Byron's transatlantic sinking

Article

Accepted Version

Matthew Scott

Byron's Transatlantic Sinking

The sublime is unique among the concepts of Western aesthetics in that it begins in antiquity as a specifically rhetorical term but becomes, by gradual analogy with the high style, one applied to grand aesthetic affect *tout court* as it is found in responses to both extraordinary phenomena in the natural world and also to products of the human imagination.[1] As eighteenth-century empiricism gives way to Romantic idealism, sublime space comes increasingly to be seen as an analogue in the natural world for the apparently boundless space of the imaginative faculty and, beyond this (joining the two spheres), as evidence of the limitlessness of the human mind itself, with reason at its core (if we are to follow Kant). It is primarily the rhetorical term that Theodor Adorno had in focus when observing, by contrast, in the introduction to his *Jargon of Authenticity*, that the grandness of the sublime often becomes the cover for something low, and Jerome Carroll has commented that, for Adorno, the sublime, 'in its resistance to singular and unambiguous definition […] no longer refers to anything that might be considered central or specific to it' and is instead 'emblematic of […] "unassuaged negativity"' (Adorno 1964: xix; Carroll 2008: 171).

Adorno had already raised this idea in a literary context in an earlier essay, calling attention to the dubious linguistic texture of the final scene of *Faust* Part II, which is rhetorically cluttered with the 'relics of a religious tradition that appears chaotically picturesque, but neither morally nor epistemologically compelling' (Rennie 2005: 36). He argues that a sense of the sublime in *Faust*, at once underpinned and undercut

***Symbiosis**: Transatlantic Literary & Cultural Relations*, 23.1

by a series of grand rhetorical anachronisms, gradually opens up into an 'abyss of ridiculousness' (Adorno 1974: 131–2 [my trans.]). Adorno is alive to the ways in which aesthetic categories incorporate antithetical elements with powerful moral implications, noting later, in response to Schiller's 'On Grace and Dignity', that 'dignity contains the form of its decadence within itself' (Adorno 1974: 136 [my trans.]). This will be my subject here and Adorno provides a useful apothegm that lies behind my thinking throughout: "Advanced art," he observes in the Aesthetic Theory, "rewrites tragedy as comedy commingling the sublime and play." (Wellmer 1997: 116). Although I do not follow his particular ideological critique in this essay, I believe that there is certainly ethical and critical value to be found in revealing the relationship between the sublime and its sinking. This essay relates to earlier work where I have explored associations between apparently opposing aesthetic categories, only I now go further to suggest that this relationship speaks to us specifically about the nature of reception.[2]

There is nothing new in connecting the sublime with its opposite, as Adorno rightly tells his readers, but it is doubtful that he had Alexander Pope in mind when he was writing. *Peri Bathous, or the Art of Sinking in Poetry* (1727), Pope's satire on the sublime or supposed high style in writing at the time, influenced as it was by translations of Longinus's *Peri Hypsous* [On the Sublime], casts modern attempts at the epic as works lost in the bathetic profound, a space of no real profundity but rather of dark foolishness:

> A genuine writer of the profound will take care never to magnify any object without clouding it at the same time. His thought will appear in a true mist, and very unlike what it is in nature. It must always be remembered that darkness is an essential quality of the profound or, if there chance to be a glimmering, it must be as Milton expresses it:
>
> No light, but rather a darkness visible. (Pope 2009: 49)[3]

So as to send up the sublime, Pope invokes Milton's Hell, later its *locus classicus* for the Romantics. It is a space that appears to be at once as boundless and also as obscure as the darkest reaches of the human mind, with potential for descent into moral depravity and even madness. Pope's conception of *bathos* is of a comical sinking of the apparently high-minded, of ideas that aim to soar grandly in intellectual terms but

which suddenly descend through pretension into the ludicrous so as to lurk instead buried in profound darkness. Relations between the topos of the sublime and its intriguing counterpart, the bathetic, are fraught with contradiction. Apart from darkness, one connotation of profundity is, of course, weight and significance of an ethical kind, and so we might well ask whether the sublime in fact attains a certain moral weight as it sinks into the profound. This is a rich question when thinking about Byron, his death and his many afterlives within the context of his transatlantic reception during the nineteenth century.

One of the consequences of *bathos* ought to be embarrassment, a rare quality in Romantic writing that is found nevertheless at the end of Hazlitt's account of Lord Byron in *The Spirit of the Age*. It is a great act of critical *retranchement*: having been deeply critical of Byron, Hazlitt becomes aware of the poet's recent death as he is at his desk and backtracks uncomfortably in a hastily added paragraph. 'Death', he writes gravely, 'is the great assayer of the sterling ore of talent.'(Hazlitt 1930: XI, 262). Then, sensing that he has not gone quite far enough in compensating for his earlier comments, he continues in the apparent hope that death itself will exfoliate them:

> At his touch the drossy particles fall off, the irritable, the personal, the gross, and mingle with the dust – the finer and more ethereal part mounts with the winged spirit to watch over our latest memory, and protect our bones from insult.

The hope for death here is that it will translate living form into ethereal memory and convert the embarrassment of the decaying body into something that transcends it completely. This strange but quintessentially Romantic use of the sublime has it as a vastness that is first apprehended in the physical world but that ultimately subsumes the physical absolutely as an idea in the mind. It is also worth noting that the idea quickly begins to undo itself — as do so many aspects of the 'Romantic Ideology'.

Hazlitt seeks to persuade his readers that they should remember the poet by his works alone. This is a product of his anxious desire to make up for his earlier remarks, but that anxiety is itself clouded by the insistent memory of Byron's rotting body and the various negotiations over it. In life, Hazlitt tells us, Byron has been 'a pampered egotist'

with 'the pride of birth and genius' sitting uneasily alongside a 'preposterous *liberalism*' (Hazlitt 1930: XI, 261). He is a figure of sublime detachment, he writes earlier, 'like a solitary peak, all access to which is cut off not more by elevation than distance […] seated on a lofty eminence' (Hazlitt 1930: XI, 253). In death, however, he is subject to 'the idle contests and the public indifference about the place of [his] interment, whether in Westminster Abbey or his own family-vault' (Hazlitt 1930: XI, 262). All this might lead one to ask, as Byron himself had done earlier in Canto One of *Don Juan*:

> What is the end of Fame? 'tis but to fill
> A certain portion of uncertain paper:
> Some liken it to climbing up a hill,
> Whose summit, like all hills, is lost in vapour:
> For this men write, speak, preach, and heroes kill,
> And bards burn what they call their 'midnight taper,'
> To have, when the original is dust,
> A name, a wretched picture, and worse bust.
>
> (Byron 1986: 432–3)

The passage half-anticipates Hazlitt's posthumous dilemma. The poet reaches after the ethereal sublime only then to be 'lost' in the vapours of the highest imaginative creation on Parnassus. Ultimately, of course, he is merely a broken body to be returned to dust, sunk low in the grave, and replaced by physical and linguistic memorials: *ersatz* objects that are bathetic copies of the original.

Byron's own uses of the sublime can be fairly conventional. In Canto III of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, as Shelley was filling his head with Wordsworth, Byron has his autobiographical narrator draw out an analogy between the uncertain limits of the mind and the vastness of external nature in terms that are similar to the *topos* as it is encountered in Shelley's own 'Mont Blanc', Wordsworth's 'Influence of Natural Objects' (as published in *The Friend* in 1809) and the Solitary's experience of the Langdale Pikes in Book II of *The Excursion*:

> Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part
> Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
> Is not the love of these deep in my heart

> With a pure passion? should I not contemn
> All objects, if compared with these?
>
> (Byron 1986: 126–7)

Later on, by reinforcing connections between wonder and the sublime, Byron has Don Juan in Canto I wandering 'by the glassy brooks', thinking 'about himself, and the whole earth, / Of man the wonderful, and of the stars' (Byron 1986: 400–1). But he is quick to remind us that it is a physical love for Donna Julia and not for nature or philosophy that leads to such musings: 'If *you* think 'twas philosophy that this did / I can't help thinking puberty assisted.' (Byron 1986: 401). Shortly before the passage on fame cited earlier, he writes that it is 'the true sublime / Which makes so many poets, and some fools' (Byron 1986: 428). He is widely disparaging of Wordsworth in the poem, having previously complained of the extent of Shelley's earlier proselytising that had led Thomas Medwin – thinking of the lines, 'I live not in myself, but I become / Portion of that around me; – and to me / High mountains are a feeling!' – to remark that *Childe Harold* III smelt 'strongly of the Lakes'(Medwin 1966: 194; Byron 1986: 680). Elsewhere in *Don Juan* Byron makes regular recourse to the *topos* of the sublime in order to evoke scepticism about its potential to liberate the contemplative mind from the needs of the flesh:

> Man's a phenomenon, one knows not what,
> And wonderful beyond all wondrous measure;
> 'Tis pity though, in this sublime world, that
> Pleasure's a sin, and sometimes Sin's a pleasure;
> Few mortals know what end they would be at,
> But whether Glory, Power, or Love, or Treasure,
> The path is through perplexing ways, and when
> The goal is gain'd, we die, you know – and then –
>
> What then? – I do not know, no more do you –
> And so good night. – Return we to our story:
>
> (Byron 1986: 410)

The tragi-comic suggestion of these lines is that it is not through analogy between the limitlessness of nature and the mind that we find an

especial relevance for the sublime but rather between the ineffable nature of the world and the apparent purposelessness of human life: both are inherently beyond comprehension. The true wonder of life is how to lend it a coherent teleology when its only certainty is death. There is, however, a powerful argument about the aesthetic hiding discreetly behind the slightly uneasy comedy of these lines: when all is so uncertain, there is nothing for it but to return to the story, to turn to make-believe and find meaning there.

The sinking sublime is nowhere so brilliantly drawn out as in the shipwreck scene from Canto II of *Don Juan*. Something of a grim parody of *The Ancient Mariner*, it also reminds us both that Byron was a keen follower of Pope, determined to undermine the pretence of epic intent, and also of the Burkean truth that while the violence of the sea may be appreciated aesthetically from a distance, it is the more pressing concern of physical being that is uppermost when one is within it. A horrid irony of this part of the poem is that when the sublime power of the Mediterranean Sea passes from its most destructive wastefulness to mere calm, it leaves its victims stuck in a state of passive physical necessity. Juan and his fellows are sunk to the profound depths of ravenous hunger, forced to render one another in a ghoulish butchery, which Byron in turn renders with lavish comedy:

> The seventh day, and no wind – the burning sun
> Blister'd and scorch'd, and, stagnant on the sea,
> They lay like carcasses; and hope was none,
> Save in the breeze that came not; savagely
> They glared upon each other – all was done,
> Water, and wine, and food, – and you might see
> The longings of the cannibal arise
> (Although they spoke not) in their wolfish eyes.
>
> At length one whisper'd his companion, who
> Whisper'd another, and thus it went round,
> And then into a hoarser murmur grew,
> An ominous, and wild, and desperate sound;
> And when his comrade's thought each sufferer knew,
> 'Twas but his own, suppress'd till now, he found:

> And out they spoke of lots for flesh and blood,
> And who should die to be his fellow's food.
>
> (Byron 1986: 451)

Not the least gruesome aspect of this passage is the way in which it replays the myth of biblical creation to reveal human nature at its most self-interested. The repose of the seventh day turns to bloodlust and animalistic carnivorousness; nature is ordained by rules that are inevitable but also inexplicable to either reason or sacramental religion: with the wine done, there is nothing for it but to turn to the body. The poem tells us something unpalatable but also crucial about human existence — that we are driven by the body — and this is arrived at in the transition from the sublime to the bathetic, with the comedy of the episode acting almost completely as a shroud for Byron's serious purpose.

* * *

In the preface to the New York edition of *The Aspern Papers*, Henry James writes of his postulating in that story 'a comparative American Byron to match an American Miss Clairmont' (James [1984] 2003, 408).[4] This statement represents the most resolutely canonical affirmation of the widespread presence of the British Romantic writer in the later North American imagination, and I want now to work from it back to my foregoing discussion of the sinking sublime in order to begin to unpack the complexities of Byron's transatlantic legacy. The germ of the idea for the story lies in a letter to Grace Norton of 27 February 1887 that tells a different myth of its origin. James describes a Contessa Gamba in Florence, relation by marriage of Teresa Guiccioli, who is possessed of a lot of Byron's letters 'which she declares shocking and unprintable', thus emphasising rather coyly to Norton the fleshly foibles of one condemned earlier by Herman Melville as 'a frightening figure of demonic, incestuous urge' (James 1980: 166; Weisbuch 1986: 13). Despite his infirmity, Byron is widely held, in the English-speaking culture of the nineteenth century, to be at once of bold physical being and signally refractory to nature's usual human laws. This opposition to the natural, more-over, extends into his supposed suspicion of 'Nature', the apparent quintessence of Romanticism, as a subject for

poetry. The early American critic, Orestes Brownson, noted that Byron maintained nature to be something that 'is not poetical'; that 'cannot sustain a literature that does not soon become fatiguing and repulsive' Weisbuch 1999: 205). Brownson's claim, made a decade after the poet's death and obviously neglecting the Wordsworthianisms of *Childe Harold III*, casts Byron as decidedly anti-Romantic in both his repulsion at the putative purity of the natural world and in being drawn instead to the arousing business of the body. This kind of thinking is all too familiar, however partial it may now seem: the 'Romantic' is figured as having to do with the natural world and its connections to the mind; bodily sensations, as in 'Tintern Abbey,' are important only as a transit to that state of mental transcendence. On this account, the messy busy of actual bodily experience is left behind as an embarrassment; and it is this that makes Byron, as someone so concerned to make a record of the physical life, rather a peculiar Romantic.

The dyad is replete with straining contradictions, however. In particular, there is anxiety among his later readers about embracing the physical nature of the poet in the cultural construction of Byron's legacy. And this has to do with a set of concerns, present during the period itself, which gather around the aesthetic concept of the sublime. Although the concerns of the sublime are so conflicted that it is hard at times not to think the much-discussed concept rather incoherent, a key suggestion of this essay is that it is exactly this that makes it so critically alive. Having at once to do with the powerfully physical, the naming of an aspect of nature, the sublime is also descriptive of non-material, ineffable and hard to reach parts of consciousness. This tension impacts upon the kinds of reflections that Byron inspires in his North American followers, producing in their confusions considerable ambivalence about his legacy. The disembodied imagination is surely predominant in any later account of a writer since it stands as that writer's literary essence. Yet in one so renowned for his physical indulgences, an aspect of Byron's posterity might also be what happens to the physical body and, moreover, to the metaphorical body that sits alongside it — the corpus of work through whose reception it is conditioned as a later cultural product. In terms reminiscent of Hazlitt's earlier account of Byron, Henry James writes, in an essay on James Russell Lowell, of death as a kind of sculptor who 'smoothes the folds' of a person's character:

> The figure retained by the memory is compressed and intensified; accidents have dropped away from it and shades have ceased to count; it stands, sharply, for a few estimated and cherished things, rather than nebulously, for a swarm of possibilities (James 1956: 77).

For James, the vagueness of the living person – always only ever half-known – becomes aestheticised in death into an idea in the mind. How absolutely in Byron's case, though, can this ineffable smoothing make good the excrescences of the physical life?

James's story of a young man's searching after a cache of indelicate letters from a famous writer to his lover is well known, but the initiatory letter less so. The aesthetic texture of the villa in which he was staying at the time suggests itself to him as fitting for an encounter with the artful Countess Gamba, 'one of the figures of the place'. (…) '[S]he was the most of a "nature" of anyone I saw,' he writes, meaning in fact that she is a contrived, unnatural thing, almost of his own creation. She inhabits, as a fixture, a space ossified into a group of sculptures and existing only as a set of aesthetic experiences. The only other encounter of note described in the letter is with Adolf von Hildebrand, 'the admirable, original German sculptor, who has the feeling of the Greeks and that of the early Tuscans'. Hildebrand is a constructed genius on James's account, one who combines the aesthetic sense of a Praxiteles with that of the *quattrocento*. He is a quasi-Canova, the sculptor whose earlier neoclassical works had idealised the forms of disfigured Venetians into pure white marble. Nature and the body, with a frisson of naughtiness present in the suggestion of sex, are latent forces in James's Florence, but they are held in check within the villa by mannered artifice:

> I saw also something of a very clever, natural, exuberant Countess Gamba, who is one of the figures of the place – niece by her husband of Byron's Guiccioli (she has a lot of his letters to the G. which she declares shocking and un-printable – she took upon herself to burn one of them up!) a *putative* natural daughter of Giuseppe Giusti, the satiric Tuscan poet. (Her mother was some fine Florentine lady to whom G. was much devoted, and she – the 'Euphrosyne' – is said much to resemble him.) She was

the most of a 'nature' of anyone I saw. (James 1980: 166)

Byron's literary and psychosexual selves remained clearly entangled in the late nineteenth-century mind. This letter is the origin of a Jamesian reflection on literary reputation – one that might be read usefully alongside his portrait of Coleridge as Frank Saltram in 'The Coxon Fund'. It hints at the ways in which private feeling could be manipulated for a public still much concerned with the morals of the Romantic artist. There is an odd duality in the Byron that emerges in these few, almost illegible and – for James at least – rough-hewn lines. The poet is at once presented to us through James's Gamba as something authentic and real. By virtue of this very mediation, however, Byron is at the same time manipulated and recreated as a thing of artifice – a figure made up like one of Hildebrand's fake Canovas, as a post-Romantic artwork. There is, moreover, a quaint bathos in the notion that the much-vaunted excesses of a physical life may become so distant that they are present only as their reduction to the dead paper of the letter, so easily burned.

'Byron' as he is tidied up into a cultural artefact is made of two things: one begins in nature, is existentially authentic and yet transcends the vicissitudes of ordinary physical being; the other is embarrassingly physical and so sinks into an aesthetic artifice that is a guard against the failing life of the body. There is a similar pattern to many North American responses to Byron. It moves from admiration in youth, complete with the cultivation of Byronic manners, to righteous repudiation on the basis of later moral rectitude. This intriguing opposition tells us something interesting about the working of a central aspect of the ideology of Romanticism more generally. It is for this reason that we might choose to pay attention to it and indeed join up a number of reactions that are superficially very different. Time and again, as readers seek to recover him, they strain after the sublime but end in comedy. And perhaps, as Adorno suggested, this is not really an aberration as such but rather an essential quality of the sublime.

The Romantics hoped that a feeling of transcendence, experienced in nature or through art, might leave behind the body and perform a quasi-divine act of tidying the self into purely mental transport. The theory left no small potential for sinking disappointment, not least because in tying external nature to the aestheticising faculty of imagi-

nation, it neglects the social and physical being that makes us human in the first place. If the first impulse of the later writer, seeking to harness Byron's legacy to a cause, is to attempt to distil that legacy into an often rather shaky idea, then the second is to embrace its sinking as an inevitable moral lesson. Over the *longue durée* of the American nineteenth century, Byron is a locus of belated classical longing. He is a figure who draws together an interest in Greece and the classical past, which can be used as a means to instantiate seriousness in a cultural environment that is gaining in confidence. He is also, however, a frightening example of how the search for the sublime in art can go wrong and sink into bathos. As American classicism negotiates the past's presence in the creation and sustenance of its own present and on-going cultural identity, Byron's position is key to identifying a space between the dream of revivified classical finesse and the nightmare of Romanticism's selfish obsessions. The latter leads classicism's hard lines and smooth bodies to be undone by anxieties about the possibility of tidying up the physical messiness of the body of the poet's work and indeed of the celebrity body itself.

It is useful to turn for a moment to Matthew Arnold. While celebrating Byron's 'wonderful personality', Arnold censured him for his vulgar dealing in thrills rather than crossing over, as does his Wordsworth, into the higher life of the mind with educative, critical exactitude (Arnold 1964: 108). 'The ideal nature for a poet and artist', he writes, 'is that of the finely touched and finely gifted man' (Arnold 1964: 104). The word 'finely' does much of the work here of conjuring a sense of refinement, the quality productive of fine art, and that against which he arranges Byron's supposedly real nature – that of 'the barbarian'. Arnold's wonder at the Byronic persona rubs up against his looking for a critical finesse. It is as though the two qualities – the senses of wonder and refinement – are twin forms of affect that unsettle him as they pull at his critical heartstrings. They are ways of naming the division that I have pointed to already. Byron is clearly representative of a sublime quality in nature, at once authentically real and also an ideal of human potential. As he assesses this construct critically, Arnold appears to want it to become idealised into the fine sublime of human consciousness but finds it instead sinking back into very physical reality.

This roughness, the real against idealized nature, has both moral and critical implications because it is, Arnold decides in his famous essay of 1888, 'the want of a fine perception [that is] exactly, again, what made possible for him his precious dictum that Pope is a Greek temple' (Arnold 1964: 106). And, as if to wrestle back the true classical inheritance from Byron's supposedly careless statement of provenance, the same phrase appears again when he turns to the poetry: 'it is exactly, in fine, what deteriorated the quality of his poetic production', he writes. Exactitude and finesse are placed, in Arnold's judgement, against incautious largesse and generosity to the whims of the physical. Byron is of nature, in a raw sense, but he has not 'that finely touched and exquisitely gifted nature which is the ideal nature for the poet'; his poetic is somehow exemplary but flawed in its crude naturalness. As though a representative of the wrong form of the sublime, there is too much 'straining after the unlimited', we are told. Like a Frankensteinian creature rough-hewn from Wordsworthian parts (Arnold's true hero), Byron makes his poetry out of 'a splendid and puissant personality' but has the self-knowledge of a child. It is this quality of straining after the unlimited and the attendant failure to realise a poetic of extreme self-consciousness — sliding over instead into a kind of moral recklessness or being undone by the body in the quest for the sublime – that is marked in the North American reception of Byron.

I emphasise the precise critical vocabulary that Arnold uses because it takes us back to James, who writes in the preface of the task of creating an American Byron as 'a question, in fine, of covering one's tracks – though with no great elaboration I am bound to admit'. The art of *fine* writing, he seems to suggest, is that of creating a smokescreen behind which to obscure a truth of which one is a little embarrassed. 'Fine' is a good Jamesian word: its use might put us in mind of a character of his who embodies some of the contradictions present in the American Byron. This is Gilbert Osmond, specifically as he is described in the central recognition scene of *Portrait of a Lady*. During the course of a solitary, silent night spent considering her marriage to him, Isabel Archer remembers that Osmond had told her 'that she had too many ideas and that she must get rid of them' (James 2011: 450–1). Certainly, she had had a head full of ideas about him: 'The finest – in the sense of being the subtlest – manly organism she had ever known

had become her property, and the recognition of her having but to put out her hands and take it had been originally a sort of act of devotion.' The scene is a recognition of an earlier act of misinterpretation in which the reality of her husband had become completely subordinate to her constructed idea of him. With the shattering of that pseudo-religious idol comes the reflection: 'it was a wonder […] that he didn't hate her more.' Osmond is the epitome of a certain fine conception of humanity, one that might be said to exist within the poised finesse of the drawing rooms and salons of high society, its very persistence dependent upon subordinating ideas to questions of social semiotics. But since those very ideas, or the ideals within which Isabel had constructed Osmond, are themselves undone by their own very careful, social terms, we are left to reflect upon a strangely symbiotic relationship between fine, subtle psychology and its own self-construction as an artificial social type. What Isabel recognises is that in making Osmond into an idea, she has unwittingly discovered a division in the concept of finesse that helps with the opposition that I outlined earlier. To be fine is potentially to be authentically moral, and aware of values of a sort, but it is also a signal of an awareness of the ways in which the aesthetic itself can act as a cover for something that is rather depraved.

Appropriate to this, T. S. Eliot wrote of James shortly after his death, that 'he had a mind so fine that no idea could violate it' – a critical analysis that is lambently imprecise but elusively enticing (Eliot 1975: 151). Within Eliot's phrase, finesse or the quality of being fine seems clearly to lie in opposition to the uncomfortable presence of ideas. It would be easier to understand Eliot had he written of 'a mind so fine that no one idea could violate it'. Then the sense would follow better of an author harnessing the thoughts and feelings of his readers to a particular political or emotional idea, which by indelicate moral purpose breaks apart the aesthetic illusion of the whole. But on Eliot's account, James himself could never, like Isabel, fall prey to the illusory idea of a fine mind; he was just too alive to the vagueness of human beings whose 'accidents' and 'shades' are only ever smoothed away in death. These thoughts relate interestingly to the remaining matter of this essay for the following reasons. If Byron's qualities as a fine aesthetic artefact in himself (indeed one who comes complete with a commitment to the finest and most sublime of all intellectual and artistic endeavours,

namely that of the maintenance of the legacy of classical Greece) can be so easily undone by censorious reflection upon his sinking physical life, then is this more widely true of the working of reception in general? Aesthetic reception (and criticism more widely) is a matter of forgetting as much as of remembering. It is conditioned by a necessity for a certain cultural scepticism that acknowledges the inevitable failure of our ability fully to empathise with the past; a scepticism that accepts the sinking of sublime critical ambition in our obligation to create a fiction of that past (such indeed as Byron himself did of Greece). It must be wilful in its failure to appreciate the entirety of an artistic life lived, subordinating the whole legacy of a writer to a partial construction that remains nevertheless locally relevant.

* * *

Between 1811 and 1830 alone, almost one hundred editions of Byron's various works were printed in North America, naturally telling no one simple narrative.[5] Nevertheless, together with the fact that Britain and the United States were at war during the early years of his reception, Byron's perceived radical Whiggism, at odds with Tory policy, conditioned his early popularity among both Northeast radicals and pro-war Southerners. Indeed, in the last year of the War of 1812, fifteen different editions of his works were published in Baltimore, Boston, New York and Philadelphia. The last of these is perhaps the most significant because it is in the fourth volume of the *Analectic Magazine* published in Philadelphia in 1814 that Americans get their first impression of Byron's physical appearance from a stipple engraving taken from the portrait of 1813 by Richard Westall of *Byron at the age of 25*, currently housed in the National Portrait Gallery in London.[6] This engraving, in an important review edited by the radical publisher Moses Thomas, is itself a copy by David Edwin of a little-known British image by Thomas Blood, executed for the *European Magazine*. It is a striking rendering but not one that is easy to associate with the Byron known to us from the most famous portraits by Westall or Thomas Phillips. An obvious point, but one worth making, is that the visual image of the poet, so crucial to his reputation in Britain, is, by comparison, rare and somewhat occluded for the American audience, hidden as it is behind the inevitable process of copying.

Later editions make this point more dramatically: the engraved frontispieces of the London and Philadelphia editions of Galt's *Life of Lord Byron* of 1830 both employ the same portrait by William Edward West but the American image — a copy of a copy — is crude and degraded.[7] The same painting when re-engraved by William Smith for the New York edition of Moore's *Letters and Journals* (Harper, 1830) shows a poet whose features are so corrupted that he is crudely comical and almost unrecognisable. That painting, executed from life in Pisa in 1822 and widely distributed in Britain before being bought by the nation, must ironically be considered the first American painting of Byron, since West was an expatriot from Kentucky – an oddly Byronic place, as I shall shortly suggest — and he moved to Italy only after having been a pupil of Thomas Sully, the great society artist of Philadelphia, who himself copied the famous Westall portrait for a private collector in 1826. In visual terms, the American Byron is from the beginning a crudely copied and sinking misrepresentation.

The Westell portrait used by Moses Thomas is significant too because it is the model for the most accomplished early American print representation of the poet. This is a beautifully executed crayon lithograph of around 1826 produced for sale in New England by the New York-based commercial artist Rembrandt Peale (1778–1860), examples of which are held at the Boston Athenaeum and the Smithsonian (see image).[8] His starting point is a version of Westall's painting that he knew from Charles Turner's widely distributed engraving. Peale's determination that copies from paintings must be 'superior to the originals' lies in the face of a quintessential Romantic denigration of the copy, such as we find throughout Coleridge's notebooks, and his own version is pursued with an aggressive American optimism to make Byron on his own terms (Pierce 1997: 59). Gone is the idea of the poet alone in uncompromising nature present in Westall's depiction, his arm resting on a rock with an appropriately savage and sublime nothingness around him. Instead, Byron rests on a quire of discarded writings, his attention focused on something else alluring (and presumably fleshy), away to the left of our field of vision. Our own eyes are drawn down to a broach in the centre of the composition, on Byron's neck, which depicts an alluringly reclined woman, and Byron is bursting out of his waistcoat: the business of writing appears to have been given up in

favour of something more enticing that might appeal to the beauty of a poet who is so lusciously rendered that it provoked a contemporary American commentator to remark that such a gorgeous print 'flattered him,' as though embarrassed by it (Pierce 1997: 59). Peale's image was produced as part of a profitable series of high quality lithographs representing key historical figures, the most notable of which is George Washington. It is an image that has little of the stark power of the original; Byron is rendered as a boyish and somewhat pudgy figure, one no doubt given over to the desires of the flesh that had been highlighted rather censoriously in recent posthumous accounts (such as those in the *North American Review*). While Byron is presented to his North American audience as a local figure of powerful imagination, there is already something about the image that is to be admired only at a careful distance.

Rembrandt Peale, Lord Byron, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of International Business Machines Corporation

By way of comparison, we might recollect Thomas Phillips' remarkable three-quarter-length portrait, *Byron in Arnaut Dress*, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1814, which is as efficient a statement of cultural ambition as any image of British Romanticism. Beyond Byron's glance, piercing but ignorant of the viewer, and his unusually svelte body and taut bone-structure, with the command and control of elegant otherness in his adopted oriental fancy dress, we might note two things. Tiny, in the lower right-hand corner, there is what looks like a boy's model of some classical remains, small enough for the poet to reach and cradle as a plaything for aestheticised politics, and above, surrounding him, there are dark clouds and a sublime landscape, which more than match the raw interior brooding of his infinite mind. An inherently sinking contradiction derives from the painting's very aborted scale – Phillips refused to produce a full-length portrait due to Byron's deformity – but it still conveys the poet's singularity and self-sufficiency in a post-social world in which he retains some of the trappings of foreign and antiquated civilisations, a lone man commanding a powerful natural world that rears up, only to bend to his own 'wonderful personality', in Arnold's phrase. This triumph of individualism against nature and history neatly fits the admittedly dated account of the post-Romantic American cultural ideology present in the work of such figures as Perry Miller or Harold Bloom. Neither chose to negotiate the embarrassments of his legacy however and, given its complexity, this is perhaps not terribly surprising; that both are quiet about Byron, as is F. O. Matthiessen, in spite of the kind of construct present in that painting, is surely because the image doesn't really suit a coherent philosophical vision of the high-minded, Emersonian exceptionalism that was fashionable in the mid-twentieth century.

From the start, Byron was keenly associated with the orient in America — the subject of Washington Allston's important painting of 1817, *Belshazzar's Feast*, for example, was familiar to audiences from Byron's poem in his popular *Hebrew Melodies* — but Phillips' painting itself was largely absent from view on both sides of the Atlantic during most of the nineteenth century. After its initial exhibition, the painting, owned by the poet's mother, largely disappeared from public view until 1969 and although a smaller copy, now in the National Portrait Gallery, was made by Phillips around 1835, it only became widely known

from William Finden's line and stipple engraving, used for an edition of *Childe Harold* in 1841. G. H. Cushman made an engraving from this later in 1850 for the American market but there is something cartoonish and faintly ludicrous about it that sinks its subject into a comic state of childish fancy dress.[9] This was always a lurking risk with the orientalist 'Byron' — a highly constructed and posturing act of self-fashioning (with the addition of a dainty moustache) — and surely explains why the image was retired so early. The most widely disseminated images in North America are relatively unadorned representations by Westall, West and indeed Phillips himself, who produced a related portrait of a clean-shaven Byron enveloped in a dark cloak from the same sitting in 1813. This is the subject of an engraving by one of the most important early American painters, Asher Brown Durand.

A correspondent of Allston, who was a close friend to Coleridge during his years in Europe, Durand was the greatest painter of the Hudson River School, a group of painters who packaged the local wilderness for a Romantic audience eager for images of the American sublime. Durand is best known today for *Kindred Spirits*, a painting that commemorates the untimely death in 1849 of his mentor, Thomas Cole. The image depicts Cole in conversation with William Cullen Bryant within an idealized Catskill landscape. The two stand together as representatives of the epitome of a Eurocentric aesthetic, the Turner and Wordsworth of America, who are nevertheless tasked with mediating a landscape far more dramatic and endless than that of the Lakes to an audience that had absorbed their masters. It is difficult not to envisage the painting as a statement of American cultural identity, and yet there is something rather imperious and voyeuristic about these admittedly diminutive high priests of cultural ambition in Durand's image. They seem to have the measure of the sublime and their control translates into the way in which we are allowed to look at it through them: it is a deeply conservative work of the picturesque, which speaks of refined North American attitudes to the wilderness.

Durand's engraving of Byron is absent from all recent accounts of his various depictions but it is recorded in a catalogue of The Grolier Club from 1895, which tells of a retrospective exhibition of Durand's engravings ([Grolier] 1895: 16).[10] This document is interesting because of the way it too places Byron among a series of other portrait

engravings produced by Durand in the first half of his career. Most are key figures of nascent American cultural power: John Quincey Adams, Joel Barlow, Alexander Hamilton and indeed William Cullen Bryant. Sitting significantly alongside Canova and Scott as exemplary old world artists, Byron represents the kind of aesthetic ambition that might be promoted by a champion of the American sublime. And for all that he is an ambiguous presence in its literature, Byron remains a focus for reflections on the development of an American canon throughout the nineteenth century, re-entering the literature of the sublime through a little-known story of its greatest exponent, Herman Melville, whose *Israel Potter* reminds us that it was the poet who popularised the story of Daniel Boone, the archetypal frontiersman and 'back-woodsman of Kentucky,' an outsider memorialised in *Don Juan* as a model of American exceptionalism before the fact.

Boon had initially come to the attention of the reading public through the 1813 poem of his nephew Daniel Bryan, '*The Mountain Muse*', and when he makes his way into Canto VIII he is portrayed as Rousseau's man of nature. Yet even here, the representation contains subtle contradictions. When Boone enters *Don Juan* it is in terms that fit the Phillips portrait rather well. Byron has just described the fall of Ismail in a part of the poem that is rich in historical and culturally diverse detail. This set piece reminds us of Byron as a mediator of the narrative of Western imperial interaction with worlds that are Eastern, foreign and ancient, and which through subjugation have become subsumed within a collective consciousness. Boone is outside this. It is a statement writ large in Romantic terms of man's proximity to nature; of the individual self-sufficient with, and yet triumphant over nature:

> Crime came not near him – she is not the child
> Of Solitude; health shrank not from him – for
> Her home is in the rarely-trodden wild,
> Where if men seek her not, and death be more
> Their choice than life, forgive them, as beguiled
> By habit to what their own hearts abhor –
> In cities caged. The present case in point I
> Cite is, that Boon lived hunting up to ninety;

> And what's stranger still, left behind a name
> For which men vainly decimate the throng,
> Not only famous, but of that *good* fame,
> Without which Glory's but a tavern song –
> Simple, serene, the antipodes of shame,
> Which hate not envy e'er could tinge with wrong;
> An active hermit, even in age the child
> Of Nature, or the Man of Ross run wild.
>
> (Byron 1986: 658)

Byron found a connection with Boone by imagining an escape from celebrity into the sublime environment of America that could also intend a retreat into a landscape of the self and, in turn, Boone's story remained popular in the American imagination into the mid-century, relying in part on *Don Juan*: the poem was regularly reprinted before copyright laws were established in the early 1890s, after half a century of debate. Boone's popularity relies too on his exemplary qualities as the man of nature who could be reinvented, via Byron, as Cooper's Natty Bumppo or in the tales of Longfellow, and if Byron's version seems patronising now, it appears not have been so to the American audience of the time: a much decorated life of Boone was reprinted with Byron's stanzas in a New York edition of 1823.

There is, however, a rival to this figure of the sublime. It is one over which there was much more aggressive argument in the late nineteenth century, as is exemplified in the Byron of the Harriet Beecher Stowe controversy of 1869. Stowe had been involved in debates about the copyright laws that had seen free pirating of American and English writings in the rival countries some years earlier (indeed at around the time that Dickens lobbied for a law to be put in place). A figure of enormous prominence in both countries since the success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe's relationship with the legacy of Byron, although one of the better-known stories of his afterlife in America, is nevertheless telling in its ambiguity. Stowe is, of course, best known today as a writer who brought the wrongs of slavery to international, popular literary prominence, and it is with this in mind that we might turn our attention to her disparagement of Byron in the period of post-Bellum America.

It is tempting to see Byron, a favoured poet of Jefferson Davis,

as an obvious figurehead for self-fashioning among confederate dandies, but he retained a continuing popularity in New England, co-opted by figures sympathetic to abolitionism as a figure of cultural authority (Williams 2005: 27). William Cullen Bryant's 'The Greek Boy' displays a debt to *The Giaour* in its depiction of a Greek Christian slave and adapts Byron's philhellenism as a charge against slavery as a whole.[11] Bryant was himself one of a number of prominent New England figures (including Melville with many Byronic debts in his long poem *Clarel* [1876], that is set in the Holy Land) who took both Byron's love of Greece and his openness to the cultures of the East as guides for their own journeys to the Ottoman Empire. Bryant's journal, published at the end of his life, narrates an incident that betrays a debt to the governing narrative of that particular Oriental Tale, and there was a palpable connection in the minds of many North American readers of Byron between his liberal philhellenic celebration of the culture of the ancient world and the growth to prominence of an American culture that could learn from the civilisations of Europe while sustaining the project of the federalists to build a free nation along lines that were classically inspired.

If the Byron of extreme individualism, as represented by Daniel Boone, is perforce all private life, having no human society, and the philhellenic Byron of self-sacrifice all public, political self, then the version that Stowe offers into this strange mix provides for further confusion. Responding to a book by Countess Guiccioli, which painted Lady Byron as 'a frigid stifler of genius', Stowe produced an account of his affair with Augusta Leigh that rocked the English-speaking world (Goodman and Dawson 2005: 131). It was written under the odd belief that she was governed by a divine spirit who had instructed her to campaign for women's rights on the basis of the sanctity of the domestic space, as well as the rather more prosaic desire simply to defend her friend. *Lady Byron Vindicated* appeared first in instalments in *The Atlantic Monthly* and constitutes one of its least auspicious moments. William Dean Howells had been left in charge of the *Atlantic* in the absence of its editors and, under the auspices of Oliver Wendell Holmes and James Russell Lowell, he was browbeaten by Stowe into accepting her articles. Because of the conflicting associations already outlined, interest in Byron was at a low point in the years following the Civil War, as publication records show, so Howells cannot have reckoned that Stowe's articles would revive a flagging readership. It remains unclear why he gave in. In the end, the articles were responsible for a reduction in the magazine's circulation to

a level from which it never recovered in this period.

Stowe was attacked in the English press (Dickens, asked by the editor to respond to the controversy, noted simply in a letter of 6 October 1869: 'Wish Mrs Stowe was in a pillory') and she was threatened with legal action by Lady Byron's estate (Dickens 2002: 418). There were a number of volumes published on the back of the controversy. Among these was *Lord Byron Vindicated* by Elliot W. Preston, which contains a series of addresses in Spenserians to suitably Byronic subjects such as the Coliseum. The Houghton owns Longfellow's copy of this, which is striking since he, along with Stowe, were key contributors to the *Atlantic* before the controversy. It goes some way to suggesting the depth of feeling that Howells's error of editorial policy entailed. The most extraordinary part of the episode was not Stowe's demonstration of her own priggishness but rather the attempted lengths to which William Dean Howells went in justifying his incredibly bad judgement. His most recent biographers note that in his youth, Howells was first a lover and then a repudiator of Byron. His later sentiments, communicated in a letter to his brother Johnny, suggest that he shared the view of Arnold at his most critical, that Byron was all style, only Howells goes further to suggest that Byron the private seducer operated his wiles on a textual level: his poems, if they 'don't spoil you, they'll make you ashamed and remorseful, some day,' he wrote, sounding a note of Victorian prudishness (Goodman and Dawson 2005: 132).

Byron ends up looking like a sadly ludicrous figure in the debates about his private life, and certainly very much less dignified than in his guise either as tamer of the Romantic sublime or philhellenic warrior. The Stowe controversy punctures the myth of Byron as a heroic figure of the sublime because it focuses attention on a sinking private sphere, which was never that of the American Byron as devised by those democrats of philhellenic public spirit who took up Greek models. Henry James must have had the memory of his friend, Howells, in hot water over Byron, when he wrote his letter to Grace Norton some years later, and in many ways the episode represents the final reduction of his sublime reputation to public gossip. But it remains exemplary of the history of the sublime figure of Byron turning bathetic in nineteenth-century America, a comic sinking away from the sublime that is often played out in terms that have to do with Byron's physical life and indeed in

the very physical descriptions of Byron imagined by his transatlantic readers. Byron's 'crime' might be the sublime of wickedness for Stowe — and all the more so because it is the ineffable, great unknown. But in this too there is potential for considerable comic sinking, as the young Henry James noticed in the *North American Review*. An unknown, or even unknowable, evil has about it something proximate to the comical, and perceptively for James, the dark sublime of Byron's mind was really nothing of the sort but instead merely the product of a silly trick played on the gullible, and a bad joke gone disastrously wrong; or a sinking disappointment. It may be the most sensible (and sensitive) response to the whole episode:

> Some people will always read the evidence of some dark and definite wrong-doing on the part of one who delighted in the appearance of criminality, and who, possibly simply by overacting his part, in the desire to mystify, rather viciously, a woman of literal mind, in whom the sense of humour was not strong, and the imagination was uncorrected by it, succeeded too well and got caught in his own trap. Even if the inference we speak of were valid, it would be very profitless to inquire further as regards Byron's unforgivable sin; we are convinced that, if it were ascertained it would be, to ingenuous minds, a great disappointment. (James, 1879: 392)

* * *

The history of Byron's early and formative reception in North America cannot adequately be assessed without paying attention to four key figures from Massachusetts, who travelled to Europe in the 1810s. They served to mediate the reputation of British and indeed European Romantic writers to an American audience in the coming decades. That they also had a considerable impact upon the development of the American university system is a fact belied by the limited attention paid to them today in academic circles. They are George Ticknor, Edward Everett, Joseph Green Cogswell and George Bancroft. Ticknor is a figure of insuperable importance in American educational history. Having single-handedly developed the study of Spanish in the American university system, he created the Boston Public Library, reformed Harvard University and travelled extensively in Europe, meeting many of the significant figures of his day. His *Life, Letters and Journals* is a

resource that rivals Crabb Robinson's, with accounts of just about every significant literary figure of the first half of the nineteenth century in Britain and Europe. He and Edward Everett met Byron in London in 1815 and took away with them copies of his works for Goethe, whom they were to meet in Göttingen.[12] In the end it was Cogswell, a friend and future librarian at Harvard, who met Goethe on that occasion, securing a run of his collected works for the future Widener Library. Everett would become in time the supreme orator of his day. He had considerable power over the conditioning of Byron's reputation in the years following the poet's death as the editor of the pre-eminent journal of the day, the *North American Review*, which included a number of important posthumous assessments of the poet, including one by Andrews Norton (professor at the Harvard Divinity School), which consciously attempts to assess his work in conjunction with his character.[13] As a future president of Harvard, Everett's influence upon the university in its Emersonian years was immense. Yet he is perhaps best remembered today with a degree of bathos as the man who delivered the two-hour-long speech on the field of Gettysburg that preceded Lincoln's rather more concise address. The last of the four, George Bancroft, is a less significant figure but his recollections of Byron at the time of their visit to London in the year preceding his departure for Europe are an important and largely forgotten record of the poet's thoughts on America.

In an Independence Day oration in Boston in 1824, immediately following the death of Byron, Everett's brother, John, focused attention upon the state of the union. Allowing that they were much in debt to Europe, he argued that the emergence of democratic equality in America might lead ultimately to the creation of a literary culture to rival that of the old world. His was a quasi-Emersonian theme before the fact but the speech turned quickly to thoughts of Byron and to the case of Greece. It was in essence a plea in support of the Hellenic cause on the grounds that the ancient Greek values of democracy and tolerance underpinned the freedom of English and American governments alike: 'Men, like Lord Byron, are, and should be the glory of their age, and no nobler death could have been destined for him, than to die in the defence of "Greece and her sunny isles"' (Accardo 2001: 30). Edward Everett himself had already expressed similarly philhellenic sentiments as early as 1811 in a slightly silly, jingoistic song that he

composed for his valedictory address at Harvard and while this is not evidence in itself of a nascent interest in Byron, there is the presence of only slightly later marginalia in his edition of *Childe Harold*. Though Byron was central to the philhellenic cause in Boston at this time, as is clear from the *Letters from Greece* (Boston, 1825), published by the Boston Greece Committee, he clearly already had exerted considerable influence upon North American attitudes to Greece much earlier than the 1820s. The extremely scarce *Curse of Minerva* was published in a small British print-run in 1812. With its stark attack on Elgin, it was then twice pirated in Philadelphia by 1816 and the later edition was widely disseminated. Published by the aforementioned radical Moses Thomas, with a group of apocryphal pieces, this is a curious collection that places *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* alongside that strongly anti-imperial poem. In a dogmatic preface, Byron is presented as the heir to Pope, who drives 'the thirsty tyrants from the throne of taste' (*Lord Byron's Farewell* 1816: xxii), and Thomas draws American attention to a classical legacy that must be celebrated, packaging Byron as a republican defender of an anti-imperial, local and independent culture.

Byron is widely politicised in this period. The early poet of *English Bards*, heavily influenced by Pope, sustained his American audience most thoroughly in the earliest years of his reception and this taste persisted longer than in Britain. A key collection that transmits Byron's reputation as a critic of modern print culture to the American audience of the 1820s is *Burlesques on Byron*, published in 1823 by the peculiar writer McDonald Clarke (1798–1842). Self-styled as 'The Mad Poet', he clearly modelled himself on Byron and wrote several volumes of imitations. Ultimately unable to cope with the demands of New York life, he killed himself, but not before he had written several collections in the Popean/Byronic mode that sent up his particular cultural moment. His poem 'Address to the Mummy, now exhibiting at the Museum' begins in quasi-Popean *medias res*:

> And – but here's the printer's little imp – well – what sir,
> Do you want? why sir, I want more copy:
> Why damn it – I've given you whole showers – 'tis not, sir
> My mind to write you any more just now.
> But sir, you'll finish 'bout the mummy – won't you?

No – 'blieve me I won't – the darn old puppy
Who's trying to 'clipse my fame, isn't worthy
Of my muse – he'll do for Southey
Ha-ha – I had forgot – Tom Campbell said
He thinks he was a mason – but look here,
See what hearty teeth he's got
He must have been a poet – was he not?

(Clarke 1823: 211–12)

Most of Clarke's poetry is pretty desperate and apart from the Masonic reference it is hard to see much here that is especially political, the whole looking instead like a piece of very sub-Byronic borrowing. Yet this is to leave aside the context of the piece as a reflection upon American culture's Eurocentric desire to ape the display of the trappings of empire, which is a decidedly Byronic theme. The pretension is sent up in so far as it is seen to be at war with its own programme of developing a culture that might stand alone as something independently significant and aesthetically engaging. Byron's celebrity body is here figured by implication as an object that can be examined and perhaps revivified in the posthumous poetic reflection. Even in such a slight piece we should not lose sight of the fact that there is an implicit sense of Byron's own body becoming exactly that of which he was himself critical in the rather more interesting earlier attack on Elgin – namely, an object of bourgeois voyeurism.

More widely, the history of Byron's poetic body in North America is torn in two ways. Firstly, there is the celebration of the sublime material that he brings to the attention of foreign readers as their history of cultural inheritance, with the vestiges of the classical civilisation mediated to his readers through poems such as *Childe Harold*. He stands metonymically for those very 'things' (the cultural artefacts themselves which he promoted in his poems) that in turn connect Americans to a *longue durée* of human civilisation, and can be examined as objects representing that cultural capital. Then, alongside this (and in quasi-opposition to it) there is the emergence of a literature that makes of the messiness of his actual physicality a reception history all of its own. Much of the nineteenth-century reception history works itself out according to this dyad, even during his lifetime.

John Agg (1783–1855), an associate of Moses Thomas, appear-

ing to anticipate the Byron of *Childe Harold* III as early as 1814, urged him to turn his attention to the sublime: 'A gloomy spot, sublime, poetic / Suited so well to theme pathetic […] Oh! Could I to you fancy show it, / As it fir'd me, 'twould fire the poet' ([Agg] 1814: 91–2). In line with this, American readers, for all their apparent enthusiasm, appear often to be confounded by their sense of what Byron should represent to them, and his early followers seem occasionally concerned that he might need corrective adjustment to ensure that he remain committed to the right kind of higher theme. Moses Thomas's octavo edition of Lord Byron's *Farewell to England*, which contains the *Curse of Minerva*, also includes five spurious poems by Agg in a somewhat sentimentally moralising tone that annoyed Byron greatly, as testified by a letter to John Murray of 22 July 1816: 'Needless to say, I know nothing of all this trash — nor whence it may spring' (Byron 1976: 84). Rather rubbing salt in the wound, Agg later called these poems a 'speculative anticipation of that which was expected from the pen of lord Byron' (Agg 1819: vii). The implication is that Byron did not continue to write as they wanted and there is a suggestion too in Thomas's preface that his disdain for Elgin is 'vindictive' and perhaps covers a sympathy for the Ottomans, from whose hand (Thomas feels) Elgin is saving 'a fragment or two of Athens' from 'speedy demolition' (*Lord Byron's Farewell* 1816: xxiv). It is telling that John Agg, clearly not dissuaded by his first intervention, then went on to publish a poem in the following year about an imagined tour by Byron of the Holy sites, *Pilgrimage to the Holy Land* (1817), which serves to Christianise Byron's orientalism in a way that further emphasises the contradiction I am pointing to.

More widely, the idea that Byron combined, alongside extraordinary aesthetic and moral 'beauties' in his poetry, great and potentially corrupting defects is prevalent in the years after his death. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, writing in his journal at Göttingen on 15 March 1829, noted that Byron had done much to 'corrupt the taste as well as the morality of the age' (Longfellow 1832: 76). The problem, which he later expanded in an essay in *The North American Review*, was one of callowness on the part of a readership unable to appreciate the Byronic sublime, more than a specific failing in poet himself: 'Imitators that could not understand his beauties could imitate his great and glaring defects. Souls that could not fathom his depths could grasp the straw

and bubbles that floated on the agitated surface.' Immediately following Byron's death, *The Worcester Spy* of July 1824 implied a more direct moral scepticism about Byron's reputation, entreating readers not to let 'love of fame / Extinguish virtue's brighter flame' (Leonard 1905: 26). But despite a certain moral prurience that came to occlude the earlier figure of cultural vitality during the late 1820s, Byron nevertheless remained, along with Hemans, the most imitated poet of the period from 1820 to 1850, as Longfellow suggests.

A key text in bringing his physical life into the foreground of his reception in the aftermath of his death is a collection published in Boston in 1826. A recent Harvard graduate and editor of the *Boston Daily Courier*, George Lunt's (1803–1885) *The Grave of Byron*, contains a late note that highlights the gap between fiction and reality in the cultural construction of the figure of the poet: 'men applied the same criterion to [Byron] that they do to the hero of a novel, whom we wo'n't [sic] put up with, unless he is almost immaculate in thought, word, & deed' (Lunt 1826: 73). Lunt's suggestion is that we ought to judge Byron as a man, complete with his faults. But implicit in his remark is that it is too late to do so: he has, within a year of his death, become a figure of fancy, even in North America. Lunt's judgement hints at a related division between these two Byrons – that of the public benevolent and the private villain – and it is this that emerges clearly in one of the most widely disseminated volumes of American criticism of the mid-century, Henry T. Tuckerman's *Thoughts on the Poets* (1846):

> If a few shallow imitators are silly enough to turn down their collars and drink gin, there is another class who mentally exclaim as they read Byron – 'What infinite longings are these! What sensibility – beauty! What capacities of suffering! how fatal is error to such a being! let me, of kindred clay, look earnestly for a lofty faith, a safe channel for passion, a serene haven for thought! The poet's torch is not always a meteor, alluring only to betray, but a beacon-light warning the curse of genius from the rocks and quick-sands which made him desolate. Besides, enough confidence is not felt in the native sense and just sentiment of readers. Can we not yield our hearts to the thinking address to Lake Leman without being pledged thereby to adopt the creed of Don Juan? Can we not accept Byron's tribute to the Ve-

> nus and Dying Gladiator without approving his bacchanal orgies at Newstead Abbey? May we not enjoy the wild freedom of the Corsair, without emulating the example 'of one virtue and a thousand curses'. (Tuckerman 1846: 174)

Tuckerman is admirably high-minded and, indeed, Byron's most elevated place in the American culture of the two decades following his death lies in his construction as a public poet who provides his readers with a sense of the writer as a guardian of liberal cultural education; one who makes present its classical heritage to a culture eager to absorb its example. In spite of this, however, the Byron of the higher calling once again is gradually occluded by the presence of a physical life that serves to puncture it.

A tradition in the mid-century of satire in the Byronic mode sends up the cultural ambition of American writers desperate to revisit their European heritage. It figures this sublime ambition as a kind of sinking away from the task of cultural singularity that America should strive to achieve. This Byron is peculiar: he is at once a key example of the decadence of the old world, and hence provides evidence of the callowness of his American admirers, but he is also the creator of the very literary mode that is being employed in the attack. Having it both ways, A. J. H. Duganne, the anonymous author of a New York satire of 1851, *Parnassus in Pillory*, closely imitates the form of *English Bards* as he diagnoses a widespread anxiety about American cultural minority that he found among his fellow writers:

> Our country swarms with bards who've 'crossed the water,'
> And think their native land earth's meanest quarter:
> Bards who have heard the gondoliers sing Tasso,
> Seen Arabs eat, and Indians throw the lasso;
> Men who have travelled, and of course must know
> All sorts of flowers that on Parnassus grow.
> Your "graceful" bards are these — your "versifiers,"
> Whose garlands are all roses and no briers,
> Who steam to Havre — take the Rhone or Rhine,
> Ascend Mont Blanc halfway then stop and dine,
> Muse, just like Byron, on the Bridge of Sighs,

> Quote Rogers freely, prate on golden skies […]
> Then home return, and (may the gods forgive them!)
> Print books whose leather shall at least outlive them.
> ([Duganne] 1851: 8–9)

The glance east at Britain, and beyond it to Europe, Greece and the Middle East, was by the mid-century beginning to lose its power as a force for anything more than the dilettante copyist. At the same time, a literature began to emerge that figured Byron as a cause gone to seed, which would end in Stowe's assault. He remained as a reference point for travellers, the writer who opened up the environment of the European art world for Americans, and might further be said earlier to have facilitated the first major engagement with the work of Canova by an American – a dissertation by Everett in the *North American Review* of 1829. The essay dwells at length upon the Elgin Marbles, which Everett had seen in London, and, more widely, assessments of Byron's posthumous reputation in that journal dwell heavily upon his having brought to cultural prominence the statuary of classical and Renaissance Europe and thus having posited a classicism upon which America might model itself.

Alongside this, a different kind of cosmopolitan Byron begins to emerge, however, exemplified by an early story of Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Assignation' (1834). In this story, an anonymous narrator witnesses a stranger, who turns out to be an English nobleman living at Venice, in the act of rescuing the drowning daughter of the Marchesa d'Aphrodite, 'the adoration of Venice […] young wife of the old and intriguing Mentoni' (Poe 1978: 152).[14] Later, the narrator visits the stranger in his apartment and discovers this to be a treasure house of sculptures and 'paintings from the Greeks to Cimabue, and from Cimabue to the present hour.' The stranger reveals his most prized possession, an extraordinary full-length portrait of the Marchesa, and proposes that they drink a pledge. As he suddenly becomes overcome with wine, a page of the Mentonis bursts in to reveal that the Marchesa is dead from poison, whereupon the narrator discovers the 'beaming eyes' of the stranger too are 'riveted in death' (Poe 1978: 160; 166).

The broad biographical affinities are obvious enough but the Byronic stranger is ambiguously drawn. On the one hand, he might be seen as a figure of physical and cultural grandeur, a collector of the

sublime in art and conqueror, through his act of rescue, of the sublime in nature. On the other hand, he is a figure defined by and at the centre of an illusory world of dead art (a Gilbert Osmond before the fact), who risks sinking, through the lurid language of the narrator, into an overblown Gothic caricature:

> With the mouth and chin of a deity – singular, wild, full, liquid eyes, whose shadows varied from pure hazel to intense and brilliant jet – and a profusion of curling, black hair, from which a forehead of unusual breadth gleamed forth at intervals all light and ivory – his were features than which I have seen none more classically regular, except, perhaps, the marble ones of Commodus. (Poe 1978: 156)

Poe's Venice is a world of illusion and mystery in which nothing quite seems as it might be, and the conceit of this passage serves the story as a whole rather well. The narrator recognises the stranger as an aesthetic construct, inseparable and made up from the materials of the sculptures found in his *palazzo*; he has abandoned the real to squander 'away a life of magnificent meditation in the city of dim visions'. Yet, although he is superficially magnificent and an apparent revivification of classical sculpture, the suspicion is alive that, just as Commodus's violent tyranny is tidied up in the regularity of his artistic representations, so too the stranger's appearance is at variance from a more unsettling truth. Which is the real Byron: the aesthetic construct, locked away in his palace of art, or the Byron of fleshy reality who cuckolds the old Marchese? Both constructs are deeply compromised figures. A disturbing thought hangs over the tale that when art appears to stand in place of reality, as it does in the portrait of the Marchesa, what remains is the death of that reality; and this is all the more compelling in the case of Byron himself, who is recast throughout the history of his reception in so many contrasting ways.

Byron's history in North America is that of a sinking away from the sublime. It is a narrative of the evasion of engagement – a slipping into contradiction – and it is all too often a story of coming to terms with anxieties about cultural priority. While he wrestles with Romantic transcendence amid the ruins of history, he is also an anti-imperialist satirist, who denies the cultural authority of Western civilisation by falling posthumously into the bathos of Popean satire. The latter figure

is caught by Nathaniel Hawthorne in his story of 1845, 'P's Correspondence', in which the eponymous 'P.' writes to his friend of having met Byron, while on a trip to London:

> His early tendency to obesity having increased, Lord Byron is now enormously fat; so fat as to give the impression of a person quite overladen with his own flesh, and without sufficient vigour to diffuse his personal life through the great mass of corporeal substance, which weighs upon him so cruelly. You gaze at the mortal heap; and, while it fills up your eye with what purports to be Byron, you murmur within yourself – 'For Heaven's sake, where is he?' Were I disposed to be caustic, I might consider this mass of earthly matter as the symbol, in a material shape, of those evil habits and carnal vices which unspiritualise man's nature, and clog up his avenues of communication with the better life. But this would be too harsh; and besides, Lord Byron's morals have been improving, while his outward man has swollen to such unconscionable circumference. (Hawthorne 1974: 363)[15]

The story, noticed by Trollope in an essay for the *North American Review* of 1879, imagines an ageing Byron who lives on to get fat, become religious and reconcile with his wife. It is a *jeu d'esprit* but has behind it a potentially serious moral purpose. The body of the poet would in time decay to show on the outside all the supposed nastiness that was contained within. Put more critically, Byron's striking appearance, famously contested by T. S. Eliot in an essay of 1937 as pudgy and weak, was, on this kind of account, all commodified appearance; a self-fashioned covering that masked only temporarily the essence, or indeed the (moral) absence, that lay within. This is a predominant view in the years leading up to the war but smacks of a certain hypocrisy. In the following year (1846) Edward Everett, one of Byron's four American visitors, was elected President of Harvard. In his inaugural address, the philhellene who had so impressed the poet on his visit in 1815, spoke at great length about the virtues of a classical learning and the importance of education, before greatly disparaging 'cheap' literature, such as *Childe Harold*: 'if,' he states, 'that can be called cheap in any sense of the term, which begins by costing a man his eyesight, and, if it have any influence, must, more of it, end in depraving his taste

and subverting his morals' (Everett 1846: 44). This is the same Everett, who was, ironically, one of his chief early proponents, having written a memoir of Byron on the latter's death, and who had taken *Childe Harold* as a high-minded call to liberty, but who now warned his young charges to approach Byron with care, lest he cost them not only their sublime minds but also their (very gradually) sinking bodies.

By this stage, Everett was (as is evident from his Gettysburg Address) a rather stodgy and self-righteous figure, and this speech hints at a division between public and private passions that is potentially somewhat comical (the bathetic afterlife of his earlier stance) but it is also neatly representative of the divided moral poles within which an appreciation of Byron works itself out in nineteenth-century America. Tracing out the long history of Byron's relationship with the figure of the sublime as it features in his post-Romantic readers, it is tempting to say that his case reveals the concept to be something rather hilariously empty, and hence deeply human; a straining after superhuman meaning that must inevitably puncture itself into comedy. As such, it seems to have something of the quality that Jean-Francois Lyotard found in the concept, when contesting its Kantian terms, as a 'joyous openness' that resists signification (Carroll 2008: 171). Byron himself both used the sublime for his own purposes and was aware of its capacity, as an idea, to resist purpose, and we certainly see something of that duality in the ways in which he is figured in his reception. But it is tempting too to ask how well either he himself or his readers truly had any control over this confusion; whether instead the sublime functioned as an aesthetic affect in the phenomenon that was 'Byron' along terms that follow Frederic Jameson's assessment of the concept as a 'characteristic quality of our confusing, globalised hyper-capitalized times' (Carroll 2008: 171).

Veering between these two poles in uncontrolled and uncontrollable ways, this reception history reveals both the complexity of Byron himself as a subject and also something of the complexity of the sublime as a concept. One of the central uses of that concept is that it can be deployed as a means to denote 'relevant complexity,' precisely because it is perceived as a value that does not have one simple or single quality but can do a number of things that are potentially contradictory without undoing its local relevance. It can be apparently specific in its

signification (a pointer, say, for philhellenic ambition) but also decidedly unknowable (a figure for Byron's always obscure moral crimes) while retaining weight as a marker for a certain critical judgement in both contexts. The Byron of the posturing sublime, which gestured grandly at its purported connections to the classical past while being at least in part a means to selling himself to a market, raises the matter of what, if anything, that essence truly was. But 'Byron' is always more than any single commodity that an audience makes of him, and his reception demonstrates that previously held standards of taste are thrown open for those who appear to have felt they have his essence, even as that essence remains complex and evasive.

This essay has covered a great deal of historical ground and examined many sources in the aim of telling one complex narrative that is pulled constantly in two directions. The reason for this has been, I hope, evident from the start, and has to do with a complexity that I find at the heart of the project of Romanticism generally as it emerges gradually from its finest writers in their later readers. Romanticism is at once an attempt to negotiate with the most private aspects of human experience and yet in its most powerful exponents it proclaims continually a public, humanitarian aim. Many commentators have found a contradiction in this and have attempted to come down on one side or the other, finding embarrassment in the excesses of that part of Romantic thought that does their account no favours. The case of Byron is exemplary because it shows that it is fruitless to discriminate between the two. In the end, I hope to have suggested that the traditional dyads amid which Romantic criticism has situated itself – public versus private, body versus mind, local versus international, the real versus the artificial – just don't function very well when submitted to the analysis of the reception history of a body of work as complicated as Byron's must surely be. More than this, there are two further matters upon which I hope to have shed some light. The first has to do with the concept of the sublime, which seems inescapably coupled with bathos even after its elevation from an eighteenth-century category; the second relates to the maintenance of cultural priority as a model for future literary excellence. That this should be haphazard ought not to surprise us: to invoke the past is not to escape automatically from the ludicrous, nor unfortunately is it true that attempted distance from past models makes

for singular seriousness. Perhaps this is a lesson to the critic as much as it is to the artist but that is a subject for later and longer reflection.

University of Reading

Notes

1. I would like to thank the Keats-Shelley Association of America for the award of a Carl H. Pforzheimer, Jr., Research Grant, which enabled me to carry out some very early work on the reception of Byron in America at the Houghton Library and the Boston Athenaeum over a decade ago. The librarians at both institutions were immensely supportive; in particular, at the former, Peter X. Accardo generously gave both time and materials on several visits.
2. See my 2008 essay 'Hazlitt's Burke and the Idea of Grace', *The Hazlitt Review* 1: 27–40.
3. On the importance of Longinus to the history of theories of the sublime, see, for example, J. Jennifer Jones's 2015 essay 'Beyond Burke's Precedent and Back Again: Longinus and the Romantic Sublime', *Neophilologus* 99.2: 175–89.
4. See Jeremy Tambling. 1999. 'Henry James's American Byron', *Henry James Review* 20.1: 43–50.
5. See Peter X. Accardo. 1999. 'American Editions of Byron, 1811 to 1830', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 93: 484–94.
6. The *Analectic Magazine* for 1814, ed. by Moses Thomas (Philadelphia), reprinted in Accardo 1999: 11. Washington Irving served as editor of the journal at this time and wrote the first brief biography of the poet by an American in this number (see Accardo 2001: 8). In this year, Byron's 'Ode to Napoleon' was published in Boston (by Monroe and Franklin). The Boston Athenaeum copy is bound with a series of political tracts, including remarks of a gubernatorial speech by A. H. Everett.
7. See Accardo 1998: 32–3.
8. Rembrandt Peale. (ca. 1825). *Lord Byron* ([Boston]: Pendleton). Reprinted with kind permission of the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM 1966.48.85). Sally Pierce et al. give the publication date, contra the Smithsonian, as 1826 (Pierce 1997: 59).
9. George Hewitt Cushman (1814–76) was trained in drawing by Washington Allston and worked as an engraver in Boston before moving to Philadelphia in 1842, where he worked as a book and banknote engraver. The engraving of Byron was published in 1850 in the *Drawing-Room Scrap Book*, ed. by Amelia W. Lawrence (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart), 47.
10. Wayne Craven contends that Durand made several uncredited engravings from images by Westall for the 1820–23 *Works of the Right Honorable Lord Byron*, 9 vols. (New York: W. B. Gilley). See Craven 1971: 42.
11. See Peter X. Accardo. 1996. '*The Giaour* and "The Greek Boy" *Harvard Library Bulletin* 7.1: 62–66.
12. See [Lord Byron]. 1954. *His Very Self and Voice: Collected Conversations of Lord Byron*, ed. by Ernest J. Lovell Jr. (New York: Macmillan), 124–29; 289–94.
13. See Andrews Norton. 1826. *A review of the character and writings of Lord Byron* (London: Sherwood Gilbert and Piper).
14. See Dennis Pahl. 1984. 'Recovering Byron: Poe's "The Assignation"', *Criticism* 26.3: 211–29.
15. See also Anthony Trollope. 1879. 'The Genius of Nathaniel Hawthorne', *The North American Review* 129.274: 203–22 and R. H. Fogle. 1972/3. 'Nathaniel Hawthorne and the Great English Romantic Poets', *Keats-Shelley Journal* 21/22: 219–35.

Works Cited

Accardo, Peter X. 1996. '*The Giaour* and "The Greek Boy"', *Harvard Library Bulletin* 7.1: 62–66

_____. 1998. 'Byron in America to 1830', *Harvard Library Bulletin* 9.2 (Special Issue)

_____. 1999. 'American Editions of Byron, 1811 to 1830', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 93: 484–494

_____. 2001. *Byron in Nineteenth-Century American Culture: Catalogue of an Exhibition organised by*

The Houghton Library, Harvard University, for the XXVIIth Interna-tional Byron Conference, August–October 2001 (The Byron Society of America and The University of Delaware)

Adorno, Theodor W. 1964. *The Jargon of Authenticity* [1964], trans. by Knut Tar-nowski and Frederic Will (London: Routledge)

_____. 1974. *Noten zur Literatur*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp)

[Agg, John]. 1814. *The General-Post Bag; or, News! Foreign and Domestic by Humphrey Hedgehog* (London: J. Johnson)

_____. 1819. *The Ocean Harp* (Philadelphia: Moses Thomas)

Arnold, Matthew. 1964. *Essays in Criticism — Second Series* [1888], ed. by S R Littlewood (London: Macmillan)

[Byron, George Gordon, 6th Baron]. 1816. *Lord Byron's Farewell to England and other poems* (Philadelphia: Moses Thomas)

_____. 1954. *His Very Self and Voice: Collected Conversations of Lord Byron*, ed. by Ernest J. Lovell Jr. (New York: Macmillan)

Byron, George Gordon, 6th Baron. 1976. *Byron's Letters and Journals, Volume V: 1816–17*, ed. by Leslie A. Marchand (Cambridge, MA: Belknapp Press)

_____. 1986. *Lord Byron: The Major Works*, ed. by Jerome J. McGann (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Carroll, Jerome. 2008. 'The Limits of the Sublime, the Sublime of Limits: Hermeneutics as a Critique of the Postmodern Sublime', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 66.2: 171–181

Clarke, McDonald. 1823. *The gossip; or, A laugh with the ladies, a grin at the gentlemen, and burlesques on Byron: a sentimental satire; with other poems: in a series of numbers* (New York: Gray and Bunce)

Craven, Wayne. 1971. 'Asher B. Durand's Career as an Engraver', *The American Art Journal* 3.1, 39–57

[Cushman, George Hewitt]. 1850. 'Lord Byron', in *The Drawing-Room Scrap Book*, ed. by Amelia W. Lawrence (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart)

Dickens, Charles. 2002. *The Letters of Charles Dickens, Volume XII: (1868–70)*, ed. by Graham Storey (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

[Duganne, A. J. H.]. 1851. *Parnassus in Pillory: A Satire* (New York: Adriance, Sherman & Co.)

Eliot, T. S. 1975. *Selected Prose*, ed. by Frank Kermode (London: Faber)

Everett, Edward. 1846. *Addresses at the Inauguration of the Hon, Edward Everett LL.D* (Boston: Little and Brown)

Fogle, R. H. 1972/3. 'Nathaniel Hawthorne and the Great English Romantic Poets', *Keats-Shelley Journal* 21/22: 219–235

Goodman, Susan and Carl Dawson. 2005. *William Dean Howells: A Writer's Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press)

[Grolier Club]. 1895. *Catalogue of the engraved work of Asher B. Durand* (New York: Grolier Club)

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. 1974. 'P's Correspondence', in *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Volume X: Mosses from an Old Manse (1846)*, ed. by Fredson Bowers et al. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press): 361–380

Hazlitt, William. 1930. *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* (21 vols.), ed. by P. P. Howe (London: Dent)

James, Henry. 1879. 'A Friend of Lord Byron', *The North American Review* 128.269: 388–392

_____. 1956. *The American Essays*, ed. by Leon Edel, (Princeton: Princeton University Press)

_____. 1980. *The Letters of Henry James, Volume III: 1883–1895*, ed. by Leon Edel (Cambridge MA: Belknapp Press)

_____. 2000. *Tales of Henry James* ed. by Christof Wegelin and Henry B. Wonham (New York: Norton)

_____. 2011. *The Portrait of a Lady* ed. by Philip Horne (Harmondsworth: Penguin)

Jones, J. Jennifer. 2015.'Beyond Burke's Precedent and Back Again: Longinus and the Romantic Sublime', *Neophilologus* 99.2: 175–189

Leonard, William Ellery. 1905. Byron and Byronism in America (Boston)

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. 1832. 'A Defence of Poetry', *The North American Review* 32: 56–78

Lunt, George. 1826. *The grave of Byron, and other poems* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little and Wilkins)

Medwin, Thomas. 1966. *Medwin's Conversations of Lord Byron*, ed. by Ernest J. Lovell Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press)

Norton, Andrews. 1826. *A review of the character and writings of Lord Byron* (London: Sherwood Gilbert and Piper)

Pahl, Dennis. 1984. 'Recovering Byron: Poe's "The Assignation"', *Criticism* 26.3: 211–229.

Pierce, Sally et al. 1995. *Early American Lithography: Images to 1830* (Boston, MA: The Boston Athenaeum)

Poe, Edgar Allan. 1978. 'The Visionary (The Assignation)' in *The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe, Volume II: Tales and Sketches* ed by Thomas Ollive Mabbott (Cambridge, MA: Belknapp Press): 148–169

Pope, Alexander. 2009. *Martinus Scriblerus's Peri Bathous, or The Art of Sinking in Poetry* (London: Oneworld)

Rennie, Nicholas. 2005. *Speculating on the Moment: The Poetics of Time and Recurrence in Goethe, Leopardi, and Nietzsche* (Göttingen: Wallstein)

Scott, Matthew. 2008. 'Hazlitt's Burke and the Idea of Grace', *The Hazlitt Review* 1: 27–40

Tambling, Jeremy. 1999. 'Henry James's American Byron', *Henry James Review* 20.1: 43–50

Anthony Trollope. 1879. 'The Genius of Nathaniel Hawthorne', *The North American Review* 129.274: 203–222

Tuckerman, Henry T. 1846. *Thoughts on the Poets* (New York: C. S. Francis and Co.)

Weisbuch, Robert. 1986. *Atlantic Double-Cross: American Literature and British Influence in the Age of Emerson* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)

_____. 1999. 'Post-Colonial Emerson and the Erasure of Europe', in *The Cambridge Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. by Joel Porte (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Wellmer, Albrecht. 1997. 'Adorno, Modernity and the Sublime', in *The Actuality of Adorno: Critical Essays on Adorno and the Postmodern*, ed. by Max Pensky (Albany: SUNY Press): 112–134

Williams, Jean Kinney. 2005. *Jefferson Davis: President of the Confederate States of America* (Minneapolis, MN: Compass Point)