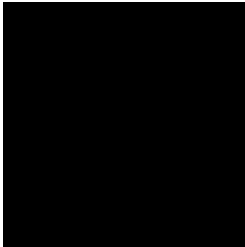


George Gordon, Lord Byron: *Manfred*

Dr. Theresa Thompson
English 3120
Fall 2009

George Gordon, Lord Byron



George Gordon, Lord Byron's Natal Chart

- Aquarius: Born 22 January 1788, London
 - A foot deformity made him limp all his life.
- 1812: Childe Harold made him a "rock star."
 - Affair with Caroline Lamb.
- 1813: sexual affair with his sister, Augusta.
- 1815-16: Travels to Italy with Shelley.
 - Wrote *Manfred*.
- 1819: Takes Teresa, Countess Guiccioli, as mistress.
- 1820: Joins Italian freedom fighters with Shelley.
 - 1822: Shelley drowns.
- 1823: Joins Greek fight for independence from Ottoman Empire.
- 1824: Epileptic seizure. Dies two months later from a "chill" caught while horseback riding during a storm.

W. P. Fitzpatrick. "Byron's Mysteries: The Paradoxical Drive Toward Eden." In *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry*. NY: 1963.

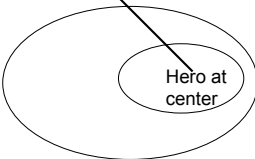
- "Byron's mysteries preclude resolution on any philosophical level—they defy the facile assignment of delineated motives to either God or His mortal antagonists. Byron's vision is paradoxically dual, and although beyond logic, ultimately honest. Because of his devotion to the real human condition the plays defy synthesis with any abstract system, whether it be Deism, Calvinism, or Catholicism..." (Fitzpatrick 79).
- "Despite the artistic irregularities of the plays, ...the conflict basic to Byron's mysteries may be, through myth, intuited: man, fallen from Eden, yearns to recapture the paradisaical state, but through the disparity between the potential of attainment and his aspiration, brings upon himself another and more grievous fall from grace.
- "Byron's heroes fall because there is no access to Eden lost, yet still they attempt, courageously, to reconstruct a new, humanistically conceived paradise—however limited or ill-conceived."

Byronic Structure (entire corpus)

Unity	Fall (inevitable)	Action (to reunite)	Re-Fall	Integration
Blake's primary innocence.	Neither fortunate nor unfortunate.	Re-open our senses.	All actions ultimately fail. Fragmentation, perversion, fallen poetry, return to Orthodoxy (in part), integration (rare).	"Concentrated Recompense": To make the self the very vessel of synthesis.
Only glancingly imaged.	Bifurcation: Male / female One / many Thought / feeling	Love. Pursue knowledge. Join a cause.	Solve some, but we create other problems (Manfred).	Make a monument of the self.
We lose it so fast, we don't know what it was we lost.	Fate: our fate to be divided. Tyranny: Defines adulthood & perverse condition The strong act against the fallen condition.	Retreat to remote place. Write poetry. Travel, stay in motion. All human acts of creativity are also acts of rebellion, destruction, and pride.	Some fall in and of themselves. 1. Can't know what we really want to know. 2. It's endless & what does knowledge make of the knower?	Acquire invisibility: to die out of & go beyond the visible world (Manfred). To "wear" the oppositions: -who can keep them together? -Prometheus wears his mountain.

Byronic Hero

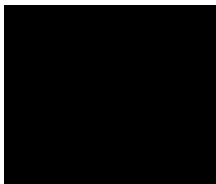
Byronic Hero ends up outside of society



Manfred isn't in society.

- Literary contexts:
 - Marlowe's Faustus / Goethe's Faust
 - Milton's Satan
- Bible
 - Cain story
 - Love can't satisfy
 - Sex rules out knowledge in the mind.
- Prometheus
 - Fire of imagination (not enough)
- Unusually dense play of ironies & a plethora of paradox.
- Cain & Prometheus paradoxical in relation to each other.
- Oppositions: past / future, mind / body, good / evil, inner / outer, male / female, guilt / innocence

First drama *Manfred* details Byronic Hero's character



Blade Runner's Byronic Hero

- **Closet Drama:** play suited primarily for reading rather than stage production
- **Byronic Hero**
 - Mystery at his core (1.1:137-8)
 - (Self-)Cursed (1.1:220-261, 2.3:35-42)
 - Concern with life/death: (1.2:20-24, 2.1:74-88, 2.2:173-82)
 - Climbs higher (1.2:59-64)
 - Fatally mortal (2.2:33-43, 76-78)
 - Tortured soul (2.4:54-73)

Manfred and Northrup Frye's Mythic Conventions

- Initiation stage.
 - Began at birth, fated to be Manfred & to quest.
 - Star of fate and Astarte (star): to know her is to know his fate.
- Act of Encroachment.
 - He summons the spirits "Mysterious agency" (1.1:28-36)
 - Invocation of spirits is mirrored in the curse. (1.1:250-1)
 - He has made the strongest poison himself. (1.1:232-41)
- Series of Complications
 - Chamois Hunter & the Witch begin to act as a web restricting him. (1.2:110-15, 2.2:150-60)
- Reversal
 - Arimanes (2.4:98-105, 2.4:115-54)
 - "Yet, see, he mastereth it..." (2.4:160-70)
- Catastrophe: Manfred smashes all avenues of escape.
 - "Look on me!" (3.1:138-53)
 - Faust & Milton echoes : Penitence & pardon (3.1:48-78, 3.1:160-71)
 - Hell looms (3.4:59-66)
- Recognition
 - Spirits, hunter, witch all offered false & delimiting solutions. Each episode a temptation to be resisted.
 - Manfred makes a solution. (3.4:121-41, 3.4:149-53)
 - He pushes fate & free will to radical extremes without a resolution.

J. Twitchell, "The Supernatural Structure of Byron's *Manfred*."

- Byron's "Chain of Being" isn't "to keep man in his place, but to show that there are certain links man can snap and certain ones he cannot" (Twitchell 601).
- "...the spirit world above Manfred is no hastily constructed cosmos;..." (601-2).
 - These spirits are not "for adornment" like the Spirits in Coleridge's *Rime*....the spirits of Acts I and II ... reflect psychological changes in the protagonist."
 - madness (1.1:65-76, 1.1:100-12 reflected in 1.2:65-81)
 - Seven formless divisions have just one form (1.1:181-91)
- Manfred is a magician shaped by Iamblichus's theurgy: "On the Mysteries."

- Theurgist = white magician "responsible for preserving material harmony on the earth" (Twitchell 604).
- "Iamblichus believed that at the very top of this cosmic pyramid is the One--the force of unity for all life. Below this point--the point of God--emanate the rational and universal souls downward through the angelic, archonic, heroic, and daemonic orders to man."
- His concern was "the problem of how the magician can communicate with the daemons which exist in the lowest of the material spheres or plateaus."
- To summon these daemons, the theurgist must understand "a doctrine of signatures or the parallelism existing between the nominal and phenomenal worlds."
 - "we preserve in the soul collectively the mystic and arcane image of the gods, and through this we elevate the soul to the gods, and when elevated conjoin it as much as possible."

- Spirits in Act 1 follow the Iamblichus pattern.
 - Celestial, Ethereal, Aquatic, Subterranean, Aerial, Lucifigum (of Night). (1.1:51-2, 1.1:76-7, 1.1:100-01, 1.1:107-08)
 - These "spirits have no bodies of their own," and "are without passions" (Twitchell 606). (1.1:181-3)
 - "...daemons are the productive and operative executors of nature, [so] they have power only over the four elements, not over the mind or the psyche of man."
- The 7th spirit "is the enigmatic ... "star which rules thy destiny (1.1.110)" (Twitchell 607).
 - "Manfred's star has become 'A wandering mass of shapeless flame,...' which serves to heighten the awfulness of Manfred's fate..." (Twitchell 607). 1.1:117-19
 - The play makes it obvious "that the star does not control Manfred, nor does Manfred control the star." (1.1:124-125)
