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## Pilgrim, Exile, Vagabond: Byron and the Citizen of the World

IN HIS ATTEMPT TO DEFINE a postmodern ethnography, James Clifford has recently turned to the old trope of pilgrimage, seeing the ethnographer as a traveller or pilgrim who traverses various sites of culture. For Clifford, viewing ethnography as a pilgrimage is one way of getting beyond the subject/object binary implicit in most texts of cultural comparison, and the metaphor allows him to recast the ethnographer's role as a participant in an intercultural encounter rather than an observer of a delimited field of study. This notion of pilgrimage is part of a more general gesture of displacement undertaken by Clifford. He posits culture itself as something that travels rather than something organic and rooted, as in standard anthropological and ethnographical accounts. By looking at culture as travel, Clifford opens up the field of comparative cultural studies to various cultures of displacement and transplantation and—most important for my purposes—to what he calls “discrepant cosmopolitanisms.”<sup>1</sup> Discrepant cosmopolitanisms complicate or “cross-cut” the boundary between “us” and “them,” and through the recognition of such cosmopolitanisms we can reconsider our notions about what constitutes a culture.

Clifford's argument usefully intersects with the cosmopolitan impulse in British Romanticism. In an important sense, his pilgrim represents a postmodern inflection of a romantic figure, one that was itself a rewriting of the earlier enlightenment figure of the citizen of the world. At its most celebrated in Byron's *Childe Harold* and most notorious in his *Don Juan*, the figure of the romantic pilgrim was part of the debate in post-Revolutionary Britain over the notion of patriotism. More specifically, Byron turned to the eighteenth-century notion of the cosmopolitan or “philosophical traveller”

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<sup>1</sup> James Clifford, “Travelling Cultures,” in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992) 108.

to counter the domestic model of the patriot in native poets like Southey and Wordsworth.

“I am so convinced . . . of the bitter effects of staying at home with all the narrow prejudices of an Islander,” Byron wrote on his Continental travels in 1811, “that I think there should be a law amongst us to set our young men abroad for a term among the few allies our wars have left us.”<sup>2</sup> If for Byron being a cosmopolitan meant escape from the “narrow prejudices of an Islander” and from the tightening Burkean nationalism of war-time Britain, however, for his conservative critics it meant something more sinister. For them, the figure of the cosmopolitan came to stand as the epitome of all that was wrong with liberal aristocratic thought: it was anti-national, anti-Christian, and immoral. And Byron himself, reacting to the critique, defiantly pushed the implications of his citizen of the world beyond the liberal to the libertine.

The first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812) refigure the conventional grand tour into a critique of conservative models of nation such as Edmund Burke's, which imagine the nation as a self-contained and unified whole. The poem opens with Childe Harold's departure from England, an act that entails breaking through each of the concentric circles Burke identified with national attachment: Harold leaves “His house, his home, his heritage, his lands” (1:11).<sup>3</sup> *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* as a whole foregrounds travel as border crossing. The hero begins his pilgrimage by breaking through the thickened border of war-time England and sailing to the Continent. But Byron's point about borders is made more emphatically by the second border Harold crosses: that between Portugal and Spain, which is remarkable only because it is so unremarkable. Portugal and Spain are not separated by “barrier,” “river deep,” or “mountains dark and tall,” the poem notes, but only by a diminutive and scarce-named “silver streamlet” (1:33). This streamlet does not so much determine the border between Portugal and Spain as the Portuguese and the Spanish determine the streamlet as border. In contrast to Harold, whose view is bound only by the horizon and extends from one nation to the other without interruption, the peasants standing on either bank see the streamlet as divisive. For them, it definitively separates one nation from the other, but the central impulse of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* itself is to throw into question the very notion of borders.

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<sup>2</sup> “To Mrs. Catherine Gordon Byron, Athens January 14, 1811,” *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 2, ed. Leslie A. Marchand (London: John Murray, 1973) 34–35.

<sup>3</sup> All references to Byron's poems are to Lord George Gordon Byron, *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann, 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980–1993).

When Harold moves from the Christian west into the Muslim east in Canto Two, for example, the crossing is figured as a descent into the underworld. But as soon as one tries to pin down the line between east and west, it becomes elusive. Thus Albania is a border-land where west blurs into east, and the Albanians a confusing “mixture” of Christian and Muslim, detested by both. Moreover, Albania is not even particularly foreign. “The Arnaouts, or Albanese,” Byron relates in a note, “struck me forcibly by their resemblance to the Highlanders of Scotland, in dress, figure, and manner of living. Their very mountains seemed Caledonian with a kinder climate. The kilt, though white; the spare, active form; their dialect, Celtic in its sound; and their hardy habits, all carried me back to Morven” (192–93). Byron arrives at the gateway to the Muslim east only to find there something like home. His comparatist, domesticating impulse may position him as an enlightenment ethnographer, but the point is that his note does not so much efface national difference as confound it. Travel in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* challenges the Burkean understanding of the nation as something clearly-bordered and unified, and the narrative structure of the pilgrimage itself allows Byron to criss-cross the political geography of Europe, dissolving lines even as he metaphorically unites European space within a text.

Moreover, this unity (like the ever-expanding poem) is a shifting one that does not really allow for “home” space. As Canto One makes clear, Byron's traveller is diametrically opposed to the homebody, who stays inside the nation and regards the traveller with scorn: “sluggards deem it but a foolish chase, / And marvel men should quit their easy chair, / The toilsome way, and long, long league to trace” (1:30). The poet's sentiments are clear: “Oh! there is sweetness in the mountain air, / And life, that bloated Ease can never hope to share” (1:30). Immobile in his state of “bloated Ease,” the homebody does not trek any further than his “easy chair.” He denies himself not only the sensual pleasures of travel but also a widened and more complete understanding of the world. Quietude may have its attractions, even for a Byronic hero, but Harold's quest for enlightenment depends on his movement through the landscape. He must remain in motion both geographically and intellectually; similarly, Byron's narrative has to keep moving as well. There is about both a kind of existential restlessness. Like the “fabled Hebrew wanderer” Cain, Harold is doomed to wander the earth until he dies:

What Exile from himself can flee?  
 To Zone, though more and more remote,  
 Still, still pursues, where-e'er I be,  
 The blight of life—the demon, Thought. (40)

Harold's journey, like Cain's, has no definitive end. It is entirely appropriate, then, that Byron's first two cantos have no definitive end either.

When the poet picks up Childe Harold again in 1816 after his own self-exile from Britain, Harold is still travelling. Although the pilgrim who makes his appearance in Canto Three is older and more disenchanted than the pilgrim of Cantos One and Two, he is still a "wandering outlaw of his own dark mind" (3:3). Moreover, he is an outlaw from humanity: "But soon he knew himself the most unfit / Of men to herd with Man; with whom he held / Little in common" (3:12). He chooses to distance himself from humankind, but insists that this does not make him a misanthrope: "To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind" (3:69). But it does make him an outsider: "I have not loved the world, nor the world me; /... I stood / Among them, but not of them" (3:113). This sense of being "[a]mong ... but not of" is crucial to Byron's survey of Italian culture and politics in Canto Four.

I've taught me other tongues—and in strange eyes  
 Have made me not a stranger; to the mind  
 Which is itself, no changes bring surprise;  
 Nor is it harsh to make, nor hard to find  
 A Country with—ay, or without mankind. (4:8)

If Byron is "not a stranger" to Italy, he is not a native either. Rather, he is consciously a British expatriate living in Italy: "Yet was I born where men are proud to be, / Not without cause" (4:8). The Byronic stance highlights the liminal position of the expatriate. To be an expatriate is to be (voluntarily or involuntarily) outside the nation; at the same time, it is to define oneself according to the nation. It is thus to be both inside and outside national attachment.

Unfettered by the interest of insiders, for example, Byron can view historical events and processes more critically. In particular, he can demystify the already mystified battle of Waterloo, viewing it as the exchange of one form of tyranny for another. "Gaul may champ the bit / And foam in fetters;—but is Earth more free?" Byron asks (3:19). "Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we / Pay the Wolf homage?" (3:19). England may have succeeded in ridding the world of Napoleon, but it has put another despot in his place. The only real change effected by the battle of Waterloo, the poet suggests, has been to fertilize the field itself with the blood of fallen soldiers (French and English). Although Byron narrates the events leading up to the battle from the British point of view, his commentary implicates

both sides in the slaughter, and the canto invokes Gibbon and Voltaire. In this way, as Karen O'Brien observes in *Narratives of Enlightenment*, Byron's history of Waterloo is a cosmopolitan rather than a national history. It draws on the historical methodologies of writers like Gibbon and Voltaire to create what O'Brien calls an "exilic cosmopolitanism."<sup>4</sup> While Gibbon and Voltaire recognize the existence of national histories, she explains, they believe that national histories are not intelligible in and of themselves, and so they detach themselves from national frames to view events in terms of a European historical framework. For Byron, O'Brien suggests, Gibbon and Voltaire were "Europe's internal exiles . . . repatriating themselves in the bosom of European history."<sup>5</sup> Their "imaginative homelessness" offered him an alternative form of European identity, one that was at odds with more dominant forms. In particular, it was at odds with the "culturally grounded position of address" adopted by Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.<sup>6</sup> Where Burke grounded his history of the French Revolution in his identity as Englishman, Byron knew himself as an exile when narrating his history of Waterloo. Not nationless so much as outside of the nation, he could view national events from an international perspective. Through such exilic cosmopolitanism, Byron reconciled his nationality and his internationalism.

In *Strangers to Ourselves*, Julia Kristeva defines the eighteenth-century figure of the cosmopolitan as the "alter ego of national man," and to understand the cosmopolitan as the "alter ego" of national man is to see him as both other (foreign) and part of the same (a second self).<sup>7</sup> Kristeva's conception of the cosmopolitan forms part of a poststructuralist reconceptualizing of identity as a differential process: a shifting between self and other, between the semiotic and the symbolic. In her reading, the cosmopolitan adopts various subject positions only to displace them, so that his stance is "temporary, moveable, changing . . . it knows neither root nor soil, it is traveling, foreign."<sup>8</sup> Such a mobile stance undermines notions of identity both private and public, and its politics tend to be disconcerting, for this kind of travelling figure cannot belong to any one nation.

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<sup>4</sup> Karen O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon* (Cambridge: Cambridge U Press, 1997) 234.

<sup>5</sup> O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment* 234.

<sup>6</sup> *Narratives of Enlightenment* 234.

<sup>7</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia U Press, 1991) 133.

<sup>8</sup> *Strangers to Ourselves* 139.

If, as Kristeva suggests, the cosmopolitan is the “alter ego” of national man, Jerome McGann gets it right (although perhaps reversed) when he suggests that Robert Southey was Byron’s “dark double.”<sup>9</sup> Southey’s *The Poet’s Pilgrimage to Waterloo* (1816) offers an important counter to Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* and highlights by contrast the radical nature of Byron’s romantic traveller. In contrast to Childe Harold’s peregrinations, the pilgrimage in Southey’s poem is a singular journey. The poet travels from his home in the Land of Lakes through England to Flanders, Brussels, and, finally, Waterloo. The tour is a prescribed one, with a set agenda, and Southey is never waylaid. Indeed, the tour is so prescribed that Southey’s *Pilgrimage to Waterloo* begins not with a departure but a return. In the opening proem, Southey, his wife, and their eldest daughter climb out of their carriage and are joyously received by the rest of the family. (As a family man, Southey has brought his wife and eldest daughter with him to the Continent.) The other Southey children eagerly step forward to greet the returning travellers, and the travellers greet each in turn. Once the initial welcome is over, Southey hands out souvenirs of the voyage to the outstretched hands of his children and extended family. By positioning the return before the pilgrimage, Southey assures his readers that his pilgrimage (unlike Childe Harold’s) will finish where it began: in the heart of England.

Travel here is not an unfolding of identity, as it is in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*; rather, it confirms an already-established identity. In contrast to Byron’s romantic traveller, Southey’s pilgrim is unmistakably a national man. In fact, Southey undertakes the pilgrimage in his role as Poet Laureate, a point he makes immediately clear:

Me most of all men it behoved to raise  
The strain of triumph for this foe subdued,  
To give a voice to joy, and in my lays  
Exalt a nation’s hymn of gratitude,  
And blazon forth in song that day’s renown,—  
For I was graced with England’s laurel crown.<sup>10</sup>

While Harold regards the triumph of Waterloo from a cosmopolitan perspective, Southey narrates the battle as “a struggle between good and evil principles” in which Napoleon is Satan, and England Europe’s saviour

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<sup>9</sup> Jerome McGann, *The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 277.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Southey, *The Poet’s Pilgrimage to Waterloo, The Poetical Works of Robert Southey* (New York: D. Appleton, 1851) 749. Further references to Southey’s poems are to this edition.

(749). Southey may go outside the borders of the nation, but he remains a homebody nonetheless.

The jingoistic *Pilgrimage to Waterloo* thus stands in stark contrast to Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, which, by 1816, had grown to three cantos. Southey's pilgrim was everything that Byron's romantic traveller was not: loyal, moral, religious, and thankful. Indeed, for Southey, the self-exiled Byron proved a very useful figure against which to position himself as national poet. His well-known Preface to *A Vision of Judgement* (1821) attributes to Byron the ruin of English literature and immortalizes him as father of the Satanic school of poetry. Southey's Preface begins with a nostalgic vision of Britain in the days when its literature was distinguished by "moral purity" and fathers could pass on books to their children without worrying about the contents (793). This, Southey laments, is no longer the case. Morally lax authors, publishers and booksellers have failed to forestall "pernicious works," and they are thus guilty of "one of the worst offenses that can be committed against the well-being of society" (793). Indeed, "every person ... who purchases such books, or admits them into his house ... becomes an aider and abettor of the crime" (793). Most at fault, of course, are the writers themselves, whom Southey describes as men "of diseased hearts and depraved imaginations" whose object is to "make others as miserable as themselves, by infecting them with a moral virus that eats into the soul" (793–94). Led by Byron, these writers struggle to "subvert the foundations of human virtue and of human happiness" (794). Together they constitute the "Satanic school," for, as Southey explains, "though their productions breathe the spirit of Belial in their lascivious parts, and the spirit of Moloch in those loathsome images of atrocities and horrors which they delight to represent, they are more especially characterized by a Satanic spirit of pride and audacious impiety, which still betrays the wretched feeling of hopelessness wherewith it is allied" (794). Because morality and politics are "inseparably connected" for Southey, the Satanic school invites political as well as moral subversion, so that poets like Byron threaten the integrity of the English nation by introducing a "moral virus" into the heart of English identity (794).

"Cosmopolitanism will be either libertarian or totalitarian—" Kristeva writes, and Byron's well-known defence of liberty places him firmly within the libertarian camp. But libertarian cosmopolitanism, she adds, has two faces: "absolute cynicism based on individual pleasure, or the elitism of lucid, self-controlled beings."<sup>11</sup> By the time of *Don Juan*, Byron

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<sup>11</sup> *Strangers to Ourselves* 61.

fulfils Southey's fearful expectations by aligning the hero of liberty with the libertine. In this poem, Byron definitively cuts the romantic traveller loose from his nation, making him (irredeemably) a citizen of the world. More precisely, he turns him into the dark shadow of the cosmopolitan, the "vagabond" that Oliver Goldsmith sought to separate from the philosophical citizen of the world: "a man who leaves home to mend himself and others is a philosopher;" Goldsmith writes, "but he who goes from country to country, guided by the blind impulse of curiosity, is only a vagabond."<sup>12</sup>

Don Juan's mother may have sent him on a grand tour to "mend his former manners, or get new" in accordance with the enlightenment understanding of travel as "pleasurable instruction," but in *Don Juan*, travel is more pleasure than instruction, a point underscored by the fate of Juan's tutor, Pedrillo (1:191).<sup>13</sup> As soon as Juan's ship leaves port at Cadiz, Pedrillo becomes seasick and is forced to take to his bed: travel has made him incapable of teaching. Things get even worse for Pedrillo when the ship sinks. On board the lifeboat, he is bled to death, then eaten by his fellow passengers (Juan excepted). Tellingly, then, Juan's grand tour begins with the incapacitation and then death of his tutor: like Goldsmith's vagabond, Juan will be travelling for pleasure and not instruction.

But Juan is a vagabond in a more unsavoury sense as well. Just as he wanders from nation to nation, so too he wanders from woman to woman. Juan's romantic attachment to the married Donna Julia dominates the first canto of Byron's poem. This first illicit affair serves as the impetus for Juan's travels, but it also initiates a pattern of sexual conquests. As Juan tearfully leaves Cadiz for his grand tour, he pledges eternal devotion to Donna Julia. When the shipwrecked Juan opens his eyes to the lovely Haidée on an obscure Greek island in Canto Two, however, Donna Julia is all but forgotten. Byron suggests that Juan's inconstancy is inevitable:

no doubt, the moon  
Does these things for us, . . .  
Else how the devil is it that fresh features  
Have such a charm for us poor creatures. (2:208)

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<sup>12</sup> *Citizen of the World*, vol. 2 of *Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Arthur Friedman (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989) 41.

<sup>13</sup> I draw the term "pleasurable instruction" from Charles L. Batten Jr., *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1978).



Thus in Canto Five, Juan moves from Haidée to the Turkish Gulbeyaz and from Gulbeyaz to the seraglio. When he arrives in Queen Catherine's Russian court in Canto Nine, he promptly fills a "high official situation" in her government, becoming a sort of royal gigolo (9:48). Although, as Juan tells Gulbeyaz, "Love is for the free," it can apparently also be simulated for a fee (5:127): not only Juan's military services can be bought.

Compared to his activities in the English cantos, however, Juan's role in Catherine's court seems tame. In England, he is befriended by the "high-born," "beauteous" and married Adeline Amundeville, enamoured of the "prim, silent, cold" and virginal Aurora Raby, and seduced by the "[d]esirable, distinguish'd, celebrated" and married Duchess of Fitz-Fulke (13:2, 15:49, 14:42). He plays the political field just as successfully. A political trimmer, he stands "well both with Ins and Outs" (13:24). In short, his political and sexual ambulations recall the *OED*'s definition of vagabond as a "disreputable, idle, or worthless person; a rascal, a rogue." And it is this darker denotation that generally surfaced in the contemporary critical reception of both Byron's romantic travellers and Byron himself.

For Byron, the cosmopolitan Childe Harold was a wandering philosophe who revealed the limitations of an uncritical and closed patriotism, but for his critics both pilgrim and poet were traitors to the nation, and both were unceremoniously pushed outside its borders. From the start the *Antijacobin Review* found Childe Harold "fractious, wayward, capricious, cheerless, morose, sullen, discontented, and unprincipled," and it poured contempt on "this querulous vagabond":

He arraigns wars, generally and indiscriminately, confounding the just with the unjust, the defensive with the offensive, the preservative with the destructive, not with the judgement of a sage, but the settled moroseness of a misanthrope; victories, though gained by courage exerted in the best of causes, excite only the sarcastic sneers of this querulous vagabond; and the profession of a soldier, deemed honourable by wise and good men, is the subject of his ridicule and contempt.<sup>14</sup>

Its charge that Byron's poetry was the "rant of democracy in its wildest form" was only reinforced when Byron published "To a Lady Weeping." Written in March 1812, the poem referred to an incident at Carleton House when the Regent turned on his old Whig friends with such vehemence that he caused the princess Charlotte to shed tears. Byron's poem criticized the

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<sup>14</sup> "Byron's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," *Antijacobin Review* 42 (August 1812): 345.

Regent for his growing conservatism, linking it to England's decline, and the *Antijacobin* scorned the lines as a "scandalous reflection on an exalted personage; and a calumny on the nation." Elaborating, the review claimed that "he sees his native country, the pride of Britons, and the envy of the world; and he labours to degrade it in the eyes of all." Its parting shot was the advice that Byron effect a slight transposition of his family motto: "instead of CREDE BYRON, we say, BYRON!—CREDE!"<sup>15</sup>

Where the *Antijacobin* opted to forget Byron, refusing to review his later works, the *British Critic* sought to banish him. With the public airing of Byron's dirty domestic laundry in "Fare thee Well" and "Sketch from Private Life" in 1816, the *British Critic* took the side of "injured innocence," supporting Lady Byron against the "oppressive brutality" of her husband.<sup>16</sup> Like many other conservative periodicals at the time, it used Byron's adultery as a lead-in to a sweeping indictment of liberal ideology: "Our plain notions will doubtless appear bigoted and narrow to the refined and liberal feelings of his Lordship's school; but they are, and we trust that they long will be, the notions of British nation" (436). If the British public disapproves of Byron's adultery, the reviewer reasons, it must disapprove of liberalism as well. The same "tender feeling of the British nation" is evoked a few years later with the prediction that the "good sense, and the good feeling of the English nation must, and will banish [*Don Juan*] from their houses."<sup>17</sup> Indeed, for the *British Critic* Byron's own self-banishment should be enforced, for "after the just and natural hatred which he has more than once expressed against his mother country ... it would be a most distressing revulsion if he were again to be exposed to the necessity of coming among a people unfitted to his modes of thinking and acting; or of reviving any attachment which it is just possible he may once have felt for a soil which is too ungrateful to return it."<sup>18</sup> For both the *British Critic* and the *Antijacobin Review* there was no such thing as being both inside and outside national attachment. One either was a patriot or one was not. If the cosmopolitan was the alter ego of national man, it was an alter ego to be repressed at all costs.

Despite Byron's half-hearted protests to the contrary, the public insisted on reading Childe Harold as Byron, and, equally provocatively, Byron as Childe Harold. In a review of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, for example, Francis Jeffrey declared that "the mind

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<sup>15</sup> "Lord Byron's Bride of Abydos and the Corsair," *Antijacobin Review* 46 (March 1814): 234.

<sup>16</sup> "Lord Byron's Siege of Corinth and Parisina," *British Critic* 5 (April 1816): 430.

<sup>17</sup> "Don Juan," *British Critic* 12 (August 1819): 204.

<sup>18</sup> "Lord Byron," *British Critic* 15 (May 1821): 466.

of the noble author has been so far tinged by his strong conception of this Satanic personage, that the sentiments and reflections which he delivers in his own name, have all received a shade of the same gloomy and misanthropic colouring which invests those of his imaginary hero."<sup>19</sup> Noticeably tenuous as it was in the first two cantos, in the third canto the boundary between Byron and Childe Harold completely gave way. The *British Critic* declared with confidence that Byron "has now so unequivocally identified himself with his fictitious hero, that even in his most querulous moods, he cannot complain of an impertinence in tracing the resemblance."<sup>20</sup> Byron himself eventually surrendered. "The fact is," he wrote in the Preface to Canto Four, "that I had become weary of drawing a line which every one seemed determined not to perceive ... it was in vain that I asserted, and imagined, that I had drawn, a distinction between the author and the pilgrim; and the very anxiety to preserve this difference, and disappointment at finding it unavailing, so far crushed my efforts in the composition, that I determined to abandon it altogether—and have done so" (122).

One of the consequences of this conflation of Byron and Childe Harold was the creation of the cultural figure "Byron-the-cosmopolitan," who figured in the battle over national identity outlined by Gerald Newman in *The Rise of English Nationalism*. Newman argues that the shift from eighteenth-century cosmopolitanism to nineteenth-century nationalism in England was intimately connected with the rise of the middling class or bourgeoisie, whose own self-promotion involved the "repudiation of 'Fashion,' the destruction of cosmopolitanism, and the elaboration of nationalist ideology."<sup>21</sup> Combining anti-French feeling with myths about the moral degeneracy of the aristocracy, the emerging middle-class ideology was at once "anti-cosmopolitan, anti-aristocratic, and nativist."<sup>22</sup> That the aristocratic Byron's fall from English grace nicely fed into this struggle between aristocratic and bourgeois notions of the nation is illustrated in particular by the response of the *British Review*.

Aiming at a middle-class audience, the *British Review* was both patriotic and moralistic, and from 1812 to 1819 its editor, William Roberts, used its reviews of Byron's poetry as a convenient space in which to criticize

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<sup>19</sup> "Lord Byron's Childe Harold," *Edinburgh Review* 19 (February 1812): 467.

<sup>20</sup> "Lord Byron's Childe Harold, and Prisoner of Chillon," *British Critic* 6 (December 1816): 609.

<sup>21</sup> Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1740–1830* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987) 47.

<sup>22</sup> *The Rise of English Nationalism* 67.

aristocratic Regency excess. His review of the third canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* explicitly makes Byron the exemplar of a segment of aristocratic society exhibiting certain negative characteristics:

A contempt for English manners and institutions; respect for the memory of Jacobin France and her revolutionary ex-generals; indignation at the conduct of our allies, and all measures of caution towards the innocent French people; a dread of the ferocious despotism of Louis, and a tender feeling for the fate of afflicted Buonaparte and the interesting Dey of Algiers; are the present characteristics of most young men of superior thinking who have travelled for the instruction of their countrymen, with a zeal that has made them abridge and abandon their own.<sup>23</sup>

Travelled, young, and aristocratic, such men are steeped in the “cant of cosmopolitanism,” and they return from their grand tours with “contempt for English manners and institutions” (8).

Lord Byron—hostile to the monarchy, critical of the Holy Alliance, and pointedly unthankful for Britain’s military victory at Waterloo—is a prominent member of this cosmopolitan class, and in his review of “Beppo” Roberts accuses the poet of subverting not only British politics but also British virtue. In particular, he takes exception to the content of Byron’s satire, declaring that the self-exiled poet has sent back to Britain “a tale of pollution, dipped in the deepest die of Italian debauchery.”<sup>24</sup> In his opinion, the “cosmopolitan liberality” that supports Byron’s satire does not involve “a Christian enlargement of sentiments” but “a growing indifference to the distinction of moral worth” (330). Resting in universal indifference rather than universal benevolence, this cosmopolitan liberality “disarms the vigilance of virtue” so crucial to Britain’s national identity (329). By introducing Italian morality into Britain, Roberts reasons, Byron is helping to make Britain Continental. His cosmopolitan liberality is part of a “denationalizing spirit” that corrodes Britain’s honour, prosperity, and masculine decency, among other things (330).

Of particular concern in Roberts’ review of the fourth canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is Byron’s “enlightened friendship” with Hobhouse, which Roberts sees as based “on a covenanted contempt for mere decent men and women, mere English maxims, mere homely institutions in church and state, and ordinary life, combined with a strong infusion of

<sup>23</sup> “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage. Canto the Third,” *British Review* 9 (February 1817): 8.

<sup>24</sup> “Beppo,” *British Review* 11 (May 1818): 329.

French principles, and the dogma of the school of revolution and political regeneration.”<sup>25</sup> Unlike “plain men” such as Roberts and his readers, Byron and Hobhouse have an air of “complacent superiority” (5). Possessing all the advantages of being English, they fail to appreciate those advantages; instilled with Continental values and philosophies, they judge England through the eyes of a foreigner and find it wanting. For Roberts, Byron and Hobhouse are men “bred out of the French revolution,” a type that subverts the foundations of nations.

Lady Caroline Lamb’s *Glenarvon* (1816) makes a similar point when it turns Byron into a morally and politically suspect Irish exile named Glenarvon, who returns to Ireland from Italy to incite the 1798 rebellion. Admittedly, Lamb had a personal animus and was herself tied to the aristocracy, but the novel’s anti-Byronic charge has a wider resonance. Indeed, Lamb’s novel exemplifies the nationalist logic of foreign invasion and corruption delineated by Gerald Newman almost too neatly. Her Irish exile Glenarvon returns from Italy; he invades British fashionable society, and proves to be a ruinous moral influence. He not only ruins several women but seduces the Irish people as well, turning them into a group of “licentious democrats” and “rebellious libertines,” and he causes widespread upheaval throughout Ireland.<sup>26</sup> Glenarvon’s horrific death at the end of the novel—mad, haunted by his past, and convinced he will be dragged down to hell for his crimes—symbolically expunges the Whig party of its cosmopolitan element, bringing it closer in line with romantic nationalism. For the liberal Lamb, Byron becomes a metaphor for an aristocratic liberalism less and less politically germane to a post-Napoleonic Britain, and as both liberals and conservatives turned their attention to Britain’s own domestic situation, the demonization of the cosmopolitan escalated.

By the time John William Polidori published *The Vampyre* in 1819, Byron had become the ultimate outsider. Reworking one of Byron’s own fragments, Polidori rewrote the cosmopolitan Byronic hero as a supernatural villain. In Polidori’s tale, an unknown nobleman, Lord Strongmore, begins to frequent London society, inspiring much speculation as to the exact cause of his singularity. With his “dead grey eye” and “colourless cheek,” Lord Strongmore seems other-worldly, “above human feelings and sympathies.”<sup>27</sup> Very quickly this mysterious stranger becomes the talk of the town. Intrigued by Strongmore, the hero (a romantic young orphan) leaves his

<sup>25</sup> “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage. Canto 4,” *British Review* 12 (August 1818): 5.

<sup>26</sup> Caroline Lamb, *Glenarvon* (London: Everyman, 1995) 111.

<sup>27</sup> John William Polidori, *The Vampyre, The Vampyre and Ernestus Berchtold; or, The Modern Oedipus: Collected Fiction of John William Polidori*, ed. D.L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf

sister and travels to the Continent with him. As the two proceed on their grand tour, the hero becomes more and more unsettled by Strongmore's indiscriminate liberality, gambling, and womanizing. Prompted by a letter from his guardian, he leaves Strongmore in Italy and travels to Greece alone. In Greece, he falls in love with a young Greek girl, who tells him tales of vampyres who feed on beautiful young women in order to prolong their own lives. He himself then witnesses a vampyre sucking the life out of the Greek girl, and sinks into a long illness from which he is nursed back to health by Strongmore. The two travel together again until Strongmore is shot by bandits. Dying, he makes the hero promise not to reveal his crimes to anyone, and by the next day his body has mysteriously disappeared. When the hero returns to England, he is horrified to find Strongmore alive and well and courting his sister. Bound by his promise, however, he can say nothing and soon falls into a stupor. He wakes when he hears of his sister's marriage to Strongmore and, breaking his promise, relates the whole story to his guardian. But by the time his guardian reaches his sister, she is dead and the vampyre has disappeared. It is important that Strongmore attacks the figure linked most closely to home. Infiltrating the domestic realm, he literally sucks the life-blood out of the heart of the nation. But it is equally important that in rejecting all socially-constructed borders, the cosmopolitan Byronic hero moves beyond the confines of society itself. In Polidori's novel, the citizen of the world becomes other-worldly. The grand tour becomes a ghost story and the world-traveller, a vampyre.