

**'Das Lebend'ge will ich preisen':
from *Ästhetik* to *Humanität*.
A comparative study of Byron and
Goethe with special reference to
Don Juan and the *West-östlicher Divan*.**

by

Shona Millar Allan

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Glasgow, Departments of German and
English Literature, Centre for European Romanticism.

July 1999

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Abstract

This comparative study of Byron and Goethe seeks to explore the idea that there may be a far more fundamental similarity between the mode of writing of these two poets than has been noted to date. Although there has been, and continues to be, much written about each poet individually there has been little produced on the two poets considered together since the first half of the 20th century — the biographical coincidences and the influence of Goethe's *Faust* on Byron's *Manfred* having been exhausted.

The initial chapter of this thesis examines this debate before proceeding, in Chapters 2 and 3, to an examination, first of all Goethe's reception of Byron as revealed in his letters, journals, conversations and reviews and then, similarly, to Byron's reception of Goethe. Suspecting that the uniquely aesthetic, vital quality of Byron's and Goethe's poetry may well be the common factor in both, it is an exploration of this 'particularity' that provides the focus in Chapter 4. Having established that there is a fundamental link between Goethe and Byron in their views about art, aesthetics and the function of poetry, it is to close textual analysis of the *West-östlicher Divan* and *Don Juan* that I turn in Chapter 5. This close examination illuminates these connections better than any purely theoretical analysis could, and thus appropriately supports Goethe's and Byron's view that the only way to express the particular is precisely through the particular.

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Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been brought to completion without the constant advice, patience and encouragement of many people. My greatest debt is to my supervisors Professor Drummond Bone, Professor Roger Stephenson and Dr Paul Bishop. I am also grateful to Susan Sirc for her assistance at the initial stages of composition. Anything of significance in this thesis is undoubtedly steeped in their influence throughout the years I have spent as both an undergraduate and postgraduate at the University of Glasgow.

Thanks must also go to Elizabeth Cantlie, Jane Cavani, Ute Dapprich-Barrett, Karl Leydecker, Martin McQuillan, Andrea Mayr, Barbara Miller, Mary Reilly, Jean Shedden, Janet Stewart, Damien Walsh, and all colleagues in the German Department of the University of Glasgow, with whom I have spent many pleasant hours in fruitful discussion. I should also like to thank Neil McKinlay for his proof-reading skills and for his commas, and Peter Cochran for his assistance with, and knowledge of, Byron manuscripts.

I should also like to thank the Clark Mile End fund whose bursary helped me through the first two years of my research, and the Erasmus scheme and The Stevenson Exchange Scholarship which financed six months in Bayreuth during my M.Phil research out of which this thesis grew.

Finally I wish to thank my parents who have supported me both emotionally and financially throughout my studies. Without their support and especially the inspiration of my late father this thesis would never have been undertaken.

Abbreviations

BJ = *The Byron Journal*.

Blessington = *Lady Blessington's Conversations of Lord Byron*. Ed. Ernest J. Lovell, Jr. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.

Eckermann = Johann Peter Eckermann. *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*. Ed. Heinz Schlaffer. München: Carl Hanser, 1986.

FA = Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Sämtliche Werke. Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche*. Ed. Friedmar Apel et al. Frankfurter Ausgabe. 40 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker, 1985- .

Gespräche = *Goethes Gespräche*. Ed. Woldemar Freiherr von Biedermann. Leipzig, 1889-96. *Goethes Werke im WWW*. Chadwyck-Healey, 1997.

HA = *Goethes Werke*. Ed. Erich Trunz. Hamburger Ausgabe. 14 vols. München: C. H. Beck, 1981.

LJ = *Byron's Letters and Journals*. Ed. Leslie A. Marchand. 12 vols. London: John Murray, 1973-82 and *Byron's Letters and Journals*. Supplementary volume. Ed. Leslie A. Marchand. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994.

MA = Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens*. Ed. Karl Richter, Herbert G. Göpfert, Norbert Miller and Gerhard Sauder. Münchner Ausgabe. 21 vols. München: Carl Hanser, 1985-98.

Medwin = *Medwin's Conversations of Lord Byron*. Ed. Ernest J. Lovell, Jr. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.

NA = *Schillers Werke*. Ed. Lieselotte Blumenthal and Benno von Wiese. Nationalausgabe. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1943- . *Schillers Werke im WWW*. Chadwyck-Healey, 1998.

PEGS = *Publications of the English Goethe Society*.

PMLA = *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*.

PW = Lord Byron. *The Complete Poetical Works*. Ed. Jerome J. McGann and Barry Weller. 7 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980-93.

WA = *Goethes Werke*. Weimarer Ausgabe (Sophien-Ausgabe). 143 vols. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1887-1919. *Goethes Werke im WWW*. Chadwyck-Healey, 1997.

Introduction

Ein freundlich Wort kommt eines nach dem andern
 Von Süden her und bringt uns frohe Stunden;
 Es ruft uns auf zum Edelsten zu wandern,
 Nicht ist der Geist, doch ist der Fuß gebunden.

Wie soll ich dem, den ich so lang begleitet,
 Nun etwas Traulichs in die Ferne sagen?
 Ihm, der sich selbst im Innersten bestreitet,
 Stark angewohnt, das tiefste Weh zu tragen.

Wohl sei ihm doch wenn er sich selbst empfindet!
 Er wage selbst sich hochbeglückt zu nennen,
 Wenn Musenkraft die Schmerzen überwindet;
 Und wie ich ihn erkannt, mög' er sich kennen.¹

¹'An Lord Byron', composed on 22 June 1823 (*Goethes Werke*, Weimarer Ausgabe (Sophien-Ausgabe), 143 vols. (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1887-1919) I, 42.1, p. 103)). Henceforth abbreviated to WA with section, volume and page numbers. See diary for this date (WA, III, 9, p. 65) and also diary for 20 September 1823 (WA, III, 9, p. 119). All references to Goethe's diaries are to the WA. The poem was first published in *Kunst und Altertum* and subsequently in translation in Thomas Medwin, *Medwin's Conversations of Lord Byron*, ed. Ernest J. Lovell, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) 274. The footnote reveals that Medwin ascribed the translation to Coleridge, but Lovell notes that 'the presence of Coleridge's hand is uncertain, witnessed only by Medwin's note. It may be significant that although Goethe's prose was retranslated between the first edition and the New Edition of 1824, his poem was not' (Lovell 275).

'One friendly word comes fast upon another
 From the warm South, bringing communion sweet, —
 Calling us amid noblest thoughts to wander
 Free in our souls, though fetter'd in our feet.

How shall I, who so long his bright path traced,
 Say to him words of love sent from afar? —
 To him who with his inmost heart hath struggled,
 Long wont with fate and deepest woes to war?

May he be happy! — *thus* himself esteeming,
 He well might count himself a favour'd one!
 By his loved Muses all his sorrows banish'd,
 And he *self-known*, — e'en as to *me* he's known!' (Medwin 274).

Where possible and appropriate published translations have been used. All unattributed translations are my own. Robertson (J. G. Robertson, *Goethe and Byron*, *PEGS* ns 2 (1925)) calls Medwin's

Leghorn. July 22d. 1823

Illustrious Sir — I cannot thank you as you ought to be thanked for the lines which my young friend Mr. Sterling sent me of yours, — and it would but ill become me to pretend to exchange verses with him who for fifty years, has been the undisputed sovereign of European literature. — You must therefore accept my most sincere acknowledgements in prose — and in hasty prose too — for I am at present on my voyage to Greece once more — and surrounded by hurry and bustle which hardly allow a moment even to Gratitude and Admiration to express themselves. — I sailed from Genoa some days ago — was driven back by a Gale of Wind — and have since sailed again and arrived here (Leghorn) this morning to receive on board some Greek passengers for their struggling Country. — *Here* also I found your lines and Mr Sterling's letter — and I could not have had a more favourable Omen or more agreeable surprise than a word from Goethe written by his own hand. — I am returning to Greece to see if I can be of any little use there; — if ever I come back I will pay a visit to Weimar to offer the sincere homage of one of your many Millions of admirers. — I have the honour to be ever and most respectfully

yr. obliged adm[irer] & Se[rvant],

NOEL BYRON²

(on receipt of Goethe's poem, above).

translation 'hardly a translation at all' (70, note 1) and provides a prose one of his own. Butler (E[lsie] M. Butler, *Byron and Goethe: Analysis of a Passion* (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1956)) also offers her own verse translation of Goethe's poem (90). Both of these translations are truer to the original than Medwin's.

²*Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand, vol. 10 (London: John Murray, 1980) 213. All references to Byron's letters and journals are to this edition, which is henceforth referred to as LJ. The sometimes idiosyncratic punctuation and spelling are reproduced as found therein. The MLA style is adhered to throughout this thesis, except in subsequent references to multivolume works and works abbreviated as letters only, where page numbers are preceded by either p. or pp. for reasons of clarity.

These two short pieces represent the sum total of direct contact between Goethe and Byron. This may not seem altogether overwhelming evidence on which to base a thesis concentrating on a comparative investigation of the two poets, yet, despite their brevity, these texts themselves nonetheless provide a great deal more information than their length might indicate and raise a great many more questions. Without any further knowledge whatsoever of the relationship between the two poets many points of interest can be established.

Goethe's poem to Byron reveals, not only that he was aware of the British poet and his work, but also that he had been so for some time ('Wie soll ich dem, den ich so *lang* begleitet') (my italics). It also indicates that he felt that to some extent he understood the man and even felt some affinity with him. This poem was penned when Goethe was 73 years old and not given to idle praise: Byron had clearly affected him deeply and something significant had incited him to write this short poem which Byron received while in Leghorn, Italy, just prior to his final departure for Greece. Our interest is surely aroused then as to why Goethe should have such an opinion of Byron. What did he know about him? With which of his works, if any, was he acquainted? What did he think of any works he had read? How did he happen across Byron in the first place? Why single out a British poet for praise and attention and not a German one? And, perhaps most curiously of all, what attracted him particularly to Byron rather than to any other of his British contemporaries?

As for Byron, it is clear from his words that he thought highly of the great German, greatly appreciating this poem which came into his hands only due to the bad weather which had delayed his departure. His pleasure is clear, as is his desire to go to Weimar to meet Goethe after his return from Greece. Like Goethe, Byron was not one for lavishing praise or admiration on just anyone, so something must have inspired his feelings. Although this letter tells us nothing about what Byron knew about Goethe the man and his life or his works, it surely inspires curiosity about the

answer to this question. What did he know of Goethe's life? With which of his works, if any, was he familiar? What did he think of any works with which he was familiar? Why single out a German poet for praise and attention? Why did he rate the opinion of this ageing German poet whose language he did not even speak?

It does not take much further investigation in the quite extensive secondary literature to discover that there is indeed much fruit to be gathered from an investigation into the relationship between the two poets. Byron features frequently in Goethe's conversations, especially with Eckermann, and in his correspondence, and his views on his British contemporary and his works are easily discernible. While Byron mentions Goethe less often it is nonetheless significant that he does so at all, and in a positive light at that, and perhaps most telling of all is Byron's angry reaction when his various dedications to Goethe did not appear as and when he desired. It is hence clear that, despite the lack of a long correspondence between the two men and the fact that they never actually met, there is nonetheless a strong link between the two. It is a delineation of that link that I strive to attain during the course of this thesis.

Deciding to investigate two of the greatest canonical authors³ in Western literature in the one thesis may seem to be nothing more than folly. On the one hand there is Goethe, surely one of the most prolific German authors of all time, while on the other there is Byron, a figure for some reason almost more renowned outwith his own country than within it (and perhaps more for the malicious gossip surrounding his private life than for his literary oeuvre). Goethe is world-renowned primarily as the

³In the early 19th century Byron and Goethe together were often considered as canonical. Astolphe de Custine writes to Stendhal on 7 January 1830: 'Les drames du genre de Faust et de ce Manfred, qui, malgré la puissante originalité du talent de lord Byron, n'est que le petit-fils de Goethe que vous n'aimez pas, m'ont toujours laissé des impressions très incomplètes, et cependant j'admire autant que personne le génie supérieur de leurs auteurs, que je reconnais pour les deux plus grands poètes de notre temps' (Stendhal, *Correspondance*, ed. Henri Martineau and V. del Litto, vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1968) 843). 'Dramas like *Faust* and *Manfred* (which, despite the powerful originality of Lord Byron's talent, is only the grandson of Goethe, whom you do not like) have always made less than complete impressions on me, yet I admire as much as anyone the superior genius of their authors, whom I recognise as the two greatest poets of our time.'

author of *Faust*; Byron as the author of *Childe Harold*, but it is to neither of these texts that I will turn my attention in this thesis. Here I choose not to follow the well-trodden 'who influenced whom first' path, nor the one marked 'Goethe's *Faust* as revealed in Byron's poetry', but rather to focus on a much misunderstood cycle of poetry composed late on in Goethe's life, the *West-östlicher Divan*,⁴ and compare it with what is arguably Byron's best work *Don Juan*. What could a comparison of two works so clearly different bring to the debate on the similarities or differences between the two poets? In the course of this thesis I investigate the extent to which, despite clear differences between the two authors and these two disparate texts, there are nonetheless many points which do provide some clues as to how best to delineate what the two poets may have shared and go some way towards making this affinity more accessible and more illuminating. Yet, although the clear differences between them, in age and language, to mention but two, may seem to position them so far apart on the literary spectrum as to warrant no useful comparative study, something does appear to link the two. And not only in the minds of academics desperate to find exciting new pastures for academic research, but also in something as everyday as a newspaper article in which an interviewer, asking the Formula-1 racing driver Michael Schumacher if he liked poetry, added, 'Poetry — such as Goethe or Byron ... sonnets, ballads, rhymes'.⁵ Why out of all the poets he could have mentioned did the interviewer select Goethe and Byron? Perhaps the selection of Goethe is understandable: Schumacher is German after all; but to add Byron also surely indicates that the interviewer feels that Byron is either on a par with the great German, or that there is something which connects the two. This link, in whatever it may consist, has not gone altogether unnoticed. Much of the critical literature, however, was written either at the end of last century or at the beginning of this and,

⁴This cycle of poetry was written between 1814 and 1819 (although Goethe did add more poems later when he edited the text for a complete edition of his works in 1827), which is also the period during which Byron first came to Goethe's attention and he became acquainted with some of his works. *Don Juan* was composed between 1818 and 1824 and is hence almost contemporaneous with the Goethe collection.

⁵Simon Sebag Montefiore, 'Simon Sebag Montefiore meets Michael Schumacher,' *Sunday Times* 21 Sept. 1997, sec. 5: 7.

apart from a few notable exceptions, Goethe and Byron as a pair have more recently been abandoned as viable and worthwhile topics for investigation. Chapter 1 of this thesis focuses on this critical literature, examining the scholarly debate, so that the focus for my own argument and analysis might be clarified.

Chapters 2 and 3 will highlight the Goethe-Byron relationship, first of all concentrating, in Chapter 2, on the development of Goethe's appreciation of Byron and then, in Chapter 3, focusing on the progression of Byron's estimation of Goethe. In each of these chapters the primary evidence in the form of letters, journals and conversations is fully investigated in order to gauge afresh the extent of the relationship between the two men and its nature. My indebtedness in these chapters to the critical works of Robertson and Butler in particular will be as apparent as the mutual admiration between Goethe and Byron.

I hope that it will then become clear that, not only do these links exist in the minds of academics, but also, far more interestingly, in the minds of the poets themselves: some kind of congruity between their respective mental tempers seems highly plausible. Rather than proceeding down the well-trodden alley of tangible links and influence, I propose to follow a slightly different course of action. With a suspicion that it may be the uniquely vital quality of Goethe's and Byron's poetry that may well be the common factor in both, it is an exploration of this sense of 'particularity' in Goethe and Byron that provides the focus in Chapter 4. As S. S. Prawer has convincingly argued, the justification of comparative scholarship lies precisely in the revelation of 'the particularity of works in one language through comparison and contrast with works in another'.⁶ Goethe's views on aesthetics and the function of poetry are outlined within an historico-philosophical context in order to bring out their usefulness to the subsequent examination of Byron's opinions, providing, in turn, an insight into the essential similarity between the two poets.

⁶S. S. Prawer, *Comparative Literary Studies: An Introduction* (London: Duckworth, 1973) x.

Having established that there is indeed a fundamental link between Goethe and Byron in the poets' own views about art, aesthetics and the function of poetry, it is to a close textual analysis of the *West-östlicher Divan* and *Don Juan* that I turn in Chapter 5. This close analysis of the poetry itself will illuminate these connections better than any purely theoretical analysis could and thus appropriately supports Goethe's and Byron's view that the only way to articulate the particular is precisely through the particular.

The methodology employed in this thesis does not adhere rigidly to any one literary theory despite current trends. Any insight afforded by a rigid adherence to one single theory, which is of course necessarily one-sided, does not compensate for that which will thus be left in the dark; and after all it is surely, as Iser notes, the interpreter's task to 'elucidate the potential meanings of a text, and not to restrict himself to just one.'⁷ Considering the distrust felt by both Goethe and Byron for theory as an end in itself, and the misrepresentation that the two poets suffered under the banner of Romanticism, it seems all the more appropriate that here any theory employed is heuristic, intended only to illuminate the Goethe-Byron relationship and, most importantly of all, only in conjunction with the poetry itself. I hope thus to achieve a fuller and less biased or theory-ridden delineation of these fundamental links between Goethe and Byron.

⁷Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978) 22.

Chapter One:

**A Review of Research:
Historical Record or
Literary Analysis?**

Much of the relatively narrow array of comparative secondary literature on Goethe and Byron dwells unduly on biographical coincidences which, in the event, prove to be of little interest in respect of literary analysis. They do, nevertheless, prove useful in so far as they bring together selections of the primary evidence and facilitate the researcher's task, by highlighting relevant sections of letters, journals, conversations and diaries. Although there is much written about each poet in his own right, there is a distinct lack of recent critical literature on the two men considered together. What little there is was published mainly in the first half of this century or even earlier, and it would appear that 'Goethe-and-Byron' as a topic has been abandoned in favour of other, apparently more interesting or exciting, subjects of critical study. In order to focus on some of the areas which could clearly benefit from closer investigation it is necessary to take a closer look at the secondary literature.

This secondary literature is quite diverse and does not lend itself easily to sharply defined categorisation. A lot of information is common, although often a different aspect is highlighted by each author to provide a slightly different angle to the question. Critics either attempt to provide an overview of all aspects of these relations, or they choose to highlight just one or two, frequently either personal relations between the two men, or their literary relations in the sense of whose work influenced whom, where, and to what extent. I have here chosen to divide these articles into six working categories, depending on which aspect of the relationship is highlighted: articles which are comprehensive and all-inclusive; those offering new information; those dealing with influence; those concentrating on personal relations; those reviewing the relationship generally; and those looking into stylistic considerations.

Two of the most useful and informative texts dealing comprehensively with all aspects of Goethe-Byron relations are Robertson's *Goethe and Byron* and Butler's *Byron and Goethe: Analysis of a Passion*. Robertson's text was the first

comprehensive study of the links between the two poets. Because of its exhaustive treatment of the topic, it is an invaluable research tool for anyone wishing to acquaint him- or herself with these links, bringing together all the then available evidence and setting it out clearly and comprehensibly. My debt to this text (and to Butler's) is evident in Chapters 2 and 3. Robertson rightly stresses Byron's rejuvenating effect and his role in inspiring Goethe once more to his *Faust*.¹ The analysis is well-documented and generally thought-provoking, and the few errors in dating Byron's letters are an exception.²

Butler's text remains the most comprehensive study available. Rather than simply quoting substantial sections of Goethe's and Byron's conversations, Butler goes some way to interpreting this information and frequently questions previously accepted views. She plays down the Faustian content in *Manfred* and casts doubt on the view that Byron was inferior to Goethe:

Something of *Faust* in *Manfred* there certainly was; but this shrinks to almost nothingness when compared with all that there was of Byron in Goethe's latter-day vision of life; for a power for which there is no rational accounting went out from the younger man; nor is it quite so certain as has been generally assumed that Byron's was the lesser spirit.³

Butler also tries to explain Goethe's ambivalent reaction to the first two cantos of *Don Juan*. Having acknowledged that Goethe was both 'dazzled' and 'profoundly discomposed'⁴ by Byron's masterpiece, she offers a credible explanation for this discomposure, attributing it not only to the gory description of the shipwreck in Canto II but also to the fact that Goethe was thus:

... receiving without prior warning the total impact of Byron's personality, and the total revelation of his mind. [...] He now met the

¹Robertson 115.

²Robertson (36) dates the letters of 21 and 30 December 1822 (LJ, 10, pp. 59-61 and 72-75) wrongly as 21 and 30 October 1822. Byron's letter to Goethe is wrongly dated as 24 July 1823 (37).

³Butler 5.

⁴Butler 49.

full blast of his humour and wit allied with tragic pessimism; love, sympathy and scorn for humanity, savagery and tenderness interpenetrating each other in the most bewildering fashion, and in a tone and metre which gave to the whole an aspect of 'depravity'.⁵

Yet to describe Goethe as subsequently undergoing the effects of a '*Don Juan* ice-age' might, on reflection, seem a little extreme.⁶ However, virtually all the salient information regarding direct connections between the two authors and their views on one another is here presented in an interesting, illuminating and thought-provoking fashion. Butler looks beyond the mere facts and presents some interesting speculations of her own. What would have occurred had Byron and Goethe actually met we shall never know, but Butler's conception of this desired meeting seems to be not at all untenable:

Meeting on equal terms, each would have made an indelible impression on the other; but it is more than likely that only Byron's effect upon Goethe would have borne any fruit. That the older man would have been refreshed, rejuvenated and inspired by the encounter seems certain from all that has been said and shown; but the result for Byron is less easy to gauge; so elusive, so lonely was that enigmatic spirit, that perhaps only Shelley among his contemporaries ever came close to affect it.⁷

Having surveyed the evidence offered, Butler's description of Goethe's feeling towards Byron and vice-versa as amounting to a 'passion' seems ever more appropriate.

Although the following two articles are significantly shorter than Robertson's and Butler's contributions, they are nonetheless worthy of comment, as they do succeed in portraying the whole spectrum of the Goethe-Byron relationship, if not in quite as much detail, yet still with insight and accuracy. Eimer's '*Byrons Beziehungen zur*

⁵Butler 52.

⁶Butler 44 and Butler, 'Byron, Goethe and Professor Benecke,' *PEGS* ns 24 (1955): 82. Goethe would surely never have published his generally praiseworthy review had he been so disconcerted by Byron's work.

⁷Butler, *Passion* 182.

deutschen Kultur'⁸ gives an overview of the complete spectrum of Byron's connections with Germany and Germanic life and people. His aim of presenting 'ein abgerundetes Bild von Byrons Verhältnis zu Deutschland'⁹ is fulfilled. After delineating these connections in some detail in the first half, entitled 'Persönliche Erfahrungen und Eindrücke', Eimer, in the last three sections of the second half, 'Geistige Beziehungen', turns his attention to Goethe and Byron. This relationship he considers primarily from Byron's point of view, in contrast to his predecessors. This analysis is clear, thorough and accurate, apart from a valiant, though not quite correct, explanation of the dedications saga, for he believes Byron's instructions to dedicate *Sardanapalus* to Goethe to have arrived at his publisher John Murray's too late to have been included.¹⁰ Yet this, and the wrong dating of Byron's letter to Goethe as 24 July 1823, do not spoil this useful and informed study. Alois Brandl's 'Goethe und Byron'¹¹ aims to prove that Byron was to some extent familiar with Goethe's works and emphasises the important intermediary role played by the French, especially Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne*, in promoting Germany within the English-speaking community. Brandl believes Madame de Staël's translation of Goethe's 'Kennst du das Land' to have been the influence behind Byron's introductory lines to *The Bride of Abydos*. It is far more likely, however, that it was an English translation of the 'Mignonlied' which lay behind Byron's piece.¹² Brandl suggests that, by the end of 1813, Byron possessed 'eine ziemlich klare und richtige Kenntnis von Goethe,'¹³ but he is quite clearly over-estimating Byron's knowledge, and, although he does qualify this with the explanation that this knowledge probably went no further

⁸M. Eimer, 'Byrons Beziehungen zur deutschen Kultur,' *Anglia* 24 (1912): 314-59, 397-449.

⁹Eimer 315, 'a rounded picture of Byron's relations with Germany.'

¹⁰Eimer 431-32. Byron's letter to Douglas Kinnaird, dated 4 September 1821, reveals that he has already sent off the dedication to *Sardanapalus* to Murray, and, since *Sardanapalus* was not published until 19 December 1821, there was plenty of time for Byron's instructions to have been carried out. The story of Byron's three different dedications is dealt with in detail in Chapter 3 below.

¹¹Alois Brandl, 'Goethe und Byron,' Vortrag, gehalten im Wiener Goethe-Verein am 18 November 1882, *Österreichische Rundschau* (1883): 62-69.

¹²Brandl 63. See also V[iktor] M. Schirmunski, 'Die Gedichte Goethes und Byrons "Kennst du das Land..." — "Know ye the land": Versuch einer vergleichenden Stilanalyse,' trans. Ernst Moritz Arndt, *Weimarer Beiträge* 9 (1963): 69-70 and Robertson 8, note 2.

¹³Brandl 63, 'a reasonably clear and correct knowledge of Goethe.'

than what he gleaned from *De l'Allemagne*, this view is highly questionable. The influence of *Faust* on *Manfred* is played down, as Brandl cites some of the many other texts which clearly had a bearing on *Manfred*, and some other factors which influenced its production, also believing the scandal surrounding Byron's marriage break-up to have played a part. These echoes are explored more closely and the subsequent influence of *Faust* on Byron's later dramas is also highlighted. Although Brandl does point out that what Byron knew of Goethe was of Goethe the poet and not the man, this knowledge of the poetry, in reality, came down to little more than knowledge of *Faust*. Goethe's relationship with Byron is contrasted as being predominantly a personal one.¹⁴ This relationship was, however, not as predominantly personal as Brandl implies: Goethe read a large proportion of Byron's works and Brandl also correctly stresses the positive influence Goethe's admiration had on Byron's reputation and vice versa, i.e., the positive influence that Byron's admiration for Goethe exercised on Goethe's popularity in Britain. Just as Byron's reputation was enhanced by the admiration of Goethe and the Germans, so too Byron's admiration of Goethe, as Brandl emphasises, played a large part in promoting Goethe in Britain.

Sixteen years later, Brandl presents some hitherto unpublished material in his 'Goethes Verhältniss zu Byron'.¹⁵ This is one of three articles which offer this type of new information, and each article in this category proves indispensable in helping to solve the mystery surrounding the fate of Byron's various dedications to Goethe. First, Brandl presents several of Goethe's attempted translations of parts of Byron's work, before he investigates Goethe as the possible author of a translation of 'Fare thee well', citing a note in Goethe's diary and the form and rhyme scheme of the poem as probable evidence of Goethe's authorship.¹⁶ On the other hand, Brandl also feels

¹⁴Brandl 67.

¹⁵Alois Brandl, 'Goethes Verhältniss zu Byron,' *Goethe Jahrbuch* 20 (1899): 3-37.

¹⁶Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 4. See diary for 26 November 1817: 'Zu Knebel, über Byron. Übersetzung seiner Gedichte' (WA, III, 6, p. 140). The translation itself is dated 24 November 1817. 'To Knebel, about Byron. Translation of his poems.'

that the use of 'müßt' in line 11 ('Wahrlich eingestehen müßt du')¹⁷ almost contradicts the other clues, as he is of the opinion that Goethe could not have written this. Yet the more important point is not so much whether 'Lebe Du Wohl' was indeed Goethe's work: that Goethe possessed and kept the work in his Byron folder says far more about his opinion of Byron. It was, in fact, not until a letter from Otilie to Goethe was examined by Robertson that the translation was found to be probably Knebel's.¹⁸ Numerous influences on *Manfred* are adduced and Goethe's translation of parts of it are introduced and evaluated within a summary of the similarities between Byron's drama and *Faust*. Brandl perceptively points out that the sections chosen for translation reveal what Goethe particularly liked about the drama, and notes Byron's role in reminding Goethe once more of his own youth in Frankfurt and Strasbourg and in re-focusing his mind on his still-unfinished *Faust*.¹⁹ Goethe's unfinished translation and notes to *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* and to *Heaven and Earth* are included, as are Goethe's first written words on Byron after Byron's death; words very similar to those of a subsequent conversation with Eckermann on 24 February 1825.²⁰ The dedications' fiasco is enlightened, to a degree, by the publication of letters from Byron's friend and banker Douglas Kinnaird to Goethe via Professor Georg Friedrich Benecke (24 February 1826);²¹ to Goethe from Benecke (23 March and 4 July 1826);²² from Goethe to Kinnaird (3 April 1826);²³ and from

¹⁷Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 5. Brandl believes that Goethe would have written 'müsstest' instead.

¹⁸Robertson 50, note 3. See letter of 24 June 1817 from Otilie to Goethe, where it appears that Knebel and not Goethe was the author of the translation of 'Fare thee well': '... doch ich hoffe, Sie beruhigen sich wieder, wenn ich Ihnen sage, daß Herr von Knebel unter die unglücklich liebenden gehören soll, und ich nichts will, als daß er die Nothwendigkeit einer Trennung von mir empfinde, und ihn der Schmerz zu der Herausgabe der Übersetzung des Byronschen "Farewell" bringen soll' (*Aus Otilie von Goethes Nachlass*, ed. Wolfgang von Oettingen, vol. 2 (Weimar: Goethe Gesellschaft, 1913) 12-13). 'But I hope you will calm down again when I tell you that Knebel is to belong to those who are unhappy in love, and I want nothing more than him to recognise the necessity of a parting from me and the pain about the publication of the translation of Byron's 'Fare thee well' might bring.' All German citations retain old German spelling if that is what appears in the edition used.

¹⁹Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 12-13.

²⁰Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*, ed. Heinz Schlaffer (München: Carl Hanser, 1986) 131-36. All references to conversations with Eckermann are to this edition, which will henceforth be referred to as Eckermann.

²¹Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 25. See also Butler, *Passion* 141-42.

²²Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 25-26 and 28. See also Butler, *Passion* 142.

²³Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 26-27. See also WA, IV, 41, pp. 5-6.

John Murray Jr. to Goethe (January 1830).²⁴ The uncensored dedication to *Marino Faliero*²⁵ and some notes on what Goethe apparently knew of his fame in Britain are also included. Brandl stresses the depth and strength of Goethe's feeling towards Byron and reveals what he perceives to be the differences in their respective aesthetic theories. He believes Goethe to be searching for a balance between the Classical and the Romantic, whereas he believes that Byron reveals a much more ambivalent attitude towards the Classical/Romantic debate.²⁶ Although he follows this line of thought no further, he has at least offered a possible explanation of the difference/similarity between the two poets and proves thus to be valuable to my later analysis in providing a context for debate. If Brandl had explored this avenue of thought further, it might have led him to reconsider his belief that Goethe was striving for an 'Ausgleich', a term which suggests some kind of passive compromise, to the point where he could perceive that Goethe was striving for something more akin to a dynamic synthesis, rather than a static equation. Nonetheless this is a useful article, despite the renaming of Byron's drama as *The Transformed Deformed*, the dating of *Cain*, *The Two Foscari* and *Sardanapalus* as 1817, and the inaccurate dating of Goethe's reply to Benecke in 1822 as 14 November.²⁷

Veit Valentin's 'Zu Goethes Verhältnis zu Lord Byron'²⁸ also presents us with new primary evidence, and supplements the information provided by Brandl. Brandl's

²⁴Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 31- 32. See also Butler, *Passion* 169-70.

²⁵A censored version of the dedication had appeared in Thomas Moore's *Life of Lord Byron: with his letters and journals*, 6 vols. (London, 1854), but this was the first time the unadulterated dedication had appeared.

²⁶Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 36-37.

²⁷Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 30, 17 and 15. Byron's drama was, of course, entitled *The Deformed Transformed*, and *Cain*, *The Two Foscari* and *Sardanapalus* were published in 1821. Goethe's letter to Benecke was dated 12 November 1822 (*Goethes Briefe und Briefe an Goethe*, ed. Karl Robert Mandelkow, Hamburger Ausgabe, 3rd ed., vol. 4 (München: C. H. Beck, 1988) 53-54). This edition is henceforth referred to as HA Briefe. References to Goethe's correspondence are taken first of all from this edition. Where this proves lacking, recourse is made first of all to the FA (*Sämtliche Werke. Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche*, ed. Friedmar Apel et al., Frankfurter Ausgabe, 40 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker, 1985-)). As this edition too contains only selected letters, it has often been necessary to take quotations from the most complete edition available, the WA.

²⁸Veit Valentin, 'Zu Goethes Verhältnis zu Lord Byron,' *Berichte des freien deutschen Hochstifts* (1900): 239-44.

mistake in dating Goethe's letter to Benecke is noted; Kinnaird's October 1822 letter to Benecke is printed; Goethe's letter to Benecke of 3 April 1826 reveals that the amount Goethe donated for Byron's memorial was £20. All this information sheds more light on the roles played by both Kinnaird and Benecke in forging communications between Byron and Goethe, as Byron had requested in his letter of 4 September 1821 to Kinnaird.

Butler's article 'Byron, Goethe and Professor Benecke'²⁹ unravels this mystery surrounding Byron's various dedications to Goethe. She notes the influence of Murray on the withholding of the dedication to *Marino Faliero*, due primarily to its remarks on Wordsworth and Southey, and the presumed effect of Goethe's *Werther* on the suicide rate.³⁰ The subsequent years of inertia and amnesia with regard to the intended dedication to *Sardanapalus* are highlighted: Murray was often unreliable and forgetful, and Kinnaird waited more than a year before enlisting the assistance of Benecke, his old German teacher in Göttingen, in order to contact Goethe. Goethe received dedication number two only after two years. Butler correctly discerns the pleasure which Goethe took in these few words from the British poet.³¹ Incompetence further prevented Byron from ever knowing of Goethe's reply to Benecke: the professor did not translate the text, it appears Kinnaird was unequal to the task and it was no thanks to Murray that Goethe received a copy of *Werner* with abbreviated dedication number three. This was offered to him instead by Frédéric Soret. This is further proof of Murray's unreliability, and, if Byron had been aware of this incompetence, this would certainly only have increased his irritation and frustration with his publisher. Only after Byron's death was the whole fiasco resolved: having requested a donation from Goethe in order to set up a memorial to Byron, it came to light that Goethe had never received the copy of *Sardanapalus* that its author had wanted him to have. The 1823 edition with the desired dedication was

²⁹Butler, 'Benecke' 77-100.

³⁰Butler, 'Benecke' 78.

³¹Butler, 'Benecke' 90.

already out of print, and, in order to cover up their past incompetences, Murray and Kinnaird came up with the cunning plan of appending the dedication to the earlier 1821 edition of *Sardanapalus*, *The Two Foscari* and *Cain*. Ironically, it was to this very edition that Byron had wished the dedication attached in the first place: his wish had been fulfilled, a mere five years late. Apart from the inaccurate dating of an account given by the Scotsman Gillies of an interview with Goethe as 22 June 1822 instead of 22 June 1821,³² this is an informed and illuminating article.

The question which occupies a large number of these critics is that of influence; either Byron's influence on Goethe, or Goethe's on Byron, especially of *Faust* on Byron. Although most articles in this category concentrate on the unanswerable influence question, they are nevertheless not all identical and, despite the inevitable overlap of information, they do still succeed in adding something to the debate, offering a different insight into these questions, however slight.

Zauner's two-part article³³ investigates the interrelations between German and English literature, focusing on Goethe. A general overview of the breadth of Goethe's knowledge of English literature and an assessment of his suitability to be a critic precede a short section on Goethe and Shakespeare before Zauner turns his attention to Byron, where the British poet is placed within the context of Goethe's overall knowledge of and more general reactions to English literature. Zauner assesses the validity of Goethe's critical opinion of Byron, emphasising that, while Goethe's

³²Butler, 'Benecke' 81, note 3. See also *Goethes Gespräche*, ed. Ernst Beutler, Gedenkausgabe, vol. 2 (Zürich: Artemis, 1950) 129-33. Henceforth referred to as GA Gespräche. Where possible reference is made to the most up-to-date edition of *Goethes Gespräche*, the FA, but as this edition only offers selected conversations it has often been necessary to consult older, but more complete, editions, especially *Goethes Gespräche*, ed. Woldemar Freiherr von Biedermann (Leipzig, 1889-96). This edition will henceforth be referred to as Gespräche.

³³Erich Zauner, 'Goethe und die englische Literatur: Beiträge zum Thema der Querverbindungen zwischen der deutschen und der englischen Literatur,' *Moderne Sprachen: Zeitschrift des Verbandes der österreichischen Neuphilologen* 33.3-4 (1989): 99-113 and 34.1-2 (1990): 62-69.

positive judgement may today be questioned, his 'Achtung' ('respect') and 'Anerkennung' ('acknowledgement'), revealed in his Euphorion, are unquestionable.³⁴ Holl's 'Goethes Vollendung in ihrer Beziehung zu Byron und Carlyle'³⁵ puts Goethe's relationship with Byron on an equal footing with those with Herder and Schiller.³⁶ Although Holl stresses Byron's rejuvenating influence on Goethe, he underestimates Goethe's appreciation of Byron's works and never sources any of his quotations. His view of Goethe's opinions on Byron's poetry as superior to anyone else's is surprising considering the fact that, of Goethe's three published reviews, only one really concentrates on the text itself.³⁷ Each poet's knowledge of the other is sketched inadequately and the dedications' saga is reduced to a fleeting mention of a dedication to *Werner*. Holl does, however, stress Byron's role in once more turning Goethe's mind to *Faust*, providing him with the 'geistige Anregung' ('intellectual stimulation') and the 'Neubelebung' ('revival'); something for which he showed his gratitude in the character of Euphorion. Carlyle's relationship with Goethe is contrasted as appealing to the other side of Goethe's polar nature,³⁸ but nevertheless proving nowhere near as influential as that with Byron, and Goethe's feeling for Byron is ultimately described as having been an:

Innigstes persönliches Verhältnis zu dem Fremden und doch Gleichgerichteten, der in seiner mangelhaften deutschen Sprachkenntnis wahrscheinlich nicht einmal den Namen Goethe richtig aussprechen konnte.³⁹

The contrast between Goethe's reception of Byron and his reception of Carlyle casts yet another light on the reception of Byron.

³⁴Zauner 68.

³⁵Karl Holl, 'Goethes Vollendung in ihrer Beziehung zu Byron und Carlyle,' *Germanisch - Romanische Monatsschrift* 9 (1921): 75-87.

³⁶Holl 75.

³⁷Holl 80.

³⁸Holl 87.

³⁹Holl 85, 'a most profound personal relationship with the man who was a stranger to him and yet on a par with him, a man whose inadequate knowledge of German probably left him unable even to pronounce the name Goethe correctly.'

Most critics investigating the influence question also consider the influence of Goethe on Byron and in the following articles the influence of *Faust* is the main focus. In 1894, Sinzheimer provides a well-structured overview of literary and personal relations between Goethe and Byron, in which he focuses on *Faust* and *Manfred*. Sinzheimer does provide more primary evidence than his predecessors to back up his claims, yet nevertheless draws no new conclusions. In words similar to those of Brandl, Sinzheimer also believes Byron to have possessed 'eine klare und richtige Kenntnis von Goethe' by the end of 1813.⁴⁰ Sinzheimer considers Byron's relationship to Goethe not to be 'durchaus ein artistisches' as Brandl claims.⁴¹ Yet it was certainly not a personal one, as he knew little or nothing about Goethe's life, and citing Byron's lack of knowledge of German as the reason for the non-artistic nature of this relationship does not stand up, when one considers the English, French or Italian translations available. Granted Byron did not possess a great knowledge of Goethe's works, but nonetheless this was what he knew of Goethe and it was on the basis of this knowledge of Goethe's work that his admiration was founded. On the other hand, Sinzheimer believes Goethe's relationship to Byron to be more artistic than personal: while Goethe certainly knew far more of Byron's works and his views were indeed more text-based than Byron's, it was clearly not only his works, but also his personality which attracted Goethe.⁴² In order to estimate the literary connections, Sinzheimer studies the influence of *Faust* on *Manfred* and the similarities between them in some detail, concentrating on the sources and the composition of each.⁴³ The greater influence of *Faust* on Byron's unfinished drama which he, like Brandl, insists on calling *The transformed deformed* is rightly

⁴⁰Siegfried Sinzheimer, *Goethe und Byron. Eine Darstellung des persönlichen und litterarischen Verhältnisses mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des 'Faust' und 'Manfred'* (München, 1894) 14, 'a clear and correct knowledge of Goethe.' See also Brandl, 'Vortrag' 63 and Chapter 1, note 13 above.

⁴¹Brandl, 'Vortrag' 67, 'a completely artistic one.'

⁴²Sinzheimer 25-26. See for example the review of *Manfred*, which is more a reaction to Byron the man rather than the work itself. See also Brandl, 'Vortrag' 67.

⁴³Sinzheimer 32.

stressed.⁴⁴ Sinzheimer believes Byron's 'finstere kalvanistische Weltanschauung'⁴⁵ may to some extent explain the differences between him and Goethe. He places great emphasis on the Faustian influence on Byron throughout.

Albert Knobbe's *Die Faust-Idee in Lord Byrons Dichtungen*⁴⁶ notes the contact between the two poets in the form of the dedications, Goethe's poem and Byron's letter of 1823,⁴⁷ before proceeding to an analysis of Byron's knowledge of German literature, stressing the influence of *De l'Allemagne*. Byron's knowledge of Goethe's works is rather overestimated, although other literary influences on Byron are mentioned, before Knobbe compares *Faust*, *Manfred* and Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, revealing similarities and differences. While other influences on *Manfred* are discussed and Faustian echoes are also perceived in some of Byron's other works, the most interesting fact about this article is the addition of Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* to the 'influence on *Manfred*' debate.

Klapper's *The German Literary Influence on Byron*⁴⁸ is the most useful text with regard to Germanic influences on Byron, setting out in some detail those influences which she feels to have been significant and which have been mentioned only in passing by other critics. The effect of *Faust* on Byron is again evident as Klapper concentrates almost exclusively on its influence. Klapper first provides a comprehensive study of the parallel and contrasting features of *Faust* and *Manfred*, perceiving that, 'while most critics are agreed that *Faust* exerted some influence on *Manfred* they have, it appears, not recognised its scope, and usually talk in generalities, giving very few examples'.⁴⁹ Copious examples are, however, provided

⁴⁴Sinzheimer 53 and Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 30.

⁴⁵Sinzheimer 67, 'dark Calvinistic weltanschauung.'

⁴⁶Albert Knobbe, *Die Faust-Idee in Lord Byrons Dichtungen*, Wissenschaftliche Beilage zum Jahresberichte des Realgymnasiums zu Stralsund, separate from Programm No. 192 (Stralsund: Realgymnasium, 1906).

⁴⁷Knobbe 4. The date of Byron's letter to Goethe is given erroneously as 24 instead of 22 July 1823.

⁴⁸M. Roxana Klapper, *The German Literary Influence on Byron: Romantic Reassessment*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1979).

⁴⁹Klapper 56.

throughout this study. *Faust* and *Cain* are considered in a similar fashion, again indicating thematic and structural correlations. *The Deformed Transformed* and *Don Juan* are subsequently examined in detail too. The latter comparison is perhaps the most noteworthy in that it investigates the rather neglected question of 'possible inspiration of Goethe's *Faust* on Byron's *Don Juan*.'⁵⁰ Klapper perceives correlations between Goethe's devil and Byron's persona, the most significant of which would appear to be their shared 'mocking sense of humor'.⁵¹ Indeed, as Klapper then acknowledges, the narrator-persona of *Don Juan* 'often adopts an intellectual mocking tone and sarcastic downgrading of everything human which is similar to that of Mephistopheles'.⁵² Although Klapper does not single out the similarity between Faust's comments (lines 1112-17) on the divided nature of his self:

Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust,
 Die eine will sich von der andern trennen;
 Die eine hält, in derber Liebeslust,
 Sich an die Welt mit klammernden Organen;
 Die andre hebt gewaltsam sich vom Dust
 Zu den Gefilden hoher Ahnen.⁵³

and Don Juan's ('So that I almost think that of the same skin / For one without — has two or three within'),⁵⁴ she does at least discuss the possibility of influence of *Faust* on *Don Juan*. Gessner's *Der Tod Abels* and *Cain* are compared next, before *Childe Harold* and *Werther*. These individual comparisons are interesting, detailed and

⁵⁰Klapper 143.

⁵¹Klapper 153.

⁵²Klapper 153.

⁵³"Two souls, alas, are housed within my breast,
 And each will wrestle for the mastery there.
 The one has passion's craving crude for love,
 And hugs a world where sweet the senses rage;
 The other longs for pastures fair above,
 Leaving the murk for lofty heritage' (*Faust I*, trans. Philip Wayne (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986) 67).

⁵⁴*Don Juan*, XVII. 11 (Lord Byron, *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann and Barry Weller, vol. 5 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) 660). All references to *Don Juan* are to the PW. Those interested in textual accuracy with regard to Byron's manuscripts, particularly from the point of view of punctuation, should consult the Garland manuscript edition (*The Manuscripts of the Younger Romantics. Lord Byron*, ed. Donald H. Reiman, 13 vols. to date (New York: Garland, 1985-)).

thought-provoking, and the parallels drawn between *Don Juan* and *Faust* prove illuminating in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

As I have just noted, Klapper investigates not only the influence of *Faust*, but also that of *Werther* and Gessner's *Der Tod Abels* and the following articles, which also deal with the question of influence, offer a more general picture of the effect of other German and other Goethean texts on Byron. Rose's *From Goethe to Byron: The Development of 'Weltschmerz' in German Literature*⁵⁵ concentrates solely on authors who have penned their own versions of Goethe's *Werther* and, as such, is of little interest with regard to advancing our knowledge of relations between Goethe and Byron. What the text does succeed in doing is filling in the background picture, hence highlighting Goethe's immense international popularity because of *Werther*.

Lovett's 'Goethe in English Literature'⁵⁶ surveys the reception and translation of Goethe, concentrating on Thomas Carlyle's translations and Matthew Arnold's views. Comments on Goethe and Byron — generally on the Goethean influence on Byron — run to no more than a short paragraph and are so error-ridden that they prove nothing short of misleading: Goethe wrote Byron a poem, not a letter; Shelley could not have read this to Byron in 1823 as he had already been dead for a year; Shelley did not reside at the Villa Diodati, but at Montalègre nearby; and Byron's original dedicatory letter to *Marino Faliero* could hardly be described as 'charming'.⁵⁷ Hoffmeister, too,⁵⁸ provides a very general short summary of the main points, and, although he does not provide as much detail as one might wish, this short section does fulfil its purpose of looking at the Byron-Goethe relationship within the wider European context of Byron's influence throughout Europe, not only in Germany and on Goethe.

⁵⁵William Rose, *From Goethe to Byron: The Development of 'Weltschmerz' in German Literature* (London: Routledge, 1924).

⁵⁶Robert Morss Lovett, 'Goethe in English Literature,' *Goethe Centenary Papers*, ed. Martin Schütze (Chicago: Open Court, 1933) 23-40.

⁵⁷Lovett 25.

⁵⁸Gerhart Hoffmeister, *Byron und der europäische Byronismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchhandlung, 1983).

Most critics also dwell to a greater or lesser degree on the personal relations between the two poets,⁵⁹ but the following articles illuminate this relationship more than most. On the 22 December 1887, Friedrich Althaus gave a lecture to the English Goethe Society in London entitled 'On the Personal Relations between Goethe and Byron'.⁶⁰ Giuseppe Mazzini's 1839 essay is used as a point of departure, with Althaus more or less agreeing with Mazzini's views on Byron, yet strongly disagreeing with those on Goethe. How, argues Althaus, can one fail to be overwhelmed by Mazzini's misunderstanding of Goethe: 'He is the poet of details, not of unity; of analysis, not of synthesis.'⁶¹ Althaus comments perceptively that it is precisely those qualities for which Mazzini condemns Goethe that are those generally thought to constitute 'essential elements of his greatness'.⁶² He traces the development of the personal relations between Goethe and Byron, attempting thus to show that, despite the vast differences between them, their mutual admiration was due to their meeting 'on a ground of common sympathy'.⁶³ Apart from an insufficient description of the fate of Byron's dedications to Goethe (explicable perhaps by the fact that all the relevant details surrounding the Murray-Kinnaird-Benecke interaction had not yet been unravelled), a reference to Charles Sterling as Mr. Stirling, a reference to Ottilie, not as Goethe's daughter-in-law, but as his daughter, this article is interesting, and fulfils its intention of presenting the development of the relations between the two poets.⁶⁴ Joseph Werner's lecture on 'Die persönlichen und literarischen Beziehungen zwischen Goethe und Byron'⁶⁵ adds little to our knowledge of the literary relations, but takes a quite different psychological approach to their personal relations, delving into each poet's childhood and assessing the role played by fate. Werner believes the lack of

⁵⁹See especially Eimer; Walter F. Schirmer, 'Goethe und Byron,' *Forschungsprobleme der vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte* 1 (1957): 47-56; Sinzheimer; Christopher J. Smith, 'Goethe's Reaction to Byron as a Poet and as a Personality,' *PEGS* ns 36 (1966): 111-46; and Joseph Werner, 'Die persönlichen und literarischen Beziehungen zwischen Goethe und Byron,' *Berichte des freien deutschen Hochstifts* (1885-86): 181-91.

⁶⁰Friedrich Althaus, 'On the Personal Relations between Goethe and Byron,' *PEGS* 4 (1888): 1-23.

⁶¹Althaus 5.

⁶²Althaus 7.

⁶³Althaus 2-3.

⁶⁴Althaus 16 and 21-23.

⁶⁵Werner presented this lecture on 24 January 1886.

moral guidance in Byron's life to be due to the absence of his father, and cites this as one of the reasons for his 'Zerrissenheit' ('inner conflict') and 'Weltschmerz' ('world weariness'), just as Goethe's childhood afforded him his 'lebensfrohe Denkart' ('way of thinking which was full of the joys of life').⁶⁶ Although a similarity is noted in the subjectivity of their poetry, this is not investigated further. Goethe's public admiration and recognition of one of his contemporaries is, however, emphasised in this over brief summary of Goethe-Byron relations. Many important points are absent from this account, yet the comparatively minor point that Goethe actually believed the story about Byron's having caused a murder in Florence actually finds a place. Byron's illness in Greece is attributed to the fatal disease of over-exertion and worry, precipitating his death six days prematurely on 13 April 1824.⁶⁷ The differences between *Faust* and *Manfred* are, nonetheless, highlighted to play down the overwhelming influence theory. Werner ends by speculating that, had Byron lived longer, the relationship between the 'Doppelgestirn der Weltliteratur' would have intensified and been poetically productive.⁶⁸ If this article offers nothing more, it does at least attempt to shed some light on the discrepancy between a perceived similarity in the poetry of Goethe and Byron and a difference in their personalities.

While Christopher J. Smith also devotes a large section of his article to the personal relations between the two, this is not where its main significance lies. This is to be found rather in his perceptive analysis of Goethe's three literary reviews of Byron. 'Goethe's Reaction to Byron as a Poet and as a Personality' is a well-structured study, clearly divided into three sections: Goethe's reaction to Byron as a personality; secondly, his reaction to Byron's works as revealed in his letters and conversations; and thirdly, his reaction to Byron as revealed in his three literary reviews.⁶⁹ Section three is by far the most significant. Differences between the three reviews are

⁶⁶Werner 182-83.

⁶⁷Werner 187. In fact Byron did not die until 19 April 1824.

⁶⁸Werner 191, 'the double star of world literature.'

⁶⁹Smith 112-13.

adumbrated: that on *Manfred* is based on 'the experience of Byron's personality'; that on *Don Juan* 'shows a preoccupation with theories of translation' and that on *Cain* is the only one which concentrates on the text itself.⁷⁰ Smith rightly perceives that Goethe's interest in Byron is rather more text-based than has been generally assumed: Byron's transmutation of *Faust* material in *Manfred* particularly impresses; the review of *Don Juan* focuses on theories of translation, revealing a desire to appreciate the text as fully as possible; and in the review of *Cain* it is the idea of the text as a book-drama that arouses Goethe's interest.⁷¹ Goethe's seldom aired reservations about Byron, such as 'a detracting, negative factor' in his character and flaws in his 'technical proficiency'⁷² are not overlooked here either. These reservations were kept private, making the public adulation of Byron all the more significant, with Goethe dwelling there 'on the admirable qualities already achieved by Byron's genius and the daimonic potentiality of its development, in the hope that the blemishes would become less conspicuous as Byron progressed'.⁷³ Smith explains the public/private discrepancy credibly thus:

what seems to have puzzled him [Goethe] from the first was the gap between the immeasurable promise of Byron's genius, already in large measure unmistakably realized, and the imperfections which still marked his poetic works but were minor by comparison with their high-aspiring distinction.⁷⁴

This is an engaging article, which, despite Smith's erroneous opinion that Goethe read no more of *Don Juan* after Cantos I and II, gives insight into the three literary reviews.⁷⁵

The four subsequent articles attempt to deal with the whole spectrum of Goethe-Byron connections in no more than a few pages and are hence superficial, inadequate,

⁷⁰Smith 143.

⁷¹Smith 144.

⁷²Smith 145.

⁷³Smith 145.

⁷⁴Smith 145.

⁷⁵Smith 130. Goethe certainly read Cantos XIII and XIV: see diary for 16 August 1829 (WA, III, 12, p. 113).

often misleading and even inaccurate. Krummel's 'Byron and Goethe'⁷⁶ is vague, inadequate and indeed often misleading: Goethe's review of *Manfred* could not have reached Byron much earlier than it did (May 1820), as Krummel suggests it could have done, as it was only published in 1820; the dedication to *Marino Faliero* is utterly ignored and the author cannot even spell *Sardanapalus*.⁷⁷ Although Krummel ends with a promising comparison of the two poets and their poetic styles, this again is vague, over-general, lacking in supporting evidence and inaccurate in the concluding paragraph when he states that Faust does indeed utter the words which mean that Mephistopheles will win his soul.⁷⁸

Koch's 'Goethe und Byron'⁷⁹ merely regurgitates previous knowledge in a haphazard fashion. Although Koch does admit that he had already finished his article when he was made aware of Robertson's, he nonetheless does not appear to have taken any notice of any other articles already in print, apart from Brandl's in 1883. He presents nothing new and what he does relate of the relations between Goethe and Byron is often far too vague and chronologically muddled. There are minor spelling and dating inaccuracies, but more importantly the inaccuracy of Koch's claim that Goethe commented on *Beppo* as having too much 'Empirie' is undeniable.⁸⁰ The point is worth clarification because it sounds plausible. When Goethe said to Eckermann, 'Lord Byron habe zu viel Empirie',⁸¹ there is no reference whatsoever to any specific text. When a similar comment is repeated later the same day it is quite clearly Eckermann's opinion, and we do not hear what Goethe has to say to this view:

⁷⁶Charles A. Krummel, 'Byron and Goethe,' *South Atlantic Quarterly* 22 (1923): 246-56.

⁷⁷Krummel 250-51. He entitles Byron's drama 'Sardonapolis!'

⁷⁸Krummel 256: 'Not until he has come to this achievement can he say to the moment: "Tarry, thou art so fair," and after the successful struggle of a hundred years, he departs this life in peace, while his soul is wafted to the skies.' Faust does not say to the moment 'Verweile doch! du bist so schön!' (line 1700 (HA, 3, p. 57)), the words which would have meant victory for Mephistopheles according to the terms of their pact. What he does say is far more inconclusive, suggesting only that he *could* say these words: 'Zum Augenblicke dürft' ich sagen: / Verweile doch, du bist so schön!' (lines 11581-82 (HA, 3, p. 348)), not that he actually does.

⁷⁹John Koch, 'Goethe und Byron,' *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen* ns 63 (1933): 47-59.

⁸⁰Koch 50-51. Sterling is misspelt as 'Stirling', and Byron's letter to Goethe is wrongly dated as 24 July 1823.

⁸¹8 November 1826 (Eckermann 164).

Und so empfand ich [Eckermann] denn beim Lesen des Beppo: Lord Byron habe zu viel Empirie, und zwar nicht weil er zu viel wirkliches Leben uns vor die Augen führte, sondern weil seine höhere poetische Natur zu schweigen, ja von einer empirischen Denkungsweise ausgetrieben zu sein schien.⁸²

Schirmer's 'Goethe und Byron' offers another brief and superficial summary of Goethe-Byron relations, yet, although he does stress Goethe's 'tiefes Mitgefühl' ('deep sympathy') for Byron and the 'unverlöschlichen Eindruck' ('indelible impression')⁸³ he left on the German, and although he highlights the fact that the interest for each was both 'persönlich-menschlich' ('personal-human') and 'dichterisch' ('poetic'),⁸⁴ this ultimately adds little to the debate. Hentschel's 'Byron and Germany: The Shadow of Euphorion'⁸⁵ provides a very general overview of Byron's reception in Germany and of his connections with Germany and the Germans. It offers no new insights into Goethe-Byron relations and is useful only in so far as it sets the relationship in a wider context.

There is, however, one article which is completely different from all the others, dwelling, not on biographical coincidences or questionable influence stories, but on a concrete and precise stylistic analysis of two short pieces of each poet's work, neither being *Faust* nor *Manfred*. Schirmunski's 'Die Gedichte Goethes und Byrons "Kennst du das Land..." — "Know ye the land..." Versuch einer vergleichenden Stilanalyse'⁸⁶ is refreshingly different. Various influential factors affecting any stylistic analysis are outlined, considering words within their original context is stressed, and the intrinsic interdependent relationship between the style and form of a work — the *Gestalt* —

⁸²8 November 1826 (Eckermann 164-65). 'So I felt, in reading "Beppo," that Lord Byron had too much *empeiria*, not because he brought too much real life before us, but because his higher poetic nature seemed to be silent, or even expelled by an empiric mode of thought' (John Oxenford, *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret*, vol. 1 (London, 1850) 295-96).

⁸³Schirmer 49.

⁸⁴Schirmer 50.

⁸⁵Cedric Hentschel, 'Byron and Germany: The Shadow of Euphorion,' *Byron's Political and Cultural Influence in Nineteenth Century Europe*, ed. Paul G. Trueblood (London: Macmillan, 1981) 59-90.

⁸⁶Schirmunski 58-75.

and its meaning — the *Gehalt* — is also underlined.⁸⁷ Schirmunski acknowledges the development of Goethe's lyrical style, from an 'individuell-expressiven Stil, der für die Poesie der Stürmer charakteristisch war' to a 'harmonische[n] Struktur der Form, wie sie den ästhetischen Grundsätzen des Weimarer Klassizismus entsprach'⁸⁸ in his detailed analysis of 'Kennst du das Land...' before introducing Byron's 'Know ye the land...' for comparison. The subsequent comparative analysis is perceptive and thorough, outlining differences in each poet's metrical structures, the addressee of the poem (singular in Goethe's case and plural in Byron's) and the method of the description of the southern landscape of the first stanzas. Byron's description is in the form of a 'lyrischen Katalogs, einer überzeitlichen, verallgemeinernden Aufzählung'.⁸⁹ It is said to be lyrically much more arbitrary in its enumeration of visual images and emotions than Goethe's work. These contrasts bear out Schirmunski's view that the devices employed by each poet merely highlight the intrinsic differences between them: while Byron was revolutionising Romanticism, Goethe was perfectly happy to employ Classical devices.⁹⁰ Schirmunski concludes by commending this approach, which has proven itself most illuminating, in contrast to a purely scientific, mechanical one:

Eine Analyse des poetischen Stils verlangt also vor allem ein aufmerksames Lesen und ein künstlerisches Verständnis des Textes. Sie darf nicht durch eine rein formale Beschreibung und mechanische Aufzählung der sprachlichen Mittel ersetzt werden.⁹¹

This approach has proven most useful in my own attempts to define interrelations in the work of Goethe and Byron, as will become clear in the course of this thesis.

⁸⁷Schirmunski 59-60. For an explanation of these German terms see Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, *Friedrich Schiller: On the Aesthetic Education of Man. In a Series of Letters*. 1967. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). Henceforth referred to as WW. All references to the *Aesthetic Letters* are to this edition.

⁸⁸Schirmunski 64, 'individually expressive style, which was characteristic of the poetry of the Storm and Stress period, to a harmonious structure of form in accordance with the aesthetic principles of Weimar Classicism.'

⁸⁹Schirmunski 73, 'lyrical catalogue, a timeless, generalising enumeration.'

⁹⁰Schirmunski 74.

⁹¹Schirmunski 75. 'Therefore an analysis of poetical style requires first and foremost an attentive reading and an artistic understanding of the text. It cannot be replaced by a purely formal description and mechanical enumeration of the linguistic devices.'

There can be no doubt that the tangible connections between Goethe and Byron, and the question of the influence each poet had on the other (a question which in itself can never be answered conclusively) are dealt with extensively, but any in-depth literary analysis is lacking and, apart from Schirmunski, no attempt is made to delve a little further to try to attain an adequate understanding and delineation of this generally perceived affinity between Goethe and Byron. While most of the texts examined have provided some useful information as the foundation stones of this thesis they have also indicated the direction which any further treatment of the subject might take in order to achieve a more adequate understanding of this relationship. They leave the way wide open for further analyses. But before beginning this analysis I will turn my attention in the next two chapters to the primary literature in the form of the letters, journals and conversations of both Goethe and Byron, in order to paint a fuller picture of the conscious relations between the two poets.

Chapter Two:
Goethe's Reception of
Byron

I turn in this chapter to a chronological examination of Goethe's opinions on Byron since it was he, Goethe, for whom the relationship was to prove of greater significance. However much some critics assert that the flame was kindled by Goethe's reading of *Manfred*,¹ it was in fact *The Corsair* and *Lara*, published in 1814, which constituted Goethe's first acquaintance with Byron the poet, who — as a name — had been brought to his attention by Knebel in a letter of 8 May 1816:

Die neusten Monthly Magazines enthalten auch fortgesetzte Artikel über die teutsche Litteratur — wahrscheinlich von Böttiger in Dresden. An Lob fehlt es darin nicht; demungeachtet halten uns diese Hrn. Insulaner im eigentlichen schriftstellerschen Fach noch sehr unter sich. Auch erleben unsre Dichter nicht, wie einige der ihrigen — Lord Byron, Southey — in kurzer Zeit die 13te Auflage ihrer Werke.²

As Knebel notes, both Byron and Southey were already well established, and the delay in their exportation to mainland Europe was surely due to the communication problems exacerbated by the Napoleonic wars. A glowing review of Byron in the *Intelligenzblatt der Jenaischen Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung* of January 1816 seems to be the first mention of Byron in a German publication:

Mit *Walter Scott* wetteifert als Dichter der junge Lord *Byron*, dessen Gedichte von dem brittischen Publicum begierig gelesen werden. Die meisten haben 5, einige schon 6 Ausgaben erlebt. Seine *Childe Harold* gefiel schon sehr; noch mehr sein *Corsair*; mit gleichem Beyfall wurde eine Fortsetzung des letzteren, *Lara (in Two tales, Lara et Jacqueline by Lord Byron and Mr. Rogers)*, aufgenommen. Auch seine *Bride of Abydos*, *Giaur* [sic] etc. erhielten immer mehr Freunde. Wie gewaltig sein Spott ist, hat er in seiner ersten Satire *Scotch Reviewers* bewiesen, worin er die übermütigen Recensenten in *Edinburgh Review* geißelt. Neuerlich gab er, auf Veranlassung eines Freundes, *Hebrew Melodies*, versificirte Psalmen und andere Stellen des A. T., heraus, in welchen er den Ton der hebräischen Sänger im Ganzen recht getroffen hat. Sie haben im Publicum vielen Beyfall

¹Holl 77 and Koch 47.

²*Briefwechsel zwischen Goethe und Knebel 1774-1832* (Leipzig, 1851) 189. Henceforth referred to as Knebel. 'The latest *Monthly Magazines* also contain further articles on German literature — probably from Böttiger in Dresden. They are not lacking in praise; nevertheless these islanders still consider us, within the field of literature itself, as far inferior to themselves. Also our poets do not live to see, like some of theirs — Lord Byron, Southey — shortly the 13th edition of their works.'

gefunden, und sind von zwey berühmten jüdischen Tonkünstlern, *Braham* und *Nathan*, in Musik gesetzt worden.³

Little could Knebel have known the extent of the effect that Byron was to have throughout the remainder of Goethe's life, and this despite the fact that direct contact amounted to no more than one poem and one letter. In his *Tag-und Jahreshefte* for 1816 Goethe notes his own enthusiasm for Byron's poetry and his admiration of *The Corsair* and *Lara*:

Mein Antheil an fremden Werken bezog sich lebhaft auf *Byrons* Gedichte, der immer wichtiger hervortrat und mich nach und nach mehr anzog, da er mich früher durch hypochondrische Leidenschaft und heftigen Selbsthaß abgestoßen und, wenn ich mich seiner großen Persönlichkeit zu nähern wünschte, von seiner Muse mich völlig zu entfernen drohte. Ich lese den Corsaren und Lara, nicht ohne Bewunderung und Antheil.⁴

In a letter to Eichstädt on 4 June 1816, Goethe deems Byron worthy of attention and is clearly already familiar with some of his poetry, commenting on how Byron's strange personality shines through his work, and expressing a desire to discover more about Byron's life:

Ich habe Kenntniss genommen von dem englischen Dichter Lord Byron, der uns zu interessieren verdient. Sein seltsames Wesen leuchtet aus seinen Gedichten hervor die gerade wegen seines wilden und doch geregelten Talentes große Gunst haben. Könnten Sie mir nachweisen wo ich von der Lebensgeschichte, dem Charakter u.s.w.

³*Intelligenzblatt der Jenaischen Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung*, 1816, 4-5. Quoted in Robertson 48. 'The young Lord Byron, whose poems are read avidly by the British public, competes as a poet with Walter Scott. Most have lived to see 5, and some even 6 editions. His *Childe Harold* was very pleasing; his *Corsair* even more so; a continuation of the latest one, *Lara* (*in Two tales, Lara and Jacqueline by Lord Byron and Mr. Rogers*) was met with the same approval. Also his *Bride of Abydos*, *Giaour*, etc. have gained more and more admirers. The power of his satire is proven in his first satire *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, where he castigates the arrogant reviewers of the *Edinburgh Review*. Recently, at the instigation of a friend, he published *Hebrew Melodies*, versified psalms and other parts of the Old Testament, where he conveyed the tone of the Hebrew singer on the whole very well. They were met with much public approval, and have been set to music by two famous Jewish musicians, Braham and Nathan.' Robertson (47, note 1) does, however, also note that there is a mention of a talented young poet called Byron in the *Stuttgart Morgenblatt* of 1811.

⁴FA, 17, p. 271. Goethe read these two works in three days: see diary for 22, 23, 24 May 1816 (WA, III. 5, pp. 233-34). 'My interest in foreign literature was mainly directed to *Byron's* poems; for he appeared increasingly significant and gradually attracted me more, as he had earlier repelled me by hypochondriac passion and violent self-hatred, which threatened to estrange me completely from his Muse when I sought to approach his great personality. I am reading *The Corsair* and *Lara*, not without admiration and interest.'

dieses wundersamen Mannes nähere Nachricht finden könnte, so geschähe mir ein besonderer Gefalle.⁵

In conversation with George Ticknor on 25 October 1816 Goethe's interest in Byron is easily discernible:

Of Lord Byron, he spoke with interest and discrimination, & said that his poetry showed great knowledge of human nature and great talent in description; "Lara", he thought, "bordered on the kingdom of spectres; and of his late separation from his wife, that, in its circumstances and the mystery [*sic*] in which it is involved, it is so poetical, that if Lord Byron had invented it he could hardly have had a more fortunate subject for his genius."⁶

Goethe's interest was fuelled as Knebel praises Byron on 5 November 1816⁷ and 29 May 1817,⁸ but, despite the fact that Goethe read Walter Scott's review of *Childe Harold*, Canto III, and *The Prisoner of Chillon and Other Poems* in the *Quarterly Review* of February 1816,⁹ there is no evidence that he ever read the texts themselves, although a comment made in a letter to his daughter-in-law Ottilie on 18 June 1817 may imply otherwise:

Es liegen noch allerley Haroldskinder, Chillonsgefangene und Träume im Hintergrund.¹⁰

⁵HA Briefe, 3, pp. 355-56, 'I have taken cognisance of the English poet Lord Byron, who deserves to interest us. His strange nature shines out in his poems, which find much favour because of his wild and yet controlled talent. If you could tell me where I might find more detailed information about the life, character, etc. of this amazing man, you would be doing me a particular kindness' (Butler, *Passion* 14).

⁶Gespräche, 3, pp. 270-71. See also George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, vol. 1 (Boston, 1876) 114. Butler (*Passion* 32, note 1) dates this conversation mistakenly as 28 October 1816.

⁷'Lord Byron ist ein gewaltiger Mann, dergleichen selten vorkommt. Die Leidenschaft herrscht fast noch mehr als die Phantasie in seinen Gedichten. Es läßt sich denken, daß er selbst einer zärtlich geliebten Frau zuwider seyn konnte' (Knebel 205). 'Lord Byron is a tremendous man, the like of whom is rarely found. Passion dominates his poetry almost more than imagination. It is conceivable that the man himself would be repugnant to a tenderly loved woman.'

⁸Knebel 223, 'Ein paar Zeilen, die ich gestern Abends aus Byrons Gedichten fand, ließen mich den Contrast zwischen unserm und dem griechischen Himmel noch mehr fühlen:

... And they were canopied by the blue sky,
So cloudless, clear, and purely beautiful,
That God alone was to be seen in Heaven.'

'A few lines which I found yesterday evening in Byron's poems allowed me to feel even more keenly the contrast between our heaven and the Greek one. [...].'

⁹Goethe received this review on 2 June 1817. See diary for 2-3 June 1817 (WA, III, 6, p. 56).

¹⁰18 June 1817 (WA, IV, 28, p. 131). 'There are also all sorts of *Harold*-children, *Chillon*-prisoners and *Dreams* in the background.'

In an attempt to satisfy his thirst for knowledge of Byron's life, Goethe read Lady Caroline Lamb's *roman à clef* *Glenarvon* in October 1817. He was not impressed either by its length or its repetition, as he indicates in his review of 1817:

Der Roman *Glenarvon* sollte uns über manches Liebesabenteuer desselben Aufschlüsse geben; allein das voluminöse Werk war an Interesse seiner Masse nicht gleich, es wiederholte sich in Situationen, besonders in unerträglichen; man mußte ihm einen gewissen Werth zugestehen, den man aber mit mehr Freude bekannt hätte, wenn er uns in zwey mäßigen Bänden wäre dargereicht worden.¹¹

Nevertheless his interest in Byron was undiminished and when, on 11 October 1817, he received a copy of *Manfred* from the American scholar Theodore Lyman,¹² he read it in just three sittings,¹³ and even before finishing it on 16 October spoke highly of it to Knebel:

Die wunderbarste Erscheinung war mir diese Tage das Trauerspiel *Manfred* von Lord Byron, das mir ein junger Amerikaner zum Geschenk brachte. Dieser seltsame geistreiche Dichter hat meinen Faust in sich aufgenommen und für seine Hypochondrie die seltsamste Nahrung daraus gesogen. Er hat alle Motive auf seine Weise benutzt, so daß keins mehr dasselbige ist, und gerade deshalb kann ich seinen Geist nicht genug bewundern. Diese Umbildung ist so aus dem ganzen, daß man darüber und über die Ähnlichkeit und Unähnlichkeit mit dem Original höchst interessante Vorlesungen halten könnte; wobei ich freilich nicht leugne, daß einem die düstre Glut einer grenzlosen reichen Verzweiflung denn doch am Ende lästig wird. Doch ist der Verdruß, den man empfindet, immer mit Bewunderung und Hochachtung verknüpft. Sobald unsere für diesen Mann

¹¹FA, 17, p. 285. He did not finish the novel until 30 October 1817 (WA, III, 6, p. 129). 'The novel *Glenarvon* was said to give information about many love-affairs of Byron's; but the interest of this voluminous work is not equal to its size; situations are repeated, especially intolerable ones. It must be admitted that it has a certain value; but one would be more ready to admit this, had it been in two modestly sized volumes' (Butler, *Passion* 37).

¹²WA, III, 6, p. 121. See also Lyman's accompanying note, published in Leonard L. Mackall, 'Briefwechsel zwischen Goethe und Amerikanern,' *Goethe Jahrbuch* 25 (1904): 6. Lyman, however, did not meet Goethe until 13 October 1817 (WA, III, 6, p. 121). Lyman also passed on a copy of Byron's *Lament of Tasso* from Edward Everett, but it was *Manfred* which grabbed Goethe's attention and there is never any other specific reference made to the other text. Edward Everett visited Goethe on 25 October 1816 (WA, III, 5, p. 280) and Byron was discussed (Brandl, *Verhältniss* 4).

¹³ See diary for 11, 12 and 16 October 1817 (WA, III, 6, pp. 121 and 123).

passionierten Frauen das Werk verschlungen, soll es Dir auch zuteil werden.¹⁴

The parallels and differences between Goethe's *Faust* and Byron's *Manfred* have been well documented ever since¹⁵ and perhaps Goethe himself is responsible for this, for, as positive and glowing as these words may be, they are not quite true. For, as we shall discover later, Byron did not possess extensive knowledge of Goethe's *Faust* and hence could not have employed his energies in reworking it as much as Goethe believed. Nonetheless, it is surely significant that he felt inclined to publish a review at all. Although the translation of sections of *Manfred* was begun on 2 November 1817, it was not published in *Kunst und Altertum* until 1820 and it was certainly not completed at this initial sitting.¹⁶ The review is less of a critical appreciation of the work itself and more of a reaction to Byron the man; it does, however, compliment *Manfred* in words reminiscent of the 13 October 1817 letter to Knebel. Goethe discusses the author himself, and then translates selected passages. *Manfred's* effect on its critic is clear and the 'wunderbarste Erscheinung' ('most wonderful phenomenon') described to Knebel has now developed into a more personal 'wunderbare mich nahberührende' one ('a wonderful phenomenon which touches me deeply').

¹⁴13 October 1817 (HA Briefe, 3, p. 403). 'The most wonderful phenomenon of these last few days for me has been Byron's tragedy "Manfred", which a young American visitor has given me. This strange, gifted poet has absorbed my "Faust", and has taken from it the strangest food for his melancholy. He has used every theme in his own way, so that none remains what it was; and for this very reason I cannot admire him highly enough. His transformation of my poem is so much of a piece, one could give extremely interesting lectures on its likeness and unlikeness to the original. I don't deny, however, that the gloomy fire of his pervading and endless despair grows irritating in the end. And yet one's annoyance is never without admiration and respect. As soon as our Byron-worshipping ladies have devoured the book, you shall have it' (*Letters from Goethe*, trans. M. von Herzfeld and C. Melvil Sym (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1957) 413-14).

¹⁵See especially Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 6-13; Eimer 438-42; Klapper 64-90; Knobbe 12-19; Robertson 10-17; Sinzheimer 32-53 and Werner 188-91.

¹⁶See diary for 2 November 1817 (WA, III, 6, p. 130), 'Manfred einzelne Stellen studirt und übersetzt', which mentions only the translations as having been done that day. 'Studied and translated some parts of *Manfred*.' See also diary for 3, 4, 9, 26, 30 November, 2 December 1817 (WA, III, 6, pp. 131, 133, 140 and 142-43) and 27 March and 24 September 1818 (WA, III, 6, pp. 188 and 246) for Goethe's continued interest in *Manfred* and translation of it.

This interest did not diminish¹⁷ and Goethe soon afforded Byron the distinction of the only great poet of the present age:

Die Unterhaltung drehte sich lange um Lord Byron, den Goethe für den einzigen großen Dichter jetziger Zeit erklärte.¹⁸

In conversation with George Bancroft, Bancroft notes that Goethe was anxious to read more Byron:

Byron he praised in the highest terms, declared himself one of a large party in Germany who admired him unboundedly and seized on and swallowed everything that came from him.¹⁹

Although communications had improved, by the 15 October 1819 Goethe still had no copy of Byron's latest work (the first two cantos of *Don Juan*, published on 15 July), as he tells Frau von Pogwisch. In this letter he also notes the typically ambivalent reaction of the British:

Von Byrons neusten Wercken habe nur gehört. Don Juan rühmen seine Landsleute stellenweise ganz unendlich, dann mäckeln sie wieder dran, wie immer.²⁰

¹⁷Letter to Sulpiz Boisserée of 1 May 1818 (HA Briefe, 3, p. 428). Goethe enquires whether Boisserée knows *Manfred* and recommends it to him.

¹⁸10 May 1819 (Gespräche, 4, pp. 11-12). 'For a long time the conversation centred on Lord Byron, whom Goethe declared the only great poet of the present age.'

¹⁹12 October 1819 (M. A. DeWolfe Howe, *The Life and Letters of George Bancroft*, vol. 1 (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1908) 67).

²⁰WA, IV, 32, p. 73. Quoted by Mackall 33, note 45. 'I have only heard of Byron's latest works. His countrymen praise parts of *Don Juan* really endlessly, and then they start carping about it again, as always.'

Despite negative reports on *Don Juan* from Joseph Cogswell,²¹ Johann Christoph Hüttner²² and George Bancroft,²³ Goethe read Cantos I and II immediately on receiving them from Karl August, Duke of Weimar on 6 December 1819.²⁴ As with *Manfred*, Goethe's response was swift and again positive:

Don Juan, höchst merckwürdig und geistreich, verkürzt die langen Abende, danckbarlichst anerkannt.²⁵

The review was written just over a week later. It appears that, by 18 December 1819, both the review and the translation had been completed, but the diary entry 'Don Juan mundirt'²⁶ helps little in assessing exactly what was achieved that day. The review did not appear in *Kunst und Altertum* until 1821 and, if it was indeed finished in 1819, why did it lie unpublished for over a year? The answer may lie in a temporary loss of interest and enthusiasm in Byron, a view supported by a conversation with Müller, in which Goethe reveals that he may soon become anti-Byron:

Er [Goethe] zeigte mir eine silberne Taufschüssel von Friedrich dem Rothbart und kam dann auf Byron zu sprechen, gegen den er sich

²¹Letter of 8 August 1819: 'A friend of mine writes me that Byron's new poem *Don Juan* is far inferior to all his former productions, but I am too great an admirer of Byron to think he can ever take a retrograde step' (Mackall 14).

²²On 10 September 1819 Hüttner reports from London thus: 'Dies Gedicht hat erstaunliches Aufsehen gemacht, weil man ... wußte, daß es von Lord Byron herrühre, und weil darin Religion, Moralität, Anstand und Alles was dem Menschen theuer ist auf das schamloseste mit Füßen getreten wird Bei alledem ist nicht zu leugnen, daß er hier wie immer als Genie, kühner Denker und feuriger Dichter erscheint, dem man als solchem seine Bewunderung nicht versagen kann. Ja, Manche halten diese Rhapsodie für sein gelungenstes Werk. Aber was den Inhalt betrifft so setzt sich der liederliche Lord ... über alle Urtheile hinweg...' (Mackall 32-33, note 45). 'This poem has made an amazing sensation here because it was known ... it was by Lord Byron, and because religion, morality, propriety and everything that is dear to us is here trampled underfoot in the most shameless manner ... For all that, it cannot be denied that he proves himself a genius in this work, a bold thinker and a fiery poet, from whom as such it is impossible to withhold one's admiration. Indeed many regard this rhapsody as his most successful work. But, as far as the subject-matter is concerned, the profligate Lord treats all opinions with contempt' (Butler *Passion* 45). Butler, however, dates this wrongly as 1813 (*Passion* 45, note 1).

²³12 October 1819: 'Of Byron I said his last poem was reported to contain the most splendid exertions of poetical power, mixed with the lowest and most disgraceful indecencies. I did not think at the moment of Goethe's *Faust*. I mentioned, too, Byron's wife, forgetting that Goethe had not been happy in the married state [...] I spoke a word, too, of Eichhorn's writing so many books, forgetting that Goethe had found no end with writing many' (Bancroft 68).

²⁴WA, III, 7, p. 119. 'Don Juan von Byron, denselben bis in die Nacht gelesen.' 'Read Byron's *Don Juan* into the night.' See also diary for 7 and 8 December 1819 (WA, III, 7, p. 119).

²⁵14 December 1819 (WA, IV, 32, p. 117). 'Don Juan, most curious and intellectually stimulating, shortens the long evenings, gratefully appreciated.'

²⁶WA, III, 7, p. 122. 'Made a fair copy of *Don Juan*.'

vielleicht in einem halben Jahre erklären werde, übrigens 'Vampyr' als Byrons bestes Product erklärte.²⁷

Clearly he had not been impressed by *Mazeppa*, the story of which Müller had related to him a week previously.²⁸ A letter to Boisseree of 23 March 1820 also reveals something of his inchoate disillusionment:

Ist Ihnen Don Juan von Byron schon begegnet? Dieses Gedicht ist verrückter und grandioser als seine übrigen. Immer dieselben Gegenstände, aber mit höchstem Talent und Meisterschaft behandelt. Wäre er ein Mahler, so würde man seine Bilder mit Gold aufwiegen. Jetzt gehören seine Bände jedermann und da kommt nun allzu deutlich zum Vorschein was Sie so treffend aussprechen. Und wie er durch ewige Wiederholung unsern Antheil ermüdet, so ermüdet er zuletzt auch die Bewunderung.²⁹

This decrease in support was only temporary: if these feelings of doubt (especially regarding *Don Juan*) had persisted, or had this doubt developed into full-blown animosity, then Goethe would hardly have allowed publication in 1821 of his largely favourable review of *Don Juan*.³⁰ Like the review of *Manfred*, this is not what one might expect in a review: a translation of the first five stanzas of Canto I precedes Goethe's commentary, which concentrates, not on the text itself, but on the validity of its being translated at all. This focus on translation, however, emphasises the fact that the text itself, despite all the noted pitfalls of a translation, must be worthy of translation. Although Goethe clearly felt it difficult to come to terms with some of what he read in the first two cantos of *Don Juan* — undoubtedly to some extent due to the vivid description of the shipwreck and cannibalism in Canto II — he nonetheless still found it possible to make positive comments on a work that was

²⁷25 February 1820 (Gespräche, 4, p. 18). 'He [Goethe] showed me a silver christening bowl belonging to Friedrich the Redbeard and then began to talk about Byron, declaring that he may perhaps come out against Byron within six months, yet by the way he declared *The Vampyre* Byron's best work.' *The Vampyre* was of course not Byron's work at all, but Polidori's.

²⁸18 February 1820 (WA, III, 7, p. 139).

²⁹23 March 1820 (WA, IV, 32, p. 205). 'Have you met with *Don Juan* by Byron? This poem is crazier and more grandiose than his others. Always the same themes, but handled with the highest talent and mastery. Were he a painter, his pictures would be worth their weight in gold. But as it is, his volumes belong to everybody, and what you so aptly express begins to appear all too plainly. And as by external repetitions he wears out our sympathy, so in the end he will wear out our patience' (Butler, *Passion* 56).

³⁰WA, I, 41.1, pp. 245-49.

proving scandalous throughout Britain. He declared it 'ein grenzenlos - geniales Werk, menschenfeindlich bis zur herbsten Grausamkeit, menschenfreundlich in die Tiefen süßester Neigung sich versenkend',³¹ a combination of negative and positive human qualities that might well remind us of the complexity that Goethe created in his own Mephistopheles. Although he does continue to call it the 'Unsittlichsten, was jemals die Dichtkunst vorgebracht' (one of 'the most immoral works that the art of poetry ever produced'), this is not at all the damning remark it may at first appear. Goethe then proceeds, in a tone echoed later by Nietzsche's critique of (conventional) *Moralität*,³² to underline the fact that Byron's text, while it may indeed in some circles be deemed 'unsittlich' ('immoral'), can in no way be thought of as any more morally corrupting than the contemporary newspapers:

Sollte man uns vorwerfen, daß wir durch Übersetzung eine solche Schrift in Deutschland ausbreitend, unverantwortlich handeln, indem wir eine treue, ruhige, wohlhäßige Nation mit dem Unsittlichsten, was jemals die Dichtkunst vorgebracht, bekannt zu machen trachten, so antworten wir, daß, nach unserm Sinne, tiefe Übersetzungsversuche nicht gerade zum Druck bestimmt sein müßten, sondern als Übung guter talentvoller Köpfe gar wohl gelten dürften. Sie mögen alsdann, was sie hiebei gewonnen, zu Lust und Freude ihrer Sprachgenossen bescheidenlich anwenden und ausbilden. Genau betrachtet, wäre jedoch von einem Abdruck solcher Gedichte kein sonderlicher Schade für die Moralität mehr zu befürchten, indem Dichter und Schriftsteller sich wunderlich gebärden müßten, um sitten-verderberischer zu sein als die Zeitungen des Tages.³³

He also divulges his admiration in conversation with Bancroft in 1821:

³¹WA, I, 41.1, p. 247, 'a work of infinite genius, misanthropical with the bitterest humanity, yet sympathetic with the deepest intensity of tender feeling' (*Goethe's Literary Essays*, trans. J. E. Spingarn (London: Humphrey Milford, 1921) 205).

³²See especially Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1977) where modern morality is shown up for what Nietzsche believes it is: a hybrid of many different schools of thought. The corrupt nature, of the actual body of doctrine of this modern conventional morality, is revealed as so corrupt that it itself only corrupts.

³³WA, I, 41.1, p. 249. 'Possibly we may be reproached for spreading in translation such writings as these through Germany, thus making an honest, peaceful, decorous nation acquainted with the most immoral works that the art of poetry ever produced. But according to our way of thinking, these attempts at translation should not be intended for the press, but may serve as excellent practice for talented brains. Our poets may then discreetly apply and cultivate what they acquire in this way, for the pleasure and delight of their countrymen. No particular injury to morality is to be feared from the publication of such poems, since poets and authors would have cast aside all restraint to be more corrupting than the papers of the present day' (Spingarn 207).

Byron's *Don Juan* Goethe has read and admired its humour. The humour of the rimes [*sic*] said he, is capable only in your language where words differently written are often pronounced alike.³⁴

After such positive comments it seems odd that Goethe appears to have made little effort to obtain more of *Don Juan* as it was published over the following 5 years. It is, nevertheless, clear that he did read Cantos XIII and XIV on 16 August 1829:

Gegen Abend Otilie, Herr Robinson und Walther. Wir lasen Himmel und Erde oder die Sündfluth von Lord Byron. Ich las nachher des 13. und 14. Gesang des Don Juan, nicht ohne erneute Verwunderung des außerordentlichen Dichtergeistes.³⁵

It would appear then that he knew little of *Don Juan*, as he told Eckermann on 5 July 1827:

Von Don Juan kenne ich wenig; allein aus seinen anderen Gedichten sind mir solche Stellen im Gedächtnis, besonders Seestücke, wo hin und wieder ein Segel herausblickt, ganz unschätzbar, so daß man sogar die Wasserluft mit zu empfinden glaubt.³⁶

Although *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* was published in 1809, Goethe only came across it in January 1821, whereupon it occupied him for quite some time.³⁷ He even attempted a translation; a task which proved too arduous in light of a lack of knowledge regarding allusions and details, as he himself admitted, in his *Tag- und Jahreshefte* for 1821:

³⁴7 March 1821 (Bancroft 98).

³⁵WA, III, 12, p. 113. 'Evening time, Otilie, Mr. Robinson and Walther. We read *Heaven and Earth or the Flood* by Lord Byron. Afterwards I read Cantos XIII and XIV of *Don Juan*, not without renewed astonishment at the extraordinary mind of the poet.' Cantos XII, XIII and XIV were published together in one volume on 17 December 1823, so it seems strange that he does not mention canto XII, and only ever reiterates the fact that he knows little of the text. If he was reading the English first edition, published by John Hunt, then he surely must have read Canto XII and simply not have mentioned it to anyone or recorded the fact in his diary. There is a possibility, of course, that he could have been reading Cantos XIII and XIV in translation, since it had been translated into French as early as 1827. I am of the opinion that he probably did read more of *Don Juan* than he admitted — it would seem odd if he did not, considering the praise he lauded on Cantos I and II and on Byron in general, and the enthusiasm he showed for many of Byron's other works.

³⁶5 July 1827 (Eckermann 230). 'I know but little of "Don Juan," but I remember passages from his other poems, especially his sea scenes, with a sail peeping out here and there, which are invaluable, for they make us seem to feel the sea-breeze blowing' (Oxenford, 1, p. 423). The full text of this conversation and a translation can be found in Appendix (iii) (e), pp. 286-89.

³⁷See diary for 16-20 January and 20 March 1820 (WA, III, 8, pp. 7-9 and 24).

Lord Byrons Invective gegen die Edimburger, die mich in vielfachen Sinne interessirte, fing ich an zu übersetzen, doch nöthigten mich die Unkunde der vielen Partikularien bald inne zu halten.³⁸

His interest in English literature was undiminished and this same review contains further positive comments on Byron:

Lord Byrons früherer Kampf gegen seine schwachen und unwürdigen Rezensenten brachten mir die Namen mancher seit dem Anfange des Jahrhunderts merkwürdig gewordener Dichter und Prosaisten vor die Seele, und ich las daher Jakobsons biographische Chrestomathie mit Aufmerksamkeit, um von ihren Zuständen und Talenten das Genauere zu erfahren. Lord Byrons Marino Valiero [*sic*], wie sein Manfred, in Dörings Uebersetzung, hielten uns jenen werthen außerordentlichen Mann immer vor Augen.³⁹

Goethe's letter to Benecke of 12 November 1822 reiterates his inability to get to grips with the text and his decision to abandon his translation:

Ich suchte mich mit ihm durch Übersetzung zu identifizieren und an seine zartesten Gefühle, wie an dessen kühnsten Humor mich anzuschließen; wobei denn, um nur des letztern Falles zu gedenken, allein die Unmöglichkeit, über den Text ganz klar zu werden, mich abhalten konnte, eine angefangene Übersetzung von English Bards and Scotch Reviewers durchzuführen.⁴⁰

Goethe received a copy of *Marino Faliero* from Knebel on 18 July 1821 and Heinrich Döring's translation of *Manfred* later that year,⁴¹ but these and *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* are the only Byron texts to occupy Goethe that year.

Byron's absence from Goethe's letters, diaries and conversations during much of 1822 appears to support the idea that he was disillusioned with Byron. The depth of any

³⁸FA, 17, p. 325. 'I began to translate Lord Byron's invective against the Edinburgh reviewers, which interested me in many ways, but my ignorance of the many details soon compelled me to stop.'

³⁹FA, 17, p. 329. 'The names of some poets and prose writers, who have become notable since the beginning of the century, brought Lord Byron's earlier struggle against his weak and unworthy reviewers to my mind, therefore I read Jakobson's biographical anthology carefully, in order to learn further details about their circumstances and talents. Lord Byron's *Marino Faliero* and Döring's translation of his *Manfred*, kept that worthy and extraordinary man always before our eyes.'

⁴⁰12 November 1822 (HA Briefe, 4, pp. 53-54). The full text of this letter (minus opening and closing niceties) and a translation can be found in Appendix (iii) (a), pp. 266-67.

⁴¹WA, III, 8, p. 121.

disillusionment that may or may not have existed was quickly dispelled in November 1822 when Goethe received from Benecke Byron's hand-written dedication to *Sardanapalus*.⁴² Clearly flattered and moved, Goethe had the dedication lithographed and returned it to Benecke together with the following letter emphasising his appreciation:

Seit seinem ersten Erscheinen begleitete ich, mit näheren und ferneren Freunden, ja mit Einstimmung von ganz Deutschland und der Welt, jenes charakter-gegründete, grenzenlos produktive, kräftig unaufhaltsame, zart-liebliche Wesen auf allen seinen Pfaden. [...] Das Alter, das denn doch zuletzt an sich selbst zu zweifeln anfängt, bedarf solcher Zeugnisse, deren anregende Kraft der Jüngere vielleicht nicht ertragen hätte.⁴³

Sardanapalus was, however, already in print, minus this dedication. The full story surrounding Byron's intended dedications to Goethe and their omission will be dealt with in Chapter 3 below. Goethe's delight was unqualified, as is evident in his letters at the beginning of 1823. To Boisserée he writes:

Lord Byron wollte mir seinen Sardanapal [*sic*] dediciren, es verspätete und zerschlug sich, doch ward mir die Handschrift deshalb für einen Augenblick mitgetheilt und ich ließ sie geschwind lithographiren. Hiebey ein Abdruck: es ist dem Alter wohl vergönnt, sich an solchen Stärkungen zu erquicken. Werner hab ich selbst noch nicht gesehen.⁴⁴

And to Nees von Esenbeck he comments:

Mit herzlichem Danke für Schreiben und Sendung durch Gräfin Beust und anderes Gleichzeitige überliedere hier das gewünschte Facsimile; damit verhält es sich folgendermaßen: Lord Byron beabsichtigte mir seinen Sardanapal [*sic*] zu widmen, er schickte das Blatt, das vorgedruckt werden sollte, nach England, man wollte mich es erst wissen lassen, das verschob und verzog sich; nun bestimmte man es für die zweyte Ausgabe des Sardanapals [*sic*], und es gelangte endlich

⁴²7 November 1822 (WA, III, 8, p. 259). See also diary for 11 and 12 November (WA, III, 8, p. 261) and letters to Riemer of 8 November 1822 (WA, IV, 36, p. 201) and Schultz of 9 December 1822 (WA, IV, 36, pp. 224-27).

⁴³See Chapter 2, note 40 above.

⁴⁴3 January 1823 (WA, IV, 36, p. 256). 'Lord Byron wanted to dedicate his *Sardanapalus* to me, it was delayed and it fell through, but because of that the manuscript was in my hands for a short time and I quickly had it lithographed. I enclose a copy: old age is surely allowed the privilege of refreshing itself on such tonics. Even I have not yet seen *Werner*.'

zu mir. Den Werth einer solchen zurückzusendenden Handschrift erkennend, besorgten wir schnell ein Facsimile, welches um soviel mehr bedeutet, als diese Widmung nie wird abgedruckt werden und er mir sein Trauerspiel *Werner*, wie ich höre, zugeschrieben hat. Sie sind überzeugt, daß ich eine solche auszeichnende Anerkennung tief empfinde und zu dem übrigen großen Capital von freundschaftlich-theilnehmendem Wohlwollen hinzufüge, wodurch mein innerstes Leben für ewige Zeiten gesichert ist.⁴⁵

Aware of the problems that had surrounded the *Sardanapalus* dedication, Goethe now knew that a dedication had been appended to *Werner*, although he did not yet possess a copy. *Werner* was published on 23 November 1822, but Goethe did not receive a copy until 24 March 1823 from Soret. Despite the fact that the dedication was much shorter than expected, there is no evidence that Goethe was disappointed.⁴⁶ At the same time Soret also presented Goethe with a copy of *Sardanapalus*, which, like the copy of *Werner*, was an 1822 reprint by Galignani. Any feelings of disillusionment with Byron disappeared and Goethe comments to Soret that these were Byron's best works:

Wir sprachen über Litteratur, Lord Byron, dessen 'Sardanapal' [*sic*] und 'Werner'. Sodann kamen wir auf den 'Faust', über den Goethe oft und gern redet. Er möchte, daß man ihn in's Französische übersetzte, und zwar im Charakter der Zeit des Marot. Er betrachtet ihn als die Quelle, aus der Byron die Stimmung zu seinem 'Manfred' geschöpft. Goethe findet, daß Byron in seinen beiden letzten Tragödien entschiedene Fortschritte gemacht, indem er darin weniger düster und misanthropisch erscheint.⁴⁷

⁴⁵2 February 1823 (WA, IV, 36, pp. 299-300). 'Here is the facsimile [of Byron's dedication] you asked for, with hearty thanks for what you wrote and sent by Gräfin Beust, and for the rest that came with it. This is the state of affairs: Lord Byron intended to dedicate his "Sardanapalus" to me. He sent the page with the dedication to England; they wanted to let me see this first, but delayed and put it off. Then it was to appear in the second edition of "Sardanapalus", and at last I got it. I realised the value of a manuscript like this, which had to go back, and quickly had a facsimile made; this will now be all the more valuable as the dedication is not going to be printed; I hear he has now dedicated his tragedy "Werner" to me. You know I feel this sort of outstanding tribute very deeply, and I add it to the rest of the considerable capital of friendly, sympathetic goodwill which ensures that what is fundamentally my life will endure for all time [...]' (Herzfeld & Sym 442-43).

⁴⁶The text of this dedication can be found in Appendix (ii) (c), p. 265.

⁴⁷13 April 1823 (Gespräche, 4, pp. 225-26). 'We talked about literature, Lord Byron, his *Sardanapalus* and *Werner*. We then came to *Faust*, a subject on which Goethe frequently and willingly speaks. He wished that it might be translated into French, in the style of Marot's period. He considers it as the source whence Byron derived the tone of his "Manfred." Goethe thinks that Byron has made decided

His enthusiasm for Byron at an all time high, he composed the poem 'An Lord Byron' on 22 June 1823, although it was not published until 1824.⁴⁸ This might never have reached its dedicatee had it not been for Charles Sterling, son of the British consul at Genoa, who had come to Weimar in the summer of 1823 bearing a short note of introduction from Byron. Goethe's poem was entrusted to Sterling, and Byron's reply was returned also via Sterling, so that it reached Goethe on 11 August 1823 together with a letter from his own son August.⁴⁹ Although no further direct reference to the letter is made, Goethe acknowledges Sterling's assistance:

Sehr gern, mein werthester Herr Sterling, hätte ich mündlich von Ihnen Abschied genommen und ein weiteres Wohlergehn auf Ihrer Reise persönlich gewünscht; alsdann hätte ich den Dank wiederholt, zu dem ich Ihnen verpflichtet bin, daß Sie einem näheren Verhältniß zu dem höchstgeschätzten Lord Byron den Weg gebahnt. Ich betrachte dieß als einen der schönsten Gewinne meines Lebens.

Gedenken Sie unserer! und wenn Sie nach Genua kommen und Gelegenheit finden von sich jenem außerordentlichen Manne Nachricht zu geben, so erwähnen Sie auch meiner, der Meinigen und der unerschöpflichen Verehrung, Bewunderung und Liebe, mit der wir ihm zugethan sind. Sprechen Sie aus, daß wir jene Person von uns höchst glücklich schätzen, die ihm, wo es auch sey, auf diesem Erdenrunde begegnen könnte.⁵⁰

Autumn 1823 saw no decrease in this admiration for Byron. On 19 October 1823 he encouraged Eckermann to learn English so that he might appreciate Byron:

Es kam dann zur Sprache, daß ich noch Englisch lernen müsse, wozu Goethe dringend riet, besonders des Lord Byron wegen, dessen Persönlichkeit von solcher Eminenz, wie sie nicht dagewesen und

progress in his last two tragedies; because in these he appears less gloomy and misanthropical' (Oxford, 1, 50).

⁴⁸See Introduction, note 1, above.

⁴⁹See diary for 11 and 13 August 1823 (WA, III, 9, p. 92).

⁵⁰13 March 1824 (WA, IV, 38, p. 79). 'I should have much liked, my dear Mr Sterling, to have taken leave of you by word of mouth and wished you well on your journey personally. I could then also have repeated the thanks which I owe you for paving the way to a closer relationship with Lord Byron, whom I esteem more than I can say. I regard this as one of the fairest gains of my life. Keep us in your memory! And when you reach Genoa and have an opportunity to give news of yourself to that remarkable man, tell him also about me and mine, and the inexhaustible reverence, admiration and love which we feel for him. Speak out and tell him that we should look upon any of us as most fortunate who might happen to meet him, wherever it might be, on this globe' (Butler, *Passion* 96-97).

wohl schwerlich wieder kommen werde. Man ging die hiesigen Lehrer durch, fand aber keinen von einer durchaus guten Aussprache, weshalb man es für besser hielt, sich an junge Engländer zu halten.⁵¹

By this time he had also read *Cain*,⁵² which he praised in conversation with Müller on 2 October 1823,⁵³ before emphasising his highest regard for Byron:

Byron allein lasse ich neben mir gelten. Walter Scott ist nichts neben ihm.⁵⁴

Could this enthusiasm increase still further? By 12 October Goethe had also completed *Heaven and Earth*, discussing both this text and *Cain* enthusiastically with Müller:

Er sprach über Byrons 'Cain' und 'Himmel und Erde'. Letzteres Stück referirte er unvergleichlich mit vieler Laune und Humor. Es sei viel faßlicher, klarer als das erste, was gar zu tief gedacht, zu bitter sei, wiewohl erhaben, kühn, ergreifend. Nichts gotteslästerlicher übrigens als die alte Dogmatik selbst, die einen zornigen, wüthenden, ungerechten, partiischen Gott vorspiegle.⁵⁵

During the following few days he also read *The Island*,⁵⁶ although it is never again mentioned. Despite apparent reservations about *Cain* and a belief that *Heaven and Earth* was more comprehensible, Goethe then set about penning a review of *Cain*. It is perhaps a little strange that he did not review the latter text, but, after having read an article in *Le Moniteur Universel* published in Paris on 30 October 1823, and having had it translated by Müller, Goethe felt impelled to publish his own advocacy

⁵¹19 October 1823 (Eckermann 50). 'They then talked about the necessity of my learning English, and Goethe earnestly advised me to do so, particularly on account of Lord Byron; saying, that a character of such eminence had never existed before, and probably would never come again. They discussed the merits of the different teachers here, but found none with a thoroughly good pronunciation; on which account they deemed it better to go to some young Englishman' (Oxenford, 1, p. 73).

⁵²1822 Galignani edition (Smith 139).

⁵³'Dann kam er auf Byron, pries seinen Cain und vorzüglich die Totschlag-Szene' (FA, 37, p.115). 'Then he came to Byron, praised his *Cain*, particularly the murder scene.' This entry would certainly seem to suggest that *Cain* had been completed by that date, despite the fact that there is no reference to this work in Goethe's diary until 11 and 12 October 1823 (WA, III, 9, pp. 127-28).

⁵⁴2 October 1823 (FA, 37, p. 115). 'Byron alone I admit to a place by my side. Walter Scott is nothing beside him.'

⁵⁵12 October 1823 (Gespräche, 4, p. 290). 'About Byron's *Cain* and *Heaven and Earth*. He discussed the latter piece incomparably, with much verve and humour. It was much more comprehensible than the first, which was too profound in thought and too bitter, although sublime, bold and soul-stirring. There was nothing more blasphemous, by the way, than the old dogmatic theology itself, which evoked a wrathful, raging, unjust and party-spirited God' (Butler, *Passion* 95).

⁵⁶1823 Galignani edition. See diary for 13-15, 17 October 1823 (WA, III, 9, pp. 128-30).

of Byron's views as expressed in *Cain*.⁵⁷ This review was finished on 19 February 1824, given to Riemer, and published in *Kunst und Altertum* later that year.⁵⁸ It is different from the other two reviews in so far as it concentrates on the text itself, for Goethe discusses Byron's adherence, in *Cain*, to biblical tradition. Whatever reservations he may have had about *Cain* (there is noticeably no discussion about the lack of clarity he perceived in comparison with *Heaven and Earth*), his admiration of these dramas and of Byron does not falter as he talks enthusiastically to Eckermann:

Darauf zeigte mir Goethe eine kurze Kritik, die er über Byrons *Cain* geschrieben und die ich mit großem Interesse las.

'Man sieht, sagte er, wie einem freien Geiste wie Byron die Unzulänglichkeit der kirchlichen Dogmen zu schaffen gemacht, und wie er sich durch ein solches Stück von einer ihm aufgedrungenen Lehre zu befreien gesucht. Die englische Geistlichkeit wird es ihm freilich nicht Dank wissen; mich soll aber wundern, ob er nicht in Darstellung nachbarlicher biblischer Gegenstände fortschreiten wird, und ob er sich ein Sujet wie den Untergang von Sodom und Gomorra, wird entgehen lassen.'⁵⁹

Two days later Byron was the topic of conversation once more and, in spite of the fact that we hear more of Eckermann's own opinion, Goethe does not appear to dissent:

So hatte Goethe von Lord Byron gesagt, daß ihm die Welt durchsichtig sei und daß ihm ihre Darstellung durch Antizipation möglich. Ich äußerte darauf einige Zweifel: ob es Byron z.B. gelingen möchte, eine untergeordnete tierische Natur darzustellen, indem seine Individualität mir zu gewaltsam erscheine, um sich solchen Gegenständen mit Liebe hinzugeben. Goethe gab dieses zu und erwiderte, daß die Antizipation sich überall nur soweit erstrecke, als die Gegenstände dem Talent analog seien, und wir wurden einig, daß

⁵⁷For Goethe's desire to write something and for his request for a translation, see also diary for 31 January and 16 February 1824 (WA, III, 9, pp. 173 and 180).

⁵⁸Diary for 19 February 1824 (WA, III, 9, p. 181) and letter to Riemer of the same date (WA, IV, 38, p. 51). Proofs for the review were dated 29 March 1824 (WA, I, 41.2, pp. 421-26) and the review was published later that year (WA, I, 41.2, pp. 94-99).

⁵⁹24 February 1824 (Eckermann 79). 'Goethe then showed me a short critique, which he had written on Byron's "Cain" and which I read with great interest. "We see," he said, "how the inadequate dogmas of the church work upon a free mind like Byron's, and how by such a piece he struggles to get rid of a doctrine which has been forced upon him. The English clergy will not thank him; but I shall be surprised if he does not go on treating biblical subjects of similar import, and if he lets slip a subject like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah"' (Oxenford, 1, pp. 129-30).

in dem Verhältnis, wie die Antizipation beschränkt oder umfassend sei, das darstellende Talent selbst von größerem oder geringerem Umfange befunden werde.⁶⁰

Before completing the review of *Cain* Goethe also read *The Vision of Judgement*,⁶¹ of which he appears to have thought very highly indeed. He sent the text to Knebel on 22 May 1824 (Knebel had after all first brought Byron to Goethe's attention) and his praise of the two biblical dramas endured. On 18 May Byron is compared favourably with the Italian poet Tasso:

Es entstand eine Pause im Gespräch, die Riemer unterbrach, indem er den Lord Byron und dessen Tod zur Erwähnung brachte. Goethe machte darauf eine glänzende Auseinandersetzung seiner Schriften und war wohl des höchsten Lobes und der reinsten Anerkennung. 'Übrigens, fuhr er fort, obgleich Byron so jung gestorben ist, so hat doch die Literatur hinsichtlich einer gehinderten weiteren Ausdehnung nicht wesentlich verloren. Byron konnte gewissermaßen nicht weiter gehen. Er hatte den Gipfel seiner schöpferischen Kraft erreicht, und was er auch in der Folge noch gemacht haben würde, so hätte er doch die seinem Talent gezogenen Grenzen nicht erweitern können. In dem unbegreiflichen Gedicht seines [J]üngsten Gericht[s] hat er das Äußerste getan, was er zu tun fähig war.'

⁶⁰26 February 1824 (Eckermann 88). 'Goethe had likewise said of Lord Byron, that the world to him was transparent, and that he could paint by way of anticipation. I expressed some doubts whether Byron would succeed in painting, for instance, a subordinate animal nature, for his individuality seemed to me to be too powerful for him to give himself up, with any degree of predilection, to such a subject. Goethe admitted this, and replied, that the anticipation only went so far as the objects were analogous to the talent; and we agreed, that in the same proportion as the anticipation is confined or extended, is the representing talent of greater or smaller compass' (Oxenford, 1, p. 140). See also conversation with Müller on 8 March 1824 for admiration of *Cain* and *Heaven and Earth*: 'dann ward Byron's "Kain" und "Sündfluth" abermals analysirt. "Ich begreife recht, wie ein so großes Genie sich nach so vielen herrlichen Productionen überall ennuyiren konnte und daher die griechischen Angelegenheiten nur als einen neuen Zeitvertreib leidenschaftlich ergriff." Zugleich bat er mich, ihm einen Artikel aus dem Moniteur über "Kain" zu übersetzen, um seine eignen Äußerungen über dieses Werk in Kunst und Alterthum "zu retouchiren". "So oft die Franzosen," setzte er hinzu, "ihre Philisterei aufgeben und wo sie es thun, stehen sie weit über uns im kritischen Urtheil und in der Auffassung origineller Geisteswerke. Interessant ist alles, was uns interessirt"' (Gespräche, 5, p. 49). 'Then Byron's *Cain* and *Heaven and Earth* were analysed once more. "I completely understand how such a great genius could get bored after having produced so many wonderful works and therefore passionately grabbed the opportunity to go to Greece as a new way to pass the time." At the same time he asked me to translate an article from *Le Moniteur* on *Cain* so that he could revise his own words on that text in *Kunst und Altertum*." "Whenever the French," he added, "give up their philistinism, and where they do so, they are far above us in their critical judgement and in their conception of original intellectual works. Everything is interesting which interests us."

⁶¹12-13 February 1824 (WA, III, 9, p. 178).

Das Gespräch lenkte sich sodann auf den italienischen Dichter Torquato Tasso, und wie sich dieser zu Lord Byron verhalte; wo denn Goethe die große Überlegenheit des Engländers an Geist, Welt und produktiver Kraft nicht verhehlen konnte. 'Man darf, fügte er hinzu, beide Dichter nicht mit einander vergleichen, ohne den Einen durch den Andern zu vernichten. Byron ist der brennende Dornstrauch, der die heilige Zeder des Libanon in Asche legt. Das große Epos des Italieners hat seinen Ruhm durch Jahrhunderte behauptet; aber mit einer einzigen Zeile des Don Juan könnte man das ganze Befreite Jerusalem vergiften.'⁶²

Similarly, on 25 May, Soret reveals Goethe's almost resigned acceptance of Byron's fate, and notes his belief that Byron had already attained the pinnacle of his career with *The Vision of Judgement*:

Herr Riemer gibt der Unterhaltung eine andere Wendung, er spricht von Byron, von seinem Tode usw. Goethe verbreitet sich über Byrons Schriften und gibt davon eine glänzende Charakteristik; dann fährt er fort: 'Übrigens hat die Literatur, denkt man an die Steigerung ihrer Möglichkeiten, durch seinen frühen Tod nichts verloren. Weiter entwickeln konnte sich Byron nicht mehr; er hatte den Gipfel seiner schöpferischen Kraft erreicht, und seine späteren Werke würden, wenn auch immer tüchtig und schön, mehr der Unterhaltung der Leser als ihm selbst gedient haben; die Grenzen der Welt, in der sein Genie zur Entfaltung kommen konnte, hätten sie nicht erweitert. In seiner unergründbaren Schöpfung "Das Jüngste Gericht" ist er bis an die äußerste Grenze seines Könnens gelangt.'⁶³

⁶²18 May 1824 (Eckermann 500-01). 'Then followed a pause in the conversation, which Riemer broke by mentioning Lord Byron and his death. Goethe thereupon gave a brilliant elucidation of his writings, and was full of the highest praise and the purest acknowledgement. "However," continued he, "although Byron has died so young, literature has not suffered an essential loss, through a hindrance to its further extension. Byron could, in a certain sense, go no further. He had reached the summit of his creative power, and whatever he might have done in the future, he would have been unable to extend the boundaries of his talent. In the incomprehensible, 'The Vision of Judgment,' he has done the utmost of which he was capable." The discourse then turned upon the Italian poet, Torquato Tasso, and his resemblance to Lord Byron, when Goethe could not conceal the superiority of the Englishman, in spirit, grasp of the world, and productive power. "One cannot," continued he, "compare these poets with each other, without annihilating one by the other. Byron is the burning thorn-bush which reduces the holy cedar of Lebanon to ashes. The great epic poem of the Italian has maintained its fame for centuries; but yet with a single line of 'Don Juan,' one could poison the whole of 'Jerusalem Delivered'" (Oxenford, I, pp. 171-72). But news of Byron's death only reached Weimar on 23 May 1824 (WA, III, 9, p. 221) so it would seem that this conversation has been misdated by Eckermann and joined together with one held on this earlier date.

⁶³FA, 37, p. 165. 'Mr Riemer gave another turn to the conversation by talking about Byron, his death etc. Goethe held forth on Byron's writings and gave a brilliant account of them; before he continued: "Incidentally, although he died young, literature has lost nothing as far as an extension of its domain is

A few weeks later Goethe reiterates this opinion to Müller:

Über Byrons zu rechter Zeit erfolgten Tod. Sein griechisches Unternehmen habe etwas Unreines gehabt, hätte nie gut endigen können. 'Es ist ein Unglück, daß so ideenreiche Geister ihr *Ideal* durchaus verwirklichen, ins Leben einführen wollen. Das geht einmal nicht, das *Ideal* und die gemeine Wirklichkeit müssen streng geschieden bleiben.'⁶⁴

Goethe's brief retrospective diary entry 'Lord Byron stirbt'⁶⁵ does not reveal how deeply he was affected by this news, but perhaps his relative silence (it was after all Riemer who broached the subject, not Goethe) reveals more than any words ever could.

Soret informed Goethe of Medwin's desire that Goethe write a tribute to Byron and, after having written a tribute,⁶⁶ he gave a first draft of it to Riemer,⁶⁷ but it was only a month later, after prompting from Soret, that it was finally dispatched on 14 July 1824, together with a letter explaining his intentions:

In Beygehendem, mein Werthester, habe ich mich ganz allein an das zwischen mir und Lord Byron bestandene Verhältniß gehalten indem der Aufsatz in sich selbst abzuschließen war.

Von Manfred, Cain, Don Juan hab ich nur weniges übersetzt, auch nur mit kurzen Worten meine Gedanken darüber öffentlich geäußert. Es findet sich zerstreut in den vier Bänden über Kunst und Alterthum.

concerned. Byron could go no further; he had reached the summit of his creative power, and what he might have produced subsequently would doubtless still have been beautiful and admirable, but it would have done more for the entertainment of the reader than for himself. It would not have extended the limits of the field in which his genius could develop. He had reached the furthest limit of his conceptions in that unfathomable production *The Vision of Judgement*." This conversation with Soret is so similar to the one recorded by Eckermann as having taken place on 18 May, that it seems plausible that there was but one conversation and that it took place on the later date, as Butler suggests (*Passion* 103, note 1).

⁶⁴13 June 1824 (FA, 37, p. 170). 'He said of Byron's death, that it had occurred at exactly the right time. His Greek enterprise had something impure about it, and could never have ended well. "It is undoubtedly a misfortune that minds so rich in ideas should be so set on realising their ideals and bringing them into real life. That simply will not do. The ideal and ordinary reality must be rigorously kept apart"' (Butler, *Passion* 104).

⁶⁵19 April 1824 (WA, III, 9, p. 207). 'Lord Byron dies.'

⁶⁶WA, I, 42.1, pp. 100-04. The full text of the tribute can be found in Appendix (iii) (b), pp. 267-74, together with the translation as it appears in Medwin 272-75.

⁶⁷See diary entry for 16 June 1824 (WA, III, 9, p. 230).

Von dem allgemeinen Beyfall, welcher den Werken des Lords in Deutschland von Männern und Frauen geworden, sind Sie selbst Zeuge, auch geben alle Tages-Hefte und Blätter seit mehreren Jahren davon ein unwiderruflich Zeugniß.

[...]

Noch eines füge ich hinzu, um allen Zweifel wegen Benutzung des mitgetheilten Hauptblattes zu beseitigen: daß ich solches ausdrücklich geschrieben habe, damit es publicirt werde; deshalb steht es Herrn Medwin frey gedachte Mittheilung zu übersetzen und seinem Werk an beliebiger Stelle einzuschalten, mit dem Bemerken daß solches völlig meiner eigenen Absicht gemäß ist.⁶⁸

For whatever reason Goethe played down his reviews of *Manfred*, *Don Juan* and *Cain*, calling them nothing more than 'weniges' ('a little'). Hence they are unsurprisingly completely absent from the tribute. This tribute was finally published in Medwin's *Journal of the Conversations of Lord Byron* at the end of 1824, in a rather bad translation of the original German. The original was, however, also published, in the *Morgenblatt* of 5 October 1824 and, shortly thereafter, Goethe was once again reading more Byron.⁶⁹ Medwin's text arrived in Weimar soon after its publication in October, and the first reference to Goethe's reading it is in his diary entry for 18 November 1824.⁷⁰ In conversation with Müller two days later Byron again features prominently:

Über Lord Byrons kritisches System in der Ästhetik. Er stellte den alten Pope so hoch, um an ihm eine unbezwingliche Mauer zum Hinterhalt zu haben. Gegen Pope (allenfalls Wieland) sei Byron ein

⁶⁸WA, IV, 38, pp. 197-98. 'In the enclosed, my dear Sir, I have restricted myself to the relation between myself and Lord Byron only, as the essay had to be complete in itself. Of *Manfred*, *Cain*, *Don Juan*, I have translated but little, and only expressed my thoughts about them in a few brief words. These things are scattered through the four volumes of *Kunst und Altertum*. Of the universal applause with which the works of the noble Lord have been received by men and women in Germany, you are yourself a witness; and all newspapers and journals have been for several years an irrefutable testimony to it. [...] I add another word to remove all doubt with regard to the use of the enclosed sheet: namely, that I have written it expressly for publication; Mr. Medwin is thus at liberty to translate it and incorporate it wherever he likes in his work, with the statement that such is entirely in accordance with my intentions' (Robertson 81). See also letter to Soret of 12 July 1824 (WA, IV, 38, pp. 195-96), and diary entries for 12-15, 21, 23 July 1824 (WA, III, 9, pp. 242-44; 246-47).

⁶⁹*The Age of Bronze* on 18 October 1824 (WA, III, 9, p. 283).

⁷⁰He could not have read the French translation as it was a prose one and did not include the poems on which Goethe commented so favourably. He was therefore reading either the German translation, published by Cotta, or the original English.

Riese, gegen Shakespeare aber freilich wieder nur ein Zwerg gewesen. Die Ode⁷¹ auf den Tod des General Moore sei eine der schönsten Dichtungen Byrons. Shelley müsse ein armseliger Wicht sein, wenn er dies nicht gefühlt; überhaupt scheine Byron viel zu gut gegen ihn gewesen. Ebenso wenig sei Körner Schillers würdig gewesen. Daß Byron bei dem Gefangenen von Chillon Ugolino zum Vorbild genommen, sei nicht zu tadeln, die ganze Natur gehört dem Dichter an; nun aber werde jede geniale Kunstschöpfung auch ein Teil der Natur, und mithin könne der spätere Dichter sie so gut benutzen wie jede andere Naturerscheinung.⁷²

On 17 December 1824, Goethe revealed to Müller and Eckermann that he was reading Medwin's *Conversations* for the second time, stressed his ambivalent reaction towards the text and uttered perhaps one of his most vehement and famous criticisms of the British poet, pointing out, in his opinion, the childish nature of his judgements and combinations:

Eckermann trat ein, das Gespräch kam auf Byrons *Conversations*. 'Ich lese sie nun zum zweitenmale, ich möchte sie nicht missen und doch lassen sie einen peniblen Eindruck zurück. Wie viel Geklatsche oft nur um eine elende Kleinigkeit; welche Empfindlichkeit über jedes alberne Urteil der Journalisten, welche ein wüstes Leben mit Hunden, Affen, Pfauen, Pferden, alles ohne Folge und Zusammenhang.

Nur über *Anschauungen* urteilt Byron vortrefflich und klar, Reflexionen ist nicht seine Sache, seine Urteile und Kombinationen sind denn oft die eines Kindes.

Wie viel zu geduldig läßt er sich Plagiate verwerfen, scharmuziert nur zu seiner Verteidigung, statt mit scharfem Geschütz die Gegner niederzudonnern.

⁷¹The poem was not by Byron at all, but by Charles Wolfe.

⁷²FA, 37, pp. 219-20. See also diary for 20 November 1824 (WA, III, 9, p. 298). 'About Lord Byron's critical system in aesthetics. He built old Pope up so high in order to have an invincible wall of protection behind him. Beside Pope (at any rate, that is what Wieland thought) Byron was a giant, beside Shakespeare however a dwarf again. The ode on the death of General Moore is one of Byron's most beautiful poems. Shelley must have been a poor creature not to have felt that; altogether Byron seems to have been much too kind to him. Körner was just as little worthy of Schiller. That Byron took Ugolino as his model for the *Prisoner of Chillon* is not to be criticised, all nature belongs to the poet; but now every creation of artistic genius is a part of nature and therefore every later poet may use such creations just as well as any other natural phenomenon.' In this same conversation Goethe also reveals a knowledge of Louise Swanton Belloc's biography *Lord Byron*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1824).

Gehört nicht alles, was die Vor- und Mitwelt geleistet, ihm de iure an? Warum soll er sich scheuen, Blumen zu nehmen, wo er sie findet? Nur durch Aneignung fremder Schätze entsteht ein Großes. Hab' ich nicht auch im Mephistopheles den Hiob und ein Shakespearisches Lied mir angeeignet? Byron war meist unbewußt ein großer Dichter, selten wurde er sein selbst froh.⁷³

Eckermann records an almost identical discussion on 18 January 1825, noting every poet's indebtedness to his predecessors and Byron's perceived lack of competence as a thinker:

So auch, fuhr ich fort, zeigt selbst Lord Byron sich nicht klüger, wenn er Ihren Faust zerstückelt und der Meinung ist, als hätten Sie dieses hier her und jenes dort.

'Ich habe, sagte Goethe, alle jene von Lord Byron angeführten Herrlichkeiten größtenteils nicht einmal gelesen, viel weniger habe ich daran gedacht, als ich den Faust machte. Aber Lord Byron ist nur groß, wenn er dichtet, sobald er reflektiert, ist er ein Kind. So weiß er sich auch gegen dergleichen ihn selbst betreffende unverständige Angriffe seiner eigenen Nation nicht zu helfen; er hätte sich stärker dagegen ausdrücken sollen. Was da ist, das ist mein! hätte er sagen sollen, und ob ich es aus dem Leben oder aus dem Buche genommen, das ist gleichviel, es kam bloß darauf an, daß ich es recht gebrauchte! Walter Scott benutzte eine Szene meines Egmonts und er hatte ein Recht dazu, und weil es mit Verstand geschah, so ist er zu loben. So auch hat er den Charakter meiner Mignon in einem seiner Romane nachgebildet; ob aber mit eben so viel Weisheit? ist eine andere Frage. Lord Byrons verwandelter Teufel ist ein fortgesetzter Mephistopheles, und das ist recht! hätte er aus origineller Grille ausweichen wollen, er hätte es schlechter machen müssen. So singt mein Mephistopheles ein Lied von Shakespeare, und warum sollte er

⁷³FA, 37, pp. 228-29. 'Eckermann came in. The conversation turned to Byron's *Conversations*. "I am now reading them for the second time, I would not have missed them and yet they leave behind an embarrassing impression. So much gossip often only about some wretched detail; what sensitiveness to every fatuous opinion of the journalists; what a wild life, with dogs, monkeys, peacocks and horses, all without order and connection. Byron only judges excellently and clearly about what he perceives, reflection is not his forte; his judgments and combinations are then often those of a child. He is far too patient about the accusations of plagiarism, only making skirmishes in his defence, instead of bringing out the great guns to annihilate his opponents. Does not everything that the past and present have produced belong to the poet by right? Why should he fear to pick flowers where he finds them? All that is great is only a result of appropriating the treasures of others. Have I not appropriated Job and a song from Shakespeare in my Mephistopheles? Byron was for the most part only unconsciously a great poet, seldom was he happy in himself.'

das nicht? warum sollte ich mir die Mühe geben, ein eigenes zu erfinden, wenn das von Shakespeare eben recht war und eben das sagte, was es sollte? Hat daher auch die Exposition meines *Faust* mit der des *Hiob* einige Ähnlichkeit, so ist das wiederum ganz recht und ich bin deswegen eher zu loben als zu tadeln.⁷⁴

By the end of 1824, Goethe had also read Byron's parliamentary speeches⁷⁵ and soon thereafter was reading Byron's correspondence.⁷⁶ A letter to Josef Max on 18 December 1824 reveals Goethe's ever-increasing estimation of Byron:

Mein Verhältnis zu Lord Byron war gewiß das zarteste, gegründet auf eine zeitig empfundene sowie ernst geprüfte Hochschätzung seiner großen Dichtergabe, im Lauf der Jahre zugleich mit einem wechselseitigen Wohlwollen glücklich gesteigert, die schönsten Hoffnungen begünstigend und zuletzt durch ein grausames Geschick abgebrochen.

Hierüber nur durch äußere Veranlassung laut zu werden, darf sich mein tiefer Schmerz nicht erlauben; nur wenn die Muse selbst mich drängte, müßt ich ihr gehorchen.⁷⁷

⁷⁴18 January 1825 (Eckermann 126-27). "'Lord Byron, too," said I, "is no wiser, when he takes 'Faust' to pieces, and thinks you found one thing here, the other there." "The greater part of those fine things cited by Lord Byron," said Goethe, "I have never even read, much less did I think of them, when I was writing 'Faust.' But Lord Byron is only great as a poet; as soon as he reflects, he is a child. He knows not how to help himself against the stupid attacks of the same kind made upon him by his own countrymen. He ought to have expressed himself more strongly against them. 'What is there is mine,' he should have said, 'and whether he got it from a book or from life, is of no consequence; the only point is, whether I have made right use of it.' Walter Scott used a scene from my 'Egmont,' and he had a right to do so; and because he did it well, he deserves praise. He has also copied the character of my Mignon in one of his romances; but whether with equal judgment, is another question. Lord Byron's transformed Devil is a continuation of Mephistophiles [*sic*], and quite right too. If, from the whim of originality, he had departed from the model, he would certainly have fared worse. Thus, my Mephistophiles [*sic*] sings a song from Shakespeare, and why should he not? Why should I give myself the trouble of inventing one of my own, when this said just what was wanted. If, too, the prologue to my 'Faust' is something like the beginning of Job, that is again quite right, and I am rather to be praised than censured'" (Oxenford, 1, pp. 198-99). It would appear that these two discussions are but one and that one has therefore been dated incorrectly. Goethe's diary for 17 December 1824 (WA, III, 9, p. 309) reveals that it is Eckermann who was at fault.

⁷⁵21 December 1824 (WA, III, 9, p. 311). *The Parliamentary Speeches of Lord Byron* (London, 1824).

⁷⁶15 January 1825 (WA, III, 10, p. 6). Goethe probably received a French translation from Knebel (letter of 30 December 1824 (Knebel 355)). *Correspondance de Lord Byron avec un ami, comprenant outre la correspondance, les lettres écrites à sa mere, de Portugal, de l'Espagne, de la Turquie, et de la Grèce dans les années 1809, 1810, 1811 et des souvenirs et observations, le tout formant une histoire de sa vie de 1808 à 1814* (Paris, 1825). See Robertson 87, note 6.

⁷⁷HA Briefe, 4, pp. 131-32. 'My relationship with Lord Byron was certainly a most delicate and tender one, based on an early felt and carefully tended admiration for his great poetical gifts. In the course of the years it was also happily increased by reciprocal goodwill, which encouraged the fairest hopes, cut off by a cruel fate. My grief is too deep to permit expression for any external reason; only if the Muse herself should force me, I would have to obey her' (Butler, *Passion* 123).

During the years 1825-1832, most of Goethe's comments on Byron are relayed through Eckermann, although Henry Crabb Robinson's visit to Weimar in 1829 also provided Goethe with the opportunity to discuss Byron. These conversations with Eckermann may well have been inspired by Goethe's irritation at Medwin's interpretation of Byron's words and his realisation that, after his own death, there would be a rush to publish his conversations. Hence Goethe decided to talk to Eckermann so that he would still have some degree of authorial control over the result. Many of Goethe's views on Byron are expressed in conversation with Eckermann, yet, however steeped in Eckermann's own opinions they may be, they still provide an invaluable insight into Goethe's life and thoughts. On 24 February 1825, Goethe underlined the multi-faceted nature of his admiration of Byron. As Eckermann notes, Goethe seemed 'unerschöpflich' ('inexhaustible') on the subject of Byron: the length of this quotation reflects the prolific nature of the ideas that occur to Goethe in connection with Byron:

'Wäre es meine Sache noch, dem Theater vorzustehen, sagte Goethe diesen, ich würde Byrons Dogen von Venedig auf die Bühne bringen. Freilich ist das Stück zu lang und es müßte gekürzt werden; aber man müßte nichts daran schneiden und streichen, sondern es so machen: Man müßte den Inhalt jeder Szene in sich aufnehmen und ihn bloß kürzer wiedergeben. [...] Lord Byron wäre vielleicht nicht so glücklich gewesen, insofern seine Richtungen von der des Publikums abwichen. [...] Dasjenige, was ich die Erfindung nenne, sagte er, ist mir bei keinem Menschen in der Welt größer vorgekommen als bei ihm. Die Art und Weise, wie er einen dramatischen Knoten löset, ist stets über alle Erwartung und immer besser, als man es sich dachte.' [...] Goethe [...] lachte dann über Lord Byron, daß Er, der sich im Leben nie gefügt und der nie nach einem Gesetz gefragt, sich endlich dem dümmsten Gesetz der *drei Einheiten* unterworfen habe. 'Er hat den Grund dieses Gesetzes so wenig verstanden, sagte er, als die übrige Welt. Das *Faßliche* ist der Grund, und die drei Einheiten sind nur in so fern gut, als dieses durch sie erreicht wird.' [...] Goethe fuhr über Lord Byron zu reden fort: 'Seinem stets ins Unbegrenzte strebenden Naturell, sagte er, steht jedoch die Einschränkung, die er sich durch Beobachtung der drei Einheiten auflegte, sehr wohl. Hätte

er sich doch auch im Sittlichen so zu begrenzen gewußt! Daß er dieses nicht konnte, war sein Verderben, und es läßt sich sehr wohl sagen, daß er an seiner Zügellosigkeit zu Grunde gegangen ist.'

'Er war gar zu dunkel über sich selbst. Er lebte immer leidenschaftlich in den Tag hin und wußte und bedachte nicht, was er tat. Sich selber alles erlaubend und an Andern nichts billigend, mußte er es mit sich selbst verderben und die Welt gegen sich aufregen. Mit seinen English Bards and Scotch Reviewers verletzte er gleich anfänglich die vorzüglichsten Literatoren. Um nachher nur zu leben, mußte er einen Schritt zurücktreten. In seinen folgenden Werken ging er in Opposition und Mißbilligung fort; Staat und Kirche blieben nicht unangetastet. Diese rücksichtslose Hinwirken trieb ihn aus England und hätte ihn mit der Zeit auch aus Europa getrieben. Es war ihm überall zu enge, und bei der grenzenlosesten persönlichen Freiheit fühlte er sich beklommen; die Welt war ihm wie ein Gefängnis. Sein Gehen nach Griechenland war kein freiwilliger Entschluß, sein Mißverhältnis mit der Welt trieb ihn dazu.'

'Daß er sich vom Herkömmlichen, Patriotischen, lossagte, hat nicht allein einen so vorzüglichen Menschen persönlich zu Grunde gerichtet, sondern sein revolutionärer Sinn und die damit verbundene beständige Agitation des Gemüts hat auch sein Talent nicht zur gehörigen Entwicklung kommen lassen. Auch ist die ewige Opposition und Mißbilligung seinen vortrefflichen Werken selbst, so wie sie daliegen, höchst schädlich. [...] Lord Byron, fuhr Goethe fort, ist zu betrachten: als Mensch, als Engländer und als großes Talent. Seine guten Eigenschaften sind vorzüglich vom Menschen herzuleiten; seine schlimmen, daß er ein Engländer und ein Pair von England war; und sein Talent ist inkommensurabel. [...] So konnte Lord Byron nie zum Nachdenken über sich selbst gelangen; deswegen auch seine Reflexionen überhaupt ihm nicht gelingen wollen, wie sein Symbolum: *viel Geld und keine Obrigkeit!* beweist, weil durchaus vieles Geld die Obrigkeit paralyisiert.'

'Aber alles, was er produzieren mag, gelingt ihm, und man kann wirklich sagen, daß sich bei ihm die Inspiration an die Stelle der Reflexion setzt. Er mußte immer dichten! und da war denn alles, was vom Menschen, besonders vom Herzen ausging, vortrefflich. Zu seinen Sachen kam er, wie die Weiber zu schönen Kindern; sie denken nicht daran und wissen nicht wie.'

'Er ist ein großes Talent, ein *geborenes*, und die eigentlich poetische Kraft ist mir bei niemandem größer vorgekommen als bei ihm. In Auffassung des Äußern und klarem Durchblick vergangener Zustände ist er eben so groß als Shakespeare. Aber Shakespeare ist als reines Individuum überwiegend.' [...] Goethe schien über Byron unerschöpflich, und ich konnte nicht satt werden, ihm zuzuhören. [...] 'Der hohe Stand als englischer Pair war Byron sehr nachteilig; denn jedes Talent ist durch die Außenwelt geniert, geschweige eins bei so hoher Geburt und so großem Vermögen. [...] Er lebte eigentlich immer im Naturzustande, und bei seiner Art zu sein, mußte ihm täglich das Bedürfnis der Notwehr vorschweben. [...] Er konnte nicht allein leben. Deswegen war er trotz aller seiner Wunderlichkeiten gegen seine Gesellschaft höchst nachsichtig.'⁷⁸

His admiration of Byron as a dramatist seems unshakeable, as he perceives potential in *Marino Faliero*⁷⁹ and affords a position to Byron beside Shakespeare for his ability to understand external things and for his insight, criticising the former only for his uncharacteristically stupid adherence to the rule of the three unities. In Goethe's view, it was Byron's inability to follow any other kind of laws in his personal life which contributed to his downfall and the fated trip to Greece. Any faults he might have had were due to the fact that he had the misfortune to have been born an English aristocrat, yet he is nonetheless a 'großes Talent' ('a great talent') and a born one at that. Goethe's nuanced appreciation is evident: Byron's talent is 'außerordentlich' ('extraordinary') and 'inkommensurabel' ('incommensurable') and there is nobody to equal him as far as 'poetische Kraft' ('poetic power') is concerned. Early March reveals an interest in Joseph Hammer-Purgstall's attack on Byron and a reading of Count Pietro Gamba's *Narrative of Lord Byron's Last Journey to Greece*,⁸⁰ and Byron is again the focus of conversation as Goethe talks to Soret and Sir William Congreve:

⁷⁸24 February 1825 (Eckermann 131-36). The full text of this conversation and a translation can be found in Appendix (iii) (c), pp. 274-83.

⁷⁹He read it on 23 and 24 February 1825 (WA, III, 10, p. 22).

⁸⁰1 March 1825 (WA, III, 5, p. 24); 2 March 1825 (WA, III, 5, p. 25); 6 March 1825 (WA, III, 5, p. 26). Goethe probably read this in French: *Relation de l'Expédition de Lord Byron en Grèce* (Paris, 1825). See also diary for 28-29 May 1825 (WA, III, 5, p. 61).

Congreve: '[...] Ohne Zweifel haben sie sich viel mit Byron beschäftigt; er ist jung gestorben, und vielleicht doch zu alt für seinen Ruhm, meinen Sie nicht auch?'

Goethe: 'Ich kann Ihre Ansicht nicht ganz teilen; selbst seine letzten Werke, in denen er sich von seiner Menschenverachtung hinreißen ließ, bekunden noch auf jeder Seite sein Genie. Überall spürt man, daß er aus Augenblicken tiefster Erregung heraus schrieb und mit ungeheurer Schnelligkeit. Schön, aber verrückt! mögen Sie sagen, meinerwegen, aber diese Verrücktheiten sind grandios!' (Es sind Brandraketen der Poesie, hätte ich gerne dazwischengeworfen, aber ich behielt die Bosheit für mich.)

Congreve: 'Gewiß, er wollte immer alles im Sturm nehmen.'

Goethe: 'Doch wohl nicht immer; sein Doge von Venedig "Marino Falieri" [*sic*], muß ihn lange Vorbereitung gekostet haben. Drei Jahre hat er in dieser Stadt gelebt, er hat es sich also nicht verdrießen lassen, den Schauplatz gründlich zu studieren. Sein "Sardanapal" ist voll tief durchdachter Schönheiten, und ich könnte noch andere Werke von ihm nennen, wo offenbar reifliche Überlegung den flüchtigen Bildern seiner Phantasie erst feste Gestalt gegeben hat. Sie sehen, wir Deutschen haben für Byrons Dichtungen sehr viel übrig. Byron ist einer unserer Lieblinge, und wir sehen in ihm nur den großen Dichter. Hat man an ihm persönlich etwas auszusetzen, darüber mag man sich in England den Kopf zerbrechen, wir wissen damit nichts anzufangen. [...]

Goethe: [...] Was ich an ihm am meisten bewundere, ist, daß sich mit seinem Genie ein so richtiges Urteil und ein so durchdringender Scharfblick verband; seine "Englischen Barden" zeigen, daß er von Anfang an in alle Geheimnisse der Kunst eingeweiht war, und jeder Pinselstrich bei ihm ist eine Offenbarung der Wahrheit.'⁸¹

This conversation is interesting, first and foremost because of its utterly unequivocal praise of Byron the Poet. The ambivalence towards Byron expressed previously is here only evident as he discusses the moral problem of Byron the Man. Surely Goethe's apparent change of heart, as his ambivalence appears to lessen, can be easily explained by the simple fact that Congreve was an Englishman criticising Byron, and

⁸¹28 April 1825 (FA, 37, pp. 270-71). The full text of this conversation and a translation can be found in Appendix (iii) (d), pp. 283-86.

in such a context it is clear where Goethe's sympathies would lie. Within the context of Art, Byron's personal life is seen as rather trivial, and the implication that Byron could still have scaled new poetic heights artistically must have come as a surprise to Soret, who had earlier heard Goethe utter, what may have seemed to him, the exact opposite view.⁸²

On 1 June 1825, Goethe acquired William Parry's *The Last Days of Lord Byron*, immediately hailing it the most interesting book yet to have been published on Byron,⁸³ and repeating this praise in a letter to Ottilie of the same date.⁸⁴ The book was quickly recommended to Zelter and complimented again in conversation with Eckermann:

Goethe sprach heute bei Tisch sehr viel von dem Buche des Major Parry über Lord Byron. Er lobte es durchaus und bemerkte, daß Lord Byron in dieser Darstellung weit vollkommener und weit klarer über sich und seine Vorsätze erscheine, als in allem, was bisher über ihn geschrieben worden.

'Der Major Parry, fuhr Goethe fort, muß gleichfalls ein sehr bedeutender, je ein hoher Mensch sein, daß er seinen Freund so rein hat auffassen und so vollkommen hat darstellen können. Eine Äußerung seines Buches ist mir besonders lieb und erwünscht gewesen, sie ist eines alten Griechen, eines Plutarch würdig.' Dem edlen Lord, sagt Parry, fehlten alle jene Tugenden, die den Bürgerstand zieren, und welche sich anzueignen er durch Geburt, durch Erziehung und Lebensweise gehindert war. Nun sind aber seine ungünstigen Beurteiler sämtlich aus der Mittelklasse, die denn freilich tadelnd bedauern, dasjenige an ihm zu vermissen, was sie an sich selber zu schätzen Ursache haben. Die wackern Leute bedenken nicht, daß er an seiner hohen Stelle Verdienste besaß, von denen sie sich keinen Begriff machen können. 'Nun, wie gefällt Ihnen das?' sagte Goethe, nicht wahr, so etwas hört man nicht alle Tage?'⁸⁵

⁸²See conversation with Soret on 25 May 1824 (FA, 37, p. 165).

⁸³1 June 1825 (Gespräche, 5, pp. 210-11). See also 1-4 June 1825 (WA, III, 10, pp. 62-63).

⁸⁴1 June 1825 (WA, IV, 39, p. 212).

⁸⁵11 June 1825 (Eckermann 145-46). 'To-day Goethe talked much at dinner about Major Parry's book on Lord Byron. He gave it unqualified praise, and remarked that Lord Byron in this account appeared a far more complete character, and far more clear as to himself and his views, than in anything which

Parry's opinions on Byron found greater favour with Goethe than Medwin's, and thereafter Goethe felt less hostile to Byron's Greek adventure and was inspired to compose the following short poem on Byron:

Stark von Faust, gewandt im Rath

Liebt er die Hellenen;

Edles Wort und schöne That

Füllt sein Aug' mit Thränen.

Liebt den Säbel, liebt das Schwert,

Freut sich der Gewehre;

Säh' er, wie sein Herz begehrt,

Sich vor muth'gem Heere!

Lasst ihn der Historia,

Bändigt euer Sehnen;

Ewig bleibt ihm Gloria,

Bleiben uns die Thränen.⁸⁶

Goethe again praises Byron in conversation with the Italian Alessandro Poërio:

had been written about him. "Major Parry," continued Goethe, "must be an elevated - nay, a noble man, so fully to have conceived, and so perfectly to have described his friend. One passage in his book has pleased me particularly; - it is worthy of an old Greek - of a Plutarch. 'The noble Lord,' says Parry, 'was destitute of all those virtues which adorn the bourgeois class, and which he was prevented from attaining by his birth, education, and mode of life. Now all his unfavourable judges are from the middle class, and these censoriously pity him, because they miss in him that which they have reason to prize in themselves. The good folks do not reflect that for his high station he possessed virtues of which they can form no conception.' How do you like that?" said Goethe: "we do not hear so good a thing every day" (Oxenford, 1, pp. 268-69).

⁸⁶Published in the Weimar journal *Chaos* in 1829. See Robertson 97.

'Strong in arm, in counsel skilled,
For the Greeks — devotion;
Noble words and deeds fulfilled
Stir his deep emotion.

Loves the sabre, loves the glaive,
Looks on arms with yearning;
Ah, to lead an army brave —
For that his heart is yearning.

Leave him to the storied page,
And restrain your grieving;
Glory his immortal gage,
Tears for us he's leaving' (Butler, *Passion* 139-40).

A me ha detto di Byron essere una mente straordinaria, una vita essere nelle sue opere e per ciò dovere essere immortali. 'Ahimè!' — soggiunse 'quando gli scrissi alcuni versi d'incitamento, non sapea, che doveano essere versi di congedo.'⁸⁷

On 25 December 1825 Goethe compares Byron and Shakespeare and suggests that Byron might not have experienced so much 'negatives Wirken' ('negative effect') had he had the chance to air his opposition in parliament:

'Ich tat wohl, daß ich durch meinen Götz von Berlichingen und Egmont ihn [Shakespeare] mir vom Halse schaffte, und Byron tat sehr wohl, daß er vor ihm nicht zu großen Respekt hatte und seine eigenen Wege ging.' [...]

Das Gespräch wendete sich auf Byron, und zwar wie er gegen Shakespeares unschuldige Heiterkeit im Nachteil stehe, und wie er durch sein vielfältig negatives Wirken sich so häufigen und meistens nicht ungerechten Tadel zugezogen habe. 'Hätte Byron Gelegenheit gehabt, sagte Goethe, sich alles dessen, was von Opposition in ihm war, durch wiederholte derbe Äußerungen im *Parlament* zu entledigen, so würde er als Poet weit reiner dastehen. So aber, da er im Parlament kaum zum Reden gekommen ist, hat er alles, was er gegen seine Nation auf dem Herzen hatte, bei sich behalten, und es ist ihm, um sich davon zu befreien, kein anderes Mittel geblieben, als es poetisch zu verarbeiten und auszusprechen. Einen großen Teil der negativen Wirkungen Byrons möchte ich daher *verhaltene Parlamentsreden* nennen, und ich glaube sie dadurch nicht unpassend bezeichnet zu haben.'⁸⁸

⁸⁷4 October 1825 (Gespräche, 5, p. 232). 'He told me that Byron's was a most extraordinary spirit, and that there was a life in his works which guaranteed their immortality. "Alas", he added, "little did I think, when I wrote him some verses of encouragement, that they were to be verses of farewell"' (Butler, *Passion* 141).

⁸⁸25 December 1825 (Eckermann 152-53). "'I did well to get rid of him [Shakespeare] by writing "Goetz," and "Egmont," and Byron did well by not having too much respect and admiration for him, but going his own way." [...] The conversation turned upon Byron, — the disadvantage to which he appears, when placed beside the innocent cheerfulness of Shakespeare, and the frequent and generally not unjust blame which he drew upon himself by his manifold works of negation. "If Lord Byron," said Goethe, "had had an opportunity of working off all the opposition in his character, by a number of strong parliamentary speeches, he would have been much more pure as a poet. But, as he scarcely ever spoke in parliament, he kept within himself all his feelings against his nation, and to free himself from them, he had no other means than to express them in poetical form. I could, therefore, call a great part of Byron's works of negation 'suppressed parliamentary speeches,' and think this would be no bad name for them"' (Oxenford, 1, pp. 276-77).

In a letter of 24 February 1826, Kinnaird invited Goethe to join a committee responsible for erecting a suitable monument to Byron:

I had the honor some few years since to be the channell [*sic*] of communicating to you, at the request of my deceased Friend Lord Byron, a tribute which his Lordship was anxious to pay to your Genius and high literary Fame, in the Dedication to you of his Tragedy *Sardanapalus* —

The melancholy task is now imposed upon me by Mr Hobhouse, the distinguished Friend and Executor of the illustrious Poet, to invite you to add your name to those of a Committee of Gentlemen, who propose to carry into effect the national wish for erecting a suitable monument to the memory of our departed countryman — That list will contain the names of none who are not distinguished by literary honors, or by the good fortune of having been personally acquainted with the late Lord Byron — I avail myself of the friendly offices of my old Friend and Instructor Professor Benecke, to insure the arrival of this letter into your hands, and I shall be much flatter'd to receive thro' the same channell [*sic*], the expression of your sentiments upon the proposal submitted to you.⁸⁹

After this letter had reached Benecke, he passed it on to Goethe with a letter of his own, where he is almost apologetic at enclosing the scrap of paper that was the original *Sardanapalus* dedication:

So eben erhalte ich von Hn Douglas Kinnaird, der Eurer Excellenz den beyliegenden Brief zu übersenden, und Sie zu bitten, Ihre Antwort darauf mir zur weitem Beförderung zukommen zu lassen.

Das einzige was ich dem Briefe beyzufügen habe ist, daß der Wunsch der Committee nur darauf geht, die Erlaubnis zu erhalten, den Namen Eurer Excellenz in der Liste Der Members of the Committee aufführen zu dürfen, und daß es ganz und gar Ihrem Gutdünken überlassen bleibt, ob Sie zu einem Geldbeytrage unterzeichnen wollen. The name of your illustrious countryman is our *only* object, schreibt mir Hr. Kinnaird. Es ist übrigens fest gesetzt, daß es keinem Mitgliede der Committee verstattet seyn soll, über zwanzig Pfund zu unterzeichnen.

⁸⁹Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 25. See also Butler, *Passion* 142 and Robertson 100.

Zugleich nehme ich mir die Freyheit, Eurer Excellenz das alte Blatt von Lord Byron's Hand zu übersenden, das vielleicht noch immer einigen Werth für Sie hat.⁹⁰

In conversation with Eckermann shortly thereafter, Goethe's attitude towards this scrap of paper is unmistakable:

Goethe war heute bei Tisch der heitersten, herzlichsten Stimmung. Ein ihm sehr wertenes Blatt war ihm heute zugekommen, nämlich Lord Byrons Handschrift der Dedikation seines Sardanapal [*sic*]. Er zeigte sie uns zum Nachtsch, indem er zugleich seine Tochter quälte, ihm Byrons Brief aus Genua wieder zu geben. 'Du siehst, liebes Kind, sagte er, ich habe jetzt alles beisammen, was auf mein Verhältnis zu Byron Bezug hat, selbst dieses merkwürdige Blatt gelangt heute wunderbarer Weise zu mir und es fehlt mir nun weiter nichts als jener Brief!'

Die liebenswürdige Verehrerin von Byron wollte aber den Brief nicht wieder entbehren. 'Sie haben ihn mir einmal geschenkt, lieber Vater, sagte sie, und ich gebe ihn nicht zurück; und wenn Sie denn einmal wollen, daß das Gleiche zum Gleichen soll, so geben Sie mir lieber dieses köstliche Blatt von heute noch dazu und ich verwahre sodann alles miteinander.' Das wollte Goethe noch weniger und der anmutige Streit ging noch eine Weile fort bis er sich in ein allgemeines munteres Gespräch auflöste.

Nachdem wir vom Tisch aufgestanden und die Frauen hinaufgegangen waren, blieb ich mit Goethe allein. Er holte aus seiner Arbeitsstube ein rotes Portefeuille, womit er mit mir ans Fenster trat und es auseinander legte. 'Sehen Sie, sagte er, hier habe ich alles beisammen, was auf mein Verhältnis zu Lord Byron Bezug hat. Hier ist sein Brief aus Livorno, dies ist ein Abdruck seiner Dedikation, dies mein Gedicht, hier das, was ich zu Medwins Konversationen geschrieben; nun fehlt mir bloß sein Brief aus Genua, aber sie will ihn nicht hergeben.'

⁹⁰23 March 1826 (Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 25-26). 'I have just received the request from Mr Douglas Kinnaird, to forward the enclosed letter to your Excellency, and to ask you to send your reply to me that I may forward it. The only thing which I have to add to the letter, is to say that the wish of the Committee is only to obtain permission to include your Excellency's name in the list of its members, and it leaves it entirely up to you whether you want to make a monetary contribution or not. "The name of your illustrious countryman is our *only* object," Mr Kinnaird writes to me. It is, moreover, fixed that no member of the Committee shall be allowed to contribute more than £20. At the same time I take the liberty of sending your Excellency the old sheet written in Lord Byron's hand, which may still be of some value to you.'

Goethe sagte mir sodann von einer freundlichen Aufforderung, die in Bezug auf Lord Byron heute aus England an ihn ergangen und die ihn sehr angenehm berührt habe. Sein Geist war bei dieser Gelegenheit ganz von Byron voll und er ergoß sich über ihn, seine Werke und sein Talent in tausend interessanten Äußerungen.

'Die Engländer, sagte er unter anderm, mögen auch von Byron halten, was sie wollen, so ist doch so viel gewiß, daß sie keinen Poeten aufzuweisen haben, der ihm zu vergleichen wäre. Er ist anders als alle Übrigen und meistens größer.'⁹¹

Goethe's admiration of Byron is evident, as is his disappointment at being unable to recover from Otilie Byron's letter from Genoa for his treasured red Byron-folder. He swiftly responded and sent this to Kinnaird via Benecke:

Des ehrenvollen Antrags einer hochansehnlichen Comité, mich in ihren zu Errichtung eines Monuments für einen zu früh abgeschiedenen trefflichen Mann versammelten Kreis geneigt aufzunehmen, darf ich mich mit warmem Gefühle erfreuen, indem die Verehrung seiner außerordentlichen Persönlichkeit gewiß von niemand lebhafter empfunden und treuer gehegt werden mag.

Ich nehme deshalb, mein werthester Herr, das mir geschehene Anerbieten dankbarlichst an und bitte mich den würdigen Männern, welche die Unternehmung leiten bestens zu empfehlen, und mir von Zeit zu Zeit Nachricht der weiteren gewiß lebhaften Fortschritte zu

⁹¹26 March 1826 (Eckermann 160-61). 'To-day, at dinner, Goethe was in one of his pleasantest moods. He had received something he highly valued, Lord Byron's manuscript of the dedication to his "Sardanapalus." He showed it to us after dinner, at the same time teasing his daughter to give him back Byron's letter from Genoa. "You see, my dear child," said he, "I have now everything collected which relates to my connection with Byron; even this valuable paper comes to me to-day in a remarkable manner, and now nothing is wanting but that letter." However, the amiable admirer of Byron would not restore the letter. "You gave it to me once, dear father," said she, "and I shall not give it back; and if you wish, as is fit, that like should be with like, you had better give me the precious paper of to-day, and I will keep them all together." This was still more repugnant to Goethe, and the playful contest lasted for some time, when it merged into lively conversation. After we had risen from table, and the ladies had gone up-stairs, I remained with Goethe alone. He brought from his work-room a red portfolio, which he took to the window, and showed me its contents. "Look," said he, "here I have everything together which relates to my connection with Lord Byron. Here is his letter from Leghorn; this is a copy of his dedication; this is my poem; and here is what I wrote for 'Medwin's Conversations;' now, I only want the letter from Genoa, and she will not give it to me. Goethe then told me of a friendly request, which had this day been made to him from England, with reference to Lord Byron, and which had excited him in a very pleasant manner. His mind was just now quite full of Byron, and he said a thousand interesting things about him, his works, and his talents. "The English," said he, among other things, "may think of Byron as they please; but this is certain, that they can show no poet who is to be compared to him. He is different from all the others, and, for the most part, greater"' (Oxenford, 1, pp. 289-90). See also diary for 26 March 1826 (WA, III, 10, p. 177).

geben, da ich in theilnehmender Verpflichtung nicht zurückbleiben möchte.⁹²

Goethe shows his delight at the honour of having been asked to join such a committee, but mentions nothing here about the *Sardanapalus* dedication, in contrast to the letter to Benecke, in which he reveals the value it has for him:

Ew. Wohlgeboren abermalige Sendung gereicht mir zu nicht geringem Vergnügen; den Antrag einer verehrlichen Comité nehme in beiliegendem Schreiben dankbarlichst an, wobei ich Ew. Wohlgeboren ergebenst bitte für mich die Summe von zwanzig Pfund zu unterzeichnen, weil ich keinen Beweis versäumen möchte, wie hoch ich den Geist eines Mannes schätze, der nur allzufrüh das merkwürdigste Individuum, das geboren werden konnte, auf- und weggezehrt.

Die Widmung des Sardanapals [*sic*] ist mir von dem höchsten Wert. Wenn ich die Gunst eines solchen Blattes meinem Verdienste nicht wohl zuschreiben darf, so bleibt es immer merkwürdig, daß ein Jüngerer in seinem Vorgänger die Ahnung jenes Strebens enthusiastisch verehrt, das er in sich selbst unwiderstehlich empfindet.

Nehmen Sie meinen verpflichteten Dank und lassen mich durch Ihre Vermittelung von den weiteren Fortschritten jenes löblichen Unternehmens ein mehreres hören. Wenn der Vorübergegangene sich zwar selbst schon ein herrliches geistiges Monument gestiftet, so ist es doch sehr schön, daß ein bleibendes reales Denkmal die Nachkommen sinnlich erinnere: er sei auch dagewesen wie viele, aber begabt, verehrt, geliebt wie wenige.⁹³

⁹²3 April 1826 (WA, IV, 41, pp. 5-7). First published by Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 26-27. 'The honourable and kind proposal of your esteemed Committee to include me in the circle which has been formed to erect a monument to the admirable being whose life has been too early cut short, has inspired me with the warmest feelings; for no one certainly has felt more warmly and cherished more faithfully a high regard for his extraordinary personality than I have. I therefore accept, my dear Sir, most gratefully the offer that has been made to me, and ask you to express my deep regret to the estimable men who are directing the undertaking, and to inform me from time to time of its further and doubtless rapid progress; for I should not like, as a participator, to be behind in my obligations' (Butler, *Passion* 143).

⁹³3 April 1826 (HA Briefe, 4, pp. 187-88). 'The letter you have again sent me has given me no small pleasure; I accept most gratefully in the enclosed the invitation of the estimable Committee, and at the same time I beg you to contribute the sum of £20 for me; for I should wish to omit no proof of how highly I prize the spirit of that man which has all-too early wasted and consumed away the most remarkable personality that could possibly be born. The dedication of Sardanapalus is of the utmost value to me. Although I cannot ascribe the favour of such a document to my own merits, it yet remains very remarkable that a younger man should have revered so enthusiastically in his predecessor an aspiration felt irresistibly in himself. Accept the thanks I owe you, and keep me in touch with any further developments of this praiseworthy undertaking. For even though the departed has already erected a glorious spiritual monument to himself, it is very right and proper that an actual, permanent

Several weeks later Goethe drew up the following short list, perhaps with a view to writing a piece on his own fame in England or his relationship with Byron:

England

Werther bald übersetzt, aber aus dem Französischen.

Späterhin Iphigenie

Nachgedruckt bey Unger

Zu Anfang des Jahrhunderts Uebersetzung des Götz von Berlichingen durch Walter Scott.

Antheil von Coleridge

Verschiedene Versuche, Faust zu übersetzen.

Andere, deren Namen nachzusehen.

Kupfer von Retsch zu Faust nachgestochen.

Lord Byrons Antheil

Aeußerungen desselben

Stellen aus seinen Werken

Sein Antheil wahrscheinlich durch Lewis und Schelle [Shelley] erregt, jedoch nur im Allgemeinen.

Im finden sich Spuren von Faust.

Verhältniß durch Sterling vermittelt.

Die kleine Sammlung deshalb zu redigiren und abschriftlich mitzutheilen.⁹⁴

memorial should bring him visibly to the memory of posterity. He may have lived his life as many others; but he was gifted, revered, beloved as few' (Butler, *Passion* 143-44).

⁹⁴Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 29. Dated 8 May 1826. The omission is there in Brandl's text.

'England

Werther translated speedily, but from the French.

Later *Iphigenie*.

Reprinted by Unger.

At the beginning of the century translation of *Götz von Berlichingen* by Walter Scott.

Interest of Coleridge.

Several attempts to translate *Faust*.

Others, whose names must be looked up.

Retsch's engravings of *Faust* reproduced.

Lord Byron's interest.

His remarks.

Passages from his writings.

His interest probably aroused by Lewis and Schelle [Shelley], but only in the most general way.

In there are traces of *Faust*.

Personal relationship brought about by Sterling.

The little collection to be edited and copies to be distributed' (Butler, *Passion* 144).

Goethe finally received a copy of *Sardanapalus* (plus dedication), *The Two Foscari* and *Cain* on 9 July 1826 from Benecke, together with the following letter attributing the inordinate delay to Murray's negligence:

Erst durch ein von mir geäußerten Verdacht hat es sich entdeckt, daß der Buchhändler Murray ganz und gar vergessen hatte, das hiebey erfolgende Buch abzuschicken. Eure Excellenz werden daher entschuldigen was einzig und allein der Nachlässigkeit des Buchhändlers zur Last fällt, und auch einen verspäteten Beweis der Huldigung, welche Lord Byron dem ersten der lebenden Dichter darzubringen sich gedrungen fühlte, mit freundlicher Erinnerung an den Entschwundenen aufnehmen.⁹⁵

Benecke's letter to Kinnaird reveals that he was aware of Murray's and Kinnaird's negligence, but also that he was willing to act as intermediary, keeping Goethe in ignorance of the real reasons for the delays.⁹⁶ As we have already seen, the copy Goethe received was, ironically, an 1821 first edition with the dedication glued in.⁹⁷ Goethe apparently did not notice and his interest in Byron was thus reawakened: he read *The Two Foscari* immediately, discussing it with Eckermann shortly thereafter:

Ich erzählte ihm, daß einer meiner Freunde die Absicht habe, Byrons *Two Foscari* für die Bühne einzurichten. Goethe zweifelte am Gelingen.

'Es ist freilich eine verführerische Sache, sagte er. Wenn ein Stück im Lesen auf uns große Wirkung macht, so denken wir, es müßte auch von der Bühne herunter so tun, und wir bilden uns ein, wir könnten mit weniger Mühe dazu gelangen. Allein es ist ein eigenes Ding. Ein Stück, das nicht ursprünglich mit Absicht und Geschick des Dichters für die Bretter geschrieben ist, geht auch nicht hinauf, und wie man auch damit verfährt, es wird immer etwas Ungehöriges und Widerstrebendes behalten.'⁹⁸

⁹⁵4 July 1826 (Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 28).

⁹⁶See 9 April 1826, Murray Papers. Quoted by Butler, *Passion* 145. Original in German except for the quotation from Kinnaird's letter.

⁹⁷Butler, *Passion* 146-47.

⁹⁸26 July 1826 (Eckermann 162). 'I told him that one of my friends intended to arrange Lord Byron's "Two Foscari" for the stage. Goethe doubted his success. "It is indeed a temptation," he said. "When a piece makes a deep impression on us in reading, we think it will do the same upon the stage, and that is by no means the case. A piece that is not originally, by the intent and skill of the poet, written for the boards, will not succeed; but whatever is done to it, will always remain something unmanageable"' (Oxenford, 1, p. 291).

Although he voices doubts about the play's suitability for the stage, Goethe's enthusiasm is lessened negligibly, and he writes the following day to Benecke, praising Byron, especially *Sardanapalus*. Goethe clearly suspected that delays were not wholly Murray's fault, and was disappointed that he could not thank Byron himself. He did, however, appreciate Benecke's assistance:

gefällige Sendungen waren immer von Wichtigkeit; die letzte ist überraschend und so ehrenvoll als betrübend. Mir gibt es ganz eigene Gedanken, daß der unbegreifliche Mann mich gerade auf den Sardanapal [*sic*] besonders anwies, da ich diesem Stück von jeher vor andern günstig gewesen. Der königliche Leichtsinn, die Anmut des griechischen Mädchens, die ganz eigene wundersame Verbindung zwischen den zwei Personen verscheuchen alle hypochondrischen Gespenster, womit der treffliche Dichter seine Freunde zu ängstigen pflegt, sie erscheinen nur hier und da gleichsam aus den Winkeln hervortretend.

Doch ich muß mich hüten von den Vorzügen dieses Stückes zu sprechen; man erschöpft eine solche Produktion niemals durch Nachdenken, beim jedesmaligen Lesen ist sie wieder neu.

So ging es mir auch diesmal. Lebhaft aber regte sich der Wunsch, dem Dichter dagegen etwas Freundliches erwidert zu haben; nun ist er nicht zu erfüllen, und man kommt in Gefahr sich abzuquälen über die Frage: wie dieses, von seiner eigenen Hand bezeichnete Exemplar so lange vorenthalten werden konnte, wie die mir erwiesene Freundlichkeit so lange ein Geheimnis blieb, ja durch die Zuschrift von Werner noch mehr verdeckt und aller Nachforschung entzogen wurde.

Bin ich nun Ew. Wohlgeboren diese ganz unerwartete Entdeckung schuldig, verdank ich Ihnen ein Zeugnis, das mir besonders in diesen Tagen ganz unschätzbar sein mußte, so werden Sie überzeugt sein, daß ich diese günstige Einwirkung auf mich und meine Zustände nach ihrem ganzen Wert anzuerkennen weiß.⁹⁹

⁹⁹27 July 1826 (HA Briefe, 4, pp. 197-98). 'The things you have so kindly forwarded to me in the past have always been important; this last is astonishing and as flattering as it is saddening. Strange thoughts arise in me when I think that this incomprehensible being should have assigned *Sardanapalus* in particular to me, since I have always preferred it to all his other plays. The levity of the king, the charm of the Greek girl, the strange and wonderful bond between those two persons banish the hypochondriacal ghosts with which the admirable poet was wont to oppress his friends; they only appear now and again as if they were stepping from the clouds [corners]. But I must beware of speaking of the beauties of this piece; one can never exhaust a production of that kind by pondering over it; it is a new experience every time one reads it. I felt that again on this occasion. But how

His admiration of Byron seemed solid, and on 3 August 1826 he writes to Müller about Byron's 'wonderful talent':

Der Band Tragödien von Lord Byron, mir schon 1821 zugedacht und zugeschrieben, war, wenn ich nicht irre, schon bey Ihrer Abreise bey mir angekommen; dadurch ward ich angeregt Sardanapal [*sic*], die beiden Foskaris, Cain wieder zu lesen, zu immer größerem Erstaunen des bewundernswürdigen Talents.¹⁰⁰

Byron was a constant topic of conversation throughout 1826 and is especially admired in discussion with Prince Pückler-Muskau, himself a great Byron admirer:

Von Lord Byron redete er nachher mit vieler Liebe, fast wie ein Vater von seinem Sohne, was meinem hohen Enthusiasmus für diesen großen Dichter sehr wohl that. Er widersprach unter andern auch der albernen Behauptung, daß 'Manfred' eine Nachbetung seines 'Faust' sei; doch sei es ihm allerdings als etwas Interessantes aufgefallen, daß Byron unbewußt sich derselben Maske des Mephistopheles wie er bedient habe, obgleich freilich Byron sie ganz anders spielen lasse. Er bedauerte es sehr, den Lord nie persönlich kennen gelernt zu haben, und er tadelte streng und gewiß mit dem höchsten Rechte die englische Nation, daß sie ihren großen Landsmann so kleinlich beurtheilte und im Allgemeinen so wenig verstanden habe. Doch hierüber hat sich Goethe so genügend und schon öffentlich ausgesprochen, daß ich nichts weiter hinzuzufügen brauche.¹⁰¹

keenly I wished that I could have responded by some sign of friendship for the honour done me. It is too late now, and I am in danger of tormenting myself with the question how this copy, marked with his own hand, could have been withheld from me for so long, and how the friendliness thus shown to me could for so long have been kept hidden; and indeed by the inscription to *Werner* have been still further covered up and removed from any attempt at elucidation. If I on the one hand owe this quite unexpected discovery to you and am in your debt for a tribute which, in these days particularly, is beyond price, you for your part must rest convinced that I realise to the full the value of its happy effect upon me and my circumstances' (Butler, *Passion* 147). Although Goethe calls Byron 'der unbegreifliche Mann' ('the incomprehensible man'), he nevertheless shows insight into Byron's character and works.

¹⁰⁰ 3 August 1826 (WA, IV, 41, p. 103). 'Unless I am mistaken the volume of Lord Byron's tragedies intended for me in 1821 and inscribed to me arrived before your departure. This incited me to reread *Sardanapalus*, *The Two Foscari* and *Cain* with ever increasing astonishment at Byron's wonderful talent' (Butler, *Passion* 146).

¹⁰¹ 14 September 1826 (Gespräche, 5, p. 308). 'He then spoke of Byron very lovingly, almost like a father about his son, which was very agreeable to me on account of my own high enthusiasm for this great poet. Amongst other things he contradicted the absurd statement that *Manfred* was an imitation of *Faust*; but he said that it was certainly very interesting that Byron should have used unconsciously the same mask for Mephistopheles as Goethe had done, although he had given him quite a different part to play. He regretted greatly never to have known him personally and he censured the English nation severely and no doubt without the greatest justice for judging their great compatriot so pettily, and in general for having understood him so little. But Goethe has talked sufficiently and publicly about this that I do not need to add anything further here' (Butler, *Passion* 150). Pückler-Muskau is

Goethe's interest is further fuelled by *The Deformed Transformed* which he commends to Eckermann:

Goethe sprach heute abermals mit Bewunderung über Lord Byron. 'Ich habe, sagte er, seinen *Deformed Transformed* wieder gelesen und muß sagen, daß sein Talent mir immer größer vorkommt. Sein Teufel ist aus meinem Mephistopheles hervorgegangen, aber es ist keine Nachahmung, es ist alles durchaus originell und neu, und alles knapp, tüchtig und geistreich. Es ist keine Stelle darin, die schwach wäre, nicht so viel Platz, um den Knopf einer Nadel hinzusetzen, wo man nicht auf Erfindung und Geist träfe. Ihm ist nichts im Wege als das Hypochondrische und Negative und er wäre so groß wie Shakespeare und die Alten.' Ich wunderte mich. 'Ja, sagte Goethe, Sie können es mir glauben, ich habe ihn von neuem studiert und muß ihm dies immer mehr zugestehen.'

In einem früheren Gespräch äußerte Goethe: 'Lord Byron habe zu viel Empirie.' Ich verstand nicht recht, was er damit sagen wollte, doch enthielt ich mich ihn zu fragen und dachte der Sache im Stillen nach.¹⁰²

The Deformed Transformed appears to have increased Goethe's estimation of Byron's talent again, and it is further complimented on 29 November 1826 in conversation with Eckermann:

'die ersten Szenen sind groß und zwar poetisch groß. Das Übrige, wo es auseinander und zur Belagerung Roms geht, will ich nicht als poetisch rühmen, allein man muß gestehen, daß es geistreich ist.'

perceptive in his description of the paternal way in which Goethe talked about Byron. Byron also comes up in conversation with Grillparzer on 2 October 1826 (Gespräche, 5, pp. 315-17).

¹⁰²8 November 1826 (Eckermann 164-65). 'To-day, Goethe spoke again of Lord Byron with admiration. "I have," said he, "read once more his '*Deformed Transformed*,' and must say, that to me his talent appears greater than ever. His devil was suggested by my Mephistophiles [*sic*]; but it is no imitation — it is thoroughly new and original, close, genuine, and spirited. There are no weak passages, — not a place where you could put the head of a pin, where you do not find invention and thought. Were it not for his hypochondriacal negative turn, he would be as great as Shakespeare and the ancients." I expressed surprise. "Yes," said Goethe, "you may believe me. I have studied him anew, and am confirmed in this opinion." In a conversation some time ago, Goethe had remarked that Byron had too much *empeiria*. I did not well understand what he meant; but I forbore to ask, and thought of the matter in silence' (Oxenford, 1, p. 294). In this conversation Eckermann relates his own reading of *Beppo* in order to try and understand Goethe's earlier comment. He compares *Beppo* with *Macbeth* and proves to himself that Goethe's comment is in his opinion true. We do not, however, hear what Goethe has to say to this, if indeed these words were ever uttered in his presence. See also diary for 8 November 1826 (WA, III, 10, p. 266).

Im höchsten Grade, sagte ich; aber es ist keine Kunst geistreich zu sein, wenn man vor nichts Respekt hat.

Goethe lachte. 'Sie haben nicht ganz Unrecht, sagte er; man muß freilich zugeben, daß der Poet mehr sagt als man möchte; er sagt die Wahrheit, allein es wird einem nicht wohl dabei und man sähe lieber, daß er den Mund hielt. Es gibt Dinge in der Welt, die der Dichter besser überhüllet als aufdeckt; doch dies ist eben Byrons Charakter und man würde ihn vernichten, wenn man ihn anders wollte.'

Ja, sagte ich, im höchsten Grade geistreich ist er. Wie trefflich ist z. B. diese Stelle:

The Devil speaks truth much oftener than he's deemed,
He hath an ignorant audience.

'Das ist freilich eben so groß und frei als mein Mephistopheles irgend etwas gesagt hat.'¹⁰³

In 1827 Goethe falls relatively silent on the subject of Byron. Schiller and Byron are, however, the focus for a discussion with Eckermann on 18 January 1827. Here Goethe perceives a similarity between these two and wishes that Schiller could have lived long enough to know something of Byron:

'Schillers eigentliche Produktivität lag im Idealen, und es läßt sich sagen, daß er so wenig in der deutschen als einer andern Literatur seines Gleichen hat. Von Lord Byron hat er noch das Meiste; doch dieser ist ihm an Welt überlegen. Ich hätte gerne gesehen, daß Schiller den Lord Byron erlebt hätte, und da hätt' es mich wundern sollen, was er zu einem so verwandten Geiste würde gesagt haben. Ob wohl Byron bei Schillers Leben schon etwas publiziert hat?'

¹⁰³Eckermann 165-66. "The first scenes are great — poetically great. The remainder, when the subject wanders to the siege of Rome, I will not call poetical, but it must be averred that it is very pointed (*geistreich*)." "To the highest degree," said I; "but there is no art in being pointed when one respects nothing." Goethe laughed. "You are not quite wrong," said he. "We must, indeed, confess that the poet says more than ought to be said. He tells us the truth, but it is disagreeable, and we should like him better if he held his peace. There are things in the world which the poet should rather conceal than disclose; but this openness lies in Byron's character, and you would annihilate him if you made him other than he is." "Yes," said I, "he is in the highest degree pointed. How excellent, for instance, in this passage, —

'The devil speaks truth much oftener than he's deemed;
He hath an ignorant audience?'"

"That is as good and free as one of my Mephistophiles' [*sic*] sayings" (Oxenford, 1, p. 296).

Ich zweifelte, konnte es aber nicht mit Gewißheit sagen. Goethe nahm daher das Konversation-Lexikon und las den Artikel über Byron vor, wobei er nicht fehlen ließ, manche flüchtige Bemerkung einzuschalten. Es fand sich, daß Lord Byron vor 1807 nichts hatte drucken lassen und daß also Schiller nichts von ihm gesehen.¹⁰⁴

A short translation of a scene from *Marino Faliero* was read in March and the *Narrative of Byron's Voyage to Corsica and Sardinia* in April,¹⁰⁵ but it is not until June that Goethe discusses Byron again. Act 3 of *Cain* is particularly singled out for praise:

Ich sagte, daß ich dieser Tage Byrons Cain gelesen und besonders den dritten Akt und die Motivierung des Totschlages bewundert habe.

'Nicht wahr? sagte Goethe, das ist vortrefflich motiviert! es ist von so einziger Schönheit, daß es in der Welt nicht zum zweiten Male vorhanden ist.'

Der Cain, sagte ich, war doch anfänglich in England verboten, jetzt aber lieset ihn jedermann und die reisenden jungen Engländer führen gewöhnlich einen kompletten Byron mit sich.

'Es ist auch Torheit, sagte Goethe, denn im Grunde steht im ganzen Cain doch nichts, als was die englischen Bischöfe selber lernen.'¹⁰⁶

At the beginning of July, another long conversation with Eckermann ensues, in which *Don Juan* is admired for the reality of its descriptions and *The Two Foscari* for its portrayal of women and its diction. Thereafter Byron's influence on the creation of Euphorion in *Faust II* is underlined:

¹⁰⁴Eckermann 194-95. "Schiller's proper productive talent lay in the ideal: and it may be said he has not his equal in German or any other literature. He has almost everything that Lord Byron has: but Lord Byron is his superior in knowledge of the world. I wish Schiller had lived to know Byron's works, and wonder what he would have said to so congenial a mind. Did Byron publish anything during Schiller's life?" I could not say with certainty. Goethe took down the "Conversations Lexicon," and read the article on Byron, making many hasty remarks as he proceeded. It appeared that Byron had published nothing before 1807, and that therefore Schiller could have seen nothing of his' (Oxenford, 1, pp. 335-36). Byron's *Fugitive Pieces* was printed privately in 1806, but, since Schiller died in 1805, he could not have known Byron's work.

¹⁰⁵28 March 1827 sent by Graf Reinhard. See 27 March 1827 (WA, III, 11, p. 37) and 6-7 April 1827 (WA, III, 11, p. 42). Goethe probably read this in German translation (Robertson 105, note 1).

¹⁰⁶20 June 1827 (Eckermann 226-27). 'I said that I had lately been reading Byron's "Cain," and had been particularly struck by the third act, and the manner in which the murder is brought about. "It is, indeed, admirable," said Goethe. "Its beauty is such as we shall not see a second time in the world." "Cain," said I, "was at first prohibited in England; but now everybody reads it, and young English travellers usually carry a complete Byron with them." "It was folly," said Goethe; "for, in fact, there is nothing in the whole of Cain which is not taught by the English bishops themselves"' (Oxenford, 1, pp. 419-20).

'Ja, sagte Goethe, darin ist Lord Byron groß; seine Darstellungen haben eine so leicht hingeworfene Realität, als wären sie improvisiert. Von Don Juan kenne ich wenig; allein aus seinen anderen Gedichten sind mir solche Stellen im Gedächtnis, besonders Seestücke, wo hin und wieder ein Segel herausblickt, ganz unschätzbar, so daß man sogar die Wasserluft mit zu empfinden glaubt.'

In seinem Don Juan, sagte ich, habe ich besonders die Darstellung der Stadt London bewundert, die man aus seinen leichten Versen heraus mit Augen zu sehen wähnt. Und dabei macht er sich keineswegs viele Skrupel, ob ein Gegenstand poetisch sei oder nicht, sondern er ergreift und gebraucht alles, wie es ihm vorkommt bis auf die gekräuselten Perücken vor den Fenstern der Haarschneider und bis auf die Männer, welche die Straßenlaternen mit Öl versehen. [...] Wir sprachen darauf über die beiden Foscari, wobei ich die Bemerkung machte, daß Byron ganz vortreffliche Frauen zeichne.

'Seine Frauen, sagte Goethe, sind gut. Es ist aber auch das einzige Gefäß, was uns Neuere noch geblieben ist, um unsere Idealität hinein zu gießen. Mit den Männern ist nichts zu tun. Im Achill und Odysseus, dem Tapfersten und Klügsten, hat der Homer alles vorweggenommen.'

Übrigens, fuhr ich fort, haben die Foscari wegen der durchgehenden Folter-Qualen etwas Apprehensives, und man begreift kaum, wie Byron im Innern dieses peinlichen Gegenstandes so lange leben konnte, um das Stück zu machen.

'Dergleichen war ganz Byrons Element, sagte Goethe; er war ein ewiger Selbstquäler, solche Gegenstände waren daher seine Lieblings-Themata, wie Sie aus allen seinen Sachen sehen, unter denen fast nicht ein einziges heiteres Sujet ist. Aber nicht wahr? Die Darstellung ist auch bei den Foscari zu loben. [...] Ich konnte als Repräsentanten der neuesten poetischen Zeit, sagte Goethe, niemanden gebrauchen als ihn, der ohne Frage als das größte Talent des Jahrhunderts anzusehen ist. Und dann Byron ist nicht antik und ist nicht romantisch, sondern er ist wie der gegenwärtige Tag selbst. Einen solchen mußte ich haben. Auch paßte er übrigens ganz wegen seines unbefriedigten Naturells und seiner kriegerischen Tendenz, woran er in Missolonghi zu Grunde ging. Eine Abhandlung über Byron zu schreiben ist nicht bequem und rätlich, aber gelegentlich ihn zu ehren und auf ihn im

Einzelnen hinzuweisen werde ich auch in der Folge nicht unterlassen.¹⁰⁷

It is chiefly because Goethe apparently immortalised Byron thus that connects the two men in most people's minds, and surely, as Robertson points out,¹⁰⁸ Byron can take some of the credit in leading Goethe once more to his *Faust* just as Schiller had done some 25 years previously. The last recorded mention of Byron in 1827 is by Eckermann on 15 July, when Goethe asserted that perhaps the Germans may be more capable than the English of appreciating Byron's strengths:

Carlyle hat das Leben von Schiller geschrieben und ihn überall so beurteilt, wie ihn nicht leicht ein Deutscher beurteilen wird. Dagegen sind wir über Shakespeare und Byron im Klaren und wissen deren Verdienste vielleicht besser zu schätzen als die Engländer selber.¹⁰⁹

Goethe was even quieter on the subject of Byron in 1828. On 11 March, however, he discussed with Eckermann Byron's life, misfortunes, and early death:

¹⁰⁷5 July 1827 (Eckermann 230-32). "[...] "Yes," said Goethe, "here Lord Byron was great; his pictures have an air of reality, as lightly thrown off as if they were improvised. I know but little of 'Don Juan,' but I remember passages from his other poems, especially sea scenes, with a sail peeping out here and there, which are quite invaluable, for they make us seem to feel the sea-breeze blowing." "In his 'Don Juan,'" said I, "I have particularly admired the representation of London, which his careless verses bring before our very eyes. He is not very scrupulous whether an object is poetical or not; but he seizes and uses all just as they come before him, down to the wigs in the haircutter's window, and the men who fill the street-lamps with oil." [...] We then spoke of the "Two Foscari," and I remarked that Byron drew excellent women. "His women," said Goethe, "are good. Indeed, this is the only vase into which we moderns can pour our ideality; nothing can be done with the men. Homer has got all beforehand in Achilles and Ulysses, the bravest and the most prudent." "There is something terrible in the 'Foscari,'" I continued, "on account of the frequent recurrence of the rack. One can hardly conceive how Lord Byron could dwell so long on this torturing subject, for the sake of the piece." "That sort of thing," said Goethe, "was Byron's element; he was always a self-tormentor; and hence such subjects were his darling theme, as you see in all his works, scarce one of which has a cheerful subject. But the execution of the 'Foscari' is worthy of great praise — is it not?" [...] "I could not," said Goethe, "make use of any man as the representative of the modern poetical era except him, who undoubtedly is to be regarded as the greatest genius of our century. Again, Byron is neither antique nor romantic, but like the present day itself. This was the sort of man I required. Then he suited me on account of his unsatisfied nature and his warlike tendency, which led to his death at Missolonghi. A treatise upon Byron would be neither convenient nor advisable; but I shall not fail to pay him honour and to point him out at proper times. [...]" (Oxenford, 1, pp. 423-25).

¹⁰⁸Robertson 115.

¹⁰⁹15 July 1827 (Eckermann 237). 'Carlyle has written a life of Schiller, and judged him as it would be difficult for a German to judge him. On the other hand, we are clear about Shakespeare and Byron, and can, perhaps, appreciate their merits better than the English themselves' (Oxenford, 1, p. 432). Goethe, apparently, also talked about Byron with Eduard Gans on 31 August 1827, but there is no record of the exact contents of this conversation (Robertson 107). Goethe's diary does confirm Gans' visit that day (WA, III, 11, p. 103).

'Lord Byron, der täglich mehrere Stunden im Freien lebte, bald zu Pferde am Strande des Meeres reitend, bald im Boote segelnd oder rudern, dann sich im Meere badend und seine Körperkraft im Schwimmen üben, war er einer der produktivsten Menschen, die je gelebt haben.'

Goethe hatte sich mir gegenüber gesetzt und wir sprachen noch über allerlei Dinge. Dann verweilen wir wieder bei Lord Byron und es kamen die mancherlei Unfälle zur Erwähnung, die sein späteres Leben getrübt, bis zuletzt ein zwar edles Wollen, aber ein unseliges Geschick, ihn nach Griechenland geführt und vollends zu Grunde gerichtet. [...] 'Mozart starb in seinem sechs und dreißigsten Jahre. Raphael in gleichem Alter. Byron nur um wenig älter. Alle aber hatten ihre Mission auf das Vollkommenste erfüllt, und es war wohl Zeit daß sie gingen, damit auch anderen Leuten in dieser, auf eine lange Dauer berechneten, Welt noch etwas zu tun übrig bliebe.'¹¹⁰

This belief that Byron had already reached the pinnacle of his powers is not new, but still stands in stark contrast to the many positive earlier comments. This does not, however, prevent Goethe reading more Byron; he reread *Heaven and Earth* on 24 August.¹¹¹ On 16 December Goethe praised Voltaire before concentrating his compliments on Byron:

Ich fand dieser Tage eine Stelle in Lord Byron, sagte ich, woraus zu meiner Freude hervorging, welche außerordentliche Achtung auch Byron vor Voltaire gehabt. Auch sieht man es ihm wohl an, wie sehr er Voltaire mag gelesen, studiert und benutzt haben.

'Byron, sagte Goethe, wußte zu gut wo etwas zu holen war, und er war zu gescheit, als daß er aus dieser allgemeinen Quelle des Lichts nicht auch hätte schöpfen sollen.'

Das Gespräch wendete sich hiernächst ganz auf Byron und einzelne seiner Werke; wobei Goethe häufigen Anlaß fand, manche seiner

¹¹⁰ 11 March 1828 (Eckermann 613-14). "Lord Byron, who daily passed several hours in the open air, now riding on horseback along the sea-shore, now sailing or rowing in a boat, now bathing in the sea, and exercising his physical powers in swimming, was one of the most productive men who ever lived." Goethe had seated himself opposite to me, and we spoke about all sorts of subjects. Then we again dwelt upon Lord Byron, and touched upon the many misfortunes which had embittered his later life, until at last a noble will, but an unhappy destiny, drove him into Greece, and entirely destroyed him. [...] "Mozart died in his six-and-thirtieth year. Raphael at the same age. Byron only a little older. But all these had perfectly fulfilled their missions, and it was time for them to depart, that other people might still have something to do in a world made to last a long while" (Oxenford, 2, pp. 51-52).

¹¹¹ 24-25 August 1828 (WA, III, 11, p. 238).

früheren Äußerungen von Anerkennung und Bewunderung jenes großen Talentes zu wiederholen.

In alles was Euer Exzellenz über Byron sagen, erwiderte ich, stimme ich von Herzen bei; allein wie bedeutend und groß jener Dichter als Talent auch sein mag, so möchte ich doch sehr zweifeln, daß aus seinen Schriften für *reine Menschenbildung* ein entschiedener Gewinn zu schöpfen.

'Da muß ich Ihnen widersprechen, sagte Goethe. Byrons Kühnheit, Keckheit und Grandiosität, ist das nicht alles bildend? — Wir müssen uns hüten, es stets im entschieden Reinen und Sittlichen suchen zu wollen. — Alles *Große* bildet, sobald wir es gewahr werden.'¹¹²

This corrective to moralistic misreadings of Goethe's conception of 'Bildung' perhaps explains the affinity Goethe felt for Byron: as for the Greeks, excellence — 'Größe' — is the ideal that sustains worthwhile culture.

Henry Crabb Robinson, who visited Weimar from 2 until 18 August, sustains Goethe's interest in Byron in 1829, despite the fact that he himself was no great Byron admirer,¹¹³ but rather a great Goethe admirer who had met Goethe in 1801 and 1804.¹¹⁴ Goethe's enthusiasm for Byron could not be quenched and *The Vision of Judgement* is particularly admired:

¹¹²16 December 1828 (Eckermann 277). Robertson (108) dates this same conversation as 3 December 1828, and the interlocutor as Soret. Oxenford dates the conversation as 16 December 1828 and the source also as Eckermann. "I found of late, a passage in Lord Byron," said I, "from which I perceived with delight, that even Byron had an extraordinary esteem for Voltaire. We may see in his works how much he liked to read, study and make use of Voltaire." "Byron," said Goethe, "knew too well where anything was to be got, and was too clever not to draw from this universal source of light." The conversation then turned entirely upon Byron, and several of his works, and Goethe found occasion to repeat many of his former expressions of admiration for that great talent. "To all that your Excellency says of Byron," said I, "I agree from the bottom of my heart; but, however great and remarkable that poet may be as a talent, I very much doubt whether a decided gain for *pure human culture* is to be derived from his writings." "There, I must contradict you," said Goethe; "the audacity and grandeur of Byron must certainly tend towards culture. We should take care not to be always looking for it in the decidedly pure and moral. Everything that is great promotes cultivation as soon as we are aware of it" (Oxenford, 2, pp. 115-16).

¹¹³He preferred Wordsworth (Henry Crabb Robinson, *Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson*, ed. Thomas Sadler, vol. 2. (London: Macmillan, 1869) 439), although he did admire *Heaven and Earth* (HCR, 2, p. 435) and the first two acts of *The Deformed Transformed* (HCR, 2, p. 436).

¹¹⁴On 3 June 1804 he describes Goethe as 'one of these illustrious few, whose Names alone serve to characterise and illustrate an age' (*Crabb Robinson in Germany 1800-1805. Extracts from his Correspondence*, ed. Edith Morley (London: Humphrey Milford, 1929) 146).

He called it [*The Vision of Judgement*] sublime and laughed while he referred to the summoning of Junius and Wilkes as witnesses and to the letting the King slip into heaven, etc., etc., as admirable hits. He said 'Es sind keine Flickwörter im Gedichte', ['there are no fillers in the poetry'] and he compared the brilliancy and clearness of his style to a metal wire drawn through a steel plate!¹¹⁵

On 13 August *Manfred*, *Heaven and Earth*, *The Deformed Transformed* and the *Sardanapalus* dedication are discussed, and this is the only time that Crabb Robinson succeeds in eliciting anything less than unadulterated adulation from Goethe with respect to Byron:

He reverted again to Lord Byron. Knebel had shown me a lithographed manuscript to Goethe, which was sent by Byron. It was a sketch of a dedication of *Sardanapalus* which being approved of by Goethe, was sent back, and Frau von Goethe says, appears before the second edition. It certainly is not before the new edition, nor I believe before the pirated German and French editions. I will try to get a copy. Goethe conceded to me that there is not character in Lord Byron, and that the idea of selling one's soul in order to gratify such an appetite as *Manfred's* is not poetical, but he praised the death of *Manfred*, after the devil could not carry him away, as very fine.

I was glad to find that Goethe particularly admires Byron's *Heaven and Earth*, and the first two acts of *The Deformed Transformed*. These are precisely my favourites.¹¹⁶

Goethe's concession is, however, worth little when one considers the fact that *Manfred* did not give up his soul to the devil. Two days later, admiration undaunted, Goethe has Crabb Robinson read Byron to him:

I read to him *The Vision of Judgement*. He enjoyed it like a child, but his criticisms went little beyond the exclamatory, 'Toll! gar zu grob! himmlisch! unübertrefflich!' ['Fantastic! Really too coarse! Heavenly! Unsurpassable!'] etc., etc. In general, the more strongly peppered passages pleased the best. Stanza 9 he praised for the clear and distinct painting. 10, he repeated with emphasis the last two lines, conscious that his own age was eighty. 13, 14, and 15 are favourites

¹¹⁵2 August 1829 (FA, 38, p. 141). See also HCR, 2, pp. 434-37 for an account of Crabb Robinson's stay in Weimar and discussions with Goethe on Byron.

¹¹⁶13 August 1829 (FA, 38, p. 148).

with me: Goethe concurred in the suggested praise. The Stanza 24 he declared to be sublime. The characteristic speeches of Wilkes and Junius he thought most admirable — 'Byron hat sich selbst übertroffen' ['Byron has surpassed himself'] — and the introduction of Southey made him laugh heartily.¹¹⁷

On 16 August Crabb Robinson reads Coleridge to Goethe, but *Heaven and Earth* is considered far superior:

I read to him Coleridge's *Love and Fire, Famine and Slaughter*. Goethe damned them with faint praise. On the contrary, he was very warm indeed in his praise of the first part of *Heaven and Earth* which I read to him. He admired excessively the *devilish* parts, called Noah a philistine and Abel a *Landprediger* ['country preacher']. He said that Byron had he lived would have dramatized the Bible. The Tower of Babel would have been a capital theme. Lord Byron he declared to be inimitable. Such a one never existed before nor ever will again. Ariosto was not so *keck* ['bold'] as Lord Byron in the *Vision of Judgment* [*sic*].¹¹⁸

Goethe's admiration of *Heaven and Earth* is highlighted again the following day:

I spent another two hours with Goethe and read to him *Heaven and Earth*. His admiration was excessive, his remarks all eulogistic. He said: 'Byron had not like myself devoted a long life to the study of nature, and yet I found only once or twice in all his works passages which I would have altered. His views of nature were equally profound and poetical. You must not take it evil, but Byron owes these fine views of the Old Testament to the *ennui* he suffered at school. He must have been terribly annoyed at the absurdities and in his own mind he ruminated over them and turned them to account.'¹¹⁹

Crabb Robinson's last day in Weimar was 18 August, when he makes one final attempt to quell Goethe's enthusiasm by re-introducing him to Milton:

I read to him the first part of *Samson Agonistes* down of the end of the scene with Dalila. He did not praise it with the warmth with which he praised Lord Byron; but still he thanked me for having made the poem

¹¹⁷ 15 August 1829 (Gespräche, 5, p. 168). See also diary entry (WA, III, 12, p. 112).

¹¹⁸ 16 August 1829 (FA, 38, p. 149). See also diary entry (WA, III, 12, p. 113).

¹¹⁹ 17 August 1829 (FA, 38, p. 149.) See also diary entry (WA, III, 12, p. 113). 'Um 5 Uhr spazieren gefahren. Später im Garten Herr Robinson, lasen Lord Byrons Himmel und Erde ferner.' 'Went for a walk at 5 o'clock. Later, in the garden, read more of Byron's *Heaven and Earth* with Mr Robinson.'

known to him. He said: 'the whole is finely reasoned, and Samson's confession of his guilt is in a better spirit than anything in Lord Byron. There is fine logic and keeping in all the speeches, and Dalila is nobly conceived.'¹²⁰

Goethe's estimation of Byron appears to have been rekindled by this visit; he read more of *Don Juan* on 16 August and wrote to Zelter on 20 August expressing his renewed pleasure in *Heaven and Earth*:

Byrons Himmel und Erde war mir höchst angenehm mit Auge und Ohr zu vernehmen, da ich ein zweytes Exemplar in der Hand hatte. Zuletzt machte er [Crabb Robinson] mich noch auf Miltons Samson aufmerksam und las ihn mit mir. Es ist merkwürdig hier den Ahnherrn Byrons kennen zu lernen; er ist so grandios und umsichtig wie der Genannte, aber freylich geht der Enkel schon in's Gränzenlose, in's wunderlichst Mannichfaltige, wo jener einfach und stattlich erscheint.¹²¹

Goethe's diary for 28 September notes the influence of Byron and Milton on Edward Reade's *Cain the Wanderer*,¹²² and a visit from John Murray Junior — Byron's ex-publisher's son — in October 1829¹²³ keeps Byron very much in Goethe's thoughts, especially as Murray Jr. mentioned to Goethe the suppressed dedication to *Marino Faliero*.

Murray finally dispatched the dedication to Goethe at the beginning of 1830, no doubt anxious about Goethe's reaction to Byron's irreverence. Yet, now that Goethe was no longer ignorant of its existence the dedication had to be forwarded. Murray Jr. wrote a covering letter attempting to soften the impact:

In transmitting to you the dedication of Lord Byrons Tragedy of Marino Faliero, which I mentioned when you allowed me the honour

¹²⁰ 18 August 1829 (FA, 38, p. 150). Goethe, of course, already knew Milton well, especially *Paradise Lost*.

¹²¹ 20 August 1829 (WA, IV, 46, pp. 54-55). 'I particularly enjoyed following Byron's *Heaven and Earth* both with eye and ear, for I had a second copy in my hand. Finally he drew my attention to Milton's *Samson*, and read it with me. It is curious to recognize in it Byron's ancestor; the latter is as grandiose and far-seeing as the former, but the descendant certainly runs off into the illimitable, into the strangest complexity, where the former appears simple and stately' (A. D. Coleridge, *Goethe's Letters to Zelter* (London, 1887) 365).

¹²² 28 September 1829 (WA, III, 12, p. 131).

¹²³ 14 October 1829 (WA, III, 12, p. 139).

of an interview in October last, I must beg to observe, that not having read it at that time, I was not aware of the nature of its contents. Could I however, for a moment suppose, that it would in any way tend to give offence, I should be tempted to refrain from fulfilling the promise I then made, of sending it to you. But, though written in the playful style in which Lord Byron was so frequently in the habit of indulging, it is at the same time characterized by the same expressions of respect for you Sir, and admiration of your works, which accompany the mention of your name in every part of Lord Byrons writings and I hope that it will be gratifying to you to possess such a literary curiosity.

I have delayed sending the enclosed little MS. to you, until the appearance of the First volume of Mr Moore's *Life of Byron*, in order that when I offered it to you, I might at the same time beg you to confer on me the additional favour of accepting a copy of the book. — I shall take the liberty of forwarding one to you on the first opportunity.

When I had the pleasure of seeing you last year, you mentioned with considerable approbation, a little Poem, entitled 'King Coles Levee' and expressed a wish to know the name of the Author, on my return to England I made a point of ascertaining this, and have to inform you that it is written by a retired military Gentleman named Scaife who resides in the North of England.

I cannot conclude this without expressing my thanks for the honour you did me in allowing me to call on you, an honour not merely temporary, but to which I shall always look back with the most pleasing recollections.¹²⁴

Prior to the arrival of this letter together with the hand-written dedication, Goethe showed *The Keepsake* for 1830 to Eckermann, pointing out that it held some 'höchst interessanten Briefen von *Lord Byron*.'¹²⁵ Murray Jr. also sent Goethe a copy of Moore's *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, and, despite the fact that this text is mentioned several times in his diary, Goethe made no explicit critical comment on

¹²⁴Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 31-32.

¹²⁵3 January 1830 (Eckermann 347), 'extremely interesting letters from Lord Byron'.

it.¹²⁶ No comment is made on the dedication either, until Goethe replies to Murray Jr.'s letter a year later:

Es ist nun überjählig, mein theurester Herr, daß ich Ihren schätzbaren Brief mit einer angenehmen Sendung erhielt, worauf ich denn, obgleich spät, versichern darf, wie das eigenhändige wunderbare Schreiben des hochverehrten Lord Byrons mir von dem höchsten Werthe gewesen und geblieben. Denn jede Äußerung eines solchen Mannes ist wichtig, besonders wenn er sich muthwillige Invectiven, polemisch-satirische Lebhaftigkeiten erlaubt.

Jenes Blatt enthält nun aber eine noch größere Bedeutung, da es neuerlich abgedruckt ist und [space in WA] zwar mit Auslassung einiger Stellen, die ich, der ich das Ganze besitze, suppliren kann, wobey ich erfahre, wie er gegen Personen gesinnt ist, deren Productionen er nun einmal nicht estimable finden konnte, wenn auch ein großes Publicum daran Genüge findet.

Nun haben Sie auch die Gefälligkeit gehabt, mir den 1. Band jenes wichtigen Werkes freundlichst mitzutheilen, und ich darf hoffen, Sie werden fortfahren, mich mit den folgenden zu erfreuen. An diesem höchst bedeutenden Werke habe ich meine Theilnahme zu bewähren gesucht, daß ich eine Abschrift jenes schätzbaren Schreibens, womit Lord Byron von Livorno aus mich erfreut, durch Herrn Robinson dem Herausgeber mittheilen ließ, wie es denn auch gegenwärtig mit abgedruckt worden.

Mir aber bleibt es traurig, daß Lord Byron, der sich gegen das wechselsinnige Publicum gar ungeduldig beweist, nicht erlebt hat, wie wohl ihn die Deutschen zu verstehen und wie hoch sie ihn zu schätzen wissen.

Bey uns fällt aller sittlicher und politischer Weltklatsch des Tages in diesem Falle hinweg, der Mensch und das Talent allein bleiben in ihrer Würde glänzend stehen. Hiebey getrau ich mir zu sagen: wer jetzt und künftig von dieser ungemeinen Individualität sich einen annähernden Begriff machen kann, sie ohne Lob und Tadel in ihrer Eigenthümlichkeit anzuerkennen weiß, der darf sich eines großen

¹²⁶See 3 March 1830 and 18 June 1830 (WA, III, 12, pp. 206 and 259) and 3, 5, 6 March 1831 (WA, III, 13, pp. 39-42).

Gewinnes rühmen. Mir wenigstens an meinem Theil gereicht ein solches Bestreben zu großem Genuß.¹²⁷

It appears that, despite the slur in respect of the effect of *Werther* on the suicide rate, the dedication was well-received by Goethe, but, as the dedication is never again mentioned by him we cannot be certain. References to Byron occur only infrequently in 1830, but on 3 March Goethe comments to Eckermann on the positive effect Byron has had on Eckermann,¹²⁸ and in conversation with Soret 4 days later he again praises

Marino Faliero:

Lese ich z.B. Byrons Marino Falieri [*sic*], so wird mir gar nicht bewußt, daß ein Engländer die Feder führt, ich bin nach Venedig versetzt, und diese unbedingt nötige Illusion ist da, ganz gleichgültig, was sonst der eigentliche Wert des Stückes sein mag. Nehme ich aber so ein Werk der jungen französischen Schriftsteller vor, ganz gleich welches, so sehe ich immer nur Paris oder Frankreich vor mir, sie schildern nur immer sich selbst, ihre Sitten, ihre Bedürfnisse und die Gärung der Welt, in der sie leben.¹²⁹

¹²⁷WA, IV, 48, pp. 164-65. 'It is more than a year, my dear Sir, since I received your valued letter and the welcome parcel. Let me assure you, however, belatedly, how greatly I appreciated — as I still do — the wonderful Dedication in the handwriting of the most esteemed Lord Byron. For everything that a man like this says is of importance, and particularly so when he indulges in playful invective, in polemic-satirical liveliness. But that paper is of still greater significance in having been recently reprinted, and this with the omission of certain passages which, possessing the whole, I can supply; these show me his opinion of people whose productions he could not find estimable even though a large section of the public finds satisfaction in them. Now you have shown me a great kindness in sending me the first volume of that important work, and I may be allowed to hope you will continue to delight me with subsequent ones. I have tried to give proof of my lively interest in this most important work by sending the editor, through Mr. Robinson, a copy of the precious letter with which Lord Byron honoured me while in Leghorn; this is now being printed with the rest. It still saddens me that Lord Byron, so impatient with the fickle public, did not see how well the Germans understand him and how highly they think of him. With us all moral and political ephemeral gossip falls away, leaving his own self and his talent standing alone, brilliant in their excellence. And I venture to say this: whoever either now or in the future can form even an approximate notion of this unusual character, whoever is able to appreciate it in its individuality without praise or blame, can boast of a great gain. For my part at least this endeavour brings me great satisfaction' (Herzfeld & Sym 519).

¹²⁸3 March 1830 (Eckermann 361). 'Mit Goethe vor Tisch spazieren gefahren. Er spricht günstig über mein Gedicht in Bezug auf den *König von Bayern*, indem er bemerkt, daß Lord *Byron* vorteilhaft auf mich gewirkt.' 'Went to walk with Goethe before dinner. He spoke favourably of my poem on the King of Bavaria, observing that Lord Byron had had a favourable influence upon me' (Oxenford, 2, p. 241).

¹²⁹14 March 1830 (FA, 38, p. 242). 'When I read, for example, Byron's *Marino Faliero*, I forget that an Englishman has wielded the pen; I am transported to Venice, and, independently of the intrinsic merit of the production, an indispensable illusion is produced; but whatever work I may read of the young French writers, they cannot make me forget Paris and France, they only describe themselves, their customs, their needs and the turmoil of the world in which they live.' See also Eckermann's report on this same conversation (Eckermann 655-56).

Another discussion with Eckermann on 14 September on Byron's depiction of the colour of the water in Geneva concludes Goethe's recorded comments on him in 1830.¹³⁰

1831 provides little more, although on 11 February Goethe suggests that Byron's polemical powers were his downfall:

Lord Byron ist an seiner polemischen Richtung zu Grunde gegangen, und Platen hat Ursache, zur Ehre der deutschen Literatur, von einer so unerfreulichen Bahn für immer abzulenken.¹³¹

On 8 March he suggests that the daemonic in Byron may have been to some extent responsible for his attraction to women and his irresistibility:

Auch in *Byron* mag das Dämonische in hohem Grade wirksam gewesen sein, weshalb er auch die *Attractiva* in großer Maße besessen, so daß ihm denn besonders die Frauen nicht haben widerstehen können.¹³²

Traits of Byron were noted by Goethe soon thereafter in the works of Paul Louis Courier, especially 'die große Gegenwart aller Dinge, die ihm als Argument dienen',¹³³ and on 3 April Goethe and Ottilie perused their Byron memorabilia together before he gave everything to her.¹³⁴ On 26 December 1831, only three months before Goethe's death, Byron appears in Goethe's diary for the final time, as Goethe discloses that he has been examining the lithographs of *Don Juan*.¹³⁵

What then can be concluded from Goethe's many comments on Byron? It is clear that he had a wide knowledge of Byron's works.¹³⁶ Although his knowledge about Byron

¹³⁰Eckermann 386-87; Oxenford, 2, pp. 305-06.

¹³¹Eckermann 402. 'Lord Byron was ruined by his polemic tendency; and Platen should, for the honour of German literature, quit for ever so unprofitable a path' (Oxenford, 2, p. 332).

¹³²8 March 1831 (Eckermann 427-28). 'In Byron, also, this element [the daemonic] was probably active in a high degree, whence he possessed powers of attraction to a great extent, so that women especially could not resist him' (Oxenford, 2, p. 363).

¹³³21 March 1831 (Eckermann 439). 'He is like Byron in command over all things which may serve him as argument' (Oxenford, 2, p. 378).

¹³⁴3 April 1831 (WA, III, 13, pp. 56-57).

¹³⁵WA, III, 13, p. 195.

¹³⁶Perhaps the most obvious gap in Goethe's praise of Byron's work is the lack of any for *Childe Harold*.

the Man was sketchier and often based on rumour and biased opinions of others,¹³⁷ he nevertheless makes many perceptive comments, not only about the works themselves, but also about the man himself. His unfailing admiration for Byron's plays¹³⁸ especially can be explained, in part at least, by Goethe's life-long interest in the theatre and particularly in poetic drama. While it is also true that Goethe had many more doubts about Byron than he revealed in public, it is also undoubtedly the case that Byron did have a profound effect on him. He had a far wider knowledge and appreciation of Byron's works than is sometimes thought and, although he was sometimes dismayed by what he called Byron's hypochondria, his admiration for him is often overwhelming. Goethe clearly saw something of a reflection of himself in Byron and thus looked upon him as something of a son, yet still as an equal: not only from the point of view of personality, but more significantly from the point of view of poetry. Goethe's brief but significant and striking comment to Müller, 'Byron allein lasse ich neben mir gelten',¹³⁹ while revealing Goethe's undoubted and oft-expressed estimation of Byron, supports the view that Goethe himself felt that there might be something far more fundamentally similar between himself and Byron than anyone else could have suspected, something more than the product of mere wishful thinking or paternal affection. Perhaps Goethe did indeed to some extent understand Byron as he implies in the final line of his poem to the British poet, 'Und wie ich ihn erkannt, mög' er sich kennen'.¹⁴⁰ It is hence the inspiration of Goethe himself that invites a closer analysis of his poetry in comparison to that of Byron and in the following chapter we shall trace the development of the relationship from Byron's point of view in order to ascertain whether he too feels this sense of kinship from afar.

¹³⁷For example Caroline Lamb and Thomas Medwin.

¹³⁸Byron's plays have not stood the test of time and even in Byron's time he himself tried to prevent *Cain* ever being performed. Perhaps Byron, too, like Goethe, was more interested in the play as a poetic drama.

¹³⁹12 October 1823 (Gespräche, 4, p. 290). See Chapter 2, note 54 above.

¹⁴⁰'And he *self-known*, — e'en as to *me* he's known!' (Medwin 274).

Chapter Three:
Byron's Reception of
Goethe

Even more arresting than Goethe's admiration of Byron was Byron's admiration of Goethe: this from a man who had no command of the German language and whose only knowledge of the German's works, apart from oral transmission, was — we are told — acquired either through Madame de Staël's French translations in her *De l'Allemagne*,¹ a translation of *Werther*, or a French translation of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. This chapter focuses on the relationship between Byron and Goethe as seen through Byron's eyes, exploring his knowledge and appreciation of Goethe and his works in order to discover why this relationship is worthy of further investigation.

Considering Byron's lack^{cf} German and his professed dislike of the German people, it may seem a little odd that he should be interested in Goethe at all, but his curiosity is clear:

I must premise, however, that I have read [...] much less of Goëthe, and Schiller, and Wieland, than I could wish. I only know them through the medium of English, French and Italian translations. Of the *real* language I know absolutely nothing, — except oaths learned from postillions and officers in a squabble. I can *swear* in German potently, when I like — 'Sacrament — Verfluchter — Hundsfott' — and so forth; but I have little of their less energetic conversation.²

Austrians are particularly hated, but German women are admired, and what he does know of German literature he likes:

I like, however, their women, (I was once *so desperately* in love with a German woman, Constance,) and all that I have read, translated, of their writings, and all that I have seen on the Rhine of their country and people — all, except the Austrians, whom I abhor, loathe, and — I cannot find words for my hate of them, and should be sorry to find deeds correspondent to my hate; for I abhor cruelty more than I abhor

¹ Madame de Staël devotes a considerable section to Goethe in *De l'Allemagne*. Apart from mentions throughout the text, four chapters are devoted solely to Goethe: Goethe, *Goetz de Berlichingen* et le *Comte d'Egmont*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Torquato Tasso*, etc. and *Faust*.

² 12 January 1821 (LJ, 8, pp. 25-26). See also letter to Murray of 7 June 1820 (LJ, 7, p. 113).

the Austrians — except on an impulse, and then I am savage — but not deliberately so.

Although he had learnt a little German while at school in Aberdeen, and had studied Gessner's *Der Tod Abels*, he claimed to have forgotten everything:

'When I was a boy,' said he, 'I studied German, which I have now entirely forgotten. It was very little I ever knew of it. Abel was one of the first books my German master read to me; and whilst he was crying his eyes out over its pages, I thought that any other than Cain had hardly committed a crime in ridding the world of so dull a fellow as Gessner made brother Abel.'³

Despite his lack of German, he was nonetheless aware of Goethe, most probably well before Goethe was aware of him, due primarily to *De l'Allemagne* and of course *Werther*.⁴ *De l'Allemagne* promoted German literature and introduced Byron to the delights of a wide variety of things German.⁵ His letters and journals reveal a strong interest in her, especially her latest work, published in both French and English by Murray in 1813.⁶ *De l'Allemagne* was reviewed in the *Edinburgh Review* of October 1813 and it is clear that Byron had read the text by 16 November: 'I have read her books — like most of them, and delight in the last.'⁷ He further comments to Murray on 29 November on his vain attempts to use the text to cure his insomnia:

³Medwin 126.

⁴See *The Waltz* (written in October 1812, published anonymously in 1813), lines 147-50 (PW, 3, p. 228):

'Seductive Waltz — though on thy native shore
E'en Werter's self proclaimed thee half a w—re;
Werter — to decent vice though much inclined,
Yet warm, not wanton; dazzled but not blind.'

There were many translations of *Werther* available which Byron could have read.

⁵*De la Littérature* was reviewed in the *Edinburgh Review* in January 1813, but Byron but did not meet Madame de Staël until 20 June.

⁶See for example letters of 5 and 8 August to Lady Melbourne (LJ, 3, pp. 85 and 86-87); 22 August to Moore (LJ, 3, p. 94); 10 November to Annabella Millbanke (LJ, 3, p. 160); Journal for 16, 17, 30 November (LJ, 3, pp. 207, 211, 226-27); 6, 7, 10, December (LJ, 3, pp. 231-32, 235, 236-37) and 18 February 1814 (LJ, 3, p. 244); letter to Madame de Staël of 30 November 1813 (LJ, 3, pp. 184-85). Although Byron was not always impressed by Madame de Staël, his opinion changes after meeting her frequently at Coppet in 1816. See for example letter to Rogers of 4 April 1817: 'I now love her — as much as I always did her works — of which I was and am a great admirer' (LJ, 5, p. 207).

⁷ LJ, 3, p. 207.

I have got out of my bed — (in which however I could not sleep whether I had amended this or not) & so Good Morning — I am trying whether De L'Allemagne will act as an opiate — but I doubt it.⁸

His journal for two o'clock in the morning of 6 December reveals his high opinion of the text:

What the devil shall I say about 'De l'Allemagne?' I like it prodigiously; but unless I can twist my admiration into some fantastical expression, she won't believe me; and I know, by experience, I shall be overwhelmed with fine things about rhyme, &c., &c. The lover, Mr. * * [Rocca], was there to-night, and C * * said 'it was the only proof he had seen of her good taste.' Monsieur L'Amant is remarkably handsome; but *I* don't think more so than her book.⁹

However flawed, biased and Schlegel-infected some of Madame de Staël's opinions were, they did open up a whole new avenue of literature for Byron and surely succeeded in elevating Byron's existing estimation of Schiller and adulation of Goethe. At this time Byron was more familiar with Schiller, essentially because more of Schiller's works were available in translation than Goethe's.¹⁰ For Byron, Goethe was, at this stage, little more than the author of *Werther*. Nevertheless the Goethean influence on the first stanza of *The Bride of Abydos* has often been assumed:¹¹

Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
 Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime?
 Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,
 Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime?

⁸ LJ, 3, p. 181.

⁹ LJ, 3, pp. 231-32.

¹⁰He read *Der Geisterseher* as a boy: letter to Murray of 2 April 1817 (LJ, 5, p. 203). Schiller's text was translated as *The Armenian, or the Ghost-Seer, a History founded on Fact* by W. Render in 1800. Byron was certainly also familiar with *Die Räuber*, *Die Verschwörung des Fiesko zu Genua* and *Don Carlos* (journal for 20 February 1814 (LJ, 3, p. 245)). English translations of *Die Räuber*, *Die Verschwörung des Fiesko zu Genua*, *Kabale und Liebe*, *Don Carlos*, *Wallenstein* and *Maria Stuart* were available, and a French edition of *Die Verschwörung des Fiesko zu Genua*, *Kabale und Liebe* and *Don Carlos* was available as well as a translation of *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*. See Robertson 5, notes 2-3. See also advertisement to *Parisina*, 1816 (PW, 3, p. 358). The extent of Byron's reading is uncertain, but it is certain that he was not as well acquainted with Schiller as he would like to have been.

¹¹For a perceptive analysis of these poems see Schirmunski.

These lines echo the 'Mignonlied' from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, whether consciously or not:

Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühn,
 Im dunklen Laub, die Goldorangen glühn,
 Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,
 Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht,
 Kennst du es wohl?

Dahin! Dahin

Möcht' ich mit dir, o mein Geliebter, ziehn!

Carlyle's translation of *Wilhelm Meister* did not appear until 1824, the year of Byron's death, but several English translations of the poem were available, and it is likely that any influence would have come from them.¹² Byron commented on these accusations of plagiarism to Lady Blessington:

In all the charges of plagiary brought against me in England did you hear me accused of stealing from Madame de Staël the opening lines of my *Bride of Abydos*? she is supposed to have borrowed her lines from Schlegel, or to have stolen them from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*; so you see I am a third or fourth hand stealer of stolen goods. Do you know De Staël's lines? for if I am a thief, she must be the plundered, as I don't read German, and do French; yet I could almost swear that I never saw her verses when I wrote mine, nor do I even now remember them. I think the first began with 'Cette terre,' [...] but the rest I forget.¹³

¹²Benjamin Beresford, *The German Erato* (Berlin, 1797); *Monthly Magazine*, August 1814 and perhaps a version by Cyrus Redding in the *Morning Chronicle* (Robertson 8, note 2) There is an unfinished translation of the first stanza by Coleridge. The translation was first published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in September 1829, but Coleridge told James Gillman that he had been asked to transcribe it for Sir Alexander Johnston in a letter of 26 October 1824 (*The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, vol. 5 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-71) 389). It appears that Coleridge did not collect the poem until 1834. The date of composition remains, however, a mystery, as the only manuscript is undated. Coleridge's admiration of Goethe's poem is clear from March 1813 onwards, but various promptings from others who translated *Wilhelm Meister* (John Anster, Carlyle) suggest that his translation of the 'Mignonlied' might not have been made until this time. Although earlier editions suggest 1799?, the latest edition of Coleridge give the later date of composition is given as 1823-4?, which corresponds more closely to the letter mentioned above. It is therefore doubtful that Byron ever saw Coleridge's version as Schirmunski (69-70) notes.

¹³Blessington 186-87.

Lady Blessington quotes the beginning of 'Épître sur Naples',¹⁴ but omits the familiar 'connais-tu' from line 1, 'Connais-tu cette terre', so Byron sees little similarity:

'Well,' said Byron, 'I do not see any point of resemblance, except in the use of the two unfortunate words land and myrtle, and for using these new and original words I am a plagiarist!

Byron would have read Madame de Staël's comments on the poem in both *De l'Allemagne* and *Corinne's* 'Improvisation sur le Capitole' and these may have influenced him;¹⁵ the former text was after all fresh in his mind in 1813 and was greatly admired. Whichever source incited Byron, consciously or unconsciously, is relatively unimportant; what is more significant is that these words do echo Goethe's poem — a poem which he could not have understood in the original, had he ever even seen it — and for which he seems to have had some sort of affinity.

Byron left Britain on 25 April 1816 and during that summer became more closely acquainted with Goethe's *Faust I* via an oral translation by Monk Lewis. Until then, his only knowledge of the text was through *De l'Allemagne* and, as there were no English or French translations available, he was reliant upon Madame de Staël and Lewis. The latter enjoyed Byron's hospitality at the Villa Diodati in Coligny and 'paid' for his keep by way of these oral translations, as Byron notes in a letter to Rogers on 4 April 1817:

¹⁴Connois-tu cette terre, où les myrtes fleurissent,
Où les rayons des cieus tombent avec amour,
Où des sons enchanteurs dans les airs retentissent,
Où la plus douce nuit succède au plus beau jour?
(*Oeuvres complètes de Mme la Baronne de Staël*, vol. 17 (Paris, 1821) p. 417). Written in 1805, but not published until 1821, hence it could not have been any influence on *The Bride of Abydos*.

¹⁵*De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2 (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1968) 45. 'Elle exprime ses regrets pour l'Italie dans des vers ravissants que tout le monde sait par coeur en Allemagne: "Connais-tu cette terre où les citronniers fleurissent, etc."' And from *Corinne's* 'Improvisation au Capitole': 'Connaissez-vous cette terre, où les orangers fleurissent, que les rayons des cieus fécondent avec amour? Avez-vous entendu les sons mélodieux, qui célèbrent la douceur des nuits? Avez-vous respiré ces parfums, luxe de l'air déjà si pur et si doux?' (*Corinne, ou l'Italie* (Paris: Garnier, n.d.) 33). See also Knobbe 7 and Robertson 8, note 1.

I forgot to tell you that last Autumn — I furnished Lewis with 'bread & salt' for some days at Diodati — in reward for which (besides his conversation) he translated 'Goethe's Faust' to me by word of mouth.¹⁶

During these months, Byron was a frequent guest at Madame de Staël's nearby home Coppet, where he met August Wilhelm Schlegel and Charles Victor de Bonstetten, amongst others. We might expect, given Byron's interest in Goethe, that he should surely have taken the opportunity of quizzing Schlegel. It seems, however, as though there was little love lost between the two.¹⁷ Even after a review of Goethe's *Aus meinem Leben, Dichtung und Wahrheit* appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* of June 1816, and, although Byron clearly sympathised with the author,¹⁸ he still did not ask Schlegel about his 'Idol Goethe'. What of *Faust* Lewis actually translated we shall never know, but Faust inciting Mephistopheles to make an appearance seems to have been one scene translated for and praised by Byron.¹⁹

Byron's *Manfred* was published on 16 June 1817 and allegations of plagiarism swiftly followed.²⁰ While Goethe was reading *Manfred* and noting, in his view, the influence of his own *Faust*, Byron wrote to Murray defending the originality of his drama:

Many thanks for the Edin[burgh] R[evue] which is very kind about Manfred — and defends it's [*sic*] originality — which I did not know

¹⁶LJ, 5, p. 206.

¹⁷See Butler, *Passion* 30. See 29 July 1816 to Rogers: 'Schlegel is in high force' (LJ, 5, p. 86) and 4 August 1821 to Murray: 'They write from Paris that Schlegel is making a fierce book against *me* — what can I have done to the literary Col-captain of late Madame? — *I* who am neither of his country nor his horde? — Does this Hundsfot's intention appal you? if it does — say so. — It don't *me* — for if he is insolent — I will go to Paris and thank him; — there is a distinction between *native* Criticism — because it belongs to the Nation to judge and pronounce on natives, — but what have *I* to do with Germany or Germans neither my subjects nor my language having anything in common with that Country? — He took a dislike to me — because I refused to flatter him in Switzerland — though Madame de Broglie begged me to do so — "because he is so fond of it.["] ——— "Voila les hommes!" —' (LJ, 8, pp. 166-67).

¹⁸5 October 1816 to Murray (LJ, 5, p. 111). 'I have read the last E[dinburgh] R[evue] they are very severe on the Germans and their Idol Goethe.'

¹⁹In a conversation about witches with James Kennedy Byron reveals his admiration for Goethe's Mephistopheles: 'The finest conception on a similar subject is that of Goethe's Devil, Mephistopheles; and though of course you will give priority to the former [Endor], as being inspired, yet the latter, if you know it, will appear to you — at least it does to me — one of the finest and most sublime specimens of human conception' (James Kennedy, *Conversations on Religion with Lord Byron* (London, 1830) 154). See also Robertson 11, note 2.

²⁰The review in *Blackwood's Magazine* of June 1817 was particularly scathing, but the review in the *Edinburgh Review* of August 1817 came to Byron's defence.

that any body had attacked. — I *never read* — & do not know that I ever saw — The 'Faustus of Marlow' and had & have no Dramatic works by me in English — except the recent things you sent me; — but I heard Mr. Lewis translate verbally some scenes of *Goethe's Faust* (which were some good & some bad) last Summer — which is all I know of the history of that magical personage; — and as to the germs of *Manfred* — they may be found in the Journal which I sent to Mrs. Leigh (part of which you saw) when I went over first the Dent de Jamant & then the Wengeren [*sic*] or Wengeberg Alp & Sheideck and made the giro of the Jungfrau Schreckhorn &c. &c. shortly before I left Switzerland — I have the whole scene of *Manfred* before me as if it was but yesterday — and could point it out spot by spot, torrent and all.²¹

Yet the accusations persisted, and, now fuelled by Goethe's own opinion of paternity of *Manfred* in the letter to Knebel,²² Byron again felt it necessary to defend the originality of his drama:

The Review of *Manfred* came very safely — and I am much pleased with it. It is odd that they should say — [...] that it was taken from Marlow's *Faustus* which I never read — nor saw. — An American [Ticknor] who came the other day from Germany — told Mr. Hobhouse that *Manfred* was taken from Goethe's *Faust*. — The devil may take both the *Faustus's*, German and English — I have taken neither.²³

Although Ticknor had heard Goethe's praise of Byron, he kept that to himself, instead emphasising Goethe's unpopularity:

²¹ 12 October 1817 (LJ, 5, p. 268).

²² 13 October 1817 (HA Briefe, 3, p. 403).

²³ 23 October 1817 to Murray (LJ, 5, p. 270). Ticknor had seen Goethe on 25 October 1816 (Gespräche, 3, pp. 270-71). See also Ticknor, 1, p. 165: 'He [Hobhouse] told me incidentally that M. G. Lewis once translated Goethe's *Faust* to him extemporaneously, and this accounts for the resemblance between that poem and *Manfred*, which I could not before account for, as I was aware that he did not know German.' See Robertson 18, note 2. Amédée Pichot, Byron's French translator, also highlighted Goethe's influence: 'Ce drame offre de nombreux rapports avec celui de *Faust* que Mad. de Staël analyse avec son génie accoutumé. Nous allons essayer, par quelques extraits de mettre le lecteur à même de comparer l'esprit de ces deux pièces extraordinaires' (Lord Byron, *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1819) 249). Quoted by Robertson 19, note 1. 'This drama has numerous links with *Faust* which Madame de Staël analyses with her usual genius. With these few extracts we are going to try to put the reader into a position whereby s/he can compare the spirit of these two extraordinary plays.'

When I happened to tell Lord Byron that Goethe had many personal enemies in Germany, he expressed a kind of interest to know more about it that looked extremely like Shylock's satisfaction that 'other men have ill luck too'; and when I added the story of the translation of the whole of a very unfair Edinburgh review into German, directly under Goethe's nose at Jena, Byron discovered at first a singular eagerness to hear it, and then, suddenly checking himself, said, as if half in earnest, though still laughing, 'And yet I don't know what sympathy I can have with Goethe, unless it be that of an injured author.' This was the truth, but it was evidently a little more than sympathy he felt.²⁴

Thus a chance had been missed, and, since Goethe's review of *Manfred* was not issued until 1820, several years were wasted in respect of the Goethe-Byron relationship. Byron came to know Goethe's review of *Manfred* only by chance: he received some German reviews, including Goethe's on *Manfred*, and quickly wrote to Hoppner on 25 May:

A German named Rupprecht has sent me heaven knows why several Deutsche Gazettes of all which I understand neither word nor letter. — I have sent you the enclosed to beg you to translate to me some remarks — which appear to be Goethe's upon Manfred — & if I may judge by *two* notes of *admiration* (generally put after something ridiculous by us) and the word '*hypocondrisch*' are any thing but favourable. — I shall regret this — for I should have been proud of Goethe's good word — [but] I shan't alter my opinion of him even though he should be savage. — Will you excuse this trouble — and do me this favour — never mind — soften nothing — I am literary proof — having had good and evil said in most modern languages. ²⁵

Hoppner wasted no time and Byron received the translation a few days later.²⁶

Despite these accusations of plagiarism, it seems that Byron was impressed by

²⁴Ticknor, 1, pp. 165-66.

²⁵LJ, 7, pp. 106-07. For a review of this translation and a favourable comparison of it with the one which appeared in the *London Magazine*, see John Hennig, 'Early English Translations of Goethe's Essay on Byron', *Modern Language Review* 44 (1949): 360-71.

²⁶LJ, 5, pp. 506-07.

Goethe's positive and admiring comments, and his pleasure is clear in his letter to Murray of 7 June 1820:

Enclosed is something which will interest you — [...] the opinion of *the* Greatest man of Germany — perhaps of all Europe — upon one of the great men of your advertisements — [...] — a critique of *Goethe's* upon *Manfred*. — There is the original — Mr. Hoppner's translation, and an Italian one — keep them all in your archives — for the opinions of such a man as Goethe whether favourable or not are always interesting — and this is moreover favourable. — His *Faust* I never read — for I don't know German — but Matthew Monk Lewis in 1816 at Coligny translated most of it to me *viva voce* — & I was naturally much struck with it; — but it was the *Staubach* & the *Jungfrau* — and something else — much more than Faustus that made me write *Manfred*. — The first Scene however & that of Faustus are very similar.²⁷

Adolph Wagner's German translation of *Manfred* came into Byron's possession in October 1820, and, after indicating to Murray his inability to understand it, he asked Hoppner on 13 October for a summary/translation of the notes succeeding the text:

Amongst the rest there is a *German* translation of *Manfred* — with a plaguy long dissertation at the end of it; it would be out of all measure and conscience to ask you to translate the whole — but if you could give me a short *sketch* of it — I should thank you — or if you could make somebody do the whole into *Italian* — it would do as well; — and I would willingly pay some poor Italian German scholar for his trouble.²⁸

Finally Byron responded by dedicating *Marino Faliero* to Goethe. The dedication²⁹ was written on 14 October and dispatched to Murray three days later, together with a note asking for advice on Goethe's title and also revealing his estimation of him.³⁰ How Goethe would have reacted to this letter, had he received it at this time, we will never know. It appears that Murray advised Byron against publication, not because of

²⁷LJ, 7, p. 113.

²⁸LJ, 7, p. 203.

²⁹The full text of all Byron's dedications to Goethe can be found in Appendix (ii), pp. 262-65.

³⁰17 October 1820 (LJ, 7, p. 206). The letter ends with the comment 'for I look upon him as a Great Man.'

any possible offence to Goethe,³¹ but due primarily to the remarks regarding Wordsworth and Southey, so the dedication was withheld, as Byron instructed Murray on 19 January 1821 to '*Omit* the dedication to Goethe'.³² But Byron did not give up. His second rather more reverent and demure dedication was for *Sardanapalus*. On 4 September 1821 he asked Kinnaird to write to Goethe:

You are a Good German — I am not even a bad one — but would feel greatly obliged if you would write two lines to the 'Grosser Mann' at my request — to tell him my intent & ask his leave.³³

Yet, when *Sardanapalus* appeared more than three months later the dedication was missing. Byron expressed his great disappointment to Murray:

I am greatly disappointed to see that you have omitted the dedication of 'Sardanapalus' to Goethe which if any opportunity of replacing it occurs I desire may be done — and a copy forwarded to Goethe from the author.³⁴

Three days later he tells Kinnaird of his displeasure with Murray:

Will you desire Mr. Murray to give up the M.S. [...] and to p[lace] before 'Sardanapalus' the dedication to 'Goethe' which he has (like a beast) omitted to prefix.

Since I wrote to you two days ago — I perceive Murray has omitted the *dedication* to *Goethe* — which I had set my heart upon! is this insolence or negligence? — Apprize him of this.³⁵

His enduring interest in Goethe, and his keen desire to reciprocate Goethe's interest in him, is evident from his annoyance at this omission. His December request to Murray for a copy of Goethe's *Life* reveals a desire to further his knowledge:

³¹Byron's comments regarding the effect that Goethe's *Werther* had had on the suicide rate may or may not have proven offensive.

³²LJ, 8, p. 66.

³³LJ, 8, p. 198. For a man who claims to know no German, his use of it, even if fragmentary, is strikingly accurate. This could, of course, be attributed to the fact that Byron clearly had an ear for language.

³⁴23 January 1822 (LJ, 9, p. 91).

³⁵23 and 26 January 1822 (LJ, 9, p. 93).

Are there not designs from *Faust*? send me some — and a translation of it — if such there is — also of Goethe's life if such there be — if not — the original German.³⁶

George Bancroft's visit on 2 May 1822 sustains Byron's interest. Bancroft had already met Goethe³⁷ and reports on his meeting with Byron thus:

We spoke of Germany. He asked if I knew Goethe. I answered I did, and reported faithfully what I had heard Goethe say of him. I then told him of the translations which have so often been made of his works, and of the great admiration which all Germans had for him. This B. said was new to him, and would serve as some solace for the abuse which he was constantly receiving from home.³⁸

Byron was clearly flattered and quickly passed this information on to Murray:

I am also told of considerable literary honours in Germany. — Goëthe I am told is my professed patron and protector. — At *Leipsic* this year — the highest prize was proposed for a translation of two Cantos of *Childe Harold*. — I am not sure that this was at *Leipsic* — but Mr. Bancroft was my authority — a good German scholar (a young American) and an acquaintance of Goëthe's. Goëthe and the Germans are particularly fond of *Don Juan* — which they judge a work of Art. — I had heard something like this before through Baron Lutzerode. — The translations have been very frequent of several of the works — and Goëthe made a comparison between *Faust* and *Manfred*. — All this is some compensation for your English native brutality so fully displayed this year (I mean *not your* individually) to its brightest extent.³⁹

In spite of the praise he afforded *Don Juan* in public, Goethe clearly had an ambivalent reaction⁴⁰ towards what little he claimed to know of the poem,⁴¹ but

³⁶4 December 1821 (LJ, 9, p. 75).

³⁷On 12 October 1819 and 7 and 12 March 1821.

³⁸Bancroft, 1, p. 148. For all Bancroft's dealings with and impressions of Byron see further 1, pp. 146-52.

³⁹26 May 1822 (LJ, 9, pp. 164-65).

⁴⁰Goethe, of course, thought that all *real* poetry was inherently 'ambivalent', because it expressed 'all der Schmerz und Lust' ('Wanderers Nachtlied', HA, 1, p. 142) of human experience.

⁴¹As Eric Blackall points out (in his *Goethe and the Novel* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1976)), Goethe is most reticent — often silent — about works which, from internal evidence he has clearly assimilated. I have already suggested earlier that Goethe knew more of the text than he let on and now believe it probable that he knew *Don Juan* very well; but wanted to avoid public discussion, as he did of anything that really was close to his heart.

Byron was not to know this and accepted the compliment eagerly. The same day

Byron also wrote to Kinnaird:

I also hear that as an author I am in great request in Germany. — All this is some compensation for the brutality of the native English. — Would you write a *German* line to Goethe for me — explaining the omission of the dedication to 'Sardanapalus' by the fault of the publisher and asking his permission to prefix it to the following volumes of *Werner & the Mystery*.⁴²

Little did Byron know that the normally trustworthy Kinnaird had at this point done absolutely nothing: the omission was not wholly Murray's fault as Byron believed.

Yet Byron's anger with Murray is still clearly visible:

Please to send me the dedication of *Sardanapalus* to Goëthe — which you took upon you to omit — which omission I assure you I take very ill. — I shall prefix it to *Werner* — unless you prefer my putting another stating that the former had been omitted by the publisher.⁴³

Perhaps even more conscious now of the forgetfulness and procrastination of his publisher, Byron badgered Murray constantly:

As you thought proper to omit the dedication of *Sardanapalus* to Goethe, you will please to append it to *Werner*, making only the necessary alteration in the title of the work dedicated.⁴⁴

Murray's non-compliance with Byron's wishes is again stressed on 8 July:

With regard to what you say about your 'want of memory' — I can only remark that you inserted the note to Marino Faliero — against my positive revocation and that you omitted the dedication of 'Sardanapalus' to Goëthe (place it before the volume now in the press) both of which were things not very agreeable to me & which I could wish were things to be avoided in future as they might be with a very little care — or a simple Memorandum in your pocket book.⁴⁵

⁴²Probably 26 May 1822 (LJ, 9, p. 163).

⁴³29 May 1822 (LJ, 9, p. 167). This desire is reiterated by Medwin: "I mean to dedicate *Werner*," said he, "to Goethe. I look upon him as the greatest genius that the age has produced. I desired Murray to inscribe his name to a former work; but he pretends my letter containing the order came too late. It would have been more worthy of him than this" (Medwin 260). Byron sent instructions for the dedication at the beginning of September 1821 and, since *Sardanapalus* was not published until 19 December 1821, it seems this was just an excuse.

⁴⁴3 July 1822 (LJ, 9, p. 179).

⁴⁵LJ, 9, p. 182.

Even after publication of *Werner*, Byron was still unconvinced that his wishes had been obeyed:

I hope that he [Murray] did not omit the preface and dedication to Goethe — the preface was essential — as explaining the story from which my work is taken.⁴⁶

By 21 December 1822 his tone to Murray is somewhat threatening:

It is my hope that our concluding transaction should be an amicable one — and I wish that it may be so still. — But I perceive by some extracts in a paper that you appear to have omitted contrary to my repeated urged requests — both the *conclusion* to the preface [...] and also the inscription to Goëthe. — If Mr. K[innaird] had it — you knew where to find it — you also knew my desire — particularly as you had already omitted it from before *Sardanapalus* — for which I reprov'd you — and yet you seem to have repeated the same omission. — Is this courteous — is it even *polite*? — I repeat to you that *no publisher* has a right to be negligent upon such subjects. [...]

Replace at your best speed — the inscription to Goethe — [...] — Do not force me to do disagreeable things — but in case of your non-attention I must not only write to Goëthe — but publish a statement of what has past between us on such subjects.⁴⁷

It would seem, however, that Murray knew nothing about Byron's request to Kinnaird, but the threat of 'disagreeable things' finally persuaded him to act. *Werner* appeared, plus dedication, on 23 November 1822, not, however, with the same dedication as the one intended for *Sardanapalus*, but with an abbreviated version, probably not even written by Byron but rather by Murray. The *Sardanapalus* dedication was in fact no longer in Kinnaird's hands. He had finally got round to executing Byron's wishes more than a year after the original request was sent.⁴⁸

⁴⁶16 December 1822 to Kinnaird (LJ, 10, p. 60).

⁴⁷LJ, 10, pp. 63-65.

⁴⁸Why he had ignored Byron's request for so long we will never know for certain, but Butler ('Benecke' 79 and note 2) gives two possible explanations: the first that Kinnaird was not really as good at German as Byron believed and the task of translating was beyond him; and second, that he was informed that Goethe spoke English and hence had told Byron he could write to him directly in English. This information comes from an L. L. Mackall letter to John Murray IV on 4 December 1923 (Murray Papers). There is, however, no evidence of the latter and Kinnaird's lack of sufficient competence in German seems the more probable explanation.

Kinnaird finally wrote to Goethe via Benecke on 22 October 1822. Benecke forwarded the letter immediately; Goethe answered promptly and Benecke was able to reply to Kinnaird around four weeks after the initial letter was penned, enclosing Goethe's words and a few of his own expressing his delight at once more hearing from his pupil, but also questioning the inordinate delay:

Ihr Auftrag, mein Theurster Freund, war von etwas bedenklicher Art. 'Warum,' konnte Goethe sagen, 'schrieb Hr. Kinnaird nicht *gleich*, nachdem er Lord Byron's Auftrag erhalten hatte, an seinen Freund Benecke, wenn er an mich nicht schreiben wollte? Jetzt ist *Sardanapalus* gedruckt; wozu also soll ich erklären, dass ich es zufrieden bin, dass die Dedikation an mich vorgesetzt werde.'

Indess ich glaube, dass ich Ihrem Zutrauen zu mir bey dieser Verhandlung entsprochen habe, und das die Sache *fürs erste* in Ordnung ist.⁴⁹

Benecke's fears about Goethe's reaction were unfounded: Goethe's letter to Benecke is decidedly positive and his gratitude to Benecke is evident. Kinnaird soon communicated Goethe's pleasure to Byron, and Byron's reply reveals his delight and admiration of Goethe:

I am very glad of old Goëthe being pleased having a great esteem and admiration of that illustrious patriarch of European Letters.⁵⁰

Yet, despite repeated requests, Kinnaird never forwarded Goethe's reply to Byron.⁵¹

⁴⁹Murray Papers. Göttingen, 25 November 1822. Quoted by Butler, 'Benecke' 88 and *Passion* 78. 'Your commission, my dearest friend, was a rather delicate one to execute. "Why", Goethe might well ask, "did Mr Kinnaird not write *immediately* on receiving Lord Byron's commission to his friend Benecke, if he did not wish to write to me? Now Sardanapalus is printed; and why then should I declare my willingness that the dedication to me should be prefixed to it?" Nevertheless I believe that I have justified the confidence you have reposed in me, and that the affair is in order for the moment' (Butler, *Passion* 78).

⁵⁰30 December 1822 (LJ, 10, p. 73).

⁵¹Kinnaird had promised to do so on 17 December 1822: 'I shall by next Post have a very pleasant communication to make to you from *Goethe*, who is delighted with yr. dedication of *Sardanapalus* to him', and again on 23 January 1823: 'Goethe by the next Post' (Murray Papers. Quoted by Butler, 'Benecke' 90-91). It would appear that Byron never received this letter from Goethe at all and was still asking Kinnaird about it on 12 February 1823: 'Where is Goëthe's letter *twice* promised?' (LJ, 10, p. 99).

Benecke must have been aware of Kinnaird's grasp of German and hence could have helped by translating the letter himself.⁵² If he failed in this, he did nonetheless succeed in covering up Kinnaird's negligence:

Jetzt aber muss ich Sie recht sehr bitten, dafür zu sorgen, dass die Dedikation, deren Original ich hier beylege, *unverzüglich* gedruckt und Goethe zugesandt werde. Wollen Sie dieses auch durch mich thun, so bin ich gern dazu erbötig. Vielleicht wäre es nicht unschicklich in einer kleinen Anmerkung zu sagen, dass der Abdruck durch zufällige Umstände verspätet worden sey.⁵³

Kinnaird answered promptly, promising to carry out Benecke's wishes:

The Dedication will be prefixed to the new edition of *Sardanapalus* together with a note of explanation as to the causes of its not having been inserted in the earlier edition. I shall send three copies to you, one for Goethe, one for yourself and one for the Göttingen library.⁵⁴

Amazingly an edition of *Sardanapalus*, plus dedication, but minus explanatory note, was published in 1823. It is unlikely, however, that Byron ever knew of this edition, for by this time there was no communication between Byron and Murray at all. As for Kinnaird, again he was unforgivably negligent: there are no copies of this edition in either the libraries of Goethe, Benecke or Göttingen University. Goethe, as we know, only received copies of *Sardanapalus* and *Werner* in Galignani editions thanks to Soret, and would never have received a copy of *Sardanapalus* plus the original dedication at all had it not been for the intervention of Benecke again in 1826. Suspecting that Goethe had never received a copy, Benecke wrote again to Kinnaird in a rather stern tone:

Nun aber eine andere Frage, die mir gerade in Hinsicht auf Goethe besonders wichtig ist. *Hat Goethe ein Exemplar des Sardanapalus mit der vorangesetzten Dedikation erhalten?* Sie schrieben mir am Ende

⁵²Butler (*Passion* 80) notes that there is an extant fragment of Kinnaird's unfinished translation of Goethe's letter in Albemarle Street, testifying to his insufficient competence in German.

⁵³Murray Papers. Quoted by Butler, 'Benecke' 91. 'But now I really have to ask you to ensure that the dedication, the original of which I enclose here, is printed and forwarded to Goethe without delay. I am willing to act as intermediary if you so wish. Perhaps it might not be altogether unseemly to add a note explaining that the imprint was delayed due to chance circumstances.'

⁵⁴Murray Papers. Quoted by Butler, 'Benecke' 92 and note 1.

des J. 1822: 'The Dedication will be prefixed to the new edition of *Sardanapalus* together with a note of explanation' (diese hatte ich ausdrücklich verlangt) 'as to the causes of its not having been inserted in the earlier edition. I shall send three copies to you, one for Goethe, one for yourself and one for the Göttingen library.' Ich habe aber *durchaus nichts* erhalten? Haben sie Goethe auf einem anderen Wege ein Exemplar zugeschickt? — Ist diess nicht geschehen, so ist ein mir sehr unangenehmes Versehen gut zu machen: auf welche Weise, das überlasse ich Ihnen. Die Hand dazu will ich gern bieten.⁵⁵

As we have seen, the edition which Goethe finally received via Benecke was indeed the 1821 original edition which Murray and Kinnaird had procured, and into which they had stuck the dedication.⁵⁶ It is probably just as well that neither Goethe nor Byron was fully aware of the extent of the negligence, incompetence and procrastination: Goethe would doubtless have been less than pleased and, considering the tone of Byron's last letters to Murray,⁵⁷ who knows what he might have done had he known the full story.

Charles Sterling instigated direct contact between the two poets in 1823 when he visited Weimar and took Goethe the following short letter from Byron:

I request Mr. Sterling will present my respectful homage to the illustrious Göethe — if he sees that great Man during his stay at Weimar.⁵⁸

⁵⁵Murray Papers. Göttingen, 9 April 1826. Quoted by Butler, 'Benecke' 95 and *Passion* 145. 'But now to another question, which, particularly as it concerns Goethe himself, is of the utmost importance to me. *Did Goethe ever receive a copy of Sardanapalus with the dedication prefixed to it?* You wrote to me at the end of the year 1822: "The Dedication will be prefixed to the new edition of *Sardanapalus* together with a note of explanation" (I had explicitly demanded this) "as to the cause of its not having been inserted in the earlier edition. I shall send three copies to you, one for Goethe, one for yourself & one for the Göttingen library.'" Personally I have received *nothing whatsoever*. Did you send Goethe a copy by another hand? — If not, then an omission very disagreeable to me must be made good: how that is to be done I leave to you, but I will willingly lend a hand' (Butler, *Passion* 145).

⁵⁶Butler, 'Benecke' 95-96 and *Passion* 146-47. The separate 1823 edition was no longer available and had they used the 1825 edition, printed with *The Two Foscari*, their negligence would have been glaringly obvious. We know Goethe received the edition also containing *The Two Foscari* and *Cain* from his letter to Müller of 3 August 1826 (WA, IV, 41, p. 103).

⁵⁷See especially 21 December 1822 (LJ, 10, pp. 63-65).

⁵⁸LJ, Supplementary, p.73.

Sterling reported back to Byron that he had met Goethe and thanked him for his letter of introduction:

I am happy to acquaint Your Lordship that I have been introduced to Mr de Goëthe and found him in a perfect state of health. During the short conversation which passed between us he expressed his gratitude towards Your Lordship for having honor'd him with the dedication of Werner. He enquired particularly whether I thought it likely that you would visit Weimar, signifying at the same time, the high esteem in which Your Lordship is held by himself & all his enlightened countrymen. I beg to return many thanks for the valuable Memorandum, by which, I may say, Your Lordship procured me the acquaintance of the 'illustrious Goëthe'.⁵⁹

Sterling forwarded Goethe's poem, suggesting to Byron who might best translate it:

The enclosed was remitted to me from the part of Mr de Goethe with a request to forward it to Your Lordship. I regret that my present task has not fallen to a more worthy person who could have added a suitable translation. Being aware that Your Lordship is not acquainted with the German language, I take the liberty of recommending Mr Noldenhawer, formerly my master, as the only person in Genoa capable of doing some degree of justice to the original. Your Lordship's 'homme d'affaires' may easily find him out by applying to Mr Barchi.⁶⁰

Byron replied immediately, despite having no idea what the poem meant, then sailed for Greece and was never to carry out his promise to visit Goethe in Weimar. A mutual admiration and respect between the two, for whatever reason and however misguided, is undeniable and Byron's continued curiosity is apparent. Despite his sketchy knowledge of *Faust*, its influence was far-reaching and can be traced, not only in *Manfred*, but also in many more of his dramas, especially *The Deformed Transformed*.⁶¹ Shelley's piecemeal translations of *Faust* — intensively discussed

⁵⁹Murray Papers. Weimar, 5 June 1823. Quoted by Butler, *Passion* 87.

⁶⁰Murray Papers. Weimar, 1 July 1823. Quoted by Butler, *Passion* 88.

⁶¹Medwin 153. 'On calling on him one morning, he produced *The Deformed Transformed*. Handing it to Shelley, as he was in the habit of doing his daily compositions, he said: "Shelley, I have been writing a *Faustish* kind of drama: tell me what you think of it." After reading it attentively, Shelley returned it. "Well," said Lord Byron, "how do you like it?" "Least," replied he, "of any thing I ever saw of yours. It is a bad imitation of *Faust*; and besides, there are two entire lines of Southey's in it." Lord Byron changed colour immediately, and asked hastily what lines? Shelley repeated, "And water

with Byron in Ravenna and Pisa in 1821 and 1822 — perpetuated his interest and his comments to Medwin on *Faust* are positive. He wonders at the reaction in England to the liberties Goethe has taken with religion, yet notes its success in Germany:

What would the Methodists at home say to Goethe's *Faust*? His devil not only talks very familiarly *of* Heaven, but very familiarly *in* Heaven. What would they think of the colloquies of Mephistopheles and his pupil, or the more daring language of the prologue, which no one will ever venture to translate? And yet this play is not only tolerated and admired, as everything he wrote must be, but acted in Germany. And are the Germans a less moral people than we are? I doubt it much. *Faust* itself is not so fine a subject as *Cain*. It is a grand mystery. The mark that was put upon Cain is a sublime and shadowy act: Goethe would have made more of it than I have done.⁶²

Byron is clearly envious of Shelley's ability to read Goethe in German and defends Goethe against charges of plagiarism he himself had suffered:

Nothing I envy him so much as to be able to read that astonishing production in the original. As to originality, Goethe has too much sense to pretend that he is not under obligations to authors ancient and modern; — who is not? You tell me the plot is entirely Calderon's. The fête, the scholar, the argument about the *Logos*, the selling himself to the fiend, and afterwards denying his power; his disguise of the plumed cavalier; the enchanted mirror, — are all from Cyprian. That *Magico Prodigioso* must be worth reading, and nobody seems to know anything about it but you and Shelley. Then the vision is not unlike that of Marlowe's in his *Faustus*. The bed-scene is from *Cymbeline*; the song or serenade, a translation of Ophelia's, in *Hamlet*; and, more than all, the prologue is from *Job*, which is the first drama in the world, and perhaps the oldest poem. I had an idea of writing a *Job*, but I found it too sublime. There is no poetry to be compared with it.⁶³

shall see thee, / And fear thee, and flee thee.' They are in *The Curse of Kehama*." His Lordship, without making a single observation, instantly threw the poem into the fire.' In fact these lines do not appear in *The Curse of Kehama*, but Byron was not to know that.

⁶²Medwin 130. See also letter to Moore of 4 March 1822 in defence of *Cain*: 'Yet *they* [the opinions in *Cain*] are nothing to the expressions in Goethe's *Faust* (which are ten times hardier), and not a whit more bold than those of Milton's Satan' (LJ, 9, p. 118).

⁶³Medwin 142. See also conversation with Lady Blessington: "'But," said Byron, "who is the author that is not, intentionally or unintentionally, a plagiarist? Many more, I am persuaded, are the latter than the former; for if one has read much, it is difficult, if not impossible, to avoid adopting, not only

Byron then reveals to Medwin the depth of his interest in Goethe, perceiving what he believes to be an analogy between them:

I have a great curiosity about everything relating to Goethe, and please myself with thinking there is some analogy between our characters and writings.⁶⁴

In reality, however, as we have seen, he knew very little about Goethe's life or works. This lack of direct knowledge is confirmed in conversation with George Finlay, another pupil of Benecke's, in *Metaxata* in October 1823, in which his estimation of *Faust* is unmistakable:

We then conversed about Germany and its literature, and I found, to my astonishment, Lord Byron knew nothing of the language, though he was perfectly acquainted with its literature; with Goethe in particular, and with every passage of *Faust*. He said nothing could be more sublime than the words of the Spirit of the Earth to Faust: 'Thou resemblest the spirit of thy imagination, not me.' I involuntarily repeated it in German, and he said: 'Yes, those are the words.' The scene of the monkeys had made a considerable impression on him, and I remember on my saying I suppose Goethe meant to represent men transformed into monkeys, he exclaimed: 'Suppose no such thing — suppose them veritable monkeys, and the satire is finer and deeper.' After a few words on *Wilhelm Meister*, I asked if he had read the *Wahlverwandtschaften*. He said he did not recollect the hard word, but inquired the significance, of it. I gave some stupid translation, as the *Choice Relationships*. Lord Byron said, 'Yes, yes, the *Affinities of Choice* — I recollect reading a translation, which I should think was not a very good one, for some parts seemed to border on the unintelligible.' I replied, that I thought some parts of the original bordered on it likewise, though, perhaps, they were not within its limits.⁶⁵

the thoughts, but the expressions of others, which, after they have been some time stored in our minds, appear to us to come forth ready formed, like Minerva from the brain of Jupiter, and we fancy them our own progeny, instead of being those of adoption" (Blessington 206).

⁶⁴Medwin 261.

⁶⁵Appendix to K. Elze, *Lord Byron* (London, 1872) 480-81. Extracts of letters from Mr. George Finlay to Colonel Stanhope. The French translation was entitled *Les affinités électives*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1810). The fact that Byron recognised these German words from *Faust* may indicate again that his German was better than he let on, but could also just support the view that he had a good ear for language.

Only *Werther* and *De l'Allemagne* can be added to the list, but perhaps his wishful thinking regarding any possible 'analogy' may well prove to be far more apt than Byron could ever have known consciously. His continued curiosity is clear as he offers money for a translation of Goethe's *Memoirs* before bemoaning his own lack of German:

So much interest do I take in him, that I offered to give 100*l*. to any person who would translate his *Memoirs*, for my own reading. Shelley has sometimes explained part of them to me. He seems to be very superstitious, and is a believer in astrology, — or rather was, for he was very young when he wrote the first part of his Life. I would give the world to read *Faust* in the original. I have been urging Shelley to translate it; but he said that the translator of *Wallenstein* was the only person living who could venture to attempt it; — that he had written to Coleridge, but in vain. For a man to translate it, he must think as *he* does.⁶⁶

In fact *Dichtung und Wahrheit* was not written when Goethe was very young, but it would seem that Byron never knew any more of the text than the initial pages, and those probably via a bad English translation (1824) from a French one by Aubert de Vitry (1823).⁶⁷ In this last conversation about Goethe he talks about the *Edinburgh Review* article on *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, about Goethe's attempt to translate *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, and about the review of *Manfred*, remembering the plagiarism accusations:

"The review of Goethe's "Aus meinem Leben" in the *Edinburgh*, he said, "was harsh and unfeeling. The literature of Europe is under obligations to Goethe, which entitled him to more respect; but often less ability is required to misrepresent and ridicule than to understand genius."

"I told Lord Byron I had seen the dedication of "Sardanapalus" on its way to Goethe before it had been printed, and the letter Goethe had written to the gentleman who had forwarded it, in which he mentioned that he had once commenced a translation of the "English Bards and

⁶⁶Medwin 261.

⁶⁷*Memoirs of Goethe written by himself, translated from the French*, 2 vols. (London, 1824). See Jean-Marie Carré, *Bibliographie de Goethe en Angleterre* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1920) 92.

Scotch Reviewers." Lord Byron pulled up his horse, and exclaimed, with eagerness, "He had, had he? and what did the old gentleman mean by that?" I said I supposed he was struck by such an extraordinary specimen of early genius; but that he had abandoned his design, finding that he could not understand some passages without assistance. Lord Byron: "No, that is not the reason: you don't understand the tricks of authorship, but I can let you into the secret; there was more of the devil in me than in Goethe, and he was content to borrow my weapons against the Review, though I had wished to suppress the work. I remember another anecdote of Goethe. On the publication of "Manfred," Goethe gave translations of those passages which he considered bore the greatest resemblance to "Faust," to show my plagiarisms." I said, "I am sure, my Lord, you have no fear of being thought a plagiarist." He replied, "No, not much, though they seem to be trying hard to prove me one, in England."⁶⁸

A final opportunity to let Byron know the contents of Goethe's letter to Benecke, which Kinnaird had never sent to him, slipped by as Finlay told Byron nothing of the positive and adulatory nature of the rest of the letter, and thus Byron never knew the true extent of Goethe's admiration and estimation of him and his works.⁶⁹

At around the same time as Byron made the remark about an analogy between himself and Goethe, Goethe told the Russian nobleman Count Stroganoff:

Byron hat mich vollkommen verstanden, und ich glaube ihn zu verstehen. Ich schätze sein Urteil so hoch, als er das meinige ehrte; doch war ich nicht so glücklich, seine Meinung von mir in ihrem ganzen Umfange kennenzulernen.⁷⁰

Just as Byron was unaware of the extent of Goethe's admiration, so Goethe was ignorant of the complete range of Byron's attitudes towards him. In spite of the dubious origins of this conversation, the views expressed therein do fit into the

⁶⁸Elze 481-82. Despite Byron's lack of any great knowledge of Goethe, his insight that 'there was more of the devil in [him] than in Goethe' is strikingly accurate.

⁶⁹Byron would never have had this particular piece of information, even if Kinnaird had forwarded Goethe's letter, for, when Benecke copied out the letter he omitted this section completely.

⁷⁰GA Gespräche, 2, p. 789. See Butler, *Passion* 158 and Robertson 44. 'Byron has completely understood me, and I believe that I understand him. I prize his judgment as highly as he honoured mine; but I have not been so fortunate as to hear his opinion of me in its entirety' (Butler, *Passion* 158).

emerging picture of two giants speaking to each other over the heads of mediators.⁷¹ Although Stroganoff is never mentioned in Byron's published letters, journals or conversations, it appears he did visit Byron in Venice (1819-20), where Goethe was often the topic of light-hearted discussion:

So sprach er oft von seiner [Goethes] Heuchelei mit vielem Humor aber wenig Ehrerbietung und sagte einst von ihm: er ist ein alter Fuchs, der nicht aus seinem Bau herausgeht und von da recht anständig predigt. Seine Wahlverwandtschaften und Werthers Leiden nannte er eine Persiflage der Ehe, wie sie sein dienstbarer Geist Mephistopheles selbst nicht besser hätte schreiben können; der Schluß dieser beiden Romane sei der Gipfel von Ironie.⁷²

Byron's earlier comment about the difficulty of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* stands in ironic contrast to his perceptive comment here. But for the inclusion of Count Strongstroganoff in *Don Juan*, I. 149, and the credible opinions expressed in these conversations, we might be tempted to believe them fake and doubt the Count's very existence.

What would have happened had the two men ever met we can only speculate, but Leigh Hunt provides an interesting view of what Goethe might have done for Byron:

I believe if anybody could have done good to Lord Byron, it was Goethe and his correspondence. It was a pity he did not live to have more of it. Goethe might possibly have enabled him, as he wished he could, 'to know himself,' and do justice to the yearnings after the good and beautiful inseparable from the nature of genius. But the danger was, that he would have been influenced as much by the rank and reputation of that great man, as by the reconciling nobleness of his philosophy; and personal intercourse with him would have spoilt all. Lord Byron's nature was mixed up with too many sophistications to

⁷¹This conversation is often absent in editions of *Goethes Gespräche* and even when present, its date is uncertain. The full story regarding Count Stroganoff can be found in Appendix (i), pp. 260-61.

⁷²GA *Gespräche*, 2, p. 790. 'For instance he would often speak of Goethe's hypocrisy with much humour but little reverence, and said on one occasion: "He's an old fox who won't come out of his lair and preaches moral sermons from it." He called his *Werther* and his *Wahlverwandtschaften* a persiflage of marriage which his familiar spirit Mephistopheles could hardly have bettered; the conclusion of both works was the summit of irony' (Butler, *Passion* 53).

receive a proper impression from any man; and he would have been jealous, if he once took it in his head that the other was thought to be his superior.⁷³

What seems undeniable is that Byron's second- or third-hand views of the 'illustrious Goethe' may be more significant than he could ever have realised. Despite his very limited knowledge about the man or his works, Byron nonetheless felt sympathy towards Goethe: he too had suffered at the hands of the critics of the *Edinburgh Review* and was not universally or unconditionally adored either. He also perceived in Goethe someone who was not afraid to shock with his treatment of religion in *Faust*, admired him for this, and saw this as a bond between them. Perhaps this was what incited him to the comment that he pleased himself 'with thinking there [wa]s some analogy between [thei]r characters and writings.' It would seem then that his intuition that the two of them might just be kindred spirits, not just two 'injured authors' 'aware of the tricks of authorship', may just stand up. That this feeling was mutual now seems clear: both Goethe (as we saw in Chapter 2) and Byron sensed that the other was a kindred spirit — and that, according to Goethe at least, is the finest kind of knowledge.

The 'analogy' that Byron believed he saw is surely an overlap in their respective styles and thus of course in the very fundamentals of their beings.⁷⁴ Despite the very flimsy factual foundations of Byron's praise of 'the illustrious Goethe', it would seem that his opinions are surprisingly perceptive, revealing the 'analogy' he liked to think he saw to be worthy of further investigation — namely, a shared preoccupation with (false and true) appearance: the same concern with what W. B. Yeats called 'the necessary

⁷³Leigh Hunt, *Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries*, vol. 1 (London, 1828) 153-54. Quoted by Eimer 448 and Robertson 46.

⁷⁴This follows the maxim 'Le style c'est l'homme même', and also E. M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, *Goethe. Poet and Thinker* (London: Edward Arnold, 1962) 222, where they note that 'it is a commonplace that a man nowhere so clearly reveals the fundamentals of his being as in his style.'

technique of seeming' — the key-concept of Weimar Classicism that was to recommend Goethe, late in the century, to Oscar Wilde and his circle.

Chapter Four:

**A Comparison of Byron's
and Goethe's Sense of
Particularity in an
Historico-philosophical
Context**

This chapter investigates Goethe's aesthetic attitudes, which provide thus a basis on which Byron's aesthetic views are then considered by comparison. It might well have proved equally as fruitful to begin with Byron and then proceed to Goethe; but it was, after all, Goethe and not Byron who displayed far more explicit interest in the subject of aesthetics. It was Goethe who felt it necessary to express his opinions openly on this subject in print, and the vast amount of relevant material that came from Goethe's own pen (and from that of his close friend and collaborator Schiller) entices us to follow this particular path of investigation as the potentially more fruitful. This chapter does not, however, in any way purport to provide an exhaustive study of all aspects of Goethe's aesthetic ideas; but rather to provide a point of reference, a methodological point of departure, from which an illuminating comparison with Byron can follow.

While today talk of 'aesthetics' would cause few heads to turn, the same cannot be said of similar conversations in the time of Goethe. Up until the middle of the 18th century, Germany, indeed the whole of Europe, was dominated by the rationalistic philosophies of Leibniz and Wolff. Only in 1750, on the publication of Alexander Baumgarten's ground-breaking *Aesthetica*, did the idea of a science of aesthetics take hold and the long ignored lower faculty of imagination and feeling begin to receive the attention it has been thought to merit ever since. So caught up were the rationalists and enlighteners in the dizzy heights of the faculties of reason and understanding that the intrinsic interrelation between this faculty and that of the imagination and feeling, noted by the French philosophers Diderot and Rousseau,¹ had not yet by the middle of the century filtered across the border into German territory. While it was Baumgarten who first introduced the idea of reconsidering the

¹For an overview of Diderot's thought and his works see Jean-Claude Bonnet, *Diderot: Textes et débats* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1984). In his *Confessions* (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Les Confessions*, ed. Henri Coulet, 2 vols. (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1968)) Rousseau stressed the importance of imagination, and in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1993)) the supremacy of feeling is evident. See also Thomas McFarland, *Romanticism and the Heritage of Rousseau*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995) 224-25 and 251.

logic of the imagination (disparagingly termed the lower faculty), it was not he, but Johann Gottfried Herder whom we have to thank for the transmission and refinement of many of these ideas, especially to his pupil Goethe. It was he who, as Willoughby correctly discerns, 'ushers in our modern world'² and he who was also one of the greatest formative influences on Goethe. It was early in September 1770, as a young doctoral student in Strasbourg, that Goethe first made Herder's acquaintance. During the winter months that followed, Goethe visited Herder frequently while the latter was recovering from an eye operation, and the friendship between them grew steadily. Goethe's debt to Herder is undeniable, as Goethe himself acknowledges in his *Dichtung und Wahrheit*:

Denn das bedeutendste Ereignis, was die wichtigsten Folgen für mich haben sollte, war die Bekanntschaft und die daran sich knüpfende nähere Verbindung mit Herder.³

It was Herder's belief that it was the poet's duty to express feelings, 'Er soll Empfindungen ausdrücken';⁴ indeed this, according to Herder, was the function of all art.⁵ How then were feelings, the inner life of Imagination, that which is by its very nature inexpressible, to be expressed? According to Herder, the poet should exploit the body of language by fusing the discursive meanings of the words themselves with their physical properties: he should manipulate and exploit the look and sound of the very words themselves so that the meaning may never be removed and so that what results is something totally unique, visible not only in each isolated word but also in the whole, i.e. in the integration between the mind and the body:

²See L. A. Willoughby, *The Classical Age of German Literature 1748-1805* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926) 52.

³*Dichtung und Wahrheit* (HA, 9, p. 402). 'The most significant event, the one destined to have the most important results for me, was my acquaintance and subsequent closer connection with Herder' (*From My Life Poetry and Truth*, trans. Robert R. Reitner, ed. Thomas P. Saine and Jeffrey L. Sammons (New York: Suhrkamp, 1987) 298).

⁴Johann Gottfried Herder, *Werke*, ed. Ulrich Gaier, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker, 1985) 402. 'He should express feelings.'

⁵As Stephenson (Roger) H. Stephenson, *Goethe's Wisdom Literature: A Study in Aesthetic Transmutation* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1983) 157) points out: 'it was [also] Goethe and Schiller's shared conviction that such objectification of the inner life is the distinctive function of all art.' See also Elizabeth M. Wilkinson, 'Schiller's Concept of *Schein* in the Light of Recent Aesthetics,' *The German Quarterly* 28 (1955): 225 and throughout WW.

Du mußst Einfalt und Reichthum, Stärke und Kolorit der Sprache in deiner Gewalt haben, um das durch sie zu bewürken, was du durch die Sprache des Tons und der Geberden erreichen willst — wie sehr klebt hier alles am Ausdrücke: nicht in einzelnen Worten, sondern in jedem Theile, im Fortgange derselben und im Ganzen.⁶

Herder also insisted that the language used in poetry stands quite apart from language used for any other purpose. His belief that this poetic language should be utterly inseparable from its meaning is clear, and this stands in stark contrast to his view that scientific language should indeed be totally separable from its meaning. In this passage it is, however, also evident that the poet's work should be produced in both a natural and an artificial fashion: through the artificial medium of language the poet has to attempt to the best of his ability to evoke an illusion of the naturalness of his feeling, to attempt somehow to integrate these two opposites and produce a poem which goes some way to expressing the inexpressible. This notion of using the language almost as a kind of body purports to appeal to the reader physically, while the given meaning should appeal to the reader's mind. This understanding of language as something physical was as influential for Goethe as was Schiller's similar call to the poet:

Laß die Sprache dir seyn, was der Körper den Liebenden; er nur
Ists, der die Wesen trennt und der die Wesen vereint.⁷

The relationship between Goethe and Herder was, however, not always an uncomplicated one and there were frequent periods of little communication between the older man and his once-eager pupil. It was nonetheless not until the appearance in Weimar of the younger Schiller and the subsequent forging of a close and fruitful friendship between the two poets that the relationship between Goethe and Herder

⁶Herder 403. 'You must master the simplicity and richness, the strength and colour of the language, in order to bring about, using linguistic means, what your natural intention would achieve in the language of sound and gesture — how everything sticks to the outward means of expression here: not in isolated words, but in every part, in their on-going articulation, and in the whole.' See also Stephenson 157 and L. A. Willoughby, "'Wine That Maketh Glad..." The Interplay of Reality and Symbol in Goethe's Life and Work,' *PEGS* ns 47 (1976-77): 91.

⁷*Schillers Werke*, ed. Lieselotte Blumenthal and Benno von Wiese, Nationalausgabe, vol. 1 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1943-) 302. All references are from this edition, henceforth referred to as NA. 'Let language be to you, what the body is to lovers; it alone separates beings and unites beings.'

really deteriorated.⁸ There is little doubt that Herder was jealous of the attention Schiller received from his erstwhile friend, not to mention the fact that he also felt little sympathy with Schiller's Kantian leanings. Hence, from the very first collaboration between Goethe and Schiller in 1794, it was the younger man who exerted the greater influence on Goethe from 1794 until the younger man's untimely death in 1805. Yet, despite difficulties in his relationship with Herder, it is clear that Herder was the all-important instigator of Goethe's theoretical interest in the function of poetry and the task of the poet. The desire for wholeness or integration attainable solely through aesthetic experience which was to become prevalent later is indeed already visible at this early stage.

However, just as the all new science of aesthetics was progressing and becoming ever more complex, so too Goethe was developing, advancing from the Herderian ideas which emphasised the physicality of language itself to the much more sophisticated ideas of the aesthetic worked out by Schiller. While the two poets certainly worked and composed in completely different ways, they were to some extent working towards the same goal, as Goethe himself recognised:

Mein Verhältnis zu Schiller gründete sich auf die entschiedene Richtung beider auf einen Zweck, unsere gemeinsame Tätigkeit auf die Verschiedenheit der Mittel, wodurch wir jenen zu erreichen strebten.⁹

Their collaboration, what has come to be thought of as the emerging literary movement of Weimar Classicism, was seminal, and not only in terms of the German

⁸See also Henry Crabb Robinson's opinion on the relationship between the two men: 'Though he [Herder] filled the highest ecclesiastical office the little state of Weimar afforded, yet the greatness of Goethe seemed to throw him into the shade; and this, perhaps, prevented him from appreciating Goethe's genius' (HCR, 1, p. 113).

⁹*Maximen und Reflexionen*, ed. Max Hecker (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1979) 279. References to this edition give the number of the maxim, according to Hecker, instead of page numbers. 'My relationship with Schiller was based on the decisive bent of both of us towards one object; our shared activity rested on our differing ways of striving to achieve this object' (*Maxims and Reflections*, trans. Elisabeth Stopp, ed. Peter Hutchinson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998) 33). Schiller also recognised the differences between himself and Goethe and, although initially sceptical about how Goethe worked, he could perceive that each complemented the other and thus a mutually enhancing relationship was possible. See his correspondence with Körner, but especially the letter of 1 September 1794 (NA, 27, pp. 34-35).

tradition of aesthetic theorising. The most significant of Schiller's ideas, in the context of a consideration of Goethe's aesthetics, is the idea that an understanding of man's interest in beauty, in aesthetics, could somehow enhance our understanding of man himself. If we learn to understand and practise aesthetics, then we should, in Schiller's opinion, be able to become more human, in the sense of an integration of physical and mental, of Mind and Body. In his search to decipher the precise nature of what it is to be human Schiller has not only taken on board the three different models of man expounded by Herder, Kant and Fichte,¹⁰ but has succeeded in interrelating them to produce a much more sophisticated model than any of his predecessors. What is this aesthetic experience that Schiller is advocating as the solution to reconciling the two sides of man? A thorough reading of his *Aesthetic Letters* soon makes the author's ideas clear that what makes man Man is an ability to see, abstract and play with form, and it is this perception of form that may be called the 'aesthetic' once it is co-ordinate with sensuous perception. Schiller agreed with Herder that man was a product of his environment, but took this view even further: man is unfree in so far as he is subject only to natural laws and determined by them. The one way to release man from his state of unfreedom is through aesthetic experience, i.e., in the free perception and appreciation of form, since only then is he both completely reconstituted in his totality and simultaneously able to experience this wholeness in freedom. Within this aesthetic experience the notion of beauty is absolutely necessary,¹¹ as it appeals, not only to the rational side of man, his mind, but also to his sensual side, the body. Beauty is a product of both the mind and the senses and hence, in order to appreciate this fully, man must not be in the state of unfreedom¹² that derives from being subject to either the sensuous or the formal drive

¹⁰Herder saw man as a whole; Kant saw him as a duality and Fichte saw him as a dynamic ever-changing entity. See Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, "'The Whole Man" in Schiller's Theory of Culture and Society: On the Plurality of Models', *Essays in German Language, Culture and Society*, ed. Siegbert S. Praver, R. Hinton Thomas and Leonard Forster (London: Germanic Institute, 1969) 177-210.

¹¹See Letter 15.4 (WW 100-02).

¹²Die Schönheit ist das Produkt der Zusammenstimmung zwischen dem Geist und den Sinnen, es spricht zu allen Vermögen des Menschen zugleich, und kann daher nur unter der Voraussetzung eines

but move into the aesthetic, where an over-emphasis on either the formal ('Formtrieb') or the sensuous drives ('Stofftrieb') is not possible, as at this point what is at work is a cancelling out of these two opposing drives, resulting in the 'play drive' ('Spieltrieb'),¹³ where to that extent man can be considered free. Hence the sensuous drive and the rational have been sublimated through aesthetic education, and the conflict between the two opposing sides of man has been resolved, albeit temporarily. Schiller is well aware that this experience is merely momentary, and that the intervention of the need to make, say, a moral choice is inevitable; but nonetheless he believes that if man is, in the aesthetic sense, 'happy', then he will probably be moral.

The importance of art and the aesthetic lies, then, in the fact that it attempts to articulate and give meaning to the inner life while liberating man, however briefly, from his determinate state: even a short illusion/vision of freedom allows man a real experience of it. Nevertheless, no matter how momentary this experience may be, it remains an utterly intrinsic step in man's becoming human. In his 1795 essay *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, Schiller sets out to popularise his mode of thought by engaging the mind of the reader in a consideration of the problem the work presents and not merely by providing simple unchallengeable explanations.¹⁴ Here the main topic for discussion is poetry; however, it soon becomes clear that poetry has been singled out due to the fact that it reflects man himself and answers his need for wholeness: the struggle to reconcile the two kinds of poetry is akin to man's

vollständigen und freyen Gebrauchs aller seiner Kräfte empfunden und gewürdiget werden' (*Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (NA, 20, p. 487)). 'Beauty is the product of accord between the mind and the senses; it addresses itself at once to all the faculties of man and can, therefore, be perceived and appreciated only under the condition that he make use of all his powers fully and freely.'

¹³ For an explanation of these German terms see the introduction, commentary and glossary of terms in WW.

¹⁴ Schiller clearly desires alert readers 'die tiefer in die Sache dringen' (NA, 20, p. 449) ('who penetrate more deeply into the subject'), and readers who are also 'wissenschaftlich prüfend' (NA, 20, p. 473) ('examine things scientifically'). These alert readers are furthermore very similar to the ones required by both Byron and Goethe, as we shall see in Chapter 5 below. On the one hand Schiller appears to be arguing on an antithetical level, by setting up all these apparent binary oppositions, but it soon becomes clear that he is contradicting himself. Only then does it really become apparent that he is simultaneously working on another level, whereby the careful, alert reader is slowly teased into perceiving the intrinsic relationship between these apparent polar opposites.

struggle to reconcile the opposing realistic and idealistic sides of his nature.¹⁵ Schiller sets up an apparent binary opposition between what he calls naive poetry (Classical) on the one hand and sentimental poetry (Romantic) on the other, but it ultimately becomes clear that these seemingly clearly defined categories do not hold up. He initially states that 'Naiv muß jedes wahre Genie sein, oder es ist keines',¹⁶ yet apparently contradicts this bold statement when he later talks of 'das sentimentalische Genie'.¹⁷ The difference between these apparent opposites is, then, one of degree rather than kind:

Sie sind, wie man sieht, äußerst von einander verschieden, aber es giebt einen höheren Begriff, der sie beyde unter sich faßt, und es darf gar nicht befremden, wenn dieser Begriff mit der Idee der Menschheit in eins zusammentrifft.¹⁸

According to Schiller's theory, Goethe is at the pinnacle of this naive poetry; this of course does not mean that he has none of the characteristics of a sentimental poet, but rather that the precarious balance between the naive and the sentimental is tipped, in Goethe's case, in favour of the naive. It is the way in which Schiller envisages the relationship between these apparently diametrically opposed kinds of poetry that lends this text its originality. By setting up this seemingly stark contrast, Schiller then subtly undermines it by bringing his two apparently clear-cut typologies (of 'naive' and 'sentimental', of 'Realist' and 'Idealist') ever closer as the text progresses, not to mention the fact that he is also clearly — one might say, blatantly — less than rigorous in his terminology.¹⁹ Thus his strategy of playing with language, his teasing of the reader, in a way which ultimately reflects the closeness of the two diametrically

¹⁵See NA, 20, p. 437, lines 14-31.

¹⁶NA, 20, p. 424, 'Every true genius must be naive, or it is not true genius.'

¹⁷NA, 20, p. 483, 'the sentimental poetic genius.' See also NA, 20, p. 485, 'Es geht dem sentimentalischen Genie hier, wie wir bey dem naiven gesehen haben.' 'The same thing happens here to the sentimental genius that we have witnessed in the naive.'

¹⁸NA, 20, p. 437. 'They are, as one can see, extremely different from one another, but there is a higher concept under which both can be subsumed, and we should not be taken aback if this concept should coincide with the idea of humanity.'

¹⁹See especially the footnote NA, 20, p. 449, and the later revelation that these terms refer of course to ideas and not things: 'denn endlich ist jene schöne Zusammenstimmung zwischen Empfinden und Denken, welche den Charakter desselben ausmacht, doch nur eine Idee, die in der Wirklichkeit nie ganz erreicht wird' (NA, 20, p. 477). 'For, in the end, that fine accord between feeling and thinking in which character subsists, is still only an idea that is never entirely achieved in actuality.'

opposed kinds of poetry he purports to be describing, ironically supports his main point regarding the closeness between them, and the need for a combination of the two:

Denn endlich müssen wir es doch gestehen, daß weder der naive noch der sentimentalische Charakter, für sich allein betrachtet, das Ideal schöner Menschlichkeit ganz erschöpfen, das nur aus der innigen Verbindung beyder hervorgehen kann.²⁰

Achieving this union, discovering its essential nature, is best accomplished by extracting the poetic from both the naive and the sentimental, i.e., by taking something from the one and equally from its apparently diametrically opposed other:

Man gelangt am besten zu dem wahren Begriff dieses Gegensatzes, wenn man, wie ich eben bemerkte, sowohl von dem naiven als von dem sentimentalischen Charakter absondert, was beyde poetisches haben.²¹

Poetry can then appeal to both the sensuous ('naive') and the formal ('sentimental') drives: the sensuousness is harnessed, in varying degrees and modes, to the rhetorical structure and form, resulting in the differential harmony that the play drive excites. This, of course, is reminiscent of the views expounded in the *Aesthetic Letters* regarding man's totality, and it is thus evident that these views on poetry only thinly disguise what is really the point: i.e., the nature of man revealed in aesthetic experience. In insisting on the complex nature of poetry, Schiller is thus stressing the essentially poly-perspectival nature of man himself: just as it is a challenge to the poet to harness the sensuousness of diction with the formality of a (probably inherited) poetic structure or genre to attempt to give expression to the reader's feeling, so too it is a challenge to man to perceive and experience the two sides of his nature (and at the same time to see the intrinsic inadequacy of any one-sided approach, any over-emphasis on one side to the exclusion of the other, any refusal to harness the

²⁰NA, 20, p. 491. 'For, in the end, we must concede that neither the naive nor the sentimental character, each considered alone, quite exhausts that ideal of beautiful humanity that can only arise out of the intimate union of both.'

²¹NA, 20, p. 492. 'One can best discover the true concept of this antithesis, as I have just remarked, by abstracting from both the naive and the sentimental character what each possesses of the poetic.'

sensuousness of passion with reason).²² Aesthetic experience, which is the balanced interaction of the two opposing drives in the play drive, answers, then, man's need and desire for wholeness, and is a concept which is central to the concept of Weimar Classicism, worked out by Schiller in close collaboration with Goethe.²³

It is, however, evident that this balancing act between two opposites is by no means an end in itself to the exclusion of everything else: it is a precarious and fragile state which will constantly be at the mercy of an over-emphasis on one side alone. As Wilkinson and Willoughby point out, in the *Aesthetic Letters* even the relationship between the aesthetic and the moral partakes of this precariousness:

from first to last the two ideals of freedom, the aesthetic and the moral, are presented as two possibilities of the human psyche, constantly interacting, the relation between them never fixed.²⁴

This interaction between the two poles calls then for a refining of the concept of polarity when used with reference to Goethe: here we do not witness a simple coming together of two opposites to form an immutable static unity, but rather we have a reciprocal relationship between the component parts, a relationship which is rather volatile rather than stable, organic rather than static. The notion of binary synthesis, defined by Jane Plenderleith²⁵ following Wilkinson and Willoughby²⁶ as 'an alternation of existing polarities in the world [that] is resolved into a new synthesis which maintains and expresses the individual properties of its component parts' would appear to be pertinent to our analysis and certainly a helpful way to describe what constitutes the central category of the aesthetic for Schiller as for Goethe. The full

²²The limitations of the realist are revealed in *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (NA, 20, pp. 493-94): 'aber nie bringt er es auch weiter als zu bedingten Erkenntnissen' ('he will never be able to proceed beyond everything that exists conditionally') and the most that he can achieve is 'eine comparative Allgemeinheit' ('a comparative totality').

²³In fact, in WW (xxxix), it is argued that Goethe's influence on the *Aesthetic Letters* may be far more far-reaching than has often been thought.

²⁴WW lix.

²⁵H. J[ane] Plenderleith, 'The Testament of Dichtung und Wahrheit: An Enquiry into Goethe's Mode of Secularization,' diss., Glasgow U, 1991, 14. See also her article 'An Approach to Goethe's Treatment of Religion in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*,' *German Life and Letters* 46 (1993): 297-310.

²⁶See introduction, commentary and glossary of terms in WW.

extent of the usefulness of this notion of binary synthesis will become apparent in Chapter 5.

With reference to 'poetry' as Goethe inherited the concept from Herder and helped elaborate it in collaboration with Schiller there, then, is a constant interaction, a binary synthesis, between the sensuousness of the 'Stoff' (in the sense of the bodily properties of the medium of language) and the formal structures of the 'Form' (the rhetorical and semantic medium through which he has to express his inner life) which results in a poetic whole whose constituent parts are inextricably linked and cannot be separated. The inner life of man is then only given expression when his experience is articulated through the interplay between the semantic meanings of the words themselves with the sensuousness of the language, its visual appearance, its sound and look. The 'Gestalt' of the work (and its 'Gehalt')²⁷ are not necessarily easily perceptible (reflecting clearly the difficulty of ^{the} challenge faced by the poet) and can only be apprehended when close attention to the texture of the work is paid, as Goethe himself notes in a letter to Benecke.²⁸

We have already seen that Schiller categorised Goethe as a naive poet (or in other words, a realist, a Classicist), yet it cannot be forgotten that Goethe is often considered to be on the other side of the equation; to be sentimental, and idealist, a Romantic.²⁹ He does, of course, deal with subjects, which may be considered

²⁷See Goethe's maxim: 'Den Stoff sieht jedermann vor sich, den Gehalt findet nur der, der etwas dazu zu thun hat, und die Form ist ein Geheimniß den meisten' (Hecker 289). 'The subject-matter is visible to everyone, content is only discovered by him who has something to contribute, and form is a mystery to most' (Stopp 35). This maxim is helpful in elaborating the problem, faced by the poet and the reader, and also in making Goethe's point that 'der Gehalt liegt in der Gestalt.'

²⁸12 November 1822 (HA Briefe, 4, pp. 53-54). See Chapter 2, note 40 above and Appendix (iii) (a), pp. 266-67.

²⁹The use and misuse of the term 'Romanticism' renders the term almost redundant without further elaboration, and to categorise any poet in this way without further explanation is not especially helpful. The fact that the terms 'Romantic', 'ideal' and 'sentimental' can all refer to something fundamentally very similar only highlights this problem. I find these terms of use only in relation to their corresponding counterparts: 'Classical', 'real' and 'naive'. For relevant discussion of the problem of the definition of 'Romanticism' see Arthur O. Lovejoy, 'On the Discrimination of Romanticisms', *PMLA* 39 (1924): 229-53; 'On the Meaning of "Romantic" in Early German Romanticism', *Modern Language Notes* 31 (1916): 385-96; and 'Schiller and the Genesis of Romanticism', *Modern Language Notes* 35 (1920): 1-10 and 136-46.

Romantic, but, on close analysis of the poetry, it should quickly become apparent that this is no Romantic, sentimental, ideal poetry in the familiar sense of expressing idealising longing for some absolute. What Goethe succeeds in producing is a poetry so vital, so 'lebendig', that the abstractions of the mere form are necessary, but only in the interaction with the physicality of the language. Goethe's belief that the only way to articulate the particular is precisely through the particular is clear.³⁰ It is this realisation which results in a vision where particularity will always have the upper hand in an eternally oscillating synthesis between the worlds of reality and imagination.

In his attempt to articulate the inner life, to follow Herder's call to express feeling, Goethe uses the artificial medium of language in conjunction with natural human feeling to produce a work of art, an aesthetic form, which, as Stephenson notes, 'exhibits the same sensuous-abstract quality as the felt-thought it is designed to express.'³¹ By successfully expressing the inner life in this way, the benefits for the author seem clear: not only does he gain insight into his own human condition ('Humanität'), but, through aesthetic experience, he now has the ability to look at the world with attitudes founded co-ordinately on reason and feeling.³² It is only this co-

³⁰See R[oger] H. Stephenson, *Goethe's Conception of Knowledge and Science* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995) 59-60. See Goethe's maxim quoted therein: 'Das Besondere unterliegt ewig dem Allgemeinen; das Allgemeine hat ewig sich dem Besondern zu fügen' (Hecker 199) and 'Das Allgemeine und Besondere fallen zusammen: das Besondere ist das Allgemeine, unter verschiedenen Bedingungen erscheinend' (Hecker 569). 'What is particular is eternally defeated by what is general; the general has eternally to fit in with the particular' (Stopp 23) and 'The general and the particular coincide; the particular is the general made manifest under different conditions' (Stopp 76). Stephenson (*Knowledge and Science* 62) also points out that, 'to the mind nurtured in a mechanistic medium, Goethe's insistence on the difference between "detail" (available to conceptual thought) and the particular (available only to sensuous apprehension), obvious enough to anyone familiar with the arts, would seem nonsensical: "So wird ein Mann, zu den sogenannten exakten Wissenschaften geboren und gebildet, auf der Höhe seiner Verstandesvernunft nicht leicht begreifen, daß es auch eine exakt sinnliche Phantasie geben könne, ohne welche doch eigentlich keine Kunst denkbar ist" (HA, 13, p. 42).' Stephenson (*Knowledge and Science* 62) cites the German in a footnote and the following English translation in the text: 'anyone born and educated to the so-called exact sciences will not easily grasp from the heights of his rational intellect [...] that there can be such a thing as an exact-sensuous imagination (without which art would be inconceivable).'

³¹See Stephenson, *Goethe's Wisdom Literature* 157.

³²See Stephenson, *Goethe's Wisdom Literature* 157.

ordination between the sensuous and the abstract, with the emphasis on the sensuous, which affords an insight into 'Das Lebend'ge'.³³

Goethe's views on aesthetics and poetry can be seen as a refinement of the views espoused by Baumgarten, developed by Herder, and those worked out in collaboration with Schiller. The relevance of the notions of polarity, binary synthesis and particularity, so central to Weimar Classicism, will prove useful in delineating the similarities between Goethe and Byron.

Let us now turn our attention to Byron to see what we might find on investigating Byron's few words on the subject of aesthetics and poetry. His comment 'I by no means rank poetry high in the scale of intelligence — this may look like Affectation — but it is my real opinion'³⁴ would not seem to augur well for any similarity with Goethe whatsoever. A comment to Murray some four years later, however, may just offer some hope otherwise: 'Opinions are made to be changed — or how is truth to be got at?'³⁵

While in Germany Baumgarten and Herder were being read and refined into the thought of Goethe and Schiller, a parallel movement took place in Britain, where the views of Alexander Pope were absorbed and refined into the thought of Byron on the one hand and Coleridge and the other Lake poets on the other. Indeed Coleridge's indebtedness to German philosophy, especially to that of Fichte and Schelling, is unmistakable and much of the *Biographia Literaria* betrays its German origins. There was, however, no great friendship and collaboration between Coleridge and

³³'Selige Sehnsucht', stanza 1, line 3 (*West-östlicher Divan*, ed. Erich Trunz, Hamburger Ausgabe, vol. 2 (München: C. H. Beck, 1989) 18). All references to the *West-östlicher Divan* are to the HA. For those unfamiliar with German, an English-German facing edition of the text is available: *West Eastern Divan. West-östlicher Divan*, trans. J. Whaley (London: Oswald Wolff, 1974). See also Stephenson, *Goethe's Wisdom Literature* 157-58.

³⁴29 November 1813 to Annabella Millbanke (LJ, 3, p. 179).

³⁵9 May 1817 (LJ, 5, p. 221).

Byron, and, although they were friendly as young men, Byron's despair at the direction which Coleridge's writings were taking is apparent:

And Coleridge, too, has lately taken wing,
But like a hawk encumber'd with his hood,
Explaining metaphysics to the nation —
I wish he would explain his Explanation.³⁶

Coleridge's interest in philosophy and metaphysics allies him more to Schiller than Goethe, and surely Byron's dislike of metaphysics is not too dissimilar to Goethe's aversion to unduly abstract philosophy. A letter to Schiller³⁷ reveals Goethe's conviction that the theoretical can only be of use to the artist or writer when he is actually in the process of producing a work. Again Goethe's conviction that the abstraction of the theory must exist in tandem with the sensuousness of the language and can only gain resonance in this way is clear. Whether anything similar can be said of Byron remains to be seen.

What is immediately obvious, however, is that Byron, like Goethe, is often categorised as a Romantic poet; a categorisation which pays little heed to the later works of both and none to the fact that neither was (or is) categorised as such within their own country. Both stand noticeably apart from their so-called Romantic contemporaries, although both clearly displayed so-called Romantic tendencies in their works. Although Byron does not call Romanticism 'sick' as does Goethe,³⁸ his comments on many of his contemporaries, especially Wordsworth and Southey, were utterly scathing:

They are the most despicable impostors — that is my opinion of them.
They know nothing of the world; and what is poetry, but the reflection
of the world?³⁹

³⁶*Don Juan*, Dedication. 2 (PW, 5, p. 3).

³⁷30 June 1798 (WA, IV, 13, p. 198).

³⁸2 April 1829 (Eckermann 300). 'Das Klassische nenne ich das Gesunde, und das Romantische das Kranke.' 'Classicism I call healthy, Romanticism sick.'

³⁹24 March 1814 to James Hogg (LJ, 4, p. 85).

This idea appears rather similar to the Goethean view of the function and ability of poetry to express the world as reflected through the inner life, lived experience. Yet, several comments made by Byron also make one believe that he was indeed a Romantic poet in the sense in which his contemporaries were. He writes to Murray thus:

I can't *furberish*. — I am like the tyger (in poesy) if I miss my first Spring — I go growling back to my Jungle. — There is no second. — I can't correct — I can't — & I won't. ⁴⁰

This is a comment, however, that is glaringly untrue, as any glance at a Byron manuscript betrays: Byron made endless changes to his manuscripts and did not leave his initial outpourings, but fanatically revised his work until happy with it. This fanaticism for apparently mere external form is what sets him apart from other so-called Romantics and explains his dislike for contemporaries such as Wordsworth. Yet, on the other hand, his interest in passion — what Goethe and Schiller called 'Gehalt' — is clear, as he asks Murray, 'Are not the *passions* the food and fuel of poesy?'⁴¹ and tells his future wife that 'the great object of this life is Sensation — to feel that we exist — even though in pain'.⁴² The comment to Murray is surely also reminiscent of Goethe's desire in poetry to express the passions, the inner life, and acknowledges the fundamental role played by passion in the creation of poetry. Nevertheless other comments make it clear that these views are not perhaps as translucent as they might first appear. Byron, like Goethe, perceives the intrinsic problem of how to express the inner life, that which is by its very nature otherwise inexpressible, in language:

As for poesy — mine is the *dream* of my sleeping Passions — when they are awake — I cannot speak their language — only in their Somnambulism.⁴³

⁴⁰18 November 1820 (LJ, 7, p. 229).

⁴¹17 July 1820 (LJ, 7, p. 132).

⁴²6 September 1813 (LJ, 3, p. 109).

⁴³2 January 1817 to Murray (LJ, 5, p. 157).

Indeed, he is also fully aware that passion is not a unique unchanging everlasting state, but clearly as volatile and transitory as both Goethe and Schiller believed it to be:

I can never get people to understand that poetry is the expression of *excited passion*, and that there is no such thing as a life of passion any more than a continuous earthquake, or an eternal fever.⁴⁴

It is hence clear that Byron's concept of poetry is anything but consistent or coherent and often contradictory. His comments are not presented in any kind of discursive treatise, but in a rather desultory way in letters, journals, conversations and of course the poetry itself. (This contrary nature will become more apparent in the in-depth analysis in the following chapter and only underscores Byron's distrust of all systematic thought.) And yet his central concepts are remarkably consonant with the key-concepts of Weimar aesthetic theory, as outlined above.

Let us now look more closely at Byron's insistence on the importance of form which he fully recognised as the counterpoint to the sensuousness of passion. While a recognition of the importance of passion (in Schillerian terms the 'Stofftrieb') is evident, the necessity for this to be shaped and formed by interacting with form (in Schillerian terms the 'Formtrieb') into the aesthetic object that is a poem is apparent. These views are especially highlighted in Byron's contribution to the Bowles-Pope controversy,⁴⁵ where his unerring admiration of Pope is also perceptible.⁴⁶ For Byron

⁴⁴5 July 1821 to Moore (LJ, 8, p. 146).

⁴⁵I am indebted to Andrew Nicholson's edition *Lord Byron: The Complete Miscellaneous Prose* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) for both the text of the controversy letters (120-83) and his extensive notes (399-491). The Bowles-Pope controversy has its origins in 1806 when William Lisle Bowles published a rather unsympathetic edition of Pope, but only really gained momentum when, in 1819, Thomas Campbell published his *Specimens of the British Poets* and Bowles responded with *The Invariable Principles of Poetry*. Bowles had, in 1806, been particularly unsympathetic towards both Pope's moral and his poetical character (Nicholson 400) and Nicholson notes that 'by this time the controversy had become thoroughly acrimonious, and the argument over the *poetical* had become smothered under the squabble over the *personal* character of Pope. It was at this juncture that Byron entered the fray with his letter, and its effect was immediate and decisive: it instantly defused the issue, and restored to the controversy its principal poetical focus.' (Nicholson 405). Although Byron's contribution to the controversy is relatively small, it does nevertheless reveal a great deal about his views on poetry and 'however eccentric or unorthodox its convictions, it documents a long-held and firm belief in the sovereignty of the classical tradition of literature, and is perhaps the more persuasive

it becomes clear that art without form is useless and meaningless, and that what interests him primarily is the aesthetic in the sense in which Herder employed the term, the artificial which is employed to capture the felt sensuousness of real life. When discussing the possibility of moving ruins from Athens to London, Byron is sceptical and stresses the beauty of the ruins themselves (that is the artificial, the man-made) and its ability to beautify its natural surroundings:

the ruins are as poetical in Piccadilly as they were in the Parthenon —
but the Parthenon and its [*sic*] rock are less so without them.⁴⁷

The subsequent discussion turns to Venice as Byron ponders what makes it poetical:

Is it the Canal which runs between the palace and the prison — or the
'Bridge of Sighs' which connects them that render it poetical?⁴⁸

For Byron it is evident that, 'were it not for the artificial adjuncts above mentioned', Venice and its Canal would be no 'more poetical than that of Paddington' and that 'without these — the Water would be nothing but a clay coloured ditch.'⁴⁹ Just as for Goethe it is the interaction between binary opposites in a binary synthesis which interests him, so too we here witness Byron interested in the link, the connection, the bridge between the artificial and the natural (between 'Stoff' and 'Form'), with the natural only gaining resonance when accompanied by the artificial. It thus appears also as a kind of binary synthesis in the sense that it is a reciprocal relationship. The

by virtue of its forcefulness and sincerity than by any strict observation of formal reasoning. As such it may fairly be regarded (together with "Some Observations" and "Observations upon Observations") as a manifesto aimed directly at the poetical (and political) taste and tenets of the day, principally upheld by such poets as Southey, Wordsworth, Hunt, and Keats.' (Nicholson 408).

⁴⁶Pope is defended throughout the letters: 'his moral is as pure — as his poetry is glorious' (Nicholson 144); 'He is the moral poet of all Civilization — and as such let us hope that he will one day be the National poet of Mankind. — He is the only poet that never shocks — the only poet whose *faultlessness* — has been made his reproach.' (Nicholson 151); 'the greatest moral poet of any age — or in any language.' (Nicholson 162). And in a letter to Murray on 4 November 1820 he says he considers Pope 'the most faultless of Poets, and almost of men' (LJ, 7, p. 217). In conversation with Lady Blessington he reiterates his praise: 'I have also been suspected of jealousy towards ancient as well as modern writers; but Pope, whose poems I really envy, and whose works I admire, perhaps more than any living or dead English writer, they have never found out that I was jealous of, nay, probably, as I always praise him, they suppose I do not seriously admire him, as insincerity on all points is universally attributed to me' (Blessington, p. 160). As Nicholson notes, however, 'Byron's sympathy for Pope here cannot be wholly separated from his own sensitivity to his lameness' (Nicholson 418).

⁴⁷Nicholson 133.

⁴⁸Nicholson 134.

⁴⁹Nicholson 134.

superiority of art over nature is evident here and throughout the controversy letters as Byron notes that:

it is the great scope of the Sculptor to heighten Nature into heroic beauty — i.e. — in plain English to surpass his model.⁵⁰

And Byron's comment that 'Art is not inferior to Nature for poetical purposes'⁵¹ is strikingly similar to one made by Schiller at the end of *Über das Erhabene*:

Da aber der ganze Zauber des Erhabenen und Schönen nur in dem Schein und nicht in dem Inhalt liegt, so hat die Kunst alle Vortheile der Natur ohne ihre Fesseln mit ihr zu theilen.⁵²

Despite the absence of an outwardly rigorous form of argumentation in these letters, Byron's insistence on the importance of form is easily discernible, and it is surely possible that what Goethe sees and admires in Byron is that mastery of the (detail of) formal medium which for him, as for Herder and Schiller, makes an artist great (and which was, in his view, lacking in many a German Romantic).⁵³

What also shines through these letters is Byron's persistent emphasis on the need for poetic truth ('Gehalt', within a work, for a Goethe and Schiller). He comments on Pope's lines 'That not in fancy's maze he wandered long / But *stooped* to Truth and moralized his Song', saying that 'he should have written "rose to truth"',⁵⁴ placing truth thus at the very pinnacle of any poetic hierarchy. Indeed Byron had previously emphasised the significance of truth in a letter to Murray:

But I hate things *all fiction* [...] there should always be some foundation of fact for the most airy fabric — and pure invention is but the talent of a liar.⁵⁵

⁵⁰Nicholson 136.

⁵¹Nicholson 138.

⁵²NA, 21, p. 54. 'But as the whole enchantment of the Sublime and Beautiful consists only in the show and not in the contents, art has every advantage over nature, without sharing her fetters' (*The Philosophical and Aesthetic Letters and Essays of Schiller*, trans. and intro. J. Weiss (London, 1845) 260).

⁵³See conversation on 28 April 1825 with Soret and Congreve: 'jeder Pinselstrich bei ihm ist eine Offenbarung der Wahrheit.' (FA, 37, p. 271). For the full conversation and a translation see Appendix (iii) (d), pp. 283-86.

⁵⁴Nicholson 143.

⁵⁵2 April 1817 to Murray (LJ, 5, p. 203).

It is hence clear that this truth he advocates is one based in fact, but not exclusively so, and filtered through the structures of poetry to make it a 'poetic' truth. Again we discern an almost Goethean interaction between two things ('Dichtung und Wahrheit') to the mutual benefit of each. Personal lived experience is paramount in the production of this poetic truth and it is this basis in fact, filtered through and thereby expressed by the shapes and forms of poetry, that lend the poetry, as in Goethe and Schiller's account, its particularity. What Byron achieves personally by using his own personal experience is a degree of distance between the actual reality and the poetic truth in the poem: the full emotional force of the experience is fashioned into this form and thus its author is afforded a degree of detachment. It is this almost cathartic purging of the inner life that Byron states, in his journal, is his goal:

To withdraw *myself* from *myself* (oh that cursed selfishness!) has ever been my sole, my entire, my sincere motive in scribbling at all; and publishing is also the continuance of the same object, by the action it affords to the mind, which else recoils upon itself.⁵⁶

Indeed, this degree of detachment inherent in aesthetic experience is very much akin to that noted by Iser:

The ability to perceive oneself during the process of participation is an essential quality of the aesthetic experience; the observer finds himself in a strange, halfway position: he is involved, and he watches himself being involved.⁵⁷

Of course Goethe too believed in the importance of personal experience for the production of poetry,⁵⁸ however, in his case the experience may not be the literal but a contemplative one. And the importance for Goethe of filtering nature, reality, through one's own being is apparent in conversation with Müller on 3 April 1824:

Die Nachahmung der Natur durch die Kunst ist um so glücklicher, je tiefer das Object in den Künstler eingedrungen und je größer und

⁵⁶27 November 1813 (LJ, 3, p. 225).

⁵⁷See Iser 134.

⁵⁸'Alle meine Gedichte sind Gelegenheitsgedichte, sie sind durch die Wirklichkeit angeregt und haben darin Grund und Boden. Von Gedichten aus der Luft gegriffen halte ich nichts.' 18 September 1823 (Eckermann 44). 'All my poems are occasional poems, suggested by real life, and having therein a firm foundation. I attach no value to poems snatched out of the air' (Oxenford, 1, p. 66).

tüchtiger seine Individualität selbst ist. Ehe man andern etwas darstellt, muß man den Gegenstand erst in sich selbst neu producirt haben.⁵⁹

Goethe's desired interaction between the object and the artist is very much akin to the interaction between truth and the poet in Byron. Byron's frequent protestations regarding the importance of truth are about as close as he ever comes to a constant unchanging view on poetry:

I mean to show things really as they are,
Not as they ought to be.⁶⁰

What then can be concluded from this brief look into Byron's views on aesthetics and poetry? Byron clearly not only dislikes, but, like Goethe, actively distrusts, all systematic thought — in the sense of systematic thought as a single view of things, as a totalising ideology. Indeed, a letter to Thomas Moore, in which Byron talks about a discussion with Leigh Hunt, about one of the latter's works, reveals his views on system:

When I saw 'Rimini' in MSS., I told him that I deemed it good poetry at bottom, disfigured only by a strange style. His answer was, that his style was a system, or *upon system*, or some such cant; and, when a man talks of system, his case is hopeless: so I said no more to him, and very little to anyone else.⁶¹

Nevertheless, in spite of this distrust of any totalising ideology, Byron does not produce a never-ending outpouring of passion unadulterated by reason or form, in what might be called a Romantic fashion, and certain points do stand out clearly. On the one hand Byron insists that the aesthetic, the civilised, the artificial, is far more important than the natural; yet on the other hand he draws a near equation between truth and fact. However contradictory these points may appear to the reader, Byron

⁵⁹Gespräche, 5, p. 62. 'Imitating nature through art is all the more successful the deeper the object has penetrated into the artist and the greater and more competent his individuality. Before one describes something to others, one must first of all have reproduced the object within one's own self.'

⁶⁰*Don Juan*, XII. 40. See also *Don Juan*, end of canto I, especially 202-03.

⁶¹LJ, 6, p. 46.

did not regard them thus: he was not searching for an ideological systemisation of truth, but something far more akin to a human aestheticisation of fact. That Byron provides no simple guide to his beliefs ironically reflects their essential variety and volatility, just as he believed human experience itself to be complex.

Each poet suffers from being inadequately categorised as Romantic and each differs from their so-called Romantic contemporaries in a very similar way: each fully recognises the primacy of passion, but at the same time each is fully aware that the original vital passion must be harnessed by the formal structures of language and poetic convention if an aesthetic object is to be created. An awareness of the essential binary nature of man himself is clear in Goethe, while it would appear that, for Byron, man may be as contradictory and complex as his own method of argumentation. For both poets it appears that it is the interaction, the oscillating binary synthesis between the real and the ideal, the body and the mind, the artificial and the natural, that results in the beauty that is the aesthetic object or, in the case of man himself, in aesthetic experience which will make him human.

Points of contact between the two poets abound and, like the conceptual similarities in their respective views of what constitutes poetry, beg a closer investigation that cannot be achieved by looking simply at the theoretical (which both Byron and Goethe both ultimately distrusted). We should surely follow Goethe's advice, noted above, that the only way to apprehend the 'Gestalt' of a text and hence its 'Gehalt' is to scrutinise the texture of the work and a close textual analysis is what will be undertaken in the following chapter.

Chapter Five:
Textual Analysis: from
Ästhetik to Humanität

The *West-östlicher Divan* and *Don Juan*, the texts on which I will be focusing in this Chapter, are, at first glance, outwardly so dissimilar as to invite no comparison, but I hope to show that looking closely at poems so apparently diverse proves illuminating, in that it delineates the aesthetic/poetic links between Goethe and Byron. On the one hand, we see in the *West-östlicher Divan*, published for the first time in 1819, although Goethe had begun it as early as 1814, a cycle of twelve books of poems displaying a very tight cyclical structure, with all the poems linked somehow to one another. An algebraic set model best describes how the cycle is structured: each poem is an individual member of a set, a 'Buch', and each 'Buch' is in turn a member of the larger set, so that each 'Buch' is a subset of the whole set and each poem is a subset of each 'Buch'. It is then no surprise that each poem only gains in resonance when considered within this wider context, although it is always possible to consider it in isolation. The cycle uses a variety of metrical forms and themes, particularly inspired by the Persian lyric poet Shams al-Din Muhammed Hafis (?1326-90), who was best known for his many short poems about love and wine, often treated as religious symbols. On the other hand, we have *Don Juan* (published 1819-1824, except for Canto XVII, which was not published until 1903), an unfinished poem of 17 cantos with a far more linear structure as far as it goes, using ottava rima throughout. The influence is not a 14th century Persian poet, but the Italian burlesque epics of Pulci and Berni¹ of the 15th century, and of course a legendary Spanish nobleman and philanderer, who had already gained fame in many poems, plays and operas.² What holds *Don Juan* together as a whole is nothing other than the presentation of the persona of Byron himself. Here, however, a connection to Goethe is already perceptible, as, whatever else the *West-östlicher Divan* might be, the authorial voice is apparent throughout. Perhaps they are not so different as they first appear: each does have a vast variety of themes at his disposal and uses these many

¹Luigi Pulci, 1432-84, and Francesco Berni, ?1497-1535. For an in-depth analysis of Italian influences on Byron, see Peter Vassallo, *Byron: the Italian Literary Influence* (London: Macmillan, 1984).

²For example, Tirso de Molina, *El Burlador de Sevilla* (1630); Molière, *Dom Juan* (1665); Goldoni, *Don Giovanni Tenorio* (1736); Mozart, *Don Giovanni* (1787).

literary traditions in their work. The influence of Hafis in Goethe, and the Bible, the Koran, Shakespeare, Pope and classical Greek and Roman poets in particular is common to both. Both Byron and Goethe are clearly parasitic and thus we have a second connection before we even begin our in-depth textual analysis. Each poet uses contemporary events to lend a synchronic dimension to their texts — especially evident in the influence of Napoleon on the 'Buch Timur' and on the war cantos of *Don Juan* — but this does not detract from the diachronic dimension in either. Despite the apparent rigidity of the ottava rima form, Byron plays with it, undermines it and stretches it to its limit, just as Goethe, equally playfully, manipulates the various poetic forms, for example the ghazel form, he employs. Each poet has a conversational, easy style which often belies the seriousness of the point being made and each makes constant use of irony. Variety in *Don Juan* is then perceptible in Byron's use of satire, epic, mock heroic, his change in tone from serious to playful, all dealing with themes from love to war and travel; from Spain to Greece, Turkey, Russia and England with frequent digressions. Variety is also a key principle perceptible in the *West-östlicher Divan* and here we also see variety in poetic forms: the themes of love, war and travel are common to Goethe here too, as well as the favourite themes he inherits from Hafis: 'Lieben, Trinken, Singen' ('Hegire', stanza 1, line 6).³

In this chapter the focus will be on a close analysis of twelve poems from the *West-östlicher Divan* and twelve short sections from *Don Juan*. In each case I have begun with the Goethe poem and then proceeded to my chosen section of Byron. This is for purely formal reasons: the formal structure of the Goethe poems varies considerably throughout in a way which the ottava rima employed by Byron throughout *Don Juan* does not; hence, in order to provide a wide range of different formal poetic structures to compare with the ottava rima of *Don Juan*, it is necessary to begin with Goethe. My selection is limited purely due to space constraints, but serves to highlight the

³HA, 2, p. 7.

similarities between the two works, otherwise overlooked: even in such a sample-analysis differences and similarities become all too apparent. I have tried to be as random as possible in my selection of pieces for close analysis, choosing as far as possible poems from different books of the *West-östlicher Divan*, ranging from those few which might seem to invite comparison with Byron to less obvious comparisons which nonetheless yield interesting results. In a similar fashion I have also selected sections from as many different cantos of *Don Juan* as possible, often employing little more than a seemingly tenuous superficial thematic similarity as the selection criterion. This almost random method of selection will, I hope, serve to emphasise my thesis that there are far more intrinsic similarities between Byron and Goethe than might be immediately obvious.

1 'Hegire' ('Buch des Sängers')⁴ and *Don Juan*, I. 1-7.⁵

The very title of this the first poem of the *West-östlicher Divan* introduces the eastern flavour which colours the entire collection: Hegira or Hejira (the English forms) is the departure of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina in 622AD and represents the starting point of the Muslim era. It does also mean an emigration, escape or flight and is hence all the more appropriate as a title when we read that a flight to the (imaginary) East is indeed what is desired in stanza 1: 'Flüchte du, im reinen Osten' (line 3). 'Hegire' is a poem of 7 stanzas each of 6 lines, all of which contain only rhyming couplets. The fact that this is the opening poem of the cycle leads us to expect that it will provide an introduction and hint at many of the predominant themes of the text to follow.

Stanza 1 emphatically contrasts the turmoil of the situation from which the poet wishes to flee, by placing, not only the West, but also the North and the South, in direct opposition to the East. The verbs 'zersplittern' (line 1), 'bersten' and 'zittern' (line 2) reflect the violence of this turmoil and thus the first two explosive, rhyming lines, before the emphatic imperative 'Flüchte du' at the beginning of line 3, stress the poet's haste to escape from his own present situation, an actuality underlined by the use of the present tense in lines 1 and 2. This description is clearly a reference to the political turmoil of the Europe of the time caused by the Napoleonic wars, yet, after reading the complete cycle, we realise that the resonances of this are far more diachronic, referring also to the time of Hafis when Timur was the tyrant wreaking

⁴HA, 2, pp. 7-8. See Hendrik Birus, 'Begegnungen des Westlichen und Östlichen in Goethes *West-östlichem Divan*,' *Goethe Jahrbuch* 114 (1997): 113-31 and FA, 3.2, pp. 882-95; Ingeborg Hillman, *Dichtung als Gegenstand der Dichtung: Untersuchungen zum Problem der Einheit des West-östlichen Divan* (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1965) 71-76; Edith Ihekweazu, *Goethes West-östlicher Divan. Untersuchungen zur Struktur des lyrischen Zyklus* (Hamburg: Hartmut Lüdke, 1971) 45-60; Esin Ileri, *Goethes West-östlicher Divan als imaginäre Orient-Reise. Sinn und Funktion*. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1982) 181-203; Lutz Köpnick, 'Goethes Ikonisierung der Poesie: Zur Schriftmagie des West-östlichen Divans,' *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft* 66 (1992): 380-82 and 387-88; Monika Lemmel, *Poetologie in Goethes West-östlichem Divan* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1987) 13-16, 26,75, 82, 120-32.

⁵PW, 5, pp. 9-11. See McGann, PW, 5, pp. 673-74.

havoc. Hence we can perceive that in fact this could be any conflict in any time and any accompanying desire to escape from it. Only in the middle of line 3 are we told the destination of this flight: the contrast to 'Nord und West und Süd' (line 1) is enhanced by the change in the rhyme in lines 3 and 4, away from the violence of 'zersplittern' and 'zittern', to 'Osten' and 'kosten'. This, together with the adjective 'rein', depicting no movement or violence whatsoever, results in a picture of this East as a calm and desirable destination. 'Patriarchenluft' (line 3), with its biblical connotations, highlights the fact that this is not merely a geographical flight to the East, but also a temporal one; moving back from the present time to the time of the Old Testament. Yet this apparently far-off spiritual time is made all the more real by the sensory nature of the verb 'kosten' and in the following line by the verbal nouns 'Lieben, Trinken, Singen'. Thus the second and third rhyming couplets of the stanza are both linked by these verbs and the description of what this East should be like and at the same time differentiated by the different rhyme. The fact that the rhyme between 'Singen' and 'verjüngen' is not quite pure illustrates Goethe's willingness to use the rhyming couplet form while stretching it to its very limits. Here in the very first stanza we have three of the predominant themes of Hafis' poetry and also of the *West-östlicher Divan* itself: the 'Buch des Sängers', the 'Buch der Liebe' and 'Das Schenkenbuch' are but three obvious examples. 'Chisers Quell' (line 6) underlines the eastern flavour to the text: Chiser⁶ occurs frequently in eastern poetry and it was he, dressed in green, who offered Hafis a drink from this life source giving him thus eternal fame. That Hafis, as a Muslim, should be drinking wine at all is blasphemous; yet wine-drinking is a recurrent theme in his poetry. And so we see a Persian poet willing to challenge limits for his art, just as we see a German one manipulating form and content in order to do likewise. The notion of rejuvenation is already present in the 'Hexenküche' of *Faust I*, and was surely close to Goethe's own heart considering

⁶Chiser was the protector of the source of life who granted Hafis the privilege of drinking from it, and promised him immortal fame (Birus, FA, 3.2, p. 886).

he was, at the time of composition of the *West-östlicher Divan*, already over sixty.⁷ Yet it is clearly not a purely physical rejuvenation that is desired: the poet is surely looking to the East and the origins of both Christianity and Islam furthermore for poetic rejuvenation, for mental inspiration. Typically the desired rejuvenation is two-sided and inter-dependent: it is both physical, so that he might once more be able to enjoy the delights of a loving sexual relationship, and mental, so that he might once more be able to create and write poetry. In Goethe's terms it is 'sinnlich-geistig' ('sensuous-intellectual').⁸

Stanza 2 sets the scene firmly in the East with the very first word 'Dort', before describing it as 'im Reinen und im Rechten', immediately linking it back to the 'rein' of stanza 1, line 3, and thus accentuating the purity of this East and contrasting it even more starkly with the chaos of the present. The poet's desire is still evident here by the emphatic positioning of 'Will' at the beginning of line 2. In fact the verb 'wollen' occurs no fewer than another four times throughout 'Hegire', stressing, not only the strength and constancy of the desire, but also the fact that this is only the beginning, and any possible fulfilment of these many desires is still to come. Here we witness a desire to trace the source of the human race by returning to its origins 'Ursprungs Tiefe'; linked obviously to 'Chisers Quell' of stanza 1, and this downward movement, contrasted with the 'Patriarchenluft', also of stanza 1, and the more horizontal movement suggested in a simple geographical flight from the West to the East. That this is a personal desire is clear by the shift from the 'du' of stanza 1 to the 'ich' used here (line 2), although the 'du' addressed in stanza 1 seems likely to be the poet actually addressing himself as if he were a divided self. Lines 3 and 4 are united through rhyme ('dringen' and 'empfangen'), yet separated through the change in tense

⁷See also the maxim from *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, Part 2, Chapter 4: 'Einem bejahrten Manne verdachte man, daß er sich noch um junge Frauenzimmer bemühte. "Es ist das einzige Ding," versetzte er, "sich zu verjüngen, und das will doch jedermann"' (HA, 6, pp. 384-85). 'A man of advancing years was criticized for continuing to concern himself with young women. "It is the only way of staying young oneself," he replied, "and that, after all, is what everyone wants"' (*Elective Affinities*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986) 181).

⁸*Italienische Reise*, Rome, December 1787 (HA, 11, p. 456).

from present to preterite as the origins of the human race are delineated. The religious connotations of lines 4-5 are evident and are surely relevant, not only to Christianity and God giving Moses the ten commandments in Hebrew on tablets of stone, but also to Mohammed giving his people the Koran in Arabic. The final line, 'Und sich nicht den Kopf zerbrachen', is clearly ironic as the human race, regardless of religion, has done exactly the opposite ever since.

Starting with 'Wo', the first line of stanza 3 is clearly parallel to stanza 2, line 4, as the description of this past time continues throughout stanza 3. Moreover, this stanza cleverly and symmetrically reflects its predecessor with 'Dort', 'Will' and 'Wo' (stanza 2, lines 1, 2, 4), recurring here in reverse order as 'Wo', 'Will' and 'dort' (stanza 3, lines 1, 3, 5). 'Väter' echoes the 'Patriarchenluft' of stanza 1 and again rhyme is used in lines 1 and 2 both to join and to divide: 'verehrten' and 'verwehrten' unite in their rhyme, but simultaneously pull away from one another in meaning. 'Jugendschranke' (line 3) again underlines the notion of rejuvenation sought in the East, yet the negative connotations of limitation are also clear and reinforced by the rhyme with 'eng der Gedanke' in line 4. It is ironic that these connotations of limitation appear precisely at the moment when the rhyme changes: we still see the rhyming couplets we have seen throughout, but it is here for the first time that we see an end rhyme that is not dependent on 'n'. The use of chiasmus here in line 4 accentuates the contrast between the narrowness of the thought 'eng der Gedanke' and the vastness of the belief 'Glaube weit'. These apparent opposites of thought and belief are nonetheless linked by alliteration, implying ironically a closer relationship than the chiasmus suggests. Lines 5 and 6 are linked clearly by the playful end rhyme 'dort war' and 'Wort war', and also by the appearance of 'Wort' twice in line 5. 'Wort' is thus highlighted and further so by the adjective 'wichtig' (line 5) and again in line 6, when it is pinpointed as the spoken word 'ein gesprochen Wort'. The importance of the oral tradition in ancient Arabic culture is well-known; but surely the importance here assigned to the spoken word also prefigures the frequent use of dialogue throughout

the *West-östlicher Divan*, thus revealing the necessity of the presence of an Other. And so the collection as a whole evokes a particularity and vivacity which emerges via this focusing, that is, primarily on the two named lovers Hatem and Suleika.

A very real and vivid picture of the East is painted in stanza 4 as the poet proceeds to elaborate his wishes, again emphatically starting the line with the elliptical 'Will mich' (line 1), parallel to stanza 3, line 3. This very specific delineation of this unspecified East, with its 'Hirten' (line 1), 'Oasen' (line 2), 'Karawanen' (line 3), 'Schal, Kaffee und Moschus' (line 4), lends a vivacity to the picture and underlines the fact that the poet not only wants to travel to the East, but to experience the full diversity of this East. The poet's sense of taste will revel in the refreshment of the oases and the coffee⁹ and his sense of smell cannot fail to be affected by the coffee aroma and the heady scent of musk. The length of time he wishes to spend there enjoying everything to the full is highlighted by the leisurely pace implied by 'wandle' (line 3) and also by the fact that he wants to travel by caravan. This almost Faustian desire for all-encompassing experience is also evident in 'Jeden Pfad will ich betreten' (line 5) and further accentuated by line 6 by the addition of more geographical detail 'Von der Wüste zu den Städten'. In contrast to the vertical movement implied in stanza 2, here the movement is horizontal, mirroring the travel theme perceptible throughout. Line 6 is typical of the whole of the *West-östlicher Divan* in so far as it reveals a desire to experience both ends of the spectrum from the desert to the town, just as throughout we see a desire, a necessity to experience both sides of everything: physical and spiritual, West and East, joy and pain, for each is essential to the other. Only when both are experienced can an enriching and truly satisfying experience occur.

In stanza 5 Hafis is mentioned explicitly and emphatically for the first time (line 2) and thereby we see the scene move further east from the deserts of Arabia and North

⁹Coffee is an anachronism in the ancient Arabic world, for coffee-drinking only reached the Islamic world from Ethiopia from the 13th century (Birus, FA, 3.2, p. 890).

Africa to Persia.¹⁰ That the poet feels a close relationship with Hafis is reflected in the familiar form used to describe his poems 'deine Lieder' (line 2). Here the poet is not composing and creating himself, but employing Hafis' songs to comfort him as he drives his caravan over the rough road, 'Bösen Felsweg' (line 1), and to frighten off any thieves (line 6). The effect of the rough road is countered by the 'Lieder', which nonetheless, just like the roads, go 'auf und nieder' (line 1) and appropriately rhyme with them too. The significance of this singing as a protective measure against these thieves is highlighted by the enjambement between lines 4 and 5, thus stressing 'Singt' at the start of line 5. This 'wenn' clause (lines 3-5) echoes stanza 4, line 3 and also prefigures stanza 6, line 3, thus linking all three stanzas structurally as well as from the point of view of content. And so we see here Hafis' songs being employed, not by other poets, other singers, but by the everyday driver of a caravan trying to protect himself. Hence the extent of the influence of these songs is stressed; simply by focusing on one particular caravan driver, we see an indication of the practical life-enhancing uses to which Art (poetry) may be put. Here again it is the focusing on the particular which affords this stanza, and indeed the whole text, its vivacity.

Stanza 6 continues with the delineation of the poet's many desires and is structurally linked to the rest of the poem by the repetition of the verb 'Will' (line 1) and the 'Wenn' clause (line 3). From a content point of view here we have an elaboration of the 'Lieben, Trinken, Singen' of stanza 1: 'Schenken' in line 1 again foreshadows 'Das Schenkenbuch', 'Liebchen' (line 3) the 'Buch der Liebe' and 'Buch Suleika', and 'des Dichters Liebeflüstern' (line 5) links to this the 'Buch des Sängers' and the 'Buch Hafis'. Indeed the very sensuous atmosphere pervading the whole stanza also prefigures the whole of the rest of the text, especially the 'Buch Suleika'. This sensuous atmosphere is created by the depiction of sensual pleasure: the 'Bädern' to please the touch, the 'Schenken' the taste buds, the 'Ambralocken' the nose and the eye, the 'Liebeflüstern' the ear and the 'Huris' the eye. This heady scent of ambergris

¹⁰See Birus, FA, 3.2, p. 891.

fills the air ('düftet' (line 4)) as the 'Liebchen' (line 3) lifts her veil and seductively loosens her locks. This lifting of the veil in public, forbidden in Islam, stands then in contrast to the alliterative and not wholly unironic description of Hafis as 'Heil'ger Hafis' (line 2).¹¹ And so, by using a religious word in a secular context, Goethe reflects Hafis' liking for crossing the boundaries of traditional Islam, by lifting the veil and also by drinking wine; but not only that, this also hints at the similar way in which he will also approach and cross the boundaries of Christian religion, thus accentuating the similarities between these two apparently opposed religions and cultures. It seems appropriate that the memory of Hafis (line 2) is precipitated by the very sensual nature of these sounds and scents. The subtle eroticism of lines 1-4 becomes explicit in lines 5-6. The rhyme between 'Liebeflüstern' and 'Huris lüstern', underlining the power of the spoken language and of poetry, and echoing stanza 3, connects the poet's love song with the power sexually to excite the nymphs of the Islamic paradise. These 'Huris' hint then at the paradise to be mentioned in the final stanza, but also foreshadow the 'Buch des Paradieses'; the similarity between this word and the word 'Hure', meaning prostitute, also cannot be overlooked by a German reader.

In stanza 7 the focus moves away from the 'ich' which has dominated, back to addressing another, but, instead of this other being just the singular 'du' of stanza 1, this other has now become the familiar plural 'ihr' (line 1) as all readers are addressed. This rather less personal and more general and objective statement in the last 4 lines is prefigured by the detachment implied by this change in personal pronoun, thus making the reader clearly an observer of the poet. Nevertheless, the structural similarity with the rest of the poem continues with the same rhyme scheme, the 'dies' (line 1) referring back, not only to the experiences wished for in stanza 6, but also to the whole vista of experiences desired throughout, and the recurrence of the verb 'wollen' (line 1) hinting that this detachment is perhaps not as definitive as first

¹¹See Birus, FA, 3.2, p. 892.

thought. The personification of the 'Dichterworte' in lines 5 and 6 clearly links this to 'Gute Nacht!' (line 1), with the personification there of the 'liebe Lieder', and line 4, 'Um des Paradieses Pforte', foreshadows the whole of the 'Buch des Paradieses'. Ultimately we are left in no doubt as to the power of language as we see these personified 'Dichterworte' desire 'ew'ges Leben' (line 6), again linking back to the desire for rejuvenation expressed in stanza 1. Yet, just as the rejuvenation in stanza 1 was two-sided, both physical and mental, so too by this personification of the words we perceive a desire for eternal life for the body as well as the products of the mind. The power of poetry is then highlighted in so far as it is ironically the one thing that can have eternal life, in so far as it is not a biological living thing in the first place.

'Hegire', then, has provided what we might have expected, in so far as it lightly and playfully introduces many of the predominant themes of the collection as a whole: (e.g., in stanza 6, that of Memory, and in stanza 7, that of the proximity of the Aesthetic and Mystical, to mention but two). It also introduces many of the poetic techniques used by Goethe throughout: irony, rhyme to link apparent opposites, enjambement, alliteration, for example. Nevertheless, 'Hegire' is an intelligible entity in its own right, despite its clear links to the following text, and as such reflects the essential binary nature of the *West-östlicher Divan* implied in the title itself.

Let us now turn our attention to Byron and to the first seven stanzas of Canto I of *Don Juan* to investigate how he begins his poem. As in 'Hegire', the very title itself *Don Juan* conjures up many images: of a Spanish nobleman, of a seducer of women, not to mention a hero of many plays, operas and pantomimes. In these few stanzas we see the author debating and supporting his choice of Don Juan for his hero, but nonetheless, as in 'Hegire', numerous links to the rest of the poem are discernible: the conversational style, the stretching of the boundaries of the seemingly strict adherence to the ottava rima form and the use of irony.

The opening words 'I WANT a hero' bluntly reveal the author's desire, while simultaneously showing what he is lacking. The repetition of 'want' at the end of line 1 does not exclude either meaning of 'want'; moreover it consciously keeps the two meanings of desire and lack side by side, and so we see even in the very first words a playing with language and an awareness that even it too may not be quite as simple as appearances suggest. Just as Goethe clearly desires an initiated reader, so too we very quickly realise that the reader of this text has to be alert in order to appreciate fully the often subtle hints in the text. The relentless cycle of new contemporary heroes is stressed in line 2 with the time phrases 'year' and 'month', yet their worth is immediately undermined, as is indicated by 'Till' at the start of line 3, which breaks the rhythm and forces the reader too to ponder what has just been said. Here Byron reveals that their fame is but passing and the time phrases of line 2 link then to the test of time in line 4 which all these new heroes have failed: 'The age discovers he is not the true one'. The 'true one' is clearly also a reference to the true Messiah, a notion which pervades the preface and dedication.¹² The irony here is surely reminiscent of Goethe's 'Heil'ger Hafis' in 'Hegire' (stanza 6, line 2). All these transitory heroes are brought together as one and dismissed swiftly in line 5: 'Of such as these I should not care to vaunt', before we are presented in line 6 with the author's personal choice, Don Juan, who is clearly set apart by the description of him as 'our ancient friend'. He has stood the test of time and his familiarity is highlighted by the change from the first person singular 'I' in lines 5 and 6, to the first person plural possessive 'our' in line 6 and the corresponding 'we' in line 7: thus it is clear that this is not only a personal choice, but also a choice into which the reader is being made complicit, lending a sense of security in familiarity. Yet, while Don Juan is painted as 'ancient' in line 6, he nonetheless links by rhyme to 'new one' (line 2) and 'true one' (line 4), suggesting that things might not be quite as simple or familiar as they first appear. Indeed this is further stressed by the strange anglicised way we are forced to pronounce Don Juan so that it rhymes with 'new one' and 'true one', an ironic playing

¹²McGann, PW, 5, p. 673.

with rhyme reminiscent of the rhyme between 'dort war' and 'Wort war' in 'Hegire' (stanza 3, lines 5-6). Again, while we think we are being presented with a hero familiar to us all, what is clear is that what follows will not be a mere regurgitation of previous Don Juans, but something a little different, something familiar taken by Byron and moulded into a new form for his own purposes, just as Goethe takes the poetry of Hafis and moulds it into his own work. Don Juan's familiarity is again emphasised in line 7 with the juxtaposition of 'We' and 'all', and the fact that he is known from the popular farcical genre of pantomime links with the strange anglicised pronunciation of his name while at the same time contrasting with the rather less farcical, if ironic, connotations of 'true one' (line 4). The outcome of the pantomime is forefronted at the beginning of line 8: a fate which adheres to the traditional ending of the Don Juan story, but which seems a little out of place in a pantomime, again hinting that what we will see in this story will not necessarily stick rigidly to the original story and will often surprise the reader. Although this appears to indicate succinctly what Don Juan's fate will be, and there is no reason to doubt that Byron would have his Don Juan follow in those footsteps, it cannot be said exactly how this fate would come about, and we already suspect that, while Byron may be using the traditional story, he will add his own personal twist to it somewhere. Indeed the author's personal opinion about his hero's traditional fate is presented in the second half of line 8 ('somewhat ere his time') indicating his view that Don Juan does not deserve his fate: again another clue that this Don Juan may not just turn out to be the unsympathetic womaniser we expect.

The focus in stanza 2 moves slightly as we are presented with a long list of names, to what purpose it is not immediately clear. Most of these men were famous recent contemporary British military leaders, and as such would have been well-known to readers of the time, even if they are largely forgotten now: in an ironic way this almost supports Byron's decision to choose the tried and tested Don Juan as his hero in place of some contemporary flash in the pan. The list is interrupted abruptly at the

start of line 3 with 'Evil and good', in such a way that it almost appears as if 'Evil and good' are names too, rather than characteristics of the people mentioned. Finally, in the middle of line 3, we find the verb upon which all these people are dependent ('have had their tithe of talk'), thus stressing the brevity of their fame to contrast sharply with the seemingly endless list of names. Line 4 highlights that their legacy amounts to no more than a street named after them and the contrast between the temporal adverbs 'then' and 'now' emphasises the difference between those of lines 1-2 and Wellesley of line 4. Nevertheless they are simultaneously linked by the comparative 'like'. It is clear then that, no matter when these men were around, this is an on-going cycle of possible heroes, none of whom stands out much from his predecessors. This is stressed further in line 5 with 'Each in their turn', and the reference to *Macbeth*, when Macbeth has a vision of eight kings and a smiling Banquo, reinforces this image of never-ending possible heroes. The fact that none stands out and all are monotonously uniform is noticeable, not only from the description of them in line 6 as 'Followers of fame' and then "'nine farrow" of that sow', but also from the alliteration on 'f' throughout. The continued allusion to *Macbeth* and the killing of the piglets by their mother¹³ further highlights the ineffectiveness of the nine mentioned in lines 1-2: they are 'eaten' by something greater and, in the context of *Don Juan*, spat out in favour of Don Juan as the hero. The rhyming of 'sow' with 'Howe' (line 2) also cleverly links the men and the pigs. The apparent shift in line 7 with the geographical move to 'France' is undermined by the fact that this continues the alliteration on 'f', which emphasises only the uniformity of the other possible heroes, and so we expect that any French heroes may not be so different; a similarity again suggested by the addition of 'too' after 'France'. After the mention of two French military heroes 'Buonaparté and Dumourier', we expect a reference to their military conquests, but what we get from the enjambement with line 8 is the highlighting of 'Recorded', thus deflating any military success to a few words

¹³*Macbeth*, IV. i, lines 63-64 (*Macbeth*, ed. A. R. Braunmuller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 193).

in a journal. These French heroes have turned out, just like their British counterparts, to have a legacy of only a few words, this time not on a signpost but in a journal.

Stanza 3 seems to parallel stanza 2 exactly, with the first two lines giving a long list of names before the verb, the expectation-shattering 'Were French', finally appears in line 3. This, however, reinforces the idea perceptible at the end of stanza 2, that these French heroes¹⁴ are not so different from the British, and this is highlighted by the continuation of the 'f' alliteration in line 3. The aside 'as we know' implies familiarity to complement 'famous people' and clearly links to stanza 1 (lines 6-7) as the reader too is brought into the all-encompassing 'we'. The never-ending list of these heroes is stressed in line 4 with 'And there were others', yet the adjunct 'scarce forgotten yet' implies that it is only a matter of time before they too will be forgotten. To stress the point even more forcefully, line 5 presents us with another six names and line 6 does likewise, although it does not mention any more by name: by this time they have become nameless and faceless and merely described by the fact they were military men. This sense of a never-ending cycle of rather unremarkable heroes is countered by the delineation of these heroes as 'Exceedingly remarkable' (line 7), however, 'at times' seems to link back to the predominant atmosphere of ordinariness of stanzas 2 and 3: they may have moments of astounding bravery or note, but they are only transitory. Line 8 reveals why this long list of heroes has been rejected, not as we might have expected because of the transitory nature of their fame, but rather because they do not easily fit his rhymes! This immediately reminds us of the way Byron forces the reader to pronounce Don Juan in stanza 1 so that it fits his rhyme. Even in

¹⁴See McGann, PW, 5, p. 674: 'These are all men who were actively involved with the French Revolution. The first is a group of largely political figures, though La Fayette was as well a distinguished general; the second is a group of military leaders. Thus, the first group is associated with the early years of the Revolution, and all (except Mirabeau and La Fayette) eventually became the victims of their own movement. The second group is associated with the campaigns of the republican armies; none survived the period of those campaigns, Moreau being the last to perish (of a cannon shot during the Battle of Dresden, 1813).' Special notice should be taken of Jean Baptiste, Baron de Cloutz (1755-94), best known as Anarcharsis Cloutz, who was condemned to the guillotine in 1794. Byron said of the hero of *Don Juan* that he was to die on the guillotine like Anarcharsis Cloutz. See LJ, 8, p. 78.

these first few stanzas it is evident that Byron is ironically playing with his reader: he, like Goethe, wants an alert reader. The possessive 'my' in line 8 again makes it clear that this is his own personal Don Juan whom he will 'adapt' as he wishes, just as stanza 2 of 'Hegire' made clear it was the poet's personal desire to go to the East.

'Nelson' at the start of stanza 4 leads the reader to think that this too will be another stanza full of rather ordinary transitory heroes unsuitable for his design, and the temporal adverb 'once' seems to support this view. Yet this stanza does not list faceless heroes, but provides more detail on the one standing proudly at the opening of line 1 of the stanza. Byron's personal admiration of Nelson is perceptible in line 2 as he bemoans Nelson's fall from favour 'but the tide is turn'd': a water image appropriate to an admiral of the fleet and surely also reflecting that fame may come and go as swiftly and as frequently as the tide. Nelson's fame is underlined by the possessive adjective 'our' in line 4, yet his fall from favour is also brought out by the quietness suggested by 'no more to be said' (line 3) and 'quietly inurn'd' (line 4). His fame is indeed as dead as he is. Lines 5 and 6 give the reason for this fall in popularity as a rise in the popularity of the army, doubtless due to the success of Wellington at the Battle of Waterloo, yet the fact that 'popular' (line 5), describing the army, links to 'war' (line 1) and 'Trafalgar' (line 3) referring to Nelson again reflects the ever-changing nature of this popularity. The contrast between army and navy described in lines 5 and 6 appears to be repeated and explained further in lines 7 and 8 with line 7, like line 5, referring to the army and line 8, like line 6, to the navy. The army's popularity is attributed to the support of the Prince Regent: something notably not in any way comparable to a great win in battle such as Trafalgar. This only underlines the arbitrary and transitory nature of fame, which is reinforced in line 8 with the forefronting of the verb 'Forgetting', followed by yet another list: this time of four naval officers including Nelson.

Standing at the beginning of line 1 of the fifth stanza, 'Brave men' seems to offer no change to the theme of the previous three stanzas, and only the naming of Agamemnon at the end of line 1 reflects that his search for a hero has extended further afield in both temporal and geographical terms to classical Greece. Just as Goethe moved from the West to the East of Arabia and then further to Persia in 'Hegire', so, too, Byron moves further afield, also to discover things are not as different there as might be expected. The enjambement 'before Agamemnon / And since' (lines 1-2) underlines the fact that possible heroes come, not only from ancient times, but also from the time thereafter, that is from any time whatsoever. The calibre of these heroes is emphasised by 'exceeding' (line 2): no longer are they simply 'Exceedingly remarkable at times' (stanza 3, line 7), they are now beyond 'valorous and sage' (line 2). That Agamemnon was not unique is illustrated by the beginning of line 3, 'A good deal like him too', but the second half of the line typically undermines this slightly as it admits 'though quite the same none'. By withholding 'none' until the end of the line, so that 'the same none' (line 3) rhymes with Agamemnon (line 1) and 'condemn none' (line 5), again shows Byron's willingness to play with his medium within the seemingly strict ottava rima form. Yet in lines 4-5 we discover these other heroes have been forgotten because they have not been written about 'on the poet's page' (line 4): the power of the poet to make or break a possible hero seems clear. Indeed the written word is the only thing that will remain after the person is dead: the echoes of stanza 7 of 'Hegire' and the eternal life of the words of the poet are apparent. Lest we should think these written words on past heroes paint a less than favourable picture of these possible heroes and may result in their disappearing from memory, Byron suddenly interrupts the flow of line 5 with the short exclamation 'I condemn none'. He continues his explanation in line 6, and the enjambement with line 7, highlighting 'Fit for my poem', makes it clear that there may indeed be contemporary heroes, none of whom, however, is suitable for his own personal purpose. This almost boastful tone, stressed by the possessive 'my', is strengthened by the conversational parenthesis '(that is, for my new one)' (line 7), again with

another possessive. This conversational tone persists into line 8 with 'So, as I said', and finally we return to Don Juan to rhyme, as in stanza 1, with 'new one'. Byron's personal affinity with the character of Don Juan seems even clearer here: 'our ancient friend' (stanza 1) has now become 'my friend' (stanza 5), and the first person singular 'I' appears twice in this final line. Compare how Goethe too focuses his attention more closely on Hafis, initially only hinting at Hafis, by mentioning some typical themes in stanza 1, line 5 of 'Hegire', before proceeding to mentioning him by name in stanzas 5 and 6 of the same poem. What is now evident is that stanzas 2 to 5 have all been an elaborate justification for the selection of Don Juan as his hero. Yet, while they may appear to provide little more than this justification, they do set the conversational tone that dominates the whole poem. We can already perceive manipulation of rhyme and the constant use of irony to undermine what has previously been invoked as examples of some of the techniques which Byron frequently employs throughout *Don Juan*.

Epic tradition is invoked at the beginning of stanza 6 and a delineation of what epic poets do continues for the rest of the stanza. This might lead us to believe that this method will be employed here, but the determiner 'Most' sitting emphatically at the start of line 1, and a growing awareness of how Byron is working in this poem, leaves the suspicion that this will not in fact turn out to be the case. The speed and intensity of the verb 'plunge' in line 1 describing this method of beginning contrasts subtly with the method we have seen Byron employ here thus far: he has not plunged 'in "medias res"'; in fact he has taken 5 stanzas to justify his choice of hero and here in stanza 6 has not begun any story. Yet epic tradition is not dismissed immediately and we are lulled further and further into it, right until the start of the following stanza. The use of Latin in line 1, the name-dropping of Horace in the conversational aside in line 2, and the clear allusions to Homer in the remainder of the stanza all stress the quality of these epic poets. Line 3, with its emphasis not on the first but on the second person, 'your hero' and 'you please', lets the author dissociate himself slightly from these

poets, but at the same time we also realise that he too is following a similar yet different pattern: he is providing pieces of information as and when he pleases and the story will be related in a kind of episodic fashion despite frequent digressions. The conversational and relaxed nature of much of the poem is also similar to the pleasant after-dinner relaxation alluded to in lines 5-6. Just as we saw lists of heroes in stanzas 2-4, here in line 7 we have a list of different possible locations for this relaxation, highlighting the wide variety available, just as the variety of possible heroes was wide. This use of listing to reflect variety is very much akin to Goethe's description of the East in stanza 4 of 'Hegire'. The hero and his mistress are depicted as 'the happy couple' (line 8) as if they are now a complete contented whole instead of two unhappy incomplete halves. That their happiness appears to be linked to the fact that they are in their 'tavern', wherever that might be, and will surely be consuming alcohol indicates that this happiness will perhaps be as transitory as the effects of the alcohol. Nonetheless the predominant atmosphere here is relaxed and happy, in spite of these subtle undertones.

Epic tradition is bluntly undermined at the start of stanza 7 by contrasting it, 'the usual method', immediately with his own, 'but not mine'. 'Mine' stands out at the end of line 1 and paves the way for the description of his method, introduced at the beginning of line 2 with 'My way'. As for his claim to 'begin with the beginning' (line 2), this is already stanza 7 and all he has done so far is choose a hero and justify his choice: in stanza 8 he does start to relate Don Juan's birth and background, thus to some extent practising what he preaches, if not in the anticipated way. Even at this early stage in the poem the irony of lines 3-4 is unmistakable: he has already wandered off to justify his choice of hero for four stanzas, has not strictly begun with the beginning as we might expect and, indeed, what characterises the whole poem are these frequent digressions he appears to be condemning. Line 5 implies that he will offer a short sharp opening ('a line'), but this is, of course, not what we get, and the conversational aside in line 6, with the idea that this has cost him much pondering, contrasts with the

brevity implied by the previous line. The rhyming of 'beginning' (line 2), 'sinning' (line 4) and 'spinning' (line 6) slyly implies that his beginning will not be the short sharp single line of line 5, and the enjambement of line 5 with line 7, interrupted by the aside that is line 6, also stretches the idea of a one line start to its very limit. The prominence given to 'Narrating' at the start of line 8 emphasises that this is a story, and hence reminds us that we are at the mercy of the storyteller. The mention of Don Juan's parents in lines 7 and 8 returns to the notion of 'beginning' of line 2 after a little 'wandering' of lines 3-6. 'If you'd rather' suggests that he is willing to listen to other views, to public opinion, despite the fact that the rest of the stanza is dominated by the first person 'mine', 'my', 'I', 'me', implying he is going to do exactly as he wishes, regardless of anyone else's opinion.

Both these extracts then reveal how each poet begins his work and how important this introduction is to an understanding of the longer text. As might be expected, each is clearly a beginning of a journey: in Goethe's case a flight to the East for poetic rejuvenation; and in Byron's the beginning of his story of Don Juan. Goethe's plundering of the Christian and Muslim religions and Hafis for his own ends is only matched by Byron's: of Christian religion, epic tradition, Shakespeare, Horace and Homer. Each, however, does not merely plagiarise what he finds, but manipulates this material subtly and ironically. Already we perceive in each extract an ability to stretch the boundaries of rhyme to their utmost ('Singen' with 'verjüngen', and 'new one' with 'Don Juan') and a conversational dimension, evident in stanza 3 of 'Hegire' with its stress on the importance of the spoken word, and throughout the *Don Juan* extract by the frequent asides and addresses to the reader. This conversational tone prefigures in both the tone of the rest of both of the texts. While Goethe introduces many of the themes which predominate throughout the *West-östlicher Divan*, Byron prefigures his poem much more obviously from the point of view of style and tone, rather than from a thematic point of view. It should, however, not be forgotten that the very mention of Don Juan conjures up traditional images in the reader's mind, and

some of the things we think might happen do indeed occur, if not always in the way we might anticipate.

2 'Selige Sehnsucht' ('Buch des Sängers')¹⁵ and *Don Juan II. 194-97*.¹⁶

Situated as it is at the end of the first book, 'Buch des Sängers', 'Selige Sehnsucht' not only provides a climax to that book, but also, like 'Hegire', introduces and sustains certain themes which pervade the whole text. I believe that an understanding of this poem in particular provides a clue to the meaning of this whole text, which has for so long stubbornly remained a perplexing problem.¹⁷ If we are to believe what Goethe wrote to Zelter about his text on the 17 May 1815 then this would — paradoxically perhaps — seem to justify the discussion of any one poem alone as representative of the complete cycle:

Jedes einzelne Glied nämlich ist so durchdrungen von dem Sinn des Ganzen, ist so innig orientalisches, bezieht sich auf Sitten, Gebräuche, Religion und muß von einem vorhergehenden Gedicht erst exponiert sein, wenn es auf Einbildungskraft oder Gefühl wirken soll. Ich habe selbst noch nicht gewußt, welches wunderliche Ganze ich daraus vorbereitet.¹⁸

For it is evident that, if any one poem is fully integrated, it, if taken alone, may function as representative of the whole. Even from the opening line it is clear that this is essentially a personal poem; the addressees being only the wise and the form of address being the familiar plural rather than the polite form. The focus of the poem is

¹⁵HA, 2, pp. 18-19. See also Stuart Atkins, 'Zum besseren Verständnis einiger Gedichte des *West-östlichen Divan*,' *Interpretationen zum West-östlichen Divan Goethes*, ed. Edgar Lohner (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973) 102; Birus, FA, 3.2, pp. 964-74; Ernst Feise, 'Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert und Goethes "Selige Sehnsucht",' *Modern Language Notes* 59 (1944): 369-74; Horst Günther, 'Ins Land der Dichtung. Zu Goethes *West-östlichem Divan*,' *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*, ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold, Text + Kritik, Sonderband (München: Text + Kritik, 1982) 202-06; Dorothea Hölscher-Lohmeyer, 'Die Entwicklung des Goethschen Naturdenkens im Spiegel seiner Lyrik — am Beispiel der Gedichte "Mailied" — "Selige Sehnsucht" — "Eins und Alles",' *Goethe Jahrbuch* 99 (1982): 11-31; Ihekweazu 13-22; Ileri 275-86; Lemmel 169-75; Trunz, HA, 2, pp. 581-84; and György Walkó, 'Offenbar Geheimnis: Zur Frage der Emblematis in Goethes *Divan*-Dichtung,' *Acta Litteraria Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 24.3-4 (1982): 344-45.

¹⁶PW, 5, pp. 149-50. See McGann, PW, 5, p. 691.

¹⁷In 1824, when Karl Förster remarked that this collection of poems had not yet been fully understood, little could he know how relevant that remark would remain for so long: 'nur scheint diese Sammlung noch nicht das richtige Verständnis gefunden zu haben, dessen sie bedarf' (Brockhaus, *Conversations-Lexikon*, 1824). 'Yet this collection appears to have not yet been properly understood as it needs to be.'

¹⁸HA Briefe, 3, p. 310. 'Every single part is so imbued with the sense of the whole, is so profoundly oriental, refers to morals, customs, religion and has first to be exposed by a preceding poem, if it is to have an effect on the powers of imagination or feeling. I myself have not yet realised what a wonderful whole I have made of it.'

then further narrowed to the self with the 'ich' in stanza 1, line 3. The poem is framed by the first and last stanzas, and it is in the three middle stanzas that the poem enacts itself. What then is this mysterious, perhaps mystical, poem, consisting of five 4 line stanzas, which has received much critical attention since it was penned in July 1814, really about?

'Liebesnächte' of line 1 of the second stanza points to the fact that whatever this is, it is not an isolated event, but a process, something that recurs repeatedly. The use of polyptoton in the verb 'zeugen' in the following line already hints that there is something different about these recent nights of love, and what this is is then revealed as being 'a strange feeling' which descends ('überfällt'): a feeling which is both physical and spiritual. It is precisely at the moment of satisfaction of physical desire in the sexual act that one suddenly becomes aware of something else: that something else being the *awareness* (in the light of the candle) of creating and of having been created — this is something which will, however, only occur *if*, ('wenn'), the moment is propitious. Only then do we become aware of the differentiation between our own present act of creating and the whole process of which we are but a part. It is this very creative createdness which will drive our desire from the purely physical upwards to the desire for something else, something different, a desire for higher being.

In the third stanza the desire of the self for an other becomes ever more undeniable as the wish to be freed from the darkness ('Finsternis', 'Beschattung'), from something at least in part evil takes hold — the undertones of 'Finsternis' are indisputable.¹⁹ The ironic detachment of the self and the intense irony which is intrinsic to any intimate moment are given expression here: it is precisely at this intimate moment of apparent

¹⁹'Finsternis' is a biblical word. When Mephistopheles, who is both mystical and coarse, is asked who he is, he replies (lines 1349-50):
 'Ich bin ein Teil des Teils, der anfangs alles war
 Ein Teil der Finsternis, die sich das Licht gebar' (HA, 3, p. 47).

'Part of a part am I, that once was all, a part of darkness, which gave birth to light (or to which light gave birth).'

fulfilment that the self becomes aware of its place in the creation process, and is overwhelmed with renewed desire. The movement switches from the downward movement of 'überfällt' (stanza 2, line 3) to an upward one with 'auf zu höherer Begattung' (stanza 3, line 4). While this has been interpreted as being a desire for a union with God — an *unio mystica* — it is unambiguously not a purely spiritual union that is desired here: the sexual connotations of 'Begattung' are clear, and the violent force with which this new desire takes hold ('reißet') reinforces the fact that the physicality continues at all levels, and has not been superseded by any exclusively spiritual desire.

The impression of flight (recalling the motif introduced at the very beginning, in 'Hegire') which predominates in stanza 3 is further stressed in stanza 4 by 'Ferne', 'geflogen' and the long-awaited specification of the 'du' as the 'Schmetterling'. The use of the second person singular 'kommst' in stanza 4, line 2 implies that the speaker is in or within the candle and is luring the 'Schmetterling' into its realm: it is almost as if there is a dialogue going on between two lovers, the one being the candle, and the other the flame. The one is so greedy for, and obsessed with, the other that the outcome is the consumption of the one by the other — and the other by the one — in the 'Flammentod' announced in stanza 1. That the 'Schmetterling' is an age-old symbol of the psyche, the soul, makes us yet more aware of the implicit ironic doubling that is going on: if this were only the soul, a problem would arise, namely that the soul cannot burn, and if it were simply a butterfly, also a symbol of life, then it could. It would now seem that what has been burnt here is not the soul but life itself ('Das Lebend'ge').²⁰ By using the statal passive in stanza 4, line 4, the resultant

²⁰See also Thomas Mann, *Lotte in Weimar*, Chapter 9, for similar use of the moth/butterfly and the candle flame, which is clearly derived from this poem. Indeed the reconciliation of opposites is central to *Lotte in Weimar*: 'Ist nicht Versöhnung und Ausgleich all mein Betreiben und meine Sache Bejahen, Geltenlassen und Fruchtbarmachen des einen wie des anderen, Gleichgewicht, Zusammenklang? Nur alle Kräfte zusammen machen die Welt, und wichtig ist jede' (*Lotte in Weimar*, Gesammelte Werke in Einzelbänden, ed. Peter de Mendelssohn, Frankfurter Ausgabe, 20 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1980-86) 299). 'Appeasement, compromise — are they not all my striving? To assent, to allow, to give both sides play, balance, harmony. The combination of all faces makes up the world; each is weighty' (*Lotte in Weimar*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968) 245).

state of being 'verbrannt' is stressed, highlighting the fact that this is not a one-off action, but an on-going recurrent condition of life itself — you have to burn repeatedly in order to be able to continue to live — a sentiment which is also clearly discernible in Goethe's aphorism:

Unser ganzes Kunststück besteht darin, daß wir unsere Existenz aufgeben, um zu existieren.²¹

The final stanza forms the second half of the outer framework of the poem, bringing together and stressing the need for the 'fremde Fühlung' of stanza 2, if this transition to a higher level of existence is to occur. It is hence clear that Goethe is not advocating a renunciation of the pleasures of the flesh in order to attain a higher, purer, exclusively spiritual existence. He is, rather, promoting a life which can only really be called LIFE when/if one has realised that the flame of erotic love is utterly intrinsic to life. If one is not simply to exist on the same level, one must continually desire; a desire which itself exists in inevitable counterpoint to the inherently inadequate physical fulfilment of erotic love. This is not to say that Goethe is in any way championing a replacement of one by the other; but that Goethe is indicating that the two must exist in tandem, one forming the necessarily opposite pole to the other. This is emphasised throughout the poem by the continual use of mutually self-implicating polar opposites: death and life, light and dark, heat and cold, physical and spiritual. Indeed the notion of binary synthesis would appear to be useful to our analysis and a useful way to describe what is going on here. It is evident that what we are not dealing with here is any sort of simple transcendental mysticism as may have first seemed to be the case: this is not a renunciation of the body in favour of the simply spiritual. Yet two compatible, self-consistent, readings of the text nonetheless still remain possible. On the one hand, we have a mystical reading and on the other an aesthetic one: a mystical reading which sees the 'höhere Begattung' as the self longing for transcendence, for an *unio mystica*; and an aesthetic reading which sees a co-ordination of the spiritual and the physical in the erotic experience of love-making.

²¹Hecker 302. 'Our whole achievement is to give up our existence in order to exist' (Stopp 36).

The sheer physicality of 'reißet', 'Begattung' coupled with the ambivalent 'Schmetterling' (both the psyche and the butterfly) longing for the 'höhere Begattung' would seem to lead us to an impasse. Yet could it not be the case that what is here being suggested is that sexual love is not merely aesthetic experience, however intense that might be, is not merely the co-ordination of the physical and the spiritual? That it possesses also the potential for a (symbolic) glimpse of the transcendental seems clear, as in the final stanza of 'Hegire'. Again, Goethe appears to be making use of the notion of binary synthesis, offering two apparently dichotomous readings which are co-present and held together in a relationship, in which neither loses its identity, but in which the self has been intensified, enhanced by its experience of reciprocated human love.²²

Let us now turn our attention to Byron and to the section of the Haidée episode in Canto II of *Don Juan*. I have chosen this episode because it is the only time in the whole of *Don Juan* that we are presented with an idyllic love situation, one comparable in intensity to that evoked by Goethe in 'Selige Sehnsucht'. After having survived the horrors of the sea journey, including cannibalism, and the subsequent shipwreck, Juan is washed up on a beach on a Greek island, where he is rescued by its owner's daughter Haidée and her maid Zoë. The idyllic love he then enjoys with Haidée during the following few months is about the closest that Byron ever comes to depicting so-called Romantic love. In stanzas 194-97 we witness the lovemaking of Juan and Haidée and then Haidée's thoughts as she watches her lover sleeping.

In stanza 194 Byron appears to be depicting their lovemaking in what might be called a typically Romantic fashion: note the connection between eyes and nature ('and their eyes / Glean in the moonlight'), seemingly portraying the idea of the two lovers becoming one; a closeness — reminiscent of that evoked by Goethe between Otilie

²²See Stephenson, *Knowledge and Science* 59.

and Eduard in Part 2, Chapter 17 of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*²³— a closeness — almost a merging — which is highlighted by the constant interchange between the possessives 'his' and 'her' and by the fact that Juan's head is 'half buried' in her hair. That she 'drinks his sighs' is also a clear indication of the extent to which the one is being consumed by the other and the other by the one (akin to the 'Flammentod' of 'Selige Sehnsucht'): the sexual connotations of the one flowing into the other need hardly be emphasised. Just as in 'Selige Sehnsucht', we are initially witnessing the apparent fulfilment of erotic desire. The stanza ends with a picture of the couple which is reminiscent of any classical Greek statue, apparently completing the paradisaical portrait of Romantic love. It is nonetheless clear that Byron is already undermining this picture; not only with these sly eroticisms, but also in his unmistakable desire to objectify the love in depicting it as an aesthetic object, a statue (a device also used — ironically of course — by Goethe in ^{of his} the fourth *Sonette*, 'Das Mädchen spricht'). That Haidée herself is indeed Greek only adds to this irony. The description of the statue as 'natural' also highlights the ironic ambivalence of the picture: not only is it natural in the sense that it has something to do with nature, but it is also natural in the sense of human nature, i.e. that the culturally-conditioned lovemaking that is taking place is part of human nature. The similarities here to the sexual procreation re-enacted in stanza 2, line 2 of 'Selige Sehnsucht' are apparent. This too is cleverly counterpointed by the fact that the statue itself is, of course, not natural, no more than the candle-light that illuminates the love scene in 'Selige Sehnsucht'.

Stanza 195 begins with the immediate afterglow of this intense lovemaking ('deep and burning moments'), evoking the long tradition, in which 'Selige Sehnsucht' also

²³'Dann waren es nicht mehr zwei Menschen, es war nur Ein Mensch im bewußtlosen, vollkommenen Behagen, mit sich selbst zufrieden und mit der Welt' (*Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (HA, 6, p. 478)). 'Then they were not two people, they were one person, one in reflecting perfect well-being, contented with themselves and with the universe' (*Elective Affinities* 286). See further Roger H. Stephenson, "'Man nimmt in der Welt jeden, wofür er sich gibt": The Presentation of Self in Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*,' *German Life and Letters* 47 (1994): 400-06.

participates, of love as a consuming force. As Juan falls asleep in her arms, seemingly utterly fulfilled, Haidée's thoughts are turning — to a Goethean 'higher union' — elsewhere ('And now and then her eye to heaven is cast'), suggesting that she is not as fulfilled or as exhausted as he appears to be. Is she searching for something else, perhaps even something divine? Yet, despite the fact that Juan appears satisfied, his cheeks are 'pale', an adjective usually more indicative of coldness rather than heat, taking our minds back to the short-lived 'Kühlung' following the 'burning moments' of Goethe's poem. The passion of the purely erotic moment has passed for Juan, as he sleeps contentedly, yet Haidée is still warm and passionate as she remembers both the active and the passive nature of the lovemaking — stressed by the repetition of the verb 'grant'. The passion we perceive here in Haidée is clearly not at all one-sided, but reciprocal and reciprocated: it is two-sided in that it is both giving and taking.

The nascent desire felt by Haidée grows even greater in stanza 196; emphasised by the listing of six different instances where someone feels desire. None is, however, as great as that experienced by Haidée while watching Juan sleep. The increase in this desire is also emphasised by the deferment, comparable to Goethe's deferral of the specification of the butterfly, of 'Feel rapture' until the second last line of the stanza. It should also be noted that it is the desire itself that is of greater significance, not the fulfilment — as, of these six examples given, only one is fulfilled — and literally so ('A child the moment when it drains the breast'). The distancing too is becoming ever clearer as Juan is no longer referred to as a person: the expected personal 'whom' is replaced by 'what' ('As they who watch o'er what they love while sleeping').

This distancing and aesthetic objectification of the love is manifest in the first line of stanza 197 where we see 'it' instead of the personal 'he'. The subtle distancing of stanza 194 with the statue is now complete as Haidée becomes fully aware that, despite her efforts to prolong the feeling of oneness and union with her lover, it is

ultimately futile. The atmosphere is now one of total calm ('tranquil', 'gentle', 'stirless', 'helpless', 'unmoved', 'hush'd'), contrasting with the passion of the earlier erotic experience, a calm once more reminiscent of the Goethean post-coital experience ('Kühlung', 'stille Kerze'). The lover has become impenetrable ('So gentle, stirless, helpless, and unmoved, / And all unconscious of the joy 'tis giving'); and, despite the best efforts of the onlooker, 'diving' will remain an unfulfilled wish. It is emphatically not until the last line that the ultimate distancing — death — finally makes its entrance. Haidée's desire and its fulfilment have reached their peak at this moment of ultimate distancing, when it is no longer possible for the two to be united in any physical form, and when each is clearly her/his own self in a relationship of one-sided awareness, very much akin to the sentiments expressed in stanza 4 of 'Selige Sehnsucht'.

Hence we do not have the typically Romantic picture of love — as we find famously in Keats' 'The Eve of Saint Agnes'²⁴ — that is, one where the identity of the lovers is lost within each other, a picture we at first believed we were getting in stanza 194. Byron is cleverly ironising this picture of Romantic love, modifying it with his subtle erotic overtones, objectifying the love and distancing it ('There lies') to the point of ultimate distance — a prefiguration perhaps of Haidée's fate and the precarious and inevitably transitory nature of a love so apparently perfect. This may not be exactly the Goethean call to 'die and become', but the similarities are nevertheless there: it is clear that the instigator of the greater desire is, in both poets, the physicality of the sexual experience itself. For Byron, as for Goethe, the moment of greatest fulfilment does not occur, as one might expect, in the fulfilment of sexual desire, however fulfilling that may at first appear. Here we perceive the greatest moment of fulfilment

²⁴ 'Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet,—' ('The Eve of Saint Agnes', stanza 36 (John Keats, *Selected Poems*, ed. Edmund Blunden (London: Tiger, 1991) 253).

for Haidée as the moment when the object of her desire is no longer actively present; when it is absent either in sleep or in death. Again it is clear that what Byron, like Goethe, is stressing here, is the necessity of the physical erotic experience as a precursor, as the *sine qua non*, to something even greater, to something 'spiritual'. This something 'spiritual' is undeniably something odd; it is clearly something that will never be fully achieved, something whose fulfilment lies in the continuity of the desire of the alternating rhythm of 'Die and Become'. Hence the spiritual here is more what one might call the unending striving of desire, while the physical is simply the purely physical, inadequate fulfilment of it. Although Haidée does turn her eyes upwards to heaven, evidently searching for something conventionally spiritual, this is not a purely spiritual desire which has superseded the physical: although they are held together in some kind of relationship, this is no simple union, but something more akin to a binary synthesis. The similarities between this relationship and the Goethean one as seen in 'Selige Sehnsucht' seem striking indeed.

3 'Unbegrenzt' ('Buch Hafis')²⁵ and *Don Juan*, XV. 18-22.²⁶

'Unbegrenzt' appears in the 'Buch Hafis', dedicated to the poet Hafis, the major influence on and inspiration for Goethe in the *West-östlicher Divan*. It is a four stanza poem; the first three being six lines long and the last only two. Rhyming couplets give way to cross rhyme in stanza 2, then to enclosed rhyme in stanza 3, before returning to couplets in stanza 4, reflecting the theme of circularity of the whole. The whole of the 'Buch Hafis' continues the west-east dialectic started in 'Buch des Sängers'. Goethe's admiration for Hafis is particularly evident in this tribute poem in which the poet thanks Hafis for his inspiration and searches for the rejuvenation already announced in 'Hegire' (stanza 1, line 6 and stanza 3, line 3 in particular).

The very title of the poem, with its suggestions of being on-going and having no boundaries, prefigures the poem's cyclic structure and also subtly reflects the monotone of the ghazal form used by Hafis. The first 2 lines of stanza 1 are closely linked by end rhyme 'groß' and 'Los', by the repetition of negatives 'nicht' and then 'nie', by the parallel appearance of 'du', 'dich' and 'dein' in each line and also by their parallel syntax: in each case a subordinate 'daß' clause is succeeded by a short principal clause introduced by 'das' summing up the preceding clause. Nevertheless, these lines are simultaneously divided by the opposition in meaning between the apparently parallel 'enden' (line 1) and 'beginnst' (line 2). The notions of there being no beginning and no end are linked by these lines, despite the use of the polar opposites 'beginning' and 'end', and the similarity of these lines again reflects the monotone of the ghazal form. The affinity Goethe feels for Hafis is indicated also by his use of the familiar form of address, not only in these lines, but throughout the first

²⁵HA, 2, p. 23. See also Atkins, 'Verständnis' 103-04; Birus, FA, 3.2, pp. 1000-05; Ileri 313-14; Gustav Konrad, 'Form und Geist des *West-östlichen Divans*,' *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 32 ns 1 (1950-51): 184; Lemmel 91-93; and Trunz, HA, 2, pp. 589-90.

²⁶PW, 5, pp. 594-95. See McGann, PW, 5, p. 763.

three adulatory stanzas. Although lines 3-4 are not syntactically parallel, they are still linked by end rhyme ('Sterngewölbe' and 'dasselbe') and also by the cyclical movement implied by 'drehend' (line 3) and by the never-ending oscillation between 'Anfang und Ende' (line 4), connecting this couplet clearly with lines 1-2. The notion of circularity continues into the final lines of the stanza: these 2 lines are also linked by end-rhyme 'offenbar' and 'anfangs war', by a syntactical similarity almost as symmetrical as lines 1 and 2 and by the link between the 'middle' and its description, in terms of the apparent polar opposites, 'was zu Ende bleibt und anfangs war' (line 6). Although this stanza is a clear tribute to the monotonous ghazal form, despite the repetition of the notion of having no beginning and no end, it should not be overlooked that each time this notion recurs it does so in a different form: lines 1-2 use the verbal form; lines 3-4 the nominal and lines 5-6 the adverbial form. This surely hints that, while Goethe is assimilating some of Hafis' traits, he is prepared to manipulate them, however slightly. Indeed (in the light of 'Selige Sehnsucht' in particular) this notion of something on-going and never-ending would seem also to apply to unending desire: we have already witnessed the poet's desire to escape to the East for both physical and poetic rejuvenation in 'Hegire'. This reading does not preclude the more obvious direct appreciation of Hafis and surely the two readings can exist in tandem and only enrich our own appreciation of the poem. In fact, lines 5-6, with the description of the 'middle' as having something in common with each of the apparent polar opposites 'beginning' and 'end', appears to support the existence of these two readings coming together in a form of binary synthesis, where neither loses its own particular characteristics and only gains from its association with the other.

The first 2 lines of stanza 2 follow the same pattern as stanza 1: they are united by end rhyme 'Dichterquelle' and 'Well' auf Welle', by the continued use of the 'du' form perpetuating the personal intimate feel, and by the water image of 'Quelle', 'entfließet' and 'Welle'. They differ from stanza 1 in so far as they no longer deal with the binary opposites 'beginning' and 'end', although the link is not severed completely, as

'Dichterquelle' implies a source, a beginning of something: not only a reference to the beginning of life of 'Chisers Quell' of 'Hegire' (stanza 1, line 6), but also to Hafis as a source of poetic inspiration. That this inspiration is not constant in its intensity is reflected clearly in the image of the movement of the waves as they rise and fall, but that it is on-going is indicated by the adverb 'ungezählt' (line 2). The water image persists throughout the rest of the stanza with 'Küssen' and 'Mund' (line 3), 'fließet' (line 4), 'Trinken' and 'Schlund' (line 5) and 'ergießet' (line 6), yet these lines are simultaneously differentiated from lines 1-2 as they are 4-footed instead of 5-footed and use cross rhyme instead of rhyming couplets. Lines 3-6 introduce the main motifs of Hafis' poetry 'Lieben, Trinken, Singen', again linking back to 'Hegire' (stanza 1, line 6) and looking forward to the main motifs which become apparent in the *West-östlicher Divan* as a whole. The diachronic nature of these motifs is stressed by the repetition of the adverb 'stets' (lines 3 and 5), bringing together 'Küssen' and 'Trinken'; indeed, the syntactical similarity between lines 3 and 5 and lines 4 and 6 only highlights the intrinsic connections between all three motifs. These lines, with their intensely physical descriptions, emphasise the tangible effects of love, drinking and poetry: note the 'stets bereit[e] Mund' (line 3) connected to its close anatomical neighbour, the 'stets gereizt[e] Schlund' (line 5), and the deeply felt 'Brustgesang' (line 4) linked to its close neighbour, the 'gut[e] Herz' (line 6). The sheer physicality of this picture, together with the abiding image of flowing water ('fließet' and 'ergießet') and moisture ('Mund' and 'Schlund'), clearly suggests a passionate sexually charged picture of incessant and insistent sexual desire. Indeed the connotations of 'gereizter Schlund' (line 5) are not only that the pharynx is irritated because it desires water, but surely also that it is stimulated because of the intensity of its desire for fulfilment; and clearly the contrast between the round shape of the mouth and the phallic shape of the pharynx is no accident. Thus stanza 2 ends with this very sensual picture of these three important Hafis themes, which appear to be intrinsically linked to one another as well as being as unending as the title itself.

Like stanzas 1 and 2, stanza 3 is 6 lines long, but it differs again in rhyme, using enclosed rhyme, which is almost like an extension of the cross rhyme of stanza 2: lines 1 and 5 rhyme, as do lines 2 and 6 with only the continuation of the rhyme of line 2 to lines 3 and 4 as well. The perpetuation of the one rhyme throughout 4 lines is undoubtedly an echo of Hafis' favourite ghazal form, but the intermittent use of other rhyme throughout the poem implies that Goethe will not merely copy the Persian's work, but will use it and manipulate it as he sees fit. The emphatic address to Hafis at the beginning of line 2 reveals his importance for Goethe, and this is only accentuated by the repetition and intensification of 'mit dir' to 'mit dir allein' immediately thereafter. The ensuing enjambement with line 3, thus highlighting the 'Will' of 'Will ich wetteifern!', brings out the strength and bold intentionality of his desire, as does the exclamation mark, suggesting the force with which these words are uttered. Similarly lines 3 and 4 are joined by enjambement, thus stressing 'Sei uns' and the fact that the two poets have now come together, just as these two lines are linked together. The nature of this relationship between the two is underlined by the interjection 'den Zwillingen': they are like twin 'binary' brothers in as much as each is still very much his own person, but there exists nonetheless a relationship between the two which produces something new and simultaneously related to both of its constituent parts. It is hence clear that this is a meeting of two poets alone: the binary nature of the meeting is indicated by the insistence in line 2 on its being Hafis alone. This unequivocal praise of Hafis will then not lead to the German cycle being a mere mimicking of his Persian work: it is far more an aspect of 'higher union' (of the type delineated in 'Selige Sehnsucht'), here on the cultural level of Goethe's assimilation of Hafis. The binary nature of this meeting is further underlined by the mention of the two apparent polar opposites they will share, 'Lust und Pein' (line 3), also suggesting that these opposites are perhaps not as mutually exclusive as they might appear. The rhyme with 'gemein' (line 4) would seem to support this link further. Line 5 takes up Hafis' motifs of love and drinking seen earlier in stanza 2, lines 3 and 5, and these are then assimilated by Goethe in line 6, as the 'du' of Hafis of line 5 emphatically

becomes the repeated 'mein' of Goethe of line 6. Goethe's strength of feeling is underlined by the fact that 'mein Stolz' is immediately succeeded and upstaged by 'mein Leben' to finish the stanza. Although this stanza differs in its rhyme scheme from the other two, it still shows clear links: consider the water image in 'versinken' (line 1), Hafis and his three favourite motifs, the continued use of the familiar form of address to Hafis and the familiar 6-line stanza form.

Suddenly the poem then concludes with a single rhyming couplet, the rhyme scheme belonging to the first 8 lines of the poem. The focus of the address is no longer Hafis but the song itself, yet the links to the rest of the poem are evident, most clearly to 'Dein Lied' (stanza 1, line 3) and 'Ein Brustgesang' (stanza 2, line 4). The 'Feuer', placed so emphatically at the close of the exclamation, both links and contrasts with the elementality of the water imagery of the water of life, of water as a life-giving force, which persists throughout stanza 2 and highlights the heat and strength of the passion previously highlighted by the water. The unique nature of the song which is produced by the coming together of these two poets is stressed by describing the song as resounding 'mit eignem Feuer': this is its own song and no-one else's. The precarious, and perhaps fleeting, nature of this 'fire song' is underlined by the fact that the water, which dominates the rest of the poem, extinguishes fire. A never-ending, eternally recurring cycle, just as intimated in the title, is recognisable here too. The final line appears to divide neatly into two halves: each is syntactically identical, yet the adjectives 'älter' and 'neuer' are semantically opposite. This would seem to imply that the difference is more one of degree rather than one of kind, and also appears to connect with the unending nature of the title of the poem itself, indicating a cyclical movement similar to that of stanza 1. Thus, not only is the implication of the on-going nature of things included in the title, it is also reflected in the structure of the poem too. We have now returned to the 'Lied' of stanza 1 and to the constant shift of focus from beginning to end. The familiarity with the 'Lied' is still evident here in the on-going use of the 'du' form of address. However, the implications in this final line

of 'älter' and 'neuer' appear to be wider than just the 'Anfang und Ende immerfort dasselbe' of stanza 1, line 4: this is now Goethe's poetry, which is 'older' in so far as it has been influenced, not only by Hafis, but also by much more ancient sources;²⁷ Hafis was not the only poet ever to use the motifs of love, drinking and poetry/song in his work. It is simultaneously 'newer' in the sense of being renewed with every attentive reading: moreover the rhyming of 'neuer' with 'Feuer' reminds us of the rebirth in the candle flames in 'Selige Sehnsucht' and the desire for rejuvenation announced, not only in stanza 1 of 'Unbegrenzt', but also in stanza 1 of 'Hegire'.

In a similar way to 'Hegire', 'Unbegrenzt' also provides an introduction to and prefiguration of what is to come in the rest of the cycle. Here the title of the poem and the very structure of it reflect the circularity of the whole *West-östlicher Divan*. This poem is, however, far more focused than 'Hegire' in so far as it concentrates only on the German poet happily paying tribute to his Persian counterpart Hafis as his source of poetic inspiration. The binary nature of this meeting between the two poets is apparent, yet it is also clear that, when the two come together, this will not be a relationship in which the German merely mimics the Persian's work: we do indeed see Goethe playing with the ghazal form here and also praising his favourite themes, but his manipulation of this form and the rhyme-scheme reveal an assimilation of the Persian's work into the German's, whereby each still retains its own identity as they come together to form something quite unique: 'Nun töne Lied mit eignem Feuer'. The emphasis on the themes of 'Lieben, Trinken, Singen' again prefigures the favourite themes for Goethe in his work; in fact this 'Buch Hafis' is itself concerned primarily with 'Singen' and the particular source of his poetic inspiration.

Let us turn our attention now to Byron and to stanzas 18-22 of Canto XV of *Don Juan*. Here we find Juan in England at the house of Lord and Lady Amundeville when Lady Adeline has decided to be Juan's match-maker in order to prevent a love-

²⁷See Birus, FA, 3.2, p. 1004.

affair with her serious rival Aurora, by arranging for the sensual Duchess of Fitz-Fulke to seduce him: the implication is clearly that Adeline wants and will eventually have him for herself. In stanza 17 we are told of Adeline's weaknesses in judging character and thus making mistakes, and it is this theme of error which continues in stanza 18 as the narrator once more digresses from his main narrative for ten stanzas. This short digression is concerned with his own plans for and method in his poem, despite the fact that this is already Canto XV. In fact the reader is frequently told of his plans for the poem and is informed at the end of Canto XII that everything up until then has been a mere introduction: 'Here the twelfth Canto of our introduction / Ends.' (stanza 87, lines 1-2). This lends credence to Byron's own protestations to Murray about his plans for his new poem: 'I *have* no plan — I *had* no plan'.²⁸ It is clear from his correspondence that his plans for the poem were constantly changing and this is reflected in his persistent wish to tell the reader of his plans throughout the poem itself.

The motif of error links this short digression to the narrative, yet a change is nonetheless signalled by way of the short direct rhetorical questions of lines 1-2 which make the reader take immediate notice. A similar syntactical structure links these three 'great' philosophers and Christ,²⁹ before revealing in line 3 what they have in common: 'Whose lot it is by man to be mistaken'. The irony, that it does not matter how 'great' these 'great' men might have been, this greatness does not prevent them being misunderstood by their readers, seems clear: indeed this fate of being constantly misunderstood regardless of stature seems one very pertinent to Byron's own situation, especially with regard to *Don Juan* and the outrage it caused in some circles. Not only are these men misunderstood, as line 4 proceeds to relate how these

²⁸12 August 1819 (LJ, 6, p. 207). See also letter to Murray of 16 February 1821 (LJ, 8, p. 78).

²⁹See Byron's own note to 'And thou Diviner still': 'As it is necessary in these times to avoid ambiguity, I say, that I mean, by 'Diviner still', CHRIST. If ever God was man — or Man God — he was both. I never arraigned his creed, but the use — or abuse — made of it. Mr. Canning one day quoted Christianity to sanction Negro Slavery, and Mr. Wilberforce had little to say in reply. And was Christ crucified, that black men might be scourged? If so, he had better been born a Mulatto, to give both colours an equal chance of freedom, or at least salvation' (PW, 5, p. 763).

misunderstandings are used to be a 'sanction of all ill', which contrasts starkly with the purity of their 'creed'. Line 5 is structured similarly to line 4, beginning with what the great men have done, this time 'Redeeming worlds' only to be immediately succeeded by what readers have made of it, here 'to be by bigots shaken'. The rhetorical question at the start of line 6, 'How was thy toil rewarded?', again stresses the disparity between the greatness of the men and how they are received by their public. The final three lines of the stanza emphasise that these 'great' men are not alone and that there are many like them. The enjambement between lines 6 and 7 stresses 'Volumes' at the start of line 7, and the alliterative 'similar sad' used to describe 'illustrations' only accentuates his despair at these misunderstandings. Again the final line simply reinforces the fact that what has been written is at the mercy of its readership, while the widespread and vast extent of this readership is stressed by 'conscience of the nations', especially with the use of the plural noun.

Just as Goethe mentions Hafis before himself in 'Unbegrenzt', so too Byron only turns to himself in stanza 19. He does so, emphatically at the very start of line 1 with 'I', after bemoaning the fate of others in stanza 18. He appears modest and unwilling to put himself on the same footing as those he mentioned in the previous stanza, in contrast to Goethe, who sees himself in 'Unbegrenzt' on a par with Hafis and Hafis alone. This is not a binary relationship between Byron and his influences or sources, as Byron clearly sees himself only as one small constituent part of the macrocosm, as is highlighted by line 2: 'Amidst life's infinite variety'. He seems almost to be standing in awe before this 'infinite variety' of which he is but such a small part. The multi-faceted nature of life itself has clear Goethean echoes which are made explicit in Canto XVII, stanza 11: 'So that I almost think the same skin / For one without — has two or three within.' Not only does this imply the Faustian two souls within his breast,³⁰ but three at least, stressing the richness of life rather more than a simple dichotomy searching for unity. The seemingly carefree attitude expressed in line 3 is

³⁰*Faust I*, lines 1112-17 (HA, 3, p. 41).

perhaps not as carefree as it initially appears: he does not say he does not care at all for 'glory', but far more subtly states that it is only a question of degree, he shows 'no great care'. His method in this poem is described in the remainder of the stanza. Unlike Goethe, Byron does not overtly state one poetic source as his favoured one, but does nevertheless give an idea of the multi-faceted origins of the poem. Lines 4-6 stress the apparent randomness and carefree way in which he goes about his selection process, particularly in line 6 ('and never straining hard to versify'), but the emphasis on seeing everything for himself before making his choice is clear and ties in with his desire to ensure the veracity of his poem throughout. This desire for truthfulness betrays a rather less flippant attitude than seems to be implied by the seemingly careless 'may or may not suit my story' (line 5). This is also evident in his claims about the ease of versification: it is not so much that he finds it easy to adhere to the strict rules of the ottava rima form, but rather that he finds it easy not to do so and stretches the form to its very limits, especially with his rhyme: look at the rhyme between 'variety', 'mine eye' and 'versify' supporting his own personal varied use of the form of versification he has chosen. In this stanza we also see 'promontory', 'glory' and 'story' connected through rhyme, suggesting that perhaps he does seek success for his poem after all, despite claims of modesty in line 1, and the rhyming of 'talk' and 'walk' in the final two lines reflects the everyday conversational tone of the whole poem.

This talk of how he goes about writing his poem continues into stanza 20, and the modesty of stanza 19, line 1, is once more apparent in lines 1-2:

I don't know that there may be much ability

Shown in this sort of desultory rhyme;

Yet, here again the simplicity of these lines only subtly indicates the work behind them: the enjambement highlighting the verb 'Shown' illustrates that there is 'ability', even if it is not immediately visible. Just as Goethe very subtly manipulated the ghazal form favoured by Hafis, so too Byron moulds his apparent 'desultory rhyme' to

make it unmistakably his own. The 'conversational facility' of which he talks in line 3 is indeed apparent, and the idea, in line 4, of this text for leisure use does not betray any more serious point within, which is often the case. The enjambement linking lines 5 and 6, highlighting 'servility' and 'In mine', upsets the regularity of the 'chime' and underlines the words themselves; that he will not bow to anyone else's rhyme and metre other than his own. The comma in line 5 after 'at least' implies it belongs with the first half of the line, but, when spoken, the possible connection to the second half of the line is clear using 'at least' in its other sense. That Byron is happy for each meaning to exist side by side is reminiscent of the two possible readings of the first stanza of 'Unbegrenzt'. The sense of duality pervades line 7, not only with the opposites 'new' and 'hoary', but also by entertaining the two meanings of 'hoary' at the same time. The rhyme of 'new or hoary' with 'Improvisatore' accentuates how enthusiastic he is about making the form his own by stretching rhyme to its limit, and the very meaning of 'Improvisatore' reflects the carefree appearance of the text he produces.

The 'conversational facility' of stanza 20, line 3 is undermined at the start of stanza 21 with two lines of Latin³¹ which are hardly conversational and demand an educated reader, similar to the one desired by Goethe in 'Selige Sehnsucht'. The remainder of the stanza will be incomprehensible to those unfamiliar with Latin, and, the fact that these lines are from Martial will also go unnoticed. Even although these lines are Latin, they still fit in with the rhyme scheme, and the 'bene' and 'male' keep up the habit of following one thing immediately by its opposite in order to undermine it. This again is a technique used by Goethe and perceptible in the juxtaposition of 'beginning' and 'end' in stanza 1 of 'Unbegrenzt'. In lines 3-6 he systematically gives his own opinion on the different ways of expressing oneself mentioned in lines 1-2. The impossibility of expressing things beautifully all of the time is highlighted in line

³¹From Martial, *Epigrams*, X. xlvi: 'Matho, you want to express everything beautifully; sometimes speak well, sometimes in a middling way, and sometimes badly' (PW, 5, p. 763).

3; the apparent opposite ways of speaking well, either 'sadly' and 'gaily', are linked in line 4; the difficulty of putting up a fight against mediocre speaking is emphasised in line 5, and in line 6 the prevalence of bad speech is stressed by the fact that we not only 'hear, and see' it, but we also 'say' it, and we do so, not infrequently, but 'daily'. By connecting 'daily' with 'gaily' (line 4) and 'male' (line 2) through rhyme we see speaking well (line 4) allied with speaking badly (lines 2 and 6). The final couplet draws the stanza together in line 7 with 'The whole together', followed by the revelation that this is what he wants to do in his poem, which he then in line 8 compares to a 'dish': something tasty for human consumption. The image then of Byron as a chef bringing together lots of different ingredients following his own secret recipe to make this 'dish' is clear. Just as diners often find it impossible to guess what the original ingredients of any one 'dish' might have been, so too Byron's poem is a 'conundrum': a riddle, whose solutions appropriately, just like *Don Juan*, often involve a play on words.³² This 'conundrum of a dish' is, then, not only the poem with all its different facets, but also life itself, and we have already been reminded of 'life's infinite variety' in stanza 19 (line 2). This metaphorical use of 'dish' is of course followed later in the same canto by the use of 'dish' literally as food, as the menu is described in detail.

'A modest hope' at the beginning of stanza 22 harks back to the 'humbler promontory' at the start of stanza 19, but the immediate interruption 'but modesty's my forte, / And pride my feeble' reveals a 'modesty' not altogether modest at all. On the one hand we see these two clauses connected by a similar syntax and the alliteration of 'forte' and 'feeble', but on the other we see them pulling apart from each other through the polar opposition in the meaning of the apparently parallel nouns 'modesty' and 'pride', 'forte' and 'feeble'. The implication is surely that the one is inherent in the other, and the technique used to suggest this is reminiscent of much of 'Unbegrenzt' (for example,

³²This is reminiscent of the artifice of Baroque tradition (of the Spanish Golden Age from which *Don Juan* stems) rather than the apparent simplicity of the Classical.

'Daß du nicht enden kannst' and 'Und daß du nie beginnst', stanza 1, lines 1 and 2, or the final line 'Denn du bist älter, du bist neuer'). 'Let us ramble on' (line 2) reiterates the nonchalant and conversational nature of the poem already familiar not least through stanzas 19 and 20 of this very canto, and appears to fit in with Byron's protestations that he was not working to a *Don Juan* plan.³³ Instantly this is undermined in line 3 as he reveals he did indeed have some design for his poem after all, but its ever-changing nature is evident, especially in the poem itself: at the end of Canto I (stanza 200, line 2) he says *Don Juan* will have 'twelve books'; at the end of Canto XII these twelve cantos are unmasked as being 'of our introduction' (stanza 87, line 1); and here in line 4 he reveals that he no longer knows how long his poem will continue; a lack of knowledge stressed by the use of the negatives 'can't' and 'may not'.³⁴ The enjambement between lines 5-6 emphasises the 'critics' who surprisingly appear instead of the expected monarchy, and shows, not only that he is very aware of the reception of his poem³⁵ and how it has been misunderstood,³⁶ but also subtly implies that the 'critics' have a very much over inflated sense of their own importance in as far as they perhaps consider themselves as important as royalty. 'Tyranny' at the start of line 7 is accentuated by the enjambement with line 6 and is thus even more closely connected to lines 5-6 than the simple continuation of the 'if' clause begun in line 5. The principal clause finally appears, similarly straddling lines 7 and 8, thus stressing the shortness implied by 'concision' and at the same time the length implied by 'more'. The idea that what is to be written and indeed what has already been

³³The dashes which punctuate the original manuscript (see the Garland edition (Byron, X, pp. 62-63)) and are largely not reproduced in the PW, accentuate the already evident conversational tone of these stanzas. Indeed, although the conversational nature of the whole of *Don Juan* is recognisable from the very first canto (and even the Dedication), the dashes which the manuscript edition retains only highlight this further.

³⁴It should be noted that the Garland edition (Byron, X, pp. 62-63) has line 4 of this stanza as 'But now I can't tell when it will be done.' Although the implication is similar to PW regarding a lack of knowledge as to how long the poem will continue, this lack of knowledge is only stressed in the Garland edition by the one negative 'can't'.

³⁵Byron's sensitivity to the reception of his poem is apparent in much of his correspondence, and he does insist that the continuation of the poem is dependent upon a positive reaction from his public. See, for example, 6 April 1819 to Murray (LJ, 6, p. 105) and 26 October 1819 to Kinnaid (LJ, 6, p. 232).

³⁶See, for example, 25 January 1819 to Murray (LJ, 6, p. 95); 12 August 1819 to Murray (LJ, 6, p. 208) and 25 December 1822 to Murray (LJ, 10, p. 68).

written could be unequivocally described as concise already leads the reader to be more than a little wary when seeing the word 'concision'; after all we have only just been told 'let us ramble on' (line 2), so it is almost expected when he interrupts the flow of line 8 with 'but I was born for opposition'. These words do, nonetheless, say very concisely indeed what his whole *Don Juan* plan is all about: once more the constant ironic undermining of something by its apparent opposite is evident. Here we perceive 'opposition' in the sense of 'rebelliousness' but also 'opposition' in the sense of providing the two sides of any coin.

Throughout these stanzas we see Byron once more digressing from his story to ponder how he is writing and will continue to write his poem. While, in 'Unbegrenzt', we see Goethe paying homage to his poetic source Hafis and revealing how he will mould Hafis' influence for his own purposes, here we witness Byron revealing, not just one dominant poetic influence, but many, while also very obviously insisting how he will mould these multifarious influences into his form, for his own purposes. Goethe stretches the ghazal form beyond its limits while Byron stretches ottava rima as far as possible, and both Goethe and Byron use rhyme and parallel syntactical structures to link and dissociate apparent polar opposites simultaneously. Just as Goethe suggests what themes will predominate in his work, so too Byron suggests that answering critics and the end of tyranny may just feature prominently at some length in his work. Yet what is clearer in these stanzas is rather more the tone and the techniques which prevail throughout: this is one of many digressions; the conversational quality remains steadfast as do the play with rhyme, form and metre. This playing with rhyme, form and metre and conversational quality is also clearly perceptible in the dialogue with Hafis in 'Unbegrenzt', where Goethe's play with rhyme, form and metre too cannot be mistaken.

4 'Schlechter Trost' ('Buch der Liebe')³⁷ and *Don Juan*, XVI. 118-23.³⁸

The whole of the 'Buch der Liebe' provides both background and contrast to the 'Buch Suleika'. In this book various aspects of love are depicted, ranging from passion and joy to separation and suffering, and I have selected this poem precisely because it concerns, not the joy, but the pain of love; a side of love not often emphasised in the *West-östlicher Divan*.

Even the title itself reflects the irony of the situation: the comfort for which the lover/poet is longing is utterly inadequate, being described as 'schlecht' and in no way as offering relief from his suffering. Hence, even before we see what the main body of the poem has in store, we suspect the worst. Unlike the poems I have examined thus far, 'Schlechter Trost' has no regular rhyme scheme or metre and consists solely of one stanza of 17 lines: just as the ghosts are to offer no respite from his pain, so too regular metre and rhyme dissolve into a near-chaos mirroring his inner turmoil. The language employed here is far more akin to prose than poetry with the tautology 'weinen' and 'schluchzen' (line 1) and their subsequent repetition, and the inelegant syntax of lines 10-12: there is no lulling rhythm or regular rhyme to soothe the pain of separation.

The poem begins appropriately at night ('Mitternachts'), in the depths of night, 'the so-called 'witching-hour', surely a time when the absence of the lover will be felt most keenly, and this literal darkness pervades the whole poem with the 'Nachtgespenster' (lines 3 and 13). Yet, not only is it literally dark, but dark too in the poet's/lover's heart: his pain is emphasised by the evocative and very concrete description of his physical embodiment of his pain. Not only does he cry ('weint'), but he sobs

³⁷HA, 2, p. 30. See also Birus, FA, 3.2, pp. 1038-40; Ileri 334, Walter Helmut Fritz, 'Der *West-östliche Divan* — gedichtete Liebe,' *Goethe Jahrbuch* 97 (1980): 67-68; Gerhard Neumann, "'Lasst mich weinen ..." Die Schrift der Tränen in Goethes *West-östlichem Divan*,' *Oxford German Studies* 15 (1984): 62-65; and Trunz, HA, 2, pp. 596.

³⁸PW, 5, pp. 655-56. See McGann, PW, 5, p. 769.

('schluchzt') (line 1), and, with the chiasmic repetition of these verbs in line 6 ('Schluchzend und weinend'), we too can almost hear the depth of his emotion in his cries, again stressed by the emphatic positioning of these words at the beginning of the clause, and in fact the beginning of his impassioned plea to the 'Nachtgespenster' (line 5) for help. These melodramatic exaggerations and stylisations surely also lend a comic dimension to the whole scene. The poet's/lover's inability to express himself because of his sobbing is also reflected in the almost stuttering nature of the rhythm, as we see almost exclusively very short clauses and sentences interspersed with direct speech and the frequent use of 'und'. The use of direct speech for the lover's plea to the ghosts makes it all the more vivid, all the more like a real conversation, and clearly prefigures the dialogue which will make up a large part of the 'Buch Suleika'. Goethe's ghosts here are not at all of the frightening Romantic variety; nor are they present to offer some kind of spiritual comfort. They are clearly known to the lover as he addresses them with the familiar plural form 'ihr' (line 7), and he seems never to exhibit any fear towards them, nor is there any evidence of their attempting to frighten him, nor for that matter do they offer him the comfort he craves. They simply pass by. The shortest sentence of the poem also provides its centre, yet, despite its shortness, or perhaps because of it, it is all the more resonant. The inversion resulting from 'Große Güter' being at the beginning of the line only emphasises this, as does the alliteration, and we only have to look to line 12 to see a similar, yet different, ending to the plea to the ghosts with 'Großes Übel betrifft ihn!' Although 'Große Güter' and 'Großes Übel' appear to be linked by the same adjective 'groß', they are opposites. We are certainly here witnessing the effective linking of two opposites into one felt complex³⁹ by nothing more than a similar positioning in the line and the repetition of an adjective. Once again we are forced to pause, with a dash and then another 'und' (lines 12-13), to wait for the ghosts' response. Lines 13-15 flow more easily than the preceding part of the poem and would seem thus to

³⁹In a way very similar to the linking of 'Schmerz und Lust' in 'Wanderers Nachtlied': 'Was soll all der Schmerz und Lust?' (HA, 1, p. 142).

reflect the smooth movement of the ghosts 'vorbei' as they completely ignore him. Withholding the verb of movement 'Zogen vorbei' until the end of the clause at the start of line 15 heightens the suspense before bluntly revealing the ghosts' indifference. In line 14 we see their faces, but they are not happy. His plight is obviously of no consequence to them, as the lover appears to be beginning to realise in line 16, since he sees that it does not matter to them whether he is 'weise oder torig'; their reaction would still be the same. This reaction is emphatically revealed in the final line: very short, very blunt, very powerful. The ghosts are completely indifferent. His plea for comfort is both cruelly and bluntly ignored. And yet this very indifference provides (albeit poor) comfort: his earthly experience (of pain) has no transcendental implications.

This depiction of the pain of love stands in stark contrast to most depictions of love in this text, and the fact that the lover's pleadings to alleviate his suffering are ignored is surely an indication, not only of the subjective nature of the lover's suffering, and hence by implication his pleasure, but surely also that this pain in love is inherent, perhaps even necessary, reminiscent of the pain endured by the dying and becoming announced in 'Selige Sehnsucht'. In spite of the clear self-conscious irony of the poem, evident from the title onwards, the lover's pain is not alleviated: comfort, whether physical or spiritual, is not forthcoming.

Let us turn now to Byron and to Canto XVI, where Juan is in England and the reader is still wondering which one of three women, Adeline, Aurora or the Duchess of Fitz-Fulke, if any, will become Juan's lover. In stanza 118 Juan is awakened by the ghost and his 'own internal ghost'. Riven with fear, he debates what he ought to do next, eventually plucking up the courage to touch the ghost, who then reveals herself, in stanza 123, as none other than the Duchess of Fitz-Fulke.

Typically, as we saw in 'Schlechter Trost', this ghost also appears at night, which makes the Goethean compound 'Nachtgespenster' (line 3) comically redundant. Again this is not the first time that the ghost has appeared to Juan, but, by contrast with the speaker in the Goethe poem, Juan is clearly absolutely terrified; a very real picture of his fear is drawn by the description of the physical manifestation of Juan's fear: 'Don Juan shook, as erst he had been shaken' (line 1), 'shaking' (line 2), 'corporal quaking' (line 6). The alternation between past and present tenses: 'shaken — shaking; mistaken — mistaking; awaken — quaking' (lines 1-2, 3-4 and 5-6) stresses the fact that he has experienced this before, but that he is nonetheless experiencing precisely the same fear he felt 'The night before' (line 2). Simultaneously, however, the rhyme of 'shaken — mistaken — awaken' of the previous night and 'shaking — mistaking — quaking' of tonight indicates that he is even more frightened tonight by the reappearance of the ghost: he is not just awakened after the 'shaking' and 'mistaking', but now he has returned to even more violent 'shaking' and is 'quaking'. Also we should not overlook the fact that we here clearly see the different reactions of Juan's body and soul: just as we perceive the opposition between shaking/quaking and fear (lines 1-2 and 5-6), this fear of the ghost encompasses Juan's reason, telling him that he must be 'mistaken' (lines 3-4). Even although he is clearly still afraid, his own reason does seem to be alleviating the physical symptoms of his fear. The final rhyming couplet again highlights the contrast between the wholeness of the human being and the partiality of the ghost through the rhyme 'body on the whole' and 'disembodied soul'. Just as in Goethe we can see a simple, subtle play with language in order to make a point: Byron here takes up the 'soul', 'body' and 'whole' in line 7 and manipulates them in line 8 to give a whole new twist to the situation, noting the body/soul duality of man and suggesting not only that there is a difference between human and ghost, but also that there is something of the one in the other. As we discover in stanza 123 of course the differences are less, and the similarities more, than we might at first think!

In stanza 119 Juan overcomes his fear and replaces it with anger: not just 'wrath' but 'wrath fierce' (line 1). After the attacking stance taken at the beginning of line 2 'arose, advanced', we expect a violent confrontation, but we are disappointed immediately by the dash, and then the attention moves to the ghost, who now appears to be frightened by Juan's aggressive behaviour: 'the shade retreated'. Then the focus returns in line 3 to Juan, who not only wants to discover the truth, but to get to the very heart of it, to 'pierce' it — to get to it physically with his sword. The coldness of night fear of stanza 118 is here substituted by the heat of excitement and anger, yet this is clearly his fear-born anger driving him to heroic, almost war-like actions with little aforethought: 'At whatsoever risk of being defeated' (line 6). The rhyming of 'retreated' — 'heated' — 'defeated' almost parallels the change from cold to hot blood, so we can surely surmise that, just as quickly as the blood went from cold to hot, it will just as easily turn cold again, just as 'heated' becomes 'defeated'. The stanza ends with the reaction of the ghost to Juan's bravado: it does not ignore and leave him as Goethe's ghosts do, but retreats before stopping at the ancient wall where it 'stood stone still': a stillness stressed by the alliteration and almost suggestive of fear on its part. The use of so many verbs to describe the movements of the ghost would also seem to indicate a lack of certainty and assurance, apparently so different from the Goethean ghosts.

Juan finally plucks up the courage in stanza 120 and tentatively reaches out, but touches nothing spiritual ('no soul'), or physical ('nor body') (line 2), only the wall. Lines 3-4 portray the strange shadows caused by the moonlight, so once again he is aware of the dark and, just as his arm fell on to the cold wall, so the fear he felt before returns in line 5: 'He shuddered'. This time, however, this is countered by the thought that this fear is perfectly normal, even for the 'bravest', whenever they may be faced with something unknown like this. We are left then to ponder why this appears to be more frightening than a 'whole host's identity' (line 8); surely here 'whole' denotes both entire and also 'whole' in the sense of a complete person with body and soul, in

contrast to the 'non-entity' of line 7. Again Byron is, in similar fashion to Goethe, bringing together opposites by emphatically juxtaposing them in the rhyming couplet at the end of the stanza:

How odd, a single hobgoblin's non-entity
Should cause more fear than a whole host's identity!

Stanza 121 picks up the description of the ghost from stanza 119: 'shade' (line 1 and 119, line 2) and 'stony' (line 2 and 119, line 8) and proceeds to give a very real description of this ghost. This ghost is not grey or deathly white, but is colourful: 'blue eyes' (line 1), 'fair-haired' (line 5) with 'A red lip' (line 6). In fact the sole thing that is grey is the 'cloud' of line 8. Furthermore, not only does the ghost appeal to our eyes, it also appeals to our sense of smell: 'the ghost had a remarkably sweet breath' (line 4), not at all the pungent stench of death one would expect (line 3). This ghost is becoming ever more alive and ever more human, and in line 6 we discover that the ghost is also wearing jewellery 'two rows of pearls'. This stanza has now offered a hint that all might not be as it seems, but all is not yet revealed: the 'grey cloud' (line 8) is still clouding the picture like an 'ivy shroud' (line 7) and the moon is only giving partial light in the darkness as it is partially obscured by the cloud.

In stanza 122 Juan's fear and anger have been replaced by confusion and curiosity and subsequently a new-found bravery to 'thrust / His other arm forth' (lines 1-2).⁴⁰ The dash mid-line increases the suspense until we find out what he has discovered, which turns out to be a firm and beautiful bust with a very live heart beating underneath (lines 3-4). Yet Juan cannot believe what his hand has found 'as if there was a warm heart under' (line 4) and concludes he must indeed have been mistaken and touched the wall instead of the ghost. This only highlights his state of confusion: how many walls possess a lovely firm bust with a beating heart underneath?

⁴⁰See especially stanza 119, line 5 and stanza 120, line 1.

In line 1 of stanza 123 it is even more obviously suggested that perhaps this is not a ghost at all with the interjection 'if ghost it were', but in typical Byronic fashion this is immediately countered by the ambivalent 'seemed a sweet soul' (line 1), not simply a description of a human being of pleasant character and disposition, but also clearly not ruling out the possibility that this still just might be a ghost, as ghosts are souls. This is followed by more detailed description of the ghost which, as it proceeds, only renders it ever more human, pointing out its facial features, 'A dimpled chin, a neck of ivory' (line 3). We are then kept in suspense once again after 'And they revealed' (line 6), and the object does not appear until the climactic exclamation at the very end of line 8, 'The phantom of her frolic Grace — Fitz-Fulke!' And so the ghost is uncovered as no ghost at all but the very earthly, real and alive Duchess. She is then further described as 'full' and 'voluptuous' (line 7), but this is directly undermined by the second half of the line 'but *not o'ergrown* bulk' and this in turn is undermined in line 8 as 'not o'ergrown bulk' is made to rhyme with 'frolic Grace — Fitz-Fulke!' Thus, for Juan, a seemingly Romantic encounter with a ghost proves to be nothing more than a very earthly, real and physical encounter.

So, Byron and Goethe present rather different pictures of the ghosts, but what they share is the fact that in neither case is this a Romantic vision. In 'Schlechter Trost' the spiritual world is called up, but only to reveal its indifference to human concerns, implying that this pain he feels is real physical pain ('schluchzen' and 'weinen') which cannot be lessened by anything 'spiritual', and is indeed an intrinsic and inevitable part of love. In Byron's case, while the outcome is completely different as Juan turns out to be the victim of an elaborate hoax, nonetheless no comfort is offered from the spiritual world either. What Juan is offered is ultimately physical gratification, so at least he is offered something by the so-called ghost; not spiritual comfort, as this is no ghost, but physical pleasure from the physical world. In 'Schlechter Trost' we see a prose-like conversational ease akin to the conversational nature of *Don Juan*, a constant use of irony in order to give both sides of the picture and clearly here a

similar use of light/dark imagery. Each poet is making use of the language itself in order to emphasise his own particular points, but also clearly also to emphasise the common point that no comfort or insight is to be obtained from the spiritual world, if this is thought of as having any objective, as opposed to merely subjective, reality.

5 'Freigebiger wird betrogen'⁴¹ ('Buch der Betrachtungen') and *Don Juan*,
XIII. 14.⁴²

Just as there is an intimate relationship between the 'Buch des Sängers' and the 'Buch Hafis', so too the 'Buch der Betrachtungen' is closely linked to its successor, the 'Buch des Unmuts'. As Goethe himself pointed out in the *Morgenblatt* in 1816, this book is dedicated to 'praktische Moral und Lebensklugheit', according to 'orientalische Sitte und Wendung'.⁴³ Indeed this 'Buch der Betrachtungen' is much more reflective and didactic than much of the rest of the text. This does not mean that it is not fully integrated into the cycle as a whole, but serves to emphasise the multi-faceted nature of life itself: love may be important, but it is not the sole component of life.

'Freigebiger wird betrogen' is a short poem of 8 lines made up of 4 pairs of regular rhyming couplets. Each pair of couplets is structured antithetically, so that, typically, as soon as we are presented with one point of view, this is immediately countered by its complementary opposite. The fact that the poems in this book are more general observations on life is reflected here in this poem too by the absence of the usual personal 'ich' and its counterparts 'du' and 'ihr'. Throughout this poem the third person is employed; the types are evoked by their one defining characteristic, and this distancing effect reflects the change from the personal tone, more usual in the cycle, to the general. Lines 1-6 are all structured in an identical fashion: lines 1, 3 and 5 begin with nouns^{each} describing a different type of person ('Freigebiger', 'Verständiger', 'Der Harte') whereas lines 2, 4 and 6 provide antitheses to their immediate predecessors ('Geizhafter', 'Vernünftiger', 'Der Gimpel'). Not only do these lines all begin with a noun, they are also then all immediately followed by a passive verb and nothing else: there are no adverbs or anything else to lessen the impact of the verb.

⁴¹HA, 2, p. 40. See also Atkins, 'Verständnis' 108-09; Birus, FA, 3.2, pp. 1072-73; Stephenson, *Goethe's Wisdom Literature* 186, and Trunz, HA, 2, pp. 605-06.

⁴²PW, 5, p. 529. See McGann, PW, 5, p. 756.

⁴³HA, 2, p. 269: 'practical morality and experience of life' according to 'oriental custom and expression.'

We also ought not to overlook the fact that the verbs are all passive, thus stressing the passive nature of what these people undergo: they are powerless to react actively, just as the language itself is passive. Yet, in what sense are these pairs opposite? All verbs used in lines 1-6 are negative; nothing good is happening to any of these kinds of people. Again the apparent opposites are linked by the rhyming of the verbs used to describe what is happening to them ('betrogen', 'ausgesogen'; 'irregeleitet', 'geweitet'; 'umgangen', 'gefangen') and the implication that these apparent opposites are not as different as they first appear seems clear. Lines 7 and 8 are simultaneously different and the same as lines 1-6: we see the recurrence of 'betrogen' from line 1, this time as a noun again like the beginnings of lines 1-6, and these two lines start with the same letter, just as lines 3-4 and lines 5-6 do. The passive description of how things are stands in stark contrast to the active commands 'Beherrsche' and 'betrüge!', and these first six lines are emphatically shown up for what they are: 'Lüge'.⁴⁴ The deception or Schillerian 'falscher Schein' is revealed for what it is, yet immediately in the final line this is undermined, with the command that the way out of all this deception is to deceive. It is Goethe's manipulation of 'betrogen' which makes this 'not simply an emphasis on an intellectual relation, but rather a felt connection of intrinsicality as if 'betrüge' had grown out of 'betrogen'.⁴⁵

Is this poem then an advocacy of lies and deception? It could be, but is it not also possible that it is far more subtle than that: none of these extremes of character has found the truth, so perhaps the answer lies in taking something from both opposites, just as 'betrüge' has 'grown out' of 'betrogen'. And surely the implication is also that the one is implicit within the other. The Faustian overtones regarding human weaknesses, as Atkins indicates, are also clear:⁴⁶ error ('lie') is perceived as an intrinsic part of man's striving nature for 'truth'. The seemingly simple endorsement

⁴⁴See also Goethe's maxim about the 'lie' (or paradox) that 'Man wird nie betrogen, man betrügt sich selbst' (Hecker 681). 'One is never deceived, one deceives oneself' (Stopp 92).

⁴⁵Stephenson, *Goethe's Wisdom Literature* 186.

⁴⁶Atkins, 'Verständnis' 108-09. See *Faust I*, line 317, 'Es irrt der Mensch, solange er strebt' (HA, 3, p. 18). 'Man will err, as long as he strives.'

of deceiving as a response to deception⁴⁷ is simultaneously undermined and emphasised by the very paradoxical structure of the language employed — an ambiguity that is to be 'mastered' ('beherrsche'), i.e., integrated into a 'binary' synthesis.

Let us now turn our attention to Byron. In Canto XIII. 14 of *Don Juan* we find Juan in England, where we have just been introduced to Lady Adeline Amundeville, who is probably the most complex heroine in *Don Juan*. She has depths that none of the other heroines possesses and has characteristics, not only of Lady Byron and many other women in Byron's acquaintance, but also of Byron himself. These English cantos provide an unmistakable satire on aristocratic English society, and it is particularly in these cantos that Byron draws heavily on his own personal experience.

Stanza 14 gives a description of both Lady Adeline and her husband Lord Henry. Adeline is immediately described as 'Chaste', emphatically positioned at the very beginning of the line and the stanza itself, and the extent of her chasteness is only further stressed by the end of the line 'to detraction's desperation'. Although she is still married to Lord Henry, there is clearly no longer any love involved in the marriage: 'one she had loved well' (line 2). The addition of the adverb 'well' almost suggests that she had carried out her duties as she ought to have done, and with this in mind, we now reassess chaste of line 1 as implying not only her purity but also the lack of sex in her marriage too. Lines 3-6 concentrate on Lord Henry and first of all portray him as a well-known peer: 'known in the councils of the nation' (line 3). Then, at the start of line 4, he is called 'Cool' and this harks back to the portrayal of his wife in line 1 as 'Chaste' and perhaps also implies the reason for her chasteness may be his frigidity. The addition of 'and quite English' is again like line 1, only highlighting the coolness of his demeanour, but, as soon as this is over, the flow of the line is interrupted by a semi-colon in the middle of the line. This is followed by

⁴⁷There is conceivably also a suggestion here of the deception/lie that is art (i.e., artifice).

the adjective 'imperturbable' which we are forced to pronounce strangely so that it rhymes with 'she had loved well', thus ironically undermining the very meaning of the word itself. Line 5 then continues this undermining with the admission 'Though apt to act with fire upon occasion': this literally undermines 'imperturbable', but this undermining is further highlighted by the contrast between 'Cool' and 'fire'. His description proceeds with 'Proud', significantly at the start of the line, again like lines 1 and 4, and the appending of 'and her' only after 'himself' suggests, not only pride in himself and a self-centredness, but surely also an awareness of duty, that pride in one's wife is appropriate and compulsory. This idea of the importance and clearly deceptive nature of outward appearance reminds us of the sentiments expressed in 'Freigeibiger wird betrogen' and is reinforced by the end of line 6, 'the world could tell': that is, the outward appearance of this happy couple was exactly as it should be as dictated by the norms of English aristocracy. The fact, however, that this clause does not end there, but is connected by enjambement to line 7, significantly to its object 'Nought', offers the possibility the world cannot really tell anything at all about the couple; and then reading on to see 'against either, and both seemed secure' surely suggests that something is going to happen, whereby one of them is going to do something wrong. The use of the verb 'seemed' is very telling indeed and the final line reveals surely what her downfall will be ('her virtue') and what his will be ('his hauteur'). 'Her virtue' of course links back to lines 1 and 2, just as 'his hauteur' links back to lines 3, 4 and 6, and the parallel structure of these statements about each hints at a similar loss of the very characteristic mentioned.

In these two very brief extracts we see both Byron and Goethe commenting on deception and deceiving. Byron is cleverly illuminating the superficiality of English society and its insistence on the importance of outward appearance and highlights just how wrong these outward appearances can be — a clear case of Schillerian 'falscher Schein'. Goethe on the other hand offers the advice that deception ought to be countered by the same; a typically Goethean balanced view where the one side has to

be balanced by its apparent polar opposite — the passively deceived must actively deceive. Although each extract is quite dissimilar in many ways, there are nonetheless many points of similarity, especially in the way in which each poet goes about making and emphasising his point. Both do set up one point of view only to undermine it immediately with its opposite; both use rhyme and parallel structures and thus succeed in reflecting the content in the very language itself and vice versa, so that one cannot be extracted from the other without detrimental effect.

6 'Der Winter und Timur' ('Buch Timur')⁴⁸ and *Don Juan*, VII. 40-42.⁴⁹

The 'Buch Timur' is one of only two books of the *West-östlicher Divan* which consist of only two poems, the other being the 'Buch des Parsen'. This short book has a distinctly different flavour from most of the rest of the text, yet nonetheless it does not seem out of place. 'Der Winter und Timur' is the first and the longer of the two poems in the book and the influence of Hafis is again clear. Timur, a Turkic name, or Tamerlane or Tamburlaine (?1336-1405), was a Mongol conqueror of the area from Mongolia to the Mediterranean and also the ruler of Samarkand (1369-1405). He defeated the Turks at Angora (1402) and died while invading China. This would seem to set this poem very firmly in the realm of the East, yet one only has to remember that, at the time of composition, the whole of Europe was in turmoil due to the effects of the Napoleonic wars, to realise that Goethe is surely making the point that, although Timur or Napoleon — caught in the Russian winter of 1812 — for that matter may be the tyrants and warriors immediate to either Hafis' audience in the 14th century or Goethe's in the 19th, a similar situation could apply at any time in history, and anywhere. Hence, although the immediate point of contact may be synchronic, the impact is certainly diachronic. This is a poem of one stanza of 33 lines with an irregular rhyme scheme, yet nonetheless a regular 4 footed 8 syllable line throughout.

The fact that the poem begins with 'So' suggests that this is only an extract from a longer piece, and even the end appears not to be definitive. We are also left wondering to what the 'sie' of line 1 refers. The lack of a regular rhyme scheme and the constant use of enjambement lend a rather prose-like flavour to the whole story: a story based very closely on a Latin translation of an Arabic poem on Timur. The dominant atmosphere, despite the 'Flammen' of line 13, the 'Flamme' of line 33, and

⁴⁸HA, 2, pp. 60-61. See also Birus, FA, 3.2, pp. 1159-67; Ronald Gray, *Goethe: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) 233-34; Ihekweazu 176-81; Lemmel 57-59 and Trunz, HA, 2, pp. 621-22.

⁴⁹PW, 5, pp. 349-50. See McGann, PW, 5, p. 724.

the 'Kohlenglut' of line 32, is that of cold ('Eishauch', line 2; 'frostgespitzten', line 7; 'meine Lüfte sind noch kälter', lines 22-23), culminating in the 'Todeskälte' of line 30. We have witnessed nothing as cold anywhere else in the *West-östlicher Divan*, but this coldness is nonetheless reminiscent of the coolness of stanza 2 of 'Selige Sehnsucht' in the 'Liebesnächte Kühlung' in the light of the 'stille Kerze'. In 'Der Winter und Timur' we see a brutal intensification and allegorical elaboration of this 'Kühlung', here emphatically as the personified season of winter.

Winter with all its powers is compared with the human tyrant entering into a dialogue with him (lines 10-33 are direct speech) and although we see a two-sided dialogue set up, we hear only one side of the story, winter's, thus emphasising it is winter/nature, and not man, that is in control. The use of dialogue is not unfamiliar to the *West-östlicher Divan* as a whole, but dialogue usually occurs between the two lovers Hatem and Suleika and often in the 'Buch Suleika', which lies in immediate juxtaposition to the 'Buch des Timur'. The close relationship between Hatem and Suleika would then seem to suggest that there may be an intimate relationship between the tyrant as a force of nature, whether he be Timur or Napoleon, and winter: after all, winter does address the tyrant as 'du' and in line 16 allies herself to him before joining him in line 17 as 'wir'. This poem, then, not only stands in stark contrast to the following love poems of the 'Buch Suleika', it really stands in stark contrast to the other eleven books: here we have no love, no rejuvenation, no life, no warming fire, no illuminating light, only frozen paralysis and 'Todeskälte'.

It is surely no accident that this poem occurs in the middle of the cycle as the first poem of two in the seventh book of twelve, sitting there literally balancing the other books on either side of it; not only the other books but also 'An Suleika', the second poem in the book, which appears far more akin to the rhyme and metre forms and eroticism of much of the rest of the cycle. In 'Der Winter und Timur' we see winter bringing together all its brutality of cold, snow, ice and wind, all its elemental powers

to confront brutally the one who has dared to believe some of these powers his own. The force and wrath of winter may be uncharacteristic of the *West-östlicher Divan*, but some poetic techniques common to the rest of the text are still evident here. The alliteration of the 'gewalt'gem Grimme' (line 2) stresses the depth and strength of winter's fury; the alliteration of 'Winde widerwärtig' (lines 4-5) and the enjambement linking and separating them underlines the adverb and how winter's fury is revealing itself in her powers. The notion of strength and violence continues in line 6 with 'Gewaltkraft', and the description of winter's powers moves from the winds to the storms and then to her voice in line 9: the power and onomatopoeic nature of the verb 'Schrie' is striking. We can almost hear winter crying, perhaps like a howling wind, but certainly in a threatening ('drohend') fashion. This loudness and anger are immediately undermined, however, by the beginning of the speech with the unexpected alliterative adjectives 'Leise, langsam' (line 10), but this turns out to be merely the calm before the storm. The alliteration between 'Unglücksel'ger' (line 10) and 'Unrecht' (line 11) reveal winter's opinion of the impudent human tyrant and prefigure what awful things will happen to him because of his arrogance. Lines 12-13 appear to offer some respite from this brutal cold as we hear of the people whose hearts Timur has enflamed, yet these flames do not precede the rebirth and life-enhancing 'Stirb und werde' of the final stanza of 'Selige Sehnsucht'. This really is a 'Flammentod' with no positive features whatsoever and is thus described as 'Todeskälte' (line 30). That winter's anger has not abated is clear from the adjective 'verdammt' (line 14) and the emphatic positioning of 'Einer' at the start of line 15, and that there is some kind of link between them is highlighted by the appearance of 'der andre', its opposite at the opposite end of the same line. The similarities are then evident and stressed in line 16 with the admission that each of them is old. The verb 'erstarren', placed very emphatically at the end of the line and juxtaposed with old age, illustrates the stagnation, the cold, the paralysis, indeed the death in old age in a word. The brutality and inescapability of this paralysis is reflected coldly in the brevity of the one-word description.

The likening in line 18 of the human tyrant to Mars, the Roman God of war and of winter, to Saturn, the Roman God of agriculture and vegetation, perpetuates the man-nature dichotomy already established: it is men who wage war, and nature and vegetation are in the hands of climate, weather, and the seasons. Furthermore we could assume Mars and Saturn to be the planets and would then also end up with links to the hot-cold polarity already evident. Mars is often also known as the Red Planet, implying heat, yet it has polar caps and its temperatures range from -70°C to -40°C , so it is hardly a hot planet and Saturn's rings consist of small frozen particles, so each can also then continue the predominant cold atmosphere. The ominous atmosphere is further heightened by the fact that, when Mars and Saturn appear in conjunction, they are nothing but the carriers of misfortune and bad luck.

The horror of and at the tyrant's actions continues with the adjective 'übeltätig' (line 19), the superlative 'schrecklichsten' (line 20), the verbs 'tötest' and 'kältest' (line 21; the latter is here not the superlative it may appear outwith context), the comparative 'kälter' (line 23), the verb 'quälen' and the adjective 'wild' (line 24), 'tausend Martern' (line 25), the comparative 'was Schlimmres' (line 27), before the climax is reached with the 'Todeskälte' skilfully prefigured, especially by line 21. The four-time repetition of 'Gott' in the syntactically similar lines 27-30 adds to the tension before the revelation of 'Todeskälte' in line 30 and reflect a final desperate insistent plea to God himself for salvation. This is a cruel and emphatic intensification of the way in which the ghosts, the spiritual world, ignored the lonely lover in 'Schlechter Trost'. Once more there is no comfort, no escape and here only death.

It is in the final confrontation in the last three lines that we see the victory of the 'Todeskälte' over the flames; in spite of the 'Breite Kohlenglut vom Herde (line 32), it is the cold that triumphs. The 'breite Kohlenglut' harks back to the 'stille Kerze' of stanza 2 of 'Selige Sehnsucht', but the candle flame which then warmed and illuminated is here amplified to embrace the souls that Timur has enflamed (with

dreams of glory and terror of his power) and frozen with fear 'Tötest du die Seele, kältest / Du den Luftkreis' (lines 21-22). Winter will kill with cold, just as Saturn is encircled by the frozen particles of its rings. This emphatic 'Todeskälte' appears then as a polar opposite to the life-giving 'Flammentod' of stanza 1 of 'Selige Sehnsucht': this is a cold that is made equivalent to old age 'Greis' (line 31), against which the warmth of the hearth can avail nothing. This ultimate destruction is then due to a lack of warmth of that flame that kills to give more life of which 'Selige Sehnsucht' speaks. In other words, where the cold and flames are not held in a binary-synthetic balance, the result is utter annihilation with no Becoming.

Despite the fact that 'Der Winter und Timur' seems to reach the pinnacle of negation with the brutal and violent victory of cold, of old age, and of death itself, over the warmth of the flames, rejuvenation and life, it does nevertheless function as a polar opposite for the whole cycle and even for the other poem in the 'Buch Timur', 'An Suleika'. The power of elemental forces and of nature is strikingly clear and it also seems clear that arrogant man is doomed to fail in his quest for supremacy, as he must live by the laws of man and not those of nature. Yet, despite its clear differences from the rest of the cycle, it does, nonetheless, use some similar poetic techniques: the lack of regular rhyme and yet regular 4-syllable lines and the frequent use of enjambement lend the whole a conversational tone, as of course does the direct speech that is much of the poem. Just as elsewhere in the cycle, form and content too are held together in a kind of relationship of binary synthesis, even if in this case the content appears to fall away so cruelly from this balance, with the cold dominating almost to the exclusion of the heat.

Let us now turn our attention to *Don Juan*, particularly stanzas 40-42 of Canto VII, one of the so-called war cantos. Like Goethe, Byron uses historical fact as the basis for his comments on war: here the inspiration is not Timur, though it was certainly Napoleon to some extent, but, as Byron notes in the preface to Cantos VI, VII and

VIII, the Siege of Ismail in Turkey, which occurred in 1790, when, on 30 November, the city was stormed by Aleksandr Vasilievich Suvarov (1729-1800).⁵⁰ In a similar way to the 'Buch Timur', these war cantos also stand out to a certain extent from the rest of the text: the sense of indignation seems even stronger as we are presented, often in an even more forthright manner than that to which we have become accustomed, with neither a whole-hearted rejection nor a whole-hearted glorification of war. War is perceived as something rather complex, and there is always a dichotomous tension between the reality of what happened and a Romanticised view of these events. Souvaroff⁵¹ is admired as a fellow realist: he is not portrayed wholly negatively, just as human nature is neither wholly good nor wholly bad, and so the full complexity of human nature, as he perceives it, is highlighted. In a rather Goethean fashion we see that there are both positive and negative sides to the so-called tyrants (Suvarrow is described succinctly in Canto VII, stanza 55, line 5 as 'Hero, buffoon, half-demon and half-dirt'), and even in the predominantly negative 'Der Winter und Timur', lines 12-13 suggest that Timur gives life to those who follow him. In these few stanzas Souvaroff has just received a letter from Prince Potemkin (1736-1791), who was one of Catherine's most famous and favourite lovers. We see the contents of the letter in stanza 40 before the tone becomes more serious in stanzas 41 and 42 as we are presented with the actuality of war and its full horror, as so often in these cantos.

The conversational tone has not disappeared and is evident in stanza 40 with the use of enjambement (lines 1-2, 2-3, 5-6), a similar playful use of rhyme ('Marshal', 'partial', 'arch all' in lines 1, 3 and 5), yet the underlying sense of something more sinister pervades and is emphatically revealed in line 8, the climax of the poem and the letter to Souvaroff: 'You will take Ismail at whatever price.' At the start of the

⁵⁰McGann, PW, 5, p. 723. Byron provides a lengthy preface to these war cantos and uses as his main source the Marquis Gabriel de Castelnau's *Essai sur l'Histoire ancienne et moderne de la Nouvelle Russie*. The relevant parts of Castelnau's text are printed in McGann's notes to PW, 5, pp. 725-32.

⁵¹Byron spells the name Suvarvov either as Souvaroff or Suvarrow.

stanza it is almost as if Potemkin's letter-writing skills are being praised, since the letter is described as being 'worthy of a Spartan' (line 2), and only thereafter, when this is immediately qualified with 'had the cause / Been one to which a good heart could be partial' (lines 2-3), do we begin to believe that this cause will prove to be the exact opposite. Indeed, as he then proceeds to enumerate what might constitute a worthy cause in line 4, this again is immediately countered by what was really the case: this 'was mere lust of power to o'er arch all / With its proud brow' (lines 5-6). The second half of line 6 comments on the 'mere lust of power' and his negative opinion of it, although the fact that it 'merits' any 'applause' whatsoever, suggests that it may not be wholly negative: a two-sidedness also implied by 'mere' preceding 'lust of power', indicating that 'lust of power' when not alone may not be so appalling. The beginning of line 7 returns to the quality of Potemkin's letter, but then interrupts the flow of the line with the interjection 'which said' to jolt us out of the constant, almost flowing, interchange from one side directly to its opposite in lines 1-6, on to the brevity of 'in a trice' and to the emphatic declaration in line 8. This is an order not to be disobeyed, with the stress on 'will' and finally on 'at whatever price', admitting that the cost will most probably be high. The inevitable destruction and annihilation is reminiscent of the negative picture painted in 'Der Winter und Timur'. This constant juxtaposing of the ideal situation (lines 1-2, 4, the first half of line 7) with the actuality of the nature of war (lines 3, 5, 6 and 8) is characteristic of all the war cantos and reflects, in Byron's view, the paradoxical nature of war.

The first line of stanza 41, with its clear biblical origins,⁵² would seem to suggest a positive, illuminating, life-giving, life-enhancing force and also the omnipotence of all-powerful God as he makes the world and what he decrees actually happens. Line 2 is both parallel to and contrasted to line 1: they are linked by the similar syntax, but divided by the replacement of 'light' by 'blood', by the move to the present tense from the past, so that we now see man, instead of God, handing out the orders. They are

⁵²Genesis 1: 3.

also differentiated by the result of the order, which in line 2 is not just its execution, not just a few drops of blood, but an uncontrolled immense 'sea'. The juxtaposition of God and man reflects the arrogance of man to think that he possesses godly powers: just as the sorcerer's apprentice cannot reproduce the feats of the sorcerer, so too man cannot reproduce the deeds of God. The brutality and violence of man who has wrongly deemed himself on a par with God is shown up here as exactly what it is, just as Goethe's Timur is unmasked as a human tyrant mistakenly trying to make use of powers which are not his to use. That Byron does not think highly of 'man' in his incarnation as tyrant is evident from the description of him as a 'spoiled child' (line 3). This 'child of the Night' is both linked to God through the rhyme with 'light' (line 1) and differentiated by the opposition in the meanings of the words themselves. The daemonic overtones of 'Night', noticeably capitalised, seem clear and again only strengthen the contrast between man and God. The conversational side that interrupts line 3 presents us with 'Day', the positive illuminating opposite to 'Night', and surely then also carrying the connotations of God as a light-giving force. The unrelenting commands given by man go on, just as the idea of command continues from lines 1-2 to lines 3 and 4, and the result of these commands, 'More evil in an hour' stands emphatically at the beginning of line 5 because of the enjambement with line 4. Thus the speed of death and the flow of blood into a sea is accentuated, and underlined yet further by the comparison of this havoc wreaked in such a short time with the 30 years which would not suffice to repair the damage. The darkness of this 'evil' is again contrasted with the light through the rhyme in line 5 with 'bright' and the enjambement bringing 'Summers' (line 6) to the forefront. The positive, life-enhancing qualities of summer are not sufficient to counteract the annihilating forces of darkness and evil and surely also winter, just as the 'Todeskälte' of winter is what triumphs over the heat of the flames in 'Der Winter und Timur'. Just as the flames should provide warmth for the hearth in 'Der Winter und Timur', so too in lines 6-7 here we see how these summers ought to be, but are not. 'Eden' suggests a paradise full of life in the height of summer, green and fertile and alive, yet this is a picture

which stands in stark contrast to the reality of what war has done. Line 8⁵³ reveals the extent of the annihilation caused by war, comparing the loss of life of people with the loss of life of nature to highlight that it is not just a small part of the community which is affected; it is shaken to its very foundations and rendered barren, just as the trees and plants are killed and rendered incapable of bearing fruit if their roots are removed. Although this line is so negative to the positive line 1, it is also connected to it in that it too shares a biblical origin, perhaps not insignificantly from the very last book of the Old Testament⁵⁴ to contrast with line 1, which is from the very first.

Despite the horrors of war, the style of the poem does not change in these cantos and, at the start of stanza 42, the use of the possessive 'Our' suggests again the initiated reader who is all too familiar with the story and apparently sympathises with our 'friends the Turks', the ones who were after all on the receiving end of all this brutality as the Russians under Souvaroff tried to take Ismail. The Eastern Turks' difference from the Western Russians is evident in their religious faith, as they thank Allah for the Russian retreat indicated in line 2. Allah also represents the polar opposite to the God of stanza 41, as the Turks too try to use the power of their god to make something happen. Line 3 'Were damnably mistaken' proves them to be no less foolish than the 'man' referred to in the previous stanza, and 'damnably' reveals the disappointment that this is not the retreat desired. The stress afforded to 'slow' by its position at the end of line 3, but not at the end of the clause, elongates the line and ironically reflects the fact that perhaps they have been rather too hasty in believing the Russians vanquished. The mini conversational digression of lines 5-6, discussing the use of 'beat' as a past participle instead of the grammatically correct 'beaten', only succeeds in accentuating once more that this is his poem and he will write it as he wishes. The italicisation of 'beaten' and 'you' link the two and thus the correctness of

⁵³The Garland edition (Byron, V, pp. 114-15) has this line slightly differently as 'For War not only cuts up branch but root'. This difference does not affect my analysis of the line, although the Garland edition does perhaps reflect even more clearly the divisive, destructive nature of war, as the verb is removed from its place immediately adjacent to its subject.

⁵⁴Malachi 4: 1.

the one imbues the other. He, on the other hand, clearly wants nothing to do with this conformity, and the emphatic placing of the first person 'I' at the start of line 6 underlines this is his own personal method, and the remainder of the line again seems to stress the carefree nature of composition, of which he talks frequently throughout. It should not be forgotten of course that he also talks of various plans for the poem throughout, and a close reading of *Don Juan* only reveals that it is not as unconsidered and desultory as he often insists it is. His insistence that he is right is clear in line 7, although here it is not an insistence on grammar, but rather a repetition of the notion that the Turks are wrong in their assumptions about the Russians' retreat. Indeed, line 8, with its strange dichotomy between their hatred of 'hogs' and their contradictory wish to 'save their bacon', ironically reveals that they appear to end up achieving something rather different from what they initially desire. 'Saving one's bacon' of course also indicates a desire for self-preservation as well as saving someone else from danger and, in spite of the connotations of flesh and perhaps the animal nature of war waged by man, a wry humour and a conversational informality nevertheless shine through.

In these few stanzas, indeed throughout the war cantos, it is not the style of *Don Juan* which has altered, but rather the focus,⁵⁵ just as we see also in 'Der Winter und Timur'. Each poet still uses techniques visible in more light-hearted and positive parts of their texts: enjambement, juxtaposition of polar opposites, a conversational tone. Both Goethe and Byron take their inspiration both from the synchronic contemporary Napoleonic wars, and also from other tyrants in other times. Thus the picture is lent a diachronic dimension: the invective against the evils of man-made war are apparent in each. The arrogance of man who has dared to think himself on a par with God in Byron and with winter in Goethe (winter is after all in God's power too) and the inescapable consequences thereof are starkly painted in each extract:

⁵⁵See M. G. Cooke, *The Blind Man traces the Circle: On the Patterns and Philosophy of Byron's Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969) 188-89.

particularly by the sea of blood in *Don Juan* and the 'Todeskälte' in 'Der Winter und Timur'. In each case the relationship is shown to be both parallel, in so far as the human tyrant foolishly believes himself to be omnipotent, and unequal, in so far as man will ultimately and brutally be put in his place by the destruction which succeeds. This is no longer a binary-synthetic relationship between hot and cold, light and dark, summer and winter and the results of this imbalance, with the weight being heavily on the negative pole because of man's own abuse of power. The devastating results are clear. The positive pole has not disappeared completely in either: the flames and heat still occur in 'Der Winter und Timur', just as the summer and the light appear in *Don Juan*; they have simply become ineffective and have been overpowered by their opposite. It should not be overlooked that, in 'Der Winter und Timur', we do briefly see a positive side to Timur when in lines 12-13 the fact that he is life-giving to his followers is stressed, and Byron too shows that Suwarrow is not all bad, especially in the description of him in Canto VII, stanza 55, lines 4-8:

A thing to wonder at beyond most wondering;
 Hero, buffoon, half-demon and half-dirt,
 Praying, instructing, desolating, plundering;
 Now Mars, now Momus; and when bent to storm
 A fortress, Harlequin in uniform.

7 'Gingo Biloba' ('Buch Suleika')⁵⁶ and *Don Juan*, IV. 10-11.⁵⁷

The 'Buch Suleika' is by far the largest book of the *West-östlicher Divan*, portraying and glorifying the love between Hatem and Suleika. This book provides both the central focus of, and appropriately the climax to, the cycle. Love has developed from the earlier 'Buch der Liebe'; it has become more specific, more particular, more personal, as here the focus is only on these two lovers, the older Hatem and the young Suleika. The majority of the poems in this book come together to form a dialogue between the two lovers and this dialogue is generally conducted in stanzas of four lines each. 'Gingo biloba', a 3 stanza poem, each of 4 lines and a regular cross rhyme scheme, is, however, not explicitly part of this dialogue as it is not obviously addressed to anyone. It and the previous poem interrupt the lovers' dialogue, yet nevertheless they are not out of place within this book and serve to comment and highlight the points made in the dialogue proper. Indeed, ending on a question as it does, 'Gingo biloba' tantalisingly evokes an interlocutor, either the reader, or Suleika, or both.

The ginkgo biloba tree is a Japanese tree with unusual fan-shaped leaves and it is sometimes known as the maidenhair tree. The fact that it was to be found in a garden in the West for Goethe to see makes it a tangible symbol of the interaction between West and East which pervades the whole text. Moreover, the title itself immediately makes one think of the actual tree⁵⁸ which is, appropriately, what is depicted in the one sentence that is stanza 1. Yet this poem is not simply a depiction of this tree: as has often been highlighted, it is a reflection of Goethe's love for Marianne, but, as Buck and Trunz point out, knowledge of biographical details does not assist

⁵⁶HA, 2, p. 66. See also Birus, FA, 3.2, pp. 1192-98; Theo Buck, 'Goethes "Ginkgo biloba,"' *Études Germaniques* 53 (1998): 277-90; Günther Debon, 'Das Blatt von Osten. Gedanken zum "Gingo-biloba" Gedicht,' *Euphorion* 73 (1979): 227-36 and Trunz, HA, 2, pp. 628-29.

⁵⁷PW, 5, p. 206. See McGann, PW, 5, p. 703.

⁵⁸See Buck 285.

understanding of the text.⁵⁹ Although this love clearly provided the inspiration for this poem, delving further into biographical minutiae, dates and places of composition ultimately help little when looking at the poem itself.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it is clear that the initiated audience addressed and desired by Goethe in all of these poems will appreciate the text more if these subtle personal references are perceived.⁶¹ The tree is made all the more real by the use of the ostensive 'Dieses', as opposed to the vaguer definite article 'das' or even the indefinite article 'ein', the factual 'von Osten' relating its origin, and then in line 2 this is personalised further by the fact that this tree is to be found in 'Meinem' and not in anyone else's garden. Goethe is, however, not necessarily referring to his own personal garden; this garden is described as belonging to him the author and surely it only belongs to him in so far as it is in his part of the world, the West, his own personal cosmos. The picture is made even more specific by focusing, not on the whole tree, but just on the leaf, clearly linked to the tree of which it is part by alliteration: 'Baums Blatt'. 'Anvertraut' suggests that it needs care and attention and that he should feel proud that he has been allowed to have this exotic tree here in the West. Whatever secret sense it has, this can only be discovered by 'der Wissende' (reminiscent of 'die Weisen' of 'Selige Sehnsucht'), so again Goethe is stressing the need for an attentive and initiated reader. The verb 'kosten' suggests that an enjoyment which is not simply, if at all, mental, but rather one which is almost wholly sensual — a connoisseurship fitting in with the very physical and sensual depiction of the Hatem-Suleika relationship in the 'Buch Suleika', but also clearly linking this poem to the very beginning, to 'Hegire': 'Flüchte du im reinen Osten / Patriarchenluft zu kosten' (stanza 1, lines 3-4).

⁵⁹Buck 283 and Trunz, HA, 2, p. 561.

⁶⁰See Debon 227-36.

⁶¹Whether this appreciation of the text is a better one is of course a debatable point. I would argue that some personal information is helpful but that narrow vision ought not to cloud our vision to a more universal point being made. It should, however, not be forgotten that it is the basing of any universal points in their own particular personal experience that affords both Goethe's and Byron's works their essential vitality.

In stanza 2 we see two symmetrical questions regarding the strange duplicitous nature of these leaves. The singular 'Ist es ein' of line 5 is doubled in line 7 to 'Sind es zwei', and the contrast between the division implied by lines 5-6 by 'ein' and 'getrennt', and the duality implied by lines 7-8 by 'zwei' and 'daß man sie als eines kennt', is unmistakable. Yet, it is not only the leaf whose very nature is being questioned here. It is evident that this refers also to the lovers — and, as in Byron's idyllic love-scene, lovers in general — pondering if they are each just a part of a whole, or are they two individual distinct beings who only appear or wish to appear as one: the sexual connotations of this division and unity need not be stressed.

We probably expect stanza 3 to provide the answer to our question, but, although we do get some kind of answer, it is not definitive; the sentence is long and itself ends with another question, albeit a rhetorical one. This question is prefigured by the alliteration on 'f' in lines 9, 10 and 11, thus focusing on 'Frage'. The change to the preterite in line 10 with 'Fand' hints that this is not a new question, but one that has been preying on the poet's mind for a while, and almost leads us to believe we will get a definitive answer. But no, what he has found is 'den rechten Sinn'; a throwback to the 'geheimen Sinn' of stanza 1 and significantly not its opposite, thus not implying openness and clarity, but merely that this is an appropriate answer. The very sensual verb 'Fühlst' (line 11) echoes the physicality of 'kosten' of stanza 1; and it is significantly this sensual physical feeling which is offering the answer 'Daß ich eins und doppelt bin'. The concept of binary synthesis illuminates what is at work here: the lovers are each unities in their own right, but when they come together they form a new unity, while simultaneously holding on to their own original unity. Hence they are at one and the same time both 'eins und doppelt.' A close look at the end rhyme highlights this yet further, for, although this rhyme scheme appears carefree and simple, a closer look reveals that here too we only have two consonant endings 'n' and 't', so even here we perceive a binary scheme which alternates equally until the final stanza where only one, 'n'-ending is operative. Yet the implications of this poem do

not appear to stop there: there seems to be another level on which this poem is operating, in tandem with love. If we assume 'Blatt' in line 1 denotes a piece of paper instead of a leaf, and also take cognisance of 'Liedern' in line 11, we may conclude that the poem is also talking about poetry. On the one hand the poet is the lover, but on the other he is also the one who attempts to express and externalise this love in his poetry. This essential polarity within all things natural and human is typically Goethean and this is reflected here in the different possible readings of this poem.

Let us now take a short section of Canto IV for comparison with 'Gingo biloba'. In stanzas 10-11 we find Juan and Haidée still enjoying their idyllic love, which is to be shattered by Lambro's arrival some twenty stanzas later. In stanza 10 Juan and Haidée are alone (line 1) and obviously blissfully happy in 'another Eden' (line 2). The biblical overtones of paradise and Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden are clear, and so we get another hint that all will not turn out well, just as in the original garden of Eden. Here we see Byron too making use of nature when talking of his lovers. Their happiness in their very physical togetherness is stressed by the juxtaposition of the fact that they were only unhappy when 'separate' (line 3), when they were not 'als eines'. Division is reinforced by the colon after 'separate', thus focusing on the 'the tree' at the end of line 3. The holding back of the verb until the beginning of line 4 merely stresses the force with which the tree is separated from its home. The natural imagery continues with the 'river'; again the rhythm is interrupted, this time by a dash, so that 'the river' is found in exactly the same position in the line as the tree before it, thus mirroring the separation that each undergoes in the very structure of the line. A similar structure appears in lines 5-6, but this time the image is a human one of a suckling baby separated from its mother, but still the emphasis is on the pain of separation. Only in line 7 is the principal cause of all these separations revealed, and this delaying only highlights the even greater power of the effect that separation would have on these two lovers; the verb 'wither' hinting that the outcome will be death. The rhyming of 'apart' with 'heart' (lines 7 and 8) reinforces this idea that

separation will ensue. Although there is nothing quite parallel to the compression of the Goethean 'eins und doppelt', the implication that the coming together of the two lovers is like the coming together of two parts of a whole is made clear here by the stress on the disastrous effect of division. Yet these two stanzas are both connected and separated by the heart: they are both linked and divided by the very stanza break and the dash.

The heart theme is continued into stanza 11 with the immediate reprisal of those last two words of stanza 10 'the heart'. The flow is interrupted by the enforced pause after 'heart', reflecting the breaking of the heart in the breaking of the rhythm. Immediately thereafter we jump from broken hearts to happiness and fortune: just as in 'Gingo biloba' we have opposites juxtaposed to considerable effect. The heart is then compared to a piece of porcelain, highlighting its fragility and the necessity of looking after it (it is 'precious' — line 3): in a way reminiscent of the gardener who has to take care of the leaf entrusted to his care in 'Gingo biloba'. After this powerful image of the heart breaking like a piece of china smashed on the ground, the mood changes as the apparent disadvantages of such a premature breakage are listed in lines 4-6. They will not be able to experience the endless humdrum everyday existence ('The long year link'd with heavy day on day'), nor will they experience all the things one has to bear, nor all the secrets which must be kept. These hardly sound like disadvantages at all and would seem to mirror far more Byron's own personal experience of love within marriage. The final rhyming couplet increases this growing disillusionment with love and incomprehension ('strange principle') of those who desire to love, indicating that those who most desire to love, to follow this 'strange principle', must also be those who 'long the most to die'. The inevitability of death as the outcome of love seems clear.

Each poet has used natural images to describe the relationship between the lovers: Goethe the ginkgo biloba tree and Byron a tree and a river. In a different way each

poet is suggesting the unity of the two lovers: in Goethe's case simultaneously stressing their doubleness; in Byron's looking to the negative (in reality, positive) aspect of what happens when the lovers are divided. That each poet was inspired by, and here relativised his own experiences, is clear. The negative outcome of love and marriage for Byron is well-documented, and the plea for poetic collaboration in 'Gingo biloba' is clearly based on Goethe's and Marianne's collaboration resulting in the inclusion of a few of her poems within the completed text. This fact was not immediately known, however, and, just as knowing that Byron too was unhappy in love adds little to the appreciation of his poem so, too, the information about Marianne's work with Goethe is only really important in so far as it provided the creative impetus and inspiration, just as the lover in the poem provides the inspiration to the poet.

8 'Wiederfinden' ('Buch Suleika')⁶² and *Don Juan*, IV. 24-27.⁶³

'Wiederfinden', also in the 'Buch Suleika', is one of the best-known poems in the *West-östlicher Divan*, often singled out by critics. It is not difficult to see why they are attracted by this expression of the delight felt by the lovers when they meet again after a period of separation. This is the reunion longed for, but never achieved, in 'Schlechter Trost' and the joy of reciprocal and reciprocated love, of unity in duality, as seen in 'Gingo biloba' and 'Selige Sehnsucht'. Yet it is surely also the cosmological story encapsulated in stanzas 2-5 which is also so appealing.

Here we do not have the usual 4-line stanzas of the 'Buch Suleika', but longer 8-line ones. These stanzas do, nonetheless, follow the typical cross rhyme scheme and can thus be seen as two 4-line stanzas joined together to form these longer stanzas, reflecting the desired length of the longed-for and long-awaited reunion. Stanza 1 celebrates the reunion of Hatem and Suleika; the delighted exclamations 'Ist es möglich!' (line 1) and 'Ja, du bist es!' (line 5) revealing the depth of the feeling, but by referring to his loved one as 'Stern der Sterne', a bright light in the overwhelming darkness of the 'Nacht der Ferne' (line 3), we already have a hint of the metaphysical to come. The idea of polarity is also already evident with the light of the stars and the darkness of the night; togetherness and separation and joy and pain. The stanza appears to be constructed in couplets dealing with togetherness, light and joy (lines 1-2 and 5-6) and their opposites separation, darkness and pain (lines 3-4 and 7-8), yet, since the rhyme scheme does not follow this pattern, but rather has the opposites

⁶²HA, 2, pp. 83-84. See also Birus, FA, 3.2, pp. 1280-89; Jonas Cohn, 'Goethes Gedicht "Wiederfinden." Versuch einer Sinndeutung,' *Archiv für Philosophie* 1 (1947): 118-31; Ihekweazu 304-19; Ileri 379-82; Lemmel 29 and 200-07; Gisela Luther, 'Goethes "Wiederfinden,"' *Interpretationen zum West-östlichen Divan Goethes*, ed. Edgar Lohner (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973) 250-76; Walter Marg, 'Goethe's "Wiederfinden",' *Euphorion* 46 (1952): 59-79; D. R. Midgley, "'Wiederfinden'" Cosmic Vision and Cultural Fusion in the *West-östlicher Divan*,' *German Life and Letters* 36 (1982-83): 87-98; Gerhard Neumann, "'Lasst mich weinen...'" Die Schrift der Tränen in Goethes *West-östlichem Divan*,' *Oxford German Studies* 15 (1984): 69-72 and Trunz, HA, 2, pp. 642-44.

⁶³PW, 5, pp. 210-11. See McGann, PW, 5, pp. 703-04.

rhyming with each other in a cross rhyme scheme ('Sterne' 'Ferne'; 'Herz' 'Schmerz'; 'Freuden' 'Leiden' and 'Widerpart' 'Gegenwart'), this only underlines the close connection between the one and its polar opposite and the intrinsicity of the one in the other. The force of the verbs in this stanza is also worth noting; 'Drück' and 'Schaudr' are both very physical and accentuate the physical effects of the emotional feeling. Midgley notes what he calls 'a certain ambiguity in the very last word of the stanza',⁶⁴ but I would argue that it is not so much ambiguity, in the sense of dubiety, as double meaning: there is no reason why the two meanings of 'Gegenwart' as 'the present time' as opposed to 'vergangner Leiden' (line 7) and the physical presence of the lover as opposed to her absence in the 'Nacht der Ferne' (line 3) should not exist in tandem. The intermingling of these polar opposites in the present tense reflects the ongoing nature of the interaction and the inevitability that the one will be followed by the other in an eternal recurring cycle.

Stanza 2 immediately provides a stark contrast to the temporal 'Gegenwart' with the past temporal conjunction 'Als' and what we find again is a move from one thing, present, to its polar opposite, past. Although this is perceptibly not the delight of stanza 1, 'tiefsten Grunde' (line 1) does echo 'Abgrund' (line 4) and the painful exclamation 'Ach' (line 6) also echoes the 'Ach' in stanza 1, which is also associated with the pain of separation. In stanza 2, however, the separation is not the separation of the lovers, but of the world from God. We have been transposed from the personal to the cosmogonic,⁶⁵ but the world still appears as a person, like a baby lying on the mother's breast: 'Lag an Gottes ew'ger Brust' (line 2). Again here the link to line 2 of stanza 1 is evident. The allusions to God creating the world are clear,⁶⁶ and the emphatic command 'Es werde!' (line 5) is reminiscent of God's words in Genesis 1: 3 'Es werde Licht', but the fact that there is no 'Licht' here moves the stress to the verb and the process of becoming following pain. Immediately we think back to the plea

⁶⁴Midgley 94.

⁶⁵See Birus, FA, 3.2, pp. 1281-82.

⁶⁶See also Birus, FA, 3.2, p. 1282.

in 'Selige Sehnsucht' to 'Stirb und werde'. In this stanza we are not thrown into light, but into the painful ('schmerzlich') process of becoming. 'Das All' is being violently divided 'mit Machtgebärde' (line 7), 'brach' (line 8) from its original oneness, so that it may become actual, and it will only become actual once it has been divided and experienced this painful birth-like process. The use of 'Wirklichkeiten' in the plural, instead of the more common singular, highlights the fragmentary nature of what is produced in plurality.

Light makes a dramatic entrance at the beginning of stanza 3 with the inversion 'Auf tat sich das Licht!' as it is separated from the darkness. Light comes first here, just as God created light in the bible first too. The reflexive verbs used in lines 1 and 2 reflect the involuntariness and inevitability of this separation. The separation process of all the elements continues at an ever-increasing pace: 'trennte', 'Scheidend', 'auseinander', 'fliehn', and becomes ever more violent, 'Rasch', 'wilden', 'wüsten', and more chaotic. Suddenly, however, in lines 7-8, the frenzied activity stops as if everything is exhausted and all is 'Starr' (line 7). An awareness of what has been lost is clear as, in line 8, we note the absence of both 'Sehnsucht' and 'Klang'.

The alliterative link between 'Stumm' and 'still' (line 1) and 'Starr' from stanza 3 perpetuate and intensify this sense of static inactivity and of deep depression. Again the link to the pain felt by the lover during separation is clear. This loneliness is accentuated by the positioning of the adjective 'Einsam' at the very beginning of line 2 and the fact that this is referring to God himself. In order to counter these feelings God creates dawn ('Morgenröte', line 3) to soothe the pain: 'Die erbarmte sich der Qual' (line 4) and to bring together that 'was erst auseinander fiel' (line 8) in order that they would once more have the ability to love: 'Und nun konnte wieder lieben' (line 7). The sense of colour here should not be overlooked: with the introduction of the red of dawn everything is lightened both literally and figuratively as we are led out of the darkness, into a sea of colour which appeals, not only to our eyes, but also to our

ears. The 'Sehnsucht' and 'Klang' so missed in stanza 3 have returned: 'ein erklingend Farbenspiel' (line 6) and 'konnte wieder lieben' (line 7).

Only now that love is existent can the divided polar opposites try to come together again, and their eagerness to do so is stressed in stanza 5 by 'Und mit eiligem Bestreben' (line 1). The change back to the present tense in this stanza mirrors the fact that this desire to reunite is not just a thing of the past, but an ongoing condition of life (line 3). The intensity of the belief that these opposites do belong together is stressed in line 2 ('Sucht sich, was sich angehört'), and they belong together precisely because they are 'originally' one. The rhyming of 'Bestreben' (line 1) with 'Leben' (line 3) also highlights the constant striving man undertakes in life in search of his polar opposite to make him whole once more. Yet, despite the metaphysical overtones of these last few stanzas, what is striven for here, as in 'Selige Sehnsucht', is not simply a spiritual union with God or Allah, but rather a very physical union with the lover. Consider the physicality of the language employed: 'Gefühl', 'Blick', 'Ergreifen', 'Raffen', 'faßt', 'hält', 'erschaffen'. The process of creating is no longer in the hands of the gods, God, or Allah, and it is here on earth that we will physically create: the need for physical creation to counterbalance the spiritual creation already executed. The use of the first person plural only stresses that this is something for humans, not gods, to do, and the sexual overtones are unmistakable.

In stanza 6 we return to the lovers of stanza 1, the change being indicated by the interjection 'So' (line 1). Yet this stanza is still clearly connected to the middle cosmic ones, as we perceive with the recurrence of 'Morgenröte' of stanza 4, here in line 1 as 'mit morgenroten Flügeln', which itself has biblical overtones.⁶⁷ Just as in stanza 1, the mutually self-implicating polar opposites are there: joy and pain, light and dark, separation and unification. This time, however, night is no longer

⁶⁷Psalms 139: 9: 'If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea.' See Birus, FA, 3.2, p. 1288.

associated with the pain of separation. It is brightened by the stars and is witness to the pleasure of sex, the reinforcing of the bond. The physicality of this is again emphasised by the rhyme between 'Bund' (line 4) and 'Mund' (line 2). Like the lovers we met in 'Musterbilder' in the 'Buch der Liebe', Hatem and Suleika are exemplary in their experiences of both 'Freud und Qual' (line 6), and the recurrence of the command 'Es werde!' (line 7) will not have the same effect again: 'Trennt uns nicht zum zweitenmal' (line 8). The original creation has taken place; the division, separation and the subsequent reunion have occurred, and this recurrent reunion is lauded as being everlasting. This does not mean that Hatem and Suleika will experience nothing but joy for evermore, for, as we are aware, for there to be joy there must be pain. The implication is that their togetherness is one in which they are aware of the necessity of periodic separations.

'Wiederfinden' is, then, not simply the meeting of Hatem and Suleika after separation, as it also highlights the potential synthesis in the intrinsic polarity of all things in the cosmos. This macrocosmic picture is, nevertheless, set firmly, and even daringly, within the realm of the terrestrial, the physical, as the cosmic stanzas are framed in an arabesque-like fashion by the lovers in stanzas 1 and 6.

Turning our attention now to Byron, once again to Canto IV, only a few stanzas further on from the section compared with 'Gingo biloba'. Just as both of these Goethe poems, 'Gingo biloba' and 'Wiederfinden', celebrate the love of Hatem and Suleika, so we find in this part of *Don Juan* the continuation of the long description of the idyllic love between Juan and Haidée, which itself stands in contrast to the ultimate brevity and transience of this love. It is no coincidence then that the sections I have chosen for comparison with both these poems from the 'Buch Suleika' should both be extracts from the same canto and the same episode in *Don Juan*.

In stanza 24 we find Juan and Haidée still together, but Haidée is clearly disturbed; she has been crying and has just had another even clearer premonition of her ultimate fate. The sense of impending disaster and the fast-approaching shattering of the idyll is heightened. Lines 1-2 reveal her desire to keep her premonitions to herself, but also not to admit even to herself what she has foreseen. The sense of urgency is reflected in the verb 'press'd' (line 1), and the ensuing enjambement with line 2 stresses 'His', thus highlighting further her urgency to stop his questioning and at the same time to offer her ^{self} comfort from her dreadful thoughts. Lines 3-4 reflect the power of this kiss and her resolve to push these thoughts out of her mind with the same force as her lips are 'press'd' to Juan's. The sense of impending doom is constantly present, even in 'that fond kiss' (line 4), if we take 'fond' in its archaic meaning of 'foolish and vain'. The Shakespearean allusions of 'Defying augury' also only add to the sense of imminent disaster.⁶⁸ In the final four lines of the stanza the focus shifts from Haidée to the views of the narrator on the efficacy of her method of trying to banish unpleasant thoughts from her mind: just as seriousness and gloom threaten to overwhelm the stanza, there is a sudden switch to comedy and, although these final four lines are intrinsically connected to the first four, they do then also stand in clear contrast to them. There is surely a play on 'doubt' in line 5, with 'no doubt' meaning certainly, but also referring to the 'doubt', the uncertainty, that Haidée wishes to forget. The move in line 6 to another method of trying to forget, 'wine', is prefigured in line 5. The differences and yet at the same time the parallels between these two methods are mirrored in the similar endings to each line ('tis the best' and 'tis not amiss'). The narrator's own experience is then emphatically stated at the start of line 7: 'I have tried both', before he then moves away from his own personal experience to words of wisdom on which path to choose. Clearly there is a play on 'a part' (line 7) too, since when this is read out loud, 'a part' cannot be heard as two

⁶⁸See Hamlet's speech near the end of the play and the beginning of his own end: *Hamlet*, V. ii, lines 192-96: 'Not a whit, we defy augury. There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be not now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come — the readiness is all. Since no man, of aught he leaves knows, what is't to leave betimes? Let be' (*Hamlet*, ed. Philip Edwards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 234).

words, implying also the one word 'apart'. This further idea of division sits well with the idea that we have that Juan and Haidée will soon be parted, and is contrasted with the coming together of the kiss at the beginning of the stanza. This kiss then stands in apparent contrast to the one we witnessed in 'Wiederfinden': there we witness the joy of lovers reunited, but here we sense their imminent separation, yet a similar use of opposites in both is clearly perceptible, for Goethe's lovers, too, will inevitably experience separations. This use of antitheses is clear in the final line with 'headache and the heartache'. Head and heart obviously oppose one another; however, they are also linked by the fact that each has the suffix '-ache' added. That each or both will therefore have a painful outcome seems clear: the sense of impending disaster for Juan and Haidée is not lifted.

In stanza 25 the narrator continues his debate with himself and the reader on the advantages and disadvantages of each approach: once again the sense of binary opposition pervades. The one side is evident throughout: 'One of the two' (line 1); 'Woman or wine' (line 2); 'But which to choose' (line 3); 'to either' (line 7) and 'than neither' (line 8). Yet the other is always close by or even implied in the one: 'One of the two' (line 1); 'Woman or wine' (line 2); 'Both maladies' (line 3); 'But which to choose' (line 4); 'For both sides' (line 6); 'to either' (line 7) and 'both than neither' (line 8). Hence it is clear that, each time the one is mentioned, it is not only the one but the other that is co-implied: for example, line 4 could be read as 'But which (one) to choose', but also as 'But which (of the two) to choose'. Even at the end of this balancing act between wine and woman there is no definitive answer as to which be preferable, but this is no surprise and has been prefigured by line 3, 'Both maladies are taxes on our joys', and line 6, 'For both sides I could many reasons show', suggesting an even-handed attitude. The fact that both woman and wine are intrinsically two-sided also is clear by the emphasis on their negative sides, 'maladies' (line 3), which 'are taxes on our joys' (line 3). Again the two-sidedness is underlined by the use of 'maladies' and its opposite 'joys' in the same line, and also by the fact

they seem to be inevitable: 'you'll have to undergo' (line 2). The rhyme between 'either' (line 7) and 'neither' (line 8), thus linking two apparent opposites, simultaneously highlights their similarity in so far as 'either' can imply one, 'either one', or two, 'either of the two'. This use of binary oppositions is very reminiscent of that which we perceived Goethe using in 'Wiederfinden' and, just as Goethe moves his focus away from the lovers in the middle stanzas, so too Byron digresses from the Juan and Haidée picture, not to cosmic visions, but to the narrator's comments on the lovers' situation.

The focus in stanza 26 returns to Juan and Haidée emphatically, with their names having pride of place at the very beginning of line 1. This is a very tender picture of the lovers, and the depth of their feeling is made explicit, not by their words 'speechless tenderness' (line 2), but by their eyes: 'gazed upon each other / With swimming looks' (lines 1-2). The verbal adjective 'swimming', almost a commonplace in the Lake poets⁶⁹ to suggest a blurring of the senses, reflects the sense of movement and penetration of this reciprocal gazing, and this image is further strengthened in line 5 with more liquid imagery, 'When two pure hearts are poured into one another'. The extent to which two are becoming one, that two halves are coming together to make one whole, seems clear. The multi-faceted nature of this love is also highlighted by the simple listing of 'friend, child, lover, brother' in line 3. 'And love too much' in line 6 stresses the strength of their love yet again, yet the danger of this overindulgence is made immediately apparent by the direct intrusion of the uncontrollable nature of this love, 'and yet can not love less', which is subsequently reinforced in line 7, 'with sweet excess'. Unlike in 'Wiederfinden', the verb 'sanctify' (line 7) does not lead to pictures of cosmic harmony and disharmony, but only to an 'immortal wish and power to bless' (line 8). Although these words are often found in a religious context, this is no desire for divine intervention and again

⁶⁹See also Coleridge's 'Dejection: An Ode', stanza 1, line 11 (*Poems*, ed. John Beer, 1963, (London: J. M. Dent; Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1991) 280).

paradoxically gives the reader a sense of the very opposite to that which the words imply: a sense of mortality and powerlessness still prevail.

The unity of Juan and Haidée is still the focus at the beginning of stanza 27: 'Mixed in each other's arms, and heart in heart', hence they are physically as well as emotionally intertwined and united. This picture of unity is, however, brutally interrupted by the question in line 2, 'Why did they not then die?', reinforcing the idea that this is what will happen very soon: the more we see references to the inevitability of pain as a counterpart to joy, the more imminent the entrance of death as the necessary antithesis to life, as in 'Der Winter und Timur', appears. This is reflected here by the immediate mention of life further on in line 2: 'they had lived too long'. Again this is very reminiscent of Goethe's use of binary oppositions. This notion of a fast approaching end to the idyll is hastened by the time phrases 'long' (line 2), 'an hour' (line 3) and 'years' (line 4), with line 4 implying that to prolong this love would only bring 'cruel things or wrong': again the inevitable negative side in binary opposition to the positive side they have enjoyed thus far. Death again looms large in line 5 with 'The world was not for them': they could not fit in, just as the Greek lyric poetess Sappho's passionate poems could not fit in to 'the world's art' (line 5). Passion is clearly something so all-consuming that it cannot and will not endure. This intensity is reinforced in the final rhyming couplet:

Love was born *with* them, *in* them, so intense,

It was their very spirit — not a sense.

The italicisation of 'with' and 'in' stresses the fact that love is both apart from them and a part of them: the intrinsicity is mirrored in the repetition of the similar structure, and the brevity is highlighted by the staccato nature of the rhythm of this line. The intensity comes to its climax fittingly in the final line with the intensification of love from 'a sense', to 'their very spirit', surely also hinting at the liquid imagery used in the previous stanza to reflect the extent of their oneness.

Again we see similar techniques being used by both Goethe and Byron in these poems. Each poet is depicting the depth and intensity of the love between two lovers and each is using the idea of two parts only becoming one whole when they are together. This is done in each case by a perpetual use of binary oppositions in synthesis: 'Freud' and 'Qual' in 'Wiederfinden' and 'maladies' and 'joys' in *Don Juan* IV. 25, to name but one. Each poem also moves from the personal and particular to the more general and back again (in 'Wiederfinden' Goethe moves from the lovers to the cosmos to the lovers, and in these stanzas of *Don Juan* Byron moves from the lovers to the narrator to the lovers once more) and in each case we finish with a picture of the lovers completely (if temporarily) together. Yet the atmosphere in each is rather different: in 'Wiederfinden' we see Hatem and Suleika together and clearly aware of the intrinsic polarity of all things, conscious that, for their love to endure, they will suffer pain as well as joy. In Byron, however, the emphasis is rather more on the transitory nature of this intense joy: here the love will not endure for years; the idyll will ultimately be shattered.

9 'Solang man nüchtern ist' ('Das Schenkenbuch')⁷⁰ and *Don Juan*, II. 178-80.⁷¹

'Lieben, Trinken und Singen': these were the predominant themes in Hafis' poetry, therefore it is hardly surprising that, as Goethe has already given us 'Singen' in the 'Buch des Sängers' and 'Lieben' in the 'Buch der Liebe' and 'Buch Suleika', he should also devote one book to 'Trinken', hence 'Das Schenkenbuch'. At first glance this poem may seem to be nothing more than a feeble attempt by the old poet to justify wine-drinking. His recognition of the apparent power of alcohol to heighten the senses is hardly original, but perhaps this poem is not as simple as it may at first seem. There is more to these 2 stanzas of 8 lines with an apparently very regular and symmetrical rhyme scheme after all.

In lines 1-2, 3-4, 5-6 of stanza 1 we hear the poet questioning in general terms ('man'), when suddenly he realises he wants an answer and pleads directly with Hafis in lines 7-8 to help him (note the familiar form of address 'du'). Although the metre is constant throughout this stanza, what at first appears to be cross rhyme does not turn out to be so, as only the even lines rhyme with each other: lines 2 and 4, and 6 and 8. The provocative first two lines, with their emphasis on the fact it is when one is sober, not drunk, that one appreciates 'das Schlechte', are, however immediately undermined by lines 3-4, which appear to stand in direct opposition with 'Schlechte', 'Rechte' and 'nüchtern', 'getrunken', yet at the same time the rhyme connecting 'Schlechte' and 'Rechte' only pulls closer together what is drawn apart in meaning.⁷² Thus the seeming praise of the qualities of wine in lines 3-4⁷³ is also tempered just as much as

⁷⁰HA, 2, p. 90. See also Birus, FA, 3.2, pp. 1318-19; Lemmel 151-54.

⁷¹PW, 5, pp. 144-45. See McGann, PW, 5, p. 691; Drummond Bone, 'The Art of *Don Juan*: Byron's Metrics,' *The Wordsworth Circle* 26.2 (1995): 97-103; Bone, 'Nature, Description, Place in *Don Juan*,' *Byron and the Mediterranean World: Proceedings of the Twentieth International Byron Conference, Athens, September 20-21, 1994*, ed. M. B. Raizis (Athens: Hellenic Byron Society, 1995) 57-65.

⁷²See also Birus, FA, 3.2, p. 1319.

⁷³The similarity to the saying 'In vino veritas' is noted by Birus (FA, 3.2, p. 1319), who is in turn noting Gustav von Loeper (*West-östlicher Divan* (Berlin, 1872) 174).

the sobriety of lines 1-2. The directness of the address to Hafis in the final two lines of the stanza, with Hafis placed emphatically at the beginning of line 7, is reminiscent of the conversational nature of much of the cycle, especially the 'Buch Suleika', but also the way in which he addresses Hafis in 'Unbegrenzt' (stanza 3, lines 2-3: 'Hafis, mit dir, mit dir allein / Will ich wetteifern!').

At the start of stanza 2 it is not Hafis' opinion with which we are presented, but the poet's: here we have the particular, the personal view of the poet himself ('meine Meinung', line 1). The emphatic positioning, through enjambement of 'Nicht' at the beginning of line 2 suggests, that he already knows that his views may indeed be considered 'übertrieben'. The links to stanza 1 are evident in the close relation between 'Übermaß' (stanza 1, line 5) and 'übertrieben' (stanza 2, line 2), but the negating 'Nicht' emphatically preceding the latter provides a simultaneous contrast. Lines 3-4 and 7-8 of this second stanza are unmistakably parallel: the identical syntactical structure stands out, as does the switching round of the two verbs. This simple switching round of the verbs 'trinken' and 'lieben' implies that in some way there exists an intrinsic relationship between the intoxication of wine and that of love: that the one is a prerequisite for the other. The two lines sandwiched in between (lines 5-6) appear almost like a Byronic conversational aside to the reader, yet nevertheless still connect to the rest of the poem through 'Trinker' (stanza 2, lines 3 and 8) and the reappearance of the verb 'sollen' (stanza 2, lines 4 and 8). The negating 'nicht' (parallel to stanza 2, line 2: 'Nicht übertrieben'), which appears no less than six times in these eight lines of stanza 2, also recurs here, and stands thus in apparent direct binary opposition to stanza 1 where there are no negatives.

The concept of binary synthesis which has proven to be at work throughout the *West-östlicher Divan* still appears to be at work in this short poem too. The poet is surely advocating that the physical inspiration of wine and the spiritual uplift of love do somehow exist in tandem: one forming the necessarily opposite pole to the other.

Even in these 2 short stanzas the notion of binary synthesis is stressed by the mutually implicating polar opposites: 'nüchtern', 'getrunken' and 'Schlechte', 'Rechte'. The contrast between the apparently positive first stanza and its negative counterpart, stanza 2, is simultaneously playfully undermined by the parallel structures so evident within stanza 2, and the use of rhyme, both of which draw these apparent opposites closer together. Certainly the binary synthesis of wine and love alludes also to the traditional combination of the twin muses of the creation of art, as the poet's search for poetic inspiration continues.

Let us now turn our attention to Byron and to a section of the Haidée episode in Canto II of *Don Juan*. These stanzas just precede those which provided a comparison for 'Selige Sehnsucht' where we found Juan washed up on a beach on a Greek island, where he is rescued by Haidée and her maid Zoë. This seeming paradise is later brought to an abrupt end when Haidée's father returns, finds Juan in his house, carts him off and sells him as a slave. He is only saved from certain death by the intervention of Haidée herself, yet it is death that is to be her own fate and the fate of her unborn child. In stanzas 178-80 Byron again digresses from the story to provide a description of the scene, before digressing yet further to the subject of alcohol.

Haidée and Juan have been left in stanza 176 enjoying a romantic stroll along the beach and, at the start of stanza 178, the description of the scene is continued from the previous stanza. The beauty of the calm sea (in stark contrast to the stormy seas of earlier in the same canto) is clear from the 'small ripple spilt upon the beach' (line 1), but the realism of this description is then overwhelmed as the champagne takes over and the artificiality becomes ever clearer; especially in stanza 181 when the narrator questions what is was he describing after all: 'The coast — I think it was the coast that I / Was just describing' (lines 1-2).⁷⁴ The delights of this wine are highlighted in lines 3-5 with the alliterative description of it as 'sparkling' (line 3) and 'That spring-dew of

⁷⁴See Bone, 'Nature' 62.

the spirit! the heart's rain!' (line 4), and his opinion in line 6 that 'Few things surpass old wine'. The fact that these pleasures will not be foregone is clear from the aside 'and more because they preach in vain' (line 6), which immediately removes any possibility that attention might have been paid to anyone who might decry vinous pleasures whoever s/he might be. Just as Goethe linked wine and love, so too in line 7 we see Byron placing 'woman' in an equal position in the pleasure hierarchy along with wine. This final rhyming couplet is ironically linked to the rest of the stanza, as the first words 'Let us' sound rather too much like a sermon from a preacher, and indeed 'Sermons' are what we have only the day after at the start of the final line. The idea of preaching of lines 5-6 is now completely up-turned as the very tools of the preacher's profession are here utilised in order to 'preach' the pleasures of 'wine and woman, mirth and laughter' (line 7), instead of the vices. The alliteration between 'wine' and 'woman' (line 7) would seem to support the view that Byron, like Goethe, perceives an intrinsic relationship between wine and love of woman. The two-sided nature of this relationship is underlined by the binary nature of the first half of the line 'wine and woman' which appears to be both symmetrical and parallel to the second half of the line 'mirth and laughter'. The immediate intervention of 'Sermons and soda water' at the beginning of line 8 suggests a parallel to the similarly alliterative 'wine and woman', but at the same time the meaning of these words leads them only to stand in opposition, almost as an antidote, to the 'wine and woman' of line 7. The enjoyment (perhaps even the over-indulgence) of line 7 is then immediately undermined by these antidotes 'Sermons and soda water' (line 8) not, say, a year, but simply a 'day', after, thus revealing the inevitability of the ending of the fun of the previous line. The idyll of intoxication (just like the idyllic love of Juan and Haidée) cannot be sustained.

Stanza 179, in a way reminiscent of Goethe's lines 1-6 in 'Solang man nüchtern ist', appears to set out the advantages of indulgence in alcohol, as lines 1-2 intimate, in a tone very similar to the preaching of the rhyming couplet of the previous stanza:

Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;

The best of life is but intoxication:

Yet, although over-indulgence is what is clearly implied by 'drunk' and 'intoxication', this is also subtly tempered by the addition of 'reasonable', suggesting a balanced approach, akin to the balance suggested in stanza 2 of 'Solang man nüchtern ist', especially by the 'Nicht übertrieben' of line 2. The universality of the desire for 'Glory, the grape, love, gold', all linked together either by alliteration and/or similar vowel sounds, is stressed in line 4 when we discover that these 'hopes' are not only individual, but also, collectively, those 'of every nation'. Lines 5-6⁷⁵ move the focus slightly from 'the grape' (line 3) to the vine and to the comparison of life to a tree. The necessity of the 'hopes of all men' delineated in line 3 is highlighted by describing what happens if they are absent: 'how branchless were the trunk / Of life's strange tree' (lines 5-6). The inability to grow and produce fruit when 'Glory, the grape, love, gold' are not present is clear, as is the possibility that growth will take place when they are: 'so fruitful on occasion' (line 6). At the beginning of line 7 the narrator interrupts himself in an attempt to return to the story, but this fails and he returns to another quasi sermon-like pronouncement for the remainder of the rhyming couplet. Unlike in 'Solang man nüchtern ist', where it is Hafis' advice that is requested, here the narrator emphatically invites the reader to try over-indulgence in alcohol for her/himself, yet the method of interruption used by each poet in order to address the drinkers is very similar ('Solang man nüchtern ist', lines 13-14). The advice of line 1, 'must get drunk', is here intensified to the 'heavily accented phrase'⁷⁶ 'Get very drunk'. The remainder of the line 'and when' offers so little of the following clause that we are forced to move quickly to line 8, thus almost completely destroying the metre of the line and leaving us 'disoriented metrically';⁷⁷ a disorientation which is

⁷⁵McGann (PW, 5, p. 691) notes a possible allusion to Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*, III. iv, lines 22-24: 'If I lose mine honour, / I lose myself; better I were not yours / Than yours so branchless' (*Anthony and Cleopatra* ed. John Wilders, The Arden Shakespeare (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) 184).

⁷⁶See Bone, 'Metrics' 99.

⁷⁷See Bone, 'Metrics' 99.

only furthered by the internal rhyme of 'wake' and 'ache', the linking of 'when' with 'wake' and 'head' with 'ache', and ultimately by the caesura which is forced upon us between 'ache' and 'you'.⁷⁸ This sense of disorientation in the metre reflects of course the feeling the day after over-indulgence. Even the two 5 syllable halves of line 8, while they are symmetrical to each other,⁷⁹ provide no comforting balance or respite: the warning of the final 'you shall see what then' is emphatic. Indeed the perpetual change of metre and resulting disorientation almost succeed in hiding the ubiquitous rhyming couplet: because of the speed with which we pass over 'and when' (line 7) on to line 8 and the enforced caesura in the middle of that line, the rhyme with 'what then' is almost concealed.⁸⁰ The inevitable result of over-indulgence is then clear, not only in the words themselves with the 'head-ache', but also in the very changeable and disorienting flow of these final lines to the stanza itself.

Advice on how to cure the hangover is offered immediately at the start of stanza 180: 'Ring for your valet.' The break enforced by the dash and then the adverb 'quickly' reflect the sudden realisation of the thumping of the head-ache and the speed with which the cure is needed. The enjambement with line 2, 'some hock and soda-water', foregrounds the nature of the cure, which may seem a little odd, considering it was wine in the first instance that caused the 'head-ache'. The important point is, however, that, although 'hock' is being suggested as a cure, it is in conjunction with 'soda-water'. Here again we see the 'soda water' of stanza 178, not, however, as a direct antidote to the wine, but used in conjunction with it in order to appease the thumping of the head-ache. Here then it is no longer the over-indulgence in just one thing which provides the pleasure, but rather the combination of the two, the wine and the water in a way very similar to the balance suggested by Goethe in the second stanza of 'Solang man nüchtern ist'. The height of this pleasure is stressed in line 3 by

⁷⁸See Bone, 'Metrics' 99.

⁷⁹See Bone, 'Metrics' 100.

⁸⁰See Bone, 'Metrics' 100.

'worthy Xerxes the great king'.⁸¹ In lines 4-6 we see a list of other drinks all described in glowing terms and all connected by alliteration on 's', but they are all preceded by a negative (either 'not' or 'Nor'), thus suggesting that these pleasures will not equal or surpass that of the 'hock and soda-water'. Line 7 still does not reveal the main verb of the principal clause, but merely delays it yet further with a temporal clause exposing when these drinks might be best enjoyed: 'After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter'. The rhythm allows the emphasis to fall on 'long', thus slowing everything down from the 'quickly' of line 1 to the 'ennui' that follows. The two remaining components of the list, 'Love, or slaughter', are both linked by the lulling rhythm of the line and at the same time differentiated by their meanings. Finally, at the beginning of line 8, we have our main verb 'Vie', which is subtly reminiscent of the 'slaughter' which immediately precedes it. Although this line appears to mimic the rhythm of line 7, at least to begin with, it again succeeds only in disorienting the reader by the middle of the line, as happened at the end of stanza 179, and only when the end of the line is reached is a definite rhythm pattern re-established.⁸² The manipulation of rhyme is here taken to the extreme: not only do we have the double rhyme 'aughter' and 'water', but very nearly also 'slaughter' and 'soda'.⁸³ As Drummond Bone notes, Byron, by using a weak-rhyming couplet, is here 'reduc[ing] the importance of an idea by capturing it in a self-consciously artificial context which itself collapses from strength to weakness, and sometimes, as here, [...] shock[ing] us by the possibility of such a reduction.'⁸⁴ The shock is provided by the scandalous link now apparent between 'slaughter' and 'soda-water'; and perhaps the idea that anything could possibly be equal to 'slaughter' and thus might even rhyme with it may just show to what extent 'slaughter' may be carried out without thought or care.⁸⁵

⁸¹Xerxes I: ?519-465BC, King of Persia (485-465) who led a vast army against Greece. His forces were victorious at Thermopylae, but his fleet was defeated at Salamis (480) and his army at Plataea (479).

⁸²See Bone, 'Metrics' 100.

⁸³See Bone, 'Metrics' 100.

⁸⁴See Bone, 'Metrics' 100.

⁸⁵See Bone, 'Metrics' 100.

Both of these extracts appear at first to sing the praises of over-indulgence in wine, yet each ultimately advocates a more balanced approach: in 'Solang man nüchtern ist', the wine is held in a relationship of binary synthesis with love, whereas in *Don Juan* it is complemented by the soda water for the utmost pleasure. Despite these differences the methods employed by each are remarkably similar: Goethe juxtaposes polar opposites (stanza 1, lines 1 and 3), positives and negatives (stanzas 1 and 2) and manipulates parallel statements (stanza 2, lines 3-4 and 7-8); just as Byron too juxtaposes polar opposites (stanza 178, lines 7-8), positives and negatives (stanza 180, lines 4-7 and 8), and manipulates parallel statements (stanza 178, lines 7-8). What, however, also stands out in this extract from *Don Juan* is the way in which the halting disorienting rhythm in the rhyming couplets of stanzas 179 and 180 also mirrors the physical effects of the hangover.

10 'Es ist gut' ('Buch der Parabeln')⁸⁶ and *Don Juan*, VI. 73-74.⁸⁷

'Es ist gut' is the tenth and final poem in this the tenth book of the *West-östlicher Divan*. The religious atmosphere in these final three books is evident; the very title of the book mirrors this in so far as a parable is not just any story, but specifically one which uses familiar events to illustrate a religious or ethical situation and will be familiar to all Western Christians brought up on the many parables told by Jesus.

'Es ist gut' is a poem of two stanzas each of 8 lines, which begins in cross rhyme in lines 1-4, but this gives way to rhyming couplets for the remainder of the poem. The title immediately sends our thoughts to the Bible and to God creating the world, for, when God is finished, he looks down on what he has done and says, 'and God saw that it was good.'⁸⁸ In stanza 1, lines 1-4, we are transported back specifically to the time when God created Eve, yet this is not quite an accurate reproduction of the story:⁸⁹ Goethe is taking the essence of the story and relating it in a particular way for his own poetical purpose. Goethe's picture is similar in so far as the scene also takes place at night, 'Bei Mondenschein' (line 1). Again we see Goethe using the binary opposites light and dark: here the darkness of the night is illuminated only by the light of the moon, almost as if Adam has a spotlight shining down upon him. This focus on Adam is also reflected in the enjambement between lines 2 and 3 which results in the stress, like the spotlight, falling emphatically on Adam. The depth of Adam's sleep is reflected by the rhyme of 'Schlafe tief' (line 2) with 'auch entschlief' (line 4), and also by the description of him as 'versunken' (line 3). The peacefulness and quiet of the scene is highlighted by the adverb 'leis' (line 3), whose rhyme with

⁸⁶HA, 2, p. 103. See Atkins, 'Verständnis' 143-46; Birus, FA, 3.2, pp. 1362-65; Lemmel 88-89 and Friedrich Sengle, 'Die didaktischen und kulturkritischen Elemente im *West-östlichen Divan*,' *Oxford German Studies* 12 (1981): 83-84 and Trunz, HA, 2, pp. 659-60.

⁸⁷PW, 5, p. 321. See McGann, PW, 5, p. 722.

⁸⁸Genesis 1: 25: 'And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.' Birus also notes the biblical connotations (FA, 3.2, p. 1363).

⁸⁹Genesis 2: 21-25.

'Paradeis' (line 1) suggests the silence of the whole of paradise. Line 4 sees Eve placed beside her binary opposite Adam and also falling asleep, apparently making this paradisaic picture complete. Referring to her in the diminutive and often familiar form 'Evchen' implies some kind of emotional attachment, yet by prefixing this with the indefinite article 'ein' there is a simultaneous distancing effect, emphasising that this could almost be any woman.⁹⁰ The fact that this is not a completely accurate representation of the creation of Eve story merely highlights the fact that Goethe is playing with his material. It also makes the reader even more aware of the divergences and inspires the attentive reader to question why the material has been manipulated, and to what effect and purpose.

The second half of stanza 1 still looks at the creation scene, but steps back from it and comments on it. This is reflected even in the rhyme: just as the rhyme scheme changes from cross rhyme to rhyming couplets as Adam and Eve are now together, so too the focus moves away from the telling of the story itself to comment on it. 'Erdeschranken' (line 5) is a clear throwback to the 'Jugendschranke' of 'Hegire', and stresses the real, earthly nature of the limited situation: although they have been created by God, they are firmly rooted in reality, rooted to the ground on which they are lying. In what we have come to recognise as Goethe's typical method we immediately see this earthly reality countered again by God at the very beginning of line 6: 'Gottes'. Typically there are two 'Gedanken', and the extent of his feeling for the realisation of these two thoughts is stressed by the use of the superlative 'lieblichste Gedanken' (line 6). Again the abstract and spiritual 'Gottes' and 'Gedanken' are matched by reality, as these thoughts have their physical embodiment in the very real and physical presences of Adam and Eve. The dash at the end of line 6 prepares us for something dramatic, and that is indeed what we get at the beginning of line 7 with the exclamation 'Gut!!!'. The use of three exclamation marks only serves to emphasise the depth of God's pleasure and satisfaction at his new creation

⁹⁰See Birus, FA, 3.2, p. 1363.

Eve; a pleasure also reflected in the title to which this exclamation clearly refers back. The final line of stanza 1, 'Er ging sogar nicht gern davon', seems almost Byronic in its conversational everyday character and its humorous overtones. Yet it is also very Goethean: was it not his own Mephistopheles who took vicarious pleasure in watching over Faust's seduction of Gretchen and got distracted near the end of Part 2 by the pleasure he found in looking at the angel's bottoms?⁹¹ God's pleasure here is no less voyeuristic in tone, alluding to the emphasis placed in Genesis on the visual, on his *seeing* 'that it was good'.

This conversational and ironic tone continues into stanza 2 with the interjection 'Kein Wunder' (line 1) as the story moves from the past tense and past lovers Adam and Eve to the present tense and the present lovers. Their presence is made all the more real by the fact that the narrator is one of the lovers and hence the lovers are referred to as 'uns' (lines 1, 4 and 5) and 'wir' (line 3). The pleasure felt by the lovers when they *look* into one another's eyes is compared to that felt by God when *watching* over Adam and Eve. The depth of this pleasure is highlighted by the verb 'berückt' (line 1) and the power of the eye and depth of its penetrative power is evident in line 2: 'Wenn Auge frisch in Auge blickt'. The erotic and scopto-sexual overtones are evident. The depth of the pleasure is further highlighted in lines 3-4 with the 'as if' clause: the pleasure has taken the lovers 'so weit' that they are now in heaven, 'Bei dem zu sein, der uns gedacht'. 'Gedacht' links back to the 'Gedanken' of stanza 1, line 6 and also forward to the 'Gottesgedanken' of stanza 2, line 8 stressing that, although this is clearly an earthly and very physical picture, the physical is reliant on its antithesis the spiritual — and vice versa — since otherwise it would not have been created. Lines 5-6 highlight the lovers' desire never to be parted, not even in death, and this desire is stressed, paradoxically perhaps, by the splitting of the condition 'Nur [...] alle zwei' by the conversational interjection 'das beding' ich'. The final rhyming couplet is clearly

⁹¹*Faust I*, line 1581: 'Das Spionieren, scheint's ist deine Lust' (HA, 3, p. 54) ('It would seem that spying is what gives you pleasure') and Mephistopheles' words in *Faust II*, lines 11753-800 (HA, 3, pp. 353-54).

linked, yet clearly contrasted, to lines 5-6 of stanza 1. We see the same rhyme ('Erdeschranken', 'Gedanken' in stanza 1 and 'Arme Schranken', 'Gedanken' in stanza 2). Just as Adam and Eve were rooted to the ground by the 'Erdeschranken', so too the lover is held in a real and physical world by the force of the lover's embrace with his arms. The final line 'Liebster von allen Gottesgedanken' parallels stanza 1, line 6, 'Gottes zwei lieblichste Gedanken', but is also clearly differentiated from it: now the focus is not on the two, but solely on the one. Even the repetition of 'Gedanken', however, does not lead us into the spiritual abstract world of thought alone, for, although these thoughts are clearly an intrinsic part of this creation process, it is the physicality of the embodiment of these thoughts which is significant. We have progressed from seeing God as a sexual being in stanza 1 to the physicality of the sex between Adam and Eve. It is only this physicality which sees them return to heaven at the end of stanza 2.

What 'Es ist gut' is depicting is then clearly not a simple statement of the delights of love as created by God. This is also recognisably not a desire for man to move into the realms of the metaphysical and join God in heaven whence he came. This is rather a love and togetherness rooted in the particularity of the real world; it is typically one firmly with its feet on the ground, so to speak, one held there by the physical arms of the lover. The abstract and spiritual is set steadfastly within the context of the physical real world, as aspects of the given.

Let us now direct our attention to *Don Juan* where, in this selection in Canto VI, we find Juan in Turkey as part of a harem. He has been smuggled into the sultan's harem at the request of the sultana, Gulbeyaz, so that he may be her love-slave and hence he is disguised as a woman, using the pseudonym Juanna. Juan has, however, rejected Gulbeyaz's advances and is to sleep along with the rest of the girls in the harem. And so he sleeps in Dudu's bed and finds himself unable to resist her charms. She, however, screams, wakes everyone up and hence has to explain her 'bad dream'.

In stanza 73 we find the narrator trying to figure out what it is that has caused Dudu to awaken with such a start while Juanna lies apparently sound asleep beside her. Similar to 'Es ist gut', we see a couple lying side by side apparently asleep, just like Adam and Eve in Goethe's poem. From the very outset it is clear that all is not quite as it appears, because it is called 'strange' (line 1). The narrator's aside which follows interrupts the flow of the rhythm of lines 1-2, just as Dudu's sleep has been interrupted, and the alliteration of 'sound sleep' (line 2) linking the two almost ironically suggests that this was anything but sound sleep. The fact that this 'sound sleep' is immediately succeeded by a dash, forcing the reader to pause, and then by Juanna, reinforces the idea that this sleep was not sound. The emphasis in lines 3-4 on the depth of Juanna's sleep, 'As fast as ever husband by his mate / In holy matrimony snores away', only highlights further the opposite. Here, however, with the introduction of 'husband', 'mate' and 'holy matrimony', the hint as to the possible sexual nature of this unsound sleep seems clear. The suggestion that something sexual may have been going on is further hinted at the end of line 5 with 'happy state', as we are left wondering at the end of this line what has caused Juanna to be in such a 'happy state'. Any sexual suggestion is bluntly countered at the beginning of line 7 as we are told this 'happy state' was one 'Of slumber'. Yet, just as we believe the sexual implications to have been thwarted, the narrator again interrupts with an aside 'ere they shook her' (line 6). The use of a dash to separate 'so they say' from the rest of the line, yet linking it to the following one 'At least' (line 7) by enjambement, serves again to highlight the jumping between what seems to be the case and what might be the case; i.e., whether she is really asleep or not. Here we see Byron making very subtle use of opposites, keeping the reader alert to what the reality might be regarding Juanna's sleep and this is reminiscent of the way in which Goethe made use of opposites in 'Es ist gut' in order to contrast and yet relate the abstract and metaphysical with the physicality of the world and the lovers. Lines 7-8 describe Juanna's awakening in some detail: 'she too unclosed her eyes, / And yawned a good deal', which appears completely innocent. The addition, however, of 'with discreet

surprise' at the end of line 8 again suggests that all is not quite as it seems. While she could just be waking from a deep sleep, the implication that this is not the case is always present too, but as this is not stated explicitly, we are still able to speculate as to the reasons for Juanna's faking sleep and Dudu's brutal awakening.

Stanza 74 relates what happens after both Juanna and Dudu are awake, but this stanza is nonetheless still closely linked to its predecessor by the similarity of the beginnings of stanza 73, line 8, 'And yawned', and stanza 74, line 1, 'And now commenced'. The description of what happens as a 'strict investigation', while seemingly stressing the rigorous nature of the questioning, is immediately undermined by lines 2-3:

Which, as all spoke at once, and more than once

Conjecturing, wondering, asking a narration,

this reveals the chaotic nature of events. Lines 4-5 offer the explanation for Dudu's silence as being understandable due to the chaotic and quickfire nature of the questioning she was undergoing. The rhyme of 'investigation' (line 1), 'narration' (line 3) and 'oration' (line 5) reflects the fact that this is an oral questioning, the fact that she is being asked to tell her story orally and also clearly the shift from fact ('investigation'), to fiction ('narration'), to her attempts to please the crowd ('oration'). In contrast to 'Es ist gut', where we saw the power of the visual, here we see the emphasis on the power of the oral: the traditional opposition between the power of the eye to perceive something real as opposed to the power of the word to deceive, to tell a story. Line 4 also prefigures line 6; moving from the general comment about anyone's ability, 'either wit or dunce', to answer coherently in such circumstances, to the particular case of Dudu and the description of her rather as the former 'never passed for wanting sense', but then again the rhyming of 'dunce' and 'sense' perhaps suggests a closer relationship between the two, or a part of the one in the other. Dudu's inability to relate events coherently is highlighted in the final rhyming couplet with the Shakespeare quotation 'no orator as Brutus is' (line 7), contrasting her with the oral abilities of Brutus, not to mention of Shakespeare himself. This inability is

further highlighted by the emphatic positioning of 'Could not' at the start of line 8 and again with the rhyme between the gifted speaker 'Brutus is' (line 7) and the mumbling Dudu unable or unwilling to relate what 'was amiss' (line 8). 'At first' in the middle of line 8, however, does suggest that this lack of ability will only be temporary and, indeed, she does go on in the following three stanzas to relate her version and explanation of what occurred.

Although we see lovers sleeping in both pictures offered by Goethe and Byron, and the outcomes of each section chosen are quite different, there are nevertheless striking similarities in how each poet has achieved his different goals and even some similarities in the two poems themselves. The sexual undertones are clear in both yet not explicit in either, and this is achieved via a continual emphasis on the physical and the particular as opposed — and related — to the spiritual in 'Es ist gut', and by hinting at the physical and stressing the particular in *Don Juan*. The intertextuality is clear in both: in 'Es ist gut' the biblical references are clear, and in *Don Juan* the Shakespearean ones are even highlighted by quotation marks, yet in each these references are fully incorporated into the very real, very physical and particular picture of the lovers. Clearly the most obvious similarity between these two pieces is the overall ironic and lightly humorous tone as, in 'Es ist gut', God seems to gain vicarious pleasure from watching his two lovers Adam and Eve, and the subtle hints in *Don Juan* that the underlying cause of all this commotion is sexual.

11 'Wenn der Mensch' ('Buch des Parsen')⁹² and *Don Juan*, II. 91-95.⁹³

As mentioned earlier, the 'Buch des Parsen' is, along with the 'Buch Timur', one of the shortest books of the text, containing only two poems. Like the 'Buch Timur', the 'Buch des Parsen' consists of one long and one short poem. Just as in the book which immediately precedes it, the 'Buch der Parabeln', the religious theme is clear here too: the Parsees are adherents of a monotheistic religion of Zoroastrian origin, and were driven out of Persia by the Muslims in the 8th century.

'Wenn der Mensch' is a short, 12 line, poem with regular cross rhyme throughout, although it almost seems to be three 4-line stanzas with abab, cdcd, efef rhyme throughout. In fact the stretching of the rhyme in line 7, and the fact that the last four lines not only follow the cross rhyme pattern, but also all rhyme with each other to some extent as they all end in 'en', reveals the precarious balance between man and nature which is to be the focus of the poem from the point of view of content. From a syntactical point of view the most obvious feature of this poem is that it is all one sentence: lines 1-10 are all subordinate clauses dependent on the principal clause emphatically placed after the colon at the very end in lines 11-12. All lines except for line 12 are also joined together by the alliteration: of 'w' (lines 1, 2, 6, 7, 9 and 11), of 'a' (lines 3 and 8) and of 'd' (lines 4, 5 and 10);⁹⁴ thus the subordinate clauses are linked together; they are linked also to line 11. Hence line 12 becomes all the more significant by the fact that it is not linked thus to any other line. Here we see a picture of benevolent flourishing nature, as we might expect, since the Parsees were sun and fire worshippers.⁹⁵ As Goethe himself also points out, their religion is not only based on fire worship, but on a regard for all the elements: 'ihre Religion ist durchaus auf die Würde der sämtlichen Elemente gegründet, insofern sie das Dasein und die Macht

⁹²HA, 2, p. 106. See also Birus, FA, 3.2, pp. 1375-76; Lemmel 154 and Trunz, HA, 2, p. 663.

⁹³PW, 5, pp. 117-18. See McGann, PW, 5, p. 690.

⁹⁴See Birus, FA, 3.2, p. 1375.

⁹⁵See Goethe's own notes on his future plans for the text in the *Noten und Abhandlungen* (HA, 2, p. 206).

Gottes verkündigen.'⁹⁶ The opposition apparent in this poem is clearly between the power of nature and the relative powerlessness of man who reveres it. Here we witness the sun beating down to ripen the vine (lines 2-3) and the juiciness and ripeness of the grapes is evident from the description of what happens when man intervenes and cuts them open: the juice flows out of them as if they are crying after having been cut by the sharp knife: 'Die dem scharfen Messer weinet' (line 4).⁹⁷ The personification of the vine continues in line 5 as we are told that it feels what the effects of its 'Säfte' on the world are. The positive effects highlighted in lines 5-6 are connected by the alliteration of 'Wohlgekocht' and 'Welt', yet these are also linked to the negative effects of overindulgence by the same device: in line 6 the 'w' alliteration is continued with 'Werden'. The contrast between the two is both highlighted and undermined by the rhyming of the positive 'erquickend' (line 6) with the negative 'erstickend' (line 8). After the dash, 'der Mensch' of line 1 reappears and the heat inherent in 'Glut' reminds us of the 'Sonne' in line 2, for which he has to be grateful for the production of the wine. The final two lines are both parallel and opposite: syntactically they are the same except for the change in the position of 'wird' from position 1 in line 11 to position 2 in line 12. This simultaneously weakens both the antithesis between 'Betrunkner' and 'Mäßiger', 'wanken' and 'sich freuen' and 'stammelnd' and 'singend', and the parallel between the two suggested by the structure. Just as the meanings of these words are pulling in opposite directions, so their parallel structure pulls them ever closer in what we have come to recognise as typically Goethean fashion. Although these two lines do stand out from the rest of the poem, they are nonetheless clearly integrated: line 11 reflects line 8 and line 12 is a throwback to line 7, resulting in a kind of arabesque structure holding the poem together. The advocacy of moderation is made all the more emphatic by the positioning of 'Mäßiger' at the start of the final line, and the generality of this warning

⁹⁶HA, 2, p. 136: 'their religion is completely based on the worth of the collected elements, inasmuch as they reveal the existence and power of God.'

⁹⁷Birus helpfully points out (FA, 3.2, p. 1376) that this line means: 'die wegen des scharfen Messers weinet.'

is stressed by the fact that there is no article preceding either 'Mäßiger' or 'Betrunkner'.

While 'Wenn der Mensch' clearly glories in the wonders of nature, in the power of the sun to ripen the fruit for man to enjoy, the warning to man is *also* apparent. Man is perceived as, in part at least, antithetical to nature and only if he does not overindulge will he be able to enjoy her delights; only then will the 'stammelnd' of the drunk in line 11 become the 'singend' of line 12. This is typically a most realistic and balanced picture: positive features will always be countered by negative ones and the only way to deal with this knowledge is to strike a balance between the two. The many links to the rest of the cycle are hence evident. Wine sends our minds back to 'Das Schenkenbuch' and to Hafis, and the singing man who drinks in moderation reminds the reader of the 'Buch des Sängers', of the poet looking for inspiration, and again of Hafis. Indeed, may this singing man not be the poet himself who has now found the inspiration for which he was looking in the 'reinen Osten' when he set off in 'Hegire'?

Let us now consider a short section of *Don Juan*, this time focusing on Canto II, at the point where Juan, having been exiled from Spain because of his affair with Donna Julia, is sailing across the Mediterranean. This is no pleasant voyage, however, as the ship and its occupants are at the mercy of the dreadful weather and are drifting aimlessly on the open sea, having lost their oars. They have no food left and have already eaten Juan's tutor, Pedrillo, and many are now dying, some as a result of going mad after having consumed human flesh. Natural images abound here as they did in 'Wenn der Mensch', and here in *Don Juan* too the powerlessness of man against the forces of nature is evident.

The opening line of stanza 91 moves the focus away from the dead boy and his father of the previous stanza with the colourful 'rainbow' which is seen emphatically

'bursting thorough / The scattering clouds' (lines 1-2). This bright and colourful picture of the rainbow shining down is reminiscent of the sun shining down benevolently in 'Wenn der Mensch'. Here the colour and brightness of the rainbow ('shone', 'its bright base') stands in contrast to the darkness of the sea ('dark', 'quivering blue') and, at least initially, the brightness appears to gain the upper hand as the clouds scatter, and the weather appears better within the arch of the rainbow than without it, almost as if it is protecting them from the bad weather, the destructive forces of nature. The continual use of opposites ('dark', 'bright', 'within', 'without') to stress the contrast between the literal darkness of the weather on the one hand and the light provided by the rainbow on the other is given a more sinister overtone with the description of the 'blue' of the sea as 'quivering' (line 3). 'Quivering' was the adjective used to describe the limbs of the recently bereaved father in stanza 90, and thus the picture here is not only of the motion of the waves, but also of the emaciated limbs. The verb 'appear'd' (line 4) underlines the fact that the difference between the sky inside and outside of the rainbow's apparently protective arch is only illusory. The final rhyming couplet highlights again the fact that this brightness is precarious and will not last: note the verbs 'changed' (line 7) and 'Forsook', placed emphatically at the start of line 8. The constant interchange between light and dark then ends with 'dim eyes'; here the darkness appears to be gaining the upper hand once more. The positioning of 'these shipwreck'd men' at the very end of the final line of the stanza reflects man's position with regard to nature: he comes right at the very end and is only noticed when the focus sweeps down from the sky via the rainbow to the sea and finally to the occupants of the ship. Man's powerlessness against nature 'bursting through' (line 1) and 'spanning the dark sea' (line 2) is apparent.

As expected, the rainbow does change at the beginning of stanza 92: 'It changed, of course'. The aside 'of course' only accentuates the fact that this was anticipated. Yet this is not a dark and negative description which we might expect after the darkening of the 'dim eyes' of the preceding stanza. Here we see a beautiful picture of the

rainbow as its colours intensify to a richness and lusciousness only underlined by the richness of the colours: 'purple', 'vermillion', 'molten gold' and 'dun' and their lustre: 'Glittering like crescents o'er a Turk's pavilion'. This is an colourful opulence akin to the abundant ripening vines in 'Wenn der Mensch'. The speed with which the rainbow can appear and disappear and can change its appearance is brought out by referring to it as 'a heavenly cameleon' (line 1). Line 2 emphasises its origins as being a product of the interaction between three of the four forces of nature, air, fire and water, and 'heavenly' (line 1) and 'Baptized' (line 4) reveal the power and influence of God in this process of creation. The rhyming couplet continues the focus on the beautiful mixture of colours in the rainbow, yet at the same time contrasts with it in the choice of simile: the beautiful array of colours is compared to a 'black eye' received 'in a recent scuffle'. Suddenly we are brought back from this beautiful picture of the sky above, down to earth with a bump and a 'black eye' in the form of man fighting bare-fisted.

The focus remains with man in stanza 93 as we discover what 'Our shipwreck'd men' think of the beautiful rainbow they have just witnessed. The brightness of the colours appears to have affected them too as they consider 'it a good omen' (line 1). The possibility, however, that it may not be so and this 'good omen' is all the product of wishful thinking is clear from the verb 'thought' (line 1); from the emphasis throughout the majority of the stanza on positive thinking and its age-old quality of encouraging those who have become 'discouraged' (line 5), which these men certainly have ('most surely no men / Had greater need to nerve themselves again / Than these', lines 5-7); and also from the addition of the verb 'look'd' in line 7: 'and so this rainbow look'd like hope'. That this may all be an optical illusion is further implied by the rhyme of 'look'd like hope' (line 7) with 'kaleidoscope' (line 8), and the adjective 'celestial' suggests, not only that the rainbow is in the sky, but also that it is something divine and in the ultimate control of God above.

The possibility of appearances deceiving is continued into stanza 94, as it is clear that, although the 'beautiful white bird' can be easily seen ('Pass'd oft before their eyes', line 4), they are not altogether sure what it is. This notion of not only optical, but also aural, illusion is reinforced by the rhyme between 'bird', 'err'd' and 'heard' (lines 1, 3, 5), not forgetting the even line rhyme between 'size', 'eyes' and 'guise' (lines 2, 4, 6). The reader too can almost witness with his/her own eyes the hovering bird thanks to the emphasis on the visual, but the imprecision within the precision of this vision (we know it is 'beautiful', 'white', 'Webfooted, not unlike a dove in size' and has 'plumage') indicates an interest in the fact that this is a bird (i.e., possible food), rather than any particular type of bird. The way in which it hovers round the men ('it came and went, and flutter'd round them', line 7) suggests an element of teasing and tempting the hungry dying men. The enjambement between lines 7 and 8, thus highlighting 'Night fell', lends a sense of doom and metaphorical as well as literal darkness, yet the notion of night as a time for relaxation and rejuvenating, re-energising sleep cannot be excluded. If 'night' is something positive, then this would parallel the end of the line, 'this seem'd a better omen still', but if, on the other hand, it is to be understood in its more sinister frightening mode, then this would provide a stark contrast to the second part of the line, and of course to the bright colourful rainbow which has dominated the previous few stanzas. Yet again, however, the certainty of this 'better omen still' is severely undermined by the verb 'seem'd', connecting it with the expressions of doubt throughout this stanza ('About this time', 'not unlike', 'probably it might', 'err'd', 'guise') and also the previous stanza ('thought', 'look'd like'). The optimism of the men appears to be increasing: the 'good omen' of stanza 93 has now grown into a 'better omen', yet the preceding verbs 'thought' (stanza 93) and 'seem'd' (stanza 94) perpetuate the possibility that all is not as it might seem.

The ever-increasing possibility that this omen is not the 'good omen' they hope it to be is strengthened further by line 1 of stanza 95, 'But in this case I also must remark', which contrasts with the seeming 'better omen' of the final line of stanza 94. The

description of the bird in line 2 as a 'bird of promise', however, appears to reassert the positive connotations of the 'better omen' once more. The sense of danger, if the bird had indeed perched on their ship masts, after the initial "'Twas well' (line 2), with 'shatter'd bark' (line 3) and 'Was not so safe' (line 4) persists, but is simultaneously countered by the security offered by God in his 'church' (line 4) and by 'Noah's ark' (line 5). It is not until the final line that we discover what would have happened had the bird decided to perch on their ship: 'They would have eat her, olive-branch and all'. Finally the full horror of what could have happened is revealed, and the 'good omen' is also unmasked as having been the illusion we always suspected it might be. The forces of nature have once again proven to be of no succour to the hungry dying men, and they are also shown to be cruel and callous in the way in which they tease man into thinking nature might be benevolent. The contrast between the apparently peace-bringing dove-like bird with her olive-branch and the violence of her end, had she stopped for rest, only heighten the irony of the situation: the bird is not bringing peace and would herself have been swiftly killed had she dared to perch.

A depiction of nature is what we are presented with in both Goethe and Byron here, but they are, on the surface at least, rather dissimilar pictures, although the devices each uses to make his point are often not so dissimilar. In 'Wenn der Mensch', we have a picture of the beauty of nature mutilated by man, whereas, in this section of *Don Juan*, we see the beauty of nature only teasing man and lulling him into a false, or at least temporary, sense of security. In both, however, it is apparent that man is nothing in comparison and is thoroughly at nature's mercy: in Goethe the warning is not to overindulge in the good things of nature, but to find a balance, and in Byron nature is seen in both a benevolent mood with the beautiful rainbow, but also more callously as the bird teasing the hungry men and thus as an enemy of man and dismissive of him. Indeed the perspective, which perpetually looks down on man from the rainbow or the bird above, only reflects man's lowly position in the natural hierarchy. This is a balancing depiction of the changeability of nature's moods: both

the positive and negative sides are perceptible, and thus it is clear that the negative is an ineluctable part of the positive. Cruel teasing nature, that is just perceptible here, but has been clear in the way in which the men have been treated by nature throughout their time at sea, stands in intrinsic antithesis to idyllic benevolent nature we see later, just as Goethe evokes the terrors of nature on occasion, as in *Werther* and *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, for example. In a Goethean fashion, Byron is at pains always to show both sides of the coin, no matter how unpleasant any particular side may be. This is not then some macabre desire to shock the reader with perversions, but rather an attempt to show reality in its full and unadulterated, uncensored truthfulness. In these two sections each poet uses the final two lines as the climax to the stanza/poem, yet each clearly connects these lines to the rest of the stanza/poem. Each uses alliteration and rhyme in order both to divide and to unite words and ideas, and each is only really using nature in order to emphasise something human: in Goethe to advocate a balanced approach to life and in Byron to highlight here the darker realms of the human psyche which are in eternal opposition to man's more positive qualities. This seems to be a *Lord of the Flies* kind of insight into man's predisposition to revert to savage behaviour when the shackles of civilisation are removed, as in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Book 1. In so far as Goethe reveals the outcome of overindulgence, of not knowing one's limits, so too Byron reveals the outcome when exclusively negative forces are at work. Thus it is evident that neither poet favours an exclusively one-sided approach to life and can see the inevitable outcomes when such an approach is followed.

12 'Gute Nacht!' ('Buch des Paradieses')⁹⁸ and *Don Juan*, XVII. 12-14.⁹⁹

The cycle comes to an end in the 'Buch des Paradieses' with 'Gute Nacht!', a poem of one stanza of 16 lines with various different rhyme schemes: lines 1-4 and 13-16 use enclosed rhyme; lines 5-8 cross rhyme and in lines 9-12 all the lines rhyme with each other, except the last. The exclamation mark at the end of the title, the first punctuation in a title of the entire cycle, emphasises that this is the end of this book and the cycle, and Goethe himself described it as the 'Abschiede des Dichters an sein Volk, und der Divan selbst ist geschlossen'.¹⁰⁰ The very first word 'Nun' colloquially suggests that this is the continuation of a story. The clear echoes in this poem of both the previous poem 'Siebenschläfer' and the very first poem 'Hegire' are many. This links it to the rest of the cycle and lends the whole an arabesque-quasi-symmetrical structure. Significantly, we do not end in the realms of any heaven, as the final two poems shift their focus away from the sublimity of 'Höheres und Höchstes' back to earth again. Here we meet the poet of 'Hegire' again, but he is now tired after his long search for inspiration 'im reinen Osten' ('Hegire', stanza 1, line 3). The description of the fruits of his labour, the 'Lieder', hark back to the 'Buch des Sängers', just as the adjective 'lieb' harks back to the 'Buch der Liebe' and the 'Buch Suleika'. The importance of these 'Lieder' is further stressed by their personification, and the closeness he feels to them is highlighted by the use of the familiar plural form of the imperative 'legt euch' and by the rhyme between 'Lieder' and 'Glieder', almost implying in the words themselves that the one is inherent in and born out of the other: flesh of the poet's flesh. That the journey has come full circle and he is now back with his own people, as opposed to the Eastern people he set off to visit in 'Hegire', is made clear by the possessive adjective 'mein' (line 2): the poet is not an Eastern poet, hence 'meinem Volk' must refer to Western people and the closeness he wishes them to feel to these 'Lieder' is stressed by the fact that they are to be laid 'An den Busen'.

⁹⁸HA, 2, p. 120. See also Birus, FA, 3.2, pp. 1403-04; Ileri 203-07 and Trunz, HA, 2, p. 671.

⁹⁹PW, 5, pp. 660-61. See McGann, PW, 5, p. 770.

¹⁰⁰HA, 2, p. 270: 'poet's farewell to his people, and the *Divan* itself is closed.'

But the Eastern flavour has not disappeared and reappears in line 3 with 'Moschuswolke': reminiscent of the 'Moschus' of 'Hegire' (stanza 4, line 4), so his wishes have been fulfilled as he rests exhausted in the comfort of a cloud with the heady scent of musk; a perfume associated with the East and often used also by Hafis. The poetic connotations of 'Moschus'¹⁰¹ who was a Greek poet making this cloud perhaps a poetic cloud too, only enhance the picture of the scented comforting cloud. Although the poet is indeed tired, this is not an unhappy picture, but one of calmness and relaxation, with comfort offered to the nose by the musk and to the body, 'die Glieder / Des Ermüdeten' (lines 4-5), by the softness of the cloud. The rest and relaxation enjoyed in the comfort of the cloud clearly also has a regenerative function, as the poet's energy is renewed in line 6. The fact that he is taken care of by the archangel Gabriel, who brings only good tidings, adds to the picture of happiness at the end of a successful, both energy-sapping and energy-gaining, journey. This explicitly echoes the 'schönen jungen Glieder' of 'Siebenschläfer' (line 38); moreover, the protection of the Seven Sleepers¹⁰² by the archangel Gabriel is also described in 'Siebenschläfer' (lines 34-42 and 95-97). This happy picture is enhanced by lines 6-7 with the adjectives 'frisch', 'wohlerhalten', 'froh' and 'gern gesellig' as the poet gladly sets out, in lines 8-11, eventually to make his way with renewed vigour over all obstacles to reach paradise. The 'Felsenklüfte' (line 8) echo 'Siebenschläfer' (line 40),¹⁰³ 'Spalten riß ich in die Felsen', but also 'Hegire' (stanza 5, line 1), 'Bösen Felsweg'. Also we have moved on from the 'Paradieses Pforte' of 'Hegire' (stanza 7, line 4) to the vastness of the 'Paradieses Weiten': vast not only in space, but also in time, as can be perceived from the rhyme of 'Weiten' with 'Zeiten' (line 10) and by the unusual extension of this rhyme to line 11 with the striding through of

¹⁰¹A Greek Bucolic poet in the age of Ptolemy Philadelphus. The sweetness and elegance of his eight eclogues, which are still extant, make the world regret the loss of poetical pieces by no means inferior to the most beautiful of the productions of Theocritus (John Lemprière, *Lemprière's Classical Dictionary* (London: Bracken, 1994) 423).

¹⁰²The legend of the Seven Sleepers is known in both Christian and Islamic tradition. In the Christian tradition the Seven Sleepers were seven Christian youths from Ephesus who were walled up in a cave by the Emperor Decius in 250AD and, according to legend, slept for 187 years.

¹⁰³See Birus, FA, 3.2. p. 1404.

'durchschreiten'. That this very same rhyme continues in lines 13 and 16 accentuates this all-encompassing, on-going vastness, but the fact that the last four lines appear as enclosed rhyme, mirroring lines 1-4, afford the 'inscape' of the poem another arabesque-like quality. The last eight lines of this sixteen line poem have only two rhymes, but it is surely significant that the '-eiten' rhyme is broken initially by the word 'Neue', indicating a newness, not only by its meaning, but also in the rhyme scheme. The all-inclusive, diachronic nature of this paradise is underlined by the fact that it contains, not only Islamic heroes, but 'Heroen aller Zeiten' (line 10).¹⁰⁴ The ever-increasing pleasure and enjoyment is accentuated further in lines 11-14 by 'Im Genusse', 'Das Schöne', 'das Neue', 'nach allen Seiten' and 'sich erfreue', with 'die Unzahl' (line 14) reflecting the number of people present and hence also that these number more than just the 'Heroen aller Zeiten'. We have already seen in 'Begünstigte Tiere' and in 'Siebenschläfer' (line 93) that there are animals in this heaven, so it is not wholly astounding to see that, in the final two lines of the poem, it is the faithful little dog that is allowed to enter heaven alongside men. Notably all things that are permitted access to heaven are all linked alliteratively by 'h'.

'Gute Nacht!' itself has a circular structure, reflecting the circularity of the whole of the *West-östlicher Divan*. Here we have a serene and happy picture of a poet come to the end of his journey, yet this is clearly a picture of a rejuvenated, re-energised poet too: the inspiration for which he longed in 'Hegire' has been granted; the experiences for which he wished have been fulfilled; he has experienced love, especially in the 'Buch der Liebe' and 'Buch Suleika'; his thirst has been quenched in 'Das Schenkenbuch'; and his regenerative rest here provides new energy to keep going. Now he can rest and sleep, but surely this 'Gute Nacht' is a precursor, not only to going to bed at the end of the day, but also to any kind of ending, the end of the *West-östlicher Divan* itself,¹⁰⁵ and surely also to death too. It also confers on the 'Dark', a

¹⁰⁴See Birus, FA, 3.2, p. 1404.

¹⁰⁵Ileri (203) sees this not as a precursor to going to bed at all, but rather as a precursor of eternal and absolute peace in every sense of the word. I, however, feel that the sleep implication is not excluded,

recurrent motif throughout the cycle, a final, positive evaluation. Even although this is talking of paradise, the picture painted does still, in typical Goethean fashion, have its base firmly on terrestrial ground. The physical is still clearly evident throughout and the concentration on the fate of one individual, as opposed to man, has afforded Goethe the opportunity to move from this one particular case to the more general — it is the plural 'Herren' (line 16), not just the one who may enter this paradise — yet remain realistic without recourse exclusively to the ideal and spiritual world.

As is well-known, *Don Juan* does not have a 'real' end, and finishes only where it does due to the author's untimely death in Greece, and, as Drummond Bone indicates, 'conclusions, Byronically, are unimportant. Endings happen because you run out of paper, or time'.¹⁰⁶ While the *West-östlicher Divan* is, despite strong implications of its on-going nature, clearly concluded with 'Gute Nacht!', this is hardly what we find in *Don Juan*. Hence it is perhaps all the more coincidental that this section provides any insight at all into the Goethe-Byron connections I have already indicated in the preceding analysis. And yet, the topos of 'so to bed', familiar enough from Pepys' diaries, is a convention, and like all conventions, has more than a whiff of the arbitrary about it. Sleep is indeed a common feature to both selections, and, while the scenes seem to be utterly dissimilar, essential similarities do remain. Here we see Byron returning to the story once more after one of his frequent digressions. We meet Juan and the Duchess of Fitz-Fulke the morning after her appearance in front of him as a 'ghost', an episode that I have already discussed in detail in section 4 of this Chapter.

The narrator only returns to the Juan story again in stanza 12 after another of his characteristic and frequent digressions, so it is therefore not surprising that, in lines 1-2, we are reminded of the fact that we left Juan, at the end of Canto XVI, 'in a tender

and, although her suggestion is possible, I believe the implications to be far more extensive than just eternal peace.

¹⁰⁶Bone, 'Nature' 65.

moonlight situation'. Typically we are not told explicitly what exactly this 'tender moonlight situation' entailed, but the hints with which we are presented are sufficient for the reader to draw his/her own conclusions. The 'situation' is further delineated as being one of those 'Such as enables Man to show his strength / Moral or physical' (lines 3-4), thus inviting the notion of possible rejection of the Duchess' advances on moral grounds or literally using his physical power to push her away, but also hinting at the possibility of his acceding to her and his own desires and thus showing his physical strength in a different way. In lines 5-6 the alternative scenarios are pondered, but emphasis placed on 'His vice' by the enjambement from the previous line and its position at the very beginning of line 6 to contrast starkly with the 'virtue' of line 5 clearly implies that vice rather than virtue won the day. This view is strengthened by the immediately preceding 'or, at length', leading us not only to linger on this thought, but to think how he might have lingered while giving in to his vice. This view is reinforced by the further explanation of his predisposition for vice, 'for he was of a kindling nation' (line 6), before we finally discover the remainder of the sentence begun in line 5 'Whether his virtue triumphed', as 'Is more than I shall venture to describe' (line 7). The sentence was interrupted by vice, interrupting as the inevitable antithesis to virtue and the alternative outcome which should not be forgotten. Line 7 makes clear that the narrator knows exactly what has occurred the night before and that this must have been a triumph for vice: if virtue had triumphed, there would be nothing to tell and nothing for him to 'venture to describe'. Yet, this is not a narrator who is offended by what he knows and has witnessed, but rather one who likes to play with his reader and tease him/her with innuendo and to feign horror. Line 8 stresses this point by immediately undermining this feigned offence in line 7 with the light-hearted aside 'Unless some Beauty with a kiss should bribe.' The narrator himself would not be averse to emotional and physical persuasion, thus mirroring Juan's succumbing to the emotional and physical persuasions of the 'Beauty', the Duchess of Fitz-Fulke.

A definitive answer, however, is still not given even at the beginning of stanza 13, although line 1 does connect the two stanzas by continuing the discussion about the problem, 'I leave the thing a problem, like all things',¹⁰⁷ and resolving to abandon it, as it is by its very nature problematic. This is separated from the rest of the stanza by a dash, which indicates a shift from the ponderings of the narrator on the events of the previous night to the morning and the reality of all that morning entails. Yet it is also linked to it in so far as a problem inevitably has two sides, just as vice and virtue are co-implicit and night will be followed by day. The focus of the stanza moves then to the particularity of the breakfast and what this consists of: 'tea and toast' (line 2). This is hardly a gourmet breakfast, so it is no surprise to see it described as something 'Of which most men partake, but no one sings' (line 3). Thus the everyday banality and sheer habitual ordinariness of the situation is stressed. In lines 4-5 the narrator again highlights that this is his creation that we are reading and what its production has cost him: 'The company whose birth, wealth, worth, have cost / My trembling Lyre already several strings'. The enjambement, concentrating thus on 'cost' and 'My trembling Lyre', stresses the suffering yet further, and surely the personal coincidences are unmistakable. Was it not English society that caused a great many of Byron's own problems and had he not already dealt with many of these people throughout *Don Juan* and especially in the English cantos? By connecting 'birth', 'wealth' and 'worth' by the similar end sound 'th' and also by assonance,¹⁰⁸ Byron is at once linking them, but ironically 'worth' as he has constantly shown throughout *Don Juan* has nothing to do with either 'birth' or 'wealth'. Line 6, with its references to Lady Adeline and Lord Henry and the prominent position given to 'Assembled', suggests the imminent arrival of the guests, which is indeed what happens in the final two lines. The casual everyday nature of events is further underlined by the verb

¹⁰⁷See Goethe's aphorism: 'Man sagt, zwischen zwei entgegengesetzten Meinungen liege die Wahrheit mitten inne. Keineswegs! Das Problem liegt dazwischen, das Unschaubare, das ewig thätige Leben, in Ruhe gedacht' (Hecker 616). 'Truth, so it is said, is situated at the central point between two opposing views. Not at all! The problem lies between the two, that which is beyond our range of vision, eternally active life, contemplated in repose' (Stopp 82).

¹⁰⁸Although these words are hardly assonant when spoken in a Scottish accent, if spoken with certain English accents the assonance becomes closer.

'dropped in' (line 7), and this is then contrasted with the naming of two of these guests, concentrating on the specific and focusing attention on these two, who notably arrive last and second last to breakfast, as this is something out of the ordinary. The rhyming of 'Her Grace' (line 7) with the description of Juan as having a 'virgin face' (line 8) slyly suggests exactly the opposite, and also the fact that each of them is just putting on a face in an attempt to conceal the events of the previous evening.

Stanza 14 then delineates how awful each of them appears, noting that one looks as bad, or as good, as the other: 'Which best is to encounter — Ghost or none, / 'Twere difficult to say' (lines 1-2). The following lines 2-5 concentrate on Juan, and paint a vivid picture of his pallor and tiredness; he is alliteratively 'wan and worn' (line 4), with eyes so sensitive to light that they 'hardly brooked / The light': the enjambement makes us wonder what it is his eyes can hardly bear, until we see the light at the start of line 5. That this light appears through the narrow Gothic windows accentuates the spotlight effect and focuses all eyes on Juan and his eyes. Juan is unable to face the morning or to face Aurora, whose name is the dawn. Not only is he incapable of facing the morning, he is also unable to face the world, i.e., Lady Adeline Amundeville, the middle section of whose name suggests the French 'monde' ('world'). This adds further weight to the notion that something sexual has occurred between Juan and the Duchess, since these two women have also been depicted as being possible partners for Juan. The focus shifts to the Duchess emphatically at the beginning of line 6, and the implication that she and Juan have been together is again hinted at, by the word 'too'. In parallel to the description of Juan as 'wan and worn' the Duchess 'seemed pale and shivered' (line 7). The verb 'seemed' again highlights the possible deceptive nature of outward appearances, or at least the wish of the narrator not to reveal explicitly the sexual goings-on implied. The enjambement between lines 7 and 8 stresses 'A vigil' at the start of line 8 and thus how bad she really looks: i.e. as if she had been up all night. Of course this is exactly what has

occurred, but not for the reasons suggested, either a vigil or a bad dream. Ironically what she has done is indeed 'rather more than slept' (line 8).

The obvious differences between these two sections seem to offer little support to the delineation of any connections between Goethe and Byron, but yet again we see each using similar techniques to similar effect despite obvious differences. Admittedly the tone in 'Gute Nacht!' is happy and serene, yet energetic and new, and it clearly concludes the cycle while still looking forward, whereas in *Don Juan* the tone is decidedly suggestive and light-hearted. Each picture, however different, is one rooted firmly in particularity: in Goethe the poet is the focus and in *Don Juan* the focus is on the two possible lovers, Juan and the Duchess. It is from this base of particularity that each poet succeeds in moving to the more universal: in Goethe's case to the ironic nature of this 'paradise' and in Byron's the possibility of deceiving by outward appearance.¹⁰⁹ Each poet uses language itself to support whatever point he wishes to make: rhyme, alliteration, enjambement, and, above all, mutually self-implicating polar opposites are used to great effect by each, for his own, here rather different, ends.

¹⁰⁹The irony of course is that the Duchess is both spiritual in her appearance to Juan as a ghost at the end of Canto XVI, and also a physical reality in so far as she is not a 'real' ghost after all.

Conclusion

Nothing so difficult as a beginning
In poesy, unless perhaps the end;¹

¹*Don Juan*, IV. 1, lines 1-2 (PW, 5, p. 203).

This thesis grew out of a suspicion that there may be a deeper and more fundamental affinity between Goethe and Byron than simple admiration and conscious influence. Chapters 2 and 3 bear witness to the mutual admiration between Byron and Goethe and also the significant influence they each exerted on the other, but what is more revealing is the fact that each poet himself clearly felt an affinity for the other and recognised common ground in their writings, and despite Byron's relatively narrow knowledge of Goethe and his works, Goethe's remark to Stroganoff, 'Byron hat mich vollkommen verstanden' ('Byron has completely understood me')² seems not altogether far-fetched. It is then the very many perceptive comments that each poet makes about the other which invite a much closer analysis of their works in order to ascertain whether these comments are indeed tenable.

With a suspicion, then, that this oft-perceived but little-explained similarity might lie in a shared view about the importance of the particular as opposed to the universal the brief theoretical base which Chapter 4 provides reveals that there do appear to be conceptual similarities in each poet's respective views about what constitutes poetry. A shared distrust of theory as an end in itself is evident and it is therefore a close analysis of the texts themselves that provides the focus in Chapter 5. By choosing to focus not on the well-worn question of the influence of Goethe's *Faust* in Byron's *Manfred* and other texts, but rather on the *West-östlicher Divan* and *Don Juan* any affinity thus uncovered becomes all the more significant, precisely because of its unexpectedness.

Furthermore, as Chapter 5 progresses, it becomes ever clearer that the similarities are many and striking. Each poet is highly conscious of 'the tricks of authorship' and is fully aware also of their debt to predecessors and able to manipulate any material found elsewhere, just as Goethe noted how Byron had taken his *Faust* to himself and made something else of it. Thus that they each understood how the other worked

²GA Gespräche, 2, p. 789.

seems clear. Despite differences it is clear that how each poet works and moulds language in his poetry so that it becomes an inextricable part of its form is very similar indeed. What stands out the most is the use of parallel syntactical structures, rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, onomatopoeia, enjambement and assonance to connect apparent opposites, thus implying that the difference between them is not clear-cut and may be one of degree rather than kind. The constant use of irony and the relativising of personal experience into the poetry, it soon becomes clear, is one of the things that lends both *Don Juan* and the *West-östlicher Divan* their vitality: in each text it is only through the focus on the particular that the particular can be articulated. Thus we have in both Goethe and Byron a vision common to both whereby in an eternally oscillating synthesis between the worlds of reality and imagination, between particularity and universality the upper hand will always be held by particularity, by reality. As Camille Paglia notes, Byron's feet are firmly on the ground as she calls him 'earthly horizontality',³ a term which she may well have applied, with equal justice, to Goethe. But again the opinions of others fade rather into insignificance when we consider what both Byron and Goethe said about each other. For Goethe the promotion of Byron to a place by his side ('Byron allein lasse ich neben mir gelten')⁴ and for Byron the sense, the intuition, for it can have been little else, that there was 'some analogy between [thei]r characters and writings'⁵ has been shown indeed to be far more appropriate than either could ever have known for certain.

As Drummond Bone observes, 'conclusions, Byronically, are unimportant. Endings happen because you run out of paper, or time.'⁶ Nonetheless some tentative general conclusions from this thesis may, I think, be drawn. The authorial voice does indeed shine through in each writer and it is clear that each poet was inspired by, but here relativised, his own experiences: for example, the influence of Marianne on Goethe

³Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990) 355.

⁴2 October 1823 (FA, 37, p. 115).

⁵Medwin 261.

⁶Bone, 'Nature' 65.

(throughout the *West-östlicher Divan*, but especially in the 'Buch Suleika' with the lovers Hatem and Suleika) and Byron's Janus-faced experience with so-called idyllic love (especially visible in the Juan-Haidée episode) offer the creative impetus to each. It is surely this basis in fact, in personal experience, this emphasis on particularity that lends the poetry much of its impact. Byron's insistence on the veracity of his story is constant, both within *Don Juan* itself (Canto XV. 19) and in his correspondence:

But I hate things *all fiction* [...] there should always be some foundation of fact for the most airy fabric — and pure invention is but the talent of a liar.⁷

Goethe, too, insisted upon the importance of experience, although not in quite such a vociferous or even such a literal fashion as Byron:

Alle meine Gedichte sind Gelegenheitsgedichte, sie sind durch die Wirklichkeit angeregt und haben darin Grund und Boden. Von Gedichten, aus der Luft gegriffen, halte ich nichts.⁸

What is, however, also very clear from each of these quotations is the fact that personal experience is merely a part of the resultant whole that is the poetry: the important word for Byron is surely 'all', and for Goethe it is surely the notion that his poems are firmly fixed in reality.

The parasitic nature of each poet has also become ever clearer, yet what is also evident is the way in which each poet is playing with the material he has found elsewhere and making something new out of it, in this way subscribing to the Goethean maxim on originality:

Alles Gescheite ist schon gedacht worden; wir müssen nur versuchen, es noch einmal zu denken.⁹

⁷2 April 1817 to Murray (LJ, 5, p. 203). See also 26 October 1819 to Kinnaird (LJ, 6, p. 232), when on the subject of *Don Juan*, Byron comments 'it may be profligate — but it is not *life*, is it not *the thing*? — Could any man have written it — who has not lived in the world? — and tooled in a post-chaise? in a hackney coach? in a Gondola? Against a wall? in a court carriage? in a vis a vis? — on a table? and under it?'

⁸18 September 1823 (Eckermann 44). 'All my poems are occasional poems, suggested by real life, and having therein a firm foundation. I attach no value to poems snatched out of the air' (Oxenford, 1, p. 66).

⁹Hecker 441. 'There's nothing clever that hasn't been thought of before — you've just got to try to think it all over again' (Stopp 57).

Goethe was certainly under no Romantic illusion that he was not indebted to those who preceded him, and of course neither was Byron:

As to originality, Goethe has too much sense to pretend that he is not under obligations to authors ancient and modern; who is not?¹⁰

The way in which each subtly manipulates his chosen poetic form to make it his own is, however, what makes the significant difference and transforms the works in each case from plagiarism into something new. As we have seen, each poet uses the tools of poetry so that the form, the metrical structure and the content are held together in a kind of binary synthetic relationship. Parallel syntactical structures, rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, onomatopoeia, enjambement and assonance are all used both to link apparent opposites, yet at the same time to draw them together, thus suggesting that the difference between them is one of degree rather than of kind, and also surely that the one is indeed inherent in the other: they are mutually self-implicating polar opposites. The constant subtle ironic undermining of one thing by its polar opposite leaves the reader constantly in a state of weighing up, in Goethe's case the two sides of a problem, and in Byron's sometimes even the many-sided nature of the problem. The necessity for an initiated and alert reader is clear, as the easy conversational style and light-hearted tone of much of the poetry often belies the serious point. What is significant is that each sees the poly-perspectival nature of the world, not only the light, but the co-implicit dark too, and recognises the precarious balance between the sides, the precarious nature of any binary synthesis; the recognition by both Byron and Goethe of all things as binary syntheses, in so far as they are all problems, is apparent.¹¹

From a thematic point of view, the fact that each man insisted upon the importance of erotic experience is hardly surprising — one has only to consider each man's personal

¹⁰Medwin 142.

¹¹See *Don Juan*, XVII. 13, line 1 and Goethe's aphorism on the problem which lies between two opposing opinions, quoted above (Hecker 616). See Chapter 5, note 107 above.

history to see what an important role this played¹² — but that each of them also noted the necessity of, and potential for, this physical moment to lead to some other 'fulfilment' is also noteworthy. It would appear that this desire for greater spiritual fulfilment, not conventionally religious fulfilment, is one that, like mysticism itself, has its roots in erotic physical fulfilment and is co-existent with it.¹³ It was Byron himself, in a letter to Murray, who stressed the human as opposed to the conventional religious nature of his poem:

you have so many '*divine*' poems, is it nothing to have written a *Human* one? without any of your worn out machinery.¹⁴

As for Goethe, the dualism 'divine-human' (as Byron's quotation marks make clear) is again one of mutual implication; and there is also little doubt that he, too, is interested in mysticism in so far as it complements and enhances the erotic experience, once that is past, as a kind of after-glow:

Alle Mystik ist ein Transszendieren und ein Ablösen von irgend einem Gegenstande, den man hinter sich zu lassen glaubt. Je größer und bedeutender dasjenige war, dem man absagt, desto reicher sind die Produktionen des Mystikers.¹⁵

Goethe may — as the verb 'sich gattet', with its connotations of a kind of binary synthetic relationship, strongly suggests — consciously have been following Schiller's advice on how best to realise one's potential:

Nur wenn das Erhabene mit dem Schönen sich *gattet* und unsre Empfänglichkeit für beydes in gleichem Maaß ausgebildet worden ist, sind wir vollendete Bürger der Natur, ohne deswegen ihre Sklaven zu

¹²See for example Byron's letter of 6 September 1813 to his future wife (LJ, 3, p. 109): 'The great object of this life is Sensation — to feel that we exist — even though in pain — it is this "craving void" which drives us to Gaming — to Battle — to Travel — to intemperate but keenly felt pursuits of every description whose principal attraction is the agitation inseparable from their accomplishment.'

¹³See for example Leszek Kolakowski, 'God of Mystics: Eros in Religion,' *Religion* (Glasgow: Collins, 1982) 98-151.

¹⁴6 April 1819 (LJ, 6, p. 105).

¹⁵Hecker 336. 'All mysticism is transcendence of and detachment from some object which one considers is being relinquished. The greater and the more meaningful what is given up, the richer the mystic's productions' (Stopp 39).

seyn, und ohne unser Bürgerrecht in der intelligiblen Welt zu verscherzen.¹⁶

But it is highly unlikely that Byron, at least wittingly, could have been doing that. In this quotation Schiller is also stressing the importance of *marrying* the sublime with the aesthetic and raising one's consciousness and reception of both to an equal degree if one's full potential is to be realised. Despite his little knowledge of Schiller, Byron too seems to be adhering to this view: it is clear that he is not advocating a replacement of the physical by the spiritual, nor is he stubbornly denying the existence of one or the other, but rather indicating that the existence of the Other is inherent in the existence of the One. Hence the spiritual and the physical 'exist' (in the human psyche) in tandem, in a relationship of binary synthesis, in which each retains its own identity, while simultaneously enhancing the ever-changing relationship between the two.

Perhaps the relationship between Goethe and Byron themselves may also be helpfully described thus, and perhaps Byron was not too far off the mark when he suggested that there might be something fundamentally similar in their works:

I have great curiosity about every thing relating to Goethe, and please myself with thinking there is some analogy between our characters and writings.¹⁷

That each poet uses irony to a significant extent is undeniable; that each relativises his own experience is similarly undeniable, and that each is fundamentally secular despite making use of religious imagery is also clear. Drummond Bone's suggestion that what might be similar to the late Goethe and the late Byron could be described as 'secular ironic relativism'¹⁸ appears to be both useful and illuminating by virtue of its profound ambiguity. 'The elegiac, [post-tragic] gentlemen of [the] *Westostlicher*

¹⁶NA, 21, p. 53. My italics. 'Only if Sublimity is wedded to Beauty, and our susceptibility for both is equally developed, are we finished citizens of nature, without consequently being her slaves, and without forfeiting our citizenship in the world of intelligence' (Weiss 259).

¹⁷Medwin 261.

¹⁸See Drummond Bone, 'The Question of a European Romanticism,' *Questioning Romanticism*, ed. John Beer (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) 130.

Divan [*sic*] [...] and *Don Juan*, [who are] close focused, materially sensual, write [in and] from a world in which creation is inherently parasitic, [inevitably] parodistic, and [one] in which life is self-created [and self-creating] — and one which is none the worse [(or indeed all the better)] for it.¹⁹

There is clearly much scope for further close textual analysis in a comparison of the works of the two poets; and much more insight to be gained especially from a comparative study of, say, Byron's *Beppo* and Goethe's *Römische Elegien*.²⁰ But that would be the work of at least another volume.

¹⁹See Bone, 'Romanticism' 131.

²⁰Again it is Goethe, in conversation with Eckermann (82) on 25 February 1824, more than a quarter of a century after the publication of his *Römische Elegien*, who points us towards possible further interesting comparative study with Byron: 'Es liegen in den verschiedenen poetischen Formen geheimnisvolle große Wirkungen. Wenn man den Inhalt meiner Römischen Elegien in den Ton und die Versart von Byrons Don Juan übertragen wollte, so müßte sich das Gesagte ganz verrucht ausnehmen.' 'Mysterious and great forms are produced by different poetical forms. If the import of my Romish [Roman] elegies were put into the measure and style of Byron's "Don Juan," the whole would be found infamous' (Oxenford, 1, p. 132).

Appendix

(i) Count Stroganoff

Goethe's conversation with the elusive Count Stroganoff does not appear often in editions of Goethe's *Conversations* and, even when it does, it is not dated precisely, hence the controversy surrounding its and the count's authenticity. While there is little doubt that there existed a Russian diplomatic family of that name, exactly which one of the family it was who met both Byron and Goethe is more difficult to determine. Butler¹ discovers at least four Stroganoffs, but immediately discounts Grigori Alexandrovitch (1770-1857) because of his age: she believes he would have been too old to have been enjoying the high life with Byron in Venice in 1819. She believes it more likely that the Stroganoff concerned was one of his sons: either Sergei, Alexander or Alexei, but what is more significant than which Stroganoff it actually was who visited both Byron and Goethe is surely that the views expressed in this reported conversation with Goethe do not stand diametrically opposed to what we have already learnt about the relationship between the two poets.² The origins of this conversation may be suspect, but this should not detract from the tenability of the views expressed therein. A Count Stroganoff did visit Weimar in 1823, but did not see Goethe as Goethe was too ill.³ Stroganoff reappears in Goethe's diary on 30 July and also on 28 September 1827,⁴ so his existence, whoever he was, is not in doubt.

As far as Byron is concerned, however, there is never any mention of a Count Stroganoff in any of his letters, journals or conversations, but it should not be forgotten that a Count Strongstroganoff does appear in *Don Juan*, I. 149.⁵ Byron

¹Butler, *Passion* 151-52. Butler then provides an interesting account of the whole of Stroganoff's visit to Goethe (*Passion* 151-59).

²Butler (GA Gespräche, 2, p. 780) believes the Stroganoff to have been Alexander Grigorjewisch, while Robertson (44) thinks it was Alexius Grigorevitch. I have left the authors' spelling of these Russian names as found therein.

³18 February 1823 (WA, III, 9, p. 17). Müller also notes Goethe's regret at not being well enough to receive Count Stroganoff at this time (FA, 37, p. 25).

⁴Diary for 30 July 1823 (WA, III, 9, p. 85) and 28 September 1827 (WA, III, 11, pp. 116-17).

⁵PW, 5, p. 56. Robertson (44, note 1) suggests wrongly that Count Strongstroganoff appears in *Don Juan*, I. 99.

must have been inspired to the name somehow, and considering his opinion that *Don Juan* itself was 'life',⁶ and his insistence in his works on the importance of fact, then it seems ever more likely that he must have met a Count Stroganoff. It could, of course be argued that he had simply heard the name and not necessarily met the man himself, but the views we hear Stroganoff then subsequently utter to Goethe are so in line with what we have learnt from other sources that a meeting seems very highly probable. Another possibility might be the culinary dish beef stroganoff: most dictionaries believe this dish to have been named after Count Paul Stroganoff, the 19th century Russian diplomat. This dish did, however, only originate in the 20th century and was not invented by Stroganoff as many believe. The recipe was invented by H. G. Wells for his short story entitled *Michael Stroganov* and only thereafter was it tried out to see how, and if, it worked. The dish is first mentioned in 1932, so its having been invented more than a century earlier and forgotten until then seems unlikely. Although the Stroganoff name was clearly the inspiration for Wells and the dish itself, it would appear that Byron could not have been inspired by beef stroganoff, as it did not exist at that time. Hence it is ever more probable that the two men did meet and enjoy Venetian life in 1819 and that a Count Stroganoff was the inspiration for Count Strongstroganoff in *Don Juan*.⁷

⁶26 October 1819 to Kinnaird (LJ, 6, p. 232). Byron writes to Kinnaird about the reception of *Don Juan*, wanting to know his friend's views too: 'As to "Don Juan" — confess — confess — you dog — and be candid — that it is the sublime of *that there* sort of writing — it may be bawdy — but is it not good English? — it may be profligate — but it is not *life*, is it not *the thing*? — Could any man have written it — who has not lived in the world? — and tooled in a post-chaise? in a hackney coach? in a Gondola? Against a wall? in a court carriage? in a vis a vis? — on a table? and under it? — I have written about a hundred stanzas of a third Canto — but it is damned modest — the outcry has frightened me. — I had such projects for the Don — but the *Cant* is so much stronger than *Cunt* — now a days, — that the benefit of experience in a man who had well weighed the worth of both monosyllables — must be lost to despairing posterity. — After all what stuff this outcry is — Lalla Rookh and Little — are more dangerous than my burlesque poem can be.'

⁷Byron began writing *Don Juan* on 3 July 1818, and the first two cantos were published anonymously on 15 July 1819 by Murray.

(ii) **Byron's Dedications to Goethe**(a) **To Marino Faliero:**

Dedication
to Baron Goethe &c. &c. &c.

Sir —

In the appendix to an English work lately translated into German and published at Leipsic — a judgement of yours upon English poetry is quoted as follows — 'that in English poetry, great Genius, universal power, a feeling of profundity, <and> with sufficient tenderness & force are to be found — but that *altogether these do not constitute poets* ['] &c. &c. —

I <am> regret to see a great man falling into a great mistake. — This opinion of yours only proves that the *Dictionary of ten thousand living English authors*' has not been translated into German. — You will have <seen> read in your friend Schlegel's version the dialogue in Macbeth —

'There are *ten thousand!* —

Macbeth.

Geese — Villain! —

Answer.

Authors — Sir. — [*Macbeth*, V. iii. 12-13]

Now of these 'ten thousand authors' — there are actually nineteen hundred and eighty seven poets — all alive at this moment — whatever their works may be — as their booksellers well know. — And amongst these there are several who possess a far greater reputation <whi> than mine, — <and> although <somewhat> considerably less than yours. — It is owing to this neglect on the part of your German translators that you are not aware of the works of William Wordsworth — who has a baronet in London who draws him <front> frontispieces and leads him about to dinners and to the play; and a Lord in the country who gave him a place in the Excise — and <a pla> a cover at his table. — You do not know perhaps — that this Gentleman is the greatest of all poets past — present and to come — besides <the fame> which he has written an <great work/'magnum opus'> 'Opus Magnum' in prose — during the late

election for Westmoreland. — His principal publication is <a> entitled 'Peter Bell' which he had withheld from the Public for 'one and twenty years' — to the irreparable loss of all those who died in the interim, — & will have no opportunity of reading it before the resurrection. — There is another — named Southey — who is more than a poet — being actually poet *Laureate* — a post which corresponds with <that of what> what we call in Italy '*Poeta Cesareo*' and which you call in German — I know not what — but as you have a 'Caesar' — probably you have a name for it. — In England there is no *Caesar* — only the Poet. — I mention these poets by way — of Sample — to enlighten you — they form but two bricks of our <poetical> Babel — (*Windsor* bricks by the way) but may serve for a Specimen of the building. —

<You have> It is moreover asserted — that 'the predominant character of the whole body of English Poetry — is a *Disgust* and Contempt <of> for Life' — but — I rather suspect that <in> by one single work of *prose* — *you* yourself have <created> excited a greater contempt <of> for Life than all the English <works> volumes of poesy that were ever written. — Madame de Stael says — that 'Werther has occasioned more suicides than the most beautiful woman' — and I really believe that he has put more individuals out of this world — than Napoleon himself — except in the way of his profession. —

Perhaps — illustrious Sir — the acrimonious Judgement past by <one of> a celebrated Northern Journal upon you in particular, and the Germans in general, has rather indisposed you towards English poetry as well as <our> Criticism. — But you must not regard our Critics — who are at bottom very good-natured fellows — considering their two professions — <studying> taking up the law in Court — and laying it down out of it. — No one can more lament their hasty and unfair Judgement in your particular than <myself> I do and I so expressed myself to your friend Schlegel <at the time (in 1816) during a dinner> in 1816 at Coppet. —

In behalf of my 'ten thousand' living brethren and of myself I have thus far taken notice of an opinion expressed with regard to 'English poetry' in general — and which merited notice — because it was *yours*. — My principal object in addressing you was

to testify my sincere respect and admiration — of a man who for half a century has led the literature of a great nation — and will go down to Posterity as the first literary Character of his Age. — You have been fortunate, Sir, not only in the <?> writings which have illustrated your name — but in the name itself — as being sufficiently musical for the articulation of posterity. — In this — you have the advantage of some of your countrymen — whose names would perhaps be immortal <too> also — if anybody could pronounce them. —

It may perhaps be supposed <that in> by this apparent tone of levity — that I am wanting in intentional respect towards you — but this will be a mistake. — I am always flippant in prose. Considering you — as I really & warmly do — <to be the> in common with all your own & with most other nations to be <very> by far the first <the> literary Character which existed in Europe since the death of Voltaire, I felt and feel desirous to inscribe to you the following work — *not* as being either a tragedy or a *poem* — (for I cannot pronounce upon it's [*sic*] pretensions to be either <the> one or the other — or both — or neither) — but as a Mark of esteem and admiration — from a foreigner to the man who has been hailed in Germany '*the Great Goethe.*'

I have the honour to be,
with the truest respect,
y.^r most obed.^t &
very hum^{ble} Ser.^t

Ravenna. —

Byron.

8.^{bre} 14.th

1820

P.S. — I perceive that in Germany as well as in Italy there is a great struggle about what they call '*Classical and Romantic*' terms which were not subjects of Classification in England — at least when I left it four or five years ago. — <They> Some of the English Scribblers (it is true) abused Pope and Swift — but the reason was that <they> they themselves did not know how to write either <in> prose or verse, <themselves — and> but nobody thought them worth making a Sect of. — Perhaps there may be something of the sort sprung up lately — but I have not heard

much about it, — and it would be such bad taste that I should be very sorry to believe it.⁸

(b) To *Sardanapalus*:

To the illustrious Goëthe a Stranger presumes to offer the homage of a literary vassal to his liege-lord — the first of existing masters — who has created the literature of his own country — and illustrated that of Europe. — The unworthy production which the author ventures to inscribe to him — is entitled '*Sardanapalus*.' —⁹

(c) To *Werner*:

TO
THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOËTHE,
BY ONE OF HIS HUMBLEST ADMIRERS,
THIS TRAGEDY
IS DEDICATED.¹⁰

⁸PW, 4, pp. 544-47. First published in Brandl, 'Verhältniss' 33-36. Due to the length of many of these citations and translations in the appendix, they are not indented or footnoted for ease of comprehension.

⁹PW, 6, p. 15.

¹⁰PW, 6, p. 383.

(iii) Goethe's longer citations on Byron:

(a)(i) Letter of 12 November 1822 to Benecke:

'Auf die gegenwärtige Mitteilung läßt sich nur mit überraschter Beschämung danken. Seit seinem ersten Erscheinen begleitete ich, mit näheren und ferneren Freunden, ja mit Einstimmung von ganz Deutschland und der Welt, jenes charakter-gegründete, grenzenlos produktive, kräftig unaufhaltsame, zart-liebliche Wesen auf allen seinen Pfaden. Ich suchte mich mit ihm durch Übersetzung zu identifizieren und an seine zartesten Gefühle, wie an dessen kühnsten Humor mich anzuschließen; wobei denn, um nur des letztern Falles zu gedenken, allein die Unmöglichkeit, über den Text ganz klar zu werden, mich abhalten konnte, eine angefangene Übersetzung von English Bards and Scotch Reviewers durchzuführen.

Von einem so hochverehrten Manne solch eine Teilnahme zu erfahren, solch ein Zeugnis übereinstimmender Gesinnungen zu vernehmen, muß um desto unerwarteter sein, da es nie gehofft, kaum gewünscht werden durfte.

Mögen Ew. Wohlgeboren dieses vorläufig dem englischen Freunde mit aufrichtigem Dank für dessen Vermittelung zu erkennen geben, so werden Sie mich sehr verbinden.

Die Handschrift des teuren Mannes erfolgt ungern zurück, denn wer möchte willig das Original eines Dokuments von so großem Wert entbehren? Das Alter, das denn doch zuletzt an sich selbst zu zweifeln anfängt, bedarf solcher Zeugnisse, deren anregende Kraft der Jüngere vielleicht nicht ertragen hätte.'¹¹

¹¹HA Briefe, 4, pp. 53-54.

(a)(ii) Translation of letter of 12 November 1822 to Benecke:

'Only with surprised confusion can I thank you for what you now send me. Since Byron's first appearance I have, with friends near and far, yes, in unanimity with all Germany and the world, followed on all his paths this strong-charactered, boundlessly productive, vehemently unrestrained, and tenderly-loving poet. I endeavoured to identify myself with him by translating him, to adapt myself to his tenderest emotions and his boldest humour; and — to mention only the latter — the impossibility of attaining clearness about his text alone restrained me from completing a translation I had begun of his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. To learn of such sympathy from so highly esteemed a man, to have such testimony of harmonising sentiments is more unexpected, as I had never dared to hope, and hardly to wish for it. If you will be good enough to express this to your English friend with my sincere thanks for his good offices, I shall be much indebted to you. I am reluctant to return the handwriting of a man who is so dear to me, for who would willingly surrender the original of a document of such great value? Old age, which ultimately begins to have doubts of itself, needs such testimonies, whose stimulating force a younger man might not have borne.¹²

(b)(i) Goethes Beitrag zum Andenken Lord Byrons:

Man hat gewünscht, einige Nachrichten von dem Verhältniß zu erlangen, welches zwischen dem leider zu früh abgeschiedenen Lord Noel Byron und Herrn von Goethe bestanden; hiervon wäre kürzlich so viel zu sagen.

Der deutsche Dichter, bis in's hohe Alter bemüht, die Verdienste früherer und mitlebender Männer sorgfältig und rein anzuerkennen, indem er dieß als das sicherste Mittel eigener Bildung von jeher betrachtete, mußte wohl auch auf das große Talent des Lords bald nach dessen erstem Erscheinen aufmerksam werden, wie er denn auch

¹²Robertson 68.

die Fortschritte jener bedeutenden Leistungen und eines ununterbrochenen Wirkens unablässig begleitete.

Hierbei war denn leicht zu bemerken, daß die allgemeine Anerkennung des dichterischen Verdienstes mit Vermehrung und Steigerung rasch auf einander folgender Productionen in gleichem Maße fortwuchs. Auch wäre die diesseitige frohe Theilnahme hieran höchst vollkommen gewesen, hätte nicht der geniale Dichter durch eine leidenschaftliche Lebensweise und inneres Mißbehagen ein so geistreiches als gränzenloses Hervorbringen sich selbst, und seinen Freunden den reizenden Genuß an seinem hohen Dasein einigermaßen verkümmert.

Der deutsche Bewunderer jedoch, hiedurch nicht geirrt, folgte mit Aufmerksamkeit einem so seltenen Leben und Dichten in aller seiner Excentricität, die freilich um desto auffallender sein mußte, als ihres Gleichen in vergangenen Jahrhunderten nicht wohl zu entdecken gewesen und uns die Elemente zu Berechnung einer solchen Bahn völlig abgingen.

Indessen waren die Bemühungen des Deutschen dem Engländer nicht unbekannt geblieben, der davon in seinen Gedichten unzweideutige Beweise darlegte, nicht weniger sich durch Reisende mit manchem freundlichem Gruß vernehmen ließ.

Sodann aber folgte überraschend, gleichfalls durch Vermittelung, das Originalbalt einer Dedication des Trauerspiels *Sardanapalus* in den ehrenreichsten Ausdrücken und mit der freundlichen Anfrage, ob solche gedachtem Stück vorgedruckt werden könnte.

Der Deutsche, mit sich selbst und seinen Leistungen im hohen Alter wohlbekannte Dichter durfte den Inhalt jener Widmung nur als Äußerung eines trefflichen, hochfühlenden, sich selbst seine Gegenstände schaffenden, unerschöpflichen Geistes mit Dank und Bescheidenheit betrachten; auch fühlte er sich nicht unzufrieden, als bei mancherlei Verspätung *Sardanapal* [*sic*] ohne ein solches Vorwort gedruckt wurde, und fand sich schon glücklich im Besitz eines lithographirten Facsimile zu höchst werthem Andenken.

Doch gab der edle Lord seinen Vorsatz nicht auf, dem deutschen Zeit- und Geistgenossen eine bedeutende Freundlichkeit zu erweisen; wie denn das Trauerspiel *Werner* ein höchst schätzbares Denkmal an der Stirne führt.

Hiernach wird man denn wohl dem deutschen Dichtergreise zutrauen, daß er, einen so gründlich guten Willen, welcher uns auf dieser Erde selten begegnet, von einem so hoch gefeierten Manne ganz unverhofft erfahrend, sich gleichfalls bereitete, mit Klarheit und Kraft auszusprechen, von welcher Hochachtung er für seinen unübertroffenen Zeitgenossen durchdrungen, von welchem theilnehmendem Gefühl für ihn belebt sei. Aber die Aufgabe fand sich so groß und erschien immer größer, je mehr man ihr näher trat; denn was soll man von einem Erdgebornen sagen, dessen Verdienste durch Betrachtung und Wort nicht zu erschöpfen sind?

Als daher ein junger Mann, Herr *Sterling*, angenehm von Person und rein von Sitten, im Frühjahr 1823 seinen Weg von Genua gerade nach Weimar nahm und auf einem kleinen Blatte wenig' eigenhändige Worte des verehrten Mannes als Empfehlung überbrachte, als nun bald darauf das Gerücht verlautete, der Lord werde seinen großen Sinn, seine mannichfaltigen Kräfte an erhaben-gefährliche Thaten über Meer verwenden, da war nicht zu zaudern und eilig nachstehendes Gedicht geschrieben:

Ein freundlich Wort kommt eines nach dem andern
 Von Süden her und bringt uns frohe Stunden;
 Es ruft uns auf zum Edelsten zu wandern,
 Nicht ist der Geist, doch ist der Fuß gebunden.

Wie soll ich dem, den ich so lang begleitet,
 Nun etwas Traulichs in die Ferne sagen?
 Ihm, der sich selbst im Innersten bestreitet,
 Stark angewohnt, das tiefste Weh zu tragen.

Wohl sei ihm doch wenn er sich selbst empfindet!
 Er wage selbst sich hochbeglückt zu nennen,
 Wenn Musenkraft die Schmerzen überwindet;
 Und wie ich ihn erkannt, mög' er sich kennen.

Weimar, den 22 Juni 1823

Es gelangte nach Genua, fand ihn aber nicht mehr daselbst, schon war der treffliche Freund abgesegelt und schien einem jeden schon weit entfernt; durch Stürme jedoch zurückgehalten, landete er in Livorno, wo ihn das herzlich Gesendete gerade noch traf, um es im Augenblicke seiner Abfahrt, den 22. Juli 1823, mit einem reinen, schön gefühlten Blatt erwidern zu können, als werthestes Zeugniß eines würdigen Verhältnisses unter den kostbarsten Documenten vom Besitzer aufzubewahren.

So sehr uns nun ein solches Blatt erfreuen und rühren und zu der schönsten Lebenshoffnung aufregen mußte, so erhält es gegenwärtig durch das unzeitige Ableben des hohen Schreibenden den größten schmerzlichen Werth, indem es die allgemeine Trauer der Sitten- und Dichterwelt über seinen Verlust für uns leider ganz in's Besondere schärft, die wir nach vollbrachtem großem Bemühen hoffen durften, den vorzüglichsten Geist, den glücklich erworbenen Freund und zugleich den menschlichsten Sieger persönlich zu begrüßen.

Nun aber erhebt uns die Überzeugung, daß seine Nation aus dem theilweise gegen ihn aufbrausenden, tadelnden, scheltenden Taumel plötzlich zur Nüchternheit erwachen und allgemein begreifen werde, daß alle Schalen und Schlacken der Zeit und des Individuums, durch welche sich auch der Beste hindurch und heraus zu arbeiten hat, nur augenblicklich, vergänglich und hinfällig gewesen, wogegen der staunungswürdige Ruhm, zu dem er sein Vaterland für jetzt und künftig erhebet, in seiner Herrlichkeit gränzenlos und in seinen Folgen unberechenbar bleibt. Gewiß, diese Nation, die sich so vieler großer Namen rühmen darf, wird ihn verklärt zu denjenigen stellen, durch die sie sich immerfort selbst zu ehren hat.¹³

¹³WA, I, 42.1, pp. 100-04. See also FA, 22, pp. 729-32 and 1463-66.

(b)(ii) Translation of Goethes Beitrag zum Andenken Lord Byrons:

'Weimar, 16th July, 1824.

"It is thought desirable that I should give some details relating to the intercourse that existed between Lord Noel Byron, alas! now no more! and myself: a few words will suffice for this object.

"Up to the time of my present advanced age, I have habituated myself to weigh with care and impartiality the merit of illustrious persons of my own time generally, as well as of my immediate contemporaries, from the consideration that it would prove a sure means of advancing myself in knowledge. I might well fix my attention on Lord Byron; and, having watched the dawn of his early and great talents, I could hardly fail to follow their progress through his important and uninterrupted career.

"It was easy to observe that the estimate of his poetical talent by the public increased progressively with the advancing perfection of his works, which so rapidly succeeded each other. The interest which they excited had been productive of more unmingled delight to his friends, if self-dissatisfaction and the restlessness of his passions had not in some measure counteracted the power of a most comprehensive and sublime imagination, and thrown a blight over an existence which the nobleness of his nature gave him a more than common capacity for enjoying.

"Not permitting myself to come to a hasty and erroneous conclusion respecting him, I continued to trace, with undiminished attention, a life and a poetical activity alike rare and irreconcilable, which interested me the more forcibly, inasmuch as I could discover no parallel in past ages with which to compare them, and found myself utterly destitute of the elements necessary for calculating the movement of an orb so eccentric in its course.

"In the mean while, neither myself nor my occupations remained unknown or unnoticed by the English poet, who not only furnished unequivocal proofs of an acquaintance with my works, but conveyed to me, through the medium of travellers, more than one friendly salutation.

"Thus I was agreeably surprised by indirectly receiving the original sheet of a dedication of the tragedy 'Sardanapalus,' conceived in terms the most honourable to me, and accompanied by a request that it might be printed at the head of the work.

"Well knowing myself and my labours, in my old age, I could not but reflect with gratitude and diffidence on the expressions contained in this dedication, nor interpret them but as the generous tribute of a superior genius, no less original in the choice than inexhaustible in the materials of his subjects. I felt no disappointment when, after many delays, 'Sardanapalus' appeared without the preface: for I already thought myself fortunate in possessing a fac-simile in autograph, and attached to it no ordinary value.

"It appeared, however, that the Noble Lord had not renounced his project of shewing his contemporary and companion in letters a striking testimony of his friendly intentions, of which the tragedy 'Werner' contains precious evidence.

"It might naturally be expected that the aged German poet, after receiving a kindness unhopèd for, from so celebrated a person, (proof of a disposition thoroughly generous, and the more to be prized from its rarity in the world,) should also prepare, on his part, to express most clearly and forcibly a sense of the gratitude and esteem with which he was affected.

"But this task was great, and every day seemed to make it more difficult, — for what could be said of an earthly being whose merit was not to be conceived in thought, or expressed in words?

"But when, in the spring of 1823, Mr. S-----, [Sterling] a young man of amiable and engaging manners, brought direct from Genoa to Weimar a few words under the hand of this estimable friend, by way of recommendation, and when shortly after a report was spread that the Noble Lord was about to consecrate his great powers and varied talents to high and perilous enterprize, I had no longer a plea for delay, and addressed to him the following hasty stanzas:

"One friendly word comes fast upon another

From the warm South, bringing communion sweet, —

Calling us amid noblest thoughts to wander

Free in our souls, though fetter'd in our feet.

How shall I, who so long his bright path traced,
 Say to him words of love sent from afar? —
 To him who with his inmost heart hath struggled,
 Long wont with fate and deepest woes to war?

May he be happy! — *thus* himself esteeming,
 He well might count himself a favour'd one!
 By his loved Muses all his sorrows banish'd,
 And he *self-known*, — e'en as to *me* he's known!"

"These lines arrived at Genoa, but found him not. My excellent friend had already sailed; but, being driven back by contrary winds, he landed at Leghorn, where this effusion of my heart reached him. On the eve of his departure, July 23d, 1823, he found time to send me a reply, full of the most beautiful ideas and the noblest sentiments, which will be treasured as an invaluable testimony of worth and friendship among the choicest documents which I possess.

"What emotions of hope and joy did not that paper once excite! — now it has become, by the premature death of the noble writer, an inestimable relic — a source of unspeakable regret; for it increases in me particularly, to no small degree, that mourning and melancholy which pervade the whole moral and poetical world, — in me, who looked forward (after the success of his great efforts) to the prospect of being blessed with the sight of this master-spirit of the age, — this friend to fortunately acquired; and of having to welcome, on his return, the most humane of conquerors.

"Yet I am consoled by the conviction, that his country, will instantly *awake*, and shake off, like a troubled dream, the partialities, the prejudices, the injuries, and the calumnies with which he has been assailed, — causing them to subside and sink into oblivion, — that she will at length universally acknowledge that his frailties, whether the consequence of temperament, or the defect of the times in which he lived, (against which even the best of mortals wrestle painfully,) were fleeting and transitory; whilst the imperishable greatness to which he has raised her name now remains, and will for

ever remain, boundless in its glory, and incalculable in its consequences. There is no doubt that a nation so justly proud of her many great sons will place BYRON, all radiant as he is, by the side of those who have conferred on her the highest honour."¹⁴

(c)(i) 24 February 1825 with Eckermann:

"Wäre es meine Sache noch, dem Theater vorzustehen, sagte Goethe diesen, ich würde Byrons Dogen von Venedig auf die Bühne bringen. Freilich ist das Stück zu lang und es müßte gekürzt werden; aber man müßte nichts daran schneiden und streichen, sondern es so machen: Man müßte den Inhalt jeder Szene in sich aufnehmen und ihn bloß kürzer wiedergeben. Dadurch würde das Stück zusammengehen, ohne daß man ihm durch Änderungen schadete und es würde an kräftiger Wirkung durchaus gewinne, ohne im Wesentlichen von seinem Schönen etwas einzubüßen."

Diese Äußerung Goethes gab mir eine neue Ansicht, wie man beim Theater in hundert ähnlichen Fällen zu verfahren habe, und ich war über diese Maxime, die freilich einen guten Kopf, ja einen Poeten voraussetzt der seine Sache versteht, höchst erfreut.

Wir sprachen über Lord Byron weiter und ich erwähnte, wie er in seinen Konversationen mit Medwin es als etwas höchst Schwieriges und Undankbares ausgesprochen habe, für das Theater zu schreiben. "Es kommt darauf an, sagte Goethe, daß der Dichter die Bahn zu treffen wisse, die der Geschmack und das Interesse des Publikums genommen hat. Fällt die Richtung des Talents mit der des Publikums zusammen, so ist alles gewonnen. Diese Bahn hat Houwald mit seinem *Bilde* getroffen, daher der allgemeine Beifall. Lord Byron wäre vielleicht nicht so glücklich gewesen, insofern seine Richtungen von der des Publikums abwichen.

¹⁴This translation appears in Medwin (272-75). From evidence in Goethe's diary and his letters to Soret this tribute was certainly written before the 16 July 1824 (see Chapter 2 above). It should also be noted that Medwin quotes the date of Byron's departure wrongly here as 23 July and the FA edition also dates this wrongly as 24 July 1823 (FA, 22, p. 732).

Denn es fragt sich hiebei keineswegs, wie groß der Poet sei, vielmehr kann ein solcher, der mit seiner Persönlichkeit aus dem allgemeinen Publikum wenig hervorragt, oft eben dadurch die allgemeinste Gunst gewinnen."

Wir setzten das Gespräch über Lord Byron fort und Goethe bewunderte sein außerordentliches Talent. "Dasjenige, was ich die Erfindung nenne, sagte er, ist mir bei keinem Menschen in der Welt größer vorgekommen als bei ihm. Die Art und Weise, wie er einen dramatischen Knoten löset, ist stets über alle Erwartung und immer besser, als man es sich dachte." Mir geht es mit Shakespeare so, erwiderte ich, namentlich mit dem Falstaff, wenn er sich festgelogen hat und ich mich frage, was ich tun lassen würde, um sich wieder loszuhelfen, wo denn freilich Shakespeare alle meine Gedanken bei weitem übertrifft. Daß aber Sie ein Gleiches von Lord Byron sagen, ist wohl das höchste Lob, das diesem zu Teil werden kann. Jedoch, fügte ich hinzu, steht der Poet, der Anfang und Ende klar übersieht, gegen den befangenen Leser bei weitem im Vorteil.

Goethe gab mir Recht und lachte dann über Lord Byron, daß Er, der sich im Leben nie gefügt und der nie nach einem Gesetz gefragt, sich endlich dem dümmsten Gesetz der *drei Einheiten* unterworfen habe. "Er hat den Grund dieses Gesetzes so wenig verstanden, sagte er, als die übrige Welt. Das *Faßliche* ist der Grund, und die drei Einheiten sind nur in so fern gut, als dieses durch sie erreicht wird. Sind sie aber dem Faßlichen hinderlich, so ist es immer unverständlich sie als Gesetz betrachten und befolgen zu wollen. Selbst die Griechen, von denen diese Regel ausging, haben sie nicht immer befolgt; im Phaëthon des Euripides und in andern Stücken wechselt der Ort, und man sieht also, daß die gute Darstellung ihres Gegenstandes ihnen mehr galt als der blinde Respekt vor einem Gesetz, das an sich nie viel zu bedeuten hatte. Die Shakespearschen Stücke gehen über die Einheit der Zeit und des Orts so weit hinaus als nur möglich; aber sie sind faßlich, es ist nichts faßlicher als sie, und deshalb würden auch die Griechen sie untadelig finden. Die französischen Dichter haben dem Gesetz der drei Einheiten am strengsten Folge zu leisten gesucht, aber sie sündigen

gegen das Faßliche, indem sie ein dramatisches Gesetz nicht dramatisch lösen, sondern durch Erzählung."

Ich dachte hiebei an *die Feinde* von Houwald, bei welchem Drama der Verfasser sich auch sehr im Lichte stand, indem er, um die Einheit des Orts zu bewähren, im ersten Akt dem Faßlichen schadete und überhaupt eine mögliche größere Wirkung seines Stückes einer Grille opferte, die ihm niemand Dank weiß. Dagegen dachte ich auch an den Götz von Berlichingen, welches Stück über die Einheit der Zeit und des Orts so weit hinausgeht als nur immer möglich; aber auch so in der Gegenwart sich entwickelnd, alles vor die unmittelbare Anschauung bringend, und daher so echt dramatisch und faßlich ist als nur ein Stück in der Welt. Auch dachte ich, daß die Einheit der Zeit und des Orts dann natürlich und im Sinne der Griechen wäre, wenn ein Faktum so wenig Umfang habe, daß es sich in gehöriger Zeit vor unsern Augen im Detail entwickeln könne; daß aber bei einer großen, durch verschiedene Orte sich machenden Handlung kein Grund sei, solche auf *einen* Ort beschränken zu wollen, um so weniger als bei unseren jetzigen Bühnen zu beliebiger Verwandlung der Szene durchaus kein Hindernis im Wege stehe.

Goethe fuhr über Lord Byron zu reden fort: "Seinem stets ins Unbegrenzte strebenden Naturell, sagte er, steht jedoch die Einschränkung, die er sich durch Beobachtung der drei Einheiten auflegte, sehr wohl. Hätte er sich doch auch im Sittlichen so zu begrenzen gewußt! Daß er dieses nicht konnte, war sein Verderben, und es läßt sich sehr wohl sagen, daß er an seiner Zügellosigkeit zu Grunde gegangen ist."

"Er war gar zu dunkel über sich selbst. Er lebte immer leidenschaftlich in den Tag hin und wußte und bedachte nicht, was er tat. Sich selber alles erlaubend und an Andern nichts billigend, mußte er es mit sich selbst verderben und die Welt gegen sich aufregen. Mit seinen English Bards and Scotch Reviewers verletzte er gleich anfänglich die vorzüglichsten Literatoren. Um nachher nur zu leben, mußte er einen Schritt zurücktreten. In seinen folgenden Werken ging er in Opposition und Mißbilligung fort; Staat und Kirche blieben nicht unangetastet. Diese rücksichtslose Hinwirken trieb ihn aus England und hätte ihn mit der Zeit auch aus Europa

getrieben. Es war ihm überall zu enge, und bei der grenzenlosesten persönlichen Freiheit fühlte er sich beklommen; die Welt war ihm wie ein Gefängnis. Sein Gehen nach Griechenland war kein freiwilliger Entschluß, sein Mißverhältnis mit der Welt trieb ihn dazu."

"Daß er sich vom Herkömmlichen, Patriotischen, lossagte, hat nicht allein einen so vorzüglichen Menschen persönlich zu Grunde gerichtet, sondern sein revolutionärer Sinn und die damit verbundene beständige Agitation des Gemüts hat auch sein Talent nicht zur gehörigen Entwicklung kommen lassen. Auch ist die ewige Opposition und Mißbilligung seinen vortrefflichen Werken selbst, so wie sie daliegen, höchst schädlich. Denn nicht allein, daß das Unbehagen des Dichters sich dem Leser mitteilt, sondern auch alles opponierende Wirken geht auf das Negative hinaus, und das negative ist nichts. Wenn ich das Schlechte schlecht nenne, was ist da viel gewonnen? Nenne ich aber gar das Gute schlecht, so ist viel geschadet. Wer recht wirken will, muß nie schelten, sich um das Verkehrte gar nicht kümmern, sondern nur immer das Gute tun. Denn es kommt nicht darauf an, daß eingerissen, sondern daß etwas aufgebaut werde, woran die Menschheit reine Freude empfinde."

Ich erquicke mich an diesen herrlichen Worten und freute mich der köstlichen Maxime.

"Lord Byron, fuhr Goethe fort, ist zu betrachten: als Mensch, als Engländer und als großes Talent. Seine guten Eigenschaften sind vorzüglich vom Menschen herzuleiten; seine schlimmen, daß er ein Engländer und ein Pair von England war; und sein Talent ist inkommensurabel."

"Alle Engländer sind als solche ohne eigentliche Reflexion; die Zerstreuung und der Parteigeist lassen sie zu keiner ruhigen Ausbildung kommen. Aber sie sind groß als praktische Menschen."

"So konnte Lord Byron nie zum Nachdenken über sich selbst gelangen; deswegen auch seine Reflexionen überhaupt ihm nicht gelingen wollen, wie sein Symbolum: *viel Geld und keine Obrigkeit!* beweist, weil durchaus vieles Geld die Obrigkeit paralyisiert."

"Aber alles, was er produzieren mag, gelingt ihm, und man kann wirklich sagen, daß sich bei ihm die Inspiration an die Stelle der Reflexion setzt. Er mußte immer dichten! und da war denn alles, was vom Menschen, besonders vom Herzen ausging, vortrefflich. Zu seinen Sachen kam er, wie die Weiber zu schönen Kindern; sie denken nicht daran und wissen nicht wie."

"Er ist ein großes Talent, ein *geborenes*, und die eigentlich poetische Kraft ist mir bei niemandem größer vorgekommen als bei ihm. In Auffassung des Äußern und klarem Durchblick vergangener Zustände ist er eben so groß als Shakespeare. Aber Shakespeare ist als reines Individuum überwiegend. Dieses fühlte Byron sehr wohl, deshalb spricht er vom Shakespeare nicht viel, obgleich er ganze Stellen von ihm auswendig weiß. Er hätte ihn gern verleugnet, denn Shakespeares Heiterkeit ist ihm im Wege; er fühlt, daß er nicht dagegen aufkann. *Pope* verleugnet er nicht, weil er ihn nicht zu fürchten hatte. Er nennt und achtet ihn vielmehr wo er kann, denn er weiß sehr wohl, daß *Pope* nur eine Wand gegen ihn ist."

Goethe schien über Byron unerschöpflich, und ich konnte nicht satt werden, ihm zuzuhören. Nach einigen kleinen Zwischengesprächen fuhr er fort:

"Der hohe Stand als englischer Pair war Byron sehr nachteilig; denn jedes Talent ist durch die Außenwelt geniert, geschweige eins bei so hoher Geburt und so großem Vermögen. Ein gewisser mittlerer Zustand ist dem Talent bei weitem zuträglicher; weshalb wir denn auch alle große Künstler und Poeten in den mittleren Ständen finden. Byrons Hang zum Unbegrenzten hätte ihm bei einer geringeren Geburt und niederem Vermögen bei weitem nicht so gefährlich werden können. So aber stand es in seiner Macht, jede Anwendung in Ausführung zu bringen und das verstrickte ihn in unzählige Händel. Und wie sollte ferner dem, der selbst aus so hohem Stande war, irgend ein Stand imponieren und Rücksicht einflößen? Er sprach aus, was sich in ihm regte und das brachte ihn mit der Welt in einen unauflöselichen Konflikt."

"Man bemerkt mit Verwunderung, fuhr Goethe fort, welcher große Teil des Lebens eines vornehmen reichen Engländers in Entführungen und Duellen zugebracht wird.

Lord Byron erzählt selbst, daß sein Vater drei Frauen entführt habe. Da sei einer einmal ein vernünftiger Sohn!"

"Er lebte eigentlich immer im Naturzustande, und bei seiner Art zu sein, mußte ihm täglich das Bedürfnis der Notwehr vorschweben. Deswegen sein ewiges Pistolenschießen. Er mußte jeden Augenblick erwarten herausgefordert zu werden."

"Er konnte nicht allein leben. Deswegen war er trotz aller seiner Wunderlichkeiten gegen seine Gesellschaft höchst nachsichtig. Er las das herrliche Gedicht über den Tod des General Moore einen Abend vor, und seine edlen Freunde wissen nicht, was sie daraus machen sollen. Das rührt ihn nicht und er steckt es wieder ein. Als Poet beweist er sich wirklich wie ein Lamm. Ein Anderer hätte sie dem Teufel übergeben!"¹⁵

(c)(ii) Translation of conversation of 24 February 1825 with Eckermann:

"If I were still superintendent of the theatre," said Goethe, this evening, "I would bring out Byron's 'Doge of Venice.' The piece is indeed long, and would require shortening. Nothing, however, should be cut out, but the import of each scene should be taken, and expressed more concisely. The piece would thus be brought closer together, without being damaged by alterations, and it would gain a powerful effect, without any essential loss of beauty." This opinion of Goethe's gave me a new view as to how we might proceed on the stage, in a hundred similar cases, and I was highly pleased with such a maxim, which, however, presupposes a fine intellect, — nay, poet, who understands his vocation. We talked more about Lord Byron, and I mentioned how, in his conversations with Medwin, he had said there was something extremely difficult and unthankful in writing for the theatre. "The great point is," said Goethe, "for the poet to strike into the path which the taste and interest of the public have taken. If the direction of his talent accords with that of the public, everything is gained. Houwald hit this path with his *Bild* (picture), and hence the universal applause

¹⁵Eckermann 131-36.

he received. Lord Byron, perhaps, would not have been so fortunate, inasmuch as his tendency varied from that of the public. The greatness of the poet is by no means the important matter. On the contrary, one who is little elevated above the general public may often gain the most general favour precisely on that account." We continued to converse about Byron, and Goethe admired his extraordinary talent. "That which I call invention," said he, "I never saw in any one in the world to a greater degree than in him. His manner of loosing a dramatic knot is always better than one would anticipate." "That," said I, "is what I feel about Shakespeare, especially when Falstaff has entangled himself in such a net of falsehoods, and I ask myself what I should do to help him out; for I find that Shakespeare surpasses all my notions. That you say the same of Lord Byron, is the highest praise that can be bestowed on him. Nevertheless," I added, "the poet who takes a clear survey of beginning and end, has, by far, the advantage with the biassed [*sic*] reader." Goethe agreed with me, and laughed to think that Lord Byron, who, in practical life, could never adapt himself, and never even asked about a law, finally subjected himself to the stupidest of laws, — that of the *three unities*. "He understood the purpose of this law," said he, "no better than the rest of the world. *Comprehensibility* is the purpose, and the three unities are only so far good as they conduce to this end. If the observance of them hinders the comprehension of a work, it is foolish to treat them as laws, and to try to observe them. Even the Greeks, from whom the rule was taken, did not always follow it. In the 'Phaeton' of Euripides, and in other pieces, there is a change of place, and it is obvious that good representation of their subject was with them more important than blind obedience to law, which, in itself, is of no great consequence. The pieces of Shakespeare deviate, as far as possible, from the unities of time and place; but they are comprehensible — nothing more so — and on this account, the Greeks would have found no fault in them. The French poets have endeavoured to follow most rigidly the laws of the three unities, but they sin against comprehensibility, inasmuch as they solve a dramatic law, not dramatically, but by narration." "I call to mind the 'Feinde' (enemies) of Houwald. The author of this

drama stood much in his own light, when, to preserve the unity of place, he sinned against comprehensibility in the first act, and altogether sacrificed what might have given greater effect to his piece to a whim, for which no one thanks him. I thought, too, on the other hand, of 'Goetz von Berlichingen,' which deviates as far as possible from the unity of time and place; but which, as everything is visibly developed to us, and brought before our eyes, is as truly dramatic and comprehensible as any piece in the world. I thought, too, that the unities of time and place were natural, and in accordance with the intention of the Greeks, only when a subject is so limited in its range that it can develop itself before our eyes with all its details in the given time; but that with a large action, which occurs in several places, there is no reason to be confined to one place, especially as our present stage arrangements offer no obstacle to a change of scene." Goethe continued to talk of Lord Byron. "With that disposition," said he, "which always leads him into the illimitable, the restraint which he imposed upon himself by the observance of the three unities becomes him very well. If he had but known how to endure moral restraint also! That he could not was his ruin; and it may be aptly said, that he was destroyed by his own unbridled temperament. "But he was too much in the dark about himself. He lived impetuously for the day, and neither knew nor thought what he was doing. Permitting everything to himself, and excusing nothing in others, he necessarily put himself in a bad position, and made the world as his foe? At the very beginning, he offended the most distinguished literary men by his 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.' To be permitted only to live after this, he was obliged to go back a step. In his succeeding works, he continued in the path of opposition and fault-finding. Church and State were not left unassailed. This reckless conduct drove him from England, and would in time have driven him from Europe also. Everywhere it was too narrow for him, and with the most perfect personal freedom he felt himself confined; the world seemed to him a prison. His Grecian expedition was the result of no voluntary resolution; his misunderstanding with the world drove him to it. "The renunciation of what was hereditary and patriotic not only caused the personal destruction of so

distinguished a man, but his revolutionary turn, and the constant mental agitation with which it was combined, did not allow his talent a fair development. Moreover, his perpetual negation and fault-finding is injurious even to his excellent works. For not only does the discontent of the poet infect the reader, but the end of all opposition is negation; and negation is nothing. If I call *bad* bad, what do I gain? But if I call *good* bad, I do a great deal of mischief. He who will work aright must never rail, must not trouble himself at all about what is ill done, but only do well himself. For the great point is, not to pull down, but to build up, and in this humanity finds pure joy." I was delighted with these noble words, and this valuable maxim. "Lord Byron," continued Goethe, "is to be regarded as a man, as an Englishman, and as a great talent. His good qualities belong chiefly to the man, his bad to the Englishman and the peer, his talent is incommensurable. "All Englishmen are, as such, without reflection, properly so called; distractions and party spirit will not permit them to perfect themselves in quiet. But they are great as practical men. "Thus, Lord Byron could never attain reflection on himself, and on this account his maxims in general are not successful, as is shewn by his creed, 'much money, no authority,' for much money always paralyzes authority. "But where he will create, he always succeeds; and we may truly say that with him inspiration supplies the place of reflection. He was always obliged to go on poetizing, and then everything that came from the man, especially from his heart, was excellent. He produced his best things, as women do pretty children, without thinking about it or knowing how it was done. "He is a great talent, a born talent, and I never saw the true poetical power greater in any man than in him. In the apprehension of external objects, and a clear penetration into past situations, he is quite as great as Shakespeare. But as pure individuality, Shakespeare is his superior. This was felt by Byron, and on this account, he does not say much of Shakespeare, although he knows whole passages by heart. He would willingly have denied him altogether; for Shakespeare's cheerfulness is in his way, and he feels that he is no match for it. Pope he does not deny, for he had no cause to fear him. On the contrary, he mentions him, and shews him respect when he can, for he knows well enough that Pope is a mere

foil to himself." Goethe seemed inexhaustible on the subject of Byron, and I felt that I could not listen enough. After a few digressions, he proceeded thus: — "His high rank as an English peer was very injurious to Byron; for every talent is oppressed by the outer world, — how much more, then, when there is such high birth and so great a fortune. A certain middle rank is much more favourable to talent, on which account we find all great artists and poets in the middle classes. Byron's predilection for the unbounded could not have been nearly so dangerous with more humble birth and smaller means. But as it was, he was able to put every fancy into practice, and this involved him in innumerable scrapes. Besides, how could one of such high rank be inspired with awe and respect by any rank whatever? He spoke out whatever he felt, and this brought him into ceaseless conflict with the world. "It is surprising to remark," continued Goethe, "how large a portion of the life of a rich Englishman of rank is passed in duels and elopements. Lord Byron himself says, that his father carried off three ladies. And let any man be a steady son after that. "Properly speaking, he lived perpetually in a state of nature, and with his mode of existence the necessity for self-defence floated daily before his eyes. Hence his constant pistol-shooting. Every moment he expected to be called out. "He could not live alone. Hence, with all his oddities, he was very indulgent to his associates. He one evening read his fine poem on the death of Sir John Moore, and his noble friends did not know what to make of it. This did not move him, but he put it away again. As a poet, he really shewed himself a lamb. Another would have commended them to the devil."¹⁶

(d)(i) 28 April 1825 with Soret and Congreve:

'Congreve: "[...] — Ohne Zweifel haben sie sich viel mit Byron beschäftigt; er ist jung gestorben, und vielleicht doch zu alt für seinen Ruhm, meinen Sie nicht auch?"

Goethe: "Ich kann Ihre Ansicht nicht ganz teilen; selbst seine letzten Werke, in denen er sich von seiner Menschenverachtung hinreißen ließ, bekunden noch auf jeder Seite

¹⁶Oxenford, 1, pp. 204-11.

sein Genie. Überall spürt man, daß er aus Augenblicken tiefster Erregung heraus schrieb und mit ungeheurer Schnelligkeit. Schön, aber verrückt! mögen Sie sagen, meinetwegen, aber diese Verrücktheiten sind grandios!" (Es sind Brandraketen der Poesie, hätte ich gerne dazwischengeworfen, aber ich behielt die Bosheit für mich.)

Congreve: "Gewiß, er wollte immer alles im Sturm nehmen."

Goethe: "Doch wohl nicht immer; sein Doge von Venedig 'Marino Falieri' [*sic*], muß ihn lange Vorbereitung gekostet haben. Drei Jahre hat er in dieser Stadt gelebt, er hat es sich also nicht verdrießen lassen, den Schauplatz gründlich zu studieren. Sein 'Sardanapal' ist voll tief durchdachter Schönheiten, und ich könnte noch andere Werke von ihm nennen, wo offenbar reifliche Überlegung den flüchtigen Bildern seiner Phantasie erst feste Gestalt gegeben hat. Sie sehen, wir Deutschen haben für Byrons Dichtungen sehr viel übrig. Byron ist einer unserer Lieblinge, und wir sehen in ihm nur den großen Dichter. Hat man an ihm persönlich etwas auszusetzen, darüber mag man sich in England den Kopf zerbrechen, wir wissen damit nichts anzufangen."

Congreve: "Aber Sie lieben Walter Scott doch sicher auch?"

Goethe: "Wir lieben ihn ebenso; unsere Frauen, durch die allein bei uns ein Schriftsteller berühmt wird, zerfallen in zwei Parteien, Scottisten und Byronisten; die mit dem großen Herzen und dem feurigen Kopf sind Byronisten, den andern ist Scott lieber."

Congreve: "Ich möchte doch wiederholen: Byron hat sich durch seine Vielschreiberei mehr geschadet als genützt; es ist ein Unglück mit diesen berühmten Leuten; in ein oder zwei Werken verpuffen sie ihre ganze Kraft, und dann schaffen sie nichts Neues mehr."

Goethe: "Ihr Tadel trifft wenigstens insofern Byron, als er sich nie Ruhe gegönnt hat; er hat unaufhörlich produziert, und natürlich mußte er sich entweder wiederholen oder merken, daß seine Kräfte versagten. Hätte er sich Ruhepausen gegönnt (der Geist braucht sie genau so wie der Körper), so würde er noch größer und erhabener dastehen. Was ich an ihm am meisten bewundere, ist, daß sich mit seinem Genie ein so richtiges Urteil und ein so durchdringender Scharfblick verband; seine 'Englischen

Barden' zeigen, daß er von Anfang an in alle Geheimnisse der Kunst eingeweiht war, und jeder Pinselstrich bei ihm ist eine Offenbarung der Wahrheit."¹⁷

(d)(ii) Translation of conversation of 28 April 1825 with Soret and Congreve:

'Congreve: "Without a doubt Byron must have taken up a lot of your attention; but you will admit that although he died young, he was still too old for his fame?"

Goethe: "I cannot quite share your view; even his last works, in which he let himself get carried away by his contempt for mankind, still show his genius on every page. One sees everywhere, that he was writing for the passion of the moment and at tremendous speed. But these are, if you will, beautiful extravagances, but sublime extravagances!" (They are fire rockets of poetry, I really wanted to add, but I kept the epigram to myself.)

Congreve: "Oh yes indeed, he always wanted to take everything by storm."

Goethe: "Not always; his *Doge of Venice, Marino Faliero* must have been a long time in preparation. Three years he lived in that town, and it is clear that he has taken the trouble of studying the locality thoroughly. His *Sardanapalus* is full of carefully thought out beauties and I could still name other works, where thought has given body to the fantasies of the imagination. You see, we Germans are very fond of Lord Byron's poetry. Byron is one of our favourites and we see in him only the great poet. We leave it to people in England to enquire into the grievances against him personally with which we have nothing to do."

Congreve: "But surely you love Walter Scott too?"

Goethe: "We love him just as much; our women, who make the fame of authors, are divided into two sections, Scottists and Byronists; those with strong hearts and a fiery head are Byronists, the others prefer Scott."

¹⁷FA, 37, pp. 270-71.

Congreve: "But I return to my point in saying that Byron has rather lost than gained by writing too much; that is a misfortune for these famous people; they expend all their energy in one or two works and then they produce nothing more that is new."

Goethe: "Your criticism is at least right of Byron in so far as he never allowed himself to rest; he has written endlessly, and has naturally been obliged to repeat the forms he had created, or see his powers weaken. If he had allowed himself moments of relaxation (for the intellect needs this as much as the body), then he would have risen to even greater and more sublime thoughts than ever. What I admire about him the most is that his genius is combined with such a true judgement and such penetrating insight; his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* prove that, from the beginning he had grasped the secret of art, and his every brush stroke was a revelation of truth."

(e)(i) 5 July 1827 with Eckermann:

'Auch in Lord Byron, sagte ich, finde ich häufig Darstellungen, die ganz unmittelbar dastehen und uns rein den Gegenstand geben, ohne unser inneres Sentiment auf eine andere Weise anzuregen, als es eine unmittelbare Handzeichnung eines guten Malers tut. Besonders der Don Juan ist an solchen Stellen reich.

"Ja, sagte Goethe, darin ist Lord Byron groß; seine Darstellungen haben eine so leicht hingeworfene Realität, als wären sie improvisiert. Von Don Juan kenne ich wenig; allein aus seinen anderen Gedichten sind mir solche Stellen im Gedächtnis, besonders Seestücke, wo hin und wieder ein Segel herausblickt, ganz unschätzbar, so daß man sogar die Wasserluft mit zu empfinden glaubt."

In seinem Don Juan, sagte ich, habe ich besonders die Darstellung der Stadt London bewundert, die man aus seinen leichten Versen heraus mit Augen zu sehen wähnt. Und dabei macht er sich keineswegs viele Skrupel, ob ein Gegenstand poetisch sei oder nicht, sondern er ergreift und gebraucht alles, wie es ihm vorkommt bis auf die gekräuselten Perücken vor den Fenstern der Haarschneider und bis auf die Männer, welche die Straßenlaternen mit Öl versehen.

"Unsere deutschen Ästhetiker, sagte Goethe, reden zwar viel von poetischen und unpoetischen Gegenständen, und sie mögen auch in gewisser Hinsicht nicht ganz Unrecht haben; allein im Grunde bleibt *kein* realer Gegenstand unpoetisch, sobald der Dichter ihn gehörig zu gebrauchen weiß."

Sehr wahr! sagte ich, und ich möchte wohl, daß diese Ansicht zur allgemeinen Maxime würde. Wir sprachen darauf über die beiden Foscari, wobei ich die Bemerkung machte, daß Byron ganz vortreffliche Frauen zeichne.

"Seine Frauen, sagte Goethe, sind gut. Es ist aber auch das einzige Gefäß, was uns Neueren noch geblieben ist, um unsere Idealität hinein zu gießen. Mit den Männern ist nichts zu tun. Im Achill und Odysseus, dem Tapfersten und Klügsten, hat der Homer alles vorweggenommen."

Übrigens, fuhr ich fort, haben die Foscari wegen der durchgehenden Folter-Qualen etwas Apprehensives, und man begreift kaum, wie Byron im Innern dieses peinlichen Gegenstandes so lange leben konnte, um das Stück zu machen.

"Dergleichen war ganz Byrons Element, sagte Goethe; er war ein ewiger Selbstquäler, solche Gegenstände waren daher seine Lieblings-Themata, wie Sie aus allen seinen Sachen sehen, unter denen fast nicht ein einziges heiteres Sujet ist. Aber nicht wahr? Die Darstellung ist auch bei den Foscari zu loben."

Sie ist vortrefflich, sagte ich; jedes Wort ist stark, bedeutend und zum Ziele führend, so wie ich überhaupt bis jetzt in Byron noch keine matte Zeile gefunden habe. Es ist mir immer, als sähe ich ihn aus den Meereswellen kommen, frisch und durchdrungen von schöpferischen Urkräften. "Sie haben ganz Recht, sagte Goethe, es ist so." Jemehr ich ihn lese, fuhr ich fort, jemehr bewundere ich die Größe seines Talents und Sie haben ganz recht getan ihm in der Helena das unsterbliche Denkmal der Liebe zu setzen.

"Ich konnte als Repräsentanten der neuesten poetischen Zeit, sagte Goethe, niemanden gebrauchen als ihn, der ohne Frage als das größte Talent des Jahrhunderts anzusehen ist. Und dann Byron ist nicht antik und ist nicht romantisch, sondern er ist wie der gegenwärtige Tag selbst. Einen solchen mußte ich haben. Auch paßte er

übrigens ganz wegen seines unbefriedigten Naturells und seiner kriegerischen Tendenz, woran er in Missolunghi zu Grunde ging. Eine Abhandlung über Byron zu schreiben ist nicht bequem und rätlich, aber gelegentlich ihn zu ehren und auf ihn im Einzelnen hinzuweisen werde ich auch in der Folge nicht unterlassen."

Da die Helena einmal zur Sprache gebracht war, so redete Goethe darüber weiter. "Ich hatte den Schluß, sagte er, früher ganz anders im Sinne, ich hatte ihn mir auf verschiedene Weise ausgebildet und einmal auch recht gut, aber ich will es euch nicht verraten. Dann brachte mir die Zeit dieses mit Lord Byron und Missolunghi und ich ließ gern alles Übrige fahren."¹⁸

(d)(ii) Translation of conversation with 5 July 1827 with Eckermann:

"In Lord Byron," said I, "I frequently find passages which merely bring objects before us, without affecting our feelings otherwise than the drawing of a good painter. "Don Juan" is, especially, rich in such passages. "Yes," said Goethe, "here Lord Byron was great; his pictures have an air of reality, as lightly thrown off as if they were improvised. I know but little of "Don Juan," but I remember passages from his other poems, especially sea scenes, with a sail peeping out here and there, which are quite invaluable, for they make us seem to feel the sea-breeze blowing." "In his 'Don Juan,'" said I, "I have particularly admired the representation of London, which his careless verses bring before our very eyes. He is not very scrupulous whether an object is poetical or not; but he seizes and uses all just as they come before him, down to the wigs in the haircutter's window, and the men who fill the street-lamps with oil." "Our German aesthetical people," said Goethe, "are always talking about poetical and unpoetical objects; and, in one respect, they are not quite wrong; yet, at bottom, no real object is unpoetical, if the poet knows how to use it properly." "True," said I; "and I wish this view were adopted as a general maxim." We then spoke of the "Two Foscari," and I remarked that Byron drew excellent women. "His women," said

¹⁸Eckermann 230-32.

Goethe, "are good. Indeed, this is the only vase into which we moderns can pour our ideality; nothing can be done with the men. Homer has got all beforehand in Achilles and Ulysses, the bravest and the most prudent." "There is something terrible in the "Foscari,"" I continued, "on account of the frequent recurrence of the rack. One can hardly conceive how Lord Byron could dwell so long on this torturing subject, for the sake of the piece." "That sort of thing," said Goethe, "was Byron's element; he was always a self-tormentor; and hence such subjects were his darling theme, as you see in all his works, scarce one of which has a cheerful subject. But the execution of the "Foscari" is worthy of great praise — is it not?" "Admirable!" said I; "every word is strong, significant, and subservient to the aim; indeed, generally speaking, I have hitherto found no weak lines in Byron. I always fancy I see him issuing from the sea-waves, fresh, and full of creative power. The more I read him, the more I admire the greatness of his talent; and I think you were quite right to present him with that immortal monument of love in "Helena.""" "I could not," said Goethe, "make use of any man as the representative of the modern poetical era except him, who undoubtedly is to be regarded as the greatest genius of our century. Again, Byron is neither antique nor romantic, but like the present day itself. This was the sort of man I required. Then he suited me on account of his unsatisfied nature and his warlike tendency, which led to his death at Missolonghi. A treatise upon Byron would be neither convenient nor advisable; but I shall not fail to pay him honour and to point him out at proper times." Goethe spoke further of "Helena," now it had again become a subject of discourse. "I at first intended a very different close," said he. "I modified it in various ways, and once very well, but I will not tell you how. Then this conclusion with Lord Byron and Missolonghi was suggested to me by the events of the day, and I gave up all the rest."¹⁹

¹⁹Oxenford, 1, pp. 423-25.

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