamic of the narrator's volatile, ever-changing mind. Harold's negativity is no mere outcome of sensuous over-satiation and fear of reflection. It may have more serious implications which can be understood in relation to Nietzsche's early philosophy, namely his *Untimely Meditations* (*Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*, 1876) and in particular its third essay, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life'. Nietzsche understands history and its contemporary consciousness as results of a decline of culture, a process when reactive forces (prompted by the 'cunning and historically cultivated egotism' of the state, science, self-seekers and aesthetes) assume control and start to manipulate history for their own purposes. Resulting 'historical knowledge' then shapes 'weak individuals' whose memory has lost its significance. In the light of Nietzsche's observations, Harold's attitude voiced in 'To Inez' can be interpreted as an expression of resistance against traditional reflections of history. The 'retrospection curst' ('To Inez,' l. 30), which is an oppressive destiny of an Ahasuerus-like fugitive in 'many a clime', travelling to 'zones more and more remote' ('To Inez' ll. 29, 22) can be understood as the last stage of the disintegration of the Enlightenment perspective typical of the previous topographical poems, whose influence is evident throughout *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Can we say that the representation of Harold's doomed pilgrimage concluded by the hero's spectral fading away 'into Destruction's mass' (IV, 164) anticipates Nietzsche's critique of the 'uses and disadvantages of history for life'?

PROZOROVA, Nadezhda

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'Dante's Aquiline Shadow: Byron's Appeal to Dante in His Italian Works

The Italian period was the time of Byron's exceptional creativity. It was also marked by his great receptivity to Italian cultural influences, in particular to the works of the greatest Italian poet 'Padre Alighier' whose tomb was fifty yards from Byron's Ravenna *locanda*.

The paper focuses on hermeneutical aspects of Dante's theme in Byron's works. According to one of the founders of modern hermeneutics H. G. Gadamer, understanding a text means applying it to ourselves. From this point of view Byron in his appeal to Dante reflected the historical context of his time, as well as many important facts of his own biography, his political and aesthetic views. At the same time the theme of Dante clearly testifies to Byron's great admiration for the Italians, for 'the extraordinary capacity of this people, the rapidity of their conception, the fire of their genius'.

In this respect Byron's poem *The Prophecy of Dante* is of special importance, since it demonstrates the main peculiarities of Byron's perception and interpretation of Dante's life and works. Besides, Byron considered his poem to be a metrical experiment, as 'the measure adopted is the *terza rima* of Dante'.

Attention is also drawn to Byron's translation of the Francesca of Rimini episode from Canto Five of Dante's *Inferno* and to the numerous allusions to Dante in *Child Harold's Pilgrimage* (Canto Four), in *Don Juan* and in Byron's letters and diaries.

Taken as a whole, the theme of Dante in Byron's works reveals the nature of a dialogue between national cultures, where 'alien' is constantly transformed into 'native'.

RAWES, Alan

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'Between two Worlds': Englishing Italy and Italianising the English in Beppo

One common reading of *Beppo* is as a poem set in a real Italian place but addressed to England. The poem's satirical targets, in this reading, are predominantly English; its primary method is to unfavourably compare the England of Byron's recent experience to a playfully idealised Venice even more recently enjoyed. This reading of the poem goes hand-in-hand with a reading of Byron as aristocratic tourist, 'a broken dandy lately on my travels': the poem is an improvised postcard subversively reporting the Venice Byron saw while 'being there'. Its 'mobility' is primarily physical – a movement between real places and real social worlds.

This paper will suggest that *Beppo* is much less improvised than it seems – that its movement between England and Italy is much more considered – and literary – than it might appear. It will argue that Byron's Laura and Count are not based on real Venetian people so much as the 'caught out woman' and *cavalier servente* that are stock characters of C18th Italian comedy and satire, in particular the work of Casti, Goldoni and Parini – all of which we know Byron read in, or before he got to, Venice. The paper will demonstrate the extent to which Byron draws on these stock characters for his own, suggesting Byron was already, in 1817, much more immersed in Italian literary culture than we normally assume. However, it will also show how Byron adapted these characters for English consumption – especially the extent to which, surprisingly, he carefully and precisely toned-down the bawdy, satirical and ideological critiques of these characters found in Italian literature, in order to turn them into gently, subtly idealised models of behaviour with which to attack the English.

Beppo certainly moves between England and Venice, then, but also deftly moves between English imaginings of Venice and Italian ones, between English and Italian satirical traditions, between English 'cant' and Italian comedy, between English morality and Italian 'immortality'. Byron's poem, while less improvised than we might think, is rather more mobile than we have yet tended to recognise.

RIZZÀ, Laura

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'Of the Ancient Greeks we know more than enough': Reading Among the Notes of Byron/Harold's Greek Quest

This paper aims to examine the actual pilgrimage/quest Harold espouses. Harold does not seem to arrive anywhere but Greece. Frederick Shilstone views the entire point of the pilgrimage as Greece. But what in fact can be seen is that Byron's purposes are far more complicated. Greece is not 'Greece' because it is under Turkish rule. Byron's notes, and the voice of the narrator, show that the conception of Greece that Englishmen had is a purely literary one, constructed from the reading of ancient philosophers and historians and contemporary historiographers under the influence of this corpus of literature. The quest, then, is also a fabrication, where Harold journeys to a land that differs completely from the one he would have read about in school. Byron's attack on Lord Elgin will be used to illustrate this further, showing the difference between Elgin's plunder of the Parthenon Sculptures as a localized act of thievery and Byron's more literary act of plunder. Byron, after all, uses Greece to write a poem that makes money for his publisher, just as Elgin enacts a commercial transaction for the transport of the marbles to London. But Byron works within the construct of an imagined community of Greece, to use Benedict Anderson's term, whereas Elgin operates on an entirely different level, plundering in a context where the Greeks cannot challenge him because they do not themselves participate in the transaction. They have no political bargaining power whatsoever because the transaction is completed by an Englishmen and Turkish officials.

ROESSEL, David

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Illustrating Thomas Hope's Anastasius: Another Look at the Novel Byron Wished He Had Written

Byron first read *Anastasius* in Ravenna, where he gave it to Shelley in August, 1821. That is one of the many mobilities that connect Hope's novel and Byron. Another is Peter Cochran's argument,

following a comment of Shelley, about the mobility of many themes and scenes from *Anastasius* into *Don Juan*. This paper will examine one more mobility connected to this text, and how it might have played a role in Byron's reaction. Hope wrote the novel many years after he had left the regions of the Eastern Mediterranean and returned to Britain, as Byron had written the Spanish and Greek Cantos of *Don Juan* years after he had visited those areas himself. But both authors made 'sketches' that were contemporary with their travels, Byron in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and Hope with the many drawings that he made (now housed in the Benaki Museum archive in Athens). I examine the connection between Hope's sketches of Near Eastern places and people and the descriptions of those places and character types in *Anastasius*. Why, as Cochran asks in the title of his article on this subject, did Byron envy Hope's *Anastasius*? If Byron did envy Hope, a debatable point, this paper will suggest that Hope, using his background as an artist, got closer to the real East than Byron did with his poetical travelogue. Hope had drawn the East in pictures, and then built on that when he constructed the East with words.

ROSE, Kaila

Independent scholar

'This is a fact and no poetic fable': Mobilizing Byron's Political 'Hints' in Correspondences and Don Juan Canto V'

In his letter to John Murray on November 5th, 1820, Byron asks to be excused for his 'nonsense' as 'in the present state of things,' his discussion of 'more serious topics' 'is not safe by a foreign post' (Marchand 219). Throughout his time in Ravenna, Byron works to remain involved in political discussion but turns toward alternative forms of direct expression. This paper focuses on Byron's linguistic mobility—or the back and forth in his lived experience and its reimagined poetic representation—where his politics reside between self-censorship and wittingly gauged revelation to his correspondents and readers. In addition, I present a yet unpublished letter written on November 10th to Conte Giuseppe Alborghetti, illustrating Byron's role as linguistic middleman as he works to connect events in England, Naples, and Milan. Then, turning attention to the 'fact' of an earlier shooting that occurred outside of Byron's residence in Ravenna around the 22nd of July, 1820 and the 'disarming' of his 'unarmed' servants around the 17th of October of that same year, I show how he presents the trauma of war in *Don Juan* Canto V in such scenes as the butchering 'in a civic alley' and searches for answers through the experience of gazing into the face of death (*DJ* st. 37). Even though Byron tells Alborghetti that he has 'heard of no change' in the moment he composes this letter, vast political shifts occur in the short time that elapses between the writing and receiving of his words across real and written borders.

SANDY, Mark

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'Breathless Being: Byron, Subjectivity, and Poetic Mobility'

Byron's treatment of subjectivity is marked by an imaginative mobility that permits competing and contradictory perspectives on selfhood to coalesce. Byron is both open to, and sceptical of, the self-absorption of the negatively capable imagination. In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, the Byronic observing self is absorbed by the surrounding world, but retains a degree of control and resists giving its subjectivity over to self-dissolution, so that in Byron's words: 'I live not in myself, but I become / Portion of that around me' (III, 72, 1). At one moment, the Byronic self is capacious and all-encompassing and, at another, it is singularly self-centred in its willed, future, vision of a place where 'the Desert were my dwelling place, / With one fair spirit for my minister, / That I might forget the human race, / And, hating no one, love but only her!' (IV, 177, 1585-8). Imaginatively, Byron is as capable of indulging the self's solipsistic fantasy, as he is of fracturing a self and its desires into a 'broken mirror' reflective of the numerous goings-on of life to 'make / a thousand images as of one that was' (III, 33, 1-3). Realised states of self-aspiration become for Byron, as they did for Rousseau, 'Madness beautiful' (*CH*, III, 729). Such deftness of imaginative touch permits Byron to glimpse the self in, and through, its mercurial, transformative, modes of being that wrest '[f]orm from the floating wreck which Ruin leaves behind' (IV, 54, 936).

SCHOINA, Maria
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Byron's Ideas on Translation

Like his famous *mobilité*, translation -- linguistic and cultural-- was essentially congenial to Byron. This paper aims to examine the role of improvisation and experimentation in Byron's translations from the Greek and Italian. As I argue, these celebrated qualities of Byron's verse assume distinctive, though at times ambivalent meanings when used by the poet to transmit the reality of a foreign literary text into his native idiom. Thus, on principle, Byron was against the idea of being pedantic and faithful to the original and reworked it freely into his own verse. Other times, however, he insisted on poetic fidelity and accuracy in translation, 'line for line if not word for word'. I'm interested in investigating the deeper implications of such a 'mixed' approach and in exploring to what extent Byron concurs with or departs from Romantic-period theories on translation (A.W.Schlegel, de Staël, Tytler). I would also like to propose that Byron's translated works, when viewed as a unified, developing body -- from his school exercises in *Hours of Idleness* (1807) to the translation of the first canto of Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore* in the *Liberal* in 1823 -- mark a gradual change in his outlook on the art and effect of translation, which challenges the shift in his outlook on literature after 1817.

SHISHKOVA, Irina
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The Russian Journal of Claire Clairmont and her 'Immediate Impressions'

The paper deals with Byron's complicated relationship with Claire Clairmont and her life in Russia after her failure to take Allegra away from the convent. From 1821 Claire grew acquainted with many Russians in Florence, being accepted in the house of Count Buturlin, the centre of the 'Russian circle' in the city.

The paper will highlight Claire's 'immediate impressions' and 'geographical mobility.' While staying in Italy, she could not even imagine that she would spend a rather long period of her 'best years' in Russia as a governess. Yet, in February 1823, she had an encounter with Countess Zotova in Vienna and made an agreement to accompany her and her two daughters to this distant country. On March 22 1823 her career as a governess began. She stayed in Russia until 1826. Her impressions of the Russians were reflected in the diaries and letters addressed to Mary Shelley and her friend Jane Williams. Claire was a well-educated and well-read person with fairly free views and an open mind. Before she came to Russia she had lived in Switzerland, Italy and Austria. She certainly tried to conceal her origins and past, for no one would entrust their daughters to a girl from the circle of such 'terrible libertines as Godwin, and immoral men like Shelley and Byron.'

Claire knew several languages, was musically gifted, had a literary talent, and the paper will concentrate on her sketches of Moscow life based on her Journal, which in general is a detailed record of the daily routine of an English governess and a very interesting literary and historical source.

SINATRA, Michael E.
Université de Montréal, CANADA
(Digital) Byron / (Humanities) Hunt: Revisiting Byron's Relationship with Hunt through the Use of Digital Humanities Tools

Although based in large part on works previously published, Hunt's *Autobiography* is probably the most important work of his later life, and rightly deserves Thomas Carlyle's praise as being 'by far the best of the autobiographic kind I remember to have read in the English language'. While a large section of the material included in Hunt's *Autobiography* comes from his 1828 *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries*, as I have discussed in my book *Leigh Hunt and the London Literary Scene, 1805-1828*, the tone is greatly altered. Whereas *Lord Byron* was very much a statement of personal justification in face of the various attacks Hunt had suffered in publications on Byron, and a reaction against the fulsome praises that the dead poet now garnered from around the country, the *Autobiography* offers a calmer depiction of Hunt's life. If during the 1810s, as Tim Fulford argues, conservative critics disliked Hunt for 'his democratization and personalization of literature' (202), reviewers of the 1850 *Autobiography* praised

him for the obvious sense of pleasure in the recollection of past events and friendships, as well as his more gentle treatment of Byron.

This paper will use digital humanities tools to offer a new interpretation of Hunt's engagement with, and representation of, Byron in both editions of his *Autobiography* (the longer version in three volumes published 1850 and the more selective one-volume edition published posthumously in 1860). It will also demonstrate the pivotal role of Hunt's work in the continued development of Byron's reputation after 1850.

STALLINGS, A. E.

Independent poet, translator and critic, Greece

Crede Byron: How Prose Impressions, Translations, and Other Sources Become 'Improvised' as Verse

I will look at Byron's letters, translations and allusions, and see how these are transformed into verse whose dominant quality is perceived as extemporaneous.

TIGANI SAVA, Maria Gabriella

University of MALTA; University of Pisa, ITALY

Italian Byronism: Political and Poetical Improvisation? The Case of the Two Miraglia

The starting point of my paper concerns the interpretation of the meaning of Byronism. Was it a superficial literary influence, a mood or a hypnotic monster, as Peter Cochran wrote? From a different approach, which rejects Schmitt's thesis – since it reduced Romanticism solely to the aesthetic dimension, attributing to romantics the label of 'feckless politicians' – we may conceive of Byronism as a complex phenomenon consisting of two linked components, both inspired by Lord Byron's works and life: the first inherent to the poetic style, the second relying on civic and political commitment. If improvisation is the main quality of Byron's poetry and action, can we say it also affected his Italian epigones?

The case I wish to examine relates two far from well-known and often confused figures of the Italian Risorgimento, Biagio Gioacchino Miraglia from Cosenza (1814-1885) and his cousin Biagio Miraglia from Strongoli (1823-1885), both poets and patriots. The older Miraglia - author of the novels *Hassan* (1835), *Il corsaro* (1843) and *Il brigante* (1844) - was an illustrious phrenologist who was one of the first to try out the therapeutic use of theatre and music focused on improvisation on his patients in Aversa; the homonymous Biagio, who led the 1844 Calabrian uprisings together with his friend Domenico Mauro, was an extemporaneous poet and wrote a number of verses imbued with a variety of Byronic themes. However, he formed his personality within the ancient Collegio of San Demetrio Corone, at the heart of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, identified as the ideal school of Byronism, which became a breeding ground of patriots, by setting up a fiery union between poetry and politics.

TUITE, Clara

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Wheels on Fire: Byron's Heroic Bustle and the Gypsy Flash

When Byron writes of *Don Juan* — 'You must not mind the occasional rambling I mean it for a poetical T[r]istram Shandy—or Montaigne's Essays with a story for a hinge' (April 14, 1823) — he casually asserts the constitutive necessity of this occasional rambling. So Byron's writing achieves its astonishing improvisational feats of mobility, I suggest, through its digressive rambling and its radical occasionality. This lecture considers the particular form of improvisational mobility generated by Byron's radical sense of occasion. It starts with the 1819 arrival in Ravenna, engaging the works and scenes of life and writing that radiate out from there.

Honing dialectical perversity and transcultural indirection, Byron's immersion in Italian literature, politics and daily life occasions a sustained critique of English literature. Hence, in the first entry of the *Ravenna Journal* (Jan 4, 1821), Byron mentions Alfieri's *Filippo* and the Carbonari business of political assassinations, but not before an elaborate set-piece in which he 'read the papers—thought what fame was,' and uses a newspaper article, about a gypsy murderess whose groceries were wrapped in

a leaf of *Pamela*, to craft a delicious piece of *schadenfreude* — revenge on Richardson for having been mean about Pope.

Similarly, writing in Genoa, in October 1822, Byron arrives in London with Juan, in Canto XI, in the company of Tom the highwayman, the maker of ‘heroic bustle,’ who Juan shoots dead, while he is in ‘full flash.’ This lecture explores the flash as an exemplary mode of Byronic mobility and improvisation.

In *The Prophecy of Dante* (1821), dedicated to Teresa Guiccioli (‘Lady!’), Byron appeals to ‘the Italian reader’ to ‘pardon my failure,’ before apologizing for ‘deviating into an address to the Italian reader, when my business is with the English one.’ Apologetics aside, I read Byron’s mock-heroic bustle as akin to the ‘mixture of sublimity and triviality’ that Auerbach celebrates in Dante, and argue that *Don Juan* might be measured on the strength of the Byronic improvisational achievement that is to perform the sublimity of triviality.

Finally, I consider another form of Byron’s exilic mobility, the harnessing of anachronism as a powerful form of slow mobility.

WARD, Matthew

University of Birmingham, UK

‘Alone we treat it, you and I’: Byron, Arnold, Keeping Company in Solitude

The conference’s interest in ‘mobility’ affords the opportunity to extend into two less remarked upon elements of Byron’s definition. For Byron’s footnote explaining his use of the word in *Don Juan* quickly qualifies ‘an excessive susceptibility of immediate impressions’ with the importance of not ‘losing the past’, before concluding that, though ‘useful to the possessor’, ‘mobility’ is a ‘most painful and unhappy attribute’. Matthew Arnold’s thorough and thoughtful poetic conversations with Byron revolve around a desire to retain a literary past within the present, but they also carry a degree of the pain and suffering inherent in Byron’s mobility. Arnold’s attitude toward Byron vacillated between dismissiveness and admiration, often in the same poem. In ‘Memorial Stanzas’ he was at pains to suggest that Byron ‘taught us little’, yet in the same breath, and with Byronic intensity and imagery, affirmed ‘our soul / Had *felt* him like the thunder’s roll’. Such a pronouncement seems to capture something of Byron’s mobility, recalling an excessive susceptibility toward immediate impressions, as well as identifying in Byron’s writing a crucial means of holding on to a literary past within Arnold’s cultural present. This paper will reflect on both Byron and Arnold in order to consider the literary inheritance of a Byronic sensibility in the work of a high Victorian with the aim of drawing out similarities between these two different characters.

WEBB, Stephen

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‘With the Authors Compts’: John Cam Hobhouse’s Uses of ‘Byron’

The relationship between John Cam Hobhouse and his friend, Lord Byron, is different than the relationship between Hobhouse and the author, Byron. The nature of print authorship and Byron’s ascendant celebrity status forced Hobhouse to confront, conflate, and struggle over the dichotomy between individual and author. However, as Byron’s meteoric literary rise was contrasted by the slower and haltingly achieved political trajectory of Hobhouse, the latter was not above using his earlier and ongoing publishing and personal collaborations with his friend, Byron, as a means to attain some political standing. A chance encounter at the Newberry Library, Chicago, with a previously undocumented piece of marginalia – a personal inscription written by Hobhouse that reads ‘To the Lord Viscount Sidmouth with the Authors Compts’ found on the title page of a copy of Hobhouse’s 1813 *A Journey through Albania, and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia, To Constantinople, During the Years 1809 and 1810*, as well as further marginal traces throughout this book – begs the reconsideration of just how Hobhouse used print, publishing, and authorship to effect personal gain. Hobhouse can be seen as both savvy and ignorant regarding authorship, and, being so closely linked to the destruction of Byron’s memoirs, he is an exemplary case of ambivalence towards a burgeoning print readership. This paper looks at the intersections between politics, celebrity, authorship, and print culture as seen in the case of John Cam Hobhouse’s publishing career and his associations with Byron, author and friend.

WHICKMAN, Paul

University of Derby, UK

'Unimaginable ether!': Byronic *Mise en abyme* in *Manfred* and *Cain*

In his seemingly damning appraisal of Byron's poetic abilities T.S. Eliot declared that 'if Byron had distilled his verse, there would have been nothing whatever left'. Others, such as Peter J. Manning, have subsequently defended Byron against these accusations of superficiality implying that critics such as Eliot have missed the point:

[I]n poetry there can be only words, and this illusion of depth and timelessness is a linguistic conjuring trick, a sleight of hand performed in language and inseparable from it. Byron's satiric and anti-sublime deconstructions strip away this illusion, insisting that we recognize that it is through our own language that we create the images that enchant us. [Peter J. Manning, 'Byron's Imperceptiveness to the English Word' in Jane Stabler (ed.) *Byron* (London & New York: Longman, 1998), p. 189.]

Such poetic self-consciousness has therefore led several critics to read Byron as anticipating postmodernism. Even though such a discussion is beyond the scope of this paper, this piece nevertheless explores Byron's use of what is now often termed *mise en abyme*, a concept commonly associated with the postmodern.

Mise en abyme, its most common trope being 'a play within a play', often demonstrates the essential baselessness of all claims to universal reality or truth, an eminently Byronic interest. This paper argues that Byron's manipulation of *mise en abyme* in *Manfred* (1817) and *Cain* (1821) is very much related to their unique form as 'mental theatre'. Not only does the self-awareness of both texts illustrate the illusive nature of language and thus the 'systems' that such language upholds, but their status as not-quite-plays dramatises the tension and gaps between the visual, the written and the imaginary. For instance, whereas Lucifer shows Cain 'the Abyss of Space', these sights are only related to us, as readers/audience, through Cain's words, much like how the story of Eden is known to Cain only through the words of Adam, Eve and Lucifer. Similarly observable in *Manfred*, this paper argues that *mise en abyme* in Byron's mental theatre therefore offers a more extensive critique of language's relation to knowledge than what is encountered in his more conventional poetry,

WOODHOUSE, David

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'Words are things': Some New Perspectives on the Trimmer-Poet Episode of *Don Juan*

The trimmer-poet episode in Canto III of *Don Juan* is an obvious example of an *improvisatore* at work and has also been described by Jerome McGann as 'Byron's most profound presentation of his idea of Romantic mobility'. McGann and Peter Cochran developed the idea that the composite figure of the protean trimmer tacks back and forth between Southey at one pole and Byron at the other, the distance bridged by the various apostate figures named in the narrative, lyric and variants (see, for example, Malcolm Kelsall on Horace and Peter Graham on Crashaw).

The rich literary excursus of Canto III becomes even more resonant when read in the echo chambers of literary controversies running from the 1790s up to the date of composition. The proposed paper would seek first to elucidate allusions to these episodes, especially in relation to Southey, and then to suggest that other writers from both sides of the political question are lurking at the fringes of 'The Isles of Greece'.

It would be argued that influences from the left include Moore and Peacock, whose *Sir Proteus* is a 'changeful seer' prototypical of the trimmer; guests from the right include Gifford, T.J. Mathias, and that 'Antijacobin at last', George Canning, one of whose many claims to fame was a precocious schoolboy exercise on 'The Slavery of Greece'.

The paper would close by suggesting that *Don Juan*, in the celebrated octave affirming that 'words are things', recuperates a propagandist catchphrase of the 1790s in one of its most mobile and polyphonic utterances on the power and the limitations of poetry.

